THE GAME

- Pickleball is a simple paddle game played using a special perforated, slow-moving ball over a tennis-type net on a badminton-sized court.
- The ball is served underhand without bouncing it off the court and is served diagonally to the opponent's service court.
- Points are scored by the serving side only and occur when the opponent faults (fails to return ball, hits ball out of bounds, etc.). The server continues to serve, alternating service courts, until server faults.
- The first side scoring 11 points and leading by at least a 2-point margin wins. For example, if both sides are tied at 10 points, then play continues until one side wins by 2 points.

UNIQUE PICKLEBALL FEATURES

- **Double Bounce Rule.** Following serve, each side must make at least one groundstroke, prior to volleying the ball (hitting it before it has bounced).
- **Non-Volley Zone.** A player cannot volley a ball while standing within the non-volley zone.

SERVICE RULES

- **Serve Motion.** The serve must be made with an underhand stroke so that contact with the ball is made below waist level.
- **Server Position.** At the beginning of the serve, both feet must be behind the baseline. At the time the ball is struck, at least one foot must be on the playing surface or ground behind the baseline and the server's feet may not touch the playing surface in an area outside the confines of the serving area.
  - The serving area is defined as the area behind the baseline and on or between the imaginary lines extended from the court centerline and each sideline.
- **The Serve.** The ball must be struck before it hits the playing surface. The ball must land in the opponent's crosscourt (diagonally opposite court) service court.
- **Placement.** The serve must clear the net and the non-volley line and land in the opponent's service court. The serve may land on any service court line except the non-volley line.
- **Interference.** If the serve clears the net and the receiver or the receiver's partner interferes with the flight of the ball on the serve, it is a point for the serving team.
- **Service Foot Fault.** During the serve, when the ball is struck, the server's feet shall not:
  - Touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the sideline.
  - Touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the centerline.
  - Touch the court, including the baseline.
• **Service Faults.** During the service, it is a fault if:
  - The server misses the ball when trying to hit it. If the ball lands on the ground without the server swinging at the ball, it is not a fault.
  - The served ball touches any permanent object before it hits the ground. Permanent objects include the ceiling, walls, fencing, lighting fixtures, net posts, the stands and seats for spectators, the referee, line judges, spectators (when in their recognized positions) and all other objects around and above the court.
  - The served ball touches the server or server’s partner, or anything the server or server’s partner is wearing or holding.
  - The served ball lands on the non-volley line.
  - The served ball hits the net and lands on the non-volley line or inside the non-volley zone.
  - The served ball lands outside the service court.
  - The served ball hits the net and lands outside the service court.
• **Service Lets.** The serve is a let and will be replayed if:
  - The serve touches the net, strap, or band, and is otherwise good and lands in the service court.
  - The ball is served when the receiver is not ready.
  - The served ball hits the net and strikes the receiver or the receiver’s partner.
• **IFP Comment:** There is no limit to the number of lets a server may serve.
• **The Receiver.** The receiver is the player diagonally opposite from the server. In doubles, this position corresponds to the player’s score and starting position. There is no restriction on the receiver’s position.
• **Double Bounce Rule.** The serve and the service return must be allowed to bounce before striking the ball. That is, each side must play a groundstroke on the first shot following the serve. After the initial groundstrokes have been made, play may include volleys.

### SERVICE SEQUENCE RULES

• **Singles.** At the start of each game, the server begins the serve on the right side and alternates from right to left to right, etc., as long as the server holds serve.
  - The server must serve to the crosscourt (court diagonally opposite) service court.
  - The server’s score will always be even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10...) when serving from the right side and odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9...) when serving from the left side (only in singles play).
• **Doubles.** The service always starts in the right-hand court and alternates from right to left to right, etc., as long as server holds serve.
  - The server must serve to the crosscourt (court diagonally opposite) service court. There is no restriction on the position of the server’s partner.
  - The team’s points will be even when the game’s starting server is on the right-hand side. Points will be odd when the game’s starting server is on the left-hand side.
  - The team serving the initial serve of a game can commit only one fault before service passed on to the opposing team. After that, each team member serves until that player loses the serve when the team commits a fault. After both players have lost their serves, the serve passes to the opposing team.
  - The server will alternate between right and left service courts upon scoring a point. After the first server’s team faults, the second server will continue to serve from that server’s
last side position and then alternate positions as long as the serving team continues to win points.

- If the ball is served by the wrong team member or from the wrong court, the service is a fault. If the fault was by the first server, then the first service is lost and the correct second server serves from the correct service position. If the fault was by the second server, then it is a side out. A point made from an incorrect service position or an incorrect server will not be retained unless play has continued and another point has been scored or the opposing team has served.

- The receiver is the person on the diagonally opposite side of the court from the server. In doubles, this position corresponds to the player’s score and starting position.

- The receiver is the only player who may return the ball. If the wrong player returns the ball, it is a point for the serving team.

- The receiver’s partner may stand anywhere on or off the court.

- The receiving team does not alternate positions when a point is scored by the serving team. The receiving team may switch positions after the return of serve, but after the rally is over, the players must return back to their original positions, which correspond to the team’s score and the players’ starting positions.

**Fault Rules**

- A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation. A fault will be declared for the following:
  - Hitting the ball into the net on the service or any return.
  - Hitting the ball out of bounds.
  - Failure to hit the ball before it bounces twice on the player’s court.
  - Violation of a service rule (See Section 4).
  - A player, player’s clothing, or any part of a player’s paddle touches the net or the net post when the ball is in play.
  - The ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying. There is one exception to this rule: if the ball strikes the player’s paddle hand below the wrist, the ball is still in play. If the ball strikes a player standing out of bounds before a fault has occurred, that player loses the rally. In doubles, if the serve strikes the receiver’s partner, it is a point for the serving team, providing it is not a let serve or a fault serve. This rule also includes balls that appear to be hit out of bounds: during play, if you catch the ball or try to stop it from heading out of bounds, you lose the rally.
  - A ball in play strikes any permanent object before bouncing on the court.
  - Violation of non-volley zone rules.
  - The serve is made by bouncing the ball off the playing surface before hitting it.
  - A player hits the ball before it passes the plane of the net.
NON-VOLLEY ZONE RULES

- The non-volley zone is the area of the court bounded by the two sidelines, the non-volley line, and the net. The non-volley line and the sidelines are included in the non-volley zone.
- A fault will be declared if, in the act of volleying the ball, a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying touches the non-volley zone or touches any non-volley line. For example, a fault will be declared if, in the act of volleying the ball, one of the player’s feet touches a non-volley line.
- A fault will be declared if, in the act of volleying the ball, the player's momentum causes the player or anything the player is wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone or touch any non-volley line. It is a fault if the player's momentum causes the player to touch anything that is touching the non-volley zone, including the player’s partner. It is a fault even if the ball is declared dead before the player touches the non-volley zone.
- A fault will be declared if the player violates the intent of the non-volley zone rule. All volleys must be initiated outside of the non-volley zone. A maneuver such as standing within the non-volley zone, jumping up to hit a volley, and then landing outside the non-volley zone is prohibited. If a player has touched the non-volley zone for any reason, that player cannot volley the return until both feet have made contact with the playing surface completely outside the non-volley zone.
- A player may step on the non-volley line or enter the non-volley zone at any time except when that player is volleying the ball. There is no violation if your partner returns the ball while you are standing in the non-volley zone. A player may enter the non-volley zone before or after returning any ball that bounces.
- A player may stay inside the non-volley zone to return balls that bounce. That is, there is no violation if a player does not exit the non-volley zone after hitting a ball that bounces.