



SCPA MEMBER HANDBOOK

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On behalf of our Board of Directors and the Membership Engagement Committee **Welcome to Strathcona County Pickleball Association**. This handbook has been written to encourage playing and enjoying pickleball with our association. Our goal is to provide information about pickleball basics and offer helpful tips on health and safety.

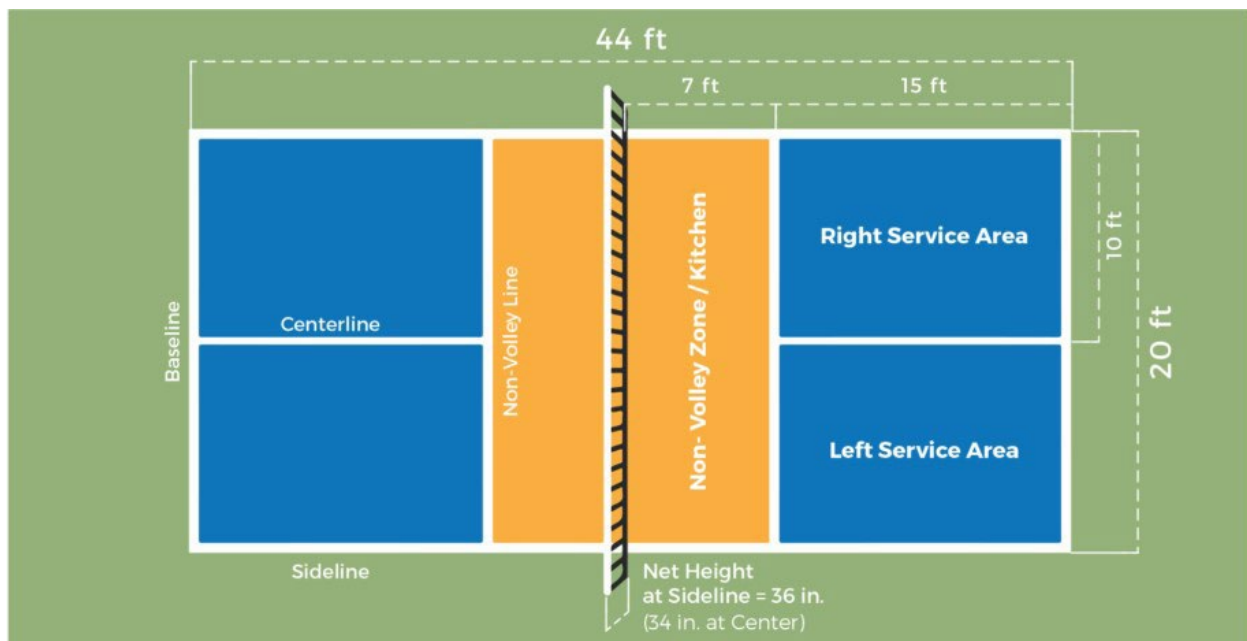
Please remember, we all started playing pickleball as beginners and received a lot of support from more experienced players and peers. Like most sports, pickleball has its own rules and etiquette so learning the ins and outs of pickleball takes time. The more you play, the more you will find yourself naturally integrating the basics into your game.

1. Rules

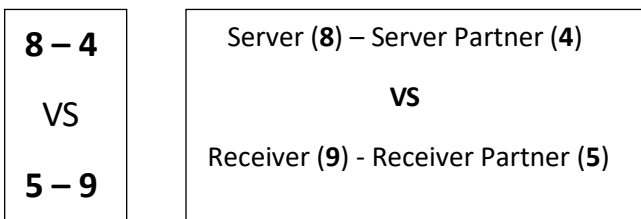
- For official pickleball rules for 2022, refer to:
- <https://usapickleball.org/what-is-pickleball/ifp-official-rules/>
- Here are the basic rules to get you started playing pickleball.

Pickleball Court

- Pickleball is played either as doubles (two players per team) or singles, with doubles being the most common.
- The same size court and rules are used for both doubles and singles games.
- The court is 20 feet x 44 feet as shown, with blue being the service courts and yellow being the 7 feet non-volley zones, also known as “kitchen”.



