



PICKLEBALL RULES & REGULATIONS FOR 2024

Introduction

The Global Encounters Festival 2024 (GE Festival) is a high-calibre global sports tournament advocating excellence, healthy competition and sportsmanship by complying with international standards established by the various international sports federations.

This document contains the official laws of the match that will be enforced and adhered to by all athletes participating in the GE Festival (“Laws of the Match”). The Laws of the Match are based on international standards published by The USA Pickleball Association (USA PICKLEBALL) and the International Federation of Pickleball (IFP). In the event there is any conflict between the GE Festival Rules and Regulations (“GE FestivalRules”) and the Laws of the Match, the GE Festival Rules will govern.

Playing conditions, format, rules and/or terms may be subject to change once the host city site visits have thoroughly been conducted and the National Sporting Federations of the host city have been consulted. The International Programme Organising Team (“IP-OT”) reserves the right to make such changes. All changes will be communicated to participating National Jurisdictions through the Jurisdiction Leads (JLs) at the earliest opportunity.

Click [here](#) for more information on the Laws of the Match from the official governing body ([IFP - 2022 Official Rulebook](#))

Significant Changes for 2022 onwards

Spin Serves

- In 2022, the server shall use only one hand to release the ball to perform the serve. If the ball is visibly spun by the server during the release, the part(s) of the hand contacting the ball must be bare.

The Drop Serve

- No changes were made to the drop serve other than to remove its Provisional status.

Wrong Score Called

- The rules concerning what happens if the wrong score is called by a player or a referee have changed.
- If a player thinks a wrong score has been called, a player may stop play to ask for a correction before the ball is served.
- If it has been served, the rally is to be played out and the score correction (if any) is made before the next serve occurs.

A Dropped Ball

- In un-officiated matches, it is not uncommon for a player to carry an extra ball. If an extra ball is carried, it must not be visible to the opponent.
- If a player accidentally drops an extra ball during a rally, it will result in a fault.
- This does not apply in an officiated match because the referee is responsible for removing any extra pickleballs from play.

Medical Time-outs Called by a Referee

- If a referee, in the interest of player safety, determines that either medical personnel or the Tournament Director should be consulted for a player health issue, that time-out is not chargeable to the player as a medical time-out.

- The player retains the right to call their own medical time out later in the match, if needed.

Verbal Warnings

- A referee may now issue verbal warnings for more than just profanity.
- Any situation that could result in a Technical Warning may instead be addressed by the referee as a verbal warning.
- Only one verbal warning per match, no matter what the infraction, may be issued to a team, or player in singles.

Calling the Score After a 15 Second Warning

- Instead of a referee calling the score immediately after the 15 second warning expires, the referee will call the score after the players are ready, or should be ready.

When to Assess a Technical Warning or Foul

- Referees are empowered to issue Technical Warnings or Technical Fouls for various reasons but it has been unclear exactly when a technical should be announced.
- The 2022 rules now make it clear that a referee will not stop a rally to call a technical warning or foul on an offending team.

Tournament Score for a Retirement

- The score recorded for a player or team that elects to “retire” from a match has been revised to allow the actual score of the match for that team to be recorded. A team retiring may play additional matches in their bracket if any are warranted.

Rules and Standards

Highlights

- Pickleball is played either as doubles (two players per team) or singles.
- The same size playing area and rules are used for both singles and doubles.
- Pickleball is a paddle sport played using a special perforated ball on a 20-foot-by-44-foot court with a tennis-type net. The court is divided into right/even and left/odd service courts and non-volley zones. (See Figure illustrated below)
- The ball is served diagonally across the net to the opponent's receiving court using an approved motion. The ball is struck back and forth across the net until a player fails to return the ball in accordance with the rules.
- Points are scored only by the serving side when the server or the server's team wins the rally, or the opposing side commits a fault. The server continues to serve, alternating service courts, until the serving side loses the rally or commits a fault.
- Typically, the first side scoring 11 points and leading by at least a 2-point margin wins.

The Players

Pickleball is a game that requires cooperation and courtesy. A sense of fair play from giving the opponent the benefit of any doubt is essential in maintaining the game's underlying principles of fun and competition. To that end:

- All points played are treated the same regardless of their importance; the first point of the match is as important as match point.
- Either partner in doubles can make calls, especially line calls; there is no place in the game for one partner telling another, "that was my call, not yours".
- Players strive to cooperate when confronted with a situation not covered by the Rulebook. Possible outcomes can be a replay, allowing the rally to stand, or in extreme cases, asking for a referee to resolve a dispute.
- Where possible, rules accommodate players with various adaptive needs

