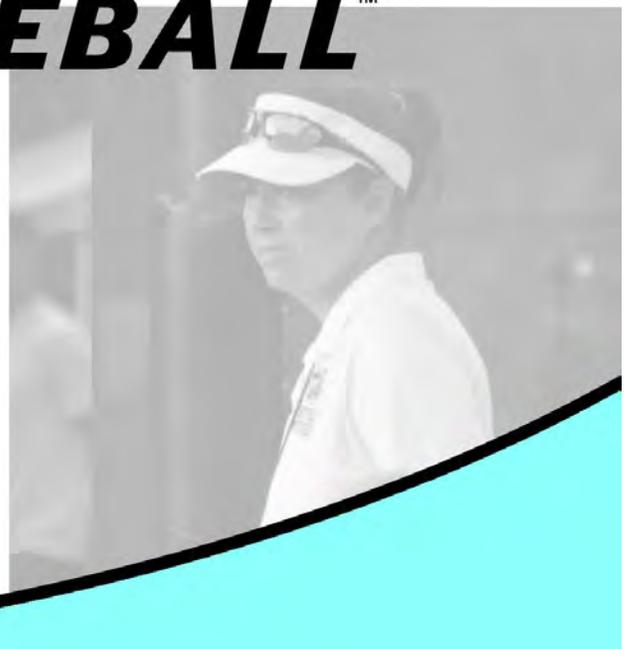


# 2021 ALTERNATE RULEBOOK



**PICKLEBALL™**



# 2021 USA PICKLEBALL ALTERNATE RULEBOOK

In early 2020, with permission from the USA Pickleball Director of Officiating, a group of referees initiated a project to present the rules in a more organized and simpler format. The result of their efforts is this *2021 Alternate Rulebook*. This rulebook is effective on January 25, 2021.

It is important to understand that the word “Alternate” refers to the organization and presentation of the rules, not to the rules themselves. While in some cases worded differently, the rules have the same meaning. The two rulebooks are entirely independent of one another; rule references in either are internal references to rules in that same publication. The use of either rulebook will result in the same information.

This alternate rulebook contains all the rules to play the sport. [Part I](#) (Sections 1, 2, and 3) and [Part II](#) (Sections 4 through 13) cover general information and rules that apply to all play, whether recreational or tournament. [Part III](#) (Sections 14 through 24) covers additional rules that are specific to tournament play but build on and, in some cases, modifies the general rules. Understanding this relationship between Parts II and III is critical to knowing how the rules work together. All rules in Part II apply, whether or not there is a referee. When there is a referee, the rules in Part III cover additional conditions that occur during tournament play, with [Section 24](#) applying only to non-officiated tournament play. Rules affecting players with disabilities and wheelchair players have been mainstreamed into the general rules for all players.

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USA Pickleball and the International Federation of Pickleball (IFP) were organized to perpetuate the growth and advancement of pickleball on an international level and to set goals for worldwide play and recognition. USA Pickleball and the IFP are committed to furthering the growth and development of pickleball.

USA Pickleball and the IFP are the governing bodies of American and international pickleball that formulate and interpret all the rules of the sport in a manner that preserves the traditional nature and character of the sport and the skills traditionally required to play the sport. All such decisions by USA Pickleball and the IFP are final and not appealable.

Some rules relating to standards for equipment manufacturing have been removed from both rulebooks this year and will be administered and enforced by the USA Pickleball Equipment Evaluation Committee. Standards for tournament play that are not rules have been removed and are addressed in the USA Pickleball *Tournament Director Handbook*.

Sanctioned tournaments allow players to be rated and ranked on a national or international basis, and insurance and other benefits are provided to tournament directors and players.

Tournament directors of non-sanctioned tournaments may also use Part III as a guideline but may be flexible in applying these rules to better fit the skills, ages, and diversity of their players. USA Pickleball and the IFP enthusiastically encourage these non-sanctioned tournaments to promote knowledge and growth of the sport, skill development, and having fun while playing pickleball.

The USA Pickleball Association (USAPA) published the first rulebook in March 1984. The first IFP rulebook was adapted, with permission, from the March 28, 2010, version of the USAPA rulebook.

The IFP invites national pickleball organizations from all countries to become members of the IFP and to observe these rules.

This rulebook may be periodically updated when appropriate to clarify or otherwise improve the rules. Comments and opinions are always welcome.

**Publication date:** January 25, 2021; revised 1/27/21\*

\* Revised text is shown with blue shading.

USA Pickleball

Website: [usapickleball.org](http://usapickleball.org)

International Federation of Pickleball (IFP)

Website: [ipickleball.org](http://ipickleball.org)

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## Significant Rule Changes for 2021

(NOTE: “Non-volley zone” is re-branded as “no-volley zone” in this Alternate Rulebook.)

1. Service lets are discontinued. If the ball hits the net on the serve and lands in the correct service court, the ball remains in play and should be returned by the receiver.
2. The drop serve is a new service method, which allows a bounce. It is an option available for all players to use. The server must drop the ball using no added force. ([Rules 9.B, 9.B.1, 9.B.2](#))
3. In the spirit of good sportsmanship, players are expected to call faults on themselves. ([Rules 5.C – 5.C.10](#))
4. To be absolutely certain when calling a ball “out,” players must clearly see a space between the line and the ball when it lands on the playing surface. ([Rule 6.E](#))
5. The server’s partner may call the score. ([Rule 8.B.3](#))
6. The entire score must be called before the ball is hit to make the serve. ([Rules 8.C, 8.C.1](#))
7. The score must be re-called whenever the serving team changes service courts before serving the ball. ([Rule 8.E](#))
8. The time allowed to challenge the score is extended to the before the ball is hit the third time during a rally. ([Rules 8.F, 8.F.2](#))
9. Service motion is redefined to no longer include backswing of the server’s arm. ([Definitions](#))
10. When making a no-bounce serve, the ball must not be above the waist when the serve is hit. ([Rules 9.A.3, 9.A.3.a](#))
11. The position of the server’s feet or wheelchair no longer matters until the ball is hit to make the serve. ([Rules 9.C, 9.C.1, 9.C.2](#))
12. The ball must not contact a player after the ball is served (during a rally). ([Rule 10.C.3](#))
13. A player must not contact the opponent’s court at any time while the ball is in play. ([Rules 13.K, 13.K.1](#))
14. A fault for incorrect server or position may be called until the next serve occurs, even if it is in the next game or after the match has been concluded. ([Rule 15.D.16](#))
15. When a player is late reporting to a multiple-game match, a game forfeit occurs 10 minutes after the match is due to start and the match is forfeited after 15 minutes. ([Rules 16.E.1, 16.E.3](#))
16. Line call appeals must be made before the ball is hit to make the next serve. ([Rule 18.D.1](#))
17. A player can make a line call appeal to the referee after asking for the opponent’s opinion on the call. ([Rule 18.D.2](#))
18. If a line judge’s “out” call is overruled by a referee or overridden by a player to favor the opponent, the rally will be replayed. ([Rules 18.E.2, 18.F.1](#))
19. Players may override a referee’s line call to favor the opponent. ([Rules 18.F, 18.F.1, 18.F.2](#))
20. A rally will be replayed in all instances when the line judges and referee are not able to make a line call. The players can no longer agree to can “out” call. ([Rule 18.G.4](#))
21. The referee must canvass the other line judges for assistance when the responsible line judge’s view is blocked and the referee cannot make the call. ([Rule 18.H](#))

22. Before the ball is hit to make the serve, players may ask the referee the score, correct server or receiver, or correct position. ([Rules 19.A, 19.B, 19.C](#))
23. Players must appeal a damaged ball before the ball is hit to make the serve. ([Rule 19.D](#))
24. A player is subject to a technical warning and a standard time-out for losing a challenge to any referee ruling. ([Rules 19.G, 19.G.1](#))
25. When the Tournament Director does not agree with a referee's ruling, the ruling will be reversed to correct the situation and, if appropriate, the rally will be replayed. ([Rule 19.G.2](#))
26. The referee must consult the Tournament Director if he/she disagrees with the players' request to remove a line judge. ([Rule 19.H.2](#))
27. No fault or penalty will be issued for failure to notify the referee or opponent of a change in the starting server. ([Rule 19.J](#))
28. Time-outs must be called before the ball is hit to make the serve. ([Rules 20.A.2, 20.A.2.a](#))
29. Between games, players may request to use time-outs for the next game. ([Rules 20.A.4, 20.C.2](#))
30. An end change time-out will be used for end changes. ([Rules 20.B – 20.B.6](#))
31. Verbal warning is introduced as non-punitive means for referees to manage the use of profanity by players. A verbal warning may be issued when the first use of profanity is detected during a match. ([Rules 15.D.16, 21.A, 21.C – 21.C.3](#))
32. The penalty for a technical foul is changed to a point being deducted from the offender's score (unless zero). ([Rules 21.E – 21.E.3](#))
33. Game forfeit is a new level of penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct between a technical foul and a match forfeit. ([Rules 16.E.1, 21.F – 21.G.2, 23.B](#))
34. A match forfeit may be imposed for launching a paddle or ball that hits someone or something without injury. ([Rule 21.H.1](#))
35. A match forfeit occurs during a match when two technical fouls are assessed or any penalty is assessed after a game has been forfeited. ([Rules 21.H.7, 21.H.8](#))
36. Ejection is an added option for Tournament Directors to address unsportsmanlike conduct. ([Rules 14.L, 15.D.16, 21.J – 21.J.5, 21.K, 23.D](#))
37. A player may be ejected or expelled for launching a paddle or ball that causes an injury. ([Rule 21.J.2](#))
38. Retirement is introduced as the method to discontinue a match due to issues other than unsportsmanlike conduct (e.g., injury). ([Rules 20.C.8, 22.A – 22.A.3, 23.E](#))
39. Wheelchair rules have been incorporated into the general rules.
40. Additional court playing surface dimensions are presented. ([Rule 3.B](#))



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# Part I Introduction to Pickleball

## Section 1 The Game

Pickleball is a paddle sport that combines many elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis. The game is played using a special perforated ball on a badminton-sized court with a tennis-type net. The court is divided into right and left service courts on each end and has a no-volley zone near the net on each side ([Figure 3-1](#)).

The game can be played outdoors or indoors. The same court can be used for both singles and doubles play. Rule adaptations accommodate players with various disabilities.

Play is initiated by a player making an underhand serve diagonally across the net to the opponent. Both the serve and return of serve must bounce before being hit. The players continue to return the ball to the other side of the net in accordance with the rules until the rally is won. Points are scored only when serving. The server continues to serve, alternating service courts, until a rally is lost.

Typically, a game is played to 11 points and won by at least a two-point margin.

