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T Q&A

By [MICHAEL WHITNEY](#) 

Imagine soccer miniaturized, and you have foosball. The table game, invented in Spain, involves rows of "foos-men," skewered by metal bars, that players use to move the ball around. Daniel "As Hard as I Can" Fiederlein has been an avid player since the mid '90s; his nickname is in reference to his playing style. Fiederlein, a ranked player with the United States Table Soccer Association, recently finished in the top 10 of roughly 100 players in his division for doubles play at a tournament in Las Vegas. This Saturday, July 23, at 5 p.m., a foosball tournament is scheduled at Main Street Billiards (8640 E. Broadway Blvd.), likely to attract some of the best "foosers" in Arizona.



Michael Whitney

Daniel Fiederlein

What level player are you?

I'm at the amateur level. ... There are four divisions--amateur, semi-pro, pro and then pro-master. Actually, after my last tournament, I might be up to the semi-pro bracket.

Someone ranked as an amateur would still be better than the average player, though.

Right.

The tournament coming up on June 23 is called a BYP. What does that mean?

Bring your partner. It's a double. Most tournaments we have locally are called a DYP, where we all put our \$5 in, and they draw partners randomly. But this one, you get to play with who you bring.

How many tournaments have you been in?

I've been to about five majors. They've got three (major foosball tournaments) a year: one in Vegas, one that moves around and one in Texas, the World Special, coming up pretty soon, (with) one of the biggest payouts. I've been to the Vegas one about three times now.

How big is foosball in Arizona?

It's pretty good--we get players from Phoenix who drive down for the tournaments, and they hold bring-your-partner tournaments there, and we drive up to Phoenix to play in that one. (...) For the doubles, we get roughly 10, 15 teams. For the singles, there are usually about 20 players.

What's the best place to find foosball in Tucson?

Main Street Billiards. Sometimes, you see some players at Click's (Billiards); they don't have as many tables. Click's has two; Main Street has four, so we try to hold the biggest events at Main Street. Phoenix has more places. They have tournaments four nights a week. They have beginner night; they have one for singles, one for bring your partner (and) draw your partner.

Is foosball more of a challenge of skill or of hand-eye coordination?

In the beginning, it's a lot of hand-eye coordination, but once you've played for a while, it becomes a lot more strategy. People starting out try to outrace the other player. Once you get more experience, it becomes more of a head game--there's a lot more strategy involved in it. Typically, with a shot, you'll hold the ball still and try to move it around to get to the goal. A new player will try to hit the ball and try to follow it. A more experienced player will ... use different kinds of defense and move faster. Then it becomes more about timing and trying to figure out the other player's defense.

How can someone become a ranked player?

Go (play in) a sanctioned tournament--one of the major events. Some state tournaments are also sanctioned. They give (player ranking) points by how far up you are in your bracket, and you get bonus points if you beat someone ranked higher than you.

How could someone get the chance to play with the top players?

Anybody can join in. We try to meet once a week at Main Street on Saturday nights, and if we get a large turnout, we might do a draw your partner, and with those, you might draw the best guy there and have a chance at winning. We'll also help show people how to play, stuff like that.

How money-oriented is professional foosball?

Well, it's not enough to live on, unless you're one of the best.

Is there such a thing as a foosball hustler?

Yeah, there are, but ... typically people know all the local players, so it would be harder to do. People would catch on pretty quick to how good you are. ... It's real easy to tell if someone knows how to play.

What got you into foosball?

Actually, my dad used to play in college, and he went to a sports bar kind of like this, and we started to get on the table. I used to go down to Magic Carpet (Golf), and there was a tournament flyer and--do you remember Malibu Grand Prix? They used to have weekly tournaments for new players, and that's where I learned how to play, from some of the local pros.