Pickleball Rules

Any rule and situation not specifically covered are subject to the current version of the United States of America Pickleball Association (USAPA) rules and the judgement and discretion of the TN Tech Intramural sports staff.

All rules are subject to change at the discretion of the Intramural Sports Office, and the Intramural Sports Office has the final decision on all situations covered and not covered by the rules. When there is a conflict between the TN Tech IM Pickleball Rules and USAPA Official Rules, the TN Tech Pickleball Rules shall take precedence.

Rule 1: Player Eligibility & Registration

Player Eligibility

- ✓ Currently enrolled (at least half-time), fee-paying Tennessee Tech University students as well as faculty and staff of the University with a current, active membership to the fitness center may participate in intramural leagues, tournaments, and contests.
- ✓ Prior to each contest and event, participants must check in with a member of the IM staff.
- ✓ **Players can compete for only one (1) team in each single-gendered league** and, if applicable, **one (1) co-rec league.** Once he or she checks-in for one (1) team, that player **CANNOT** transfer to another team in that league for the duration of the season.
- ✓ **For postseason eligibility, a player must have participated in at least one (1) regular season game.**
- ✓ Current varsity athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport. Former varsity athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport for one calendar year (365 days) after their official affiliation with a college or university team has ended.
- ✓ Current professional athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport. Former professional athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport for five (5) years after their official affiliation with a professional team has ended.
- ✓ Intramural Sports Professional staff shall make the final decision on eligibility issues.

Registration

- ✓ Teams should register by the deadline by registering on the Fusion Play App.

Rule 2: Team Composition & Team Format

Divisions

- ✓ Open Doubles
  - o No Gender Restrictions

Tournament Format

- ✓ Single Elimination Tournament

Match Format

- ✓ Each match shall be best two-out-of-three games.
- ✓ Individuals and teams shall switch sides after each game.

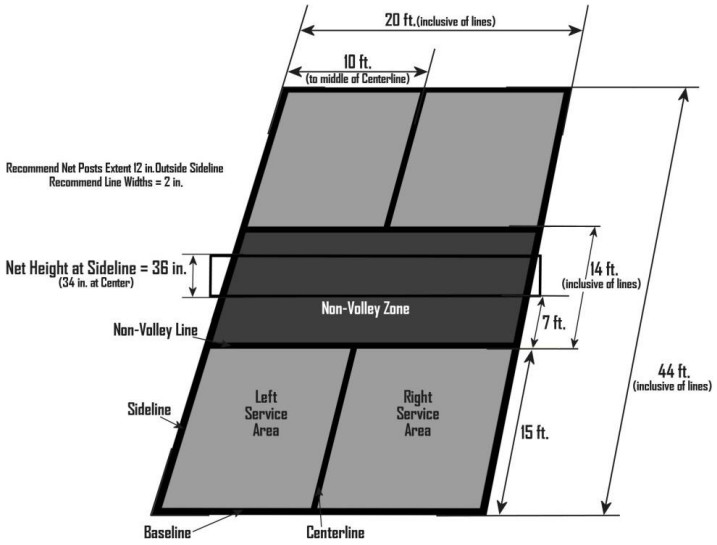
Team Composition

- ✓ Each doubles team will be composed of two (2) players. Two (2) players are required to start and finish the doubles match.
  - o **Any teams with less than two (2) players will be considered a forfeit.**

Rule 3: Playing Area & Equipment

Playing Area

- ✓ All matches will be played in the Marc L. Burnett Student Recreation and Fitness Center.
- ✓ The following diagram is the standard pickleball court. Actual dimensions may vary.



Paddles & Pickleballs

- ✓ The Intramural Sports Office will provide the paddles and pickleballs for competition.
- ✓ Participants may also provide their own paddles and pickleballs if preferred.

