



Basic Rules of Pickleball

At an early point in teaching beginners, some basic rules of the game of Pickleball must be introduced. The basic rules of the game are simple and easy and that is what makes Pickleball fun to play. "You can get started right away." Here are the basic rules you need to know or teach to get started. More complex rules can be introduced as players progress.

Background

The game of Pickleball was developed so that all members of a family could participate so the rules were kept simple. Many of the rules are an adaptation from tennis, ping pong and badminton.

The rules of Pickleball have been published by the International Federation of Pickleball. The Federation refers to their rules as, IFP [Official Tournament Rulebook](#). These are the official rules that must be followed for a sanctioned tournament but adaptations of the rules can be used for non-sanctioned and recreational play.

There is no reason why teachers cannot make changes to accommodate a smaller space or younger players. As long as basic rules are followed, the main objective is to have fun. For teachers and players who want all the technical aspects click on IFP Official Tournament Rule Book.

Pickleball Canada will make modifications to rules for non-sanctioned tournaments held in Canada as they are required.

Here are the key rules that beginning players need to know.

The Two Bounce Rule

The ball must bounce twice, once on each side of the court before players can hit the ball in the air or on the "volley". When the ball is served, it bounces in the receivers service court, the serving team must stay back and wait for the ball to bounce again on their side before they can move up and play the ball in the air.

This rule is instrumental in providing long rallies in the game of Pickleball. The serving team cannot serve the ball deep and then run to the net and smash it down "the throat"

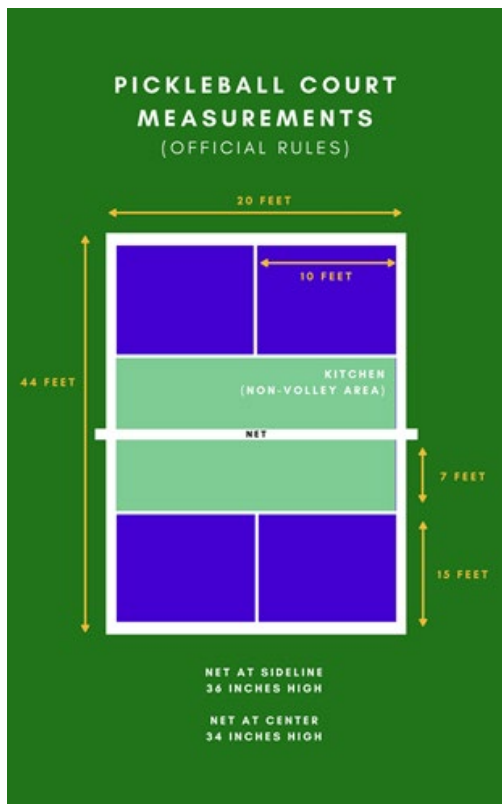


of their opponents. They must stay back and wait for the return bounce. New players often forget this and start to move up quickly with the serve and get caught hitting the ball in the air.

Coaches/instructors must remind both players on the serving team to stay back at the service line until the ball has bounced on their side. After the ball has bounced twice either team can play the ball on the bounce or in the air.

The Non-Volley Zone Faults

The Non-Volley Zone is a rectangle that is 7' X 20 feet on both sides of the net. Since Pickleball was designed as a family game this area was put in place so that a player has to stay back from the net when hitting the ball in the air. Thus, cutting down on the number of smashes and possible injury to an opposing player. This also helps make for longer rallies.



This is one of the most difficult rules for players to get used to especially tennis players.



You cannot step on the NV-line or into the NV-Zone when making a volley shot, a shot in the air. Your forward momentum cannot take you into the NV-zone after you hit the ball even if it is missed on the other side. No article of clothing, jewelery or paddle can fall into the zone on a volley or it is a fault. Your hat or paddle falling in is considered a fault.

Key points. This only applies when you are volleying or hitting the ball in the air. You can step in after making a ground stroke. You can go into the NV-zone to get a ball that bounces in there first. You can stand in the NV-zone all day if you want, you just can not play the ball in the air. It is a fault if you step in even after the ball is missed or hit by the opponents.

It may help to tell beginners that this rule was introduced to prevent players from going to the net and smashing it at their opponents as in tennis. It is safer and longer rallies result because there are fewer "put away's" standing 7' back from the net.

Points

The game of Pickleball is usually played to a score of 11. The winning team must win by two points or play continues until one team wins by 2. In tournament play, games can be played to 15 or 21. Unlike tennis or badminton, only the serving team can win a point. The receiving team must get the "side down" and get the serve back before earning points.

You earn a point when the other team commits a fault. Faults are described below.

Scoring

Scoring in pickleball can be very confusing to beginners. The first rule of etiquette in pickleball is that the server and only the server should announce the score. The player that is standing in the right-hand service area of the serving side always starts. That player is server number 1 for this sequence only. The next time they get the serve, their partner maybe in the right court to start and they become server number 1.

The sequence for announcing the score is as follows; serving team's score first, opponents score second and server number third. So if the server announces 3, 4, 1, the serving team has 3 points, the opposing team has 4 points and server number 1 is serving. If the serving team wins a point, the score would be 4, 4, 1. The serving team switches courts after winning a point but the receiving team stays as is.



Remember the server only gets one fault and they lose their serve. You only get one chance to get your serve in, not two as in tennis.

Serving

To start the game, teams may decide to rally for serve playing the ball three times over the net before it is in play. Often, one team just decides to start. The team serving first gets only one serve their first time. This rule helps prevent “blow” out games with one team getting a large number of points to start. The server making the first serve should announce 0, 0, 2. The score is 0, 0, and because the team gets only one serve, the server is number 2. When the serve switches to the other side that team gets two serves and play continues that way until a score of 11 is reached.

