

BASIC PICKLEBALL RULES FOR BEGINNERS:

Scoring rules

Keeping score in pickleball seems complicated at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Here's what you need to know:

- A game is played to 11 points and the winner must win by 2.
- You score points only while your team is serving.
- The score consists of three numbers: first, the serving side's score; next, the opponents' score; and last, the number indicating whether you are the first (1) or second (2) server on your team for that point.

For example, if your side has just regained serve after the other team has lost its turn to serve (a sideout), a score of 5–3–1 would mean you are winning 5 to 3, and you are the first server on your team for this sideout. If you don't score while serving, your partner gets a turn and announces the score as 5–3–2.

- The server or server's partner must state the score before each serve.

Serving rules

Two types of serves are legal in pickleball: the traditional and the drop serve:

- **Traditional:** You must strike the ball with an underhand, low-to-high swinging motion and contact it below your waist. The highest part of your paddle must be below your wrist at contact.
- **Drop serve:** You can't add any upward or downward force to the ball when you drop it. With the drop serve, other serve restrictions go away because you will never be able to get the ball to bounce high enough to hit it as a high-to-low or above-the-waist serve.

Here are the other serving rules:

- You must stand behind the baseline, between the extensions of the sideline and centerline, and hit the ball into the cross-court (diagonal) service box.
- You get only one serve unless your team scores. Hitting the ball out, into the net, or into the kitchen is a fault.
- The centerline, sidelines, and baselines are considered in, but if the ball lands on the kitchen line, it's a fault.
- If the ball clips the net and successfully goes into the service box, it's live and must be played. If it clips the net and lands out, it's a fault.
- In doubles, each player on a team gets a chance to serve before there is a sideout and the serve goes to the other team. The player standing on the right is always the first server and continues to serve (switching sides with their partner each time) until their team loses a rally. After the first server's team loses the rally, the server's partner begins serving from whatever side they were standing on when the first serve was lost.
- You must follow the Two-Bounce Rule: The serve must bounce before the receiver can hit it. When the ball is returned to the serving team's side, the ball must again bounce before being hit. After the ball has bounced once on each side of the court, players can hit the ball out of the air (volley), as long as they aren't in the kitchen.

Other pickleball rules

Here are a few more rules to know:

- **Line calls:** On your team's side of the net, your team calls the ball out if it lands beyond the boundaries of the court; on your opponents' side of the net, they call it. If partners disagree, the ball is in. If you didn't clearly see where the ball landed, it's in.
- **Dead ball fault:** If a player hits the ball into the net or out of bounds, they lose the rally. This is also true if they commit a serving or kitchen foot fault.
- **Double bounce:** The ball can't bounce twice on your side unless you are using a wheelchair, in which case you must hit the ball prior to the third bounce.
- **Touching the net:** No touching! You may not touch the net, the net post, or the opponent's court while the ball is in play. Your clothing can't touch them, either, so leave those billowing scarves at home.

Tips for understanding the kitchen

The rules of the kitchen (non-volley zone) are not as complex as they may seem, but we break them down for you so that you'll be a kitchen expert (a.k.a. Top Chef) in no time. The kitchen is not a pool of hot lava, and you *can* go in there! Just observe the following rules.

What you *can* do in the kitchen:

- Hit a ball that has bounced on your side.
- Go in the kitchen and wait for the ball to bounce so that you can hit it. Go ahead, get in there! This is especially helpful when the ball just barely touches the top of the net, dribbles over, and bounces on the court. You can hustle in there and lift the ball up and over the net, keeping it in play.
- Stand in the kitchen anytime you like, except when serving.
- Also, you can straddle or leap over the corner of the kitchen and hit a volley from outside of the sideline boundaries of the court. This is commonly known as an *Erne* (pronounced as *Ernie*).

What you *can't* do in the kitchen:

- Have one foot or both feet in the kitchen or on the kitchen line and hit a volley (a ball that hasn't bounced on your side).
- Let your hat, glasses, or dentures fall into the kitchen after hitting a volley.
- Touch the kitchen surface with your paddle immediately after hitting a volley.
- Step or fall into the kitchen as a continuation of your momentum after hitting an otherwise legal volley.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Understand that most players spend time and work to elevate their game. When they take time to help you and/or play with you, they are being kind. Be aware and considerate of putting yourself into games with higher level players. Learn all you can to elevate your own game and look for groups of other new players. If possible, take lessons!!!!

LESSONS AT J BRYAN FLOYD:

VICKI KELLY - Certified instructor IPTPA level I and II and PPR. Call for appointment; use of pickleball machine! Individual: \$70/hour; 2 people: \$35 each; 3 or 4 people \$25 each. (Vickikelly34568@gmail.com); PPR & IPTPA I & II. (508) 223-6003.

TC COUGHLIN - IPTPA Certified Teaching Pro Level I & II. Certified Rating Specialist. Advanced Pickleball Instructor, City of North Myrtle Beach, SC. Onix distributor, Team PickleStrong™. Lessons are 1 hour: Private- \$60. Semi-private- \$55 per player. Contact TC @ 631.495.4200 or CoachTCCoughlin@gmail.com.