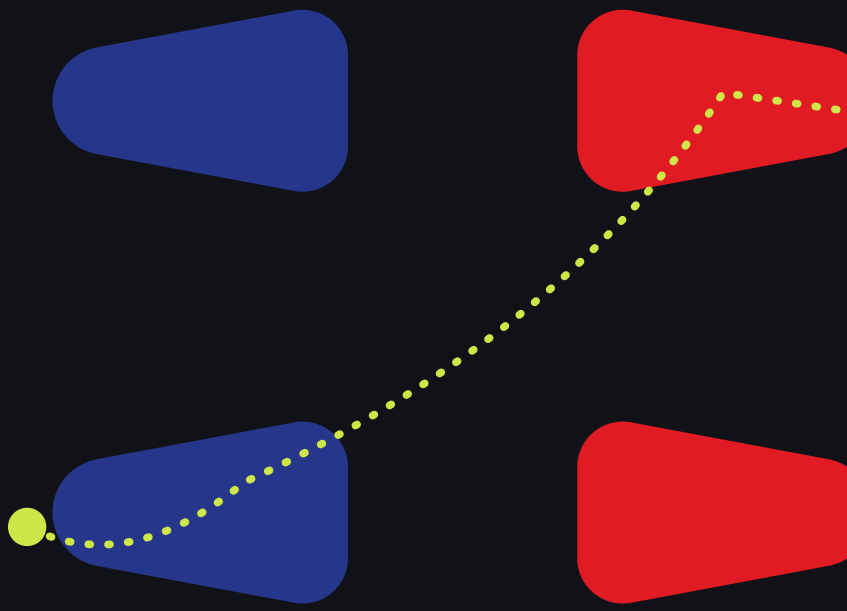
HANTIS

FREESTYLE + COMPETITIVE

THE OFFICIAL HANTIS RULEBOOK

Every rule for both modes of play, with diagrams. Four tables. One ball. Two hits.



2026 EDITION · UPDATED OCTOBER 2026

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One page to print and keep by the court

TWO MODES, ONE SET OF RULES

Hantis has two modes of play. **Freestyle** is the rotation game for groups of any size. **Competitive** is fixed teams of two playing for points. Almost every rule applies to both. When a rule is different, this book says so.

HOW RULES ARE NUMBERED

Rules are numbered by section, group and rule. For example, **4.0.7** is Section 4, group 0, rule 7. Use the numbers to settle arguments quickly.

WHAT CHANGED · OCTOBER 2026

Safety: 7.0.3 stay off the tables, 7.0.4 play the ball, not the player, 7.0.5 safe space, 8.0.2 no Walking the Dog in schools. **Rulings:** 1.1.5 interference, 1.2.0 rotation after a Double, 2.0.1 and 2.1.0 the serve, 1.1.2 and 4.0.6 boundaries, 6.0.3 first serve in later sets.

Hantis was created in 2005 by students at Scott County High School in Georgetown, Kentucky.

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SECTION 1

GETTING STARTED

All you need is a tennis ball, four tables the same size and three friends.

1.0 EQUIPMENT

1.0.0 THE BALL

The most common ball used to play Hantis is a tennis ball. For maximum effect, make sure it's a new one out of a pressurized can. Other balls can be used on less-bouncy plastic tables, for example a high-bounce rubber ball.

1.0.1 THE TABLES

Any type of table can be used to play Hantis. To play, you will need 4 tables of the same size.

1.1 SETTING UP

1.1.0 WHERE TO PLAY

You can play Hantis almost anywhere: indoors, outdoors, on a beach, in a park, on a basketball court, or even in a squash court for extra X-Factor bounces. Beach volleyball courts are our favorite, because they give you an area of play with set boundaries and you can dive on the sand.

1.1.1 TABLE PLACEMENT

Set up the 4 tables in a 2×2 pattern as shown in Figure 1.1. The distance between each table depends on your skill level.