### Unique Features

**Two-Bounce Rule.** The serve and the return of serve must bounce before being returned.

**No-Volley Zone (NVZ).** An area of the court that parallels the net 7 feet on each side of the net. Players are not allowed to volley the ball (hit the ball before it bounces) while in the no-volley zone.

### Sportsmanship

Since its inception, pickleball has established a tradition of good sportsmanship, courtesy, and cooperation among players and officials. A strong sense of fair play is essential to maintaining the game's underlying principle of fun while keeping a competitive spirit. This means players must give the opponent the benefit of the doubt on close line calls and foot faults (service line and no-volley zone) and call faults on themselves that may not be detected by the opponent or officials. When confronted with a situation that does not appear to be covered by the Rulebook, players should cooperate to resolve the situation amicably. Players have a responsibility to be familiar with the basic rules and are expected to be respectful at all times.

## Section 2 Definitions

**Baselines.** The lines parallel to the net at each end of the court, delineating an outer boundary of the court. (See [Figure 3-1](#).)

**Carry.** Hitting the ball in such a way that it does not immediately bounce away from the paddle but stays on the face of the paddle.

**Casters.** The front wheels of a wheelchair, typically smaller than the rear wheels.

**Centerline.** The line down the center of the court, on either side of the net, that extends from the no-volley zone line to the baseline and separates the right and left service courts. (See [Figure 3-1](#).)

**Coaching.** Communication of any information from someone other than a player's partner by any means, including verbal, visual, and electronic, that a player or team may act upon to gain an advantage or help them avoid a rules violation.

**Court.** The area inside the outer edges of the baselines and sidelines. (See [Figure 3-1](#).)

**Dead Ball.** A ball that is not in play.

**Distraction.** Any action by a player that is not common to the game and interferes with the opponent's concentration or ability to hit the ball. Examples include stomping feet, making loud noises, and waving the paddle erratically.

**Double Hit.** The ball being hit twice before it is returned.

**Ejection.** Elimination of a player from tournament competition.

**Expulsion.** Removal of a player from the tournament venue.

**Fault.** A rules violation that results in a dead ball and the loss of a rally.

**First Server (Doubles).** The doubles player who serves first after a side out.

**Forfeit.** The awarding of a game or a match to the opponent before the winning point is scored.

**Hinder.** An occurrence outside the player's control that suddenly arises and adversely impacts play. Examples include an errant ball entering the court, blowing debris, a distracting insect, a person crossing the court, and a net malfunction.

**Imaginary Extension.** The invisible continuation of a court line and the net outside the court boundaries. (See [Figure 3-1](#).)

**In Play.** The time extending from the start of the score call to the end of a rally, during which the ball is live.

**Line Call.** A decision as to whether a ball landed in or outside the court.

**Momentum.** Momentum is a property of a body in motion, such as a player executing a volley, that causes the player to continue in motion after contacting the ball. The act of volleying produces momentum that ends when the player regains balance and control of their motion, and either stops moving toward the non-volley zone, or pauses to initiate a new, separate movement.

**No-Volley Zone (NVZ).** The 7-foot by 20-foot (2.13 m by 6.08 m) area of the court on each side of the net bounded by the net, the sidelines and a line (no-volley zone line) parallel to the net. All lines

bounding the NVZ are part of the NVZ. The NVZ is two-dimensional and does not include the space above the playing surface. (See [Figure 3-1.](#))

**Paddle Grip Adjustment.** A non-mechanical device that changes the size of the grip or stabilizes the hand on the grip.

**Paddle Head.** The paddle, excluding the handle.

**Permanent Object.** Any fixture, item or person around or above the court excluding the net, net crossbar and players. Examples include the ceiling, walls, fencing, lighting fixtures, net posts, seating, referee, line judges, and spectators.

**Plane of the Net.** The imaginary horizontal and vertical extension of the net.

**Playing Surface.** The court and the ground surrounding the court designated for playing.

**Point Differential.** The difference between the number of points scored and the number of points allowed. A negative point differential means more points were scored against a singles player or doubles team than the player or team scored against the opponent. (Example: Team A won Match 1: 11-8, 11-4. They have a point differential of +10 (22 points score minus 12 points allowed) for Match 1. Team A then wins Match 2: 11-9, 2-11, 11-6. For Match 2, their point differential is -2 (24 points score minus 26 points allowed). The total point differential for Team A is +8 (10-2).)

**Profanity.** Words, phrases, or gestures commonly considered to be vulgar or inappropriate in public or around children. Typically included are words used as expletives or verbal intensifiers.

**Rally.** Continuous play that starts with the hit of the ball to make the serve and ends when the ball becomes dead.

**Receiver.** The player who is positioned diagonally opposite the server to return the serve.

**Replay.** A restart of a rally for any reason without the awarding of a point or a change of server.

**Retirement.** A player or team's decision to discontinue playing a match and award the match to the opponent.

**Second Serve (Doubles).** A term used interchangeably with "Second Server" to identify when the second server serves.

**Serve.** The initial hit of the ball to start a rally.

**Server.** The player who initiates a rally.

**Second Server (Doubles).** The doubles player who serves second in sequence.

**Service Court.** An area of the court bounded by the centerline, a sideline, the baseline, and the no-volley zone line. All lines are included, except the NVZ line. (See [Figure 3-1.](#))

**Service Motion.** The forward movement of the server's arm that results in a serve.

**Serving Area.** An area behind the baseline bounded by and including the imaginary extensions of the centerline and a sideline. (See [Figure 3-1.](#))

**Sidelines.** The lines perpendicular to the net on each side of the court, delineating an outer boundary of the court. (See [Figure 3-1.](#))

**Side Out.** The awarding of the serve to the opponent after a singles player or doubles team loses the serve.

**Starting Server (Doubles).** The player designated to serve first at the start of a game.

**Technical Foul.** A penalty assessed for a specific rule violation that affects the player's or team's score.

**Technical Warning.** A penalty notification to a player or team for a specific rule violation.

**Third Shot.** The shot hit by the server or the server's partner after the opponent hits the return of serve (e.g., the third hit of the ball during a rally).

**Verbal Warning.** An oral caution to all players on the court for the use of profanity that will lead to the assessment of a penalty on the next occurrence.

**Volley.** Hitting the ball before the ball bounces during a rally.

**Wheelchair Player.** Any person, with or without a disability, who plays seated and keeps their legs in the wheelchair. The wheelchair is considered to be part of the player's body.

**Withdrawal.** A player or team's decision to be removed from all upcoming play in a specified bracket.

## Section 3 Court and Equipment

3.A Court Specifications. The standard court measurements are shown in Figure 3-1.

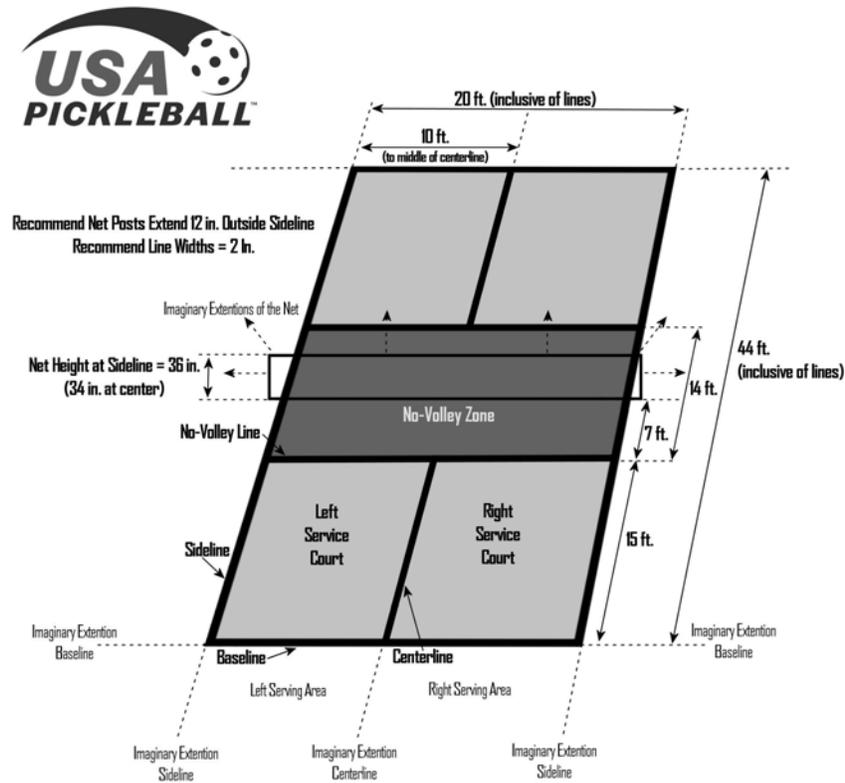


Figure 3-1: Court Specifications

- 3.A.1 Dimensions.** The court must be a rectangle measuring 20 feet (6.10 m) wide and 44 feet (13.41 m) long. (See Figure 3-1.)
- 3.A.2 Measurement.** Court measurements must be made to the outside edges of the sidelines, baselines, and no-volley zone lines.
- 3.A.3 Line Size and Color.** All lines should be 2 inches (5.08 cm) wide and the same color, clearly contrasting with the color of the playing surface and court.

**3.B Playing Surface Area.** The recommended minimum playing surface area is 30 feet (9.14 m) wide and 60 feet (18.29 m) long. Other recommendations for playing surface dimensions are:

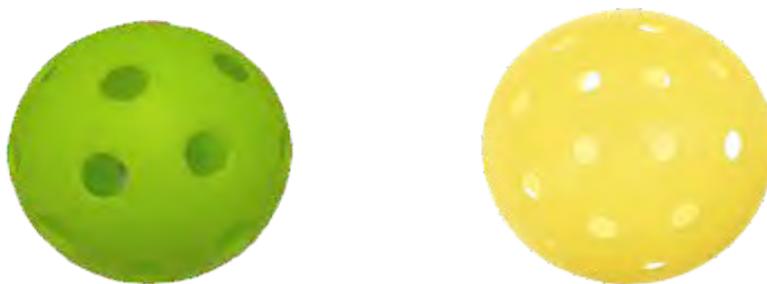
Purpose	Width – feet (m)	Length – feet (m)
New Construction	34 (10.36 m)	64 (19.51 m)
Tournament Play	34 (10.36 m)	64 (19.51 m)
Preferred	40 (12.19 m)	64 (19.51 m)
Wheelchair Play	44 (13.41 m)	74 (22.56 m)
Stadium Court	50 (15.24 m)	80 (24.38 m)

**3.C Net Specifications.** The requirements for the net and related elements are as follows:

- 3.C.1 Material.** The net must be made of any mesh material that will not allow a ball to pass through.
- 3.C.2 Posts.** The distance between the net posts should measure 22 feet +/- 0 inches (6.71 m) from the inside of one post to the inside of the other post. The maximum diameter of the net posts should be 3.0 inches (7.62 cm).
- 3.C.3 Size.** The net length must be at least 21 feet 9 inches (6.63 m), extending from one post to the other. The net measurement from the bottom edge of the net to the top should be at least 30 inches (76.2 cm).
- 3.C.4 Edge.** The top edge of the net should be bound with 2-inch (5.08-cm) white tape over a cord or cable running through the binding. This binding must rest on the cord or cable.
- 3.C.5 Height.** The top of the net must measure 36 inches (91.44 cm) high at the sidelines and 34 inches (86.36 cm) high at the center of the court. (See [Figure 3-1.](#))
- 3.C.6 Center Strap.** A center strap is recommended and must be placed at the center of the net to enable easy adjustment to the required height.

