



2025 Spring League Rules & Regulations

Overview

The Ted Whitlock Community Center Pickleball League strives to promote sportsmanship, competition, community involvement, and health and fitness in a recreational setting. All participants are expected to play the game with an understanding that this is a recreational activity. The Palm Bay Recreation Department reserves the right to modify any rule that it deems fit to better enhance the quality of the program.

Palm Bay Recreation Pickleball League Rules

The following rules will be used in the Palm Bay Recreation Pickleball League. Anything not covered below will be covered by the official USA Pickleball Rulebook which can be found at www.usapa.org/ifp-official-rules.

Basic Rules

- Palm Bay Recreation pickleball league is a doubles league with teams consisting of between 2 & 4 players each (all male, all female, or any mix).
- Seasons consist of a 10-match regular season.
- The top 8 teams in each division will participate in a 1-night playoff tournament.
- Only players on a team's roster can play in league matches. Players on other league team's rosters cannot fill in.
- If 2 members from the team's roster are not available to play, the match will result in a forfeit. Whichever players start the match will play the entire match. (Only exception will be due to injury or emergency - Once a player leaves the match they may not return. That game will be a forfeit, and an available team member may sub in for any remaining games.)
- Any 2 players on the team's roster may play during playoff night providing they have played at least one regular season match. Whichever players start the playoff game(s) will play the entire night. (Only exception will be due to injury or emergency - Once a player leaves the playoffs they may not return. That game will be a forfeit, and an available team member may sub in for any remaining games.)
- Teams will have a 15-minute grace period after the scheduled match start time to be ready to start. After 15 minutes, they will have to forfeit.
- The score of forfeited games will be recorded as 11-0.
- When your match is over, please get off the court quickly so that the next teams up can warm up and get ready to start.

- There will be no open play between the 6:30 and 7:30 games, even if there is an open court. This will assure the teams playing in official games have less of a chance of errant balls hindering their play and will help to speed play along.
- League players are welcome to stay and play once all league games have completed. The gym closes at 9 PM.

Determining Serving Team

- The first team listed on the weekly schedule will serve first in the first and third games of the match.
- The second team listed will choose the side they want to start on and will serve first in the second game of the match.

The Serve

- The server's arm must be moving in an upward arc when the ball is struck.
- Paddle contact with the ball must not be made above the waist level.
- The head of the paddle must not be above the highest part of the wrist at contact.
- A 'drop serve' is also permitted in which case none of the elements above apply.
- At the time the ball is struck, the server's feet may not touch the court or outside the imaginary extension of the sideline or centerline and at least one foot must be behind the baseline on the playing surface or the ground behind the baseline.
- The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.
- Only one serve attempt is allowed per server.

Serving Sequence

- Both players on the serving team get 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 court.
- If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server will initiate the next serve from the left 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 court and both players on that team get to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.

**At the beginning of each new game only one partner on the serving team gets to serve before faulting, after which the service passes to the receiving team.*

Scoring

- Points are scored only by the serving team.
- Games are played to 11 points, win by 2.

Two-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 two-bounce rule eliminates the serve and volley advantage and extends rallies.

Non-Volley Zone (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 in 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 the volleyed ball is declared dead before this happens.
- A player may legally be in the non-volley zone any time other than when volleying a ball.
- The non-volley zone is commonly referred to as "the kitchen."

Line Calls

- A ball contacting any part of any line, except the non-volley zone line on a serve, is considered "in."
- A serve contacting the non-volley zone line is short and a fault.
- Line calls are made by players on their own side of the court.
- If you don't see the ball clearly out, it is in.

