

Pickleball Rules Cheat Sheet

The whole game on two pages — print it, fold it into your bag, settle every court argument.

The court

- Court: 20 ft wide × 44 ft long (same for singles and doubles).
- Net: 36 inches high at the sidelines, 34 inches at the centre.
- Non-volley zone (the kitchen): 7 feet deep on each side of the net, the full 20-ft width.
- Service boxes: the centreline splits each side into two equal boxes; serve diagonally.

The serve

- Underhand only: contact below waist level, paddle head below the wrist, upward arc.
- Both feet behind the baseline, at least one foot on the ground at contact.
- Serve diagonally into the opposite service box; it must clear the kitchen (landing in the kitchen, even on the line, is a fault).
- One serve attempt per server, except a serve that clips the net and lands in is replayed (a let).
- Drop serve option: bounce the ball first and hit it after the bounce — the underhand restrictions do not apply to the drop serve, but the ball must be dropped, not thrown or bounced with force.

Scoring (standard side-out scoring)

- Only the serving team can score points. Win the rally on return and you win the serve, not a point.
- Games are to 11 points, win by 2.
- Doubles: both partners serve each turn (except the very first turn of the game, which starts with one server). When the first server loses the rally, the serve passes to their partner; when the second loses it, the serve changes sides — a side out.
- Call the score as three numbers: serving team's score – receiving team's score – server number (1 or 2). Example: 4-2-1.
- Singles: the server's score decides the side — even score, serve from the right box; odd score, from the left.

The two-bounce rule

- The serve must bounce before it is returned, and the return must bounce before it is hit. After those two bounces, volleys are allowed.

The kitchen (non-volley zone)

- You may not volley while any part of you is touching the kitchen or its lines — including your momentum carrying you in after a volley.
- You CAN be in the kitchen any other time: to play a ball that has bounced there, or just to stand there (unwise, but legal).

Faults — the rally is over when someone:

- Serves into the net, out of bounds, or into the kitchen.
- Volleys from the kitchen, or their momentum carries them in after a volley.
- Volleys the serve or the return before it bounces (two-bounce rule).
- Hits the ball into the net or out of bounds.
- Is hit by the ball, or the ball bounces twice on their side.
- Touches the net, net post, or crosses the net plane (except a ball that spins or blows back over — that one you may reach over to play, without touching the net).

Line calls

- A ball landing ON the line is IN — every line except the kitchen line on a serve, which is a fault.
- Players call the lines on their own side; if you cannot clearly see it out, it is in. Give your opponents the benefit of the doubt.

Quick answers

- Ball hits the net on a rally and goes over? Play on — only serves have let replays.
- Ball bounces twice before you reach it? Their point (or side out) — the rally ended at the second bounce.
- Your partner calls it out but you saw it in? If partners disagree on a line call, the doubt resolves in the opponents' favour.
- Score forgotten mid-game? Play resumes with the agreed score; in recreational play, re-serve and restart the count everyone can agree on.

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