LEVEL	GAP BETWEEN TABLES
BEGINNER	3 FT (90 CM)
INTERMEDIATE	4 FT (120 CM)
ADVANCED	5 FT (150 CM)

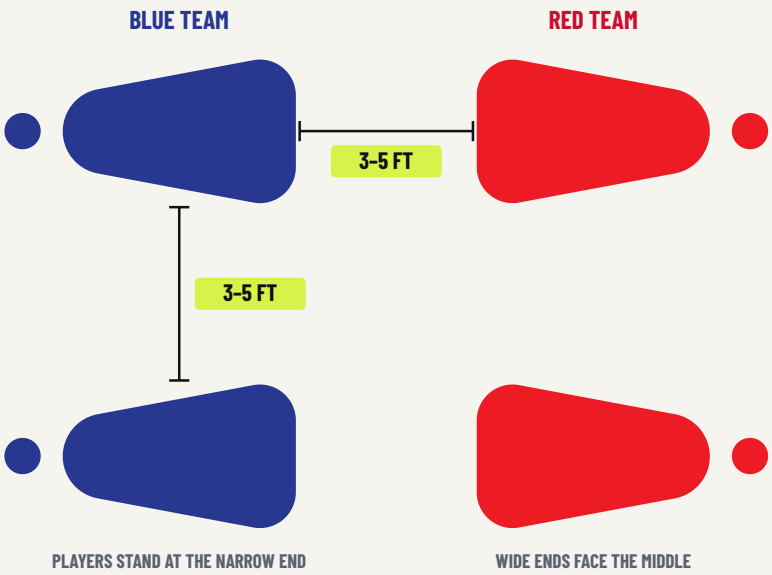


FIGURE 1.1 TABLE PLACEMENT: A 2×2 SQUARE, TEAMMATES SIDE BY SIDE, OPPONENTS ACROSS THE MIDDLE

1.1.2 FREESTYLE BOUNDARIES

8 m × 8 m, up to 16 m × 8 m. The teacher or organizer marks it with cones or floor tape. If nobody does, players make the calls or play with no boundary.

TIP: SHORTEN THE BOUNDARY TO PREVENT OVERUSE OF "THE SLAM."

1.1.3 COMPETITIVE BOUNDARIES

BOUNDARY	METRIC	IMPERIAL
OFFICIAL BOUNDARY	8 M × 8 M	26.25 FT × 26.25 FT
ADAPTIVE: FULL SAND COURT	16 M × 8 M	52.5 FT × 26.25 FT
ADAPTIVE: HALF SAND COURT	8 M × 8 M	26.25 FT × 26.25 FT
ADAPTIVE: RACQUETBALL OR SQUASH COURT	13.7 M × 7.6 M	45 FT × 25 FT

TIP: CREATE A NEUTRAL ENVIRONMENT WITH NO EXTRA OBJECTS IN THE WAY (BALLS, CHAIRS, PEOPLE, CLOTHES OR BACKPACKS).

1.1.4 WHAT IS AN X-FACTOR?

Any surface besides the players, the four tabletops and the ground is called an **X-Factor** and is completely neutral. X-Factors include walls, ceilings, or anything else surrounding the playing area. The ball may even bounce off the legs of the tables and still be in play. During the serve and for the rest of the rally, the ball may bounce off these surfaces with no penalty to the other team. If the ball gets stuck or stops moving on an X-Factor, it is dead, and whoever touched it last is at fault: the player who last struck it, or the player whose table it last bounced off, is out (Freestyle) or loses the point (Competitive). Keep track of how many touches and bounces you've had, because **X-Factors do not reset your hit count**.

1.1.5 INTERFERENCE

People aren't X-Factors. If someone waiting in line, a spectator or a stray ball from another court gets in the way of the ball or a player, replay the point.

1.2 WHO GOES WHERE?

1.2.0 FREESTYLE HANTIS

There are 2 modes of play: Freestyle and Competitive. Freestyle Hantis involves 2 teams of 2, with each of the 4 players at their own table. When a player gets out, they go to the back of the line, and the other players rotate around to the empty table ahead of them, toward the serving table. If you've ever played four square, it's the same rotation. After a Double (4.0.7), both players go to the back of the line, the other two players move up toward Table 4 to fill the empty tables, and the first two players in line enter at the lowest empty tables.

