

Pickleball rules and regulations of the game

By [Maria Linda \(https://sportsavis.com/author/mlindausa/\)](https://sportsavis.com/author/mlindausa/) | Last Updated on April 24, 2020

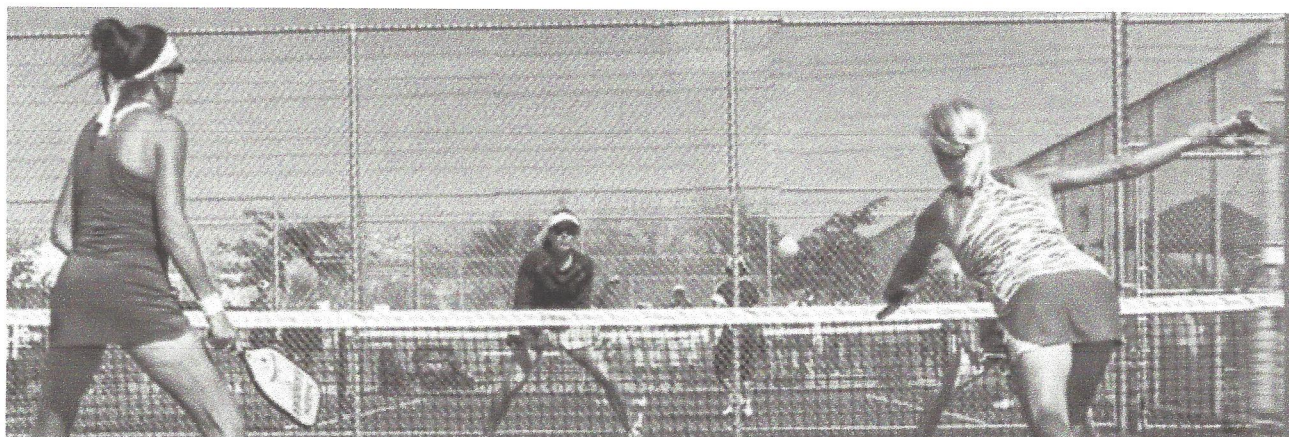
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Pickleball is played using a perforated ball that's served diagonally across a tennis-type net. The game is played on a 20-foot-by-44 foot court. A Pickleball court is divided into left/odd service courts and right/even service courts, and non-volley zones.

The balls are shot back and forth until one of the players commits a fault (fails to play according to the rules). You get to score a point when you or your team win a rally or when your opponent(s) commit a fault. The servicing side continually serves while alternating service courts until they commit a fault or lose a rally.

The first side to hit 11 points while leading by at least 2-points are the winners. For instance, if both you and your opponent(s) tie at 10 points, the game goes on until one of your leads by 2 points.

Pickleball is played both as singles and doubles. [Click here \(https://sportsavis.com/best-pickleball-paddle/\)](https://sportsavis.com/best-pickleball-paddle/) to look at your Pickleball paddle.





DEFINITIONS

Fault: A loss of rally that results in the opposing side gaining a point, a side-out, or loss of serve.

First server: In singles, the first player to serve. In doubles, the player on the right/even service court when service is awarded to the team becomes the first server.

Starting First Server: For a doubles game, this is the player who is designated to serve first when the game starts. In a doubles tournament game, a starting server needs wear a visible identification.

Groundstroke: Hitting the ball after one bounce.

Left/Odd Court: The left service area of the court. When scores are odd, the first server in doubles or the singles server should serve from the serving area on left/odd court.

Let: When a serve or a rally must be replayed for whatever reason.

Rally: The continual back and forth shooting that goes on after service, before a fault.

Receiver: The player diagonally opposite the server, in the receiving side.

Replay: A rally that's replayed for whatever reason without change of server or awarding of a point.

Service Court: The area on either side of the centerline, excluding non-volley zone (NVZ). It's bordered by centerline, baseline, and sideline.

Serving Area: The area behind the baseline between the imaginary extended sidelines and centerlines.

Cross-Court: The Court diagonally opposite your court.

