



PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT RULEBOOK

2026 BIG APPLE SPORTS CLASSIC V1

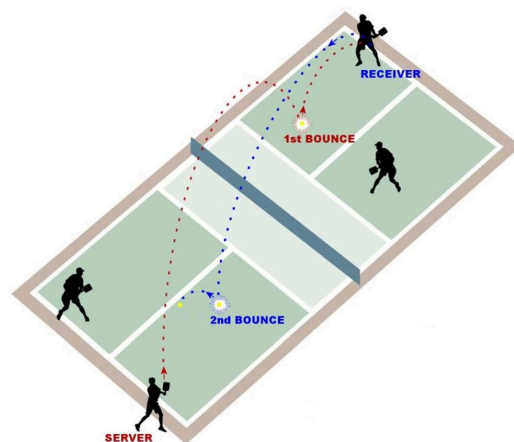
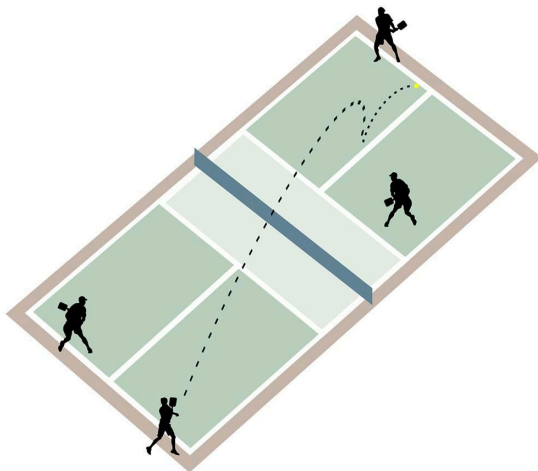


Big Apple
Recreational
Sports

Basic Pickleball Rules

Serving Rules

- Only the serving team can score points
- The server must stand behind the baseline
- The serve must be underhand and below your waist
- The serve must land in the box diagonal to the server. You must stand behind the baseline and within the sidelines when serving
- The server keeps serving, switching sides each point, until their team loses a point. Then their partner starts serving and switches sides each point until they lose a point. When the serve switches sides, the player on the right side of the court serves first
- For the first serve of the game, that team only gets one chance to serve (until they lose a point). It's like they are the second server. The other team then gets a chance for both players to serve (until they lose two points). This pattern continues for the rest of the game
- The server must call out the score before each point. Three numbers are said: Your score, the other team's score, and if you are the first or second server for your team. This helps everyone keep track of the score and who serves next



Fault Rules

- Hitting the ball outside the court lines
- The ball must bounce once on each side after the serve (double bounce rule) before you can hit it without bouncing (volley)
- Not getting the ball over the net
- Hitting the ball without bouncing it in the non-volley zone (the kitchen). It's also a fault if you step into the kitchen after hitting a volley, even if it's just from moving too fast. Standing on the kitchen line is the same as being in the kitchen
 - Be aware that the front of your shoe crossing the kitchen line is considered a fault
- The ball bouncing twice on your side
- Hitting the ceiling or walls before the ball lands on the court
- If the ball touches any part of a line, it's considered "in," EXCEPT for a serve that hits the kitchen line. That serve is "out."
- If a player touches the net with their paddle or body, it's a fault and their team loses the point
- If the ball hits your hand below your wrist, the ball is still in play
- Hitting the ball twice in one shot (double hit) is allowed only if it's not on purpose, it's a continuous motion in one direction, and done by only one player

