

Lifetime Sports

Official Pickle-Ball Rules

History

Pickle-Ball was created during the summer of 1965 on Bainbridge Island outside of Seattle, Washington. The original purpose of the game was to provide a sport for the entire family. Pickle-Ball was invented by US Congressman Joel Pritchard, William Bell, and Barney McCallum. Originally people played in their backyards on hard surfaces and driveways. Since the mid-1970's Pickle-Ball has grown from a family activity game to a sport with formalized rules.

Equipment

Each player will use an official Pickle-Ball paddle. The game can be played with an official Pickle-Ball or whiffle ball (approximately size of baseball).

Court

The size of the court is 20' x 44' for singles and doubles, the net is approximately 36" 36" on the sides and 34" in the center.

Serve

A player must serve with one foot behind the back line, hitting the ball with an underhanded motion (the paddle must pass below the player's waist). When serving, you need to serve the ball diagonally across the net and it must clear the non-volley area. Only one service attempt is allowed. In the case of a let serve (when the ball hits the net and still goes into the correct service area) the serve is repeated. *In doubles*, at the start of a new game the first team to serve is allowed only one fault before the serve is turned over to their opponent. After the first serve, members of each team will serve and fault before the ball is turned over to the opponent. The player in the right hand court will always start the serve.

Fault

A fault can be:

- hitting the ball out of bounds
- a ball not clearing the net
- stepping into the non-volley area and volleying a ball (A player may only step into the non-volley area if a bounced ball has brought him/her into the non-volley area.)
- volleying the ball before the double bounce rule has occurred.

Double Bounce Rule

Each team must play their first shot off of the bounce. That is, the receiving team must let the serve bounce, and the serving team must let the return of serve bounce before playing it. After the two bounces have occurred, the ball can be volleyed or played off the bounce.

Volley

A volley is to hit the ball in the air without first letting it bounce. All volleying must be done with the player's feet behind the non-volley zone line. It is a fault if the player steps over the line on his volley follow through.

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Scoring

A team can score a point only when serving. A player who is serving shall continue to serve until a fault is made by their team. The game is played to 11 points and a team must win by two.

Doubles Play

The player in the right hand court (facing the net player on the right side) always serves first. The serve should be diagonally across the court to the receiver in the opposite right hand court. After complying with the double bounce rule the ball can be volleyed or played off of the bounce until a fault is made. When the serving team makes its' first fault, players will stay in the same court and the second partner will then serve. When they make their second fault they will stay in the same courts and turn the ball over to the other team. Players switch courts **only** after scoring. A ball landing on the line is good.

Singles Play

All rules of doubles apply except: when playing singles each player serves from the right hand court when **their** score is 0 or even, and from the left hand court when their score is an odd number.

Doubles Strategy

Pickle-Ball involves strategies that include lobbing, overhead slamming, passing drive shots from the baseline and fast volley exchanges at the net. The key strategy to remember is that the team that reaches the front court in a net volley position first will be in the best position to win the point. Remember, the serving team must stay back until the ball has bounced once (double bounce rule) on their side prior to moving forward into the net volley position. The player receiving the serve should play with 1-2 feet behind the baseline anticipating a deep serve. The receiving team should hit a deep return shot and move forward to the net volley position side-by-side with their partner. This is an ideal attack position. The serving team needs to stay side-by-side behind the baseline for the serve and return of serve in order to play the ball after it bounces. They should try to use a passing shot, lob shot, or drop shot to avoid their opponent and allow them to come to the net.