

Breath of Fresh Air-Hockey League

Welcome to the Gold Standard Games *Breath of Fresh Air-Hockey League* program! This league is designed to help you make the most out of your Air Hockey table and to promote this exciting healthy table sport to players at your school or recreation center.

Over the last several decades young adults have become less and less active, turning to video games, television and hand-held digital devices as their sources of fun. Rates of obesity have sky-rocketed and the trend does not appear to be slowing. This league is focused on combating these issues and encouraging young adults to engage in a much healthier, active and fun activity - Air Hockey.

Air Hockey is a unique game which continues to attract players of all ages. Even in a digital virtual-reality entertainment society, people still pick up mallets in an arcade and play. There remains a fascination with the frictionless floating puck that offers a simple pure enjoyment. And, since Air-Hockey has become so well-known in popular culture, it is strongly positioned as an alternative to video games.

Learning to become great at Air Hockey provides a host of benefits. Gross and fine motor skills are both enhanced, as well as hand-eye coordination. Improvement will take continued practice and the spirited nature of the one-on-one table sport offers players the chance to experience competition and grow personally.

Here is what you will find in this package:

Intro letter (this sheet)

Two Paths to Promote - Running a tournament

League format information

League Nights - Warming up, Practice Patterns and Competition

U.S. Air Hockey Association (USAA) Air Hockey Rules

Connecting to the World of Air Hockey

Terminology

Weissman Air Hockey Skills Assessment

Breath of Fresh Air Hockey

2 Paths to Promotion

This program has 2 main ways to promote Air Hockey. First, you can start by running small tournaments (open or handicapped) for your interested players. This is an easy initial step to take. Tournaments can be scheduled on a single day and will not require a long commitment from potential competitors. It can help you get your feet wet, assess what sort of interest exists in your community of players, and help you build toward a greater following.

The second area of promotion in this program is league play. League play is an excellent way to foster a more committed and interested group of players, as well as a way to give structure to their development for the skill sets required to be good at this recreational sport.

Running a Tournament

Before you set up your tournament, decide whether it will be Handicapped or Non-handicapped. A Non-handicapped tournament simply means that skill-level will not be taken in to account. In a Handicapped tournament, players are given skill ratings ranging from 0-6. Then, when they compete, players with higher skill ratings must give free points to the lesser-rated player each game they play. This is generally referred to as “spotting points.” For example, if a player rated 5 competes against another player rated as a 3, the lower rated player will start every game with 2 free points (being “spotted 2 points). If a 4 plays a 3, then the lower rated player will start each game with 1 free point. The only restriction on point spotting in Handicapped tournaments is that 5 free points in the maximum ever given out. So, if a 6 plays a 0, the 0 still only receives 5 free points per game.

Determining ratings can take place via a relative system within the community of players you have. The organizer/promoter can set up a fair system of moving up the Rating list. However, a more objective system for this does exist. It is called the Weissman Air Hockey Skills Assessment. The measure is included in this package. It provides a way to rate players based on observable skills. It’s a more advanced way to rate players, but available should you move in that direction, or should your players desire something less subjective than the organizer/promoter simply making the decisions.

For your initial tournaments, it is strongly suggested to make them Non-handicapped events.

Setting up your tournament

Start by choosing a date and time that works well for your community. Typically, an evening around 6:30-7:30 is a good time. Students are finished with classes and have had a chance to eat dinner. Create signage to promote the event with plenty of time for the message to get to your community. Post signs right next to your Air Hockey tables. Offer prizes, prestige, glory! Create a sense of excitement and make it bold and visible.

