

Simplified Pickleball Rules

Revised December 12, 2013

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 2.

Serving

A player or team can only score points when serving.

When serving, both feet must remain behind the baseline until after the ball is struck.

- 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.
- Serves must travel diagonally and land between the no-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.

Double Bounce Rule:

Each team must play their first shot off the bounce. That is, the receiving team must let the serve bounce and the serving team must let the return of the serve bounce before playing it. After the two bounces have occurred, the ball can either be volleyed or played off the bounce.

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.

If the ball lands on the sidelines or the baseline, it is good (a playable ball). 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.

SECTION 3 – DEFINITIONS

Carry – Hitting the ball in such a way that it does not bounce away from the paddle but tends to be carried along on the face of the paddle during its forward motion.

Cross-court – The court diagonally opposite your court.

Dead Ball – A dead ball is declared after a fault. See fault.

Double Hit – One side hitting the ball twice before it is returned over net. Double hits may occur by one player or could involve both players on a team.

Drop Shot – A groundstroke shot that falls short of the opponent's position.

Fault – A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.

Groundstroke – Hitting the ball after one bounce.

Hinder – Any element or occurrence that affects play. Examples: a stray ball that enters the court or people who disrupt play by walking across the court.

Let – A serve that hits the net cord and lands in the service court. Let may also refer to a rally that must be replayed for any reason.

Lob – A shot that returns the ball as high and deep as possible, forcing the opposing side back to the baseline.

Non-Volley Zone – The section of court adjacent to the net in which you cannot volley the ball. It includes all lines surrounding the zone.

Overhead Slam/Smash – A hard, overhand shot usually resulting from an opponent's lob, high return, or high bounce.

Rally – Continuous play that occurs after the serve and before a fault.

Replays – Any rallies that are replayed for any reason without the awarding of a point or a side out.

Service Court – The area on either side of the centerline, bounded by the non-volley line, the baseline, and the sideline. All lines are included in the service court except the non-volley line.

Side Out – Declared after one side loses its service and other side is awarded service.

Volley – Hitting the ball in the air, during a rally, before the ball has a chance to bounce onto the court.