

Pickleball Study Guide

HISTORY:

- Pickleball was invented in 1965 on Bainbridge Island, a short ferry ride from Seattle, Washington. Three dads – Joel Pritchard, Bill Bell, and Barney McCallum — whose kids were bored with their usual summertime activities — are credited for creating game. Pickleball has evolved from original handmade equipment and simple rules into a popular sport throughout the US and Canada. The game is growing internationally as well, with many European and Asian countries adding courts.
- Currently, the sport of Pickleball is exploding in popularity. The number of places to play has more than doubled since 2010. There are now nearly 4,000 locations on the USAPA's Places to Play map. The spread of the sport is attributed to its popularity within community centers, PE classes, YMCA facilities and retirement communities. The sport continues to grow worldwide as well with many new international clubs forming and national governing bodies now established in Canada and India.
- Why Call it "Pickleball?"
 - According to Joel Pritchard's wife (Joan), she started calling the game Pickleball because "the combination of different sports reminded me of the pickle boat in crew where oarsmen were chosen from the leftovers of other boats."
 - According to Barney McCallum, the game was officially named after the Pritchards' dog Pickles, who would chase the ball and run off with it. According to McCallum, "The Pritchards had a dog named Pickles, and you're having fun at a party, right? So anyways, what the hell, let's just call it Pickleball."
 - Others claim both accounts may actually be true.

RULES OF THE GAME:

Basic Rules Overview

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

The Serve

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

Service Sequence

- Both players on the serving doubles team have the opportunity to serve and score points until they commit a fault *(except for the first service sequence of each new game).
- The first serve of each side-out is made from the right-hand court.
- If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left-hand court.

- As subsequent points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until a fault is committed and the first server loses the serve.
- When the first server loses the serve the partner then serves from their correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game*).
- The second server continues serving until his team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.
- Once the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right-hand court and both players on that team have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.
- In singles the server serves from the right-hand court when his or her score is even and from the left when the score is odd.

*At the beginning of each new game only one partner on the serving team has the opportunity to serve before faulting, after which the service passes to the receiving team.

Scoring

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

Double-Bounce Rule

- When the ball is served, the receiving team must let it bounce before returning, and then the serving team must let it bounce before returning, thus two bounces.
- After the ball has bounced once in each team's court, both teams may either volley the ball (hit the ball before it bounces) or play it off a bounce (ground stroke).
- The double bounce rule eliminates the serve and volley advantage and extends rallies.

Non-Volley Zone

- The non-volley zone is the court area within 7' on both sides of the net.
- Volleying is prohibited within the non-volley zone. This rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone.
- It is a fault if, when volleying a ball, the player steps on the non-volley zone, including the line and/or when the player's momentum causes them or anything they are wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone including the associated lines.
- It is a fault if, after volleying, a player is carried by momentum into or touches the non-volley zone, even if the volleyed ball is declared dead before this happens.
- A player may legally be in the non-volley zone any time other than when volleying a ball.
- The non-volley zone is commonly referred to as "**the kitchen.**"

Line Calls

- A ball contacting any line, except the non-volley zone line on a serve, is considered "in."
- A serve contacting the non-volley zone line is short and a fault.

Faults

- A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.
- A fault by the receiving team results in a point for the serving team.
- A fault by the serving team results in the server's loss of serve or side out.
- A fault occurs when:
 - A serve does not land within the confines of the receiving court

- The ball is hit into the net on the serve or any return
- The ball is volleyed before a bounce has occurred on each side
- The ball is hit out of bounds
- A ball is volleyed from the non-volley zone
- A ball bounces twice before being struck by the receiver
- A player, player's clothing, or any part of a player's paddle touches the net or the net post when the ball is in play
- There is a violation of a service rule
- A ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying
- A ball in play strikes any permanent object before bouncing on the court

Determining Serving Team

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

KEY TERMS:

- **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.
- **Cross-court** – The court diagonally opposite your court.
- **Dead Ball** – A dead ball is declared after a fault. See fault.
- **Dink Shot** – A soft shot that is intended to arc over the net and land within the non-volley zone.
- **Double Bounce** – A ball that bounces more than once, on one side, before it is returned.
- **Double Hit** – One side hitting the ball twice before it is returned over net. Double hits may occur by one player or could involve both players on a team.
- **Drop Shot** – A groundstroke shot that falls short of the opponent's position.
- **Drop Shot Volley** – A volley shot that is designed to "kill" the speed of the ball and return it short, near the net, to an opponent positioned at or near the baseline. This shot is especially effective when initiated close to the non-volley line.
- **Fault** – A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.
- **Groundstroke** – Hitting the ball after one bounce.
- **Hinder** – Any element or occurrence that affects play. Examples: a stray ball that enters the court or people who disrupt play by walking across the court.
- **Let** – A serve that hits the net cord and lands in the service court. Let may also refer to a rally that must be replayed for any reason.
- **Lob** – A shot that returns the ball as high and deep as possible, forcing the opposing side back to the baseline.
- **Non-Volley Zone** – The section of court adjacent to the net in which you cannot volley the ball. It includes all lines surrounding the zone. The NVZ is only two dimensional and does not rise above the court surface.
- **Second Serve** – A term used to describe the condition when a serving team begins the game or subsequently loses the first of its two allocated serves.
- **Overhead Slam/Smash** – A hard, overhand shot usually resulting from an opponent's lob, high return, or high bounce.
- **Passing Shot** – A volley or groundstroke shot that is aimed at a distance from the player and is designed to prevent return of the ball (e.g., a line drive close to sideline).
- **Rally** – Continuous play that occurs after the serve and before a fault.

- DIAGRAMS:**

Created in Washington state in 1965, pickleball was named after the pet dog of one of its originators, who used to take the ball and run off with it when it was hit near him. Pickleball borrows from badminton in its rules and playing field;

The ball must bounce before the opposite team returns the serve. Additionally, the serving team has to let the ball bounce before they return the ball.

Pickleball is played on a badminton-sized court over a tennis court-type net.

Serves in pickleball are underhanded and must contact the ball below the player's waist. Serves have to land in the diagonally opposite court from the server.

Only the serving team can score points. Points are earned by serving a ball that the opposing team does not touch, or if the opposing team faults during play. The game is played to 11 points; however, a team has to win by two points.

Pickleball is played with a wiffle ball and a solid paddle, usually 8 inches wide and 15 inches long.

Faulting occurs when the ball is hit out of bounds, if the ball doesn't clear the net, if a ball is returned by a player inside the no-volley zone or if the double-bounce rule is violated.

Source: USA Pickleball Association