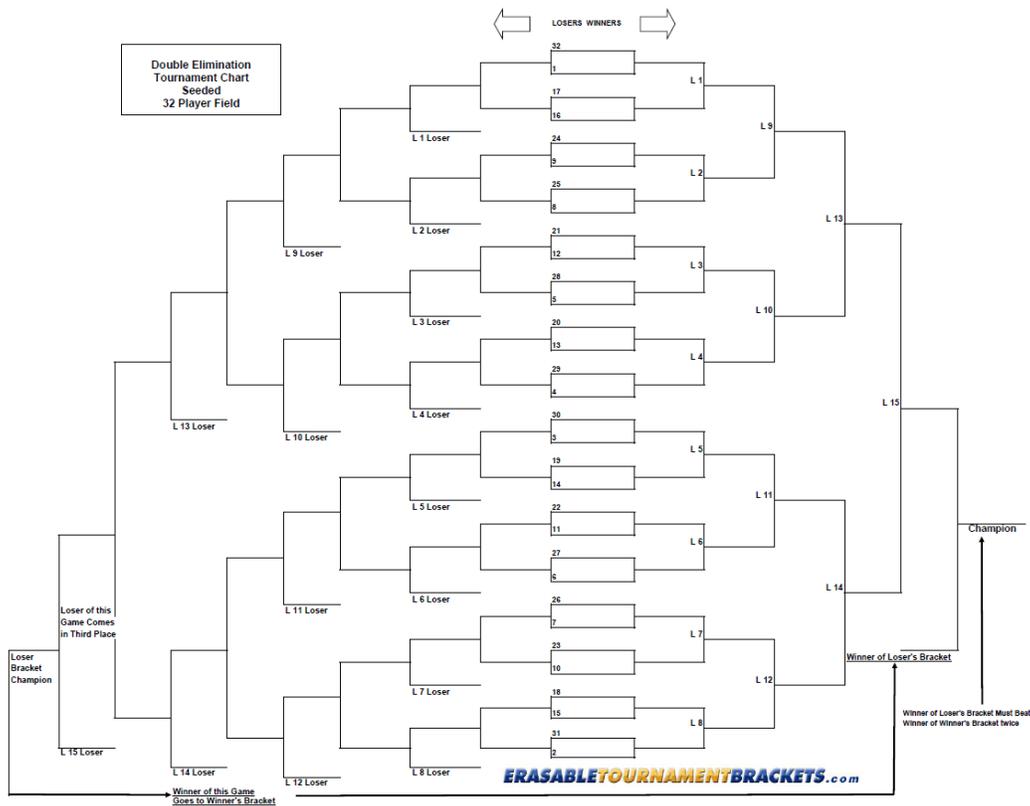
Most commonly in Air Hockey, tournaments are Double Elimination. That simply means that for a player to be completely eliminated from the event, they must lose two matches. Playing Single Elimination is fine if there is limited time, but it is strongly encouraged to use the Double Elimination format.

Each match is typically best 2 of 3 games, best 3 of 5 games or best 4 of 7 games. It is suggested to begin with matches that are best 2 of 3 games, and then play a 3 of 5 match for the finals and semi-finals.

To set up your tournament, you will need tournament brackets. You can print out free brackets by going to <http://www.printyourbrackets.com/>

Choose whether you will have Double or Single Elimination, then the number of players needed and whether it will be a Blind Draw or Seeded. Blind Draw will randomly match players up against each other. If you choose a Seeded tournament, then the matches will be set up accordingly to the rankings you give to each player. The purpose of a Seeded tournament is to match the best players up against the less skilled players, such that the best two players have the greatest chance of making it to the finals to face each other.

In the beginning, it is suggested to run Blind Draws. Once you have a group of players and a rating/ranking system in place, you can move to a Seeded system.



Breath of Fresh Air-Hockey League Format

The league is intended to run for anywhere between 4 and 8 weeks. The number of weeks is determined by several factors: Number of players, number of Air Hockey tables used and the number of league nights per week. As the organizer, it will be up to you to determine what makes the most sense for your location.

The league is divided into two main sections. The first section consists of Practice Nights and the Preliminary Seeding Tournament (PST). The second, and last section, is the Finale Tournament. The first section is the bulk of the league, consisting of players spending league nights practicing and learning then playing matches in the Preliminary Seeding Tournament (PST). The results of the PST are recorded and used to determine seedings in the Finale Tournament.

Both league tournaments are double elimination, matches being best 3 of 5 games. The finals for each tournament are best 4 of 7 games. Seeding for the PST is determined randomly. Seeding for the Finale Tournament is determined by the results of the PST. To create a tournament chart for these events, use the resources at <http://www.printyourbrackets.com/>

Each League Night is between 1.5-2 hours long. The first half of the night is spent learning basic skills via practice patterns, warm-up activities and scrimmage games against other players. The second half of the night is spent playing a number of PST matches. For the Finale Tournament, the warm-up part of the night is shortened to about 15-20 minutes.