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

Weekly Match Play

- Weekly matches will include 3 games against scheduled opponent.
- The team listed second on the weekly schedule will chose which side of the net to start on.
- Teams switch sides after each game.
- Each team gets 2 one-minute timeouts per game.
- League games will be self-officiated; thus, it is essential that all league rules be followed during game play.
- If a disagreement occurs, please take the following steps:
 - Check the league rules
 - Ask other players on a nearby court to help clarify rules
 - If there is a disagreement that cannot be settled among the teams, a replay shall occur
 - This is a recreational league, please be courteous and try to resolve all issues in a calm and friendly manner
 - As a last resort, the Recreation Staff at the community center has final say
- The winning team of each game earns 2 standings points.
- If the losing team scores 6 or more, they earn 1 standings point.
- If losing team scores under 6 they earn 0 standings points.
- Teams will be given a score sheet before each match . Game scores should be recorded after each game. **Please record the actual score of the game, not the standings points awarded!**
- One member from each team should sign the completed score sheet at the end of the match.
- Awards will be given to the top 3 finishers in the regular season for each division.

Postseason Playoff Tournament

- A postseason playoff tournament will be held the week following the regular season.
- The top 8 teams in each division will be eligible to participate.
- Team ranking will be determined by the following tiebreakers
 - Standings points
 - W-L record
 - Head-to-head record
 - Head-to-head point differential*

- The first round of the playoffs will consist of two pools of round robin play.
 - Pool A will contain regular season seeds #1, 4, 5, and 8.
 - Pool B will contain regular season seeds #2, 3, 6, and 7.
 - Teams will play each team in their pool 1 game to 15 points, win by 2.
 - The team with the higher seed will serve and the lower seed will pick their starting side for each game.
 - The teams will switch sides at 8 points.
- The top 2 teams in each pool will be seeded 1 through 4 based on their record in pool play and will advance to the semifinal round.
 - Tiebreakers for pool play:
 - Head-to-head results among tied teams
 - Point differential* of all pool play games
 - Head-to-head point differential*
 - Point differential* against the next highest team
 - Teams will play 1 game to 15 points, win by 2.
 - The team with the higher seed will serve and the lower seed will pick their starting side.
 - Teams will switch sides at 8 points.
 - The winners of each game will advance to the Gold Medal Match.
 - The losers of each game will advance to the Bronze Medal Game.
- Gold Medal Match
 - Teams will play best-of-three series. Games to 11, win by 2.
 - The team with the higher seed will serve first in the first and third game (if necessary) and the lower seed will pick the side.
 - Teams will switch sides after each game.
 - The lower seeded team will serve first in the second game.
- Bronze Medal Match
 - Teams will play one game to 15, win by 2.
 - The team with the higher seed will serve first and the lower seeded team will pick the side.
- All regular season rules will be followed.

*Point differential is the number of points a team scored minus the points a team lost. Points earned is called “Points For” (PF) and points lost is called “Points Against” (PA). Point differential is abbreviated as PD. So, $PD = PF - PA$

Game Equipment

- The nets, pickleballs, and scoreboards will be provided.
- Wooden paddles are available for use.
- Players are welcome to use their own USA Pickleball Approved paddle.

Player Eligibility

- All players must be 18 and registered through the Palm Bay Recreation Department and have a signed player waiver on file. Ages 16-17 may participate with a signed waiver from parent or guardian.
- Players may be added to a team's roster up until the completion of week 5. (4 players max per team)
- Any combination of 2 players from the team's roster may play in each regular season match. Whichever players start the match will play the entire match. (Only exception will be due to injury or emergency - Once a player leaves the match they may not return)
- Any combination of 2 players from the team's roster may play during playoff night providing they have played at least one regular season match. Whichever players start the playoff game(s) will play the entire night. (Only exception will be due to injury or emergency - Once a player leaves the playoffs they may not return. That game will be a forfeit, and an available team member may sub in for any remaining games.)
- Friends/Family/Spectators are not permitted to play on the courts during league nights. This is a liability issue for the City. Those interested in bringing guests out to play pickleball are welcome to do so during our normal Open Gym Pickleball times at either the Ted Whitlock or Tony Rosa Community Center.



www.PBFL.org/Pickleball