



# 2019 OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULEBOOK



# USAPA & IFP OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULEBOOK

The USA Pickleball Association (USAPA) and the International Federation of Pickleball (IFP) were organized to perpetuate the growth and advancement of pickleball on an international level and to set goals for worldwide play and recognition. The USAPA and IFP are committed to furthering the growth and development of pickleball among all players.

The USAPA and IFP are the governing bodies of American and international pickleball that formulate and interpret all the rules of the sport in a manner that preserves the traditional nature and character of the sport and the skills traditionally required to play the sport. All such decisions by the USAPA and IFP are final and not appealable.

The purpose of the rulebook is to provide pickleball players with the rules necessary for organized league and tournament play. Some sections of this rulebook are designed to be used only for the conduct of sanctioned tournaments. A sanctioned tournament allows players to be ranked on a national or international basis.

Non-sanctioned tournaments may also use these sections as guidelines. Tournament directors for non-sanctioned tournaments may be flexible in the use of these guidelines to better fit the skills, ages, and diversity of their players. The USAPA and IFP enthusiastically encourage these non-sanctioned tournaments to promote knowledge, growth of the sport, skill development, and having fun while playing pickleball.

The USAPA published the first rulebook in March 1984. The first IFP rulebook was adapted, with permission, from the March 28, 2010, version of the USAPA rulebook.

The IFP invites national pickleball organizations from all countries to become members of the IFP and to observe these rules as the international rules of pickleball.

These rules will not be changed without good cause. Comments and opinions are always welcome. If you have any questions in regard to the rules, please visit:

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**USA Pickleball Association (USAPA)**

*Website:* [usapa.org](http://usapa.org)

**International Federation of Pickleball (IFP)**

*Website:* [ipickleball.org](http://ipickleball.org)

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## SECTION 1 – THE GAME

Pickleball is a paddle sport played using a special perforated ball on a 20-foot-by-44-foot court with a tennis-type net. The court is divided into right/even and left/odd service courts and non-volley zones. See Figure 2-1.

The ball is served diagonally across the net to the opponent's service court using an underhand motion. The ball is struck back and forth across the net until a player fails to return the ball in accordance with the rules.

Points are scored only by the serving side, when the server or the server's team wins the rally, or the opposing side commits a fault. The server continues to serve, alternating service courts, until the serving side loses the rally or commits a fault.

Typically, the first side scoring 11 points and leading by at least a 2-point margin wins. For example, if both sides are tied at 10 points, then play continues until one side wins by 2 points.

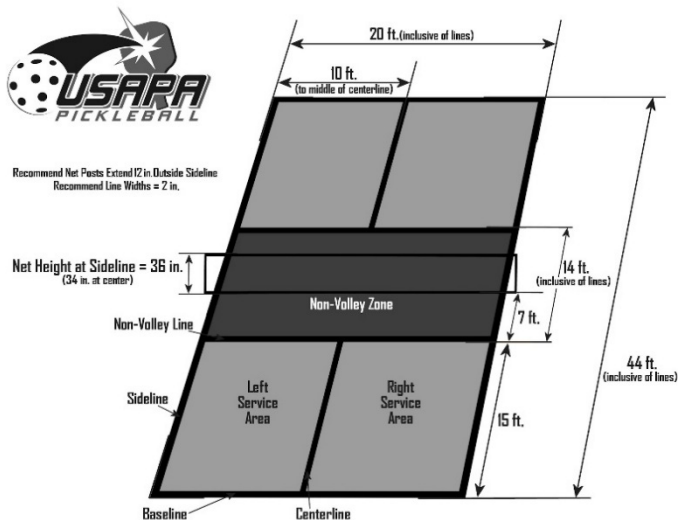
Pickleball can be played as singles or doubles. Doubles is the most popular.

### Unique Features

**Two-Bounce Rule.** After the ball is served, each side must make one groundstroke prior to volleying the ball.

**Non-Volley Zone (NVZ).** An area that extends 7 feet from the net on each side, within which a player is not allowed to strike the ball without it first bouncing.

## SECTION 2 – COURT AND EQUIPMENT



**2.A. Court Specifications.** The dimensions and measurements for the standard pickleball court are:

**2.A.1.** The court shall be a rectangle 20 feet (6.10 m) wide and 44 feet (13.41 m) long for both singles and doubles matches. See Figure 2-1.

**2.A.2.** Court measurements shall be made to the outside of the lines. All lines should be 2 inches (5.08 cm) wide and the same color, clearly contrasting with the color of the playing surface.

2.A.3. A minimum playing surface area measuring 30 feet (9.14 m) wide and 60 feet (18.29 m) long is recommended. A 10-foot (3.05-m) surrounding margin with a larger size of 40 feet (12.19 m) by 64 feet (19.51 m) is preferred.

2.B. **Lines and Areas.** The lines and areas of the standard pickleball court are explained below. Also, see Figure 2-1.

2.B.1. Baselines. The lines parallel to the net at each end of the court.

2.B.2. Sidelines. The lines perpendicular to the net on each long side of the court.

2.B.3. Non-Volley Zone (NVZ). The area of court bounded by three lines and the net: the parallel line 7 feet (2.13 m) from the net (non-volley-zone line) and the two sidelines, which are perpendicular to the net. All NVZ lines are inside the NVZ.

2.B.4. Service Court. The area on either side of the centerline, including the centerline, sideline, and baseline, excluding the NVZ.

2.B.5. Centerline. The line down the center of the court extending from the NVZ to the baseline separating the odd and even courts.

2.B.6. Right/Even Court. The service area on the right side of the court when facing the net.

2.B.7. Left/Odd Court. The service area on the left side of the court when facing the net.

2.C. **Net Specifications.**

- 2.C.1. Material. The net may be made of any mesh fabric material that will not allow a ball to pass through it.
- 2.C.2. Posts. **Net posts should be 22 feet (6.71 m) from the inside of one post to the inside of the other post. The maximum diameter of the net post should be 3 inches (7.62 cm).**
- 2.C.3. Size. The net length should be at least 21 feet 9 inches (6.63 m) extending from one post to the other. The net height should be at least 30 inches (0.76 m) from top to bottom.
- 2.C.4. Edge. The top of the net should be edged with a 2-inch (5.08-cm) white binding over a cord or cable running through the binding. This binding must rest upon the cord or cable.
- 2.C.5. Height. The net shall be suspended over the center of the court and shall be 36 inches (91.44 cm) high at the sidelines and 34 inches (86.36 cm) high at the center of the court.
- 2.C.6. Center Strap. A center strap is recommended for permanent nets, and should be placed at the center of the net to enable easy adjustment to the 34-inch (86.36-cm) requirement at center.





**Figure 2-2**

The ball pictured on the left in Figure 2-2 is customarily used for indoor play, and the ball pictured on the right is customarily used for outdoor play. Colors may vary. However, all approved balls are acceptable for indoor or outdoor play. The complete list of approved balls is on the USAPA and IFP websites.

## **2.D. *Ball Specifications.***

- 2.D.1. **Construction.** The ball shall be made of a durable material molded with a smooth surface and free of texturing. The ball will be one uniform color, except for identification markings. The ball may have a slight ridge at the seam, as long as it does not significantly impact the ball's flight characteristics.
- 2.D.2. **Size.** The ball shall be 2.87 inches (7.29 cm) to 2.97 inches (7.54 cm) in diameter. The maximum out-of-round diameter variance shall not be greater than  $\pm 0.020$  inch (0.51 mm).
- 2.D.3. **Weight.** The ball shall weigh between 0.78 and 0.935 ounces (22.1 and 26.5 grams).