As an example, if your location has 1 Air Hockey table and 16 league players, the league can feasibly run for 6 weeks. The way to determine the number of weeks has to do with how many total PST and Finale Tournament matches will be needed, how many league nights you want to run per week and how long you want each league night to last. In this example, with 16 players, there should be 31 PST matches and 31 Finale Tournament matches (The number of matches is easily predicted by multiplying the total number of players by 2, then

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subtracting 1). Figure on each match lasting about 20 minutes. To be able to complete the league in 6 weeks, we will need to run the league 2 nights per week for 2 hours each night. That comes to 24 hours. For the first 3 weeks we can spend 30 minutes each night on skills and warming-up, then the last 1 1/2 hours on matches. In the last 3 weeks we spend about 15 minutes on warming up, then the last 1 3/4 hours on matches.

This is only an example, and in reality, tweaks will need to be made along the way. The important point is to use these guidelines to set up your league schedule, but understand you will need to be flexible as well.



Connecting to the World of Air Hockey

Air Hockey has a diverse community, with numerous hubs throughout the United States and abroad. To connect to this community there are several excellent resources, all easily accessible via the Internet. Share these resources with your players and help them on their path to Air Hockey greatness.

www.Airhockey.com

This site is run primarily by many active players within the United States Air Hockey Association (the major sanctioning and rules organization behind professional level Air Hockey). Airhockey.com is a fantastic site for any prospective player hoping to become a member of the Air Hockey community. The site lists places to play, has an active forums section visited by pros and amateurs, reports on tournaments and events, has rules and sanctioned procedures, and even has a ticker at the top of the site which gives scores on current competitive matches taking place each day. The real gem is the ability for new players to directly connect and talk with World Champions, many of who are very willing to share advice and tips.

www.Goldstandardairhockey.com

For any player wanting a table of his or her own, or some tips from the best Air Hockey players around, Goldstandardairhockey.com is a great site to visit. The tables sold here are the best on the market, and have all been designed for competitive play by two-time Air Hockey World Champion Mark Robbins. The site also contains a news feed and blog section, giving excellent information about upcoming events and matches.

Air Hockey Videos

There are a multitude of videos on the Internet which can be viewed for training and instruction. If you have access to a computer at your location, it is encouraged to play some video of the best players in the world as part of warm-ups on a few nights.

<http://vimeo.com/airhockey/videos>

<http://protablesports.com/>

Getting Rated

Getting a USAA rating is fairly simple. First, register as a player on airhockeyworld.com and you will be given a default, beginner-level rating. To improve this rating, you can either play in a sanctioned major tournament or challenge another USAA rated player to a sanctioned match. If you win matches in the sanctioned tournament or beat a player in a sanctioned challenge match, your rating will be adjusted accordingly. The rules and mechanics of challenging a player to a match can be found on airhockeyworld.com.

Getting World Ranked

Everyone can obtain a USAA World Ranking. Currently, the World Championships is open to anyone. Your World ranking is the position where you finished in the last USAA sanctioned World Championship. That position can shift, based on a second way people can obtain rankings - via Challenge Matches. You can challenge a World Ranked player to a match. If you win, you take their rank and everyone below them moves down one spot. Players who are ranked only need to accept 1 challenge per month - being required to play the highest ranked challenger. More details on the procedures are available on Airhockey.com

League Nights

Warming Up

Every League Night begins with stretching and warm-ups. Proper warm-up is critical to developing a sense of purpose and patience. Spend the first 10 minutes doing a routine of both arm and leg stretches. For Air Hockey, there are several excellent arm and back stretches that loosen them up for the type movements inherent in this table sport. These are pictured below:



Spend the next 15-20 minutes running practice patterns on your Air Hockey table(s). Practice patterns are similar to boxing drills in that they are repetitive motions that the player uses to develop their muscle memory and in the case of Air Hockey, to develop the most critical beginning skill - Puck Control. Puck Control is simply the ability to make the puck do what you want it to do. Without this skill, nothing else really matters. So, spend a good deal of effort teaching this and instructing the players in its development.

There are 4 practice patterns to use. You can view them on the following videos and also show them to the players for instruction.

Across the Table: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jdwGZSrMc&feature=youtu.be>

Speed Bag: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbmohScosDI&feature=youtu.be>

Circle drift: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgMLFmxvcPg&feature=youtu.be>

Tap tap: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7kdHeRLSNY&feature=youtu.be>

All of these videos are on the Airhockey7 Youtube channel, so you can go directly there and look for the titles if you prefer.