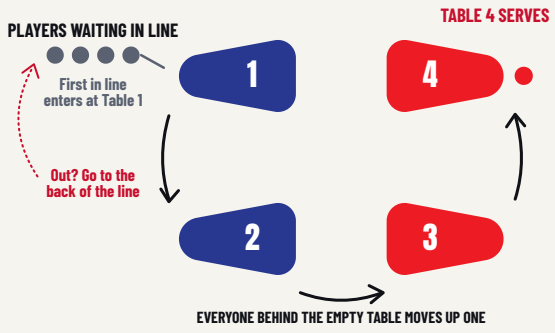


FIGURE 1.2 FREESTYLE ROTATION. TABLES 1-2 ARE ONE TEAM, 3-4 THE OTHER. MOVING FROM TABLE 2 TO 3 CHANGES TEAMS.

1.2.1 COMPETITIVE HANTIS

In Competitive Hantis the starting positions are the same as Freestyle, except you don't rotate and there is no line. You keep the same teammate throughout the game and score points instead of getting people out. For more on Competitive Hantis, see Section 6.

SECTION 2

THE SERVE

2.0 SERVING THE BALL

2.0.0 A REGULATION SERVE

To serve, hold the ball in one hand and, with your other hand, strike the ball downward onto your own table and then onto either of your opponents' tables. You may also throw the ball up and serve it with that same hand. You must be behind the back of your table to serve.

2.0.1 WHAT YOU CAN'T DO

You may not throw the ball as a serve. You may not strike the ball directly onto your opponent's table. You may not serve to your teammate's table. Neither the server nor their teammate may touch the ball again until it has changed possession by touching an opponent or an opponent's table.

2.0.2 TRICK SERVES

Some variations of the serve are called trick serves. These include kick serves, scissor-kick serves, elbow and header serves, and tweener serves. As long as you strike the ball onto your own table with any part of your body and then onto an opponent's table, it's a legal serve.

2.1 LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

2.1.0 STARTING POSITIONS DURING A SERVE

The line of scrimmage decides where each team can stand immediately before a serve. The **serving team** can stand anywhere behind the **back** of their tables. The **receiving team** can stand anywhere up to the **front** of their tables. As soon as the served ball hits the server's table, every player may move anywhere. A receiver may play the serve before it bounces on their table: that touch takes possession and is their first hit (3.0.2).

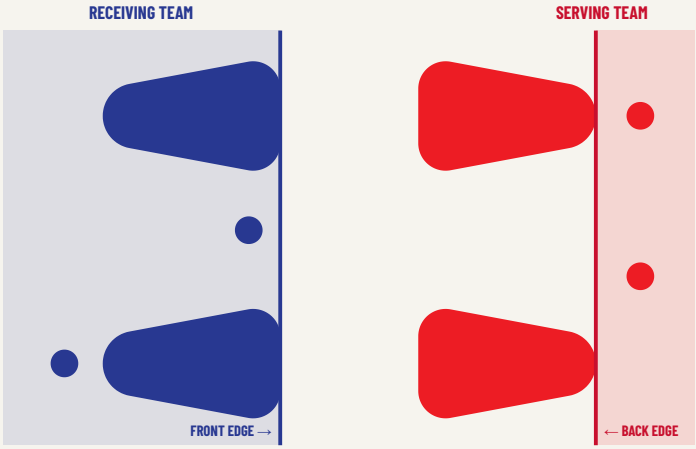


FIGURE 2.1 STAY IN YOUR SHADED ZONE UNTIL THE BALL IS SERVED

2.2 FAULTS

2.2.0 FAULTS DURING FREESTYLE FREESTYLE

A fault is when you miss your opponent's table while serving. You get 1 fault for your whole time at Table 4: miss a serve and you get one redo. Miss a second serve at any point while you're at Table 4 and you're out, even if you served legitimately in between.

2.2.1 FAULTS DURING COMPETITIVE COMPETITIVE

You only get faults when you are set point or match point down. All other missed serves give the other team a point. A double fault gives the other team a point, and with it the set or match.