Commonly Used Terms

- **Dink Shot:** A soft shot that is intended to arc over the pickleball net and land within the non-volley zone
- **Double Bounce/Rule:** A ball that bounces more than once, on one side, before it is returned. Following the serve, each side must make at least one ground-stroke, prior to volleying the ball (hitting it out of the air)
- **Drop Shot:** A groundstroke shot that falls short of the opponent's position.
- **Fault:** A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation
- **Lob:** A shot that returns the ball as high and deep as possible, forcing the opposing side back to the baseline
- **Non-Volley Zone ("The Kitchen"):** The section of court adjacent to the net. A player cannot volley a ball while standing within the non-volley zone. It includes all lines surrounding the zone
- **Overhead Slam/Smash:** A hard, overhand shot usually resulting from an opponent's lob, high return, or high bounce
- **In:** When the ball is in bounds. This signal can be gestured by extending your hand flat and parallel to the ground

- **Out:** When the ball is out of bounds. This signal can be gestured by raising your index finger pointing up
- **Rally:** Continuous play that occurs after the serve and before a fault

Apparel/Equipment

- Players must wear proper athletic clothes.
- Shoes must have soles that do not mark or damage the court's playing surface.
- You can bring your own paddle or use the free paddles provided by the venue.
- Balls will be provided

For a full guide to pickleball rules, check out [this manual](#). You can also watch Youtube videos like [this one](#) for more information.

Tournament Info and Rules

General League Information

- This tournament is designed in line with the mission of Big Apple Recreational Sports (BARS) to foster a community of players that extends beyond the courts. The importance of socialization is at the forefront of the decisions made in designing the league. We structure the league to offer the opportunity to meet and play with new people, build community, and play competitive games.

Registration

- All leagues will have both free agents and “buddy” system. This means you can sign up individually or as a pair.
 - Advanced, Intermediate, and WTNB Teams consist of two (2) players
 - MiLP Teams consist of four (4) players
 - If you sign up as a free agent, you will be paired up by the leads
 - If you sign up, you will have to identify your buddy/partners and we will provide them with a link to register
- Waitlist
 - If the tournament is full, you may add yourself to our [Waitlist](#)
 - If a player drops out, we will contact the first person from this list to offer them a spot
 - Buddy systems will not be honored for waitlisted players.

Teams

- Each team will have two (2) players, with the exception of the MiLP division which will have four (4).

Substitute Players

- We will not have a substitute policy for this tournament
- If you signed up for the tournament and can no longer make it, please notify us immediately so that your partner can still participate

- All registrations are final and non-refundable
- Player filling up a spot will have to pay the registration fee
- If no player can be identified, that team will be pulled out of the tournament altogether and any teams playing that team will receive a 11-0 win for the match.

Player Attendance

What happens if someone is either late for their matches or has to leave early?

- Players are encouraged to arrive early and during our setup time before the tournament starts
- Players who miss the first five minutes of their match will forfeit the match
- If a player needs to leave the tournament early, any games not played will be an automatic forfeit as no matches can be played and no players will fill that spot

Teams are expected to complete all scheduled games

- **If a team leaves before completing all games**, any unfinished games are forfeited.
 - Games that have been completed before departure will stand as played.
- **If a player becomes unable to continue (injury or other reason) during the match:**
 - Any Games not completed will be forfeited.

Player Rotation

- There are no Player Rotation rules for teams of two (2) in the Advanced, Intermediate, and WTNB divisions
- For MiLP Teams, there will be 4 games played, each with a different pairing of partners from the team of 4.
 - There will be a coin toss at the beginning of the match to determine which team must reveal their line-up first. (see MiLP section below)

Scoring

- You must enter your score in its entirety and accurately. Anyone can enter the score. The opposing team will have a few minutes to contest the score entered prior to it becoming finalized.
- Games are played to 11 points, win by 2.
- The first team to reach 11 points wins.

Determining Serving Team/Starting Side

- A virtual coin toss will determine who gets to choose to serve/receive or starting sides. The team that loses the coin toss gets to make the remaining decision.
- Teams will switch sides after one team reaches 6 points in games that are played to 11 or 8 points in games that are played to 15.

