

# Avon Pickleball Club Pickleball Beginner Training

## 1) Safety

Have fun, get some exercise, but remember safety and be courteous

- a) Always warm up your body before playing, with some easy stretches, back, arms, shoulders, hamstrings
- b) Always call 'BALL ON COURT' loud and clear and never run onto the adjoining court to retrieve your ball; players on that court will throw it back to you
- c) Do not run backwards to get a ball over your head. It is too easy to fall or collide with a wall and hurt yourself
- d) Carefully run forwards to get a low bouncing ball so you don't fall and hurt yourself
- e) Wear a good pair of tennis court shoes (no black soles, walking, running, cross trainers or street shoes)
- f) Never walk behind players while they are playing; wait until they are between points and let them know you want to cross behind their court
- g) Don't take extra balls onto the court. Only one can be used and strays should never be left lying on other courts. Always retrieve the stray ball
- h) Do not take extraneous materials (bags, bottles, coats, towels) onto the court or hang them on the net posts. These items create unsafe courts and impede visibility
- i) Keep well hydrated, drink plenty of fluids before, during and after play

## 2) Grip

- a) A 'V' (continental) grip is recommended, where the V between your thumb and your forefinger is in the middle of the side of the handle. Moving the paddle up and down should feel like holding a hammer where the head of the hammer is the edge of the paddle

## 3) The four pillars of pickleball

- a) Rules - e.g. how to score, the non volley zone, service area, legal serve, ball in/out calls
- b) Mechanical - e.g. how to hit the ball (essential)
- c) Strategic - e.g. where to stand, where to hit the ball, anticipation
- d) Athletic - e.g. the mind and body (remember to know your limits)

## 4) Hitting the ball

- e) Always stand in the ready position – knees slightly bent, weight on balls of feet with your paddle up in front of body with edge facing forwards
- f) You should be hitting the ball in front of your body with an upward arc is generally more consistent (not a horizontal sideways swing).
- g) Anticipate the trajectory of the ball and move your feet to get into the correct position before hitting the ball. If right handed and hitting a forehand this will mean having you left foot forward. If right handed and hitting a backhand this will mean having your right foot forward

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- h) If 'dinking' bend your knees while dropping your paddle, and 'lift' the ball to return to ready position. Try to avoid big swings or leaning down with a straight back and stretching
- i) Remember to follow through on a swing – the ball will follow the angle of your paddle at the end of a swing, and stopping a swing short will normally result in a weak shot (which won't go over the net). For a softer shot start your swing not as far back, but still follow through

### 5) The court

- a) The court is the same size as a badminton court and the net is approximately two inches lower than a tennis net. Pickleball is either played as doubles (two players per team) or singles; doubles is the most common
- b) The same size playing area and rules are used for both singles and doubles

### 6) The Traditional Volley Serve

- a) The serve must be made underhand with the paddle below the wrist
- b) Paddle contact with the ball must be below the server's waist (navel level)
- c) The serve is initiated with both feet behind the baseline; neither foot may contact the baseline or court until after the ball is struck
- d) The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal service court
- e) Only one serve attempt is allowed. In the event the ball touches the net, if the ball lands in the proper service court, the serve is good and played. If the serve lands in the NVZ or on the NVZ line, the ball is short and service passes to the next server. There is no let.
- f) The server must call the score before serving. See scoring section below

### 7) The new Drop Serve

- a) This was made a provisional rule in 2021, but is now an accepted serve from 2022 (the word provisional has been dropped from the rules)
- b) You can 'drop' the ball and hit it after the bounce (you can let it bounce more than once)
- c) You can drop the ball in the court or outside the court, but you must be standing as per the traditional server at the point of contact
- d) You must simply drop the ball and must not impart any additional movement to the ball
- e) There are no conditions on how you hit the ball as per the traditional volley serve

### 8) Service sequence

- a) Both players on the serving doubles team have the opportunity to serve and score points until they commit a fault (except the first sequence of each new game \*)
- b) The first serve of each side is made from the right/even court
- c) If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left/odd court