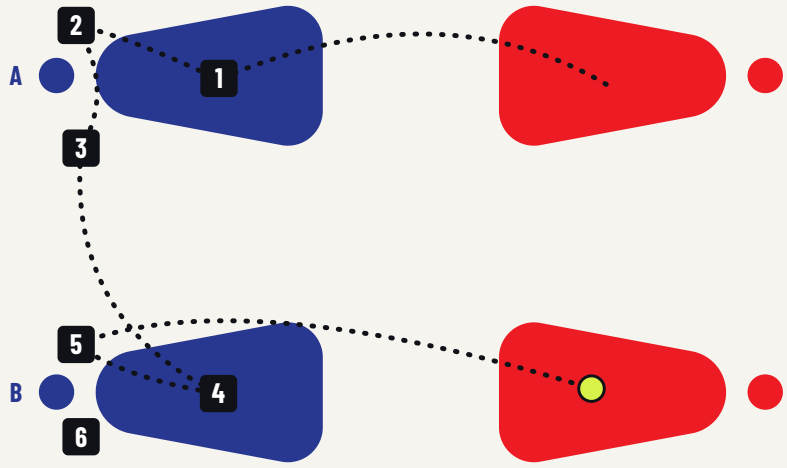
SECTION 3

POSSESSION

Possession is the heart of Hantis. Know whose ball it is, and how many hits and bounces are left.

3.0.0 HITS

Once the ball has been served, the receiving team has possession. Each of the 2 players in possession is allowed **1 bounce on their table** and **2 hits** with their body. The most common body part to use is the hands, because they give the most control, but you can use your feet, knees, head or anything else, as long as you only hit the ball twice. A hit off your clothing counts as one of your hits.



1. Serve bounces on A's table
2. A pops it up (hit 1)
3. A passes (hit 2)
4. Bounces on B's table
5. B sets it up (hit 1)
6. B strikes it onto Red's table (hit 2). Possession changes.

FIGURE 3.0 ONE FULL POSSESSION: EACH PLAYER USES 2 HITS AND EACH TABLE TAKES 1 BOUNCE

3.0.1 PASSING

The goal of Hantis is to score points or get your opponents out, depending on whether you're playing Competitive or Freestyle. One of the best ways to do this is to use your teammate. While your teammate gets into an ideal position, you use your hits to pass the ball to them, and they can score. You can get tricky and pass several times to use up your set of hits. Confusing the other team gives you the upper hand.

3.0.2 CHANGE OF POSSESSION

As soon as the ball touches the other team's table or a player on the other team, possession changes. They then have their 2 hits and 1 bounce each, and your hit count is reset.

3.0.3 DRIBBLING

Any time the ball is hit onto a player or table, possession changes, so the ball can be hit again to bounce it out of the opponents' reach. This means the ball can be dribbled indefinitely on the other team's tables, because possession changes after every bounce and hit. Players who are being dribbled on can try to intercept the dribble at any time.

3.0.4 SIMULTANEOUS HITS

If two hands are used at the same time to hit the ball, it counts as two hits, even if only one of the hands touches the ball. A simultaneous hit followed by a single hit counts as 3 hits, and you are out (Freestyle) or lose the point (Competitive).

3.0.5 SIMULTANEOUS HITS BY OPPOSING PLAYERS

If two opposing players hit the ball at the same time and it then drops out of play without touching either player or a table, the referee decides whether to award the point to one team or replay the point. Without a referee, settle it as in 7.0.2.

SECTION 4

HOW TO SCORE OR GET SOMEONE OUT

Every rule on this page works the same way in both modes of play, except one Freestyle exception in 4.0.4. Only the result changes.

FREESTYLE	The player is **out** and joins the back of the line.
COMPETITIVE	The other team wins the **point**.

4.0.0

TRIPLE TOUCH

If you touch the ball 3 times in one possession, you are out. That includes three hits in a row, or a third hit after your teammate passes the ball back to you when you've already used your 2 hits.

4.0.1

TABLE-TABLE

If the ball hits your table twice in one possession, you are out, whether the bounces come one after the other or with a number of hits in between.

4.0.2

TABLE-GROUND

If the ball hits your tabletop and then the ground, you are out.