The last 15-20 minutes of warm-up should be spent letting the players engage in random scrimmage games against each other. Encourage them to try new shots and drifts. For information on the basic shots and drifts, please refer to the Air Hockey Glossary page in this packet.

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Competitive Play

The second part of every League Night consists of recorded matches between players. After printing out tournament charts using resources at <http://www.printyourbrackets.com/>, post the sheets so all players can see them. However many Air Hockey tables you have will determine how many matches you can run at one time. Each match must have a referee. The top seeded players will be the first referees. Then, after this, the loser for each match will referee the next match. The referee is responsible for calling out the score correctly after each goal, as well as making the calls for fouls. The referee stands next to the table in the middle (but not too close to be distracting) and holds the scores out on their hands for all to see.

When matches are taking place, encourage the other players to watch respectfully. Clapping after goals is accepted, as is rooting for your favorite player, but discourage any unsportsmanlike behavior or taunting. After each match is over, encourage the players to shake hands and show proper etiquette whether they won or lost. Beyond learning the skill of this table sport, we want to teach the players how to compete with honor and respect.

When you reach the Finale Tournament portion of the league, you can save a little time by eliminating scrimmage games from your League Night warm-up. Promote the Finale Tournament at your location, inviting friends and guests to come watch. Also, promote the night of the finals and encourage all league players to attend and watch the finals, clapping when the League Champion scores the final goal. One way to encourage players to attend even after their competitive matches are over is to have prizes and/or certificates, and let the players know everyone must see the league through to the end in to receive their prize.

Awards/Banquet

It is a good idea to have a final ceremony where awards are presented to the players. We suggest certificates for each player and a trophy for the winner and runner-up. Come up with some other awards too - Most Improved, Most Unique, Coolest Nickname, etc. Make it fun and give the players plenty of positive reinforcement for being part of the league. Ask friends and guests to attend, and if you charged a fee to play, perhaps use the money for some food/drinks, or take everyone out to a local restaurant.



Air Hockey: Basic Rules of Play

SCORING

- First player to score 7 points wins the game.
- A point is scored when the puck enters and falls into the goal.
- After a point is scored, the player scored upon receives possession of the puck for the next serve.

CENTERLINE

- If any part of the puck is on the centerline, either player may hit it. If the puck is completely within one player's half of the table, not touching the centerline, the opposing player may **not** hit it. Violation of this rule constitutes a **foul** (forfeiture of possession of the puck).
- It is a foul if a player's mallet **completely** crosses over the centerline.

PUCK OFF THE TABLE

- When a player offensively strikes the puck and causes it to leave the playing surface, that player is guilty of a **foul**.
- If, however, a puck leaves the table while a defensive player is **blocking** a shot, by moving his mallet sideways, backwards, or not at all, the offensive player is guilty of a foul and the defensive player is awarded possession of the puck.
- If the defensive player charges **forward** to block a shot, and the puck leaves the table, the defensive player commits a foul and loses possession of the puck.

LOSS OF MALLET

- It is a foul for a player to lose total control of his mallet.

TOPPING

- It is a foul for a player to “top” the puck by lifting his mallet and placing it on top of the puck.

PALMING

- It is a foul when a player's hand, body or clothing touches the puck while the puck is on the table and in play.

GOALTENDING

- If a player's hand, body or clothing blocks or deflects the puck while the puck is on a direct path toward that player's goal, “goaltending” must be called. Goaltending constitutes a **technical foul** which allows the opponent a **free shot** at the penalized player's unprotected goal.

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7 SECOND RULE

- A player has 7 seconds to execute a shot that crosses the centerline. The 7 seconds begins when the puck enters and remains on that player's side of the centerline. Violation of this rule is a foul.

FOULS

- If a player commits a foul and is scored on in the course of the same play, the goal counts and the penalty is nullified.
- If a foul occurs and the innocent player immediately gains possession of the puck anyway, the referee should allow play to continue and not interrupt the game.

MALLETS/PUCKS

- Mallets and pucks must meet standards of the U.S. Air Hockey Association (USAA).

TOURNAMENT/CHALLENGE MATCH PLAY

- Tournament play shall begin with a face-off. The winner of the face-off is the first player to gain possession, or the player who scores off the face-off. The player who loses the face-off receives possession of the puck to begin the 2nd game of the match, and first possession alternates each subsequent game of the match. Players also switch sides after each game.