**3.D Ball Specifications.** The complete list of approved balls is posted on the USA Pickleball and IFP websites.

**3.D.1 Usage.** All approved balls may be used for indoor or outdoor play. (See [Figure 3-2.](#))



**Figure 3-2: Approved Balls**

The ball pictured on the left, with larger holes, is customarily used for indoor play. The ball pictured on the right, with smaller holes, is customarily used for outdoor play. Colors may vary.

**3.D.2 Design.** Balls must have a minimum of 26 to a maximum of 40 circular holes, with spacing of the holes and overall design of the ball conforming to standards for flight characteristics. Balls must have a manufacturer's or supplier's name or logo printed or embossed on the surface.

**3.D.3 Color.** Balls must be one uniform color except for identification markings.

**3.E Paddle Specifications.** The complete list of approved paddles is posted on the USA Pickleball and IFP websites.

- 3.E.1 Brand and Model Identification.** Paddles must bear the manufacturer's legible identification of the brand and model name or model number. The brand and model information may be shown on the paddle by a manufacturer-affixed decal.
- 3.E.2 Dimensions.** The combined length and width of the paddle, including any edge guard and butt cap, must not exceed 24 inches (60.96 cm). The paddle length must not exceed 17 inches (43.18 cm). There is no restriction on paddle thickness.
- 3.E.3 Weight.** There is no restriction on paddle weight.
- 3.E.4 Material.** Paddles must be made of material deemed safe and not prohibited by these rules. Paddles must be made of rigid, non-compressible material meeting the criteria specified on the USA Pickleball and IFP websites.
- 3.E.5 Prohibited Surface Features.** The paddle's hitting surface must not contain:
- a) Holes, cracks, delamination, or other breaks
  - b) Indentations
  - c) Rough texturing
  - d) Sandpaper characteristics
  - e) Natural and synthetic rubber
  - f) Moving parts that can increase head momentum
  - g) Removable parts
  - h) Anti-skid paint, textured paint, or any material that causes additional spin
  - i) Any other objects or features that allow a player to impart additional spin on the ball
  - j) Highly reflective finish that has the potential to adversely affect the vision of opposing players
- 3.E.6 Allowable Alterations.** The only alterations allowed to a paddle are:
- a) Addition of edge guard tape. (See Rule 3.E.7.)
  - b) Addition of lead tape. (See Rule 3.E.7.)
  - c) Addition of name decals or other identification markings on the paddle face. (See Rule 3.E.7.)
  - d) Changes to the grip size or grip wrap.
  - e) Hand drawn or handwritten markings and graphics that do not impact the surface roughness and are in good taste. Aftermarket graphics are prohibited.
- 3.E.7 Tape and Decals.** Tape and decals must not extend more than 1.0 inch (2.54 cm) above the top of the grip or more than 0.5 inch (1.27 cm) inside the outer edge of the paddle or inside the edge guard.

## Part II General Rules of Play

Part II (Sections 4 through 13) presents the rules that apply to all pickleball play, both recreational and tournament.

### Section 4 Point Scoring

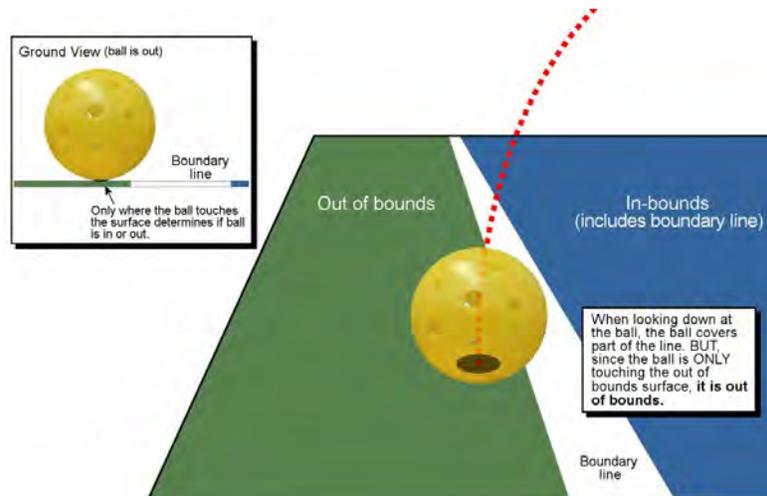
- 4.A Scoring Only When Serving.** Points are only scored when serving.
- 4.B Scoring a Point.** A point is scored by serving the ball and winning the rally.
- 4.C Winning the Game.** The first singles player or doubles team to score the winning point wins the game. The customary game-winning score is 11 points, win by two points.

## Section 5 Dead Balls

- 5.A Dead Ball.** Any action that stops play results in a dead ball.
- 5.A.1 Fault – Stopping Play.** A fault occurs when a player stops play during a rally, except to call a hinder (see [Rule 5.E](#)) or to ask for correction of an incorrectly called score before the third shot (see [Rule 8.F](#)).
- 5.B Faults and Calling Faults.** A called fault stops play and results in a dead ball.
- 5.B.1 Fault Occurrence.** Faults only occur while the ball is in play, except for no-volley zone violations involving momentum (see [Rule 11.B.1](#)).
- 5.B.2 Dead Ball Timing.** The ball becomes dead when the fault occurs, even if the fault is called after the rally is over.
- 5.B.3 Loss of Rally.** The player who commits the fault loses the rally.
- 5.B.4 Calling Faults.** A fault must be called before the ball is hit to make the serve for the next rally of the match.
- 5.C Fault Call Responsibility.** Players are expected to call the following faults on themselves or on their partner as soon as the fault is realized or detected, during or after completion of a rally.
- 5.C.1 Service Foot Faults.** See [Rules 9.C.1](#), [9.C.2](#) and [9.C.3](#).
- 5.C.2 Double or Triple Bounce.** See [Rule 10.B.1](#).
- 5.C.3 Contacted by Ball.** See [Rule 10.C.3](#).
- 5.C.4 Double Hit.** See [Rules 10.C.6](#) and [12.D.1](#).
- 5.C.5 No-Volley Zone Faults.** See [Rules 11.A.1](#), [11.A.2](#), and [11.B.1](#).
- 5.C.6 Catch or Carry.** See [Rule 12.D.2](#).
- 5.C.7 Hitting Before Ball Crosses Plane of Net.** See [Rule 13.I.1](#).
- 5.C.8 Contacting Net or Net Support System.** See [Rule 13.J.1](#).
- 5.C.9 Contacting Opponent or Opponent’s Court.** See [Rule 13.K.1](#).
- 5.C.10 Other Faults.** Any other fault knowingly committed by the player.
- 5.D Permanent Object.** When a ball in play contacts any permanent object before or after bouncing on the court, play stops and the ball becomes dead.
- 5.E Hinder Call.** A called hinder stops play and results in a dead ball.
- 5.E.1 Who Can Make the Call.** Any player may call a hinder.
- 5.E.2 Replay – Valid Hinder.** A valid hinder results in a replay.
- 5.F Out Ball Call.** See [Rule 6.E](#).

## Section 6 Line Calls

- 6.A Line Calling Responsibility.** Players are responsible for making calls for all lines on their end of the court. In doubles, either or both partners may make a line call.
- 6.B In Ball.** Excluding the serve, a ball in play that lands in the opponent's court (including touching any court boundary line) is in. A served ball that clears the no-volley zone line and lands in the correct service court is in. Players are not required to signal an in ball.
- 6.C Out Ball.** A ball that lands outside the court is out. When a ball lands out of bounds, a space exists between the ball and the line. (See Figure 6-1.)



**Figure 6-1: Out Ball Illustration**

- 6.D Sportsmanship in Line Calling.** When making line calls, players must strive for accuracy and operate under the principle that all questionable calls must be resolved in favor of the opponent. Players must give the opponent the benefit of the doubt when there is uncertainty on a line call.
- 6.D.1 Uncertainty.** Any ball that cannot be promptly called “out” is in.
- 6.D.2 Certainty.** To be absolutely certain when calling a ball “out,” players must clearly see a space between the line and the ball when it lands.
- 6.E “Out” Call and Signal.** Players must indicate an out ball by an audible signal, regardless of how far out the ball lands. “Out” is the preferred term to indicate an out ball; however, other terms meaning “out” may be used. The call may be accompanied by a hand signal. Players with a voice or hearing impairment may use a hand signal only.
- 6.E.1 Promptness.** An “out” call must be made before the ball is hit by the opponent or before the ball becomes dead for other reasons; otherwise, play continues.
- 6.E.2 Valid Line Call.** Any “out” call made by a player after a ball bounces is a line call.
- 6.E.3 Dead Ball.** A ball called “out” stops play and results in a dead ball.

- 6.E.4 Partner Communication.** Before a ball bounces, any communication between partners regarding the ball possibly landing out is player communication, not a line call.
- 6.F Overriding Opponent's In Call.** Players may call their own shots "out" during or after a rally.
- 6.G Partner Disagreement (Doubles).** When partners disagree on a line call, the ball is in.
- 6.H Requesting Opponent's Opinion.** A player may defer any line call that the player is responsible for making to the opponent by asking the opponent's opinion. Players must accept a definitive line call made by the opponent.
- 6.I Spectators.** Spectators must not be consulted on any line call.

