



## St. Petersburg Parks & Recreation Department Pickleball League Rules

All games played in accordance with the rules listed below.

### ROSTERS

Each team may have a maximum of four players on the roster. The roster must be filled out completely and submitted to City staff at the first match. Players are not legal until they have signed the roster. Illegal players will result in a match forfeit for each match played and a player suspension. Roster changes can be made up to the completion of the sixth played match.

### PICK UP PLAYERS

To minimize forfeits and maximize play, the following pick up player rule will apply. If a roster player is not able to play, you may pick up a player from your specific league. This player must be a legal player and have signed their team's roster. You must inform City staff of the change prior to match start. Please write the player's name and what team they are from on the scorecard. This will have a penalty of 2 pts to start each game. NO pick up players are allowed in the tournament.

### GAME PERIOD & EQUIPMENT

There will be a five-minute grace period for players to arrive at court. After five minutes, a forfeit will be awarded for the first game. After 15 minutes, the match will be considered a forfeit.

**Players are responsible for their own paddles. Each team must provide one ball for game play.**

### OFFICIATING

Games are self-officiated. Players are asked to be honest and play with integrity. If players are found to intentionally and consistently cheat, they may have games forfeited and possibly be asked to leave the league. If a discrepancy occurs, ask all players in the game, check the league rules. If the discrepancy remains unresolved, **ask City staff for clarification.**

### MATCH PROCEDURE

Teams are mixed doubles or doubles consisting of two players and any combination of male or female players. During play, you may sub in and out of the game at any time with any legal roster player from your team. Teams will flip a coin/flip racket to see who serves first. The winning team can pick sides or serve first. Each match will consist of the best out of three games. Games will be played to 11 points, and teams must win by two points. Match has 45-minute time slot. Time will begin when the first team serves. No match can start after the 40-minute mark. Games may finish even after the 45-minute mark, only if the 3<sup>rd</sup> game is necessary to win best of 3. If the 3<sup>rd</sup> game is not necessary, please be courteous and let the next match start on time.

**START SERVE:** Once the server announces the score, they have 10 seconds to serve the ball, or a fault is called. Players will serve from behind the baseline with an underhand swing. The ball must land in the opponent's service court.

**DOUBLE BOUNCE RULE:** After the ball is served to the opponent, it must bounce once on their side and then bounce once on the server's side before the ball can be taken out of the air. Then rally can begin, and the ball can be hit without a bounce.

**SERVICE SEQUENCE:** Both players on the serving team can serve and score points until they commit a fault. Exceptions are as follows:

- At the beginning of each new game, only one partner on the serving team can serve before faulting, after which the serve passes to the receiving team.
- If a point is scored, the server switches sides and initiates the next serve from the left side of the court.
- When the first server loses the serve, the partner then serves from their correct side of the court (except for the

first serve sequence of the game).

- The second server continues serving until their team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.
- Once the serve goes to the opposition, the first serve is from the right side of the court, and both players on that team can serve and score points until their team commits two faults.

**NO VOLLEY RULE IN THE KITCHEN:** There is a 7 ft. area on each side of the net. No volleying may happen in this zone. No stepping in the kitchen unless a dink bounces once in the kitchen. The player then may step in the kitchen after the ball bounces, hit the ball, and immediately get out of the kitchen after hitting it.

**SCORING:** Only the serving team can score points. For the other team to score, they must win the serve back and then win the rally.

**FAULTS:**

- Second Bounce - ball bounces on same side two times
- Out of Bounds - ball lands outside the marked boundaries
- Net - ball does not clear the net
- Kitchen - ball hits in any part of this area on a serve, including the lines

**CALLING OUT SCORE:** There are three numbers to call out. The first number indicates the serving team's score, the second number is the opposing team's score, and the third number is who is serving (1st server or after fault 2nd server). The call out must be heard by all players.

**SCORE REPORT:** A member from each team must report scores to City staff.

**TIME OUT:** Each team may have one timeout per game that will last one minute.

**TIME LIMIT:** 45-minute match play.

## **LEAGUE TIEBREAKER RULE & PLAYOFFS**

If teams have a tied record at the end of the season, the tiebreaker rule will be in effect: If the tied record is head-to-head between teams, then the greater number of points scored between each other will win tie breaker. If it is still tied, it will go with most points scored overall. If any team has a forfeit during the season, they are eliminated from all tiebreakers.

## **FORFEITS**

Any team forfeiting three times within the league game schedule may be removed from the program and will lose their right to priority registration. *No refunds will be given.* If you know before your scheduled game time that you will not be able to field a team, call the Athletics Office at (727) 892-5224 so that we can notify the other team and umpires. The sooner you call the better.

## **PROCEDURES FOR PROTESTING PLAYER NOT ON TEAM ROSTER**

A check in the amount of \$50 payable to the City of St. Petersburg must be submitted to the scorekeeper *at the time of protest*. A manager may request a player's photo ID from the scorekeeper and umpire. A player must provide a photo ID, which will be compared with the lineup and roster to make sure the player is not playing under another person's name. If the ID and the player's name match, the game is continued. If no photo ID is presented, the game is forfeited. The scorekeeper will circle the player(s) in question and indicate in the remarks section the reason for the protest. The Athletics Office will check their records and determine the outcome. If the protest is upheld, the check will be returned. If the protest is not upheld, the check will not be returned. All protests need to be made before the end of the first game. *Scorekeepers and City staff reserve the right to check IDs at any time.*

## **MISCELLANEOUS RULES**

- Minimum player age is 18.
- For league information, rules, schedules, rosters and standings, and registration, please visit our website at [www.stpeteparksrec.org/adultleagues](http://www.stpeteparksrec.org/adultleagues)
- Fighting or arguing before, during, or after a game, on or off the field, will not be tolerated and will be dealt with severely.
- All players must wear closed-toe athletic shoes.