REFEREE

- Each game in tournament or challenge match play should be judged by a referee.

FACE-OFF

- In addition to beginning a match, a face-off should be used when the referee can't determine who committed the foul. The puck is placed flat at the center of the table, with players' mallets allowed no closer than 1 inch from the puck. On Gold Standard tables, the players' mallets must remain completely outside the center circle. When the referee releases the puck, both players may hit it.

PENALTIES

- Player committing a FOUL is penalized by loss of possession of the puck.
- A TECHNICAL FOUL allows the penalized player's opponent one free shot at the player's unprotected goal. If the free shot misses, the puck is immediately in play.

Weissman Air Hockey Skills Assessment

The Air Hockey Skills Assessment is a general measure for the overall level of ability in the sport. It is divided up in to 2 main categories: Offense and Defense. Each category is broken down in to sub-categories, where the player is given a numeric value between 1-10 for a given skill/ability. Each section has a general description, along with suggestions for values based on observed abilities.

The purpose of this measure is to provide a more objective way to assess the skill level of players so that tournament organizers can more accurately seed events and determine entry fees and/or promote local tournaments. It is also intended as an educational tool for students of the game to further develop our understanding of the sport.

As a general rule of thumb, a 10 point difference in score equates to a 1 point handicap. So, if a player with skill of 55 is competing in a handicapped event against a player with skill of 45, then the more skilled player will give a free point every game to the less skilled player. If a 55 plays a 25, then he/she must give 3 points per game as the handicap.

Offense:

It is the common wisdom of the students of the sport that in Air Hockey offense is more important than defense. Players can win a great deal based purely on their offense. However, only the best of the best have both offense and defense. Because offense is typically more critical than defense, it is weighted more heavily in the Air Hockey Skills Assessment.

SHOTS/SHOT SPEED

The nature and variety of shots possessed by a player are a critical component to his/her success in Air Hockey. Basic shots are simply straights and banks. Advanced shots are considered either the backhand and forehand versions of cut and cross straights, as well as over and under-the-mallet banks. Some players even demonstrate the ability to consistently execute what are unconventional shots – such as a scoop or blade. For the purposes of this measure, shot speed can differentiate shots. Typically, there are only two shot speed categories – fast and medium speed. A player that has both a fast cut and a medium cut is considered to have two different shots.

Score: 1 (No repeatable shots)
 2-4 (One-two repeatable basic shots – typically a straight and/or bank)
 5-7 (Three-four repeatable basic shots – or at least 2 advanced level shots)
 8-10 (Over four repeatable advanced level shots, at the higher end both forehand and backhand)

PUCK CONTROL

From Puck Control comes all things. This is a critical component to the early progression of skill in Air Hockey. Puck Control is simply the ability to make the puck do what you want.

- Score: 1 (Shows no tendency or ability to stop the puck, and typically strikes at the puck whenever it is near his/her mallet)
- 2-4 (Shows the ability to stop most slowly moving pucks but is not able to accurately hit transition shots and gives up many possessions to unsuccessful attempts to catch the puck)
- 5-7 (Shows the ability to catch and stop pucks consistently, from most areas of the table, though they still make mistakes when trying to stop a transition or fast moving puck. Higher level shows ability to perform effective transitions, though may have trouble regaining control in the midst of a fast exchange)
- 8-10 (Shows advanced ability to consistently stop and catch pucks from any position on the table, even when in mid-transition and off very fast shots. At higher levels the player almost never commits an unforced loss of puck error due to loss of control.)

DRIFTS/ATTACKS

In Air Hockey offense the use of a drift and attack significantly increases one's potency. A drift is a controlled movement of the puck along invisible lines which are repeated and typically varied at the higher levels. The attack is executed off these drifts and is at the most basic level a counterbalance of at least two shots played off of one another (ex. Right-to-center drift followed by a straight or a bank). At the highest levels of Air Hockey, a player will vary the speed, direction and angle of their drifts, as well as which shots they execute.

- Score: 1 (Player does not drift the puck before executing shots)
- 2-4 (Player uses a basic drift before executing shots OR player has at least two shots they execute consistently which are played off one another)
- 5-7 (Player consistently uses at least two different drifts and executes at least two shots off each of these which play well off one another)
- 8-10 (Player demonstrates multiple consistent drifts with the ability to execute at least 3 different advanced shots off of them. At the highest levels, the player can consistently execute as many as six different shots off one drift)

DECEPTIONS

Deceptions on offense include hitting complementary shots from the same setup, time delays, pump fakes and various change-ups in speed and shot setup. Frequently, players talk about “keeping it fresh.” This category assesses the player’s ability to keep it fresh.