## Section 7 Player Positions and Serving Sequence

- 7.A Singles.** The correct position of the server is determined by the score. The opponent should align diagonally from the server to receive the serve.
- 7.A.1 Server Position.** A player must serve from the right serving area when the player's score is even (0, 2, 4, etc.) and from the left serving area when the player's score is odd (1, 3, 5, etc.).
- 7.A.1.a Fault – Incorrect Serving Area (Singles).** A fault occurs when the server serves from the incorrect serving area.
- 7.A.2 Holding Serve.** A player continues to serve, alternating service areas after each point won, until the player loses a rally.
- 7.A.3 Side Out.** A side out occurs after the server loses a rally.
- 7.B Doubles.** The correct server and correct receiver and their positions are determined by the team's score after the last side out and the players' starting positions in the game.
- 7.B.1 Starting Server.** At the start of a game, only the starting server serves, as the second server, until the serve is lost to the opponent. The starting server must serve from the right serving area at the starting score of 0-0-2.
- 7.B.2 Correct Server and Position.** When the serving team's score is even after a side out, the starting server is the correct first server starting from the right serving area and alternating serving areas after each point is won until a rally is lost. When the serving team's score is odd after a side out, the starting server's partner is the correct first server and follows the same procedure, starting from the right serving area.
- 7.B.2.a Fault – Incorrect Serving Area (Doubles).** A fault occurs when the server serves from the incorrect serving area.
- 7.B.2.b Fault – Incorrect Server.** A fault occurs when the incorrect player serves the ball.
- 7.B.3 Second Server.** When the first server loses the serve, the serve passes to the partner of the correct first server.
- 7.B.4 Correct Receiver and Position.** When the receiving team's score is even, the team's starting server must receive serves at the right service court and the partner must receive serves at the left service court. When the receiving team's score is odd, the starting server's partner must receive serves at the right service court and the starting server must receive serves at the left service court.
- 7.B.4.a Fault – Incorrect Receiver.** A fault occurs when the incorrect player returns the serve.
- 7.B.5 Holding Serve.** A player continues to serve, alternating service areas after each point won, until the team loses a rally.
- 7.B.6 Side Out.** A side out occurs after a team loses a rally when the second server is serving.
- 7.B.7 Partner Positions.** There is no restriction on the position of the partners of the correct server and correct receiver, on or off the court, as long as they are on their respective sides of the net while the ball is in play.

**7.B.8 Player Positions During Rally.** After the serve, the players on the serving team may continue play from any position. After the return of serve, the players on the receiving team may continue play from any position.

**7.C Incorrect Server, Receiver, or Position Discovered After Rally.** After the incorrect player serves or receives, or a correct server serves from the incorrect position, the fault must be called against the offending player before the ball is hit to make the serve for the next rally of the match.

**7.C.1 Point Scored During Rally.** A point scored by the offending team during the rally in which a fault is declared for incorrect server or incorrect server position will not count.

**7.C.2 Previous Points Scored.** Any points scored before the rally in which the fault is declared for incorrect server or incorrect position will stand.

## Section 8 Player Readiness and Calling the Score

- 8.A Readiness.** Before the start of the score call, any player may signal they are not ready to start play.
- 8.A.1 Not Ready Signals.** Players must use one or more of the following signals to indicate they are not ready: 1) Paddle raised and remaining above the head; 2) Non-paddle hand raised and remaining above the head; 3) Back turned and remaining turned to the net.
  - 8.A.2 Invalid Signals.** After the start of the score call, not ready signals are not valid, unless there is a hinder.
- 8.B Calling the Score.** The score must not be called until the receiver is in position and no player is signaling not ready.
- 8.B.1 Singles.** For singles play, the server must call the score as two numbers: server's score, then receiver's score. Each game starts at "zero – zero."
  - 8.B.2 Doubles.** For doubles play, the server must call the score as three numbers: serving team's score, then receiving team's score, then server number. Each game starts at "zero – zero – two."
  - 8.B.3 Score Called by Partner (Doubles).** If a server is unable to call the score, the server's partner may call the score. The same player must call the score throughout the entire game.
- 8.C When to Serve.** The entire score must be called before the server hits the ball to make the serve.
- 8.C.1 Fault – Early Serve.** A fault occurs when the server hits the ball to make the serve while the score is being called.
- 8.D 10-Second Rule.** The server must serve the ball within ten seconds after the score is called.
- 8.D.1 Fault – 10-Second Violation.** A fault occurs when the server does not serve within 10 seconds after the score is called.
- 8.E Serving Area Change After Score Called.** After the score is called, if the player with the ball switches serving areas or passes the ball to their partner in the other serving area, the receiver must be allowed to reposition and the score must be re-called.
- 8.F Challenging the Called Score.** A player may stop play to ask for a score correction before the third shot.
- 8.F.1 Replay – Incorrect Score Called.** If the score was called incorrectly, the correct score must be called and the ball re-served without penalty.
  - 8.F.2 Fault – Late Challenge to Score.** A fault occurs when a player stops play to ask for a score correction after the third shot.
  - 8.F.3 Fault – Correct Score Called.** A fault occurs when a player stops play to challenge a correctly called score.

## Section 9 Serving

**9.A No-Bounce Serve.** The server must hit the ball before the ball bounces. The service motion must comply with Rules 9.A.1 through 9.A.3.

**9.A.1 Underhand Swing.** The server's arm must be moving upward at the time the ball is hit. The swing may be made with either a forehand or backhand motion. (See Figure 9-1.)

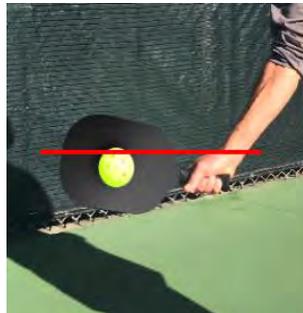
**9.A.1.a Fault – No Upward Service Motion.** A fault occurs when the server's arm is not moving upward at the time the ball is hit.



**Figure 9-1: Legal Serve**

**9.A.2 Paddle Position.** The highest point of the paddle head must be no higher than the player's wrist joint at the time the paddle contacts the ball. (See Figure 9-2.)

**9.A.2.a Fault – Paddle Head Above Wrist.** A fault occurs when the highest point of the paddle head is above the server's wrist joint when the ball is hit.



**Figure 9-2: Illegal Serve**

**9.A.3 Ball Position.** The ball must be no higher than the player's waist at the time the paddle contacts the ball. (See Figure 9-3.)

**9.A.3.a Fault – Ball Contacted Above Waist.** A fault occurs when the ball is above the server's waist at the time the ball is hit.



**Figure 9-3: Legal Serve**

- 9.B Provisional Drop Serve.** Players may opt to use a provisional drop serve instead of the traditional no-bounce serve. When using the drop serve, the server must drop the ball from the hand or the paddle face, without adding force. After one or more bounces, the ball must be hit. The server must drop the ball from the hand or the paddle face, with no added force, and hit the ball after the ball bounces. There is no restriction on where the ball bounces. No service motion restrictions apply to a drop serve. The swing may be made with either a forehand or backhand motion.
- 9.B.1 Fault – Force Added to Ball Release.** A fault occurs when the server adds force to the ball to initiate a drop serve.
- 9.B.2 Replay – Ball Release Not Visible.** A replay must be called before the return of serve if the release of the ball is not visible.
- 9.C Server Positioning.** At the time the ball is hit, a standing server must have at least one foot in contact with the serving area and neither foot is allowed to be in contact with the playing surface outside the serving area. At the time the ball is hit, a server in a wheelchair must have the rear wheels in contact with the serving area and none of the wheels is allowed to be in contact with the playing surface outside the serving area.
- 9.C.1 Fault – Server Contacting Court.** A fault occurs when a server’s foot or a rear wheel of a server’s wheelchair is in contact with the court when the ball is hit.
- 9.C.2 Fault – Server Outside Serving Area.** A fault occurs when a server’s foot or any wheel of a server’s wheelchair is in contact with the playing surface outside the serving area when the ball is hit.
- 9.C.3 Fault – Server Not Grounded.** A fault occurs when a standing server does not have at least one foot in contact with the playing surface in the serving area when the ball is hit.
- 9.D Serve Placement.** The server must serve to the correct service court diagonally opposite the server. The served ball must clear the no-volley zone line, with or without touching the net, and land in the correct service court.
- 9.D.1 Fault – Serve Lands Out of Bounds.** A fault occurs when the server serves a ball that lands outside the correct service court.

- 9.D.2 Fault – Serve Lands in No-Volley Zone.** A fault occurs when the server serves a ball that fails to clear the no-volley zone line and lands in the opponent’s no-volley zone.
- 9.D.3 Fault – Serve Hits Permanent Object.** A fault occurs when the server serves a ball that contacts any permanent object before landing on the playing surface.
- 9.D.4 Fault – Serve Hits Server or Server’s Partner.** A server fault occurs when the server serves a ball that contacts the server or server’s partner, or anything worn or carried by either partner, before landing.
- 9.D.5 Fault – Serve Hits Receiver or Receiver’s Partner.** A receiver fault occurs when the receiver or the receiver’s partner, or anything worn or carried by either partner, contacts or is contacted by the served ball before it lands on the playing surface.

## Section 10 Rally Situations

- 10.A Two-Bounce Rule.** The serve and the return of serve must each bounce before being returned.
- 10.A.1 Fault – No Bounce by Receiver.** A fault occurs when the receiver does not let the serve bounce before hitting the ball.
  - 10.A.2 Fault – No Bounce by Serving Side.** A fault occurs when the server or server’s partner does not let the return of serve bounce before hitting the ball.
- 10.B Maximum Number of Bounces.** A standing player must return a ball before a second bounce. A wheelchair player must return a ball before a third bounce; the second bounce may be outside the court but must be on the playing surface.
- 10.B.1 Fault – Double or Triple Bounce.** A fault occurs when a standing player fails to return a ball before it bounces twice or a wheelchair player fails to return a ball before “the ball” bounces three times.
- 10.C Shot Placement.** A player must hit a ball in play so that the ball lands in the opponent’s court or contacts any opponent, or anything worn or carried by an opponent, before the ball lands.
- 10.C.1 Fault – Ball Lands Out of Bounds.** A fault occurs when a player hits a ball that first lands out of bounds of the opponent’s court.
  - 10.C.2 Fault – Ball Lands on Player’s Side of Net.** A fault occurs when a player hits a ball that fails to cross the net and lands on the player’s side of the net.
  - 10.C.3 Fault – Ball Hits Player.** After the serve, a fault occurs when a player, or anything worn or carried by the player, is contacted by the ball, except the receiver’s paddle or the receiver’s hands below the wrist joint while in contact with the paddle.
  - 10.C.4 Fault – Ball Hits Permanent Object Before Landing.** A fault occurs when a ball hit by a player contacts a permanent object before landing on the playing surface.
  - 10.C.5 Fault – Ball Hits Permanent Object After Landing.** A fault occurs when a player fails to return a ball that has bounced in the player’s court before the ball contacts a permanent object.
  - 10.C.6 Fault (Doubles) – Double Hit.** A fault occurs when both partners hit a ball during a return.
- 10.D Distraction.** Players must not distract an opponent when the opponent is preparing to hit a ball that is in play.
- 10.D.1 Fault – Distraction.** A fault occurs when a player distracts an opponent as the opponent is preparing to hit a ball that is in play.
- 10.E Damaged Ball.** When a ball is damaged, play must continue until the end of the rally. When a damaged ball impacts the rally, the rally must be replayed with a replacement ball. When players do not agree that a damaged ball affected the outcome of a rally, the rally must stand as played.
- 10.F Injury.** When a player is injured, play must continue until the end of the rally.
- 10.G Player Equipment Problem.** When a player experiences an equipment or apparel problem, play must continue until the end of the rally.

