

Pickleball Rules Cheat Sheet

Your simple, one-page guide to the most important rules. Keep this in your bag!

1. The Court Basics

- **Non-Volley Zone (The "Kitchen"):** The 7-foot area on both sides of the net.
 - **Service Courts:** The two boxes behind the kitchen on each side.
 - **Baseline:** The line at the very back of the court.
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2. Serving Rules

- **Position:** You must stand with both feet *behind* the baseline.
 - **Motion:** The serve must be hit **underhand**. The paddle must contact the ball *below your waist*.
 - **Bounce:** You must *drop* the ball and hit it *after* it bounces (this is the "drop serve," the only legal serve).
 - **Target:** Serve *diagonally* across the court. The ball must land in the service court *past* the opponent's kitchen.
 - **Who Serves?** In doubles, the player on the **right side** (even court) always serves first for their team.
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3. Scoring Basics

- **Who Scores:** You can **only** score a point when your team is serving.
 - **Game Length:** Games are normally played to 11 points (win by 2).
 - **Calling the Score (Doubles):** Announce **3 numbers** before every serve:
> [Your Score] - [Opponent's Score] - [Server Number (1 or 2)]
 - **Example:** Your team has 5 points, the opponent has 3, and you are the first server for your team. You call out: "**5 - 3 - 1**".
 - **Starting the Game:** The very first server of the game is special. They are Server 2. They start on the right and call: "**0 - 0 - 2**".
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- **Side Out:** When your team's first server (Server 1) loses a rally, the serve goes to their partner (Server 2). When Server 2 loses a rally, it is a "**Side Out**," and the serve goes to the other team.
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4. The 3 "Must-Know" Rules & Faults

This is what you *really* need to remember. A "fault" means you stop play and lose the rally.

1. The Double-Bounce Rule (or Two-Bounce Rule)

This rule applies to the first two shots of *every* rally:

- * **Bounce 1 (The Return):** The team *receiving* the serve **MUST** let the ball bounce once before hitting it.
- * **Bounce 2 (The Serve):** The team that *served* **MUST** also let the ball bounce once on their side before hitting it.
- * **After that:** Once these two bounces have happened, players are free to hit the ball out of the air (a "volley") or after a bounce.

2. The Non-Volley Zone (The "Kitchen")

This is the most famous rule in pickleball.

- * You **CANNOT** hit a *volley* (hitting the ball out of the air) while any part of your body is standing in the kitchen or touching the kitchen line.
- * It is *also* a fault if your momentum from a volley causes you to step into the kitchen, even *after* you've hit the ball.
- * **It's OK...** to stand in the kitchen at any other time (e.g., to hit a ball that has already bounced in the kitchen).

3. Other Common Faults

You lose the rally if you do any of the following:

- * Hit the ball into the net.
- * Hit the ball out of bounds (outside the court lines).
- * Hit a volley before the Double-Bounce Rule is complete (see rule #1).
- * Commit a kitchen violation (see rule #2).
- * Serve the ball into the net or into the wrong service box.
- * Let the ball bounce twice on your side before you hit it.