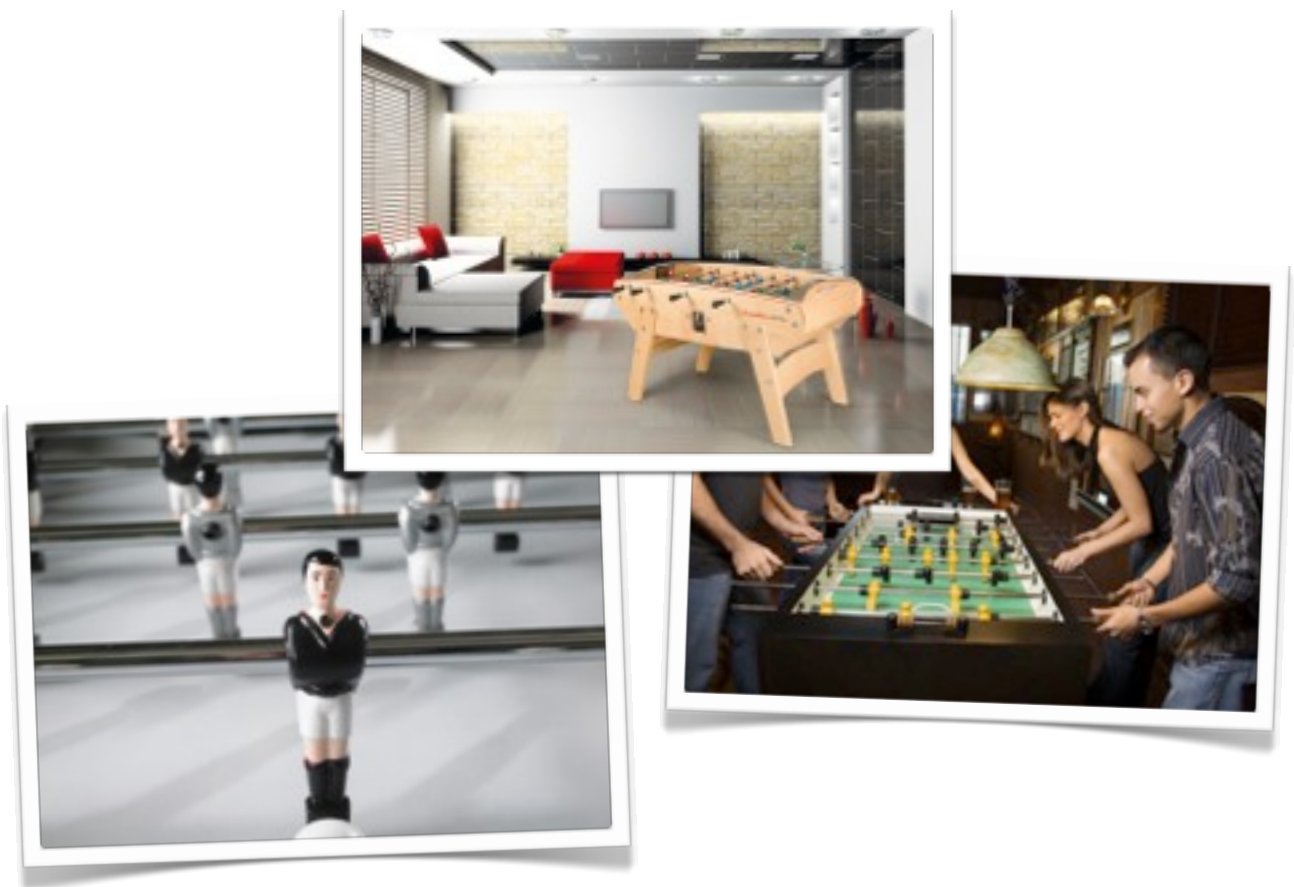


Football Table Buying Guide



A Helpful Guide from Rene Pierre

The Beautiful Game UK
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There's Nothing Like a Great Pair of Legs!



So you've decided to get yourself a table football table, which is excellent news. After all there are not many other ways these days of having fun as a family and providing hours of entertainment for the kids in a location that you know they're going to be safe.

