



PICKLEBALL LEAGUE RULES Updated: 03/2024

I. Philosophy

This league is hosted by Kirkwood Parks and Recreation Department (KRD) as a recreational and competitive activity. We hope that all teams will follow our philosophy of friendly competition in a recreational setting. You can be competitive and courteous at the same time. Respect your opponents. With this philosophy in mind, the following rules will apply.

II. League Guidelines

- A) This league is played as non-gender specific and is based on self-rated skill level of both players. This league will be played in doubles format. For example: two men may play two women of same skill set/level **OR** one woman and one man can play two men/women of the same skill set/level.
- B) All players must be 18 years of age and older to participate and out of high school.
- C) A team consists of two players. Teams can use a substitute for a player (must be the similar skill level) to fill in if one of the main two players is absent. If both main players are absent the matches will be declared forfeits.
 - 1. Players can only play on ONE team roster for league and tournament.
- D) KRD Pickleball League will provide game balls. Pickleballs are expected to be returned at the end of play. Players are responsible for their own paddles.
- E) Teams will be scheduled best of 3 games per match. Time limit is 45 minutes. All three games will be played to 11 points, win by 2. As long as time permits, **PLAY ALL 3 GAMES**. If time expires, the next point will determine the winner.
- F) A player at the end of each match, should record their score, using the KRD Pickleball League scorecards. The scorecards will be located next to the courts, and should be left there for the tennis attendants to collect.
- G) Standings will be on the basis of:
 - 1. OVERALL match Win/Loss
 - 2. Tie-Breaker #1 - Head to Head
 - 3. Tie-Breaker #2 - Overall Game Win/Loss

III. Single Elimination Tournament

- A) Tournament seeding will be decided at the end of the league.
- B) Recreation Program Manager reserves right to combine divisions.
- C) Players are not considered officially registered until **ALL team members have paid KRD**.
- D) NO referees – this is a self-refereed league.
- E) **Timeouts:** One timeout per game lasting 30 seconds each. Between each game, teams are allotted a one-minute break before start of next game.

Determining Serving Team

- F) Serve will be determined by coin toss or rock/paper/scissors. Team who loses coin toss will pick starting side of the court.

IV. Pickleball Rules

The Serve

- A) The serve must be made underhand.
- B) Paddle contact with the ball must be below the server's waist (navel level).

- C) The serve is initiated with at least one foot behind the baseline; neither foot may contact the baseline or court until after the ball is struck.
- D) The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.
- E) Only one serve attempt is allowed, except in the event of a let (the ball touches the net on the serve and lands on the proper service court; let serves are replayed).

Service Sequence

- A) Both players on the serving doubles team have the opportunity to serve and score points until they commit a fault *(except for the first service sequence of each new game).
- B) The first serve of each side-out is made from the right-hand court.
- C) If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left-hand court.
- D) As the following points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until a fault is committed and the first server loses the serve.
- E) When the first server loses the serve the partner then serves from their correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game).
- F) The second server continues serving until his team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.
- G) Once the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right-hand court and both players on that team have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.
- H) At the beginning of each new game, only one partner on the serving team has the opportunity to serve before faulting, then the service passes to the receiving team.

Scoring

- A) Points are scored only by the serving team.
- B) When the serving team's score is even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10) the player who was the first server in the game for that team will be in the right-side court when serving or receiving; when odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) that player will be in the left-side court when serving or receiving.
- C) **Calling out scores-** The score should be called as three numbers. Proper sequence for calling the score is: server score, receiver score, then the server number: 1 or 2. To start a match, the score will be called as: zero – zero – two The server number (1 or 2) applies for that service turn only. Whoever is on the right side (depending on the score) when the team gets the serve back is the first server for that service turn only. The next time that the team gets the serve back, it might be the other player that is on the right and is therefore the first server for that service turn only. Beginning players often mistakenly assume that the player keeps the same server number throughout the game.

*First Server Exception: To minimize the advantage of being the first team to serve in the game, only one player, the one on the right side, gets to serve on the first service turn of the game. Since the serve goes to the other side when that player loses the serve, that player is designated as the second server. Therefore, at the start of the game, the score should be called, "0-0-2." The "2" indicates the second server and means that the serve goes to the other side when the serve is lost.

Double Bounce Rule

- A) When the ball is served, the receiving team must let it bounce before returning, and then the serving team must let it bounce before returning, thus two bounces.
- B) After the ball has bounced once in each team's court, both teams may either volley the ball (hit the ball before it bounces) or play it off a bounce (ground stroke).
- C) The double bounce rule eliminates the serve and volley advantage and extends rallies.

Non - Volley Zone

- A) The non-volley zone is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net.
- B) Volleying is prohibited within the non-volley zone. This rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone.

- C) It is a fault if, when volleying a ball, the player steps on the non-volley zone, including the line and/or when the player's momentum causes them or anything they are wearing or carrying to touch the nonvolley zone including the associated lines.
- D) It is a fault if, after volleying, a player is carried by momentum into or touches the non-volley zone even if the volleyed ball is declared dead before this happens.
- E) A player may legally be in the non-volley zone any time other than when volleying a ball.
- F) The non-volley zone is commonly referred to as "the kitchen."

Line calls

- A) A ball contacting any line, except the non-volley zone line on a serve, is considered "in."
- B) A serve contacting the non-volley zone line is short and a fault.

Faults

- A) A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.
- B) A fault by the receiving team results in a point for the serving team.
- C) A fault by the serving team results in the server's loss of serve or side out.
- D) A fault occurs when:**
 1. A serve does not land within the confines of the receiving court.
 2. The ball is hit into the net on the serve or any return.
 3. The ball is volleyed before a bounce has occurred on each side.
 4. The ball is hit out of bounds.
 5. A ball is volleyed from the non-volley zone.
 6. A ball bounces twice before being struck by the receiver.
 7. A player, player's clothing, or any part of a player's paddle touches the net or the net post when the ball is in play.
 8. There is a violation of a service rule.
 9. A ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying.
 10. A ball in play strikes any permanent object before bouncing on the court.

The Kirkwood Parks and Recreation and its staff will not be responsible for any injuries or accidents incurred by the players or spectators due to participation in this league. The department also reserves the right to change rules and/or schedules at any time.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

Kirkwood Community Center - 314-822-5855

Program Coordinator - 314-984-6966