HIT THE EDGE AND WENT DOWN? SEE SECTION 5, THE EDGE RULE.

4.0.3

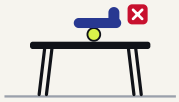
BODY-GROUND

If the ball hits your body and then the ground, you are out. That goes for a mis-hit while attacking and for getting hit while defending. If you were the last to touch the ball, you're out.

4.0.4

GRAB · CARRY · HOLD · CATCH · CUP

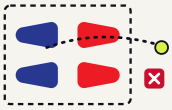
Contact with the ball is a hit, strike or slap. The ball may not be cupped, grabbed, held, caught or carried. If you do any of these, you are out. **Freestyle exception:** 8.0.2.



4.0.5

TRAP

If you trap the ball so it stops between your hand (or any body part) and your opponent's table, you are out.



4.0.6

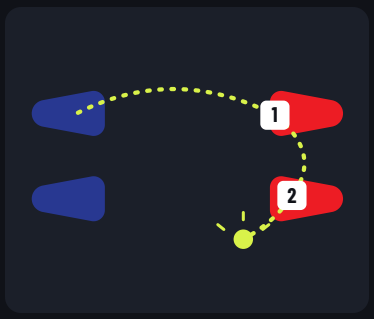
OUT OF BOUNDS

The ball is out where it first lands outside the boundary, and the last person to touch it is out. A smash that hits their table and then lands out is still your out. No boundary, no out of bounds (1.1.2).

Remember

WHO'S IN POSSESSION?

Possession changes the instant the ball touches the other team or their table (3.0.2), and that resets every hit and bounce count. X-Factors (walls, ceilings, table legs) are neutral but **don't** reset your count (1.1.4).



4.0.7 · The most sought-after move in Hantis

DOUBLE-POINT / DOUBLE-OUT

A Double happens when you strike the ball and it hits **both** of your opponents' tables without interruption, then hits the ground. You've just beaten two players at once. If anyone touches the ball after your hit, it can't be a Double and the regular rules apply.

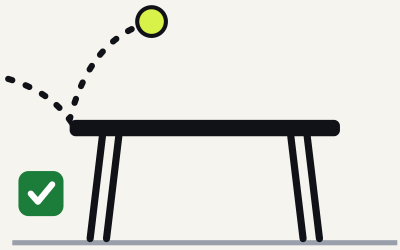
If it hits one table, clips the edge of the other and comes back to hit the first table, sadly that isn't a Double. It's two bounces on the first table (4.0.1).

FREESTYLE · BOTH OPPONENTS OUT | COMPETITIVE · 2 POINTS

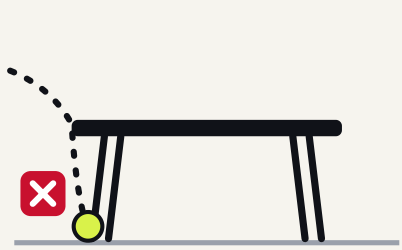
SECTION 5

THE EDGE RULE

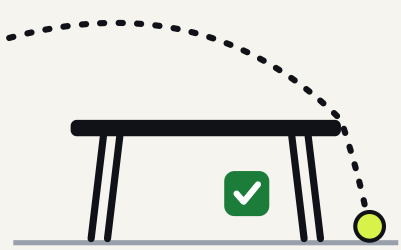
Did it hit the table or not? It depends on which edge the ball hit, and which way it went next.



5.0.0 UP OFF THE LEADING EDGE = TABLE HIT



5.0.1 DOWN OFF THE LEADING EDGE = NO TABLE HIT



5.0.2 DOWN OFF THE FAR EDGE = TABLE HIT

5.0.0 LEADING EDGE AND UP

If you strike the ball onto the leading edge of a table (the edge closest to you) and it goes up, it remains in play. If it then touches the ground, the player who started at that table is out.

5.0.1 LEADING EDGE AND DOWN

If you strike the ball onto the leading edge of a table (the edge closest to you) and it goes down, you are out. The ball needs to hit the top surface to be considered in.

