Pickleball

Officiating

Handbook
This document, titled Pickleball Officiating Handbook, is the guiding material for both referees and line judges with respect to following Best Practices when officiating any game or match. It is the basis of all training programs.

All material and references are current and in compliance with the 2020 edition of the IFP Rulebook.

Comments and corrections are welcomed anytime at:

officiating@pickleballcanada.org.
Table of Contents

1. The Elements of Officiating ...................................................................................... 4
   a. Primary Responsibility .................................................................................. 4
   b. Code of Conduct ......................................................................................... 4
   c. The Tools of Officiating ............................................................................. 4
   d. Scorecard Markings Pre-Match .................................................................... 5
   e. Scorecard Markings During a Game ............................................................... 6
2. Understand the Use of the Server Clip .................................................................... 12
3. Game Management .................................................................................................. 13
   a. Pre Game Tasks & Instruction ....................................................................... 13
   b. Game Pace and Cadence .............................................................................. 14
   c. Score Calling Procedure .............................................................................. 14
   d. Allowable Questions with Respect to Serve Conditions .............................. 14
   e. At the End of Every Rally ............................................................................ 14
   f. Timeout Procedure ...................................................................................... 15
   g. Change of End Procedure ........................................................................... 15
   h. Between Games Best of Three Matches ....................................................... 15
   i. Hydration Requests ..................................................................................... 16
   j. Technical Warnings and Technical Fouls .................................................... 16
4. Specific Rules and Circumstances ........................................................................... 17
   a. Common Rules to Know and Enforce ............................................................ 17
   b. Handling of Disputed Calls ......................................................................... 17
   c. Know Your Limit ........................................................................................ 18
5. Line Judges ........................................................................................................................................... 19
   a. Game Management Hierarchy ........................................................................................................... 19
   b. Line Judge Code of Conduct ........................................................................................................... 19
   c. Pre Match Briefing ............................................................................................................................ 20
   d. Making the Call ................................................................................................................................. 20
   e. Other Line Judge Responsibilities .................................................................................................... 21
   f. Appeals and Questions ....................................................................................................................... 21
Appendix A - Pregame Conference ............................................................................................................. 23

Revision History:
   Rev 0: **20-03-10** - Initial release
   Rev 1: **20-04-25** - Updated graphics, minor text changes, synchronized with French copy
1. The Elements of Officiating

   a. Primary Responsibility
   The primary responsibility of a pickleball match official is to facilitate the match in an orderly and expeditious manner while at the same time enforcing the rules in a fair and equitable manner.

   b. Code of Conduct
   It is important that the official be friendly and courteous but at the same time be officious.

   The official should:
   - Stand near centre line but back from net post if possible
   - Only carry clip board & card, pencils, server clip & timing device
   - Stand and look/be attentive
   - When NOT actually marking the scorecard, it should be down and out of the way
   - No cheering or coaching
   - Demonstrably watch base line when a serve is in motion
   - Demonstrably watch the NVZ line during any play action close to the NVZ

   c. The Tools of Officiating
   There are a few simple tools or aids that a potential match official should either carry themselves or be certain they are supplied by the tournament director prior to each match.

   - Stop watch
   - Pencil with eraser, 2 suggested
   - Pregame instruction notes
   - A scoresheet
   - A clipboard for holding the score sheet
   - Numbered server clip, 2 suggested
   - Extra server bands
   - Two tournament balls
d. Scorecard Markings Pre-Match

There are many things that the tournament desk should have filled out on the scorecard prior to giving it to the potential match official.

