

## What is Open Social Play?

Delta Pickleball Association (DPA) philosophy



**Open Social Play** is the term used in Pickleball to designate playing times that are open for players of all skill levels and years of experience to mix together to have fun playing Pickleball. In Open Play, competition takes a back seat to the social aspects of meeting people, making everyone feel welcome, and enjoying this beautiful game the way the game's creators envisioned it fun for everyone.

Because Open Play is somewhat a vague description of the experience and often misunderstood, the Delta Pickleball Association (DPA) is changing its Open Play designation to **Open Social Play** to put the emphasis on the **social** aspects of the game. Open social play is not a time to come out with a set group and stick together.

To create an atmosphere in which players of many varied skill levels, ages, and physical fitness levels can enjoy playing together, DPA has adopted the following guidelines for **Open Social Play**:

- Be willing to play with any other players, regardless of skill level, when it is that player's turn to play. Do not try to manipulate the rotation of courts or paddles to get a more competitive game. **Open Social Play** is about fun, not competition.
- When the opponents are unequal in skill, do not always play the ball to the weaker player just to score points. That is a competitive strategy meant for tournament or skill-level play and is no fun for the player who is being targeted. Likewise, not playing the ball to the stronger player makes the game no fun for that player either.
- If you are the strongest member of the group, focus on shots that will improve your overall game, like the 3rd shot drop and the dinking short game - important skills to practice as you move up the skill ladder. Stronger players may also seek to improve their game by intentionally hitting the ball with appropriate pace and spin to a spot that will specifically allow a weaker opponent to return the shot. That is, the stronger player seeks to prolong the point rather than to end it. This gives everybody involved more practice.
- Respect players' physical limitations and do not take advantage of them to win a game. One of pickleball's great advantages is that people with physical conditions that preclude them from playing other sports can play and enjoy this game.
- Intentionally hitting an opponent with the ball to score a point is a strategy for competitive play. Refrain from using it in **Open Social Play**.
- **Open Social Play** is not a time to come out with a set group and stick together.