

Pickleball Club Oxfordshire

Pickleball Social Playing Guide

Here are some points to keep in mind as you continue forward in playing the great sport of pickleball.

Have fun, get some exercise, but play safe by remembering the safety and courtesy rules!

1. Always warm up your body before playing, with some easy stretches, back, arms, shoulders, hamstrings. If in doubt consult with a certified physiotherapist or doctor who can factor in any medical problems you may have.
2. Always call 'BALL ON COURT' loud and clear and NEVER run onto the adjoining court to retrieve your ball; the players on that court will throw it back to you.
3. Do Not run backwards to get to a ball over your head, it is too easy to fall or collide with a wall and hurt yourself.
4. Carefully run forward to get that low bouncing ball so you don't fall and hurt yourself.
5. Wear a good pair of tennis court shoes (no black soles, walking, running, cross trainers, or street shoes).
6. Never walk behind players while they are playing; wait until they are between points and let them know you want to cross behind their court.
7. Don't take an extra ball or balls with you on the court. Only one can be used and strays should never be left lying on the other courts. Always retrieve the stray ball.
8. Do not take extraneous materials (bags, bottles, towels) on the court or hang them on the net posts. These items create unsafe courts and impede visibility.
9. Keep well hydrated, drink plenty of fluids before, during and after playing.
10. Consider wearing safety glasses to protect eyes.

The Game

- 1- Played to 11 points, one team has to win by 2 points.
2. Only the team who is serving can score points.
3. Remember the two bounce rule - the person receiving serve has to let it bounce, the serving team has to let the return bounce before hitting the ball.
4. The game is played in the Spirit of Good Sportsmanship and Honesty.

Basic Game Fundamentals

1. The ball is not going to bounce high up to you like a tennis ball, pickleball is a bending game, bend those knees.
2. Bat (Paddle) grip- 'shake hands with the bat'. The point of the "V" between your thumb and index finger should be placed on top of the handle of the bat when the face of the bat is perpendicular to the ground.
3. Use both sides of the bat. Never hit a backhand with the same side of the bat that you hit a forehand.
4. You can use two hands on the bat and you can switch hands.
5. Always be in your ready position (elbows and bat out in front of your body, feet at shoulder width apart, side by side on your toes, not your heels, ready to move left or right). There are two ways to hold the bat in the ready position: bat pointing toward your opponents or flat side pointing to your opponents. Use whichever one works best for you. By maintaining the ready position, you will improve your game tremendously.
6. Remember the game of pickleball is played up at the 'NON-VOLLEY ZONE' (NVZ) line, not in the backcourt like tennis, so remember to move up as soon as possible.

Lines and Line Calling (Section 6)

1. With the exception of the serve (see serving), all lines are good; the ball just has to touch a part of the line.
2. Never call a ball out until it has bounced; remember it is not out until it bounces on the court.
3. Never catch a ball in the air or let it hit you as that will be a fault on you.
4. Line calling is based on the honour system and good sportsmanship.
5. The team on the side where the ball is bouncing always calls the lines; never call the lines on the other side of the net, and do not argue with the other team over line calls.
6. Always turn your head and help your partner make line calls on all balls including the serve.
7. Remember all questionable line calls are resolved in favour of your opponents.
8. You can ask your opponents if they saw the ball but you have to accept whatever they say.

Lines and Line Calling (Cont.)

9. If you and your partner cannot agree if the ball was in or out, the call is always 'IN' because that is resolving the line call in favour of your opponents. (See Rule 6.D.9.)

Non-Volley Zone (NVZ)

1. This is the zone marked by the line which is seven feet back from the net on both sides of the net and the zone **Does Not** extend outside of the sidelines of the court.
2. Remember a volley is hitting the ball in the air without it bouncing so the non-volley zone means you cannot be standing on the non-volley zone line or within the zone and hit a volley.
3. You can reach over the NVZ line with your bat and hit a volley as long as you or anything you are wearing or carrying does not touch the line or fall into the NVZ.
4. Never let your momentum force you to step on the NVZ line or carry you into the NVZ after hitting a volley, as this is a fault on you and will cause your team to lose a serve or give the serving team a point.
5. You can enter the NVZ anytime you want too but you cannot volley the ball; you have to wait until the ball bounces before hitting it.
6. When playing at the NVZ line, train yourself to move laterally and hit volleys and overheads without taking a step forward.
7. If your foot touches the NVZ for any reason, you cannot volley a return until both feet have made contact with the playing surface completely outside the NVZ area. (See Rule 9D)
8. Remember opponents can call NVZ foot faults on you. However you should still call faults on yourself if you see them.
9. After making a volley when close to the NVZ, train yourself to quickly look down at your feet to make sure you did not foot fault. (See Rule 6.D.1.)