- Player names
- Play level
- Game max scores
- Court #
- Your name

As the official in charge you must ensure the following is recorded:

- Any of the above if not done yet
- #1 or 2 on back
- Change of end marks
- Circle teams starting servers, add unique identifier
- First serve side game 1 or games 1, 2 & 3 if applicable

**Pre-Game Scoresheet Marking**
e. Scorecard Markings During a Game

As a game proceeds there are several additional marks or notes that may be required to record the progress, status and conditions.

i. Recording A Point Earned
   • Based on server # when point scored
   • Forward slash for server #1 in current score box
   • Backward slash for server #2 in current score box

Recording Points by First Server

Recording Points by Second Server
ii. Recording the loss of serve or rally
   - Loss of first serve - no marking
   - Side out or loss of second serve – mark with a vertical line after current score
   - If current score is ZERO make a vertical line to the left of the score = 1

Recording Side Out
iii. Recording Timeout
- Do NOT flip the scorecard - regardless who called the Timeout
- In Timeout area / box for team calling Timeout
- Diagonal slash corresponding to current server #
- Serving team score above diagonal slash
- Receiving team score below diagonal slash

**Time Out Serving Team**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

**Timeout Receiving Team**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Pickleball Officiating Handbook

8

Rev 1
iv. End of Game - Single Game Match
   • Keep score card with winning team up
   • Circle winning team names - clearly
   • Write final score within circle area
   • Have winning team verify and sign

v. End of Game - Best of Three Match
   • Make horizontal line thru unused score areas
   • Make horizontal line thru unused Timeout areas

Scoresheet Marking After Game 1
vi. End of Match Best of Three Match
   - Keep score card with winning team up
   - Circle and/or shade final scores
   - Circle winning team names clearly
   - Write ALL final scores in space allocated
   - Have winning team verify and sign

Scoresheet After Match Completion
vii. Change of End
Before changing card orientation, below end change marker write
- Score - 6\4 or 6/3, slash indicating server #
- Below the server’s name note 1st or 2nd server - "1" or "2"
- Shade in triangle to confirm action

viii. Technical Warnings / Fouls
- When the first Technical Warning is given
  - Write "T/W" to the right of the Timeout section
  - Make notes re why it was given, use the back of the scoresheet if necessary
- When a second Technical Warning is given
  - Write a second "T/W" beside the first T/W
  - Circle them both and make note " = T/F"
  - Write "T/F" in appropriate 'score box'
  - Make notes why it was given, use the back of the scoresheet if necessary
- When a Technical Foul is given
  - Write "T/F" beside the Timeout section
  - Write "T/F" in appropriate 'score box'
  - Make notes why it was given

**Recording a Technical Foul**
• Further accumulation of 'Technical’s’ - the third strike
  o A third T/W or
  o A second T/F or
  o A T/W with a T/F already recorded or
  o The first T/F with a T/W already recorded
  o Make notes re the last Technical awarded; add to previous notes the reasons why, etc.

2. Understand the Use of the Server Clip

Any one of several types of 'clips' may be used as an aid to tracking the current server. The clip must be large enough to fit over the clipboard and easy to manipulate with one hand. It needs to have space to write both a server number (1 or 2) and the placement of a diagonal line indicating server 1 or 2 as well. See these pictures for the setup.

The clip with the appropriate number face up is to be attached to the clipboard 'over' the current server’s name. When the server changes due to loss of rally or a side out the clip must be flipped and repositioned to be over the new server's name.

**Rotate the Clip**
3. Game Management

a. Pre Game Tasks & Instruction

- Make sure you have your tools and can operate them properly
- Make sure you know local conditions per Tournament Director instruction
- Review scorecard, make sure you understand it and it is correct
- Start timer for specified warm up period
- Call the players in and conduct Pregame Conference
  - The tournament director should have provided guidance
  - If not be prepared per Appendix A, typical
- Complete any scorecard notes required
- Orientate scorecard correctly
- Establish clipboard with ‘clip’ pointing to serving team
- At T-1 minute announce 1 minute
- At T-15 seconds announce 15 seconds, give game ball to team with first serve
- At T-0 call the score
b. Game Pace and Cadence
   - Do all your score carding during the time ball is being retrieved - be ready when the players are ready
   - Call scores clearly, loudly and with consistency
   - Enforce all time limit conditions
     - Pre game warm up time
     - Nominal time to get ready to serve or receive
     - Ten second serve time
     - Timeout durations
     - Change side duration

c. Score Calling Procedure
   - Check all players are or should be ready
   - Call score clear, loud and with consistency
   - Mentally start 10 second count
   - Timeout calls are allowed after score is called but must come before the serve motion has started
   - No one can become 'unready' after the referee starts to call the score
   - Call time violation and fault after 10 seconds