- 2.D.4. Bounce. The ball shall have a bounce of 30 to 34 inches (76.2 to 86.4 cm) to the top of the ball when dropped from a height of 78 inches (198.1 cm) onto a granite surface plate that is a minimum of 12 inches (30.5 cm) by 12 inches (30.5 cm) by 4 inches (10.2 cm). The test is to be performed at an ambient temperature of 75 to 80 degrees F (24 to 27 degrees C).
- 2.D.5. Hardness. The ball shall have a hardness of 40 to 50 on a Durometer D scale at an ambient temperature of 75 to 80 degrees F (24 to 27 degrees C).
- 2.D.6. Design. The ball shall have a minimum of 26 to a maximum of 40 circular holes, with spacing of the holes and overall design of the ball conforming to flight characteristics. The ball must have a manufacturer's or supplier's name or logo printed or embossed on it.
- 2.D.7. Approval. The tournament director will choose the tournament ball. The ball selected for play in any USAPA- or IFP-sanctioned tournament must be named on the official list of approved balls posted on the USAPA and IFP websites: [usapa.org](http://usapa.org) and [ipickleball.org](http://ipickleball.org).

## 2.E. ***Paddle Specifications.***

- 2.E.1. Material. The paddle may be made of any material deemed safe and not prohibited by these rules. The paddle shall be made of rigid, non-compressible material meeting the criteria located on the USAPA and IFP websites.

- 2.E.2. Surface. The paddle hitting surface shall not contain holes, indentations, rough texturing, or any objects or features that allow a player to impart additional spin on the ball. Paddle roughness is determined using a Starrett SR160 Surface Roughness Tester (or equivalent). The allowable limits for roughness shall be no greater than 30 micrometers ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) on the Rz reading (average maximum height, peak to valley) and no greater than 40 micrometers on the Rt reading (average maximum height, peak to valley). All readings will be taken in six different directions.
- 2.E.2.a. Paint. The surface may be painted but must otherwise adhere to the general surface requirements.
- 2.E.2.b. Reflection. The paddle hitting surface shall not be adversely reflective, such that it has the potential to obscure the vision of opposing player(s). Paddles shall not have any measurement exceeding 80 GU. Measurement is to be taken at the universal measurement angle of 60 degrees with ETB-0833 Self-Calibration 20° 60° 85° Surface Glossmeter Tester 0-200 GU or equivalent.
- 2.E.2.c. Depictions. Any writing or pictures on the paddle must be in good taste.
- 2.E.3. Size. The combined length and width, including any edge guard and butt cap, shall not exceed 24 inches (60.96 cm). The paddle length cannot

exceed 17 inches (43.18 cm). There is no restriction on paddle thickness.

2.E.4. Weight. There is no restriction on paddle weight.

2.E.5. Alterations. Altered paddles must meet all specifications.

2.E.5.a. The only alterations or additions that may be made to a commercially made paddle are edge guard tape, lead tape, changes to the grip size or grip wrap, and name decals and/or other identification markings on the paddle face.

2.E.5.b. Decals and tape can extend no farther than 1.0 inch (2.54 cm) above the top of the grip nor more than 0.5 inch (1.27 cm) inside the outer edge of a paddle or, if an edge guard is in place, 0.5 inch inside the edge guard.

2.E.5.c. Pen markings are allowed on the paddle playing surface as long as they do not impact the surface roughness and are in good taste.

2.E.6. Prohibited Surface Features and Mechanical Features.

2.E.6.a. Anti-skid paint or any paint textured with sand, rubber particles, or any material that causes additional spin.

2.E.6.b. Rubber and synthetic rubber.

2.E.6.c. Sandpaper characteristics.

- 2.E.6.d. Moving parts that can increase head momentum.
- 2.E.6.e. Removable parts. No removable parts except for paddle grip adjustments and/or grip wraps and lead tape on the paddle edge.
- 2.E.6.f. Springs or spring-like material.
- 2.E.6.g. Flexible membranes or any compressible material that creates a trampoline effect.
- 2.E.6.h. Electrical, electronic, or mechanical assistance of any sort.
- 2.E.7. Model Designation. The manufacturer must have a clearly marked brand and model name or model number on the paddle. Paddles with different core material, surface material, or other significant differences must have a unique name or number.
- 2.E.8. Homemade Paddles. Paddles that are not commercially made are not permitted (e.g., homemade paddles).
- 2.F. **Equipment Approval and Authorization.** The approval of equipment authorized for sanctioned tournament play shall be made by the USAPA Board of Directors acting on a recommendation of the Equipment Evaluation Committee (EEC).
  - 2.F.1. Approval and authorization of a specified piece, model, brand, version, design, or type of equipment may be revoked by the Board of Directors upon 18 months' notice on the USAPA

and IFP website home pages, official national newsletter publications, or other acceptable means of communication, if the specified equipment is found to have been materially changed by the manufacturer or if the equipment materially degrades or changes under ordinary use so as to significantly alter the nature of the sport.

2.F.2. Manufacturers are subject to annual and/or blind testing to ensure that products as produced and sold are compliant with all requirements. The lists of approved equipment may be posted on the USAPA and IFP websites: [usapa.org](http://usapa.org) and [ipickleball.com](http://ipickleball.com).

2.F.3. USAPA/IFP Approved Paddle List – Players are responsible for confirming that the paddle they are using for match play is listed as Pass on the USAPA/IFP Approved Paddle List. The lists of approved equipment may be posted on the USAPA and IFP websites: [usapa.org](http://usapa.org) and [ipickleball.com](http://ipickleball.com).

2.F.3.a. Violation. If at any point during the tournament it is determined that a player is using a paddle that violates any of the paddle specifications or is not listed on the USAPA/IFP Approved Paddle List as Pass, the following penalties apply:

- If the violation is identified prior to the match starting, the player may switch to a paddle listed as Pass on

the USAPA/IFP Approved Paddle List without penalty.

- If the violation is identified after the match has started, the player or team forfeits only the match being played.
- If the violation is discovered after the match has concluded, the match results stand.

## **2.G. Apparel.**

- 2.G.1. Safety and Distraction. A player may be required to change garments that are inappropriate.
- 2.G.2. Depictions. Graphics, insignias, pictures, and writing on apparel must be in good taste.
- 2.G.3. Footwear. Shoes must have soles that do not mark or damage the court's playing surface.
- 2.G.4. Violation. The tournament director has the authority to enforce apparel changes. If the player refuses to comply with the apparel rules, the tournament director may declare a forfeiture of the match.

## SECTION 3 – DEFINITIONS

- 3. A.1. 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.
- 3. A.2. Court – The court is defined as the area inside the outer dimensions of the baselines and sidelines.
- 3. A.3. Cross-Court – The court diagonally opposite your court.
- 3. A.4. Dead Ball – A ball that is no longer in play.
- 3. A.5. Dink Shot – A soft shot that is intended to arc over the net and land within the non-volley zone.
- 3. A.6. Double Bounce – When the ball bounces more than once on one side before it is returned.
- 3. A.7. Double Hit – Hitting the ball twice before it is returned.
- 3. A.8. Drop Shot – A shot that falls short of the opponent's position on the opponent's side of the court.
- 3. A.9. Drop Shot Volley – A volley intended to diminish the speed of the ball and return it short on the opponent's side of the court, near the net.
- 3. A.10. Fault – A loss of the rally resulting in a point for the opposing team, a loss of serve (from first serve to second serve), or a side out.
- 3. A.11. First Server – In singles, the player who serves first. In doubles, after each side out, the player who is correctly positioned on the right/even service court



when service is awarded to the team becomes the first server.