Score: 1 (Player does not demonstrate any ability to use deceptions)

2-4 (Player uses at least 1 type of deception, albeit basic. At the upper end this deception is successful in obtaining scores)

5-7 (Player uses at least 2 forms of deception, or they have developed at least 1 deception to a more advanced level, showing intent to vary this deception)

8-10 (Player consistently uses at least 2 types of deceptions at advanced levels, varying them with intent and success)

Defense:

Defense in Air Hockey is a supreme test of reflexes, body control and perception. To be great, a player needs strong body fundamentals and the ability to hold oneself in position without being frozen. Though offense is generally considered more important in Air Hockey, at the highest levels, a player must have BOTH offense and defense to win World Championships.

BODY FUNDAMENTALS

Without basic fundamentals of form, a player limits their ability to defend and react. Proper defense body fundamentals for a right-handed player include right leg forward, shoulders squared with short side of the table, upper body neither hunched forward over the goal or leaned back behind, right arm holding the mallet about 10-15 inches in front of the goal and centered, left hand planted on the rail to the left of the goal, and standing on the balls of both feet.

Score:

1 (Player does not show the basics of form. Player makes at least 2 gross errors in form. Examples include, but are not limited to, improper positioning of legs, not on ball of at least their back foot, off-hand not resting on rail, mallet positioned back on goal face)

2-4 (Player makes at least 1 gross error in form, at the higher end, this error is transient)

5-7 (Player shows good form. However, they make transient errors in form, typically in the midst of action after which they do not return to proper form in a timely manner)

8-10 (Player demonstrates excellent form, at the upper end they demonstrate controlled form during almost all of their play and quickly return to proper form during and after intense action)

ANTICIPATORY REFLEXES

Control over anticipatory reflex is critical in a sport requiring extreme hand/eye coordination. In many ways, defense is simply a test of reflex. The quicker a person can send a signal to their arm to pull to a specific place on the table, then pull to that spot, the more successful they will be at defending. However, the signal must go to the brain at the right moment, based on perception of one's opponent and the puck. Pull too soon and you leave huge holes. Pull too late and you are essentially frozen.

Score:

1 (Player has very slow reflexes on defense. The player demonstrates no ability to snag pucks in transition.)

2-4 (Player reacts too slow most of the time, but demonstrates an ability to anticipate some basic shots. They simply get to the blocking position too slow. Players at this level also may show poor and frequent charging used to overcompensate for slow reflexes. They may deflect some pucks in transition.)

5-7 (Player can successfully anticipate basic shots, but still struggles with anticipating advanced shots. Some players at this level can anticipate advanced shots but tend to show "jumpiness" and react too soon. Players at this level may charge too frequently to overcompensate for difficulty blocking advanced shots. They likely can snag some pucks in transition.)

8-10 (Player demonstrates an ability to anticipate advanced shots and can pull to block with great success. Basic shots are very ineffective against them. At the upper end, sophisticated setups and attacks are needed to score on them. Charges are used infrequently and at the upper end primarily for strategic purposes. Transitions are strong and they frequently snag pucks moving around the table.)

READ BLOCKING

With strong perceptive ability over the totality of the table, puck and opponent, one is able to “read” what shot is imminent. The player in essence learns what the opponent is doing, and adjusts accordingly. In doing so, a player doesn’t need reflexes to be as lightning fast because the player simply knows where to block. Read Blocking and Anticipatory Reflexes are definitely connected, but the key difference is that Read Blocking comes from being able to adjust over the course of a game/match.

Score:

1 (Player demonstrates almost no ability to adjust. Typically, an opponent can score the same shot over and over and this player makes no attempt to adjust and read what the opponent is doing.)

2-4 (The player does not naturally read his/her opponent and will be scored upon with many basic shots. However, the player will show glimmers of "reading" the opponent when the same shot is used over and over from the same setup. At lower levels, the player is quite susceptible to basic deceptions and will lose their "read" frequently.)