d. Allowable Questions with Respect to Serve Conditions
   - Anyone can ask 'what is our score?' - answer "Your score is X"
   - Anyone can ask 'what is the full score?' - answer "Your score is X, their score is Y, it is Z server"
   - Serving team may ask 'am I the right server?' - only answer yes or no
   - Offer no extra information
   - Answer questions only as asked - IF you are allowed to answer

e. At the End of Every Rally
   - Announce clearly
     - Point or
     - Second serve or
     - Side out
   - Mark scorecard if required
   - Move server clip if required
   - Rotate clipboard if required
f. Timeout Procedure
   - Acknowledge team asking for Timeout
   - Start timer - one minute
   - Move to centre of court - avoid conversing with players
   - Mark scorecard - refer to Section 1.e.iii
   - At T-15s announce 15 seconds left
   - Advise both teams of Timeouts remaining
   - Move to your referee side position
   - At T-0 call score - regardless if players are ready or not
   - Coaching is allowed during Timeouts
   - As soon as players should be ready call score

g. Change of End Procedure
   - State "score is xx, change ends, one minute"
   - Start timer
   - Move to centre court
   - Mark scorecard - refer to Section 1.e.vii
   - Re-orientate scorecard
   - At T-15s announce '15 seconds left'
   - Move to your referee side position
   - At T-0 call score - regardless if players are ready
   - Do NOT allow coaching

h. Between Games Best of Three Matches
   - Start 2 minute timer
   - Collect the ball to ensure the same ball is used next game
   - Move to center court
   - Finish any end of game score card work
   - Reposition scorecard on clipboard
   - At T-15s announce 15 seconds left
   - Move to your referee side position
   - Announce start of game 2 or 3 as appropriate
   - At T-0 call score - regardless if players are ready
   - Coaching is allowed between games
i. **Hydration Requests**
   - Hydration "breaks" are no longer permitted
   - Players may quickly take drinks between rallies

j. **Technical Warnings and Technical Fouls**
   - A Technical Warning is considered a single strike
   - A second Technical Warning is considered another strike
   - Two Technical Warnings become a Technical Foul
   - A Technical Foul by itself is considered two strikes
   - A Technical Foul warrants a point being awarded to the non-offending team
   - A third strike results in a match forfeiture

If a situation is such that a Technical Warning or Foul is warranted:

- Advise the offending team of the offense and penalty
- If this call is the first Technical Warning of the match
  - Mark the score card as required
  - Announce 15 seconds till play will resume
  - Resume play
- If this call results in a Technical Foul (and not the third strike) advise both teams of this fact
  - Announce and award one point to the non-offending team,
  - Mark the score card as required
  - Announce 15 seconds till play will resume
  - Resume play by calling the score
- If this call is the 'third strike'
  - Advise the offending team the match is being forfeited
  - Mark the score card as required, including the required game winning marks
4. **Specific Rules and Circumstances**

a. **Common Rules to Know and Enforce**
   - All faults to be called as soon as the fault occurs
   - Faults may be called at any time prior to the next score call
   - Serve motion starting before score is fully called
   - Illegal serve motion
   - Service foot faults
   - Correct server, correct court
   - Correct receiver
   - Serve passes NVZ line
   - NVZ faults during rally play
   - Conditions re ball striking net, net supports etc
   - Conditions when players may cross plane of net line
   - Generally acceptable paddles and allowable modifications

b. **Handling of Disputed Calls**
   - Question on side or base line IN/OUT - if ASKED
     - If CERTAIN - make your statement, it is final
     - If not 100% certain state 'I did not see (clearly) defending team call stands'
     - Do not allow debate
     - Prepare and call score to restart play action
   - Questions re score accuracy
     - Listen to both teams and check scorecard to verify
     - If disagreement continues - trust your scorecard
   - Question re right server or server or receiver position
     - Trust your score card
     - Accept you may have made an error
     - Attempt to respond with only score-score-server #
   - Do not allow debates to start or to continue
     - Assert authority by calling the score
     - If debaters insist on further discussion
       - After 10 seconds - state loss of serve
       - Or if serve occurs and is not returned call point
- Any more debate = technical warning

c. Know Your Limit
- Understand you may have made an error
  - Can you correct it - do so
  - If you cannot - you may need to call for help
- If debate starts and will not end - call for help
- Unknown rule or circumstance - call for help
5. Line Judges

This Section on line judges is included in the general Pickleball Canada Officiating Handbook as the use of line judges is an integral part of many tournament matches and therefore needs to be a portion of an official’s development program. It is also designed as a Section that can be ‘taken out’ for use in developing individuals for the specific role as a line judge.