- 3. A.12. Starting Server – For each doubles team, the player designated to serve first at the start of the game. In doubles tournament play, the starting server shall wear a visible form of identification determined by the tournament director.
- 3. A.13. Groundstroke – Hitting the ball after one bounce.
- 3. A.14. Half Volley – A groundstroke that contacts the ball immediately after it bounces and before the ball reaches its full height.
- 3. A.15. Hinder – Any element or occurrence outside of the player’s control that impacts play. Example: a stray ball that enters the court during play.
- 3. A.16. Left/Odd Court – The service area on the left side of the court, when facing the net. The starting server in doubles or the singles server should be positioned on the left/odd side of the court when his or her score is odd.
- 3. A.17. Let – A serve or rally that must be replayed for any reason.
- 3. A.18. Lob – A high and deep shot that is intended to force the opposing side back to the baseline.
- 3. A.19. Non-Volley Zone (NVZ) – The 7-foot-by-20-foot area adjacent to each side of the net. All lines bounding the NVZ are part of the NVZ. The NVZ is two-dimensional and does not rise above the playing surface. See Figure 2-1 and Section 2.B.3.
- 3. A.20. Overhead Slam/Smash – A hard overhand shot.

- 3. A.21. Paddle Head – The paddle, excluding the handle.
- 3. A.22. Passing Shot – A volley or groundstroke that passes an opponent, usually to win the rally.
- 3. A.23. Permanent Object – Any object on or near the court, including hanging over the court, that can interfere with play. Permanent objects include the ceiling, walls, fencing, lighting fixtures, net posts, the stands and seats for spectators, the referee, line judges, spectators when in their recognized positions, and all other objects around and above the court.
- 3. A.24. Rally – Continuous play that occurs after the serve and before a fault.
- 3. A.25. Receiver – The receiver is the player diagonally opposite from the server.
- 3. A.26. Replay – Any rally that is replayed for any reason without the awarding of a point or a change of server.
- 3. A.27. Right/Even Court – The service area on the right side of the court, when facing the net. The starting server in doubles or the singles server should be positioned on the right/even court when his or her score is even.
- 3. A.28. Second Serve – A term used to describe the condition when a serving team loses the first of its two allocated serves.
- 3. A.29. Second Server – In doubles, the first server's partner. The second server serves after the first server loses serve.
- 3. A.30. Serve – Hitting the ball to start the rally.
- 3. A.31. Server – The person holding the ball at the time the score is called.

- 3. A.32. Service Court – The area on either side of the centerline, including the centerline, sideline, and baseline, excluding the NVZ.
- 3. A.33. Service Motion – Begins when the player’s arm moves to initiate the swing backward or forward to contact the ball.
- 3. A.34. Serving Area – The area behind the baseline and on or between the imaginary lines extended from the court centerline and each sideline.
- 3. A.35. Side Out – When a singles player or doubles team loses its serve(s) and service is awarded to the opposing side.
- 3. A.36. Technical Foul – A referee’s assessment of a rule or behavioral violation that results in 1 point being awarded to the opposing team. May be issued when one technical warning has already been given or when warranted by a player’s or team’s actions, based on the referee’s judgment.
- 3. A.37. Technical Warning – A referee’s first verbal warning of a rule or behavioral violation given to a player or team prior to a technical foul being called. Points are not awarded for a technical warning.
- 3. A.38. Volley – During a rally, hitting the ball while in the air, before the ball bounces.

## SECTION 4 – THE SERVE, SERVICE SEQUENCE, AND SCORING RULES

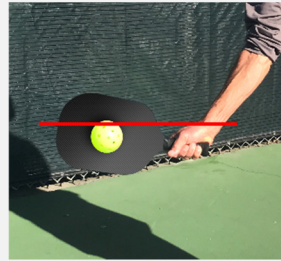
### 4.A. *The Serve.*

- 4.A.1. The entire score must be called before the server begins his or her service motion.
- 4.A.2. The service motion begins with the server's arm movement initiating the swing, backward or forward, to contact the ball.
- 4.A.3. At the beginning of the serve, both feet must be behind the baseline and the imaginary extensions of the baseline. At the time the ball is struck, at least one foot must be on the playing surface or ground behind the baseline, and the server's feet may not touch the playing surface in an area outside the confines of the serving area.
- 4.A.4. The ball must be struck without bouncing it. A person with a physical disability, such as having the use of only one arm, may bounce the ball before making the service motion.
- 4.A.5. The server's arm must be moving in an upward arc at the time the ball is struck and may be made with either a forehand or backhand motion (see Figure 4-3).
- 4.A.6. The paddle head must be below the server's wrist when it strikes the ball. The highest point of the paddle head cannot be above the highest

part of the wrist (where the wrist joint bends)  
(see Figures 4-1 and 4-2).



**Figure 4-1 (legal serve)**



**Figure 4-2 (illegal serve)**



**Figure 4-3 (legal serve)**

*(Photos and graphics courtesy of Steve Taylor, Digital Spatula)*

- 4.A.7. Contact with the ball is made below waist level (waist is defined as the navel level) (see Figures 4-1 and 4-3 above).
- 4.A.8. Placement. The server must serve to the correct service court (the court diagonally opposite the server). The serve must clear the net and the NVZ. The serve may land on any service court line.
- 4.A.9. If the serve clears the net or hits the net and then touches the receiver or the receiver's partner, it is a point for the serving team.

**4.B. *Player Positions.***

- 4.B.1. Server and Receiver. The correct server and receiver and their positions are determined by the score and the players' starting positions in the game.
- 4.B.2. At the start of each game, the starting server begins the serve from the right/even side of the court.
- 4.B.3. Each player will serve until a rally is lost or a fault is declared against the player or team.
- 4.B.4. As long as the server holds serve, after each point, the server will alternate serving from the right/even and left/odd sides of the court.
- 4.B.5. Singles.
  - 4.B.5.a. If the player's score is even (0, 2, 4 ...), the serve must be made from the right/even serving area and be received

in the right/even service court by the opponent.

4.B.5.b. If the player's score is odd (1, 3, 5 ...), the serve must be made from the left/odd serving area and be received in the left/odd service court by the opponent.

4.B.5.c. After the server loses the rally or faults, a side out occurs and service is awarded to the opponent.

4.B.6. Doubles. Both players on a team will serve before a side out is declared, except at the start of each game, when only the starting server will serve. The starting server of each game is therefore designated as "Server 2" for scoring purposes, since a side out will occur once a fault is committed by the team and service is awarded to the opposing team.

4.B.6.a. At the start of each side out, service begins in the right/even serving area.

4.B.6.b. When the team's score is even (0, 2, 4 ...), the team's starting server's correct position is at the right/even serving area. When the team's score is odd (1, 3, 5...), the starting server's correct position is at the left/odd court.

4.B.6.c. After each side out, service begins with the player correctly positioned on the right/even side of the court according to the team's score. This player is referred to as "Server 1" and his or her partner is "Server 2."

- 4.B.6.d. Server 1 will serve, alternating service sides after each point is won, until a rally is lost or fault is called on the server's team.
  - 4.B.6.e. After Server 1's team loses a rally or faults, Server 2 will serve from the correct position and will alternate serving positions as long as the serving team continues to win points.
  - 4.B.6.f. The receiving team does not alternate positions when a point is scored by the serving team. The receiving team may switch positions after the return of serve, but after the rally is over, the receiver must return back to the correct position, which corresponds to the team's score and the players' starting positions.
- 4.B.7. Partner Positions. In doubles, there is no restriction on the position of the partners of the server and receiver as long as they are on their respective team's side of the net. They can be positioned on or off the court.
- 4.B.8. Prior to the start of the service motion, to determine the correct server and correct service court, the serving team may ask the referee the score and "Am I the correct server?" Players may not ask if they are in the correct position.
- 4.B.9. Prior to the start of the service motion, to determine the correct receiver and his or her position, the receiving team may ask the referee



to confirm the score. Players may not ask if they are in the correct position.

4.B.10. The referee will not correct players' positions. When an incorrect player serves or receives, or a player serves from an incorrect position, the referee will immediately stop play and identify the fault.

4.B.11. **Incorrect Server or Player Position.** When an incorrect server or player position is discovered after a rally, the offending team can be faulted until the next serve occurs. A point scored during the rally will not count. Any previous points scored by the incorrect server or with players in the incorrect positions will stand.