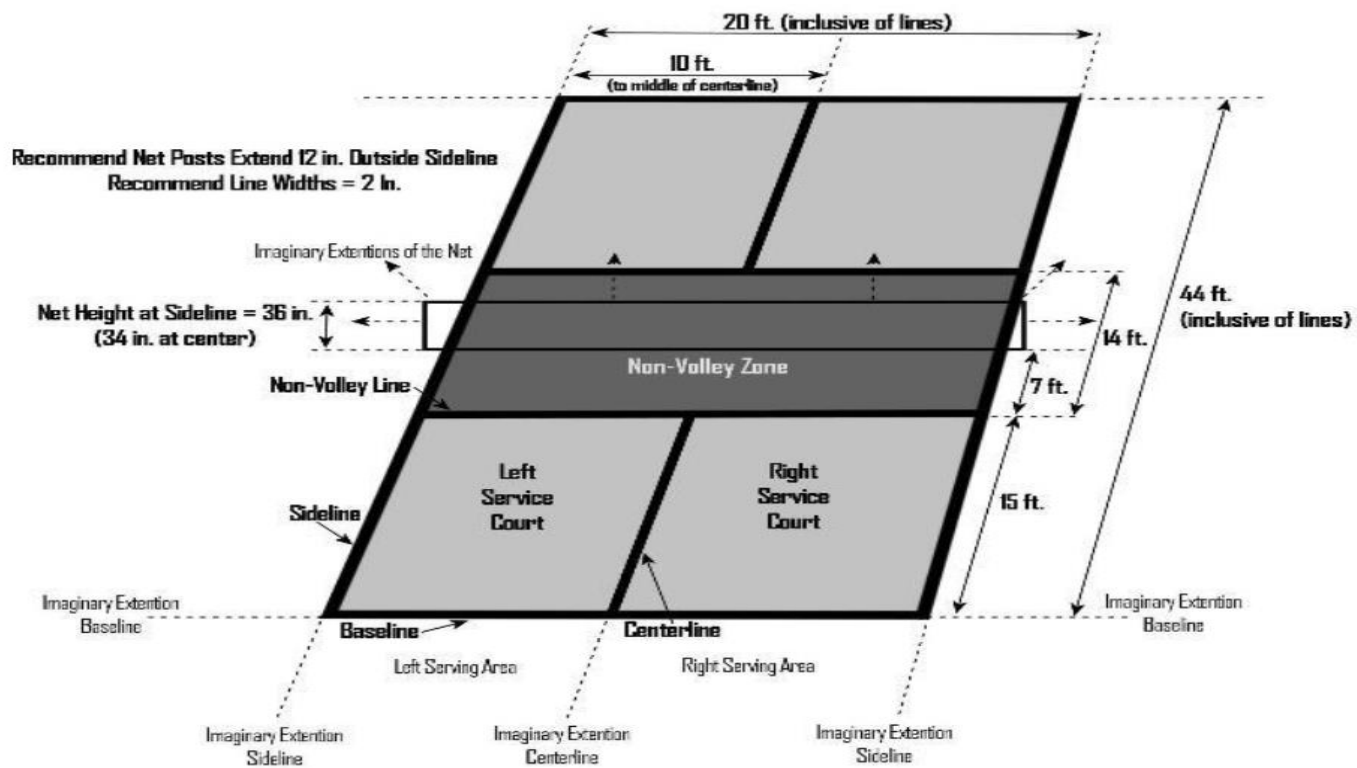
Unique Features

Two-Bounce Rule. After the ball is served, each side must make one groundstroke prior to volleying the ball.

Non-Volley Zone (NVZ). An area that extends 7 feet from the net on each side, within which a player is not allowed to strike the ball without it first bouncing. More specifically, the whole court from net to baseline is the same and can be freely used for all play with one exception: volleying. The first seven feet, the non-volley zone, cannot be used for volleying.

Court & Equipment

The Diagram below is an illustration of a court:



Equipment

- USA PICKLEBALL/IFP Approved Paddle List – Players are responsible for confirming that the paddle they are using for match play is approved and listed as “Pass” on the USA PICKLEBALL/IFP Approved Paddle List. The lists of approved equipment may be posted on the USA PICKLEBALL and IFP websites: USA Pickleball.org and ipickleball.com.
- Violation. If at any point during the tournament it is determined that a player is using a paddle that violates any of the paddle specifications or is not listed on the USA PICKLEBALL/IFP Approved Paddle List as Pass, the following penalties apply:
 - If the violation is identified prior to the match starting, the player may switch to a paddle listed as Pass on the USA PICKLEBALL/IFP Approved Paddle List without penalty.
 - If the violation is identified after the match has started, the player or team forfeits only the match being played.
 - If the violation is discovered after the scoresheet is returned to the tournament operations desk, the match results stand.

