



## Adult Pickleball Rules

### Basic Rules/Terms:

- The game is played either as doubles (two players per team) or singles (one v one).
  - Fault: Rules violation that results in a dead ball and/or end of the rally.
  - Rally: Continuous play that occurs after the serve and before a fault.
  - Volley: During a rally, a strike of the ball out of the air before the ball has bounced.

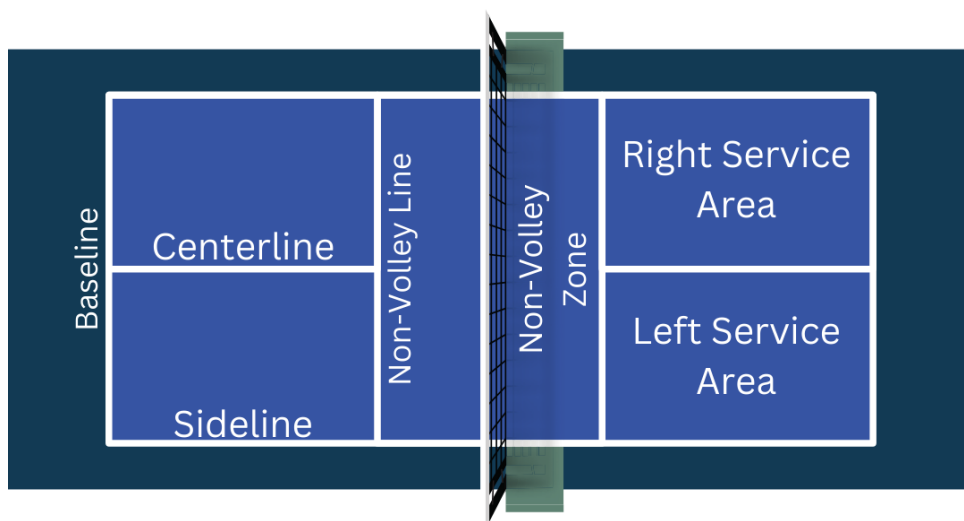
### Scoring & Service Sequences

- Official USA Pickleball Scoring
  - Points are scored only by the serving team - Games to 11 (win by 2)
    - Can also be played to 15 or 21 (win by 2)
  - Games to 11, teams will switch court sides at 6 pts, in fair of disadvantages such as wind or sun.
    - Games to 15, switch at 8pts.
  - Scoring in pickleball is structured as follows:
    - The score is called out as three digits: X-Y-1 or X-Y-2.
      - The first digit (X) represents the serving team's score.
      - The second digit (Y) represents the receiving team's score.
      - The third digit (1 or 2) indicates which player on the serving team is serving.
    - Here's how it works:
      - The serving team's score is called out first, followed by the receiving team's score.
      - For instance, if the serving team has a score of 0 and the receiving team has a score of 2, it would be called out as "0-2-1" or "0-2-2".
      - The digit 1 or 2 indicates whether the first or second server on the current serving team is serving. After server 1 loses the rally to the opponent, the serve switches to server 2 on the same team. Once server 2 loses their rally, the serve goes to the other team.
- Rally Scoring (Used only if league specified)
  - A point can be earned after every rally, whether it was won by the serving or receiving team!
    - "Rally scoring in pickleball benefits fans by providing faster-paced games, increased intensity, easier-to-follow scoring, and enhanced suspense, making the sport more enjoyable and engaging for spectators." (MLP)



Each partner on a team selects their starting position on the left or right side of the court.

- The first serve of each side-out is made from the right/even court (server 1)
  - If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left/odd court.
- As subsequent points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until a fault is committed, and the first server loses the serve.
  - When server 1 loses the serve, server 2 then serves from their correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game, see first bullet point)
- Server 2 continues serving until his team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.
  - Once the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right/even court and both players on that team can serve and score points until their team commits two faults.
- In singles the server serves from the right/even court when his or her score is even and from the left/odd when the score is odd.
- When the serving team's score is even (0, 2, 4...) the player who was server 1 in the game for that team will be in the right/even court when serving or receiving; when odd (1, 3, 5...) that player will be in the left/odd court when serving or receiving.





### **The Serve:**

- The server's arm must move in an upward arc when striking the ball and contact with the ball must be made at waist level or lower, with the head of the paddle not above the highest part of the wrist.
  - A drop serve is permitted.
- The serve is started with at least one foot behind the baseline; neither foot may contact the baseline or court until after the ball is struck.
- The serve is made diagonally across the court and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.
- Only one serve attempt is allowed per server.

### **Two Bounce Rule:**

- When the ball is served, the receiver must let it bounce before returning, and then the serving team must let it bounce before returning, thus two bounces.
- 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).
- The two-bounce rule eliminates the serve and volley advantage and extends rallies.

