



Pickleball Rules Summary

Note: This is an abbreviated form of the rules to give a quick overview of how the game is played. See the official rules for more information. If there is a conflict between this summary and the official rules, the official rules prevail.

The serve must be hit underhand and each team must play first shot off the bounce. After the ball has bounced once on each side then both teams can either volley the ball in the air or play it off the bounce. This is called the “double bounce rule” because the ball must hit twice (once on each side) before it can be volleyed. This eliminates the serve and volley advantage and prolongs the rallies. To volley a ball means to hit it in the air without first letting it bounce.

The non-volley zone is the 7 foot zone on both sides of the net (delineated by the “kitchen” line). No volleying is permitted within the non-volley zone, preventing players from executing smashes from a position within the zone. When volleying the ball, the player may not step on or over the line. It is a fault if the player’s momentum carries him into the zone while the ball is still in play. A player may be in the non-volley at any other time. The non-volley zone is sometimes referred to as the kitchen.

Both players on the serving team are allowed to serve and a team shall score points only when serving. A game is played to eleven points and a team must win by two points. In some situations event directors may choose to win by one point if time is a problem. Rallies are lost by failing to return the ball in bounds to the opponent’s court before the second bounce, stepping into the non-volley zone and volleying the ball, or by violating the double bounce rule. The hand is considered an extension of the paddle. The player loses the rally if the ball hits any part of his body or clothing.

The server must keep both feet completely behind the back line when serving. The serve is made underhand. The paddle must contact the ball below the waist. The serve is made diagonally cross-court and must clear the non-volley zone. The volley line is a short line for the serve (the serve is a fault if it hits this line). All other lines are good at all times. 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), then the serve may be taken over. At the start of each new game only one player on the first serving team is permitted to serve and fault before giving the ball to the opponents. Thereafter, both members of each team will serve and fault before the ball is turned over to the opposing team. When the receiving team wins the serve the player in the right hand court will always serve first.

When the serving team wins a point the server moves to the other side of the serving team’s court. Note, that if the serve rotation is done properly, the serving team’s score will always be even when the player that started the game on the right side is on the right side and odd when the player is on the left side.

Singles Play: The server serves from the right side when his score is even and from the left side when his score is odd.

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