4.C. **Readiness.** The service motion will not start until the score has been called in its entirety.

4.C.1. **Not-Ready Signals.** The server and receiver must use one of the following signals to indicate that he or she is not ready to serve or receive the serve, respectively: 1) raising the paddle above his or her head, 2) raising the non-paddle hand above his or her head, or 3) completely turning his or her back to the server. These signals are not valid if used by the server's or receiver's partner.

4.C.2. Once the score has been called, the receiver cannot become "not ready" unless there is a valid hinder.

4.D. **Calling the Score.** The referee shall call the score when he or she determines that the receiver is in position or should be ready to play. In doubles, when calling the

score, the referee does not have to wait for the receiver's partner or the server's partner to be ready.

4.D.1. If it appears the server or receiver is delaying the game, the referee will call the score to start the 10-Second Rule. See 4.E.

4.D.2. Any player may call a time-out before the service motion has begun. See 4.A.2.

4.E. **The 10-Second Rule.** Once the referee determines the receiver is in position and ready or should be in position and ready and the score has been called, the server is allowed 10 seconds to serve the ball.

4.E.1. If the server exceeds 10 seconds to serve, a fault will be declared.

4.E.2. A fault will be called against a receiver who signals "not ready" after the score has been called, unless there is a hinder. A player or team out of position is not considered a valid hinder.

4.E.3. A receiver who attempts to return a serve shall be considered to have been ready, whether or not contact with the ball was made.

4.E.3.a. If no attempt was made, the referee will determine if the receiver had a valid reason.

4.E.3.b. A valid reason will result in a service replay. Some valid reasons are court safety issues or hinders that occur as the ball is served.

- 4.F. **Scoring.** A singles player or doubles team scores points only when serving. Points may also be scored when technical fouls are called against the opposing side
- 4.G. **Points.** A point is scored by serving the ball and winning the rally.
- 4.H. **Winning the Game.** The first side scoring the winning point wins.
- 4.I. **Calling the Score in Singles Matches.** The proper sequence for calling the score is server score then receiver score as two numbers; e.g., “one – zero.”
- 4.J. **Calling the Score in Doubles Matches.** The score is called as three numbers in doubles matches. The proper sequence for calling the score is: serving team’s score – receiving team’s score – the server number (one or two), (e.g., “zero – one – one”). To start each game, the score will be called as “zero – zero – two.”
- 4.K. **Wrong Score Called.** If the server or referee calls the wrong score, any player may stop play before the return of serve to ask for a correction.
- 4.K.1. If the score was incorrect, the player or referee will call the correct score and the ball will be re-served with no penalty.
- 4.K.2. A player who stops play after the serve when there is no error in the score will have committed a fault and shall lose the rally.
- 4.K.3. A player who stops play after the return of serve will have committed a fault and shall lose the rally.

- 4.L. **Service Foot Faults.** During the serve, when the ball is struck, the server's feet shall:
- 4.L.1. Not touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the sideline.
  - 4.L.2. Not touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the centerline.
  - 4.L.3. Not touch the court, including the baseline.
- 4.M. **Service Faults.** During the service, it is a fault against the server resulting in loss of serve if:
- 4.M.1. The server serves from the incorrect serving area.
  - 4.M.2. In doubles, the incorrect player serves the ball.
  - 4.M.3. The server misses the ball when trying to hit it. If the ball lands on the ground without the server swinging at the ball, it is not a fault.
  - 4.M.4. The served ball touches any permanent object other than the net, the receiver, or the receiver's partner before it hits the ground.
  - 4.M.5. The served ball touches the server or server's partner, or anything the server or server's partner is wearing or holding.
  - 4.M.6. The served ball lands in the non-volley zone.
  - 4.M.7. The served ball lands outside the service court.
  - 4.M.8. The served ball hits the net and lands inside the non-volley zone.
  - 4.M.9. The served ball hits the net and lands outside the service court.

- 4.M.10. The server begins the service motion before the entire score is called.
  - 4.M.11. The server uses an illegal service motion.
  - 4.M.12. The server or his/her partner calls a time-out after the score has been called and the server has started the service motion.
  - 4.M.13. The serving team asks the referee to confirm the correct server and/or the team's score after the score has been called and the server has started the service motion.
- 4.N. Receiver Faults.** It is a fault against the receiving team resulting in a point for the server if:
- 4.N.1. The incorrect player returns the serve.
  - 4.N.2. The receiver or the receiver's partner is touched by or interferes with the flight of the ball before it bounces.
  - 4.N.3. The receiver or the receiver's partner calls a time-out after the score has been called and the server has started the service motion.
  - 4.N.4. The receiver signals "not ready" after the score has been called.
  - 4.N.5. The receiving team asks the referee to confirm the score after the score has been called and the server has started the service motion.
- 4.O. Service Lets.** There is no limit to the number of lets a server may serve. The serve is a let and will be replayed if:

- 4.0.1. The serve touches the net, strap, or band and is otherwise good and lands in the service court.
- 4.0.2. The referee calls a service let.
- 4.0.3. Any player calls a service let. If the referee determines that a service let called by a player did not occur, a fault will be declared against the offending player.

## SECTION 5 – SERVICE AND SIDE SELECTION RULES

### 5.A. *Selection of Side, Serve, or Receive.*

- 5.A.1. Any fair method can be used to determine which player or team has first choice of side, serve, or receive. (Example: Write a 1 or 2 on the back of the score sheet.) If the winner chooses to serve or receive first, the loser picks the starting side. If the winner chooses starting side, the loser chooses to serve or receive. The winner can defer first choice to opponent(s).
- 5.A.2. Once a selection has been made, it cannot be changed.
- 5.A.3. In doubles, the starting server may be changed before the start of any game with notice given to the referee.
- 5.A.4. The starting server for each doubles team must visibly wear the form of identification determined by the tournament director.

### 5.B. *Change of Sides.*

- 5.B.1. Sides and initial service will be switched upon the completion of each game.
- 5.B.2. The maximum of 2 minutes is allowed between games. The referee will announce a 15-second warning and then call the score after the full 2 minutes has elapsed and apply the 10-Second

Rule even if all players are not on the court and/or not ready to play. See Rule 4.E.

- 5.B.3. In a match with two out of three games to 11 points, in game three, sides will be switched when the first team reaches a score of 6. Serve remains with the player holding serve.
- 5.B.4. In a game to 15 points, sides will be switched when the first team reaches a score of 8. Serve remains with the player holding serve.
- 5.B.5. In a game to 21 points, sides will be switched when the first team reaches a score of 11. Serve remains with the player holding serve.
- 5.B.6. The maximum time allowed to switch sides during a game is 1 minute. During this time, players may communicate with each other, but no third-party coaching is allowed. The referee will announce a 15-second warning, then call the score after the full 1 minute and apply the 10-Second Rule even if all players are not on the court and/or not ready to play. See Rule 4.E.



## SECTION 6 – LINE CALL RULES

- 6.A. A served ball that clears the non-volley zone and lands in the correct service court or on any correct service court line is in.
- 6.B. Except the serve, any ball in play that lands in the court or touches any court line is in.
- 6.C. A ball contacting the playing surface outside of the baseline or sideline, even though the edge of the ball overlaps the line, is considered out of bounds (see Figure 6-1).

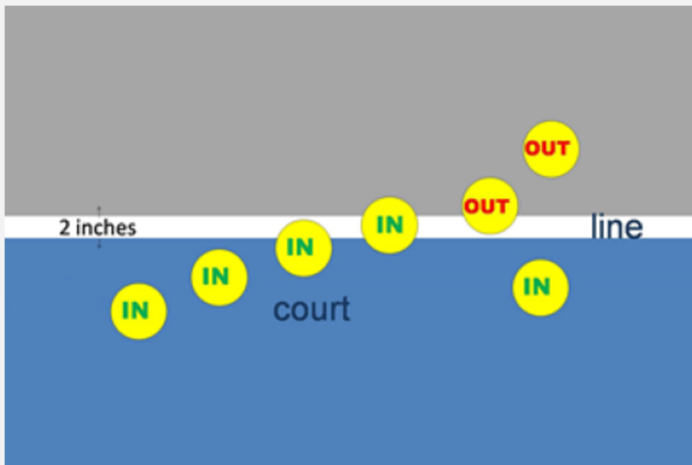


Figure 6-1

- 6.D. Code of Ethics for Line Calling. Pickleball is played according to specific rules. It also requires a code of

ethics for line-calling responsibilities when performed by players.