Clothing & Equipment

- ✓ All attire and equipment are subject to the approval of Intramural Sports staff. Any clothing or equipment that is deemed unsafe or illegal must be removed prior to competition.
- ✓ IM staff reserves the right to ask participants to remove or conceal clothing that, in the opinion of IM staff, displays offensive or demeaning language or imagery.
- ✓ **Proper athletic attire is required.** Non-athletic clothing including but not limited to jeans, dress pants, dresses, khakis, and blouses is prohibited.
- ✓ Footwear
  - Players are required to wear athletic shoes (e.g. basketball shoes, running shoes, tennis shoes).
  - Footwear including but not limited to boots, cleats, open-toed shoes, crocks, and sandals is strictly **PROHIBITED.**
- ✓ Jewelry
  - Religious or medical jewelry is permitted and must be taped down against the body.
  - Participants must remove all watches and necklaces prior to each contest.
  - **All Air Pods/Ear Buds/Headphones are PROHIBITED during IM Contests.**
- ✓ Headwear
  - Players may wear knit or stocking caps, headbands, and hair control devices made with soft and non-abrasive material.
  - Headwear including but not limited to baseball caps, bandanas with knots, hard plastic hair devices, bobby pins, and safety pins is strictly **PROHIBITED.**
- ✓ Pads/Braces
  - Leg & knee braces covered with soft, pliable material and free of any sharp edges are allowed.
  - Compression sleeves and wrist sweatbands are permitted above the waist.
  - Casts and other equipment made of hard, unyielding materials may not be worn above the waist.
- ✓ Blood

- Participants that are bleeding, have an open wound, and/or have an excessive amount of blood on the uniform must leave the field. The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound must be covered, and/or the bloody uniform must be changed before the player can return to the game.

Rule 4: Forfeits, Defaults, & Protests

Defaults

- ✓ A default is a game not played without penalty (e.g. dropped from the league).
- ✓ To receive a default, the team captain or representative must notify the Intramural Sports Office by **2:00 PM on the day of the contest.**
- ✓ Sportsmanship Rating will be as followed:
  - Winning Team = 8
  - Defaulting Team = 5
- ✓ To verify that the request is legitimate, the team captain or representative must notify the Intramural Sports Office via e-mail or in person. **Phone calls are not accepted.**

Forfeits

- ✓ A forfeit is defined as one of the following:
  - Failing to field a team for an intramural contest without contacting the Intramural Sports Office before 2:00pm on the day of contest.
    - The final score shall be 2-0.
  - Receiving three (3) or more conduct warnings before, during, and after an Intramural contest.
    - If the forfeiting team is ahead, the final score shall be 2-0 in favor of the opposing team.
    - If the non-forfeiting team has the higher score, the game shall end with the existing score.
  - Defaulting two (2) games during pool play.
- ✓ If a team forfeits its first (1st) game of the season, that team may be dropped from the league and replaced with a team on the waiting list.
- ✓ Sportsmanship Rating will be as followed:
  - Winning Team = 8
  - Forfeiting Team = 2
- ✓ A second (2nd) forfeiture may result in removal from the league.

Grace Period

- ✓ If at least **one (1)** team member is **checked-in** at game time, the team will be granted a **five-minute (5:00)** grace period.
- ✓ Once a team reaches the minimum number of players to start the game, the game will start.
- ✓ A team may not wait for additional players once the minimum number of players have arrived.
- ✓ If the team has not reached the minimum number of players required to play at the end of the grace period, a forfeit will be declared.

Protests

- ✓ Protests will be considered by Intramural Sports Graduate Assistants and Professional Staff.
- ✓ During the contest, players or teams may protest (a) player eligibility, (b) the misinterpretation or the misapplication of a rule, or (c) a scoring error. Protests regarding items b & c must be submitted immediately before the beginning of the next serve.
- ✓ When protesting player eligibility:
  - *Regular season*: The eligibility of any player may be protested at any point during the regular season (e.g. before, during, and after the contest; anytime during office hours)
  - *Postseason:* Player eligibility must be protested before the start of the match.
  - **Protests made after the start or end of the match will be not recognized.**

Scoring

- ✓ Team that is serving may only receive a point if the team scores.
- ✓ The first (1st) two (2) games shall end when a team reaches fifteen (15) points with at least a two-point (2pt) advantage. The first (1st) and second (2nd) games shall continue past fifteen (15) points until a team has at least a two-point (2pt) advantage, or a team reaches twenty (20) points.

