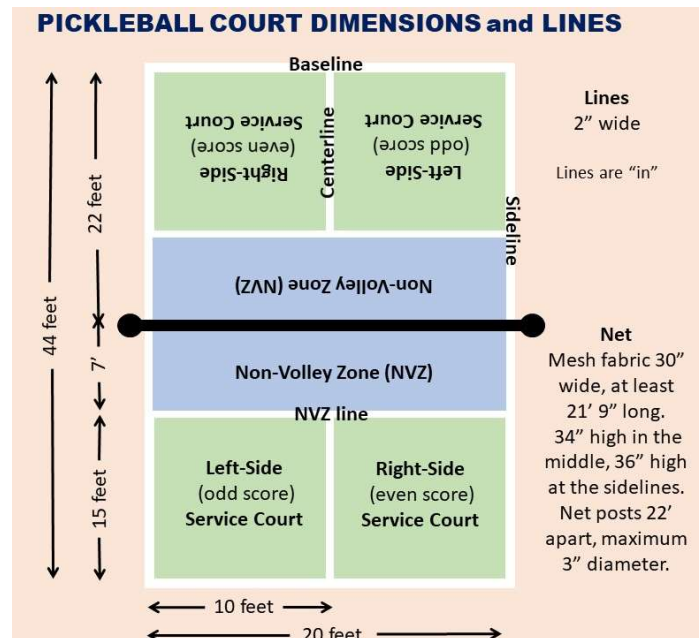


# 20 BASIC THINGS to KNOW about PICKLEBALL

1. **INVENTED.** Pickleball was invented in 1965 by families vacationing together on Bainbridge Island, Washington. They combined elements from other sports to create a unique game “fun for the whole family”.
2. **NAME.** The game got its name from a naval term for a boat – a pickle boat – whose crew was put together from other boats. Note: the name of this sport is one-word, not capitalized, like football and baseball.
3. **THE BENEFITS.** Pickleball has physical, mental and social benefits. It is a fun game to play. Players usually mix with other players when playing doubles (2 vs. 2). It is relatively easy to learn; but it is difficult to master. The design of the game, its rules and equipment make it a game for all ages and abilities.
4. **THE COURT.** A pickleball court is 20' wide by 44' long (including the lines). This is about 1/3 the size of a tennis court. The dimensions of the pickleball court are measured from the outside of the boundary lines: two sidelines and two baselines. Lines should be 2" wide.
5. **THE NET.** A tennis-like mesh net divides the court into two 20' x 22' half-courts. A pickleball net is slightly lower than a tennis net. It is 34" high in the middle and 36" high at the sidelines. Net posts 22' apart, maximum 3" diameter.
6. **SERVICE COURTS.** A centerline divides the back 15' of each court. This results in two 10' x 15' service courts into which a serve must bounce: a right-side (even score) service court, and a left-side (odd score) service court.
7. **NON-VOLLEY ZONE.** Each side of the net has a unique zone called the non-volley zone also known as “the kitchen”. The NVZ is 7' x 20'. The “non-volley zone” is descriptive of what a player cannot do if the player is in the zone or touching the NVZ line.
8. **LINES.** Lines are “in” so a ball that bounces on the baseline or centerline is in the court, not out-of-bounds. A serve is good if it bounces on a sideline, baseline or centerline of the correct service court. However, if a serve bounces on the non-volley zone line, the serve is “in” the non-volley zone, so the serve is short and is not good.
9. **PADDLES.** Pickleball is played with paddles not racquets. Racquets have strings. Pickleball paddles are about twice the size of ping-pong paddles. They typically weigh between 7.5 and 8.5 ounces. They are usually between 15" and 16" inches tall. A paddle’s width plus height cannot exceed 24". There are 800+ paddles approved by USA Pickleball.
10. **BALLS.** Pickleball balls are a plastic ‘whiffle ball’ available in many colors. USA Pickleball has approved 35 different balls. Pickleball balls have between 26 and 40 holes and weigh about 1/8 of an ounce. Balls are made differently for outdoor and indoor play. Balls for outdoor play typically have smaller but more holes than balls for indoors play.



## 11. A FEW KEY TERMS:

- a. **FAULT:** A fault is a rules violation that results in a dead ball and the end of a rally.
- b. **RALLY:** A rally starts when the score is called. A rally ends when a fault occurs. A rally could be short if the serve goes into the net or does not bounce in the correct service court. A rally could be long with multiple hits back and forth over the net.
- c. **VOLLEY:** a volley is hitting the ball in the air before it bounces.
- d. A **GROUNDSTROKE** is hitting the ball after it bounces.
- e. **SIDE-OUT:** The awarding of the serve to the opposing team after the serving team loses its serve.
- f. **TWO-BOUNCE RULE:** The receiving team must let the serve bounce before returning it; and the serving team must let the ball bounce before hitting it back.