The line-calling responsibilities of players are different from those assigned to referees or line judges. The officials make impartial judgment calls with all players' interests in mind. The player, when assigned line-calling duties, must strive for accuracy and operate under the principle that all questionable calls must be resolved in favor of the opponent.

The basic elements are:

- 6.D.1. Players will call the lines on their side of the court (excluding service foot faults and all non-volley-zone lines, if being called by a referee).
- 6.D.2. Players' only line call is the centerline on the serve in matches that have line judges.
- 6.D.3. The opponent gets the benefit of the doubt on line calls made. Any ball that cannot be called "out" will be considered "in." A player cannot claim a "let" because the ball was not seen or there is uncertainty. A player may appeal to the referee to make the call if he or she did not clearly see the ball land. If the referee is unable to make the call, the ball is "in."
- 6.D.4. Spectators should not be consulted on any line call.
- 6.D.5. A player should not question an opponent's call, although any player may appeal a call to the referee before the score is called to start the next point.

- 6.D.6. Requesting Opponents' Help. A player may ask the opponent's opinion if the opponent was in a better position to make a line call on the player's side of the court. The vision of a player looking down the line is more likely to be accurate than one looking across the line. An opponent's opinion, if requested, must be accepted.
- 6.D.7. Do not call a ball "out" when you are looking across the line, unless you can clearly see a space between the line and the ball as it hits. The player's depth-of-field judgment, based on the laws of parallax, prevents accurate judgment in these cases.
- 6.D.8. All "let" or "out" calls must be made "instantly"; otherwise, the ball is presumed good and still in play. "Instantly" is defined as calling "let" or "out" prior to the ball being hit by the opponent or before a dead ball is declared.
- 6.D.9. In doubles play, if one player calls the ball "out" and the partner calls it "in," then doubt exists and the team's call will be "in." Any player may appeal a call to the referee. If the referee did not see the ball, the ball is considered in.
- 6.D.10. "Out" line calls should be promptly signaled by voice and may include a hand signal (see 13.E.2), regardless of how obvious they may seem.
- 6.D.11. While the ball is in the air, if a player yells "out," "no," "bounce it," or any other words to communicate to his or her partner that the ball may be out, it shall be considered player

communication only and not considered a line call.

- 6.D.12. If an “out” call is made after the ball bounces, it will be considered a line call. The ball will be considered dead and play shall stop. If a player on the receiving team (the team that did not make the out call) or the referee upon appeal then indicates the ball was in, it is a fault against the team called the ball out. Exception: If the match has line judges, the baseline and sideline judges are responsible for the call. See 13.E.

## SECTION 7 – FAULT RULES

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

A fault will be declared for the following:

- 7. A. If the serve or service return does not bounce before striking the ball (Two-Bounce Rule).
- 7. B. Hitting the ball into the net on the serve or any return.
- 7. C. Hitting the ball under the net or between the net and the net post.
- 7. D. Hitting the ball out of bounds.
- 7. E. Failure to hit the ball before it bounces twice on the receiving player's court.
- 7. F. Violation of any service rule. See Section 4.
- 7. G. A player, a player's apparel, or a player's paddle touches the net system or the net posts when the ball is in play.
- 7. H. The ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying, except the paddle or the player's paddle hand below the wrist. If the player is in the process of changing hands with both hands on the paddle, or is attempting a two-handed stroke and either hand is hit below the wrist, then the ball is still in play.
- 7. I. A live ball that is stopped by a player before it becomes dead. Example: catching or stopping a ball in flight before it makes contact with the court.
- 7. J. A ball in play strikes any permanent object before bouncing on the court.

- 7. K. If the ball in play hits a permanent object after it has bounced on the court, the player who hit the ball wins the rally.
- 7. L. Violation of the non-volley-zone rules. See Section 9.
- 7. M. Violation of the other rules. See Sections 11.
- 7. N. The serve is made by bouncing the ball before hitting it. Exception: See 4.A.4.
- 7. O. Once the ball is in play, a player hits the ball before it passes the plane of the net.
- 7. P. The player deliberately carries or catches the ball in play on the paddle.
- 7. Q. The player deliberately touches the ball with the paddle more than once (double hit). See 11.A.

## SECTION 8 – DEAD BALL RULES

- 8. A. A dead ball is declared after any action that stops play.
- 8. B. A ball is declared dead once it has bounced twice before being returned or has violated one of the fault rules. See Section 7.
- 8. C. A hinder called by the referee or player will result in a dead ball. The referee will determine if the hinder called by the player was valid. A valid hinder will result in a replay.
- 8. D. A service let called by the referee or player will result in a dead ball.

## SECTION 9 – NON-VOLLEY-ZONE RULES

- 9. A. All volleys must be initiated outside of the non-volley zone.
- 9. B. A fault will be declared if, in the act of volleying the ball, a player or anything contacting the player touches the non-volley zone.
  - 9.B.1. The act of volleying the ball includes the swing, the follow-through, and the momentum from the action.
  - 9.B.2. If the paddle touches the non-volley zone during the volley motion, before or after contacting the ball, it is a fault.
- 9. C. It is a fault if the player's momentum causes the player to contact anything that is touching the non-volley zone, including the player's partner.
  - 9.C.1. It is a fault even if the ball is declared dead before the player contacts the non-volley zone.
- 9. D. If a player has touched the non-volley zone for any reason, that player cannot volley a return until both feet have made contact with the playing surface completely outside the non-volley zone. A maneuver such as standing within the non-volley zone, jumping up to hit a volley, and then landing outside the non-volley zone is prohibited.
- 9. E. A player may enter the non-volley zone at any time except when that player is volleying the ball.



- 9. F. A player may enter the non-volley zone before or after returning any ball that bounces.
- 9. G. A player may stay inside the non-volley zone to return a ball that has bounced. There is no violation if a player does not exit the non-volley zone after hitting a ball that bounces.
- 9. H. There is no violation if a player returns the ball while his or her partner is standing in the non-volley zone.
- 9. I. For non-officiated play, non-volley-zone faults may be called by any player on either team. Benefit of the doubt goes to the player who makes the call.

## SECTION 10 – TIME-OUT RULES

10. A. **Standard Time-Out.** A player or team is entitled to two time-outs per 11- or 15-point game. For games to 21 points, each team is allowed three time-outs per game.
- 10.A.1. Each time-out period may last up to 1 minute.
- 10.A.2. Play must be resumed at 1 minute or when all players are ready to resume play, whichever occurs first, unless another time-out is called by either side. Rule 10.A.6 procedures will be followed to resume play during a standard time-out.
- 10.A.3. Time-outs may not be called once the referee has called the score and the server has begun the service motion or the ball is in play.
- 10.A.4. Additional time-outs for player hydration are not allowed. Exception: See 10.C.
- 10.A.5. There is no penalty for calling a time-out when none is available if all other time-out rules are complied with. Play will immediately resume.
- 10.A.6. The referee will give the players a warning when there are 15 seconds remaining. At the end of the time-out, the referee will call “time in”, and announce the score to begin the 10-Second Rule even if all

players are not on the court and/or not ready to play. If the server does not serve within 10 seconds after the score is called, and no additional time-outs are called or available, a fault will be called.

