

Here are 5 fundamental rules of Pickleball to know:

Serving

A serve must be a legal serve; otherwise, the server loses its turn. A legal serve can only be made by striking the ball on or above the server's waist before hitting the ground. A player may strike the ball with any part of their body, but they cannot use their hands, arms, elbows, or legs to hit the ball. Once a player has begun their swing, they cannot stop it before striking the ball.

You must serve underhand from the backcourt. The ball must bounce once on your side of the court (the "in-bounds" area), then once on the opponent's side of the court. Your serve may bounce twice in any other part of the court. If you serve successfully, you continue to play. If you don't, your opponent gets to serve.

Two-Bounce Rule

If the ball bounces twice before reaching its target, it's considered out-of-bounds and counts as an automatic fault against your team. When this happens, you lose that point, and your opponents get one automatically, no matter what they were doing when it happened. This rule prevents players from getting away with just letting their balls bounce around until they reach their target without actually hitting them into play at all.

Non-Volley Zone (NVZ)

The NVZ is a 3-foot-wide area in front of the net where a ball can be served but not volleyed. This rule is designed to prevent players from serving the ball directly at another player. It also prevents the server from putting too much power behind their serve and hitting the other player in the face as they attempt to return it.

You can't hit the ball over this rectangular area above the net, it's where players stand when they're serving or returning serve. The NVZ extends from one side of the court to the other.

Faults

A fault occurs when a player or team commits an infraction that results in a loss of points or side out, or if they don't follow one of the fundamental pickleball rules correctly. Examples include hitting the ball out of bounds, hitting it before it bounces twice on your side of the court, or hitting it before your opponent has returned it properly. The team committing a fault loses their turn, and their opponent receives a point or sides out, depending on whether they're playing first to 15 points or first to 11 points, respectively (or whatever increments you've decided beforehand).

Change of Serve

When playing doubles, each team can switch who serves after every game, as long as both teams are ready to play before serving starts up again (this means you have to have your pickleball paddle in hand and your feet must stay behind your half of the court).