### **Non-Volley Zone:**

- This is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net.
- Volleying is prohibited within the non-volley zone and prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone.
- When volleying a ball, it is a fault when the player steps into the non-volley zone, including the line, or when a player's momentum causes them to touch the non-volley zone including the associated lines.
  - It is a fault, after volleying, if the player is carried by momentum into or touches the non-volley zone, even if the volleyed ball is declared dead before this happens.
- A player may legally be in the non-volley zone at any time other than when volleying a ball, also referred to as the kitchen.

### **Line Calls:**

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



### **Paddle:**

- A player can only carry one paddle during a rally.
- A player must have possession of the paddle when the paddle contacts the ball.

### **Determining Service Team:**

- Any fair method can be used to determine which player or team has the first choice of side, service, or receive. (rock-paper-scissors, coin flip)

### **Faults:**

- This is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.
- A fault by the receiving team results in a point for the serving team, and a fault by the serving team results in the server's loss of serve or side out.
- Common faults include:
  - Serve not landing within the confines of the receiving court.
  - Ball being hit into the net, on a serve or any return.
  - Volleying before a bounce has occurred on each side.
  - Ball being hit out of bounds.
  - Ball being volleyed from the non-volley zone.
  - Ball bouncing twice before being struck by the receiver.
  - Player's clothing or any part of a player's paddle touching the net or the net post when the ball is in play.
  - Violation of a service rule.
  - Ball in play striking a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying.
  - Ball in play striking any permanent object before bouncing on the court.

### **Miscellaneous Rules:**

- Two-handed shots are allowed.
- If a ball floats to another court and interferes with the game, a replay will be appointed.
- Rally can continue due to injury until its conclusion, and a rally will not be stopped if a player loses or breaks a paddle or loses an item unless the action results in a fault.
- Crossing the plane of the net prior to striking the ball is a fault; after striking the ball, a player or anything they are wearing can cross the plane of the net
  - Cannot touch any part of the net system while the ball is still live.
- If the ball hits the net posts (connected wheels, arms, net cable or rope on top of the net post positioned out of bounds), it is a fault.
  - If a player contacts the net post while the ball is live, or the ball contacts the net post it will result in a dead ball, and the team that hit the ball loses the rally.



- Net: If the ball strikes the top of the net or top net cable or rope that is between the net post and the net and lands inbounds, it remains in play.
  - If the ball travels between the net and net post, it is a fault against the striking player.
    - Except on the serve, a replay will occur if the ball goes over the net and hits the center base, any part of the horizontal bar, gets caught between the net and horizontal bar, deflecting net, or a draping net on the ground.
- Shots Around the Net Post
  - A player may return the ball around the outside of the net post.
    - Ball does not need to travel back over the net.

### **Non-Officiated Play:**

- In the spirit of good sportsmanship, players are expected to call any type of fault on themselves as soon as the fault is committed or detected.
  - The call must happen before the next serve occurs.
- Players call all lines on their end of the court, including non-volley zone and service foot faults.
- Players can call non-volley zone and service foot faults on the opponent's end of the court; if there is disagreement among players about a foot fault, a replay occurs.
- If a player believes an opponent has committed any type of fault other than a service or non-volley zone foot fault, they may mention it to the opponents but cannot enforce it.
  - The final fault resolution belongs to the player tactically committed to the fault.
- No objectionable language, audible or visible gestures, arguing aggressively, equipment abuse, unnecessary time-killing between rallies that would disrupt the flow of play, repeatedly appealing line calls that disrupt the flow of the game.
- Aggressive or reckless actions such as throwing a paddle in frustration or anger and destruction of equipment can result in suspensions, threats or challenges of any nature towards someone, and extremely unsportsmanlike behavior can result in a tech.
- Forfeits can occur after two technical warnings.



### **Open Play Sportsmanship Etiquette:**

- When a ball is inadvertently hit onto your court, retrieve it and toss the same ball back to them while they are looking.
- Do not cross courts behind a match until play has stopped.
- Do not play keep-away from the best player on the team during open play just to win because they want to play as well.
- If you are the weakest player on the court, thank others for letting you play; however, do not stay on the court for an indefinite period longer than needed.
- If you are asked to play with a group that is obviously of a lower skill, accept graciously and play a game or two. They will appreciate it and understand that you may want to get back to playing with the same skill level players.
- If you are the best player, tone down the competitiveness and hit the ball on a return so other players can enhance their skills.
- In recreational play, do not exploit someone's physical limitations just to win.
- If you and your partner cannot determine if the ball was in or out, or you disagree with your partner on a line call, the benefit of the doubt goes to your opponent.
- Remember to be fair, enjoy the game, and be a good sport!