5.0.2 FAR EDGE AND DOWN

If you strike the ball over a table and it hits the far edge and goes down, it is in, and you have won the point. Even though the ball went downward off the table, it clipped the top surface of the table, not the side as in 5.0.1.

> **HOW TO JUDGE AN EDGE BALL**
> The ball is judged from where it was last bounced or struck. Ask: did the ball pass over the tabletop before it hit the edge? If yes, it's a table hit. If it hit the edge directly without passing over the top, it only counts as a table hit if it bounces up.

SECTION 6

COMPETITIVE RULES

Fixed teams of two, playing for points. These rules apply to Competitive Hantis only.

6.0.0 STARTING OUT

Unlike Freestyle Hantis, in Competitive Hantis you score points instead of getting people out. You also don't rotate around the tables. You keep the same teammate throughout each match and for the whole tournament.

6.0.1 POINT, SET, MATCH

A Competitive Hantis match is the best of **1, 3, 5 or 7 sets** of "first to 21, win by 2." The tournament organizer chooses the match length.

6.0.2 TIME RESTRICTIONS

If you're running out of time to get through games, you may reduce the winning score, for example to first to 15 or first to 11. You must always win by 2 points.

6.0.3 ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS

Before a Competitive match starts, decide who will serve first with rock, paper, scissors. In each later set, the team that received first in the set before serves first.

6.0.4 SERVICE ROTATION

The team serving first picks which of its players serves. That player serves 5 times. The serve then alternates through each of the 4 players for the rest of the match, each serving 5 times and then passing the serve to the other team. Count serves, not points: a Double scores 2 points but uses only 1 of the server's 5 serves.

SERVES	SERVER	SERVES	SERVER
1–5	Team 1, player A	21–25	Team 1, player A
6–10	Team 2, player C	26–30	Team 2, player C
11–15	Team 1, player B	31–35	Team 1, player B
16–20	Team 2, player D	36–40	Team 2, player D

Change ends after every 10 points: at 10, 20, 30 and so on (6.0.6).

At set or match point, the **trailing team** serves until the score is level (6.0.7).

Serves are counted in order through the set. A Double is 2 points but only 1 serve.

6.0.5 SERVING SIDE

Each player may choose which table they serve from, but they must make all 5 serves from that table. They can't switch until their next turn to serve. Right-handers are more likely to pick the right table and left-handers the left, because each opens up both opponents' tables to the server's dominant hand.

6.0.6 CHANGE OF ENDS

After every 10 points, teams must swap ends. This evens out outside factors like sunlight and wind.

6.0.7 SET POINT AND MATCH POINT

When a Hantis match reaches set point or match point, the team that is losing serves until the scores are level. Once the scores are level, the team that reached that score first serves. A team should never be serving for a set or a match. The serving team may choose its serving player.

SECTION 7

MISCELLANEOUS RULES

7.0.0 CONTACT

Hantis is a non-contact sport, but there will be some incidental contact. The official ruling is that it works like basketball: you may make slight contact while contesting the ball, but you can't block another player's movement. In Competitive play, the referee decides blocking calls: either award the point to the team that was fouled, or replay the point. Without a referee, settle disputes as in 7.0.2.

7.0.1 TABLE DISRUPTION

If a table is moved or disrupted by accident during play, play on, unless it directly causes an unfair point, in which case you replay the point. If a player deliberately moves a table to gain an advantage, they lose that point. **Freestyle exception:** 8.0.2.

7.0.2 DISPUTES OVER POINTS

Hantis is a game of honesty and fairness. If you know you've touched the ball, own up to it. If there are disputes over carries, blocking or touches, solve them in a civil manner using any of these methods:

- agree to replay the point;
- play rock, paper, scissors for the point; or
- watch the rally back on video, if possible.

7.0.3 STAY OFF THE TABLES

No one may sit, stand, kneel, climb on or put their weight on a table, during play or between points. Tables aren't built to hold a person. If you do, you are out. Touching a table as you reach is fine; leaning your weight on it is not.

7.0.4 PLAY THE BALL, NOT THE PLAYER

Never aim the ball at a player's head, and keep kicks away from other players' heads. If you hit someone in the head on purpose, you are out. **Youth and school play:** if the ball hits a player above the shoulders, replay the point instead of calling anyone out.

