PICKLEBALL STUDY GUIDE

HISTORY

Pickleball is a simple game designed for all ages and any athletic ability. It was first played in 1965 in the backyard of Joel Pritchard, where his dog Pickles loved to chase and carry away the ball when it landed off the court. Hence the name: Pickleball. Today the sport is played all across the U.S. and in far-away places like Singapore and Kenya. As the sport has grown in popularity there are many competitive tournaments and leagues across the country.

OBJECTIVE

The object of the game is to score more points than your opponent. Pickleball is played either as doubles (2 players per team) or singles. Games are normally played to 11 points, win by 2. In doubles play, the game begins with an underhand, drop serve to the opposing team and diagonally across the net. The serving player starts from the right hand side of his/her court and makes contact with the ball below the waist before the ball hits the court surface. The ball must clear the nonvolley zone and bounce in the designated serve/receive area before the receiving team can return it. The return must again bounce on the serving team’s court before it is returned over the net (double bounce rule). After the first two bounces, each side can choose to hit the ball in the air (volley) or let it bounce once. Volleying (hitting the ball before it bounces) is prohibited within the non-volley zone.

GAME PLAY

* Service for a team starts with player in the right hand court with at least one foot behind the baseline.
* For the first service sequence of a new game only one partner serves until his/her team faults.
* After all players on both teams have had one service rotation, then both partners take a turn at service before the ball is returned to the opponent.
* One player continues serving, switching sides of his/her court with his/her partner until his/her team commits a fault.
* The second server continues serving until his team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.
* Both players on a team serve and score points until their team commits two faults.
* Points are scored only by the serving team.
* Games are played to 11 points, win by 2.
* The serve is made underhand with contact below the server’s waist before the ball touches the ground.
* The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite court. Only one serve attempt is allowed.
* The receiving team must let the ball bounce before returning as well as the serving team must let it bounce before returning (double bounce rule), thus two bounces before both teams may volley the ball (hit before a bounce)
* Volleying is PROHIBITED within the nonvolley zone. (7 feet from the net) Player’s feet must be behind the nonvolley zone line when “volleying” a ball. (ball has not touched the ground)
* Players can play a ball in the nonvolley zone after it has bounced.
* Balls hitting the side or end lines are good.
* Points are scored only by the serving team.

VOCABULARY

* **Volley** – hitting the ball before it bounces
* **Side out** – When serving team faults and service goes to the opposing team
* **Let** – On the serve the ball hits the net and lands in the appropriate diagonal court area. The server may replay the serve
* **Fault**- any action that stops play because of a rule violation
* **Nonvolley zone** – the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net
* **Double Bounce Rule** –When the ball is served the receiving and serving team must let the ball bounce before returning
* **Game** – regular games are played to 11 points and win by 2 points
* **Smash** –A player’s feet are behind the nonvolley zone line and use an overhand swing when volleying a ball
* **Receiving court** – the designated area where the serve must land diagonally across the net from the serving team

SKILL TECHNIQUES

**Underhand serve**- Paddle contact with the ball must be below the server’s waist with at least one foot behind the baseline and neither foot may contact the baseline or court until after the ball is struck

**Forehand** - A player steps forward with the opposite foot and shoulder facing the net and swings the paddle in a level manner with the arm extended and finishing the swing out in front

**Backhand** – A player is standing with the shoulder of the arm/hand holding the paddle facing the net (sideways) and the same foot is stepping to the net as the paddle is brought back and across the body to make a play on the ball that is on the opposite side of hand holding the paddle

**Lob** – A high and deep hit ball often over the heads of the opposing team

**Smash** – An offensive play on the ball when a player’s paddle is extended overhead and swung in a downward motion before the ball has bounced and his/her feet are behind the nonvolley line

THE COURT

The court dimensions are 20’ x 44’ for both doubles and single. Net height is 36” on each end and 34” in the middle of the net. A nonvolley zone extends 7’ on each side of the net. There remains 15’ on each side of the court. On each side, the 20’ x 15’ rectangles are further divided into 2 equal rectangles measuring 10’ x 15’.

