



Street Table Tennis events are happening across London with increasing regularity

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Community ensures street table tennis enjoys surge in popularity throughout London

Louis Cadier, StreetTT Admin, writes about the recent Street Table Tennis pilot and the way Londoners can make the most of urban table tennis tables to get active and social.

Come with me to meet some people. They are not famous, except to those who know them.

They are hard to notice and yet they are everywhere, gathering day and night at chosen places across the city. Many have never picked up a table tennis blade before. Others have held one their whole life.

From the beginning, the public table tennis table offered more than just somewhere to play, it is a place that is free. There is no cost to play but it's also free to every ability, walk of life, age group and culture.

[StreetTT](#) is a community-run platform, [mobile](#) and web app, that seeks to unite and grow the now 1000+ player street table tennis community.

And I have been spreading the word. [In partnership with Ping!](#), a programme led by Table Tennis England and London Borough Councils, we organised the capital's first citywide street table tennis tournament.

The tournament offered players of any level the opportunity to participate via tournaments dotted all over London and culminating in the final.

I am contacted by Yee. He, and people like him, are gardeners of the tables where they play, they nurture players, involve newbies and hide away their considerable abilities in favour of encouraging talent to grow.

Born in Hong Kong, Yee emigrated to London when he was 10 but developed an interest in table tennis in his later teens. A few decades later, Yee is passing on what he knows patiently.

Not only does Yee volunteer to referee tournaments across one of the largest cities in the world, at each event he was waiting there for me, early and with home-baked cakes for all the players.



[Watch video on YouTube here](#)

And Yee is not alone. Meet Paul, a founder of KX Table Tennis Tribe, one of the longest established street collectives, who play at [UAL, Granary Building](#) near Kings Cross.

While some of the top players in town can be found at KX, the tribe give up their places at the tables to new players and first-timers, they offer to play them, answer questions, and share helpful tips and techniques.

Paul takes 20 minutes out of his evening to teach me and times this on his phone so that we share the table with others fairly. He plays an important role in the development of players, beyond the improvement of their sporting ability, extending confidence, experience, and determination.

There are thousands of people in London who play, so why this surge in interest in street table tennis?

There are many reasons. Lockdowns are a factor, they have shown us the value of outdoor activities and with table tennis not requiring extreme athleticism, it can be played by all ages and fitness levels.

Public tables ensure the sport is highly accessible. And, like never before, people understand the benefits to their health, physical fitness and mental wellbeing.

But what we have seen, is that there is something quite beautiful at the heart

of the street table tennis phenomenon - community.

Across London, people are venturing to tables and making friends, realising that it only takes turning up to be a member of a community. Warm ambassadors are there to welcome, encourage, and develop new players.

Playing in the street is an act of sharing, we share the tables, our knowledge, and our time with each other. Street table tennis is a free space where cooperation is more important than winning and losing.



[Watch video on YouTube here](#)

Using the StreetTT mobile and web app any player can create a free profile and submit their own match results, entering them into a global ranking of street players. It gives players the tools to meet, compete and achieve locally, and to win badges for achievements and activity.

For new and existing organisers, they can become a StreetTT moderator for free to receive education and guidance on how to grow the game at any table.

There are StreetTT events happening across London and they can all be found in the app.

StreetTT has been made possible in London by Ping! and the following London

councils: Camden, Barnet, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Kingston, Sutton and Westminster.

Check out the [Montrose Playing Fields](#) in Barnet, [Woolwich Estate](#) in Greenwich, [Chessington Sports Centre](#) in Kingston, [Edbrooke Road Gardens](#) in Westminster, [Finsbury Park](#) in Haringey.

About London Sport

London Sport is a charity working to ensure more Londoners live happier, healthier lives through access to sport and physical activity. Supported by Sport England and the Mayor of London, we collaborate with those that share our vision, running and supporting projects that help children, young people and the least active adults to embed sport and physical activity into their lives.

For more information on London Sport, visit www.londonsport.org

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