- Team trophies will be awarded in the playoffs for 1st and 2nd place and individual awards to champions.
- The league director reserves the right to monitor and move individual players from leagues in which they are not of level play
- All players must always have their personal identification with them.
- Any team that has illegal players, or someone playing under a different name, will be suspended along with the illegal players.

## RAIN OUTS & LIGHTNING

We will attempt to make up all rain outs at the end of the schedule. It is the team's responsibility to contact the Athletics Office for times and dates of rain outs. For any matches not made up prior to the start of the next program, a refund (per game) will be submitted, and the team will receive a credit for the upcoming season, or the City will mail a check for the amount due if the team is not returning. Any match discontinued by the league director or City staff, due to weather or other conditions, will be rescheduled at a later date and will start over as a brand-new match.

The league director or City staff will be watching the weather conditions. If lightning is seen, the league director or City staff will determine the proximity of the lighting as follows: Once lightning is seen, begin counting the seconds (one thousand one, one thousand two...) until thunder is heard. If the count is under thirty, ALL activities will be stopped IMMEDIATELY, and ALL players, participants, spectators, etc. must leave the courts and move to a safe location. After 30 minutes, the league director will determine if it is safe to resume play.

Sign up for automated texts or emails to be sent to you (and your players) when a rain out occurs or go to [www.stpeteparksrec.org/athletics](http://www.stpeteparksrec.org/athletics) OR call 727-877-2236 for more information.

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## UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

Players, other team members, and spectators will not make disparaging or insulting remarks to or about opposing players, officials, or spectators or commit other acts that could be considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Penalty could result in player ejection, removal of spectator, and, if needed, forfeit of the match. Any use of cursing, swearing, or profanity of any kind during league play may result in immediate ejection from the match. This is your warning. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND WILL BE SUBJECT TO PENALTY AT THE LEAGUE DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION.**

**EJECTED PLAYER:** An ejected participant must leave the grounds immediately and have no contact with any participants in the match. Failure to comply may result in forfeit or the player may be POLICE TRESPASSED from the park. No substitute is allowed in the ejected player's position. Once ejected from a match, a two-week suspension will follow automatically. The two-week suspension includes all sports and all nights for two weeks of scheduled games. This ejection could carry over into the following season if applicable. The league director has discretion to add a longer suspension due to severity of player actions or if have prior ejections.

## ALCOHOL AT COURTS

- \* It is ILLEGAL to have alcohol on City owned property (City Ordinance Section 21-38A).
- \* Any team found with alcohol on the court could result in forfeiting the match.
- \* If any team is found drinking alcohol in the park, including the surrounding parking lots, any City representative may impose a forfeiture of a future game. If a team has TWO forfeits due to drinking alcohol, they will be removed from the league. This includes, but is not limited to, spectators or any team affiliates.

# SELF RATE SYSTEM & RATING DEFINITIONS

To make the leagues fair and fun for all, please self-rate your pickleball play. As we go through the league play, your player level will be evaluated for future league formation. See next page for rating definitions.

Levels: Beginner 0-2.5; Intermediate 3-3.5; Advanced 4-4.5; Open 5+

## Rating 1.0

- New player with understanding of the game and rules.

## Rating 1.5

- Can hit the ball back and forth a bit.
- Learning to serve.
- Fails to hit easy balls frequently.
- Beginning to learn the basic rules such as scoring, lines, side outs, etc.

## Rating 2.0

- Sustains short rallies.
- Makes basic strokes such as forehand, backhand, volley, and can serve the ball.
- Understands court positioning and doubles rules.

## Rating 2.5

- Can sustain longer rallies but not at a fast pace.
- Makes most easy shots, including backhands, but still needs some work.
- Able to approach the non-volley zone and hit volleys.
- Good understanding of the rules.
- Struggles to cover the entire court.

## Rating 3.0

- Has a consistent serve and returns medium-paced balls reliably.
- Able to make all basic strokes. Lacks control when trying to place the ball.
- Attempts lobs and dinks with limited success.

## Rating 3.5

- Consistent control and placement of medium-paced shots. Able to return fast-paced shots with slightly less success.
- Improved control and placement of the ball.
- Needs more shot variety.
- Can play aggressively at the non-volley zone.
- Anticipates opponent's shots and learning strategy of doubles play.

## Rating 4.0

- Consistent with both forehand and backhand strokes.
- Can use spin with some success.
- May lose rallies due to impatience.
- Uses the dink and drop shot successfully.
- Demonstrates 3rd shot strategies.
- Aggressive net play in doubles.
- Full understanding of the rules.

## Rating 4.5

- Beginning to master placement and spin.
- Beginning to master 3rd shot choices.
- Good footwork and positioning.
- Adjusts game style to account for opponent's strengths, weaknesses, and court position.
- Good shot selection. Does not force shots.
- Serves consistently and can vary speed and spin.
- Good court positioning. Anticipates opponent's shot.

## Rating 5.0

- Mastered all shot types.
- Excellent shot anticipation.
- Accurate shot placement.
- Forces errors. Limits their own unforced errors.
- Mastered dinks and dropshots.
- Mastered 3rd shot strategy.
- Raw athletic ability is often what separates 5.0 players from the rest.

If you have any questions, concerns, compliments or just want to talk pickleball, please contact Tracy Roy, Athletic Supervisor, at [tracy.roy@stpete.org](mailto:tracy.roy@stpete.org) or (727) 892-5224. Thank you for your continued support of the kickball program in the City of St. Petersburg.