- 10.H Item on Court.** When anything worn or carried by a player lands on the player's court, the ball remains in play when it hits the item, except when the item contacts the no-volley zone as a result of the player volleying the ball (See [Rules 11.A.1](#) and [11.B.1](#)) or the item contacts the opponent's court (see [Rule 13.K.1](#)).
- 10.I Missed Shot.** When a player completely misses hitting the ball, the ball remains in play.
- 10.J Between Rallies.** Players may quickly hydrate, towel off, and adjust equipment and apparel between rallies as long as the flow of the game is not adversely impacted.

## Section 11 No-Volley Zone

- 11.A Allowable Contact.** A player, or anything worn or carried by the player, may contact the no-volley zone at any time except while volleying a ball. For a wheelchair player, the casters may contact the no-volley zone at any time.
- 11.A.1 Fault – No-Volley Zone Contact.** A fault occurs when a volleying player, a rear wheel of a player’s wheelchair, or anything in contact with the player during the volley contacts the no-volley zone.
- 11.A.2 Fault – Failure to Reestablish Before Volleying.** A fault occurs when, after touching the no-volley zone, a player volleys a ball before both feet or both rear wheels of the player’s wheelchair contact the playing surface completely outside the no-volley zone.
- 11.B Volleying Action.** The swing, follow-through, and momentum associated with volleying the ball must occur while the volleying player is outside the no-volley zone.
- 11.B.1 Fault – No-Volley Zone Momentum.** A fault occurs when a volleying player’s momentum causes the player or the rear wheels of the player’s wheelchair to contact anything (including the player’s partner) that is in contact with the no-volley zone, even after the ball becomes dead. This fault takes precedence over any fault that occurs after the volley starts.

## Section 12 The Paddle During Play

**12.A One Paddle.** A player must not use or carry more than one paddle while the ball is in play.

**12.A.1 Fault – More Than One Paddle.** A fault occurs when a player uses or carries more than one paddle while the ball is in play.

**12.B Holding the Paddle.** A player is allowed to hold the paddle with one or both hands.

**12.C Paddle Possession.** A player must have possession of the paddle when it contacts the ball.

**12.C.1 Fault – Paddle Not in Possession.** A fault occurs when a player does not have possession of the paddle when it contacts the ball.

**12.D Paddle Stroke.** A player must use a single, continuous stroke in a single direction to hit a ball that is in play. The stroke may result in the player's paddle inadvertently contacting the ball more than once in rapid succession or carrying the ball along the paddle face.

**12.D.1 Fault – Double Hit.** After the serve, a fault occurs when a player intentionally hits a ball more than once in succession while the ball is in play.

**12.D.2 Fault – Catch or Carry.** After the serve, a fault occurs when a player intentionally carries or catches a ball on the paddle while the ball is in play.

## Section 13 The Net and Net Support System During Play

- 13.A Ball Contacting Net.** When the ball contacts the top of the net, or the cord or cable between the top of the net and the net posts, the ball remains in play.
- 13.B Ball Contacting Net Support System.** A ball must not contact any part of the net support system on the hitting player's side of the net.
- 13.B.1 Fault – Ball Contacts Net Support System.** A fault occurs when a player hits a ball that contacts the net support system before going over the net.
- 13.C Served Ball Contacting Net Support System.** A served ball must not contact any part of the net support system on either side of the net.
- 13.C.1 Fault – Served Ball Contacts Net Support System.** A fault occurs when a player serves a ball that contacts the net support system.
- 13.D Replay – Ball Affected by Net.** When a returned ball that crosses the net gets caught in the net or contacts the net lying on the court, the rally must be replayed.
- 13.E Replay – Ball Affected by Net Support System.** When a returned ball crosses the net and contacts any part of a crossbar or any other part of the net support system within the court boundaries, before or after the ball bounces, the rally must be replayed.
- 13.F Ball Around Net Post.** A ball may be returned around the outside of the net post without crossing over the net.
- 13.G Ball Under Net.** A ball must not be hit under the net.
- 13.G.1 Fault – Ball Under Net.** A fault occurs when a player hits the ball under the net.
- 13.H Ball Between Net and Net Post.** A ball must not be hit between the net and the net post.
- 13.H.1 Fault – Ball Between Net and Net Post.** A fault occurs when a player hits the ball between the net and the net post.
- 13.I Ball Crossing Plane of Net.** A ball must cross the plane of the net to the player's side before a player hits the ball.
- 13.I.1 Fault – Ball Hit Before Crossing Plane of Net.** A fault occurs when a player hits the opponent's shot before the ball crosses the plane of the net to the player's side.
- 13.J Player Contacting Net or Net Support System.** A player, or anything worn or carried by the player, must not contact the net or net support system while the ball is in play.
- 13.J.1 Fault – Player Contacts Net or Net Support System.** A fault occurs when a player, or anything worn or carried by the player, contacts the net or net support system while the ball is in play.
- 13.K Player Contacting Opponent or Opponent's Court.** A player, or anything worn or carried by the player, must not contact an opponent or the opponent's court while the ball is in play.
- 13.K.1 Fault – Player Contacts Opponent or Opponent's Court.** A fault occurs when a player, or anything worn or carried by the player, contacts an opponent or the opponent's court while the ball is in play.

- 13.L Player Crossing Plane of Net.** A player must hit the ball before the player, or anything worn or carried by the player, crosses the plane of the net or goes around the net post, except as described in [Rule 13.M](#).
- 13.L.1 Fault – Player Crosses Plane of Net Before Hitting Ball.** A fault occurs when a player, or anything worn or carried by the player, crosses the plane of the net before the player hits the ball, except after the ball has returned to the opponent’s side of the net without being hit.
- 13.M Allowable Player Crossing Plane of Net.** When a ball bounces on a player’s side of the net and then returns to the opponent’s side without being hit, the player may cross the plane of the net to hit the ball, but only after the ball has first crossed back to the opponent’s side.
- 13.M.1 Fault – Player Crosses Plane of Net Before Ball Crosses.** When a ball bounces on the player’s side of the net and is returning to the opponent’s side without being hit, a fault occurs when the player crosses the plane of the net before the ball.
- 13.M.2 Fault – Too Many Bounces.** When a ball bounces on a player’s side of the net and then returns to the opponent’s side without being hit, a fault occurs when the player fails to hit the ball before it bounces on the opponent’s side.
- 13.N Malfunction.** Any malfunction of the net or net support system during play is a hinder.

## Part III Tournament Play

Part III (Sections 14 through 24) presents additional rules, and modifications to rules in Part II, that apply to tournament play.

### Section 14 Tournament Director Responsibilities

- 14.A Overall Responsibility.** The Tournament Director manages the tournament, designates the officials and their areas of responsibility, and ensures that planned support is available.
- 14.B Designee Selection.** The Tournament Director may designate a representative to assume certain Director duties, but the Tournament Director retains final decision-making authority.
- 14.C Notification of Hazards and Abnormal Conditions.** Before the tournament, the Tournament Director must notify players and referees of any unique features, abnormal local conditions, or hazards associated with the courts. Players should be notified in writing as part of the pre-tournament instructions. Referees must be notified at the venue.
- 14.D Local Rules and Exceptions.** The Tournament Director must not implement or impose any rule that is not provided in the USA Pickleball/IFP Rulebook. Exceptions to the rules because of physical limitations of the courts or other local conditions must be approved in advance by the USA Pickleball Director of Officiating.
- 14.E Ball Selection.** The Tournament Director will choose the tournament ball, which must be named on the official list of approved balls posted on the USA Pickleball and IFP websites.
- 14.F Starting Server Identification (Doubles).** The Tournament Director will provide a method of identifying each team's starting server for each game.
- 14.G Line Judges.** The Tournament Director will determine which matches will use line judges and is responsible for their selection. Line judges are recommended for medal matches.
- 14.H Apparel Changes.** The Tournament Director has the authority to enforce apparel changes. (See [Rule 16.B.3.](#))
- 14.I Extending Time to Report to Match.** The Tournament Director may allow an extension of time for players to report to a match when circumstances warrant.
- 14.J Court Change.** The Tournament Director may direct a court change during a match to accommodate better spectator or playing conditions.
- 14.K Officiating Appeals.** The Tournament Director must resolve player appeals concerning officiating rulings. Decisions of the Tournament Director are final.
- 14.L Player Misconduct.** The Tournament Director has the authority to impose match forfeits and to eject or expel any player for misconduct. (See [Rules 21.I](#) and [21.J.](#))
- 14.M Removal of Referee or Line Judge.** The Tournament Director has the authority to remove and replace members of the officiating team. (See [Rules 19.H.2](#) and [19.I.](#))

## Section 15 Referee Responsibilities

- 15.A Basic Duties.** The referee is responsible for all decisions related to procedural and judgment calls during a match.
- 15.B Pre-Match Checks.** Before each match starts, the referee must:
- 15.B.1 Referee Tools.** Check the availability and suitability of necessary supplies for the match, such as balls, score sheets, pencils, and a timing device.
  - 15.B.2 Court Conditions.** Check the preparation of the court with respect to cleanliness, lighting, net height and position, court markings, and hazards.
- 15.C Pre-Match Briefing.** Before each match starts, the referee must meet with the players at courtside to:
- 15.C.1 Paddle Inspection.** Inspect paddles for compliance with paddle specifications. (See [Rules 3.E](#), [16.A](#) and [17.A](#).)
  - 15.C.2 Rule Modifications and Hindrances.** Point out approved rule modifications, court abnormalities and non-standard court conditions that could adversely affect play.
  - 15.C.3 Line Calling Duties.** Instruct players on the line calling duties of the referee, players, and line judges when applicable. (See [Section 18](#).)
  - 15.C.4 Selection of Service and End.** Use any fair method to determine which player or team has first choice of serving, receiving, or selecting which end of the court to start the match. The winner can defer first choice to the opponent. Once a selection is made, it cannot be changed.
  - 15.C.5 Starting Server Identification (Doubles).** Ensure the starting server for each team wears the required identification. (See [Rule 16.C](#).)
- 15.D Officiating Play.** During the match, the referee must:
- 15.D.1 Score Calls.** Call the score to start each rally (see [Rule 8.B](#)). When any player appears to be delaying the game, the referee will call the score for play to proceed.
  - 15.D.2 Point Calls.** Announce the awarding of each point.
  - 15.D.3 Second Server Calls (Doubles).** Call for the second server after the first server's team loses a rally.
  - 15.D.4 Side Out Calls.** Announce a side out when a singles player or second server loses the serve.
  - 15.D.5 Score Sheet Annotations.** Appropriately annotate the score sheet after a rally is completed, a time-out is called, or a penalty is assessed.
  - 15.D.6 Net Checks.** Recheck the net height and position when the net is disturbed.
  - 15.D.7 Fault Calls.** Identify and call rule violations when they occur. The referee must identify all faults when they occur simultaneously.
  - 15.D.8 Line Calls.** Assist with line calls upon appeal and when a line judge signals a blocked view. (See [Section 18](#).)

