

## Our Club

Sunrise Table Tennis Club, Inc. is a non-profit organization operated by volunteers. Our non-profit status is granted by both the I.R.S. and the State of Florida. This status means that we depend on donations from our Members for our continued existence and that all funds received are dedicated to provide services and activities to benefit our Members and the community.

We have a rather unique relationship with the recreational facilities where we operate, which currently includes four Recreational Centers owned by the City of Clearwater and one by the City of Safety Harbor. These Centers offer to the public two types of activities – those conducted by the Center itself as City programs; and those conducted by other individuals, groups or organizations who rent time and space at the Center.

Our special relationship allows our Club to conduct our table tennis activities at the Centers without paying the usual rental fees, except for some of our large tournaments that require extra courts or a second day. We are granted the free use of the gym courts for our regular play sessions and most of the courts for our tournaments in exchange for providing services (volunteers and equipment) for City programs which include:

- Table tennis training and play for City summer camp kids for about eight hours a week, eight weeks every summer.
- Hosting the county Good Life Games and the Florida Senior Games table tennis tournaments.
- Putting on special events, such as open house demonstrations or clinics for the disabled.

Without this special relationship, the Club would have to charge something like \$5.00 per player each and every play session just to cover court rental fees, which would be in addition to the Center entry fee or yearly membership that is collected from you at the Center front desk (we don't get any part of that).

We are also obligated to abide by City rules and requests for use of the courts, which include:

- Strict limits to the storage space for our equipment (we are actually assigned very specific dimensions in the storage rooms).
- Exact start and end times for our sessions.
- On-time breakdown and storage of all of our equipment.
- Advance approval of any schedule changes or special events (e.g. tournaments).
- Proper sanitation and storage of any city equipment we use (such as the chairs).
- Payment of Center entry fees by our players (daily entry fees or yearly membership).
- Carry our own liability insurance to cover our players.

So why do we need our own organization in the first place, instead of just letting the City run its own table tennis program? It is questionable that the City would offer table tennis on its own, as it requires a lot of resources (the purchase and maintenance of equipment) and manpower (setup, breakdown, etc.). In discussions held with the City recreation program leaders in the past, a city-run table tennis program, if it existed at all, would most likely look like this: a few tables for play sessions a couple times a week at one or two facilities and never any tournaments or coaching. It would be a far cry from our Club full schedule of regular play at four facilities and six or more tournaments each year (in normal times).

Our organizational budget normally runs about \$10,000 to \$12,000 per year, which covers our expenses for operations, programs and equipment replacements (tables are expensive!). About half of our budget goes toward putting on tournaments, which usually turn a small profit that goes into our general fund. The other half of the budget is spent on: benefits to our Members such as coaching clinics and event prizes; advertising (website, flyers, etc.); equipment (tables, nets, barriers, balls, repairs); insurance; and other normal business expenses (office supplies, PayPal fees, government filing fees, etc.). A small portion of our budget gets paid to individuals for independent contractor services, such as tournament officiation, club coach certifications and data entry. None of our Officers are paid as staff, although there may be some instances where an Officer also is providing one of the paid independent contractor services. We depend on donations from Members to meet our budget, mainly the annual Membership fees. Any additional donations are greatly appreciated and often make the difference between just squeezing by and being able to upgrade our services and equipment. We also welcome sponsorship donations from businesses, for which we provide advertising space on our website and at our tournaments, and other benefits.

Member participation in the Club should mean much more than just playing at our regular open sessions and our tournaments. All of the work necessary to manage and run the Club is done by volunteers. We certainly welcome those willing to step up for the responsibilities of a Club Officer position. Or Members can take on simpler jobs to help on one of our Committees. But we also depend on all Members to do the simple daily tasks required just to play – setting up and breaking down the tables and barriers; welcoming new players that show up and getting them into play; showing those that need help with the proper set up of the tables and net; cleaning up and sanitizing at the end of each play session; and keeping an eye out for the preservation and security of our equipment. Keep in mind that our management team consists of all volunteers – the daily tasks should be shared by all Members, not just expected to be done by “management”.

There have been a number of times in the history of the Club where the future has been in doubt. This has always been followed by a resurgence of the dedication of a few individuals willing to commit to the time and labor to ensure the Club continues. It’s mostly a “thankless” job. If you see someone doing some work for the Club, remember that they are just a volunteer and thank them. If you see someone make a mistake, forgive them. If you disagree with the way things are done, instead of complaining, volunteer to help. Our Club exists for the benefit of its Members, but also depends on the participation of its Members for its existence.