Serving Mechanics

1. If you cannot get your serve in, you can never score points, as it is only the team that is serving can score.
2. Remember - When serving, the ball has to be struck below your waist, in an upward motion, with the bat head below your wrist. (Note: From 2021, a Provisional Drop Serve is allowed. The ball can bounce on the playing surface before being struck. The ball must be dropped from a natural height before bouncing on the ground, the ball shall not be propelled (thrown) downward or tossed or hit upward with the paddle. The receiver **MUST** be able to see the ball being dropped. (See Rule 4.A.8.) Note:- If serve is used - Rules 4.A.3, 4.A.4 and 4.A.5 do not apply.)
3. You should never miss your serve; hard serves are not necessary as you rarely are able to serve an ace.
4. Keeping your position behind the baseline and between the centre and side lines will help you avoid serving foot faults.
4. Use a bowling motion.
5. Point your bat toward the ground with bent knees and bend at the waist. The person you are serving to should see the top of your head.
6. Hold the ball loosely in the hand not holding the bat.
7. Step toward your target (centre of the serving box diagonally across from you) with your front shoulder pointing at your target.
8. Swing in an upward motion with the bat below the wrist; drop the ball out of your hand just as the bat reaches it and watch the ball contact your bat below the waist. The further back you swing the more power you will have.
9. Follow through in the direction of your target.
10. After contacting the ball and finishing your follow-through, step back behind the baseline to ensure the return of serve will land in front of you (remember the two bounce rule; you have to let the return of serve bounce before playing the ball).
11. A good serve will be low over the net and land at least 6 inches to a foot from the back line.
12. A serve hitting the NVZ line is a fault; all other lines of the serving box are good.
13. **There is NO-LONGER a service let where a served ball hits the net and lands in the correct serving box. (Pickleball England says, clubs can decide whether to retain the old service let for social play, if thought appropriate)**
14. A serve hitting the receiver or receiver's partner prior to bouncing is a fault against the receivers.
15. A serve hitting the net post, or a person or object off court, before bouncing on the court is a Fault.
16. In the spirit of sportsmanship and honesty, you should call serving foot faults on yourself and partner.

Positioning

1. Correct positioning on the pickleball court is all-important. Remember, the game of pickleball is played up at the NVZ line.
2. When serving, both partners are back. Why? Because of the two bounce rule; the serve has to bounce and the return of serve has to bounce before the ball can be volleyed.
3. The person receiving serve has to be back, as they have to let the ball bounce before returning the ball. But the partner of the receiver should be up at the NVZ line, as they do not have to let it bounce before returning it.
4. The person returning the serve should immediately start moving towards the NVZ line, once they have returned the serve.
5. The serving team, once the second bounce has occurred, should start moving up to the NVZ line.
6. One of the main problem beginners have is failing to move up.

Calling Faults other than Line Faults

1. Faults, other than Line Faults (Section 6), Can be called against you by your opponents.
2. This includes foot faults on serving (See Section 4) and NVZ violations (See Section 9).
3. Any rule under Faults (See Section 7) including touching the net or net posts with clothing and racket.
4. Violation of other rules (See Section 11).

Keeping Score and Serving Sequence

1. Many people think this is the most difficult part of learning the game of pickleball.
2. You must always call the score before serving for two reasons:
 - a) You are letting the other team know you are ready to serve and they need to be ready.
 - b) It helps everyone remember what the score is and avoids arguments.
3. The team which starts the game, only one person gets to serve in this service sequence, and the team gets to make only one fault. The person who starts serving, serves until their team fails to make a point. Thereafter each team gets two faults: (that is each person gets to serve until their team makes a fault). Remember that a fault occurs when a team fails to score a point.
4. To help in keeping track, think of each time your team gets the ball to serve as a sequence.
5. The calling of the score consists of three numbers: first number is the score of your team; the second number is the score of your opponents; the third number is what server you are (either server one or server two).
6. In any serving sequence the first person to serve is always the person standing on the right hand side of the court.
7. After scoring a point, the server always rotates (changes places with their partner) to make the next serve; you never serve to the same person or serving box twice in a row. (The receiving team NEVER rotate their position.)
8. The person to start the game calls the score as 0-0-start. This means their team has no points, the other team has no points and they are the start server of the game. The person serves and their team scores a point. The server then rotates with their partner (that is moves to the left hand side of the court) and the score is 1-0-start. This means the server's team score is one, the opponents team's score is zero, and they are still the start server. On the next serve, the serving team fails to score a point and their serving sequence is ended since they were the start team and only one person gets to serve.
9. The ball then passes over to the other team to start their serving sequence. The person standing on the right hand side of the court becomes the first server and calls the following score: 0-1-1. This means the server's team score is zero, the other team's score is one and the server is server one for that sequence. Remember this time both players get to serve in the serving sequence. The server serves and the server's team scores a point. The server moves to the left hand side of the court

and serves again, calling the following score: 1-1-1. This means the server's team score is one, the opponent's team score is one, and they are still server one. The server remains server one serving and rotating until they fail to make a point. Then

Keeping Score and Serving Sequence (Cont.)

the server's partner gets to serve from whichever side they are on, it could be the right or left side of the court. Let's say that the server's team has scored 5 points, so the second server calls the following score: 5-1-2. This means that the server's team score is five, the opponent's team score is one, and the server is server two in this serving sequence. They fail to score a point which ends their serving sequence and the ball goes over to the other team for them to start their serving sequence, which will have both players getting to serve.

Remember it is the player standing on the right hand side of the court is the one to start serving in each serving sequence. Remember also, if you were the first to serve on your team and your teams score is Even, i.e. 0-2-4-6 etc. You will always be standing on the right side of the court. If your teams score is Odd i.e. 1-3-5 etc. You will be standing on the left side of the court.

Pickleball Website information in UK.

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