5-7 (Player shows the ability to routinely read basic shots, can read some advanced shots, and will adjust to overused shots/setups. At the upper level, the player is not very susceptible to basic deceptions such as exaggerated cut shots.)

8-10 (Player routinely reads basic shots and advanced shots, adjusting to shots and attacks from the opponent over the course of a match. At the higher level, the player will effectively adjust within a single game.)

Terminology

Air Hockey	A competitive table game in which players strike a floating puck with mallets and attempt to send it in to their opponent's goal. The winner is the first player to score 7 points.
Bank shot	A specific type of shot in Air Hockey in which the player bounces the puck off at least one rail before it heads towards his opponent's goal.
Block	When a defensive player prevents an incoming puck from entering his goal by positioning his mallet in front of it.
Centerline	The horizontal line that divides the top of an Air Hockey table into two equal halves. Players may only strike a puck which is either on their side of the table or touching the centerline.
Challenge Match	A competitive match where one player challenges another for their ranking and/or for rating points.
Charge	A defensive maneuver in which a player lunges forward at an incoming puck and deflects it back at the opponent.
Chase shot	A type of shot in which a player moves out and re-directs a moving puck which has just rebounded off one of their own back rails.
Cross-straight	This is a specific type of straight shot in which the puck crosses over from one side of the table to the opposite side of an opponent's goal.
Cut shot	A type of shot (typically a straight shot) in which the perceived motion of mallet and the direction the puck is hit are opposite. This involves "slicing" the edge of the puck with the mallet.
Drift	A controlled movement of a puck, typically on a player's side of the table, which serves as a set-up before an executed shot or attack. Very common and popular drifts are the Circle drift and the Right-to-Center drift.
In-Play/Out-of-Play	A game state which is asserted by the referee. During time-outs or penalties, the game is Out-of-play until the referee asserts otherwise.
Interference Defense	An aggressive maneuvering on defense in an attempt to deflect a moving puck or distract the opponent in order to obtain possession or score.
Face-off	A condition in which the referee places the puck in the middle of the centerline, and upon releasing it, both players attempt to gain possession or score at the same time.
Goal	One of the two gaps on either end of the table which the puck enters for a score. It can also refer to a player scoring - as in "making a goal."
Goal blocker	A training device that is used to cover part, or all, of one goal. A player can use this to practice shots without the delay of the puck entering the opposing goal.
Goal tending	A technical foul in which a player stops a puck from entering their goal with something other than their mallet (ex. hand, shirt, etc)
Lexan	The plastic material used to make pucks.
Mallet	The device a player uses to strike a puck. There are two main types - high-tops and low-tops. Mallets are traditionally made of soft plastic, but a variety of materials can be used as long as they conform to guidelines set forth by the USAA.
Off-goal	This refers to a strategic technique in which the player on offense directs the puck at one of the back rails instead of his opponent's goal. The puck typically returns directly back to the player on offense for another shot.
Over the line (the centerline)	A foul in which a player hits a puck which is completely on his opponent's side of the table.
Over-the-mallet	Also referred to as an "over." This is a specific type of bank shot in which the puck crosses

	in front of ("over") the opponents mallet and enters the goal on the opposite corner from the rail used. This is typically done by fooling the opponent in to thinking an under-the-mallet bank is coming, in which the opponent pulls back, only to see the puck cross in front of their mallet and in to the far corner of the goal.
Puck	The object which floats on the table and which players strike with their mallets in an attempt to score points.
Pump fake	This is a maneuver in which a player winds up as if to strike the puck but stops himself right before impact so as to deceive the opponent.
Rail (Wall)	One of the metal beams which outline the surface of the table and serve to contain the moving puck to the play area.
Release	The specific motion a player makes as the mallet strikes the puck.
Straight shot	A shot that is executed and travels across the centerline toward the opponent's goal but does not hit a side rail.
Topping	A foul in which a part of the mallet touches the top of the puck.
Triangle defense	A very common defensive strategy in which a player holds their mallet about 12-16" in front of their goal and in the center. They await their opponent's shots and pull diagonally toward the corners of their goals to block banks while holding out and mostly in the center to block straights.
Under-the-mallet	Also referred to as an "under." This is a specific type of bank shot in which the puck bounces off the rail and enters behind ("under") the opponent's mallet. This typically occurs by freezing the opponent on defense.
USAA	United States Air Hockey Association. This is the governing and rules-making organization for the sport of Air Hockey. It was founded in 1978.