The Serve

- The server’s arm must be moving in an upward arc when the ball is struck.
- Paddle contact with the ball must not be made above the waist level.
- The head of the paddle must not be above the highest part of the wrist at contact.
- A ‘ Drop serve’ is also permitted in which case none of the elements above apply.
- At the time the ball is struck, the server’s feet may not touch the court or outside the imaginary extension of the sideline or centerline and at least one foot must be behind the baseline on the playing surface or the ground behind the baseline.
- The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.
- Only one serve attempt is allowed per server.
- Servers must release the ball from one of the server’s hands or drop off the server’s paddle face from any natural (un-aided) height and hit the ball after the ball bounces. There is no restriction how many times the ball can bounce nor where the ball can bounce on the playing surface. The server’s release of the ball must be visible to the referee and the receiver. In matches without a referee, the server’s release of the ball must be visible to the receiver. A replay shall be called before the return of serve if the release of the ball is not visible. The rules for foot placement still apply.
- The ball shall not be propelled (thrown) downward or tossed or hit upward with the paddle.

- If the drop serve is used, the ball may be struck with either a forehand or backhand motion without any other restriction i.e The location restrictions of the ball and paddle do not apply.

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 side-out is made from the right/even court.
- If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left/odd 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 their correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game*).
- The second server continues serving until his team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.
- Once the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right/even court and both players on that team have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.
- In singles the server serves from the right/even court when his or her score is even and from the left/odd when the score is odd.
- At the beginning of each new game only one partner on the serving team has the opportunity to serve before faulting, after which the service passes to the receiving team.

Official Rules

Scoring

- A coin is tossed and the team that wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first (1st) half of the match. The other team takes the kick-off to start the match.
- Points are scored only by the serving team.
- Games are normally played to 11 points, win by 2.
- Tournament games may be to 15 or 21, 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.

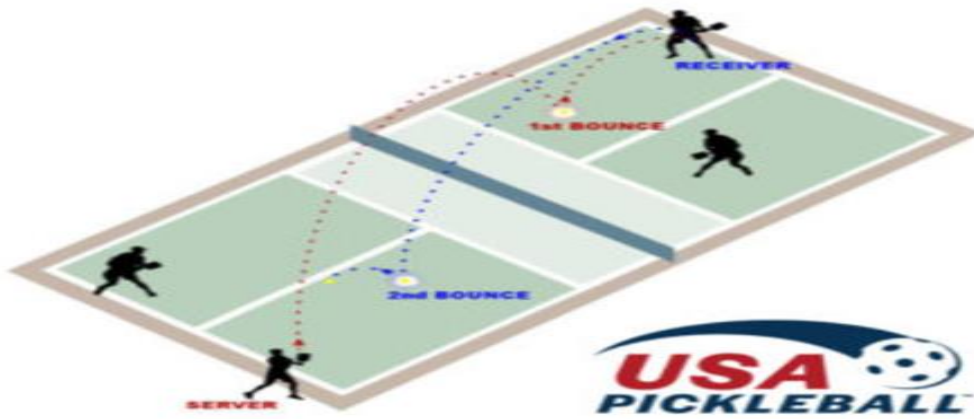
Two Bounce Rule

- 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 (ground stroke).
- The two-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 on the non-volley zone, including the line and/or when the player's momentum causes them or anything they are wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone including the associated lines.
- It is a fault if, after volleying, a player is carried by momentum into or touches the no 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 part of 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.
- A ball contacting the playing surface completely outside of the court is “out”.

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 or side out.

Determining Service Team

- Any fair method can be used to determine which player or team has the first choice of side, service, or receive. (Example: Write a 1 or 2 on the back of the score sheet.)

Timeout Rules

Standard Time-out: A player or team is entitled to two time-outs for 11- or 15-point games and three time-outs for a 21-point game.

- Each time-out period may last up to 1 min.
- If a team has any remaining time-outs, any player on that team may call a time-out before the next serve occurs.
- Before the serve occurs, if a team calls a time-out while having no time-outs remaining, no penalty shall be called.
- The referee will announce when there are 15 seconds remaining. At the end of the time-out period, the referee shall call “time in” and then call the score when all players are (or should be) ready to play.

Medical Time-out: A player needing medical attention during a match should request a medical time-out from the referee. Once the medical time-out has been requested, the following guidelines shall be used:

- The referee shall immediately summon on-site medical personnel, or the Tournament Director if no medical personnel are present, to assess the situation and render appropriate first aid.
- When medical personnel or the Tournament Director arrive, the referee shall start the 15-minute timer.
- If medical personnel, or the Tournament Director if no medical personnel are present, determine that a valid medical condition exists, then that player will be allowed no more than 15 minutes for the medical time-out.
- The time-out must be continuous and may be up to 15 minutes. If the player uses fewer than 15 minutes, the remaining time is lost and no additional medical time will be available to the player during the match.
- If the player cannot resume play after the 15-minute medical time-out period, the match will be declared a retirement.
- If medical personnel, or the Tournament Director if no medical personnel are present, determine that no valid medical condition exists, the player or team will be charged a standard time-out, if available, and issued a technical warning.

