



# PICKLEBALL ROUND UP

## Rules Summary

The following is an abbreviated form of the rules to give a quick overview of how the game is played. A complete copy of the official rules can be found on the USAPA website at [usapa.org](http://usapa.org). If there is a conflict between this summary and the official rules, the official rules prevail.

### Basic Rules Overview

- 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 serve must be made underhand.
- Paddle contact with the ball must be below the server's waist (navel level).
- The serve is initiated with at least one foot behind the baseline; neither foot may contact the baseline or court until after the ball is struck.
- The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.
- Only one serve attempt is allowed, except in the event of a let (the ball touches the net on the serve and lands on the proper service court; let serves are replayed).

### 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-hand court.
- If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left-hand 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-hand 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-hand court when his or her score is even and from the left 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

### **Scoring (cont.)**

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.

### **Double-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 double bounce rule eliminates the serve and volley advantage and extends rallies.

### **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 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.
- A fault occurs when:
  - A serve does not land within the confines of the receiving court
  - The ball is hit into the net on the serve or any return
  - The ball is volleyed before a bounce has occurred on each side
  - The ball is hit out of bounds
  - A ball is volleyed from the non-volley zone
  - A ball bounces twice before being struck by the receiver
  - A player, player's clothing, or any part of a player's paddle touches the net or the net post when the ball is in play
  - There is a violation of a service rule
  - A ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying
  - A ball in play strikes any permanent object before bouncing on the court

### **Determining Serving Team**

- Players use a coin toss to determine who will serve first. The winner of the coin toss will have the option to choose side or to serve or receive.