In review from the first session, the server must serve underhand making contact with the ball below the waist. The top of the paddle face must be below the wrist and the server must have both feet behind the service line at the time of contact with the ball. The ball must be served to the diagonally opposite court and it must be clearly in the service area. The ball cannot hit any part of the non-volley zone including the non-volley line. A serve that hits the net but lands in the service area is called a “let” and is reserved. Before serving the ball, the server should make sure all players are ready. Take a minute to check to make sure your partner is ready and that the opposing team is ready.

If you are receiving the serve but you or your partner are not ready, hold up your hand or paddle. If the server serves to you anyway, do not swing at the ball and call for a “let” serve because you were not ready. Returning the ball indicates you were ready and the point stands.

Calling Lines

Pickleball like most racquet sports relies on the integrity of the players in calling shots in or out. The rule of etiquette suggests that players will call the lines as honestly and fairly as they can. Players should call the lines on their side of the net and opponents will do the same on their side. Opponents should never make a call on the other side of the net unless they are asked. If a team cannot decide on a line call, then the benefit always goes to the opponent. If a team asks for an opinion from an opponent, that decision is



final. Again, fairness is the rule of the day. Remember it is only a game. Keeping this in mind, will prevent conflict on the court.

Faults

A point is earned or a serve is lost if a fault occurs. Remember, as in volley ball a point can only be scored by the serving team. A fault occurs on a serve when the ball hits short of the service court including the non-volley line. If the ball is served to the wrong court, long behind the back service line or out of the bounds that is a fault.

After the serve, a fault occurs if a player steps in the non-volley court or on the non-volley line while making a volley shot. If the ball is hit into the net or other permanent object such as the pole, that is a fault.

A balls that hit outside the boundary lines of the court are considered out and a fault. If the ball hits a player, they have committed a fault. On the serve, if a ball is hit into the wrong court and the opposing player in that court is hit or catches the ball that is considered a fault on the receiving team.

A player should not catch a ball that is heading out of bounds because that is considered a fault as well. Always let the ball bounce first. An indication of an out ball should be made by yelling out or by hand jester indicating out. This should be done quickly.

Failing to hit the ball before it bounces twice is a fault. However, if the ball bounces twice off your paddle while you are making a continuous forward motion, this is legal. If the ball hits any part of your paddle hand, the hand below the wrist, is considered part to the paddle and legal.

If a ball hits a player or his/her clothing, while standing on or off the court during a rally, this is a fault and a point for the opponents.



Review Quiz (optional)

1. Name two games the rules of Pickleball evolved from?
2. How many times must the ball bounce before it can be played in the air?
3. A game of pickleball goes to points.
4. You must win a game by Points.
5. At the start of a game of pickleball, the serving team gets serves.
6. When the server announces 8, 3, 2, which team is winning?
7. To volley the ball you must be completely outside the?
8. The benefit of the doubt on a line call goes to the?
9. Hitting the ball in the air is called a?
10. When may players, hit the ball on the bounce?

Answers

1. tennis, badminton, ping pong volley ball
2. Twice (2)
3. 11
4. 2
5. One
6. The serving team
7. Non-volley zone
8. The opponent
9. Volley
10. anytime after the serve

To learn more, click on the following links

- [History of Pickleball](#)
- [Terminology](#)
- [Strategy Guide](#)
- [Positioning & Scoring](#)
- [Basic Play, Etiquette & Safety Rules](#)
- [Rewards of Playing](#)



COVID 19 - TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLAYERS

If you wish to play pickleball, please remember that you play at your own risk. With that in mind, if you choose to play, we strongly suggest you follow the below recommendations:

BEFORE YOU PLAY

- Make sure that your city or region allows pickleball play based on the government authority criteria for the progressive lifting of confinement measures and that your municipality permits the use of pickleball courts.
- Don't arrive early. Go directly to courts upon your arrival.
- Play only with family members, persons living in your household or individuals you believe to be low risk.
- Do not play if you or your playing partner:
 - Exhibit any coronavirus symptoms, such as a fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, or other symptoms identified by health experts.
 - Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
 - Are considered vulnerable or at risk (elderly individuals with underlying health concerns, immunosuppressed persons, individuals suffering from serious health problems, notably high blood pressure, pulmonary diseases, diabetes, obesity and asthma).

PREPARING TO PLAY

- Protect yourself against infections and the spreading of such:
 - Wash your hands with disinfectant soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer, before going on a pickleball court.
 - Bring hand sanitizer and use it before you begin play, between games and again when you complete play and leave the courts.



- Clean your equipment, including your paddles and water bottles, with an appropriate disinfectant.
- Do not share equipment with your playing partner or others.
- Make sure you have enough water before leaving the house to avoid having to touch a tap or water fountain handle.
- Wear gloves and/or a mask while playing.
- If you cough or sneeze, do so in a tissue or in your sleeve.
- Avoid touching door handles, gates, benches and all other objects where the virus could survive. If you touch something, make sure to wash your hands and disinfect the surface you have touched.

WHILE PLAYING

- Keep a 2-metre distance from other players. To respect this measure, we strongly suggest only playing singles or skinny singles or just doing safe drills. If doubles can be played, this 2-metre distance is required, except for brief exchanges (referred to as incidental contact).
- Avoid all physical contact, for example shaking hands or tapping paddles, with other players.
- Avoid touching your face after touching a ball or paddle, or when you hit a stray ball to another player.
- Stay on your side of the court.
- Use only a sanitized ball and change to another freshly sanitized ball after each game.

AFTER PLAYING

- Wash your hands carefully with water and disinfectant soap or with hand sanitizer.
- Do not use locker rooms or changing areas.
- Leave the court immediately after you finish playing.