But how do you know if you're buying a truly awesome table, or a complete nightmare? Well this guide is designed to help you make the best decision and get the best table for your budget and your requirements, so what better place to start than at the bottom with the way the table levels.

You can pay upwards of £3,000 on a football table but if it's not level, you're not going to be able to play properly and that's just a waste of money. Without having a

level playing field, the ball will roll away. You can stop this by ensuring that the table is level and this is done in a number of ways

Some tables (predominantly the [Garlando football tables](#)) have built in leg levellers that you can adjust to make sure that the play field is level. Others (such as the majority of the [Bonzini](#) range) don't have built in levellers, but this doesn't mean that you shouldn't consider buying one. In fact, we would recommend you do buy a football table without adjustable legs, and here's why...

Even entry-level football tables can weigh-in at 20kgs or more. That's quite heavy, but consider that better tables will weigh upwards of 80kgs, you don't have to be a brain surgeon to recognise that the firmer and more robust the footing, the better.

Add into the mix that foosball can be a very active game, especially when teenagers and adults are playing. It's not unusual to see the table being lifted and dropped as players start to get a little carried away with themselves!

And that's the point here. Any table with adjustable feet will have the small foot attached to the leg of the table via a thin spindle. This spindle and the foot will need to be capable of handling the moving and the dropping of the table when in play and our experience shows, there are not many that can. The breaking of the foot can be quite common, which means expense in replacing it (if you can), and inconvenience whilst you wait for the replacement.

So what's the better option?

In our opinion, it's much better to go for the traditional French style of open leg table like our [Rene Pierre tables](#). Not only are they much sturdier, and easier for four to play, they are much easier to level.

But how do you level a table without adjustable feet I hear you say...

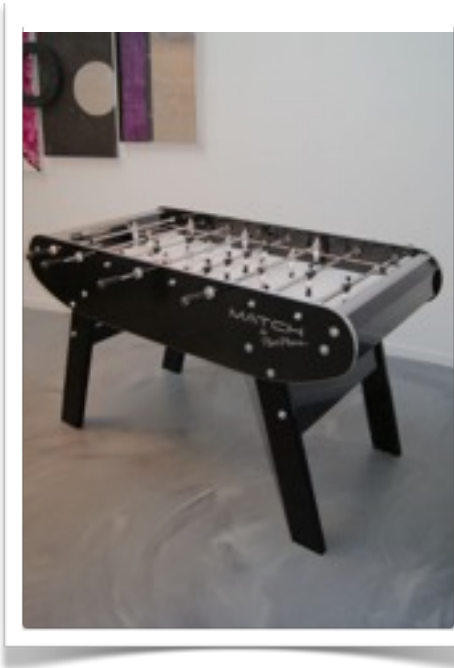
Simple, just tighten each leg to a point where it is not quite totally secure and check the table for level. If you notice one side is higher, then simply kick the leg out a little. This drops the affected side a little bit, allowing the table to level. Once you're happy, just tighten the legs up completely and off you go.

No problems with busted feet and a table that is super sturdy. Everything you want for a great game.

So by now, you should have noticed that there are effectively two designs of table...

The first is the straight leg table and used by most (if not all) American manufactured football tables, and the second is the 'splayed' leg style where the legs are not as chunky as the square leg and are positioned as you might expect a folding table

So, first things first... Both styles have to be strong enough to hold firm a cabinet that can weigh 80kgs or more. Does one design do that better than the other? Probably not, so long as the legs are firmly attached to the cabinet in a way that ensures they are not going to become unstable and at best make for a poor experience and at worst, collapse possibly causing serious injury.



Thankfully, it's fairly simple to determine this as you can generally see how the legs are attached in the images used to advertise the table.

In the image left, you can see that this Rene Pierre table features the splayed leg, but is attached by bolts to the cabinet and in our opinion make the table more of a design feature in your home, rather than simply a footie table.