**10. B. *Medical Time-Out.*** If a player is accidentally injured during a match, that player may take a medical time-out. On-site medical staff should be summoned to assess the situation and render appropriate first aid. There are no medical time-outs for muscle cramping unless deemed necessary by the on-site medical team or the tournament director.

**10.B.1.** Medical personnel, or the tournament director if no medical personnel are present, must agree that there is a valid reason for a medical time-out to take place and that the player is not just stalling to rest or recuperate.

**10.B.1.a.** If medical personnel, or the tournament director if no medical personnel are present, determine that there is a valid medical condition, then that player will be allowed no more than 15 minutes for the medical time-out. If the player cannot resume play after the 15-minute medical time-out period, the match shall be awarded to the opponents. Rule 10.A.6 procedures will be

followed to resume play during a medical time-out.

10.B.1.b. If medical personnel, or the tournament director if no medical personnel are present, determine that there is not a valid medical condition, the player or team will be assessed a regular time-out, if available, and issued a technical warning. If a technical warning has already been issued, then a technical foul will be called. The medical time-out is no longer available to that player for that match.

10.B.2. A player may take only one medical time-out per match.

10.B.3. The time used must be continuous and may be up to 15 minutes. If less than 15 minutes is used, no additional medical time is available to the player during that match.

10.B.4. If blood is present, play may not resume until the bleeding has been controlled and any blood on clothing and the court has been cleaned up.

10.B.4.a. All issues relating to blood cleanup or control will be considered a referee time-out, unless the injury is intentionally self-inflicted.

10. C. **Hydration Break.** The tournament director may authorize referees to allow players to quickly drink water or other hydration as long as it does not impact the flow of the game. During this time, partner communication is not allowed.
10. D. **Equipment Time-Outs.** Players are expected to keep all apparel and equipment in good playable condition and are expected to use regular time-outs and time between games for adjustments and replacement of equipment. If a player or team is out of time-outs and the referee determines that an equipment change or adjustment is necessary for fair and safe continuation of the match, the referee may award an equipment time-out not to exceed 2 minutes. Rule 10.A.6 procedures will be followed to resume play during an equipment time-out.
- 10.D.1. Apparel and equipment adjustments that can be accomplished quickly are allowed between points (e.g., tying shoelaces, cleaning glasses, adjusting hat).
10. E. **Time Between Games.** The period between each game in a match shall not exceed 2 minutes. Rule 10.A.6 procedures will be followed to resume play.
10. F. **Time Between Matches.** The minimum time between matches shall be 10 minutes. If all players are ready to play prior to 10 minutes, the match may be called early.
- 10.F.1. In a championship match with a tie-breaker match: If the winner of the losers bracket defeats the winner of the winners bracket, then a tie-breaker match to 15 points must be played. Maximum time

between the championship match and the tie-breaker match is 10 minutes. Rule 10.A.6 procedures will be followed to begin play for the tie-breaker match.

- 10. G. **Suspended Games.** A game suspended due to extenuating circumstances shall be resumed with the same server, score, and remaining time-outs as when interrupted.
- 10. H. **Other Time-Out Rules.** No time-outs may be taken before a match starts. A match begins when all players are present and the starting score is called. Failure to be present on time shall result in match forfeiture. See 13.H.3.
  - 10.H.1. A time-out may be called at the start of the second or third game in a two-out-of-three-game match.

## SECTION 11 – OTHER RULES

- 11. A. **Double Hits.** Balls can be hit twice, but this must occur during an unintentional, continuous, single-direction stroke. If the stroke is not continuous or not in a single direction, the hit is not allowed and a fault will be declared.
- 11. B. **Switching Hands.** A paddle may be switched from hand to hand at any time.
- 11. C. **Two-Handed Shots.** Are allowed.
- 11. D. **Missed Shot.** A player completely missing the ball when attempting to strike it does not create a dead ball. The ball remains in play until it bounces twice or until any other fault has occurred.
- 11. E. **Broken or Cracked Ball.** Play continues until the end of the rally. Players may appeal to the referee to determine if a broken or cracked ball impacted the rally. If, in the judgment of the referee, a broken or cracked ball impacted the outcome of the rally, the referee will call for a replay with a replacement ball. In non-officiated sanctioned play, if the players do not agree, the rally stands as played.
- 11. F. **Injury During Game.** The rally continues to its conclusion despite an injury to any of the players.
- 11. G. **Player Equipment Problem.** A rally will not be stopped if a player loses or breaks a paddle or loses an item, unless the action results in a fault.

11. H. **Items on the Court.** If any item a player is/was wearing or carrying lands on his/her side of the court, unless the item lands in the non-volley zone as a result of a volley, the ball remains in play even if it hits the item.
11. I. **Plane of the Net.** After striking the ball, a player or anything the player is/was wearing or carrying may cross the plane of the net or the imaginary extension line of the net beyond the posts but may not touch any part of the net system or the opponent's court.
- 11.I.1. Exception. If the ball bounces into a player's non-volley zone with enough backspin as to cause it to return over the net, the player may reach over or around the net to hit the ball but may not touch the net system or the opponent's court. If the player does not touch the ball, the team that last struck the ball wins the rally.
11. J. **Distractions.** Players may not distract an opponent when the opponent is about to play the ball. (Examples: making loud noises, stomping feet, intentionally waving the paddle around in a distracting manner, physically interfering with your opponent's ability to hit the ball.)
- 11.J.1. A player may ask the referee to determine if a distraction occurred at the time the opponent was about to strike the ball. If, in the judgment of the referee, a distraction did occur, a fault will be declared against the offending player or team and will result in a loss of the rally. In non-officiated sanctioned play, if players do not agree



that a distraction occurred, any player may request a decision by a referee or the tournament director. See 13.A.1.

11.J.2. In doubles play, team communication before the opponent strikes the ball shall not be considered a fault.

11. K. **The Net Posts.** The net posts (including connected wheels, arms, or other support construction) are positioned out of bounds. If a ball or player contacts the net post, it is a fault and a dead ball is declared.

11.K.1. A ball contacting the net, the net cable, or rope between the net posts remains in play.

11. L. **The Net.**

11.L.1. The net and the wires or strings holding up the net are positioned (mostly) on the court. Therefore, if the ball strikes the top of the net or strikes the top net wire or string and lands inbounds, then it remains in play.

11.L.2. The ball may not travel between the net and the net post.

11.L.3. The player is allowed to go around the net post and cross the imaginary extension line of the net after the ball is hit, so long as the player or any item he or she is/was wearing or carrying does not touch the opponent's court. If the player goes around the net post and crosses the imaginary extension

line of the net but does not make contact with the ball, a fault will be declared.

11.L.4. If a player hits the ball over the net into the opponent's court, and then the ball bounces back over the net without being touched by the opponent, the striking player wins the rally.

11.L.5. When net systems have a horizontal bar that includes a center base:

11.L.5.a. If the ball hits the horizontal bar or the center base before going over the net, it is a fault.

11.L.5.b. If the ball goes over the net and hits the center base or any part of the horizontal bar or the ball gets caught between the net and the horizontal bar before touching the court, it is a let and will be replayed. See 11.L.5.c for an exception.

11.L.5.c. On the serve, if the ball hits the horizontal bar or the center base after going over the net, it is a fault.

11. M. ***Shots Around the Net Post.*** A player may return the ball around the outside of the net post.

11.M.1. The ball does not need to travel back over the net.

11.M.2. There is no restriction on the height of the return, so a player may return the ball

around the net post below the height of the net.

- 11. N. **Coaching.** During play, except from their partner, players may only receive coaching during time-outs and between games. Once play has begun, any communication between a player and any person not on the court, if determined by the referee to be coaching, shall result in a technical warning to the offending player or team. If the communication occurs a second time, it shall result in a technical foul and a point will be awarded to the opponent.
- 11. O. **One Paddle.** A player shall not use or carry more than one paddle while playing.
- 11. P. **Paddle Possession.** A player must have possession of the paddle when it makes contact with the ball.