- 15.D.9 Appealed Calls.** Rule on calls appealed by players. The referee must resolve appeals based on observations, relevant rules, and a judgment of circumstances. The referee may consult players and line judges to decide the outcome of any appeal.
- 15.D.10 Line Judges.** Monitor and manage line judge performance. (See [Rule 19.H.](#))
- 15.D.11 Hinders.** Call hinders and determine the validity of player-called hinders.
- 15.D.12 Damaged Balls.** Determine if a ball is damaged and must be replaced. (See [Rule 19.D.](#))
- 15.D.13 Time-Outs.** Enforce time-out procedures. (See [Section 20.](#))
- 15.D.14 15-Second Warnings.** Announce 15-second warnings for players to become ready to play at the start of each game, after assessing a technical warning or technical foul, and before the expiration of any time-out. At the end of the 15 seconds, the referee must call the score, even if all players are not on the court or not ready to play. When all players agree, the referee will resume play early.
- 15.D.15 Player Conduct.** Monitor and manage player conduct. The referee is empowered to call verbal warnings, technical warnings, and technical fouls, and to forfeit games and matches. The referee may also recommend ejection or expulsion of a player to the Tournament Director. (See [Section 21.](#))
- 15.D.16 Player or Position Error – Last Rally of Match.** An incorrect player or position error occurring in the last rally of a match must be corrected and play resumed before the scoresheet is returned to tournament operations personnel.

## Section 16 Player Pre-Match Responsibilities

- 16.A USA Pickleball/IFP Approved Paddle.** Players must use a paddle that is listed on the USA Pickleball/IFP Paddle List as “Pass” and complies with the paddle specifications in [Section 3.E](#). Players are responsible for confirming the “Pass” status of their paddles.
- 16.B Apparel.** Player apparel must comply with Rules 16.B.1 through 16.B.3.
- 16.B.1 Depictions.** Graphics, insignias, pictures, and writing on apparel must be in good taste.
- 16.B.2 Footwear.** Shoes must have soles that do not mark or damage the playing surface.
- 16.B.3 Apparel Change.** A player must change apparel that is considered inappropriate by the Tournament Director. (See [Rule 14.H.](#))
- 16.B.4 Match Forfeit – Refusal to Change Apparel.** When a player refuses to comply with the apparel rules, the Tournament Director may impose a forfeit of the player’s current match, when applicable, or an upcoming match.
- 16.C Starting Server Identification (Doubles).** Starting servers must wear the required form of identification determined by the Tournament Director. This identification must be visible to the referee and players during play.
- 16.C.1 Match Forfeit – Refusal to Wear Server Identification.** When a player refuses to wear the starting server identification, the referee must impose a match forfeit against the player.
- 16.D Notice of Matches.** It is the responsibility of each player to check the posted schedules to determine the time and place of each match. If any change is made in the schedule after the initial posting, the Tournament Director or their designated representative must notify the players of the changes.
- 16.E Reporting Time.** Players must report to play a match within 10 minutes after the match is called. A match cannot begin until all players are present and the starting score is called.
- 16.E.1 Game Forfeit – Late Reporting for First Game of Match.** In a multiple-game match, when a player fails to report to play within 10 minutes after the match has been called to play, the referee will impose a game forfeit against the player, unless the Tournament Director has granted an extension.
- 16.E.2 Match Forfeit – Late Reporting for Single-Game Match.** In a single-game match, when a player fails to report to play within 10 minutes after the match has been called to play, the referee will impose a match forfeit against the player, unless the Tournament Director has granted an extension.
- 16.E.3 Match Forfeit – Late Reporting for Multiple-Game Match.** In a multiple-game match, when a player fails to report to play within 15 minutes after the match has been called to play, the referee will impose a match forfeit against the player, unless the Tournament Director has granted an extension.
- 16.F Partner Change (Doubles).** A player may change a partner before a first-round match, with the consent of the Tournament Director, when the change is due to injury, illness, or circumstances beyond the control of the player. Under no circumstances can a partner change be made after the partners start team play.

## Section 17 Non-Compliant Paddles

- 17.A Non-Compliant Paddle Discovered Before Match Starts.** Before a match starts, when a player is discovered using a paddle that has not received USA Pickleball/IFP approval or is not in compliance with the paddle specifications in [Section 3.E](#), the player must switch to a compliant paddle.
- 17.B Match Forfeit – Non-Compliant Paddle Discovered During Play.** During a match, when a player is discovered playing with a paddle that has not received USA Pickleball/IFP approval or is not in compliance with the paddle specifications in [Section 3.E](#), the referee must impose a match forfeit on the player.
- 17.C Non-Compliant Paddle Discovered After Match Concludes.** After a match has ended, when a player is discovered to have used a paddle that has not received USA Pickleball/IFP approval or is not in compliance with the paddle specifications in [Section 3.E](#), the match results stand.

## Section 18 Tournament Line Calls

- 18.A Match Officiating Options.** Matches may be officiated by a referee with or without line judges.
- 18.B Matches Without Line Judges.** In matches officiated by a referee without line judges, players are responsible for calling the lines on their end of the court, excluding service foot faults, short serves, and the no-volley zone line.
- 18.C Matches with Line Judges.** In matches officiated by a referee with line judges:
- 18.C.1 Line Judge Responsibilities.** Line judges make line calls and foot fault calls for their assigned line and assist the referee as requested.
  - 18.C.2 Player Responsibilities.** Players are responsible for calling only the service court centerline on their end of the court and overriding any line call to favor the opponent.
  - 18.C.3 Invalid Line Calls.** Player line calls are not valid, except for their centerline and the override of any line call to favor the opponent.
- 18.D Line Call Appeal.** Players may request that the referee rule on any line call.
- 18.D.1 Appeal Timing.** A line call appeal must be made before the ball is hit to make the next serve.
  - 18.D.2 Requesting Opponent's Opinion Before Appeal.** Before appealing to the referee, a player may ask an opponent's opinion on any line call the player is responsible for making.
  - 18.D.3 Loss of Opportunity to Make Line Call.** After appealing to the referee, the player and the player's partner lose the opportunity to make the line call, except to override the referee's call to favor the opponent (see [Rule 18.F](#)).
- 18.E Referee Overrule of Line Call.** Upon appeal, the referee may overrule any line call by a player or a line judge.
- 18.E.1 Fault – Referee Overrule of Player's "Out" Call.** A fault occurs when the referee overrules an "out" call made by a player.
  - 18.E.2 Replay – Referee Overrule of Line Judge's "Out" Call.** When the referee overrules a line judge's "out" call upon appeal, the rally must be replayed.
- 18.F Player Override of Official's Line Call.** A player may override an official's line call when the override favors the opponent.
- 18.F.1 Replay – Player Override of "Out" Call.** When a player disagrees with a line judge's "out" call that favored the player, the rally must be replayed.
  - 18.F.2 Player Override of In Call.** When a player disagrees with a line judge's or a referee's in call that favored the player, the opponent wins the rally. (See also [Rule 6.F](#).)
- 18.G No Definitive Line Call by Referee.** When the referee is unable to make a line call upon appeal, the outcome of the rally is determined by Rules 18.G.1 through 18.G.4.
- 18.G.1 No Call by Referee – Without Line Judges.** When the referee is unable to make a line call upon appeal, the player's call stands, unless the opponent was asked and made a definitive line call, in which case the opponent's call stands.

- 18.G.2 No Call by Players and Referee – Without Line Judges.** When the players and the referee (upon appeal) are unable to make a line call, the ball is in.
- 18.G.3 No Call by Referee – With Line Judges.** When the referee is unable to make a line call upon appeal, the line judge's call stands.
- 18.G.4 No Call by Officiating Team.** When the line judges and referee are unable to make a line call, the rally must be replayed.
- 18.H Immediate Line Call by Referee.** When the assigned line judge signals a blocked view and the referee clearly saw where the ball landed, the referee should make the call immediately. If the referee cannot make the call, the referee must consult the other line judges for assistance in making the call.

## Section 19 Tournament Match Situations

- 19.A Confirmation of Score.** Before the ball is hit to make the serve, any player or team may ask the referee to confirm the score.
- 19.B Confirmation of Server or Receiver (Doubles).** Before the ball is hit to make the serve, either player on the serving team may ask the referee to confirm the correct server and either player on the receiving team may ask the referee to confirm the correct receiver.
- 19.C Confirmation of Player Position.** Before the ball is hit to make the serve, any player may ask the referee to confirm their correct position.
- 19.D Damaged Ball.** A player may make a damaged ball appeal to the referee. The appeal must be made before the ball is hit to make the next serve and the referee must be allowed to inspect the ball.
- 19.E Coaching.** During a match, coaching is only allowed during time-outs (including between games and during end changes).
- 19.E.1 Technical Warning – Coaching.** The referee will assess a technical warning against a singles player or doubles team that receives coaching during play.
- 19.F Hinder.** The referee must validate a hinder called by a player.
- 19.F.1 Fault – No Hinder.** A fault occurs when the referee does not validate a hinder called by a player.
- 19.G Officiating Decision Challenge.** Players may appeal any officiating decision to the Tournament Director.
- 19.G.1 Technical Warning or Technical Foul – Correct Ruling by Referee.** When the Tournament Director concurs with a referee’s ruling, the referee will assess a technical warning and a standard time-out against the singles player or doubles team. If a standard time-out is not available, the referee will assess a technical foul against the player or team.
- 19.G.2 Incorrect Ruling by Referee.** When the Tournament Director does not concur with a referee’s ruling, the referee must reverse the ruling to correct the situation or order a replay of the rally, as appropriate.
- 19.H Removal of Line Judge.** The referee may remove and replace a line judge for any reasonable cause based on either the referee's own observation or the unanimous request of the players.
- 19.H.1 Player Request.** When all players agree, they may petition the referee to have a line judge removed.
- 19.H.2 Referee Disagreement.** When the referee disagrees with the players’ request to remove a line judge, the referee must summon the Tournament Director for a final decision.
- 19.I Removal of Referee.** When all players agree, they may petition the Tournament Director to have a referee removed.
- 19.J Change of Starting Server.** Teams may change the starting server between games and should notify the referee before the start of the next game. There is no penalty for failure to make the notification.

