

Basic Properties

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Ok, lets get back on a more serious note. Although there is a huge range of different long pimped rubbers, they all share some common characteristics, and all to different degrees. These characteristics are commonly referred to as 'long pimple effects', and are summarised below: 1. The small surface area of the tips of long pimples results in minimum contact between the ball and the rubber. This reduces the friction between the ball and rubber significantly, resulting in the rubber being very insensitive to incoming spin, and allowing a lot of the incoming spin to be returned back to the opponent. This is commonly referred to as 'Spin Reversal'. 2.

The pimples bend under impact with the ball, the higher the impact the more they bend. Now as the pimples bend, more of the rubber (sides of the pimples) is exposed, resulting in a greater contact surface area between the ball and the rubber, which changes the characteristics discussed in 1. In addition to this, the texture of the tip of the pimples may be different to that of the sides of the pimples, which changes the effect it has on the spin on the ball. 3.

The pimples bend back after releasing the ball. This results in some of the pimples giving the ball a bit of a 'flick', which can add some random spin to the ball. Although this effect is far more pronounced in soft, long and skippy long pimples, the effect is present for most long pimples rubbers. 4.

The long pimple rubbers are generally significantly slower than most other types of rubbers, often taking the pace off the ball. This generally improves control but diminishes attacking ability. 5.

The effects described in the 4 points above, can be significantly changed by the three main factors: -

Choice in sponge thickness. This usually ranges from 'no sponge' (commonly referred to as 'OX') to thicker sponges usually up to 1.5mm. Most 'long pimple effects' are greatest for OX, and decrease with the thicker sponges. As discussed later though, there may be good reasons to choose a thicker sponge. -The hardness of the sponges also has an effect. Most 'long pimple effects' are greatest for harder sponges, but again there can be good reasons for choosing softer sponges. -The choice of blade can make quite a difference in how the pimples perform. Since the choice is often a compromise between the different rubbers on either side of the bat, the choice of suitable blades for the required style is often much harder than for inverted players. Most 'long pimple effects' are greatest for harder blades.

Over the next few articles I will attempt to explain these 5 points in details, and explain what advantages and disadvantages these characteristics offer. Examples of rubbers where these effects are most obvious will be included.