## SECTION 12 – SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT POLICIES

### 12. A. *Event Categories.*

Men: Singles and Doubles

Women: Singles and Doubles

Mixed: Doubles

12.A.1. In events described by gender, only members of that gender shall be allowed to play in that event.

12.A.2. Mixed doubles – A mixed doubles team shall consist of one male and one female player.

12. B. *Tournament Game Options.* The primary and recommended tournament scoring option to be used is best two of three games to 11 points, win by 2 points. Other options include: one game to 15 or one game to 21. All formats win by 2 points.

12. C. *Tournament Formats.* There are four tournament formats that may be used. The particular format is typically the choice of the tournament sponsor or the tournament director.

12.C.1. Single Elimination with Consolation. The first player or team to score the match-winning point by at least a 2-point margin wins. Losers from all rounds go into a consolation bracket playing for the bronze

medal/third place and are eliminated after a second loss. The final two players or teams in the winners bracket play for the gold/first-place and silver/second-place medals.

12.C.2. Double Elimination. The first player or team to score the match-winning point by at least a 2-point margin wins. A loss will put the loser into the losers bracket. The winner of the losers bracket will play the winner of the winners bracket for the championship. If the winner of the losers bracket defeats the winner of the winners bracket, then a tie-breaker match to 15 points must be played.

12.C.3. Round Robin. All players or teams play each other. Games may use any of the approved tournament scoring options (see 12.B). The winner is determined based on number of matches won. If two or more teams are tied:

First tie-breaker: head-to-head matches won.

Second tie-breaker: point differential of all games played. (Example: Team A won Match 1 11-8, 11-4, so they would have a point differential of +10. Team A then wins the second match 11-9, 2-11, 11-6. For this round, they would have a point differential of -2. This would give them a total for the day of +8.)

Third tie-breaker: head-to-head point differential.

Fourth tie-breaker: point differential against next-highest team. (Example: If the teams are tied for second, use point differentials against the first-place team.)

12.C.4. Pool Play. The participants are divided into two or more player pools. Each pool plays a round robin to determine the qualifiers that put the players into a single-elimination or double-elimination playoff.

12. D. **Draws and Seeding.** A draw and seeding committee shall be appointed by the tournament director to rank the players and teams and set up a fair draw for each event.
12. E. **Notice of Matches.** It is the responsibility of each player to check the posted schedules to determine the time and place of each match. If any change is made in the schedule after the initial posting, the tournament director or his or her designated representative shall notify the players of the changes.
12. F. **Forfeited Matches.** A player or team forfeiting a match for any reason shall lose the match as if that player or team lost all games of that match. Therefore, the other player or team wins the match as if that player or team won all games of that match. The winning player or team shall receive the appropriate point score and/or advance to the next level.
12. G. **Two-Match Minimum.** In all USAPA-/IFP-sanctioned tournaments, each entrant shall be entitled to

participate in a minimum of two scheduled matches per event entered.

**12. H. *Scheduling Matches.*** A player is not permitted to enter multiple events scheduled on the same day with same or overlapping time duration.

**12. I. *Doubles Play.*** A doubles team shall consist of two players who meet the classification requirements to participate in a particular division of play.

**12.I.1.** In an event based upon skill rating, the higher-rated player determines the team's ability level. In an adult event (ages 19 and over) based upon age grouping, the lowest age of the team members will determine the team's age classification. Players may play in a younger division unless prohibited by the rules of the National Senior Games Association.

**12.I.2.** Juniors (ages 18 and under) may enter any junior event for which they are age qualified. If a junior event is not available or does not receive enough entrants, or at the tournament director's permission, juniors may play as adults in the 19-and-over events.

**12. J.** Partner change may be made prior to the first-round match, with the consent of the tournament director, if the change is due to injury, illness, or circumstances beyond the control of the player.

**12.J.1.** Under no circumstances can a partner change be made after the partners have begun team play.

12. K. **Court Changes.** In USAPA-/IFP-sanctioned tournaments, the tournament director or designee may decide on a change of courts after the completion of any tournament game if such a change will accommodate better spectator or playing conditions.



## SECTION 13 – TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT AND OFFICIATING

13. A. **Tournament Director.** A tournament director shall manage the tournament. It is the tournament director's responsibility to designate the officials and their areas of responsibility.
- 13.A.1. Unless otherwise stated in the rules, officiating decisions may be appealed to the tournament director. After appeal, decisions of the tournament director are final.
- 13.A.2. In all USAPA-/IFP-sanctioned tournaments, the tournament director will provide some method of identifying each team's starting server for each game. This identification must be visible to all on the court during play. Refusal to wear this identification will result in forfeiture of the match.
- 13.A.3. The tournament director should check to ensure that planned support (e.g., first aid, tournament volunteers, etc.) is available.
- 13.A.4. The tournament director has the authority to expel any player from the tournament for misconduct.
13. B. **Rules Briefing.** Before the tournament, all officials and players shall be briefed or supplied with the current

rules about court hinders. This briefing should be put in writing when possible. The current USAPA/IFP tournament rules will apply and be made available. The tournament director may not impose any local rule or use any interpretation of any rule not stated within the current USAPA/IFP rules. Any exception to the rules that is desired because of physical limitations of the court or other local conditions must be approved in advance by the USAPA/IFP.

13. C. **Referee's Duties.** The referee is responsible for all decisions related to procedural and judgment calls during the match.
- 13.C.1. The referee calls non-volley-zone infractions, short serves, and service foot faults.
  - 13.C.2. If the players or line judges make the line calls and there is a disputed line call, the players may request that the referee determine the line call. The referee's call will stand. If the referee cannot make the line call, the player's or line judge's call stands. If doubles partners appeal a line call that they disagree on and the referee cannot make the call, the ball will be declared "in."
    - 13.C.2.a. Spectators should not be consulted on any calls.
  - 13.C.3. Before each match begins, the referee must:
    - 13.C.3.a. Check on preparation of court with respect to cleanliness,

lighting, height of the net, court markings, and hazards.

13.C.3.b. Check on availability and suitability of necessary materials for the match, such as balls, score sheets, pencils, and the location of the clock and/or the scoreboard.

13.C.4. Before each match begins, the referee must meet with players at courtside to:

13.C.4.a. Inspect paddles for irregularities.

13.C.4.b. Point out court hindrances and other approved rule modifications.

13.C.4.c. Instruct players on line-calling duties of the referee, line judges, and players.

13.C.4.d. Use any fair method to determine the initial selection of side, serve, or receive.

13.C.4.e. Ensure the starting servers for each team are wearing the official identification. Refusal to wear the identification will result in forfeiture of the match.

13.C.5. During the match, the referee must:

13.C.5.a. Recheck the net height if the net is disturbed.

- 13.C.5.b. Call the score to start each rally. Calling the score indicates to each side that play is ready to resume.
- 13.C.5.c. Call “point” after each is awarded.
- 13.C.5.d. Appropriately annotate the score sheet after each rally is completed or time-out is called.
- 13.C.5.e. In doubles matches, call “second serve” after the first server’s team loses the rally.
- 13.C.5.f. Call “side out” when appropriate.
- 13.C.5.g. Enforce time-out procedures. See Section 10.
- 13.C.5.h. Maintain player conduct. In USAPA-/IFP-sanctioned tournaments, the referee is empowered to call technical warnings and technical fouls and to forfeit a match if an individual player’s or team’s behavior is detrimental to the tournament.

**13. D. *Player Line Call Responsibilities.***

- 13.D.1. Non-Officiated Sanctioned Play.

13.D.1.a. Players call all lines on their side of the court, including NVZ and service foot faults.

13.D.1.b. Players may call the NVZ faults and service foot faults on the opponent's side of the court.

13.D.2. **Officiated Sanctioned Play.**

13.D.2.a. Players call baseline, sideline, and center service line on their side of the court.

