



Basic Rules of Pickleball

1. The service is underhand. When serving, you must hit the ball below your waist, the racquet head must be lower than your wrist and the racquet head must be moving in an upwards direction, not sidearm.
2. The serve must **clear** the no-volley (kitchen) line. If it touches the line the ball is considered “out” and is a lost point. Note: if the ball touches any other line it is considered “in” (such as side line, back court line, mid court line). **After** the serve, if the ball touches the kitchen (or any other line), it is considered “in”.
3. A two-bounce rule is in effect. The ball must bounce once on each side of the court before it can be volleyed.
4. No volleying is allowed in the Kitchen (properly called the no-volley zone). (Note – volley means to hit the ball before it touches the ground.) If your momentum carries you into the kitchen after volleying, you lose the point. You **can** enter the kitchen to play a ball that has hit the ground. You **can** enter the kitchen *before* the ball hits the ground. You **can** reach and volley *overtop* of the kitchen, so long as your feet don’t enter the kitchen or touch the line.
5. If you serve the ball and it hits the non-receiving opponent or that player catches it **before** the ball hits the ground, you win the point! It may seem obvious that the ball was going to the wrong court, but because it didn’t hit the ground, it cannot be called a service fault.
6. Similarly, if a ball is going out of bounds and you catch it before it hits the ground (even with the good intention of preventing it from going into the next court), you lose the point.
7. Detailed rules can be found on the Calgary Pickleball Club Website at www.calgarypickleballclub.ca.

Court Etiquette & Safety

The following practices have been developed for safety and courtesy reasons.

- **A number of players have been injured because they have stepped and tripped on balls from other courts. To prevent this:**

If your ball enters a neighbouring court, DO NOT go on that court if play is still in progress. Call out **“BALL”** as loudly as is appropriate and **WAIT** for them to stop play and retrieve the ball **for** you.

When sending a ball back to another court, do not just bat it along the ground. Pick the ball up and hit it back to the person who is calling for the ball.

If you hear a neighbouring team player shout out “BALL,” **immediately STOP play** and retrieve the ball for the neighbouring team. Then serve again with no penalty.

- **If a ball goes out of bounds**, call “OUT” but also point your index finger upwards because it is often hard to hear players on the other side of the court.

Likewise, if a ball is **in** and you failed to return it, call “IN” and point your index finger towards the floor.

- It is your responsibility to call balls IN or OUT on your side of the net. If you and your partner are not sure if the ball was IN or OUT, give the benefit of the doubt to the opposing team and call it IN. Points are **never** replayed because of uncertainty as to whether the ball was IN or OUT.
- Avoid moving backwards while trying to get in position to return a lob to the back of the court. Either turn sideways (90 degrees) or right around (180 degrees) so that you can see where you are going and avoid a possible trip and hard landing.
- **Always** call out the score so the other team can hear it before serving, eg 6-5-1 which means 6 for the serving team, five for the receiving team, and Server #1. A new rule (March 2015) states that if you do not call the score you lose the serve – No second chance!
- **Everybody plays with everybody!** Players new to the game should not feel intimidated by the level of play. The only way to get better is to play with others who are more experienced than you. And rest assured that we are all patient and understanding when it comes to beginners. Don't get frustrated. Relax and have fun. In no time at all, you will be more than proficient.

Gord McLure
Cedarbrae Community Centre

RULES REFRESHER

There are a few misconceptions concerning some of the basic rules:

1. **FICTION** – You cannot ever go into the kitchen to play a shot.

FACT – If you choose, you can enter the kitchen at any time and you can stay in the kitchen the whole game if you wish. Obviously, this would not be wise since if the return shot comes right back at you, you would not be allowed to volley it.

The proper name for the kitchen is the No Volley Zone. The only shot you cannot make in the kitchen is volleying the ball before it hits the ground. Some players tend to take a run at a volley and their momentum takes them into the kitchen after they have hit the ball. This too results in the loss of the point. To avoid this, make sure your feet are firmly planted before you volley the ball.

2. **FICTION** – After you enter the kitchen to play the ball after it bounces, you then need to get out of the kitchen before your next shot.

FACT – See above. You can stay in the kitchen all day. Opponents will take advantage of your staying there, but it is not illegal, just unwise.

3. **FICTION** – When your partner is serving, you must stand at the back line of the court.

FACT – You can stand anywhere you want. It makes sense to be near the back of the court though, since the first time the ball comes back, you have to let it bounce.

4. **FICTION** – When you and your partner do not agree whether a ball is in or out (on your end of the court) you can replay the point.

FACT – Absolutely not – if you and your partner do not agree, the ball is ruled in and your opponents get the benefit of the doubt. The only replays allowed are when a serve hits the net and clears the kitchen, and when a ball from another court enters your court.

5. **FICTION** – When the person serving makes a terrible serve into the wrong side of the opponents' court, it is OK to catch the ball.
FACT – If an errant serve strikes the non-receiving player or is caught by that person, the point goes to the server. Although it was obvious that the ball was going to the wrong half of the court, a ball cannot be declared out until it hits the floor. (Don't waste time discussing the absurdity of this rule – just get faster at ducking the errant serve.)

6. It is the rule that you must call the score **before** you serve. This is intended to give your opponents a chance to question the score before you serve. Calling the score while starting your back swing does not accomplish this. Failing to call the score at all results in a loss of serve – don't be shy about pointing this out to your opponents – everyone needs to play by the rules

7. Finally, this is not a rule, but it should be because it is a safety issue! When a ball comes into your court, do not just bat it along the ground to get it rid of it. Pick it up, look to see who is waving to get the ball back and serve it back to them. **Everyone**, not just the hosts, needs to remind their partners and opponents to observe this common-sense rule – don't be shy – it is your safety at stake.

Note – At Cedarbrae, the kitchen line is the BLUE LINE. The green line is for badminton. Kudos to Cedarbrae for having the only indoor pickleball courts in Calgary with the proper kitchen line!