

# PICKLEBALL

## League Rules



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## 1. EVENT COORDINATORS

An Event Coordinator (EC) is a player in the league who is already registered on a team for that specific season, who has agreed to help coordinate games and manage the facility.

### ROLES OF THE EC

- Arrive early, and act as the onsite contact for the facility
- Bring all required equipment and permits to the facility
- Update players with pre-game announcements
- Ensure that games start and end on time
- Record the scores and submit to the ESSC office

### ROLES OF PLAYERS IN AN EC'D LEAGUE

- Record the game results on the score sheet after each game/match
- Help the EC set-up and take-down the equipment before and after the games are played

## 2. COURT REQUIREMENTS

League	Total # of Players Required on the Court	Minimum # of F Players Required on the Court	Maximum # of M/X Players Allowed on the Court
Co-ed	2	1	1
Open	2	0	2

- **Masters** Pickleball Leagues require that **all** players be at least 40 years of age prior to the start of the current season.
- The ESSC welcomes people of all gender identity or expression. Minimum female player requirements are inclusive of *anyone* who identifies as a female (i.e. players who identify themselves as M and X will not count towards female player minimums).

## 3. DEFAULT MINIMUMS & SCORES

Format	Minimum # of Players to Avoid Default	Default Score
Co-ed / Open	1 (No Gender Requirements)	0 - 11; 0 - 11

## 4. FORMAT & EQUIPMENT

### GAME FORMAT

- Players should arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time
- Teams will play two matches per night against different opponents
- Each match will consist of three games
  - The third game is *always* played, regardless of the results of Game 1 and 2 (time permitting).

### SCORING

- Pickleball scoring is not rally-point; teams can only score points when they have the serve
- **All games** are played to 11 points (must win by two, to a max of 15)
- A total of 5 combined points must be played in a game for the result to count
  - If the EC is required to call 'time' on a match, finish the current point
  - The score will stand as-is, unless the combined score in the current game has not reached a total of 5 points, in which case the game will not count
  - **Regular Season:** ties are allowed
  - **Playoffs:** ties are not allowed, one additional point must be played to determine a winner
- The serving player should announce the score before each serve
- Announce the serving team's score first, followed by the opponents score, and then the server number
  - Example: 10-8-2 (indicates that the score is 10-8 for the serving team, and they are on their second serve)

### EQUIPMENT

- Players must wear clean, non-marking, indoor shoes
  - No outdoor shoes are allowed
- Players are encouraged to bring their own paddle, but a limited quantity will be provided the Event Coordinator
- Balls will be supplied by the Event Coordinator

## 5. GAME PLAY

### SERVING AND RETURNING

#### SERVICE ROTATION

- Teams can use any suitable means to determine who gets to serve first in Game 1
  - Service and sides will alternate between teams for Game 2
  - In the 3rd game, teams must re-determine who gets serve or side
  - Teams will switch sides in Game 3 once one team has reached 5 points
- The team that starts the game with the serve, will start on their 2nd serve; they only get one service game to start

- After this initial service game is played out, each team will always have both players serve during each remaining service game
- The serving team always starts the game with the player in the right-hand-service-court
  - If a point is scored, the server moves to the left side (odd court) and serves to the diagonally opposite court
  - Players on the serving side continue to move from the right to left or left to right each time a point is scored
- For the serving rotations that follow, serves will always start in the right-hand court, but the player serving first will vary
  - Whoever is on the right side (depending on the score) when the team gets the serve back is the first server for that service turn only
  - When the first server of that game is on the right side of the court, that team's score should be even
  - If this is not the case, then either the players are positioned on the wrong side of the court or the called score is inaccurate.
- Players on the serving team alternate between the service-courts after each point

#### RECEIVING THE SERVE

- To start the game, the receiving team must decide which court / side each of them will receive serve in
- After the initial service game, players receive serve from the court / side they last served from
- The receiving team does not alternate positions when a point is scored by the serving team

#### SERVICE

- Both players on the serving team must be behind the baseline at the time of the serve
- All serves must be underhand, and contacted below the waist.
- The server has the option of dropping the ball and hitting it off of the bounce, performing what is called a Drop Serve.
  - Drop Serves: The server should simply release the ball and let gravity run its course. Players **may not** force the ball down to create a higher bounce, spin or any other type of manipulation.
- The ball must land in the diagonal court, between the non-volley zone and the boundary lines
  - On a serve, the ball must clear the kitchen (if it lands on the non-volley zone line, it is considered out) however, if the ball hits the center or outer boundary lines, it is considered in.
- If the served ball touches the net, and lands in the correct service-court area it is considered fair
  - Please note this used to be considered a let, however it no longer is in order to align with Pickleball Canada rules.
- The receiving team makes the line calls. If there is a dispute, re-serve with no point awarded

#### RETURNING THE BALL

- **Double Bounce Rule:** Each team must play their first shot off of the bounce, or as a ground-stroke
  - This means that the receiving team must let the serve bounce, and that the serving team must let the return bounce before playing it
  - Once these two bounces have occurred, the ball can either be volleyed or played off a single bounce
- **Non-Volley Zone:** Also known as the "kitchen," extends out approximately 7 feet from each side of the net

- A player cannot step on the non-volley zone line or into the zone itself when making a volley (hitting the ball in the air)
- A player cannot enter the non-volley zone due to forward momentum after hitting a volley shot, even if contact with the ball was made outside of the zone
- Players can enter the non-volley zone any other time, as long as they do not make contact with a ball in the air
- Players can enter the non-volley zone to make a ground-stroke, or play a ball that bounces in the zone

## VIOLATIONS AND FAULTS

Players are expected to know the Pickleball rules and call their own faults. If an obvious fault is missed, a player on the opposing team may politely point this out, assuming that their opponent either does not know the rule or missed their own fault. Generally, teams should NOT call faults against their opponents.

### SERVICE FAULTS

- The server foot faults; touching the back line or court during the serve
- The server misses the ball when trying to hit it
- The ball touches a permanent fixture or post before hitting the ground
- The ball does not land in the diagonal service-court area
- The ball touches the net and lands in the non-volley zone

### GAMEPLAY FAULTS

- Ball lands outside the boundaries of the court
- Ball fails to pass over the net
- Ball touches the side walls
- Ball touches a player or their clothing
- Ball is caught and held on the paddle and then slung during the execution of a stroke
- Ball is hit more than once by the same team (double hit)

### PLAYER FAULTS

- **Double bounce rule** violation
- **Non-volley zone violation** “Stay out of the kitchen!”
- Failure to return the ball before it bounces twice on their side of the court
- Touching the net or its supports with a body part, paddle or clothing
- Crossing the plane of the net with their body, paddle or clothing
  - Exception: Players can cross the plane (without touching the net) if they have contacted the ball on their side of the net first

**Note:** *Hard smashing is discouraged in ESSC Pickleball leagues, please respect the level of your opponents.*