

# Welcome to Pickleball!

Greater La Crosse Area Pickleball  
[greaterlaxareapickleball.jimdo.com](http://greaterlaxareapickleball.jimdo.com)  
And find us on Facebook!

## Basic Rules Overview

- Pickleball is played either as doubles (two players per team) or singles; doubles is most common
- The same size playing area and rules are used for both singles and doubles; in singles, where you stand for serving is the only difference.

## The Serve

- The serve must be made underhand.
- Paddle contact with the ball must be below the server's waist (navel level) and below the wrist.
- The serve is initiated with at least one foot behind the baseline; neither foot may contact the baseline or court until after the ball is struck. Both feet must be inside the outer line when the ball is struck.
- The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court. This does not include the non-volley zone (aka kitchen). A ball touching the NVZ or it's lines on a serve is a fault.
- Only one serve attempt is allowed, except in the event of a let (the ball touches the net on the serve and lands on the proper service court; let serves are replayed). There is no limit on number of let serves.

## Service Sequence

- Both players on the serving doubles team have the opportunity to serve and score points until they commit a fault \*(except for the first service sequence of each new game).
- The first serve of each side-out is made from the right-hand court.
- At the beginning of each new game only one partner on the serving team has the opportunity to serve before faulting, after which the service passes to the receiving team. The first score called is 0-0-2 (0-0-start was eliminated in January 2016).
- If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left-hand court.
- As subsequent points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until a fault is committed and the first server loses the serve.
- When the first server loses the serve the partner then serves from their correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game).
- The second server continues serving until his team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.
- Once the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right-hand court and both players on that team have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.
- In singles the server serves from the right-hand court when his or her score is even and from the left when the score is odd.

## Scoring

- Points are scored only by the serving team.
- Games are normally played to 11 points, win by 2.
- Tournament games may be to 15 or 21, win by 1 or 2 depending on tournament director's decision.
- When the serving team's score is even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10) the player who was the first server in the game for that team will be in the right-side court when serving or receiving; when odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) that player will be in the left-side court when serving or receiving.
- The entire score and server number must be called before serving the ball or it is a fault and the serve goes to the next person.
- Once the score has been said, the server has 10 seconds to serve the ball.

## Double-Bounce Rule

- When the ball is served, the receiving team must let it bounce before returning, and then the serving team must let it bounce before returning, thus two bounces.
- After the ball has bounced once in each team's court, both teams may either volley the ball (hit the ball before it bounces) or play it off a bounce (ground stroke).
- The double bounce rule eliminates the serve and volley advantage and extends rallies.

### **Non-Volley Zone – NVZ (aka “the kitchen”)**

- The non-volley zone is commonly referred to as “the kitchen.”
- The non-volley zone is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net.
- **Volleying is prohibited within the non-volley zone.** This rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone.
- **It is a fault if, when volleying a ball, the player steps on the non-volley zone, including the line and/or when the player’s momentum causes them or anything they are wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone including the associated lines.**
- It is a fault if, after volleying, a player is carried by momentum into or touches the non-volley zone even if 1) the volleyed ball is declared dead before this happens or 2) the opponent has hit the ball to return it.
- A player may legally be in the non-volley zone any time - other than when volleying a ball – but it’s not recommended as it will likely lead to loss of point.

### **Line Calls**

- A ball contacting any line, except the non-volley zone lines on a serve, is considered “in.”
- A serve contacting the non-volley zone lines is short and a fault.
- If not sure if ball was in or not, then call it “in”. If you and your partner disagree and cannot come to an agreement on the call, then the other team makes the call and the call stands as to how they saw it. If a ref is available, and the ref is asked, the ref’s call stands if the ref saw it.

### **Faults**

- A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.
- A fault by the receiving team results in a point for the serving team.
- A fault by the serving team results in the server’s loss of serve or side out.
- A fault occurs when:
  - A serve does not land within the confines of the receiving court
    - The ball is hit into the net on the serve or any return
    - The ball is volleyed before a bounce has occurred on each side
    - The ball is hit out of bounds
    - A ball is volleyed from the non-volley zone
    - A ball bounces twice before being struck by the receiver
    - A player, player’s clothing, or any part of a player’s paddle touches the net or the net post when the ball is in play
  - There is a violation of a service rule
  - A ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying
  - A ball in play strikes any permanent object before bouncing on the court

### **Determining Serving Team**

There are a number of way to determine the serving team.

1. USAPA recommends that players use a coin toss to determine who will serve first. The winner of the coin toss will have the option to choose side or to serve or receive. If choosing a side, the other side will serve.
2. The local club may have a side that always serves first.
3. You can volley for serve as you would in table tennis, with the winner receiving the serve.
4. At the Y, the curtain side serves first.

**For the entire rule book, please visit [www.USAPA.org](http://www.USAPA.org)**

For clarification of any rules, along with video demonstrations, please visit

**[greaterlaxareapickleball.jimdo.com](http://greaterlaxareapickleball.jimdo.com)**

This is also where you will find information about Pickleball supplies, tips and strategies, local Pickleball news, where to play, and so much more!

I look forward to hearing from you! - USAPA Ambassador Jan Lucas  
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