

Medical students launch ping pong club to collaborate and decompress

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The School of Medicine Ping Pong Club held its first event this spring, and club leaders hope to make it a regular event. (Photo provided)

Zhihao Wu first picked up a ping pong paddle at the young age of 5. By the time he was 10, Wu was training professionally in his hometown of Heshan, China. He won many table tennis championships in his two decades of playing the popular sport.

Now a 2nd-year medical student at Tulane University School of Medicine, Wu no longer competes professionally. He hasn't put away his paddles, though. Wu and three of his classmates created the TUSOM Ping Pong Club earlier this year, sharing their passion for the game with their fellow students.

"The club provides free training sessions 5 days a week to all medical students," said Wu. "These training sessions also serve as a study break. Medical school is very difficult, so we encourage everybody to take a break after studying for a long time and exercise through ping pong. It's such a convenient sport that everyone can just pick up the paddles with their study buddies and forget about the heavy coursework for 15 minutes and stay healthy."

Along with regular training sessions at the tables in the Hutchinson and Murphy buildings, the group held its first tournament in April. The event brought together medical students of all levels. Director of Admissions, Dr. Mike Woodson, even got involved.

"It was a great success, and everybody had a great time, not just playing ping pong but also making new friends," said Wu. "What I did not expect was that this also gave us a chance to better connect the students and teachers through sport. Dr. Woodson played with us just like he was one of us."

The club gifted Woodson a paddle as a thank-you for his participation.

The TUSOM Ping Pong Club hopes to host an even bigger tournament in the fall, and they plan to invite medical students from LSU, extending the long-lasting, friendly rivalry to another sport.

The TUSOM Ping Pong Club started a Discord to share training and event schedules. [Join here.](#)



Mike Woodson, PhD, Director of Admissions (second from right), joined students for the tournament, which was held at the Reily Student Recreation Center on Tulane's uptown campus.