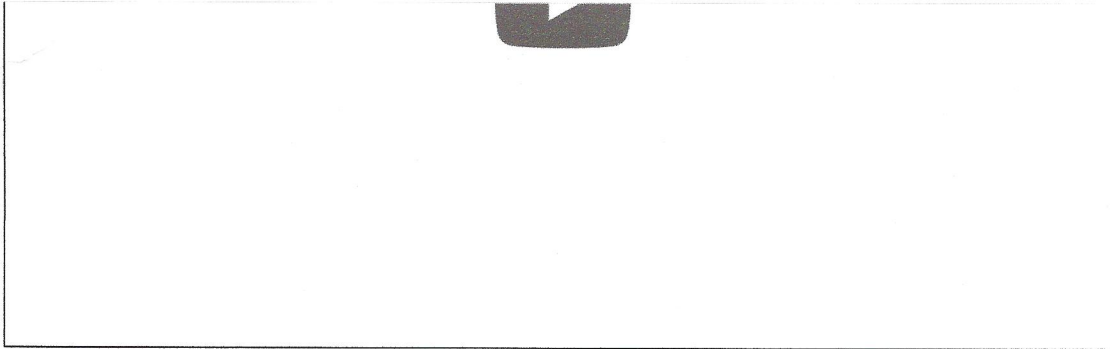
Technical Foul: when one side violates a rule. When this happens, a referee adds a point to the opponents.

Dead ball: When a ball is no longer in play.

Side out: when one side loses it is right to serve to the opposing side

Underhand: When shooting, a player's arm must move in a forward and upward arc with the palm turned downward or upward.

Volley: Hitting the ball back while it's still in the air before it bounces.



UNIQUE FEATURES OF PICKLEBALL

Two-Bounce Rule

When a ball is first served, the receiving side must let it bounce before hitting it back, and then the serving side must let it bounce before returning it, thus two bounces. That's the two-bounce rule.

After the 'two bounces', both sides can choose to either volley the ball or groundstroke. The two bounce rules extend rallies and eliminate the volley and serve advantage.

Non-valley Zone

The non-valley zone is an area within 7 feet on both sides of the net. You can't volley within the non-valley zone, it's against the rules. The rule is meant to prevent players from smashing the ball from close the net.

It's a fault if, when volleying a ball, you step in into the non-valley zone; this includes when stepping on the line and when momentum causes anything you're carrying or wearing to touch the non-valley zone and its associated lines.

The Serve

A Serve must be hit underhand.

A Paddle's meet with the ball must be below the server's waist.

You can only serve from the serving area; neither foot should contact the court or baseline until you've hit the ball.

You should serve diagonally crosscourt; the ball must land within the directly opposite court.

You're only allowed one serve, except in a let serve. For instance, when the ball touches the net and then lands on the appropriate side of the court, that serve is replayed.

Serving Sequence

Any of the players on the serving side can serve and score points until their side commits a fault (except when adhering to the first service sequence rules of a new game).

The first serve of a side-out is made from the right/even court.

If the server side scores a point, they switch sides and initiate the next serve from the left/odd court.

With every subsequent score of points, the serves switch back and forth up to the point when a fault is committed and the first server loses the right to serve.

to when their team commits two faults.

In singles, the serving player serves from the left/odd side when the score is odd and the right/even when the score is even.

At the start of a new game, one player of the serving side is allowed to serve before fault after which service shifts to the receiving side.

10-Second Rule: Once the referee has determined the receiver side is ready and in position, the server has 10 seconds to serve. If the server exceeds the 10 seconds, a fault is declared.

Scoring

Only the serving side scores points.

Typically, games are played to 11 points and won by a margin of two.

Tournaments games can extend to 15 or 21 (won by 2)

When the score of the serving side is even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10), the first server in the game must be on the right/even court when receiving or serving; when the score is odd, (1, 3, 5, 7, 9), the first serve must be in the left/odd court when receiving or serving.

Line Calls

If a ball contacts any line other than the non-valley zone line, it's considered 'in.'

Opponents are given the benefit of doubt when they make line calls. If the ball is not called out, it's considered in.

If the opponent was in a better position to see a line call on the player's side, a player can ask the opponent's opinion.

Dead Ball Rules

If any action stops play, a dead ball is declared

A dead ball is also declared dead if a ball bounces twice before being returned.

