

# Rules of Pickleball

Here are seven basic rules of pickleball so you can start playing.

## 1. Pickleball Shots

There are two types of shots you can hit in pickleball:

- **Volley:** This is when you hit the ball out of the air before it bounces onto the court during a rally. A rally is the back-and-forth play after a serve and before a fault. Players often hit volleys to return a ball struck hard and low over the net.
- **Groundshot:** Any shot you make after the ball bounces once.

## 2. Serves

Each game begins with a serve. You serve the ball diagonally to your partner in the right or left service area. In other words, if you are in the right service area, you hit the ball to your opponent's right service area.

The ball must clear the kitchen and non-volley line and bounce once to count. To serve, you can hit the ball out of the air or drop it and strike it. Your serve must be an underhand stroke below waist level.

## 3. Two Bounces

After the first serve, the ball must bounce once before the receiving team can return it. Then, the serving team must let it bounce once. When the ball has bounced once on each side, players can hit it out of the air or after it bounces.

## 4. Faults

After a serve, gameplay continues until a fault happens. Faults occur if:

- The serve is above waist-level.
- The serve doesn't clear the kitchen.
- A shot lands outside the sideline or behind the baseline.
- A shot lands in the net.

## 5. The Kitchen

You can never hit a volley with any part of your body in the kitchen or on the kitchen line. However, you can hit groundstrokes in the kitchen. If your opponent hits a short shot that lands in the kitchen (a dink), you can enter the kitchen to return it.

## 6. Both Partners Serve in a Turn

When you play as doubles, both players on a team get to serve. The score will feature three numbers, such as 2-1-1. This means that the score is two for the serving team versus one for the receiving team and the first player on the team is serving. If you lose the point, the ball goes to your teammate, who announces 2-1-2.

However, to begin the game, the first serving team in a game only receives one serve and calls out 0-0-2. After a fault from the first service team, the other team gets to serve.

If you play pickleball singles, there's no need to call out the third number.

## 7. Pickleball Singles

When playing pickleball singles, the first serve is always on the right side of the court. If the server wins the point, they switch sides of the court and continue serving until losing a point. There is only one serve per rotation, so if the receiver wins the point, play passes to them. Neither player switches sides if the receiver wins.

## Pickleball Scoring System

Only the serving team scores points — if your opponent faults, you gain a point, but if you fault, no one earns a point. The first team to 11 points wins, but they

must win by two points. So, if the score is 10-10, play will continue past 11 until one side has two points more than the other.

## **Tips for Pickleball Beginners**

Playing pickleball is the best way to learn. You can begin playing once you understand the basics. Here are some tips for beginners to help you bring your A game:

- **Stretch:** Stretching before exercise helps loosen your muscles and prevent injuries and excessive soreness.
- **Keep your focus:** Focus on the holes in the ball so you can consistently hit it.
- **Maintain your breathing:** Ensure you breathe during the game to prevent tension and stress.
- **Stay on the balls of your feet:** This helps you move faster than if you stay on your heels.
- **Aim for long rallies:** Hit as many balls as you can so you can practice your swing.
- **Keep it simple:** Master the fundamentals of the game before you try to implement strategies.
- **Learn from your mistakes:** Every mistake you make is a lesson that can help you become a better pickleball player.
- **Have fun:** While pickleball is a competitive sport, it's also fun. You'll enjoy it more if you step onto the court determined to have a good time, no matter the outcome.

## **Get Your Pickleball Game On!**