## Section 20 Time-Outs and Breaks

- 20.A Standard Time-Out.** Two standard time-outs are allowed for each 11- and 15-point game and three time-outs for a 21-point game.
- 20.A.1 Before Start of Match.** A standard time-out may not be called before a match starts.
- 20.A.2 Requesting Time-Out.** Any player may call a time-out between rallies or between games.
- 20.A.2.a Fault – Late Time-Out Request.** A fault occurs when a player calls a time-out after the ball has been hit to make the serve.
- 20.A.3 Consecutive Time-Outs.** A player or team may call consecutive time-outs.
- 20.A.4 Between Games.** Between games, players may request to use one or both standard time-outs for the next game. The standard time-out will start immediately after the expiration of the time between games. A time-out must be charged when any portion of the time is used. If the requesting player or team is ready to resume play before a requested time-out begins, that time-out is not charged.
- 20.A.5 Duration.** A maximum of one minute is allowed for each time-out period.
- 20.A.6 Resuming Play.** The referee will resume play by announcing a 15-second warning ([Rule 15.D.14](#)).
- 20.A.7 No Time-Outs Available.** There is no penalty for calling a time-out when none is available.
- 20.B End Change Time-Out.** The referee will call a time-out to allow players to change ends at specified points during certain games.
- 20.B.1 11-Point Game.** In a single game to 11 points or the third game of a match with games to 11 points, the players will switch ends when the first singles player or doubles team reaches a score of 6.
- 20.B.2 15-Point Game.** In a single game to 15 points, the players will switch ends when the first singles player or doubles team reaches a score of 8.
- 20.B.3 21-Point Game.** In a single game to 21 points, the players will switch ends when the first singles player or doubles team reaches a score of 11.
- 20.B.4 Service Continuation.** Service after the end change continues with the same server.
- 20.B.5 Duration.** A maximum of one minute is allowed to change ends during a game.
- 20.B.6 Resuming Play.** The referee will resume play by announcing a 15-second warning ([Rule 15.D.14](#)).
- 20.C Medical Time-Out.** A player needing medical attention during a match (including between games) may request a medical time-out.
- 20.C.1 Before Start of Match.** A medical time-out may not be called before the start of a match.
- 20.C.2 Between Games.** Between games, a player may request to use a medical time-out, if available, at the start of the next game. The medical time-out will start immediately after the expiration of the two minutes between games. The time-out must be charged when

any portion of the time is used. If the requesting player or team is ready to resume play before the requested medical time-out begins, the time-out is not charged.

- 20.C.3 Number Available.** A player may be charged only one medical time-out per match.
- 20.C.4 Summoning Medical Assistance.** The referee will immediately summon on-site medical personnel to assess the situation and render appropriate first aid. When medical personnel are not available, the Tournament Director will be summoned to render assistance.
- 20.C.5 Duration.** A maximum of 15 continuous minutes is allowed for a medical time-out.
- 20.C.6 Time Start.** When medical assistance arrives, the referee will start a 15-minute timer. Play must resume as soon as possible but no later than 15 minutes from the start of the timer.
- 20.C.7 Valid Medical Condition.** When medical personnel (or the Tournament Director if medical personnel are not available) determine that a valid medical condition exists, any bleeding must be controlled and the player must be able to resume play in 15 minutes or less. When the player is able to resume play in fewer than 15 minutes, the remaining time is lost and no additional medical time is available to the player during the match.
- 20.C.8 Match Retirement.** A match retirement is imposed when a player is not able to continue play after the 15-minute medical time-out period expires.
- 20.C.9 Technical Warning or Technical Foul – Invalid Medical Condition.** When medical personnel (or the Tournament Director if medical personnel are not available) determine that no valid medical condition exists for granting a medical timeout, the referee will assess a technical warning and a standard time-out against the singles player or doubles team. If a standard time-out is not available, the referee will assess a technical foul against the player or team. The medical time-out is no longer available to that player for that match and the player must resume play immediately.
- 20.C.10 Blood on Court.** Blood on the court must be cleaned up before play can be resumed. Blood clean-up will be addressed as a referee time-out without a time limit.
- 20.C.11 Resuming Play.** The referee will resume play by announcing a 15-second warning ([Rule 15.D.14](#)).

**20.D Referee Time-Out.** The referee may call a referee time-out to address extenuating circumstances that require an extended interruption of play.

- 20.D.1 Summoning Assistance.** The referee will summon assistance, as necessary. When designated personnel are not available, the Tournament Director will respond.
- 20.D.2 Referee Discretion.** In the interest of overall safety, when the referee determines a potential medical situation exists, the referee is authorized to call a referee time-out and summon medical personnel. Medical personnel (or the Tournament Director if medical personnel are not available) will determine if the player may resume play. When determined to be a valid medical situation requiring treatment, the referee will charge a medical time-out to the affected player, if available.
- 20.D.3 Presence of Blood.** When a player is actively bleeding or blood is found on the court, play must be stopped at the end of the rally. Play must not resume until the blood has been cleaned up and the bleeding has been controlled. Issues relating solely to blood cleanup or

control that do not require the services of medical personnel will be addressed as a referee time-out. If medical services are required, a medical time-out must be charged.

**20.D.4 Foreign Substances.** Foreign substances on the court, such as debris, water, or other fluids, must be removed or cleaned up.

**20.D.5 Resuming Play.** The referee will resume play by announcing a 15-second warning ([Rule 15.D.14](#)).

**20.E Equipment Time-Out.** Players are expected to keep all apparel and equipment in playable condition and are expected to use standard time-outs and time between games for adjustments and replacement of equipment.

**20.E.1 Time-Out Award.** When a singles player or doubles 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.

**20.E.2 Duration.** A maximum of 2 minutes is allowed for an equipment time-out.

**20.E.3 Resuming Play.** The referee will resume play by announcing a 15-second warning ([Rule 15.D.14](#)).

**20.F Time-Out Between Games.** Players change ends and initial service upon the completion of each game.

**20.F.1 Duration.** The time between games in a match must not exceed two minutes.

**20.F.2 Resuming Play.** The referee will resume play by announcing a 15-second warning ([Rule 15.D.14](#)).

**20.G Time Between Matches.** The time between matches will be a minimum of 10 minutes. When all players agree, a match may start early.

**20.G.1 Championship Tie-Breaker Match.** When a tie-breaker match must be played to determine a championship, 10 minutes between the matches is allowed. When all players agree, play may start early.

**20.H Suspended Game.** A game suspended due to extenuating circumstances resumes with the same server, score, and remaining time-outs as when the game was suspended.

## Section 21 Unsportsmanlike Conduct and Related Penalties

- 21.A Verbal Warning.** A verbal warning may be assessed for the first-time use of profanity during a match (see [Rules 21.B.2](#) and [21.D.4](#)). The referee will assess the verbal warning against all players on the court and may concurrently assess a technical warning or technical foul against a particular player. Subsequent use of profanity by any player results in the assessment of a technical warning or technical foul, as appropriate. Only one verbal warning may be issued per match.
- 21.B Technical Warning.** A technical warning may be assessed for minor unsportsmanlike conduct any time during a match while the players are at the court and the ball is dead. The referee will assess a technical warning against a singles player or doubles team for:
- 21.B.1 Objectionable Language.** Use of objectionable language directed at another person.
  - 21.B.2 Profanity.** Use of audible or visual profanity for any reason.
  - 21.B.3 Aggressive Arguing.** Arguing aggressively with the officiating team, other players, or spectators in a manner that disrupts the flow of play.
  - 21.B.4 Ball Abuse.** Intentionally damaging or aggressively striking a dead ball without endangering people.
  - 21.B.5 Delay of Game.** Delay of game between rallies in a manner that unnecessarily disrupts the flow of play.
  - 21.B.6 Excessive Line Call Appeals.** Repeatedly appealing line calls in a manner that disrupts the flow of play.
  - 21.B.7 Coaching.** See [Rule 19.E.1](#).
  - 21.B.8 Ruling Challenge.** See [Rule 19.G.1](#).
  - 21.B.9 Invalid Medical Time-Out Request.** See [Rule 20.C.9](#).
  - 21.B.10 Other Behavior.** Other minor unsportsmanlike behavior.
- 21.C Verbal Warning and Technical Warning Consequences.** The assessment of a verbal warning or technical warning will be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reason.
- 21.C.1 No Loss of Rally or Point.** Verbal warnings and technical warnings are verbal notices only and do not result in a loss of rally or point adjustment.
  - 21.C.2 No Effect on Server.** A verbal warning or technical warning does not result in a server change or side out.
  - 21.C.3 Resumption of Play.** After a verbal warning or technical warning is assessed, the referee will resume play by announcing a 15-second warning (see [Rule 15.D.14](#)).
- 21.D Technical Foul.** A technical foul may be assessed for extreme unsportsmanlike conduct any time during a match while the players are at the court and the ball is dead. The referee will assess a technical foul against a singles player or doubles team for:
- 21.D.1 Paddle Abuse.** Aggressively or recklessly throwing a paddle without endangering people or property.
  - 21.D.2 Ball Abuse.** Throwing or striking a dead ball that inadvertently endangers people.

- 21.D.3 Extreme Objectionable Language.** Use of extremely objectionable language regardless of to whom or what it is directed.
- 21.D.4 Extreme Profanity.** Use of extremely excessive audible or visual profanity.
- 21.D.5 Threats.** Making a threat or challenge of any nature toward or against any person.
- 21.D.6 Ruling Challenge.** See [Rule 19.G.1](#).
- 21.D.7 Invalid Medical Time-Out Request.** See [Rule 20.C.9](#).
- 21.D.8 Two Technical Warnings.** Being assessed a second technical warning during a match.
- 21.D.9 Other Behavior.** Other extreme unsportsmanlike behavior.

#### **21.E Technical Foul Consequences**

- 21.E.1 Score Adjustment.** When a technical foul is assessed against a singles player or doubles team, one point will be deducted from the score of the offending player or team. When the offender's score is zero, one point will be added to the opponent's score. The player or team whose score is adjusted must move to their correct position(s) based on their new score without direction from the referee.
- 21.E.2 No Effect on Server or End Change.** A technical foul does not result in a server change or side out and does not affect a completed end change.
- 21.E.3 Resumption of Play.** After a technical foul is assessed, the referee will resume play by announcing a 15-second warning (see [Rule 15.D.14](#)).

#### **21.F Game Forfeit.** The referee will impose a game forfeit on a singles player or doubles team for:

- 21.F.1 Technical Warning Plus Technical Foul.** Being assessed a combination of one technical warning and one technical foul (or three technical warnings) during a match.
- 21.F.2 Late Reporting for First Game of Match.** See [Rule 16.E.1](#).