Continuous Play

- Play should be continuous, although players are permitted to quickly take a drink or towel off in between rallies as long as, in the judgement of the referee, the flow of the game is not adversely impacted. The referee shall call the score when play should be resumed

Equipment Time-out

- Players are expected to keep all apparel and equipment in good playable condition and are expected to use regular time-outs and time between games for adjustments and replacement of equipment. If a player or team is out of time-outs and the referee determines that an equipment change or adjustment is necessary for fair and safe continuation of the match, the referee may award an equipment time-out of up to 2 minutes.

Time Between Games:

The standard time between games is 2-minutes.

- In between games of a match, players may take one or both of their upcoming game's timeouts. The players must inform the referee, or their opponents if there is no referee. If a team returns to play before one (or both) requested time-outs have started, the team retains the time-out(s) for the upcoming game. The normal two minutes in between games will be used before any team-allotted timeouts.

Time Between Matches

- The standard time between matches is 10 minutes. If all players are ready to play prior to 10 minutes, the match may be started early.
- In a championship match with a tie-breaker match: If the winner of the loser's bracket defeats the winner of the winner's bracket, then a tie-breaker match to 15 points must be played. The standard time between the championship match and the tie-breaker match is 10 minutes.

Other Time-Out Rules

- Before A Match or Between Games: Neither medical nor regular time-outs may be taken before a match starts. A match cannot begin until all players are present and the starting score is called. Time-out(s) may be used before the start of the second or third game in a two-out-of-three game match
- Extenuating Circumstances: The referee may call a referee time-out to address extenuating circumstances that may require an extended interruption of play.
 - In the interest of safety, if the referee determines a potential medical situation exists, (for example, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, etc.) and the player is unable to or refuses to call a medical timeout, the referee is authorised to call a referee time-out and summon medical personnel or the Tournament Director. Referee requested medical time-outs will not be charged against the player.
 - Foreign substances on the court, such as debris, water or other fluids, shall be removed or cleaned up.

Other Rules

Double Hit

- Balls can be hit twice, but this must occur during an unintentional, continuous, single-direction stroke, by one player. If the stroke made while performing the serve or during a rally is deliberately not continuous, or not in a single direction, or the ball is struck by a second player, it is a fault.

Switching Hands

- A paddle may be switched from hand to hand at any time.
- Two-handed shots are allowed

Plan of the Net

Crossing the plane of the net prior to striking the ball is a fault. After striking the ball, a player or anything the player is/was wearing or carrying may cross the plane of the net. The player may not touch any part of the net system, the opponent's court, or the opponent while the ball is still in play.

- Exception: If the ball bounces into a receiving player's court with enough backspin or wind aid to cause it to return to the other side of the net, the receiving player may cross the plane of the net (over, under or around the net post) to hit the ball. It is a fault if the receiving player (or anything the receiving player is wearing or carrying) crosses the plane of the net before the ball has first crossed back over the plane of the net to the opponent's side. It is a fault if the player touches the net system, the opponent's court, or the opponent while the ball is still in play.

The Net

- The net and the wires or strings holding up the net are positioned (mostly) on the court. Therefore, if the ball strikes the top of the net or strikes the top net wire or string and lands inbounds, it remains in play.
- If the ball travels between the net and the net post, it is a fault against the striking player.
- A player is allowed to go around the net post and cross the imaginary extension line of the net after hitting the ball, so long as the player or any item he or she is/was wearing or carrying does not touch the opponent's court. If the player goes around the net post and crosses the imaginary extension line of the net but does not make contact with the ball, a fault will be declared.
- If a player hits the ball over the net into the opponent's court, and then the ball bounces back over the net and bounces a second time without being touched by the opponent, the striking player wins the rally.
- For net systems with a horizontal bar that includes a centre base:
 - Before going over the net, if the ball hits the horizontal bar or the centre base, it is a fault.
 - Except on the serve, if the ball goes over the net and hits the centre base, or any part of the horizontal bar, or the ball gets caught between the net and the horizontal bar, a replay will be called. Other than on the serve, if the ball goes over the net and bounces on the court and then performs any of the 3 above listed actions, a replay shall occur.

- On the serve, if the ball hits the horizontal bar or the centre base or gets caught between the net and horizontal bar after going over the net, it is a fault.
- Any malfunction of a net system during play shall be considered a hindrance.

For all other issues not addressed in these Laws of the Match, please refer to the [Global Encounters Festivals General Rules and Regulations](#).

CONVENORS: DEREK PEMA & NIRAV SHAH

An Event with Less than three (3) communities shall be cancelled. Subject to change without notice. Age As at 5th OF NOVEMBER 2024. For more information Contact your community representative.