For added structural rigidity, the Rene Pierre tables, feature a stretcher board between the legs to further stop any movement across the width of the table. Generally this is something that you don't normally see on square leg tables, with the exception of one or two such as the Garlando F5. Other tables such as [Rene Pierre football tables](#) feature a robust cradle that not only stops the legs moving, but helps support the weight of the cabinet

In the most part, it doesn't really make too much difference in terms of stability which style or design you choose, provided the splayed leg has the stretcher or cradle of some form. What does matter and what can affect your choice, is how you play the game and who with...

If the table is only really going to be played 1 v 1, then the straight leg table is fine. However in our experience, if you want to play four-up (2 v 2), then the splayed leg table can be much better.

This is due to the design of the legs being less hefty and having a much smaller 'footprint'. What this means, is that you're less likely to kick the leg or the foot as you're moving around the table, and if you like occupying the corner, you'll get more space for your knee.

Of course, you may prefer the style of the square leg in which case, you'll have to contend with potential knocks, and as we outlined above, the fact that a straight-leg table may not be the best table to stay level but as with all things, it's weighing up the options and going with what works best for you

Having A Great Body Can Make a Real Difference...



There is rarely nothing that draws the eye more when looking at a football table, than the cabinet.

It can be square and angular or rounded with soft edges and the touch of a craftsman. Plain matte black or painted to look like a tiger. It can be hand crafted from solid hardwoods or machine formed from MDF.

But regardless of how the cabinet looks, the way it's designed and constructed

can have a huge bearing as to just how much fun (or not) you get from the football table as a whole.

The cabinet is one of the most important aspects of buying a football table. It determines how the table looks, so you can decide if you want a modern design, a more traditional design, or even a full custom design. But it also determines how the table will play, which can mean the difference between having years and years of fun, or getting bored with it after just a few days.

So let's start with probably the most important issue, that of playability...

In simple terms, there are effectively two designs for any football table cabinet, being the square sided, rectangular cabinet seen in the majority of American manufactured tables (Dynamo and Tornado etc...), plus some [Garlando tables](#), and

the 'tub' style employed by the majority of French manufacturers such as [Rene Pierre](#) or [Bonzini](#)

As the play area for a football table has to be rectangular, the shape only has an effect in terms of where and how you prefer to stand to play the game. Now in simple 1 v 1 game play, this may not be too much of an issue as you will, most likely, be positioned in the centre of the table. But if you're going to be playing four-up (2 v 2), then one person is likely to be positioned 'around' one corner of the table looking after the defence and goalie

On some square cabinet tables, this can mean that you're going to be fighting with the table leg to get your foot and your leg in a comfortable position, and you may find that you have to lean over to the right to get to the handles and bars.

A tub styled table such as a [Rene Pierre Foot](#) on the other hand, has a sloped bottom with legs that are situated just inside the outer edge of the cabinet, allowing you to position one foot and leg on one side of the table leg, and one the other. The handles and bars are also located closer to your position, making for a much more natural and comfortable playing position

So, in terms of comfort and when playing with multiple people, it may be worth considering the Bonzini. But comfort is not the only thing to consider. Let's take a look at how the cabinet can effect the speed of the game...

As you should expect, lower priced football tables feature cabinets anywhere from 15mm to 20mm in thickness, and usually constructed from MDF. Higher end tables will typically be manufactured with at least 20mm, but generally 25mm or thicker. But why?

In simple terms, a thicker cabinet has more mass and therefore is more dense, which provides a better, stronger and more precise rebound, which in turn can make the game a bit faster. A thicker cabinet should also last longer, giving a much better return on value for money

A faster table is generally considered to be much more fun and indeed for adults and older children, it most definitely can be. However for younger children and their friends, a big, heavy cabinet is not going to provide the type of fun they're looking for, so a lighter, slower cabinet may well work better for them.

In summary, the design of the cabinet is more than simple aesthetics, although ensuring a football table with zebra graphics will work in your house, is going to be a major point of discussion!

Think of who, and how many will be playing on the table and determine if you want a faster, more accurate playing experience before deciding which table to go for.

The Play Field...

