



Could this be the end of the wooden blade?

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The ITTF have begun a study and review of materials used in table tennis rackets.

The study could lead to the abolition of the rule specifying that at least 85% of the blade by thickness shall be of natural wood.

Other sports, such as tennis, badminton and squash, have previously made the switch to materials such as carbon fibre, plastic and metal.

A proposal was put forward at the 2017 International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) AGM by Hong Kong and South Korea to change the rule.

Although the proposal failed to gain the 75 per cent majority required for a constitutional change, a separate "resolution D" was put forward to begin research and easily got the 50 per cent majority required, with 151 votes out of 186.

The ITTF are now expected to set up a Commission or Working Group to explore a change in the rules to: "the blade shall be made of one or more layers of natural wood or other solid materials, without cavities and not compressible".

Changing the materials used to produce blades could reduce the cost of manufacturing and bring down equipment prices for players.

The ITTF's findings will be reported back at a future AGM, although no official changes can be made until after the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

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