- ✓ During a tie-breaker game, the first (1st) team to eleven (11) points shall be declared the winner of the set. The game shall continue past eleven (11) points until a team has at least a two-point (2pt) advantage, or a team reaches fifteen (15) points.
- ✓ Scoring will be told after each point and before the server serves the ball.
    - Servers score vs Opponent score and the Service Number
        - Ex. 2-4, 2

Rule 5: Timing

Game Length

- ✓ The match shall be played until a player or team wins two (2) games.

Timeouts

- ✓ There are no timeouts.

Game Intermissions

- ✓ The rest period between each game should not exceed one minute (1:00) in length.

Rule 6: Playing Rules

TN Tech IM pickleball is self-officiated. Players should honor the legitimate calls of their opponents. The scorekeeper will settle disagreements that cannot be resolved in a reasonable time. The scorekeeper shall decide or seek the advice of IM Graduate Assistants or Professional Staff.

Determining the First (1st) Serve

- ✓ A coin toss or other method will determine which captain may choose between the following options:
    - Serve
    - Receive
    - Side of Court

Service

- ✓ The server shall receive one (1) attempt per serve.
- ✓ The server shall serve the ball in an underhand motion and contact the ball below his or her waist.
- ✓ When contacting the serve, the server shall have at least one (1) foot behind the baseline. Neither foot may touch the baseline or court until the after the ball is struck.
- ✓ The server shall direct the ball diagonally, and the serve should land in the opposite diagonal court.
- ✓ The served ball shall completely clear the non-volley zone line and bounce once in the court before the receiver can contact the ball.
    - If the serve hits the net and hits on the opponent's non-volley zone, it will be the opponent's point.
    - If the serve hits the net and lands in the correct volley zone, the ball is considered "in play."
- ✓ Sequence
    - Every first (1st) serve is made from the right-hand court.
    - If the server wins the point, the serve shall switch to the other side. For each subsequent point, the serve shall alternate courts until the serve is lost.
    - Both players on a team will serve each time.
        - Exception: The first serve to start the game
        - The first player in the right-hand box will serve until he/she loses the point and then the opponents will serve.
        - The server will call out the score and service number
            - Service Number 1: The first server is serving and will remain service 1 until server loses point.
            - Service Number 2: The second server is serving and will remain service 2 until server loses point and the opponents will receive the ball.
- ✓ The team that serves first to start the game will be start the game being on their second (2nd) serve.

- The server will start in the right hand box

The Return

- ✓ After a legal serve, the receiver must allow the ball to bounce once before attempting to return the ball.
- ✓ The returned ball can bounce anywhere in the serving team's court.
- ✓ The serving team or player must allow the ball to bounce once before contacting the ball.

During The Rally

- ✓ Double Bounce Rule
  - On the serve, the receiving team must allow the ball to bounce once before contacting the ball AND the serving team must also allow the ball to bounce once before making contact with the ball.
  - Once the ball has been legally served and returned, the ball may be hit in the air or after a single bounce.
- ✓ Non-Volley Zone (Kitchen)
  - Volleys are not allowed in the non-volley zone.
  - A player may play shots after a bounce in the non-volley zone.
  - A player cannot take a defensive position in the non-volley zone.
- ✓ Boundary lines
  - During the serve, a ball that contacts the non-volley zone line is considered a fault.
  - During the serve, a ball that contacts the center line shall be considered a legitimate serve.
  - The sidelines and baselines are considered in-bounds.
  - The ball is out of bounds if it contacts the ceiling, the wall, or any object outside of the court.
- ✓ Faults
  - A fault is any action that violates the rules.
  - A fault by either team results in a point for the opposing team.
  - A fault occurs when:
    - A server commits a serving rule violation.
    - The ball is hit into the net.
    - The ball is volleyed before a bounce has occurred on each side (double bounce rule).
    - A ball is volleyed from the non-volley zone.

Ejections

- ✓ When two (2) members of a team is ejected, that team shall forfeit the contest.
- ✓ Ejected players must leave the Fitness Center and/or Intramural Fields immediately and cannot return to play **ANY** sport until he/she has been cleared for participation by a professional staff member of the Intramural Sports Office.