

Competition Format and Rules

Format et règlement des compétitions

As of WED 21 OCT 2026

Youth Olympic Competition Format

The Table Tennis competition at Dakar 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games consists of three events: men's singles, women's singles, and mixed doubles. There will be a maximum of 32 men and 32 women entries. The maximum number of athletes per NOC will be one man and one woman.

Men's/Women's Singles:

The singles events consist of the following stages:

- The preliminary stage is a pool format (eight groups of up to four players, each player in a group plays all other players in that group). The top two players from each group qualify to the knock-out stage and the remaining players are ranked as follows: The eight players placed 3rd in each group are ranked 17th and the eight players placed 4th in each group are ranked 25th. Players are awarded 2 match points for a win, 1 point for a loss in a completed match and 0 points for a loss in an unplayed or unfinished match, i.e. in case of injury, illness, disqualification (DSQ) or walkover (W/O).
- The knock-out stage is a direct elimination format, and consists of: Round of 16, quarterfinals, semifinals and finals.

  The finals (bronze and gold medal matches) decide ranks 1 to 4. The four quarterfinal losers are ranked 5th, and the eight round of 16 losers are ranked 9th.

Mixed Doubles:

The mixed doubles competition is played in a direct elimination format. The round of 32 will be organised if there are more than 16 pairs, followed by the round of 16 (eight matches) and progress through the quarterfinals (four matches), semifinals (two matches) to the finals (bronze and gold medal matches). The mixed doubles event consists of 16-24 NOC pairs according to the Participation Principles for Dakar 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games.

Differences between the ITTF Youth World Championships and the Summer Youth Olympic Games

The ITTF full program consists of men's teams, women's teams, men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles and mixed doubles.

Changes since Buenos Aires 2018 Summer Youth Olympic Games

The Mixed Doubles event is on the programme for Dakar 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games, instead of the Mixed International Team event that was on the programme for Buenos Aires 2018 Summer Youth Olympic Games.

Sport Rules and Procedures

Singles and Mixed Doubles matches

The singles events matches are the best of five games in the preliminary stage and the best of seven in the knock-out stage. The mixed doubles event matches are the best of five games. In all events, the games are played to 11 points. A game is won by the player or pair first scoring 11 points unless both players or pairs score 10 points, in which case the game is won by the first player or pair gaining a lead of two points. There is an interval of up to one minute between successive games of an individual match; a player may claim one time-out period of up to one minute during an individual match. Players may receive advice at any time except during rallies provided the competition is not delayed.

Match points scoring

Unless the rally is a let, a player scores a point:

- If an opponent fails to make a correct service
- If an opponent fails to make a correct return
- If, after he or she has made a service or a return, the ball touches anything other than the net assembly before being struck by an opponent

Competition Format and Rules

Format et règlement des compétitions

As of WED 21 OCT 2026

- If the ball passes over his or her court or beyond his or her end line without touching his or her court, after being struck by an opponent
- If the ball, after being struck by an opponent, passes through the net or between the net and the net post or between the net and playing surface
- If an opponent obstructs the ball
- If an opponent deliberately strikes the ball more than once in succession
- If an opponent strikes the ball with a side of the racket blade whose surface does not comply with the requirements
- If an opponent, or anything an opponent wears or carries, moves the playing surface
- If an opponent, or anything an opponent wears or carries, touches the net assembly
- If an opponent's free hand touches the playing surface
- If a doubles opponent strikes the ball out of the sequence established by the first server and first receiver
- As provided under the expedite system

The service

The service starts with the ball resting freely on the open palm of the server's stationary free hand. The server then projects the ball near vertically upwards, without imparting spin, so that it rises at least 16cm after leaving the palm of the free hand and then falls without touching anything before being struck. As the ball is falling the server strikes it so that it touches first his or her court and then touches directly the receiver's court; in doubles, the ball touches successively the right half court of server and receiver. From the start of service until it is struck, the ball should be above the level of the playing surface and behind the server's end line, and it should not be hidden from the receiver by the server, or his or her doubles partner, or by anything that they wear or carry. As soon as the ball has been projected, the server's free arm and hand should be removed from the space between the ball and the net. The space between the ball and the net is defined by the ball, the net and its indefinite upward extension.
It is the responsibility of the player to serve so that the umpire or the assistant umpire can be satisfied that he or she complies with the requirements of the Laws, and either may decide that a service is incorrect.
If either the umpire or the assistant umpire is not sure about the legality of a service he or she may, on the first occasion in a match, interrupt play and warn the server; but any subsequent service by that player or his or her doubles partner which is not clearly legal will be considered incorrect.

The return

The ball, having been served or returned, should be struck so that it touches the opponent's court, either directly or after touching the net assembly.

The expedite system

The expedite system is introduced if a game has not finished after 10 minutes of play (or at any earlier time at the request of both players or pairs). This system cannot be used after a total of 18 points has been scored.

If the 10 minute time period elapses while the ball is still in play, the umpire interrupts play by calling "time". The match resumes with service going to the player who was serving when the rally was interrupted. Otherwise, if after 10 minutes the ball is not in play, play shall resume with service by the player who received in the preceding rally.

Under the expedite system, each player serves for one point alternately until the end of game. If the receiving player, or pair, makes 13 returns, the receiver scores one point. Once introduced, the expedite system remains in operation until the end of the match.

Competition Format and Rules

Format et règlement des compétitions

As of WED 21 OCT 2026

Tie Break Rules

A game is won by the player or pair first scoring 11 points unless both players or pairs score 10 points, in which case the game is won by the first player or pair gaining a lead of two points.

In the singles events, the players within a group are ranked according to the number of match points (two match points for a win, one match point for a loss in a played match and zero match points for a loss in an unplayed or unfinished match (i.e. in case of injury, illness, disqualification (DSQ) or walkover (W/O)).

In case of a tie in the group ranking of the preliminary stage: If two or more players are tied with the same number of match points, the ties will be broken as follows:

Only results of the matches played between the tied players will be considered:

1. Number of match points
2. Games ratio
3. Points ratio

If at any step in the calculations the positions of one or more members of the group have been determined while the others are still equal, the results of matches in which those members took part shall be excluded from any further calculations needed to resolve the equalities in accordance with the above procedure

4. If still tied, the ties will be broken by a draw

Please note the following definitions:

- Games ratio is the total number of games won by the player divided by the total number of games won by the opponents in the matches that are being considered.
- Points ratio is the total number of points won by the player divided by the total number of points won by opponents in the matches that are being considered

Penalties / Disqualification Rules

The referee has the power to disqualify a player or a pair from a match, an event or the competition for serious, unfair or offensive behaviour.

Protests / Appeals

Appeals will be decided in accordance with the ITTF Regulations for International Competitions.

Note:
For further information please consult: www.ittf.com