#### **21.G Game Forfeit Consequences**

- 21.G.1 Eligibility to Continue Play.** A player or team against which a game forfeit is imposed continues play in any subsequent games in the match.
- 21.G.2 Match Forfeit.** For single-game matches, a game forfeit is equivalent to a match forfeit.

#### **21.H Match Forfeit by Referee.** The referee will impose a match forfeit on a singles player or doubles team for:

- 21.H.1 Dangerous Paddle or Ball Abuse.** Aggressively or recklessly throwing a paddle or hitting or throwing a dead ball that endangers people or property.
- 21.H.2 Starting Server Identification.** See [Rule 16.C.1](#).
- 21.H.3 Late Reporting for Single-Game Match.** See [Rule 16.E.2](#).
- 21.H.4 Late Reporting for Multiple-Game Match.** See [Rule 16.E.3](#).
- 21.H.5 Non-Compliant Paddle.** See [Rule 17.B](#).

- 21.H.6 Improper Contact.** Making improper physical contact with another person.
- 21.H.7 Technical Foul Plus Second Foul.** Being assessed a second technical foul during a match.
- 21.H.8 Penalty After Game Forfeit.** Being assessed a technical warning after a game forfeit during a match.
- 21.I Match Forfeit by Tournament Director.** Any time a player is at the tournament venue, the Tournament Director may impose a forfeit of a singles player's or doubles team's current match, when applicable, or an upcoming match for:
  - 21.I.1 Venue Rules.** Failure to comply with the tournament or host facility's rules.
  - 21.I.2 Improper Conduct.** Improper conduct before, during or after a match.
  - 21.I.3 Abuse of Facilities.** Abuse of hospitality rooms, locker rooms, or other venue facilities.
  - 21.I.4 Improper Apparel.** See [Rule 16.B.4](#).
  - 21.I.5 Other Rules.** Violation of other rules and procedures as deemed appropriate or necessary.
- 21.J Ejection or Expulsion.** Any time a player is at the tournament venue, the Tournament Director is authorized to eject a player from the tournament or expel a player from the venue for:
  - 21.J.1 Slurs.** Using ethnic, religious, racial, sexist, or homophobic slurs.
  - 21.J.2 Injurious Paddle or Ball Abuse.** Aggressively or recklessly throwing a paddle or hitting or throwing a dead ball that causes an injury.
  - 21.J.3 Biological Substances.** Intentionally spitting, sneezing or coughing on another person.
  - 21.J.4 Intentional Lack of Effort.** Not exhibiting "best effort." This includes, but is not limited to, defaulting, forfeiting, or not giving best efforts in matches, whether for their own benefit or otherwise.
  - 21.J.5 Other Behavior.** Other flagrant, injurious or egregious behavior that the Tournament Director deems detrimental to the tournament.
- 21.K Prizes and Points.** When a player is ejected or expelled from a tournament, any prizes and ranking points gained from the tournament may be required to be surrendered.

## Section 22 Retirements and Withdrawals

- 22.A Retirement from Match.** When a singles player or doubles team retires from a match, the match is awarded to the opponent. (See [Rule 23.1.5](#) for scoring.)
- 22.A.1 Retirement During Match.** A singles player or doubles team may retire before the end of any match being played by notifying the referee or opponent.
  - 22.A.2 Advance Notification of Retirement.** A singles player or doubles team may retire in advance of any upcoming match by notifying the Tournament Director, Head Referee, or operations desk personnel.
  - 22.A.3 Eligibility to Continue Play.** A singles player or doubles team that retires from a match continues play in subsequent matches if eligible in accordance with the bracket format.
- 22.B Withdrawal from Bracket.** Players may request to withdraw from all matches. Withdrawal requests must be made to the Tournament Director, Head Referee, or operations desk personnel. (See [Rule 23.1.6](#) for scoring.)
- 22.B.1 Withdrawal Before Start of Bracket.** A singles player or doubles team may withdraw from a bracket that has not started play.
  - 22.B.2 Withdrawal from Upcoming Matches.** A singles player or doubles team may withdraw from all remaining matches in a bracket.
  - 22.B.3 Effect of Withdrawal.** A withdrawn singles player or doubles team is removed from all upcoming matches in the specified bracket.

## Section 23 Tournament Event and Scoring Policies

### 23.A Event Categories.

Men's:	Singles and Doubles
Women's	Singles and Doubles
Mixed:	Doubles

**23.A.1 Men's Events.** Only male players are allowed to play in men's events

**23.A.2 Women's Events.** Only female players are allowed to play in women's events.

**23.A.3 Mixed Events.** A mixed doubles team must consist of one male player and one female player.

**23.A.4 Doubles Play.** A doubles team must consist of two players who meet the classification requirements to participate in the appropriate event category.

**23.B Skill-Rated Events.** In an event based upon skill rating, the higher-rated player determines a team's skill level.

**23.C Age-Qualified Events.** In an adult event (ages 19 and over) based upon age grouping, the lower age of the team members determines a team's age classification. Players may play in a younger adult division unless prohibited by the rules of the National Senior Games Association.

**23.D Junior Events.** Juniors (ages 18 and under) may enter any junior event for which they are age qualified. If a junior event is not available or does not receive enough entrants, or with the Tournament Director's permission, juniors may play as adults in 19-and-over events.

**23.E Two-Match Minimum.** Each player is entitled to participate in a minimum of two scheduled matches per event entered.

**23.F Scheduling Matches.** A player is not permitted to enter multiple events scheduled on the same day with the same or overlapping time duration.

**23.G Draws and Seeding.** The Tournament Director must appoint a draw and seeding committee to rank the players and teams and set up a fair draw for each bracket in each event.

**23.H Event Formats.** The event format is selected by the tournament sponsor or the Tournament Director. Matches may use any of the approved tournament scoring options. (See [Rule 23.I.1.](#))

**23.H.1 Double Elimination.** For each bracket in each event, first-round matches are based on the seeding of all singles players or doubles teams as set by the draw and seeding committee. After losing one match, players or teams play in a consolation bracket. Winning players or teams remain in the winners' bracket. Players or teams are eliminated from competition after one loss in the consolation bracket. The winner of the consolation bracket plays the winner of the winners' bracket for the gold and silver medals. If the winner of the consolation bracket defeats the winner of the winners' bracket, then a tie-breaker match to 15 points must be played to determine the gold (first place) medal and silver (second-place) medal. The loser of the final match in the consolation bracket receives the bronze (third-place) medal.

**23.H.2 Single Elimination with Consolation.** For each bracket in each event, first-round matches are based on the seeding of all singles players or doubles teams as set by the draw and seeding committee. After losing one match, players or teams play in a consolation

bracket. Winning players or teams remain in the winners' bracket. The consolation bracket plays for the bronze (third-place) medal and players and teams are eliminated after one loss in the consolation bracket. The final two players or teams in the winners' bracket play for the gold (first-place) medal and silver (second-place) medal.

**23.H.3 Round Robin.** All singles players or doubles teams play each other. The winner is determined based on number of matches won. If two or more teams tie:

**23.H.3.a First Tie-Breaker.** Best record of head-to-head matches.

**23.H.3.b Second Tie-Breaker.** Best record of point differentials of all matches played.

**23.H.3.c Third Tie-Breaker.** Best record of point differentials of head-to-head matches.

**23.H.3.d Fourth Tie-Breaker.** Best record of point differentials of matches played against the player or team with the next highest number of matches won. If players or teams are tied for second-place, the point differentials against the first-place player or team.

**23.H.4 Pool Play.** The singles players or doubles teams are divided into two or more player pools. Each pool plays a round robin to seed the players or teams for a single-elimination or double-elimination playoff for the medals.

**23.H.5 Non-Pool Play.** All singles players or doubles teams play a round robin to seed the players or teams for a single-elimination or double-elimination playoff for the medals.

### **23.I Tournament Scoring.**

**23.I.1 Match Scoring Formats.** The recommended format for tournament scoring is best two of three games to 11 points, win by two points. Other formats are one game to 15 points and one game to 21 points, win by two points. Round robin brackets with six or more entries may also use one game to 11 points, win by two points.

**23.I.2 Scoring for Game Forfeit.** When a game forfeit is imposed on a singles player or doubles team, the score for the forfeited game is reported as 11-0 (for a game to 11 points), 15-0 (for a game to 15 points), or 21-0 (for a game to 21 points). Scores for games completed before the forfeited game are retained.

**23.I.3 Scoring for Match Forfeit.** When a match forfeit is imposed on a singles player or doubles team, the scores for each game of the forfeited match are reported as 11-0 (for games to 11 points), 15-0 (for games to 15 points), or 21-0 (for games to 21 points). Scores for matches completed before the forfeited match are retained.

**23.I.4 Scoring for Ejection and Expulsion.** When an ejection or expulsion is imposed on a singles player or doubles team, the scores for each game of the current match and all upcoming matches are reported as 11-0 (for games to 11 points), 15-0 (for games to 15 points), or 21-0 (for games to 21 points). Scores for matches completed before the ejection or expulsion are retained.

**23.I.5 Scoring for Retirement.** When a singles player or doubles team retires from a match, the scores for each game of the retired match are reported as 11-0 (for games to 11 points), 15-0 (for games to 15 points), or 21-0 (for games to 21 points). Scores for matches completed before the match retirement are retained.

**23.1.6 Scoring for Withdrawal.** When a singles player or doubles team withdraws from a bracket, the scores for each game of each match not played or completed are reported as 0-0. Scores for games and matches completed before the request for withdrawal are retained.

## Section 24 Non-Officiated Play

**NOTE – Applicability of Other Rules:** All rules apply to non-officiated tournament play, with the modifications set forth in this section.

- 24.A Self-Administration.** Players must call the score and administer their own time-outs.
- 24.B Line Calling Responsibility.** Players must call all lines on their end of the court, including the no-volley zone line and service foot faults against themselves.
- 24.C Calling Faults on Opponent.** Players may call no-volley zone faults and service foot faults on the opponent's end of the court. When there is any disagreement among players about the call, the rally must be replayed.
- 24.D Distraction.** When players do not agree that a distraction occurred, any player may request a referee or the Tournament Director to determine if a distraction occurred.
- 24.E Change of Starting Server (Doubles).** Teams may change the starting server between games provided they notify the opponent before the start of the next game.
- 24.F Request for Referee.** Any player may request that the Tournament Director assign a referee to their match when:
  - 24.F.1 Repeated Rule Violations.** The player believes that the opponent is repeatedly violating one or more rules.
  - 24.F.2 Inability to Resolve Issue.** A situation arises that players are not able to quickly and easily resolve.

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