It's also considered a dead ball when the referee calls it out.

Faults

Any action that violates rules and stops play is a fault.

If the receiving team commits a fault, the serving side is awarded a point.

When a serving side commits a fault, they lose their right to serve (side out.)

Time-Out

Players are entitled to two timeouts per an 11 or 15 point game. For 21 point games, the players are

Coaching is only allowed during time-outs.

Determining Serve Team

You can come up with any fair method of determining which team or side serves or receives first.

The Rules are published by International Federation of Pickleball in what's known as, USAPA (<https://www.usapa.org/>) Official Tournament Rule Book.

Now that you the rules of the game, let the beautiful game begin! We've reviewed the best Portable Pickleball Net Reviews – [link \(https://sportsavis.com/best-portable-pickleball-net/\)](https://sportsavis.com/best-portable-pickleball-net/).

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ABOUT MARIA LINDA

I have been in love with sports from my childhood. I am studying at CSE in a reputed university as well as an occasional blogger, I want to share my interests and experiences through this blog.



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Basics – Rules Summary

Overview

The following is an abbreviated form of the rules to give a quick overview of how the game is played. If there is a conflict between this summary and the official rules, the official rules prevail.

Basic Rules

- Pickleball is played either as doubles (two players per team) or singles; doubles is most common
- The same size playing area and rules are used for both singles and doubles

The Serve

- The server's arm must be moving in an upward arc when the ball is struck.
- Paddle contact with the ball must not be made above the waist level.
- The head of the paddle must not be above the highest part of the wrist at contact.
- A 'drop serve' is also permitted in which case none of the elements above apply.
- At the time the ball is struck, the server's feet may not touch the court or outside the imaginary extension of the sideline or centerline and at least one foot must be behind the baseline on the playing surface or the ground behind the baseline.
- The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.
- Only one serve attempt is allowed per server.

Service Sequence

- 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).
- The first serve of each side-out is made from the right/even court.
- 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 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*).
- The second server continues serving until his team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.



When the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right/even court and both players on that team have the opportunity to 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.
 - *At the beginning of each new game only one partner on the serving team has the opportunity to serve before faulting, after which the service passes to the receiving team.

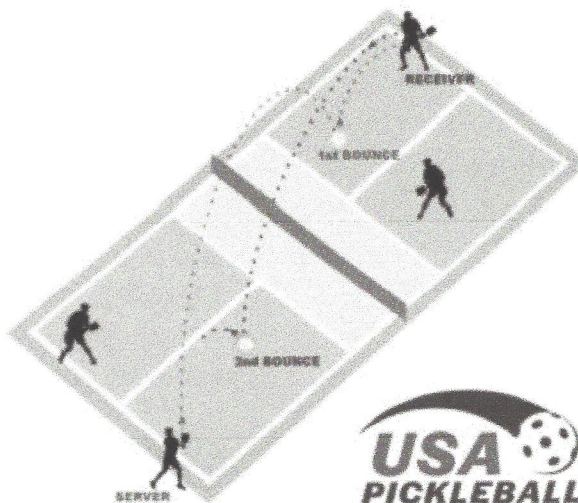
Scoring

- Points are scored only by the serving team.
- Games are normally played to 11 points, win by 2.
- Tournament games may be to 15 or 21, win by 2.
- 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.

Two-Bounce Rule

- 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.
- 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.

click diagram to view larger:



(<https://usapickleball.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/DOUBLE-BOUNCE-DIAGRAM.jpg>)

Non-Volley Zone

- The non-volley zone is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net.
- Volleying is prohibited within the non-volley zone. This rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone.
- 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 non-volley zone including the associated lines.
- 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.
- A player may legally be in the non-volley zone any time other than when volleying a ball.
- The non-volley zone is commonly referred to as "the kitchen."



Line Calls

- A ball contacting any part of 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.

Faults

- A fault 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.
- A fault by the serving team results in the server's loss of serve or side out.

Determining Serving Team

Any fair method can be used to determine which player or team has first choice of side, service, or receive. (Example: Write a 1 or 2 on the back of the score sheet.)

Pickleball Basics