13.D.3. **Officiated Sanctioned Play with Line Judges.**

13.D.3.a. Players call center service line on their side of the court.

13.D.3.b. Player line calls are not valid in matches with line judges. Players may appeal a line call made by the line judge to the referee. See 13.F.

13.D.3.c. If neither the line judge nor the referee is able to make a line call, unless all four players or both players in singles agree to replay the point, the ball will be considered "in."

13. E. ***Line Judges.***

13.E.1. It is recommended that line judges be assigned to medal matches. The

tournament director or designated representative will select line judges.

- 13.E.2. Line judges will call all line faults within their jurisdiction and will signify fault by loudly calling “out” and giving an accepted hand signal.

Accepted hand signals are:

- 13.E.2.a. “Out” ball – outstretched arm pointing in direction of the out-of-bounds ball path.
- 13.E.2.b. “In” ball – arms extended parallel to court with palms down.
- 13.E.2.c. Blocked/blinded – use hands to cover eyes. Note: If the line judge displays this signal, the referee can make the call immediately.

13. F. **Appeals.** Appeals to the referee regarding judgment calls (line calls, double bounce, etc.) will be decided by the referee. The referee may consult players or line judges to decide the outcome of the appeal. (Example: If all four players or both players in singles agree to a replay, the referee should accommodate.)

- 13.F.1. A player may appeal a procedural or judgment call to the referee. The referee will consider procedural appeals and will provide a decision.
- 13.F.2. A referee’s decision will result in a point awarded, a service loss, or a replay.

### 13. G. *Technical Warnings and Technical Fouls.*

- 13.G.1. Technical Warning. A referee will impose a technical warning when a player refuses to abide by the referee's decision or engages in unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 13.G.2. Actions or behavior that will result in a technical warning:
  - 13.G.2.a. A player using objectionable or demeaning language directed at another person will incur a technical warning or a technical foul, depending upon its severity. Excessive profanity used for any reason will incur similar action. The referee will determine the severity of any violation.
  - 13.G.2.b. Excessive arguing.
  - 13.G.2.c. Purposely breaking the ball or striking the ball between rallies.
  - 13.G.2.d. Delay of game, either in the form of taking too much time during time-outs or between rallies or games.
  - 13.G.2.e. Excessive questioning of the referee on the rules.
  - 13.G.2.f. Excessive or unnecessary appeals.

- 13.G.2.g. Challenging the referee's interpretation of a rule and losing the challenge (i.e., referee's ruling was correct) and a time-out is assessed.
  - 13.G.2.h. Requesting a medical time-out without a valid medical condition.
  - 13.G.2.i. Any other actions that are considered unsportsmanlike behavior.
- 13.G.3. Technical Fouls. The referee is empowered to call technical fouls. When a technical foul is called, one point shall be added to the score of the opposing side.
- 13.G.4. Actions or behavior that will result in a technical foul (without a technical warning being issued beforehand):
- 13.G.4.a. Intentionally throwing a paddle.
  - 13.G.4.b. A player using extremely objectionable or demeaning language directed at another person or extremely excessive profanity will incur a technical foul.
  - 13.G.4.c. Threats of any nature to any person.
  - 13.G.4.d. Challenging the referee's interpretation of a rule and



losing the challenge (i.e., referee's ruling was correct) and no time-out is available.

- 13.G.4.e. Any other actions that are considered extreme unsportsmanlike behavior warranting a one-point award to the opposing side.

13.G.5. Effect of Technical Fouls and Technical Warnings. The assessment of a technical warning or technical foul shall be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reason.

- 13.G.5.a. A technical warning shall not result in a loss of rally or point awarded.

- 13.G.5.b. Once a technical warning has been issued, a second technical warning for any reason, given to the same player or team during the match, will result in a technical foul being issued to the player or team.

- 13.G.5.c. If a referee issues a technical foul, one point shall be added to the non-offending player's or team's score. After the point is awarded, the player or team awarded the point must move on their own to the

correct position(s) that reflects their score.

- 13.G.5.d. A called technical warning or technical foul shall have no effect on server change or side out.
- 13.G.5.e. After assessing a technical warning or a technical foul, the referee will call a 15-second warning for the players to become ready. At the end of 15 seconds, the referee will announce the score to begin the 10-Second Rule even if the server and receiver are not on the court and/or not ready to play. See Rule 4.E.

### 13. H. **Match Forfeiture.**

- 13.H.1. The referee will impose a match forfeiture when either of the following occurs:
  - 13.H.1.a. After one technical warning has been assessed and subsequent issuance of a technical foul listed in Rule 13.G.4.
  - 13.H.1.b. After one technical foul has been assessed in accordance with Rule 13.G.5.b. or Rule 13.G.4. and subsequent issuance of another technical

warning or technical foul for any reason.

13.H.2. The tournament director may impose a match forfeiture for failure to comply with the tournament or host facility's rules while on the premises, or for improper conduct on the premises between matches, or for abuse of hospitality, locker room, or other rules and procedures.

13.H.3. A referee may impose a match forfeiture when a player fails to report to play 10 minutes after the match has been called to play. The tournament director may permit a longer delay if circumstances warrant such a decision.

13.H.4. The tournament director has the authority to expel any player from the tournament for misconduct.

13.H.4.a. At the discretion of the tournament director, if a player has been expelled from a tournament, any prizes and ranking points gained from the tournament may be forfeited.

13. I. ***Rules Interpretations.*** If a player thinks the referee has interpreted a rule incorrectly, that player may request that the referee, the head referee, or the tournament director show the applicable rule in the rulebook. If the referee's ruling is correct, the player or team will lose a time-out and be given a technical warning. If no time-

outs are available and the referee's ruling is correct, the player or team will be given a technical foul.

13. J. **Removal of a Referee or Line Judge.** A referee or line judge may be removed when all players agree to the removal. A referee or line judge may also be removed at the discretion of the tournament director. If a referee or line judge is removed, the tournament director will appoint the new referee or line judge.
13. K. **Non-Officiated Sanctioned Play.** Any player may request a referee or tournament director if:
- 13.K.1. The player reasonably believes that a rule is being consistently and intentionally violated by his or her opponent.
  - 13.K.2. A situation arises where players are not able to quickly and easily resolve a dispute.

## SECTION 14 – WHEELCHAIR RULES

14. A. **Basic Play.** The wheelchair is considered to be part of the player's body, and all applicable rules that apply to a player's body will apply to the wheelchair except in the non-volley zone as listed below. All applicable rules that apply to standing players apply to players in a wheelchair except as listed below.
14. B. **Double-Bounce Rule.** The wheelchair pickleball player is allowed to double bounce the ball on his or her side of the net. The second bounce can be anywhere inside or outside of the court boundaries.
14. C. **Service.**
- 14.C.1. Server shall be in a stationary position and is then allowed one push before striking the ball.
  - 14.C.2. At the time the server strikes the ball, the server shall not touch any lines, including the sidelines or the imaginary extension of the centerline, with any wheel.
14. D. **Non-Volley Zone (NVZ).** The double-bounce rule applies to the NVZ.
- 14.D.1. A wheelchair player may strike a ball in the NVZ on a volley. It is a fault only if the larger rear wheels contact the NVZ.
  - 14.D.2. After entering the NVZ, the player's larger rear wheels must return to outside the

NVZ boundaries before hitting a volley or it is a fault.

**14. E. *Wheelchair/Standing Pickleball.***

14.E.1. When a wheelchair pickleball player is playing with or against a standing person in singles or doubles, the rules of pickleball for standing players shall apply to all standing players, while the wheelchair pickleball rules shall apply to all wheelchair players.

**14. F. *Singles Wheelchair Pickleball.***

14.F.1. Singles play with one or both players in a wheelchair shall be played on half of the court. The server and the receiver shall serve, receive, and play the entire point from their respective service and receiving courts.

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