



# PICKLEBALL LEAGUE RULES

*Last Updated 1/1/2026*

## **RULE #1 - HAVE FUN!**

The first and foremost goal of playing is to HAVE FUN! SportsLink staff are there to provide you with a fair, safe, and fun environment. Enjoy yourself, make new friends, relieve some stress and get a little exercise.

The rules are a basic guide to play and may not address every situation in a game. For further explanation or interpretations, refer to USA Pickleball Rules, talk to the coordinator of the league or email SportsLink at [office@sportslinkus.com](mailto:office@sportslinkus.com). Only game time and game format rules have been amended.

All players must have an active SportsLink Passport to play. Teams may use up to five guest passes during the season for substitutions and must register those players with the coordinator before play of the game

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## **EQUIPMENT**

Players are to bring their own paddles. SportsLink will provide the balls for the games as well as extra paddles if needed.

## **GAME DURATION**

- Pickleball will be played as doubles only for our 2v2 and 4v4 leagues. Both teams are required to have two players on the court at all times.
- Each game will be 15 minutes and played to 11 points, win by 1 (win by 2 in playoff games).
- Regular season 2v2 Matches will be played as a single game to 11 (win by 1) to determine a winner. Teams will play multiple games against different teams in a single day.
- 4v4 leagues will have 2 players per team playing at one time. These games will be played first to three points (match wins).
  - There will be 1 male doubles match, 1 female doubles match and 2 coed matches (best of three). All of these matches are to 11, win by 1.
  - Each team that wins a match will be awarded 1 point for the win.
  - In the event the teams are tied after the first four matches (2-2), then a tie breaker coed doubles game will be played to 11 (win by 2) to determine the winner between the teams.

## **HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED**

### **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.

## **Serving 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.
- 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 have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.

**\*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/Timing**

- Points are scored only by the serving team.
- 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/even court when serving or receiving; when odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) that player will be in the left/odd 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).

## **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.

## **Non-Volley Zone (The “Kitchen”)**

- 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.

## **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 the first choice of side, service, or receive. (Example: coin flip)

# **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

Unsportsmanlike conduct has no place in rec sports. If a player or team is behaving in an unacceptable manner, please communicate this to the coordinator onsite and/or report it to SportsLink via email: [office@sportslinkus.com](mailto:office@sportslinkus.com).

Players and teams displaying such conduct will be communicated to by league staff and risk suspension or expulsion from games and the league itself.

## **PLAYOFFS**

- Playoff 2v2 matches will be played best of three games to 11, win by 2.
- The higher seed automatically gets the pick of service or side for the first game. Teams will switch sides for the second game and play Roshambo for the third game, if needed.