



Pickleball Rules Cheat Sheet

Quick reference for players and coaches

SportsRulesExplained.com

Based on the 2026 USA Pickleball Rulebook · Standard recreational play

SCORING

- Standard games go to **11**, win by **2**. (Tournaments may play to 15 or 21.)
- Only the **serving team** can score a point (side-out scoring).
- Doubles: call **three numbers**: your score, their score, then server **1 or 2**.
- Both partners serve before a side-out, except the game's first turn (one server; call **0-0-2**).

THE KITCHEN (NON-VOLLEY ZONE)

- The **7-foot** zone on each side of the net.
- You **cannot volley** (hit before it bounces) while any part of you touches the kitchen or its line.
- **Momentum** from a volley that carries you in is a fault, even after the ball is dead.
- You may stand in the kitchen **anytime** to play a ball that has bounced.
- Re-establish **both feet outside** the line before you volley again.

SERVING

- Serve **underhand**, diagonally crosscourt, into the box past the kitchen line.
- Contact must be **clearly below the waist**, paddle head below the wrist, in an upward arc.
- At least one foot **behind the baseline**; feet inside the sideline and centerline extensions.
- **Drop serve** allowed: drop the ball (no toss, no spin) and hit it after it bounces.
- A serve that clips the net and lands in the right box is **live**, so play it.
- You get **one** serve attempt.

COMMON FAULTS (the point ends)

- Volleying in the kitchen, or momentum carrying you in.
- Breaking the two-bounce rule.
- Serve lands out, in the net, or in the wrong box.
- Your shot lands out of bounds.
- The ball touches you or anything you are wearing.
- Hitting the ball before it crosses to your side.
- A second bounce on your side before you return it.

THE TWO-BOUNCE RULE

- The **serve** must bounce once before the returner hits it.
- The **return** must bounce once before the serving team hits it.
- After those two bounces, **either side may volley**.
- This is why nobody rushes the net on the serve.

GOOD TO KNOW

- Line calls on your side are **yours to make**; you may **not** ask spectators.
- If you and your partner disagree on your own fault, the point goes to your **opponents**.
- A ball touching **any line is in** (except a serve on the kitchen line, which is short).
- **Erne** and **around-the-post** shots are legal.
- **Call the score** out loud before every serve.