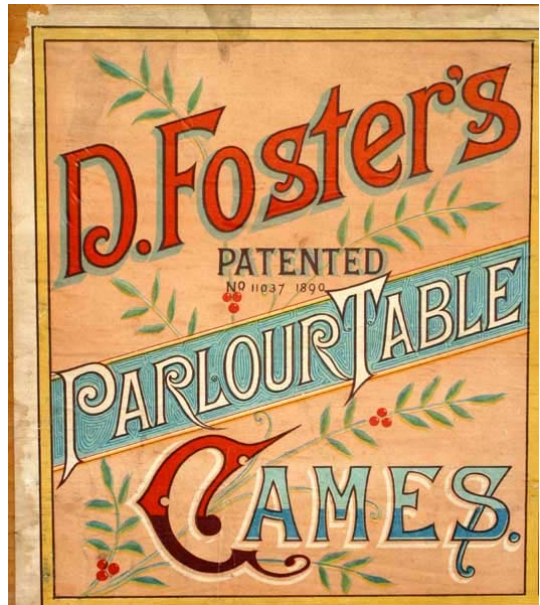


The First Table Tennis Set

Chuck Hoey, Curator ITTF Museum

Firsts are always of interest to collectors, historians and the curious alike. The first use of the name 'Table Tennis' was in the USA in 1884, for a board & dice game. The first action game of Table Tennis was patented in England in 1890 by David Foster, played with gut-strung rackets and a 30mm cloth-covered rubber ball. The only known example of this game is now on exhibit in the ITTF Museum in Switzerland. A Victorian parlour will be re-created to show the origins of our sport, replete with mannequins dressed in period costume, carpet, curtains, and a dining table.

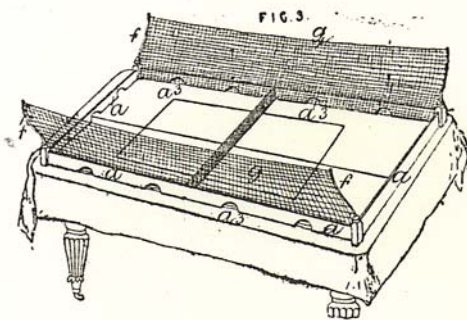


The 1890 game label - still true after 116 years!



The only known example of the 1st game of Table Tennis, made in 1890

11,037. Foster, D. July 15.



Games played with tables, balls, &c.—Relates to apparatus for imitating known games, such as lawn tennis, football, and cricket, on an ordinary table. The table is covered by a cloth marked out in any desired way, and upon this is fixed a fence *a*, having openings *a*³, as shown, at intervals therein. The frames are preferably hinged at the centre of each section for convenience in packing, and the sections are joined together by corner blocks. For lawn tennis, brass wires *f* are inserted in the corner blocks to carry nets *g*, and to posts at the centres of the two long sides is secured the central net. The game is played by two persons with small balls. For imitating football, the nets are arranged across the ends of the table behind the two model goal posts. In this case the balls are moved about by model boots fixed at the end of handles. For imitating cricket, stumps are provided at one end, and small model bats.