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- d) As subsequent points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until a fault is committed, and the first server loses the serve
- e) When the first server loses the serve the partner then serves from their correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game \*)
- f) The second server continues serving until his or her team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team
- g) Once the serve goes to the opposition, the first serve is from the right/even court and both players on that team have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults
- h) In singles the server serves from the right/even court when his or her score is even and from the left/odd when the score is odd
- i) \* At the beginning of each new game only one partner on the serving team has the opportunity to serve before faulting, after which the service passes to the receiving team

### 9) Scoring

- a) Points are scored only by the serving team
- b) Games are normally played to 11 points. Win by 2
- c) Tournament games may be played to 15 or 21. Win by 2
- d) The score should be announced loud and clear before serving, so the other team can hear with the serving team's score stated first. In doubles, both players on a team serve (except at the start of the game). The first number is the serving team's score, the second number is the receiving team's score, and the last number stated should be to identify which team member is serving e.g. 5 – 3 – 1 would mean the serving team is winning 5 to 3 and the server is the first server on the team. For the second server it would be 5 – 3 – 2.
- e) When the serving team's score is even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10) the player who was the first server in the game for that team will be on the right/even courts when serving or receiving

### 10) Two bounce rule

- a) When the ball is served, the receiving team must let it bounce before returning, and then the serving team must let it bounce before returning. Thus two bounces
- b) After the ball has bounced once in each team's court, both teams may either volley the ball (hit the ball before it bounces) or play it off a bounce (single bounce ground stroke)

### 11) Non Volley Zone

- a) The non volley zone (NVZ) is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net, and includes the line parallel to the net
- b) Volleying is prohibited within the NVZ. The rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone
- c) It is a fault if, when volleying a ball, the player steps on the NVZ (including the line) and/or when the player's momentum causes them or anything they are wearing or carrying to touch the NVZ including the associated lines

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- d) It is a fault if, after volleying, a player is carried by momentum into or touching the NVZ, even on the volleyed ball is declared dead before this happens
- e) A player may legally be in the NVZ zone at any time other than when volleying a ball
- f) The NVZ is also commonly referred to as 'the kitchen'

### **12) Line calls**

- a) A ball contacting any line, except the NVZ line on a serve is considered 'in'
- b) A serve landing in the NVZ including the NVZ line is short and a fault
- c) In order for pickleball to remain fun and enjoyable, players should give the benefit of the doubt to their opponents when it comes to line calls.
- d) Players should only make line calls on their side of the court and only call balls out when there is a space clearly visible between the line and where the ball lands.
- e) Balls cannot be called out if the ball is not seen to land outside the court
- f) If a ball hits a receiving player before it bounces it is a fault by the receiving team

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## 13) Faults

- a) A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation
- b) A fault by the receiving team results in a point for the serving team
- c) A fault by the serving team results in the server's loss of serve (and the serve passes onto the server's partner for the second serve (except at the start of the game), or the receiving team if both of the serving team have served

## 14) Determining Serving Team

- a) Any fair method can be used to determine which player or team has first choice of side or service.

## 15) During the game

- a) Remember to have fun
- b) Congratulate opponents and your partner when they make a great shot

## 16) At the end of the game

- a) Meet your opponents at the net and thank them for the game and 'paddle tap'.

## 17) Warm up practice

- a) It is a good idea to practice different shots before playing your first game
- b) Start with a few DINKS (short shots into the NVZ)
- c) Try a few gentle volleys back and forth at the net
- d) Try a few block volleys – one partner hits the ball from mid court at their partner, and the other partner blocks the shot short over the net
- e) Try a few 'deep' serves and 'deep' return of serves
- f) Try a few 3<sup>rd</sup> shot drops – drop the ball into the NVZ from back of court (this is one of the hardest shots but is required to play with intermediate and advanced players)

Remember to practice particular shots during recreational games (especially ones you are weak on). Winning by playing to your strengths and avoiding your weaknesses (e.g. running round the ball to hit it on your forehand and avoid you backhand) means you will not improve.

Most of all, remember to have fun!

[www.avonpickleball.club](http://www.avonpickleball.club)



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