

# Pickleball Rules

## The Serve

The serve must be made underhand.

Paddle contact with the ball must be below the server's waist

The serve is initiated with at least one foot 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 diagonally opposite service court (the area between the non-volley zone and the baseline).

Only one serve attempt is allowed, except in the event of a let (the ball touches the net on the serve and lands in 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 service sequence is made from the right-hand court.

If a point is scored, the server switches sides and 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 the correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game\*).

The second server continues serving until his/her team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.

Once the service goes to the opposing team (a "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.

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## Scoring

Points are scored only by the serving team.

Games are played to 11 points, win by 2.

When the serving team's score is even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10...) the player who was the first server in the game for that team will be in the right-side court when serving or receiving; when odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9...) that player will be in the left-side court when serving or receiving.

## 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 (groundstroke).

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 feet 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 in the non-volley zone, including the line, and/or when the player's momentum causes him/her or anything the player is wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone, including the associated lines.

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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 and side out if second server.

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## **A fault occurs when:**

The ball is hit into the net or out of bounds

A serve does not land within the confines of the receiving court

The ball is volleyed before a bounce has occurred on each side after the serve

A ball is volleyed from within 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

The server serves before the referee calls the score in an officiated match

## **Determining Serving Team**

Players use any fair method to determine who will serve first, such as picking number 1 or 2 written on the back of the scoresheet in a tournament. The winner has the option to choose side, or to serve or receive. In recreational play local players or clubs often designate a particular end of the court (e.g., north side) as the side to serve first.