It's strange to think that probably the most important part of a football table is generally the least important in terms of deciding on which table to buy.

After-all, it's the main component that will be in play, yet the vast majority of us are very unlikely to know that there are many different types of play field available, and whether one will be a better experience than another

So in this part of our 'How to Find the Perfect Football Table' guide, we'll take a look at the shapes and the materials used in the production of modern table football play areas and just how each can make a difference to how you enjoy (or not) playing on your table.

Let's start with the shape of the play field. Now this may sound strange, after-all aren't all play fields flat?

Actually no they're not. The US derived football tables usually are, but the vast majority of European football tables have sloped or raised corners which allows the ball to roll back into the middle of the play field. Now those more observant may well be thinking "OK, but what happens on a flat play field?"

Well, as with most things American, they like to 'change things around a bit' and so these tables use 3 goalies. Now in our experience, not only does this mean you play with 13 players which is of course wrong, but it can still leave balls marooned in the corner, so we would always recommend going for raised corners as you will find on all Rene Pierre, Garlando and Bonzini foosball tables

OK, so now we have a better understanding of how the shape of the play field effects potential enjoyment of your game, let's take a look at what the surface is made of and how that can make a difference to how you play...

Most entry level football tables have a laminate play field. These provide a long life, but not really much control, but as such are great if you simply want to have as much fun as possible without spending a fortune

Higher end tables tend to use tempered glass play fields that have been finely sanded to allow good speed, but also control. As they are quicker than laminate play fields, they are normally preferred by semi-pro and advanced players

Rene Pierre tables on the other hand, use linoleum for their play fields. Lino gives more 'grip' and allows players to perform advanced tricks and moves that simply can't be played on other tables, however it also makes for a very good surface for any level of player

As with most things in life, it's very much a case of personal choice, but essentially if you just want great fun, go for a laminate play field. If you're an accomplished player, then look at a glass play field or try a [Competition by Rene Pierre](#). If you want the very highest level of play, but you're not a pro-level player yet, consider a [Mondial](#) by Rene Pierre. It's not as highly priced as Bonzini tables, but offers a similar experience at a more realistic price

It's Called Bar Football For a Reason...

They're the things you grab hold of and spin, but you've probably never really thought about just how key the rods (or bars) on a football table can be...

In this part of our guide, we'll take a look at the two types of rods commonly found on modern football tables, plus the different handle options and discuss the things you need to know to make your decision the best decision.

So let's kick off with the rods and we'll start with the most common type of rod, that being the solid or push through rod.

Solid rods are the full length required to push the players on that bar from one side to the other, so the midfield bars are generally shorter than the goalie bar as there are more men in midfield and they have to move less to cover the full width of the table.

There are two issues here; the first that long bars that are pushed, pulled and spun hard and fast have to be able to take some hammer and solid chromed bars should

be able to stand up to this, and the second, a safety issue that pushing long, solid steel bars can potentially injure someone standing the other side

We'll discuss point two in a second, but let's consider the strength of the solid bar first...



There's no doubt that damaging a solid steel bar is going to be pretty hard, so the long term durability is going to be very good as you would expect, which is why they are used so often. However although they are strong, they do bend, which means for better players this can be a problem, especially when using your palm to play power shots as it can lift the bar in the

middle. Which leads us on to the solution for this and the safety issue described above

Higher spec tables now use telescopic rods which are quite obviously much better in terms of safety, but also for better players. Now this may seem strange, but if you think about it, the rod is fastened at the far end, which isn't the case with the solid rod. This means the bar is shorter and is harder to flex, making the more advanced shots easier to pull-off.

The higher-end Rene Pierre table football tables, now feature a unique finish that keeps the bars slick and fast, without the continual chore of having to lubricate them as with most other tables, and tables with solid bars making Rene Pierre tables possibly the best playing and user-friendly.

So if you have young children, or you're looking for a higher spec table, look at telescopic rods as your preferred choice.

OK, so we're sorted on the rods, but let's have a look at the handles....

