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## PingPod bringing high-tech ping-pong 'pods' to Chicago



A couple of players playing ping-pong at one of PingPod's locations in New York City.  
Jordan Rathkopf

By [Alex Zorn](#) - Staff Reporter

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Chicago is getting a new form of nightlife entertainment by way of a classic racket sport.

[New York City-based startup PingPod](#) is bringing its tech-enabled autonomous table tennis "pods" to Chicago. Set for a grand opening on Saturday, PingPod will open its ping-pong concept at 676 N. LaSalle St. in River North.

The company said PingPod Chicago has four ping-pong tables in a 2,000 square-foot street-level space. The pods are open 24/7 with customers renting tables in 30-minute increments through an app.

PingPod launched in 2020 and has 15 locations across New York City, New Jersey, Boston, Philadelphia, the United Kingdom and soon-to-be Chicago.

"We look for bustling neighborhoods that have a mix of residential and commercial units," co-founder [David Silberman](#) told Chicago Inno. "As a baseline we're looking for vibrant neighborhoods that are safe and have high population density. The more foot traffic and car traffic, the better."

While the concept launched before Covid, Silberman thinks the pandemic may have actually helped the business find its footing. Last year the entertainment startup closed a \$10 million Series A funding round, and over the last three years, PingPod locations have logged more than 175,000 hours of play.

"I think we are leveraging the decades-long evolution of the experiential economy," he said. "Even before Covid, we saw big-box retailers struggling but at the same time experiential businesses were thriving, and Covid definitely accelerated that trend and turbocharged our business."

Silberman sees Chicago as a second New York City for the entertainment startup, where there are already nine locations.

"We think that Chicago has that sort of potential, where we think we can become a multi-unit franchise," he said. "We may look to St. Louis or surrounding states like Wisconsin or Ohio, but we would be first and foremost seeking a build-out in Chicago."

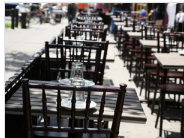
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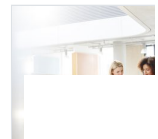
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