

Simplified Pickleball Rules

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A complete set of rules may be obtained from the United States of America Pickleball Association on their web site (www.usapa.org). However, if you are just learning, you will find the following condensed rules much easier to follow.

Game and Match

.....In tournaments, a match will usually consist of the best 2 out of 3 games to 11. A game is finished when one player or team reaches 11 points and is leading by at least two points. If the score is tied at 10-10, then the game continues until one player or team wins by two points. Players switch sides after the first game. If a third game is needed, the players will switch sides after the first player or team gets to 6 points, and the game will then continue to its conclusion.

.....For consolation events, or when time is short, matches often consist of just one game to 15 points. The winner in this format must also be ahead by two points. In a 15 point game, players should switch sides after one team gets to 8 points, and the game will then continue to its conclusion.

Serving

Local Rule – Server must start service motion within an arms length (not including paddle) of the back wall.

- Players must announce the score prior to serving. Always call the server's score first!
- The serve must be made with an underhand stroke so that contact with the ball is made below waist level.
- **Underhand Defined:** The arm must be moving in an upward arc and the paddle head shall be below the wrist when it strikes the ball.
- Serves must travel diagonally and land between the non-volley zone and the baseline of the service court opposite of the serving player.

Each player is allowed only one serving attempt unless it is a “let” serve. A let serve occurs when the serve hits the net and still lands in the correct service court. If this occurs, the

serve is played over. Each player will continue to serve until he does not win a point.

Serving in Doubles

- **At the start of each new game** , only one player on the first serving team is allowed a service turn before giving up the ball to the opponents. Thereafter both members of each team will have a service turn before the ball is turned over to the opposing team.
- In doubles , the player on the right at the start of a service turn, will be the first person to serve for their team and will continue to serve until he or she does not win a point. Then his or her partner will serve until he or she does also does not win a point. Then it is the other team's turn to serve.
- When the serving team scores a point, the server moves to the other side of the serving team's court. The receiving team should never switch sides.
- If the serve rotation is done properly in doubles, the serving team's score will always be even when the player that started the game on the right side is on the right side and odd when that player is on the left side .

Serving in Singles

- In singles, the server will serve from the right when he has an even number of points (0, 2, 6, 10). The server should serve from the left when he has an odd number of points (1, 3, 7, 9). The receiver should adjust their position according to where the server stands.

Non-Volley Zone:

To volley a ball means to hit it in the air without letting it bounce. All volleying must be done with the player's feet behind the non-volley zone.

- If a player's momentum causes them to step on or over the non-volley line after hitting a volley they have committed a fault and lose the point.
- If a player's paddle, clothing, hat, or any part of their body touches any part of the non-volley zone while hitting a volley or because of their forward momentum after hitting the ball they lose the point!
- A player may jump across the no-volley line after hitting a volley if they don't touch any part of the non-volley zone including the lines while doing so.

Double Bounce Rule:

Local rule – The receiving team may return the serve in the air and the next shot by the serving team may also be played in the air.

Faults

The ball may only bounce once per side. After the ball is hit by a player, it must travel to the other side of the net.

Local Rule - If the ball hits one of the side walls or the back wall in the air it is deemed out.

When a player or team fails to win the rally they are said to have made a **fault**. Some, but not all of the things that cause a fault are listed below:

- Serving the ball into an incorrect area.
- Hitting the ball out of bounds.
- Volleying the ball before it has bounced once on each side.
- Hitting the ball into the net or hitting the net with your paddle or body.
- Hitting the ball while in the non-volley zone before it is allowed to bounce.
- Touching the non-volley zone with your paddle or clothes while attempting to hit a volley.
- Stepping on or over the non-volley zone line on a follow through.
- Missing the ball when you try to hit it.
- Server swings the paddle with the intent of hitting the ball but misses.

The Walls

The ball may only bounce once per side. After the ball is hit by a player, it must travel to the other side of the net.

Local Rule – AFTER bouncing once If the ball hits one of the side walls or the back wall players may then hit the ball “forward” over the net. Players may not play the ball back off any wall.