In a lot of tables, you're stuck with what comes with the tables, but in higher spec tables such as [Rene Pierre](#), you can choose from as many as four different styles to ensure you get to play the type of game you want.

Most times, this will be the standard long (or American) handle. This is fairly easy to grip and for most casual players, it is simple and natural way to play. However many European and French tables in particular feature shorter and rounder handles.

The round handles are ideal for rolling the bars in your palm and allow fast interchange between the bars because you don't have to grab hold of anything and of course as they are shorter, there's less chance of hitting your hand as you go from one to the other

So, in wrapping up this part of our guide, think about who's going to be playing on the table. If it's youngsters, or it's in a public place, it will likely be better to opt for telescopic rods. Similarly, if all you want is sensibly priced, good time fun, then just go for the standard handles.

It Takes Balls For a Great Game of Foosball...

Balls are balls. They're round and they're designed to be hit hard into the goal, right?

Whoa... Hold on there if you think that's all the balls are in a foosball or table football table. There is a wide range of ball types on the market, all of which have a different style of play and quality

In many cases, the standard balls that come with the table are the only ones you'll ever use, but they may not provide the best experience due to being a light ball with a hexagonal pattern. Although they may look like miniature versions of the real thing, the lines cause the balls to continue rolling as if the table is out of level.

But that's the great thing - you don't have to have the standard balls, as you can always get better, upgraded balls that will make playing on the table much more fun and entertaining

So what's the options?

Most quality tables will come with balls that are designed for that particular table. For example the Bonzini and Rene Pierre tables come with cork balls that allow a much better grip on the play field, improving ball control and allowing a greater level of finesse in play.

Garlando on the other hand, generally provide good quality smooth balls that are fine for standard play, but once you start developing your skills as a foosball player, you may want to upgrade to the ITSF versions which again give a better grip and feel and are more precise.

And Finally, The Players...



So we've been through all the key elements of any good football table but for one - the players.

Without players, it would be pretty difficult to enjoy a great game of foosball right? After all, how would you ever get to shoot on goal? But as we've discovered throughout this guide, things are not always as simple as they might at first appear, and such is the case with the players.

Let's get one thing straight right at the beginning. If you're interested in a table and the players are not already fixed to the bars, then take this as a warning from experience that you will end up pulling your hair out if you end up trying to put them together. Most premium brand football tables such as Rene Pierre and Bonzini will already have the players attached to the bars, which saves about five hours of messing around.

Next, it's important to know that there's generally two types of players; plastic and metal. Now plastic are fine for junior players. They keep everything light and the power is a little restricted, so no issues about balls flying off tables and taking out your prize ornament. But, for more serious fun and for adult players, plastic really doesn't cut the mustard.

Solid metal players on the other hand, not only play better, but they look an awful lot better too. Most French tables such as Rene Pierre and Bonzini feature hand painted metal players for that extra-special touch and attention to detail.

In playing foosball, it's natural that the players will take a fair bashing - it's what they're there for, but metal players will take it a lot better than plastic players which can crack depending on the force used and how the table is used generally.

The metal players also allow for much, much more control. If you decide you want to improve your foosball play, doing so with metal players will help no end and you'll soon be passing and power shooting like a pro in no time.

Summary...

If you're looking for a high quality, low cost table that's great for juniors, consider the Rene Pierre Bistrot, or the Garlando F5

If you're looking for a high quality table that's going to be used by teenagers and adults and possibly in groups of four, then we'd go for a Rene Pierre or Bonzini due to the leg design that makes the table much more stable and easier to play 2 vs. 2 and of course the better playing characteristics of the French style tables

And finally if you want something really special, then it has to be any of the Bonzini, or a Black (or white) Match or solid beechwood Competition from Rene Pierre.

Take a look below to find out more about us, how to contact us and some of the tables we most like...



Our Favourite Tables...



Rene Pierre Black Match



Rene Pierre Competition - Solid Beechwood



Bonzini B90 Tiger



Bonzini B90 Zebra



Rene Pierre Stade



Rene Pierre Bistrot



Garlando Olympic Coin op



Rene Pierre White Match



Garlando F5