12. **TO WIN.** A game of pickleball is won by the first team to get 11 points, must win by 2 points. Some games are played to 15 points. A pickleball match is usually best 2 out of 3 games. A single game typically lasts only 10-15 minutes.

13. **SERVING TEAM SCORES POINTS.** Only the serving team scores points. This occurs when the receiving team commits a fault. The serving team serves again after earning a point. Pickleball generally does **not** use “rally scoring” where a point is won by either team with every serve; although some tournaments may use rally scoring to shorten the length of games.

14. **THE SERVE.** There are many rules about serving including for the new “drop serve”. See Section 4 in the 2021 Official Rulebook.

4.A.1. The entire score must be called before the ball is served.

4.A.2. The moment the ball is served: 4.A.2.a. At least one foot must be on the playing surface behind the baseline. 4.A.2.b. Neither of the server’s feet may touch the court on or inside the baseline. 4.A.2.c. Neither of the server’s feet may touch outside the imaginary extensions of the sideline or centerline.

4.A.3. The server’s arm must be moving in an upward arc at the time the ball is struck and may be made with either a forehand or backhand motion.

4.A.4. The highest point of the paddle head must not be above the highest part of the wrist (where the wrist joint bends) when it strikes the ball.

4.A.5. Contact with the ball must not be made above the waist. (See Figures 4-1 and 4-3 above)

4.A.6. Placement. The server must serve to the correct service court (the court diagonally opposite the server). The serve may clear or touch the net and must clear the NVZ and the NVZ lines. The serve may land on any other service court line.

4.A.7. If the serve clears the net or hits the net and then touches the receiver or the receiver’s partner, it is a point for the serving team.

*For rules about the new 2021 provisional drop serve, see Section 4.A.8. in the 2021 Official Rulebook.*

15. **THE SCORE.** The score has three numbers in sequence. First, the serving team's score. Second, the receiving team's score. Third, whether the server is "Server 1" or "Server 2". The entire score must be called before the ball is served.
16. **GAME-STARTING SCORE.** The score at the start of every game is "**Zero – Zero – Two**". 0-0-2.
17. **SERVER 1 and 2.** Whichever player is on the right-side (even score) court always starts serving for the team. That player at that time is known as Server 1. EXCEPTION: the very first server to start the game is at that time Server 2. Throughout a game, players will be Server 1 and at other times Server 2. When a rally is started by Server 1 and the serving team commits a fault, then the other partner starts serving on whichever side of the court he is on. He is known at that time as Server 2. When Server 2 is serving and the serving team commits a fault, then there is a **side-out**. The receiving team now starts to serve with whichever player is on the right-side court. That player is known at that time as Server 1.
18. **SERVING TEAM (RIGHT - LEFT).** When a serving team wins a point, the same player serving keeps serving but switches with the partner to alternate serving between right and left-side courts. Both serving team players start a rally back behind the baseline and generally stay back because they must let the return-of-serve bounce.
19. **RECEIVING TEAM (UP – BACK).** The receiving team starts a rally with one player **back** behind the baseline in the diagonally opposite court to the server. The partner is **up** at the NVZ line on the opposite side court. When a receiving team loses a rally, receiving team players switch **up – back** so the other player returns the serve.
20. **NON-VOLLEY ZONE.** The 7' x 20' area on both sides of the net – the non-volley zone or "kitchen" – is a unique area for the game. No player can stand closer than 7' from the net and hit the ball out of the air. The non-volley zone generates a fun aspect of the game with soft shots called "dinks". Players getting up to the non-volley zone line can take command of the game. Be familiar with the NVZ rules in Section 9 of the Official Rulebook.
  9. A. All volleys must be initiated outside of the non-volley zone.
  9. B. It is a fault if the volleying player or anything that has contact with the volleying player while in the act of volleying, touches the non-volley zone. 9.B.1. The act of volleying the ball includes the swing, the follow-through, and the momentum from the action. 9.B.2. If the paddle touches the non-volley zone during the volley motion, before or after contacting the ball, it is a fault.
  9. C. During the act of volleying, it is a fault if the volleying player's momentum causes the player to contact anything that is touching the non-volley zone, including the player's partner. 9.C.1. It is a fault even if the ball becomes dead before the player contacts the non-volley zone.
  9. D. If a player has touched the non-volley zone for any reason, that player cannot volley a return until both feet have made contact with the playing surface completely outside the non-volley zone. A maneuver such as standing within the non-volley zone, jumping up to hit a volley, and then landing outside the non-volley zone is a fault.
  9. E. A player may enter the non-volley zone at any time except when that player is volleying the ball.
  9. F. A player may enter the non-volley zone before or after returning any ball that bounces.
  9. G. A player may stay inside the non-volley zone to return a ball that has bounced. There is no violation if a player does not exit the non-volley zone after hitting a ball that bounces.
  9. H. There is no violation if a player returns the ball while the partner is standing in the non-volley zone.

Non-volley-zone faults may be called by any player on either team. Benefit-of-the-doubt goes to the player who makes the call.