The use of line judges promotes fair play by providing extra officials in locations affording the best views for side and base line calls.

Determining when line judges will be used is within the jurisdiction of the Tournament Director, but PCO recommends all sanctioned tournaments employ a minimum of 4 line judges for all gold medal matches.

a. Game Management Hierarchy

The assigned match referee is in charge of all aspects of officiating and managing the match, including:

- Managing the officiating team
- Briefing the officiating team
- Positioning of all members of the officiating team
- Ensuring all members of the officiating team are ready

b. Line Judge Code of Conduct

As part of the officiating team the line judge assumes certain higher levels of responsibility.

- Be fair, impartial and consistent
- Be pleasant and courteous
- Avoid excess friendliness with players and spectators
- Silence all electronic personal devices
- Recuse yourself from conflicts if friends, partners, relatives are to play in the match to be assigned to you
- Devote 100% to the match before you
c. Pre Match Briefing

Prior to the start of each match the assigned match referee will conduct a briefing with the line judges to review:

- Line assignment responsibility, including faults on serve activity
- Positioning - sit, stand, location, sun, spectators, etc
- Verbal and non verbal calls
- Obstructed view situations
- Role of players in calling lines - none
- Role of spectators in calling or influencing your calls - none
- Response to a 'ready?' signal

d. Making the Call

There are several game circumstances that will require a line judge to react. All verbal calls are to be made loudly and immediately.

- A ball landing clearly OUT
  - Immediately call "OUT"
  - Raise one arm pointing in an out direction
  - Hold the arm position until the referee positively acknowledges the out call you made
  - Make out calls for all balls landing out of bounds, even those way out. A non call is an indication of IN

- A ball landing IN but close enough such that a question may arise
  - Signal with both hands, palms down, pointing to the playing surface at a downward angle
  - NO verbal call is to be made - silence is mandatory

- Your view is blocked
  - If you did not or could not see the ball clearly land you cannot make a call
  - Place and hold both hands covering your eyes until the referee acknowledges your 'blocked view' indication

- Service Foot Faults
  - Line judges positioned to call both base line and side line IN/OUT balls are ideally positioned to call service foot faults as well and it is their responsibility to call them. The line judge should immediately call 'foot fault'
e. Other Line Judge Responsibilities

Non volley zone faults of all types are the referee’s responsibility but a line judge may be polled for help and should be ready to respond if clearly observed. Net contact violations, double bounces, ball-player contact situations may also result in the referee calling upon a line judge for help.

f. Appeals and Questions

- The referee may poll the line judges for help with an appeal of a call
- The referee may request a line judge to repeat his call for confirmation if the original call was not clear or heard plainly
- The referee may overrule a line judge call if the referee saw the ball clearly as different than the line judge called - if asked by a player
- The referee may consult with the players
- The referee’s decision is final

Remember the game is about the players - a good official is one that no one remembers after the game is over.
My Notes
Appendix A - Pregame Conference

This document is an example only. You probably will get a specific tournament guide from the tournament director. This information is not intended to be memorized - you may read it to the players. The amount of information you give may change as the tournament day progresses.

Introduce yourself

Confirm Event

Confirm format of match (1st to 11, win by etc, or?)

Determine Initial serve and end states

If end change is scheduled - remind players of when

Point out court hindrances

Remind players about line calling - them versus you

  Base line on serve - you

  NVZ line on serve and during rally - you

  Other line calls - players

Review line call appeal process

Advise players of time outs available

Remind players they must wait for you to fully finish calling the score before starting their serve motion

Inspect paddles for irregularities & other non-compliance

Start the game / match