



## Adult Pickleball League Rules and Structure

### Determining Serving Team

Players from each choose 1 person and play Rock/Paper/Scissors for the opening serve. One chance.

### The Serve

- The serve must be made underhand, ball can bounce or dropped down prior to performing the serve. Players cannot spin the ball prior to hitting the paddle on their serve.
- Paddle contact with the ball must be below the server's waist (navel level).
- 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 Kitchen and the baseline).
- Only one serve attempt is allowed, except in the event of a net ball (the ball touches the net on the serve and lands in the kitchen, serves are replayed only one time) (if the ball touches the net but lands in the proper serving box, play continues and no re-serve).

### 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 current 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.
- Opposing team follows the same sequence.

\*At the beginning of each new game only one partner on the first serving team has the opportunity to serve before faulting, after which the service passes to the receiving team.

### Scoring

- *Points are scored only by the serving team.*
- *League games will be scored to 12, DO NOT have to win by 2.*
- *Tie Breakers for League standings*
  - *Head to head*

- *Scoring differential overall (widest margin of victory)*
- *Scoring differential over a common opponent*
- *Coin Toss*

### **Doubles Scoring**

- Points are scored only from the serving team; the receiving side cannot score a point.
- Players on the serving side continue to move from the right to left or left to right each time a point is scored.
- Players on the serving team do not alternate sides unless a point is scored. The receiving side never alternates sides.
- The first server continues to serve until the serving team loses a rally by committing a fault; then the serve passes to the second server on the team. [See \* below for an exception]
- When the second server loses the serve, the serve goes to the other team and the player on the right serves first. That pattern continues throughout the game.

### **Calling the Score:**

<> The score should be called as three numbers.

<> Proper sequence for calling the score is: server score, receiver score, then, for doubles only, the server number: 1 or 2.

<> To start a match, the score will be called as: zero – zero – two\*

- The server number (1 or 2) applies for that service turn only. Whoever is on the right side when the team gets the serve back is the first server for that service turn only. The next time that the team gets the serve back, it might be the other player that is on the right and is therefore the first server for that service turn only. Beginning players often mistakenly assume that the player keeps the same server number throughout the game.
- \*First Server Exception: To minimize the advantage of being the first team to serve in the game, only one player, the one on the right side, gets to serve on the first service turn of the game. Since the serve goes to the other side when that player loses the serve, that player is designated as the second server. Therefore, at the start of the game, the score should be called, “0-0-2.” The “2” indicates the second server and means that the serve goes to the other side when the serve is lost.

### **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 the 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.

## The Kitchen

- The Kitchen is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net. Also known as the non-volley zone.
  - Volley – described as hitting the ball in the air without a bounce. \*Note a double hit of the ball is allowed if there is NO intent to do so and as long as the volley is one continuous motion.
- Players may not stand in the Kitchen, cross the line or touch the line with any part of your body and your momentum cannot take you into the Kitchen after a volley.
- Players may enter the Kitchen only if the ball is hit short and bounces causing the receiving team to perform a groundstroke. Players can only hit the ball upwards off of a bounce within the Kitchen.
  - Groundstroke – described as hitting the ball after the ball has bounced one time

## Line Calls

- A ball contacting any line, except The Kitchen line on a serve, is considered “in.”
- A serve contacting The Kitchen 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.
- A fault occurs when:
  - The ball is hit into the net without going over 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 illegally from The Kitchen
  - 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

## Structure (League Games)

- With 3 courts at the Gym we will have 3 matches taking place at once with a total of 6 teams per time slot.  
Each match is decided by a full 3 game series or the winning team by 45 minutes past the scheduled start  
This is due to time constraints.
- Each week is played as a doubleheader against two different teams
  - Any team 5 minutes late for their match will start their first game down 6 - 0
    - If a team is 10 minutes late a forfeiture of the match will occur

- A team can start and finish their match with only 1 player. This is to avoid forfeits for legitimate reasons for either being late or a full roster to attend.
- Doubles rules apply even with 1 player, meaning the single player must rotate between the right and left side service and has two serves. If/when the player missing arrives that player can enter once play is stopped.
- Updated team rosters are due before matches are played. Roster size is unlimited, but only three team members may play in a single night. Additional players may be added to your roster by filling out the waiver form provided by the Court Supervisor.
- No substitutions allowed in the middle of games. Substitution can take place in between games.
- The only time a substitution is allowed in the middle of games is when injury occurs to a team member.
- Standings will be kept by the individual games not the overall match. Tie breaker rules mentioned prior will apply.
- Teams call their own faults, there will be no referees onsite.
- Teams will bring their own equipment to each match. This includes racket and pickleballs.
- Site staff will NOT resolve conflict over scoring or other faults. If faults cannot be agreed upon by the two teams then the try must be re-done with neither team receiving the benefit. The play in question is nullified and resume play quickly.

### **Forfeits & Reschedules**

- Forfeits without notice will be subject to a **\$25 fine.**
  - Teams with multiple forfeits without notice may be removed from the league without refund at the League Director's discretion.
- Matches may be rescheduled for \$25 and if the reschedule is agreed upon 72 hours in advance of the originally scheduled date, there is time/court space available, and the opposing team is willing and able to reschedule the match.
- If you know your team cannot make it to your match, thereby a forfeit, please contact the Recreation Office: 253-841-5457, the League Director: bcarter@puyallupwa.gov and the opposing team's coach: teamsideline.com/puyallup to notify them of the forfeit.