

Referees and Rules Summary Player Instructions

Please carefully read this important information in its entirety.

All USA Pickleball 2023 Rules apply

Key points of the 2023 USA Pickleball rules are summarized below for your convenience. However, as a player, you are responsible for being familiar with the rules in their entirety.

MAJOR NEW RULES FOR 2023

- Only one hand can be used to release the ball to serve. The **server may not spin the ball during its release.** (Rule 4.A.5)
- If your apparel color approximates the color of the ball, the Tournament Director may request you to change your apparel. Failure to comply with an apparel change request may result in the forfeit of your match. (Rules 2.G.1, 2.G.4)
- If the referee is not certain that your serve complied with the service motion or ball release requirements, the referee may call for a re-serve. (Rule 4.A.9)
- The question “Am I good?” is considered to encapsulate “Am I the correct server or receiver?” and “Am I in the correct position?” (Rule 4.B.8)
- If the referee or server calls the wrong score, you can stop play to challenge the score **before the return of serve.** Otherwise, the correction will be made at end of the rally. (Rule 4.K)
 - If you stop play after the serve is made and the score was called correctly, this is a fault against you.
 - If you stop play after the serve is returned, this is a fault against you.

1. Players must use USA Pickleball-approved paddles. You are responsible for ensuring that the paddle you play with is on the [Approved Paddle List](#) posted on the USA Pickleball website.

2. Players are responsible for calling all the lines on their end of the court with the exception of service foot faults, NVZ foot faults, and short serves, which will be called by the referee if you are in an officiated match. The Code of Ethics for Line Calling requires that the opponent gets the benefit of any doubt.

3. You may ask the referee to make a ruling on any line call. The referee will only make a ruling if he/she clearly saw the ball land. Otherwise, the appealed call will stand.

4. Starting server bands will be provided for doubles events and must be worn by each starting server.

5. Referees, and servers in self-officiated matches, will check to make sure that all players are ready, or should be ready, before calling the score.

6. After the score is called the serving team has 10 seconds to serve the ball. Failure to do so results in a fault.

7. The server may not hit the ball to serve until after the entire score is called.

8. Before the serve is hit, players may ask the referee who is the correct server or receiver, whether they are in the correct position, or to confirm the called score.
9. In officiated matches, the referee will pay close attention that each player's service motion complies with USA Pickleball requirements. The ball release must also be visible to the referee and the opponent.
10. Each team is entitled to two 1-minute time-outs per 11- point or 15-point game. Time-outs for a game may be requested and used during the between-game time-out before the game begins.
11. There is a maximum of a 2-minute break (time-out) between games.
12. An end change time-out occurs at 6 points in the last game to 11 points and at 8 points in games to 15 points. Teams have up to 1 minute to change ends of court.
13. Players may quickly hydrate and towel off between rallies within the flow of the game.
14. Any carry, or double-hit of the ball, must be unintentional and be part of one continuous motion.
15. Any action that results in the presence of blood is an automatic referee timeout requiring medical attention and clean-up of the blood.
16. In accordance with the USA Pickleball Concussion Protocol, any player sustaining a head injury will not be permitted to resume play without a written release from a licensed health care professional.
17. Each player may request one medical time-out per match to address injuries and medical conditions. When a player requests a medical time-out, medical personnel (or the Tournament Director) will be summoned to assess whether the need is valid. If the request is deemed not valid, the requesting player will be charged a standard time-out (if available) and issued a technical warning. If the player has no remaining time-outs, a technical foul will be issued (resulting in a 1-point score adjustment).
18. Players requesting to see the Head Referee or Tournament Director to challenge a referee's ruling will be charged a standard time-out and be issued a technical warning if the referee's ruling is correct. If no time-out is available, a technical foul will be issued (resulting in a 1-point score adjustment).
19. In self-officiated matches, any player may request a referee if a player believes that a rule is being consistently violated or when players are not able to quickly and easily resolve disputes.
20. Players are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. Any action deemed by the referee to be unsportsmanlike will result in a verbal warning, technical warning, or technical foul. A game will be forfeited if the player or team receives a technical warning and a technical foul, or three technical warnings, during a match. The match will be forfeited if the equivalent of four technical warnings is obtained.

Pre-Match Briefing

Before play begins for each match, the referee will hold a briefing with all players to:

- Inspect player paddles.
- Inform players of the match format.
- Identify starting servers and ensure visibility of the starting server identification.
- Use a fair method for players to choose service and ends to start the match.
- Remind players to make loud and clear calls. (Line calling responsibilities covered above in #2 and #3 not required for briefing).
- Notify players of any court abnormalities and approved rule modifications.
- Review major rule changes for 2023.
- Answer any questions about player instructions and rules.
- Allow players to warm up as time permits.