7.0.5 SAFE SPACE

Before you play, clear bags, chairs and loose balls off the court, and leave walking room between the tables and the walls. Dive only on sand or soft ground. Beginners and young players may use a softer foam or low-compression ball.

SECTION 8

TRICKS

8.0.0 MASTERING HANTIS

Once you've mastered the smash they can't reel in and the little tap they can't get to, explore what else the game has to offer. Hantis is all about creativity: use your 2 hits for trick shots with your head or feet, between-the-legs shots and set plays with your teammate. Nothing gets a crowd going like a long rally finished off with some trick-nastiness or a Double.

8.0.1 DRIBBLE TRICK COMBO

One of the best ways to set yourself up for a trick shot is to dribble the ball on your opponent's table. Every bounce resets your hit count, which gives you more time to prepare, and you're right up close to their tables for maximum effect.

8.0.2 FREESTYLE-ONLY TRICKS

Freestyle is a little more relaxed than Competitive about two things. In the Hand1 and Reverse Hand1, the ball travels around your body inside your shirt, which would otherwise be a carry (4.0.4). In Walking the Dog, a player drags an opponent's table away while their teammate dribbles on it, which would otherwise lose the point (7.0.1). Both are allowed in Freestyle only. Never play Walking the Dog in school or P.E. play, or across a gym floor.

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RULES AT A GLANCE

HANTIS

1 SET UP

- 4 same-size tables in a 2×2 square (1.1.1)
- 3 ft beginner · 4 ft intermediate · 5 ft advanced
- 1 tennis ball, new from a pressurized can (1.0.0)
- Walls, ceilings and table legs are neutral X-Factors (1.1.4)

2 SERVE

- Strike the ball onto your own table, then either opponent's table (2.0.0)
- No throwing, no serving to your teammate (2.0.1)
- Servers stay behind the back of their tables; receivers up to the front of theirs (2.1.0)
- The serving team can't touch it again until possession changes (2.0.1)

3 POSSESSION

- 2 hits per player, any body part (3.0.0)
- 1 bounce on each of your team's tables
- Touch the other team or their table and possession flips; counts reset (3.0.2)
- Dribbling on their tables is legal (3.0.3)

4 YOU'RE OUT (OR LOSE THE POINT) IF...

- You touch it 3 times (4.0.0)
- It bounces twice on your table (4.0.1)
- It goes table → ground or you → ground (4.0.2, 4.0.3)
- You grab, carry or trap it (4.0.4, 4.0.5)
- You hit it out of bounds (4.0.6)

★ THE DOUBLE (4.0.7)

One shot bounces on both opponents' tables, then the ground. Both opponents are out, or you win 2 points.

5 EDGE RULE (SECTION 5)

- Up off the leading edge = table hit
- Down off the leading edge = no table hit
- Over the table, down off the far edge = table hit

FREESTYLE

- Out? Go to the back of the line (1.2.0)
- New players enter at Table 1
- Everyone moves up toward Table 4, the serving table
- 1 fault (one redo) for your whole time at Table 4; 2 faults = out (2.2.0)
- A Double puts 2 out: both to the back, 2 new players in (1.2.0)

COMPETITIVE

- First to 21, win by 2; best of 1, 3, 5 or 7 sets (6.0.1)
- Rock, paper, scissors for first serve; later sets alternate (6.0.3)
- Each player serves 5 times in rotation; a Double is 2 points but 1 serve (6.0.4)
- Change ends every 10 points (6.0.6)
- Trailing team serves at set or match point (6.0.7)

PLAY FAIR, PLAY SAFE

If you know you touched it, own up. Settle disputes by replaying the point, playing rock, paper, scissors, or checking the video (7.0.2). Stay off the tables (7.0.3), never aim at anyone's head (7.0.4), and clear the court before you play (7.0.5). Someone in line or watching gets in the way? Replay the point (1.1.5).

FOUR TABLES.
ONE BALL.
TWO HITS.

Watch the game and get the free Quick Start, plus table build plans and the P.E. Lesson Plans, at **hantis.net**

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