Making Calls

- The player or players closest to the ball get to make the call. No outside players can help in making calls.
 - If both teams are really unsure of the call, they can agree on replaying the point
- If a ball from another court rolls onto your court during a point, any player can yell "Ball" to stop the point. The point will then be replayed.
- When playing at a facility with a Replay System, it cannot be used to assess calls

Hindrance

- A hindrance call in pickleball refers to a situation where a player's intentional actions or behavior interfere with their opponent's ability to play a shot effectively. Examples of this include waving arms, excessive noise, and stomping feet.
- Recognizing the difference between accidental interference and intentional hindrance is important for players. Accidental interference examples include a player losing their balance, a player's paddle scrapping the ground when trying to hit the ball, and telling a teammate "good job" after the point has ended.
- Players should approach hindrance calls with respect and a willingness to resolve any disputes amicably. If the disagreement persists, involving a neutral third-party referee can help in reaching a fair decision.
- If a player makes a hindrance call, the point should be replayed.
- If this persists during a game, players should inform the Operations Manager or Director immediately to observe and intervene as needed. If hindrance persists, this can lead to the decision up to and including a forfeited match for the player that is hindering play.

Timeouts

- Each team is entitled to one timeout per match. That timeout must not exceed one minute
- Timeouts not used in a match do not roll over to future matches.

Round Robin Standings

- Final standings within a pool are determined primarily by match win percentage
- When there is a tie, head to head winner between those with identical win percentage breaks the tie
- When a 3 way tie cannot be resolved by head to head, point differential will be used to resolve the tie.

Playoffs

- Playoff games will consist of a single match played to 15, win by 2.
- If match is won in 2nd game, 3rd game is not needed since game wins and points aren't factored into standings at this point (this differs from regular season games)
- There will be no playoffs for MiLP

If there are any changes to this, leadership will email the league before the tournament.

MiLP Event (Minor League Pickleball)

- 5 teams of four players of any gender will compete against each other in a round robin format. There will be no playoffs.
- A match consists of four games with each game consisting of a different pairing of players.
 - Each player on the team plays two games per match.
- Games are played to 11, win by 1.
- The match starts with a virtual coin toss.
 - The winner of the coin toss chooses between 3 decisions: Seeing your opponents line up before creating yours, serve/receive for the 4 games, starting side for the 4 games
- Switch Sides when one team reaches 11 points.
- Each team is entitled one timeout.
- The team that wins the majority of the 4 games, wins the match
- If there is a 2 games each tie, a Dreambreaker will be played

- Dreambreaker: a singles game played to 21 with rally scoring. After every 4 points, both teams switch players and continue to cycle through all 4 players until one team reaches 21 points. The team that revealed their line-up first in the original coin toss will get to choose their line-up second for the dreambreaker.
 - In rally scoring, you must win by 2 and you can only win on your serve. This may result in the leading team's score "freezing" until they win another point on their serve.
- If a player cannot finish a game for any reason, that game is forfeited. If any player is not able to finish the dreambreaker, that team forfeits the dreambreaker.
- Final standings will be determined by match record. A tie in match record will be broken by considering head to head results. If the tie has not been resolved, point differential will be considered.

Player Participation

Code of Conduct

- Big Apple Recreational Sports is a non-profit, community sports league for LGBTQ+ friendly people who want to play sports fairly. We want to make sure everyone feels welcome. So, all players must behave in a respectful way
- Sportsmanship means being fair, respecting other players and referees, and being nice whether you win or lose.
- Threatening language, mean words, or insults about someone's race, religion, gender, or who they love will not be allowed.
 - This includes on and off the court, such as in-person, email, phone/text, and social media.
- If someone does something unacceptable as described above, and it's found to be true by the Director or Operations Manager, they might be told to leave the game, match, season, or the league.
- Here are helpful links to Big Apple Rec Sports Policies
 - [Terms of Participation](#)
 - [Player Participation Policies](#)
 - [Harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying Policy](#)
- Respecting the venue's property is important for maintaining the relationship for future seasons
 - Clean up after yourself
 - No damaging of property
- BARS Pickleball Leadership reserves the right to review all incidents and escalate decisions to the Board of Directors when needed.