SCPA Court Positions



*****Server serves from the Northwest Quadrant of the Court**

Service

- For the above doubles games of players 8, 4, 5 and 9, server 8 serves from the north end of the court, with the ball landing diagonally to receiver 9 in the opposite blue diagonal service court.
- The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.
- Only one serve attempt is allowed per server.
- At the time the ball is struck, the server's feet may not touch the court or outside the imaginary extension of the sideline or centerline and at least one foot must be behind the baseline on the playing surface or the ground behind the baseline.
- There is only one rule you must comply with on the drop serve: the ball has to be dropped. The ball cannot be propelled downwards (or tossed up and then allowed to bounce). Instead, it must be dropped out of your hand with no downwards force applied to it. Dropping the ball is the only requisite.
- The server's arm must be moving in an upward arc when the ball is struck.
- Paddle contact with the ball must not be made above the waist level.

Double Bounce Rule

- The double bounce rule states that the receiving team must let the incoming ball bounce once before playing the ball, and the serving team must let the ball bounce once before returning the ball to the receiver.
- After the two bounces have occurred, the ball can either be played off the bounce or be volleyed (hit the ball in mid-air, before it bounces).

Non-Volley Zone (kitchen) Rule

- The non-volley zone (kitchen) is the 7 feet x 20 feet area between the net and the non-volley line.
- Volleying in the kitchen will result in a fault. In addition, it is a fault if the player steps into the non-volley zone after volleying the ball in mid air from the service court. You can stand in the non-volley zone and hit the ball after the ball bounces once in the non-volley zone.
- It will be a fault if something the player is wearing or carrying touches the non-volley zone.

Faults

- A fault is committed when the ball:
 - lands in the non-volley zone during serving
 - does not clear the net
 - is hit out of bounds
 - bounces twice on the receiver side
 - is volleyed (hit in mid air before a bounce) inside the non-volley zone
 - is volleyed on serve and/or on serve return

also, a fault occurs when

- the server's feet touch the court or outside the sideline or centreline during the serve

Serve, Scoring and Points

- Any player can say the score, but the server MUST say the score. (If unsure, check with another player on the court).
- Referring to the SCPA Court Positions diagram, server 8 of the serving team serves first. At the start of the game, server 8 would announce 0-0-2.
- At the beginning of a doubles game only one partner on the initial serving team has the opportunity to serve; once the serve is lost it is "side out"
- When the serve switches to the other side, the receiving team gets two serves and play continues until a score of 11 is reached.
- All four players on the doubles team now have the opportunity to serve and score points until one team commits 2 faults, at which time Side Out is called and the ball is returned to the opposing team for serving.
- Side out means one side loses its service and the other side is awarded the service.
- The first serve of each side-out is made from the right/even court.
- When a point is scored, the server switches side with the playing partner and the server does the next serve from the left/odd court.
- As subsequent points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until there is a fault.
- The game of Pickleball is usually played to a score of 11. The winning team must win by two points or play continues until one team wins by 2.
- Only the serving team can win points. The receiving team must get the "side out" and get the serve back before earning points.

Remember to have fun, respect your fellow players and **Let's Play Pickleball!**

2. Equipment

- Pickleball is an inexpensive sport because there is little equipment required. The SCPA provides the nets, and often the balls, so players only need to purchase a paddle. Paddles come in many shapes and sizes, are made from different materials, and are a personal preference. Choose one that feels comfortable to you and fits your budget. Most sporting goods stores will sell pickleball paddles, specialized stores may offer more knowledgeable staff.

- Court shoes are the recommended footwear because they are designed for side-to-side movement whereas running shoes are not and could lead to injury. Clean shoes with non-marking soles are appreciated for the indoor game to avoid damage to the floor/surface. For your safety it is important to wear proper fitting footwear that is designed for court sports.
- The Pickleballer [website](#) explains equipment in greater detail.

A great Edmonton resource for all things pickleball is the [Pickleball Superstore](#)

3. Safety First, Don't Be Sorry

We all like to think that we won't experience an injury! The reality is that injuries can and do occur while playing pickleball. Therefore, make safety a priority, using common sense as a preventative measure.

- If a ball strays from your court onto another, loudly call "Ball" so that others can hear your call.
- When a stray ball enters a court, all play immediately stops.
- Never run onto another court to retrieve a ball.
- Return the ball to the correct person by using your paddle and returning it overhead to the appropriate court/person. Do not roll the ball along the floor.
- Never throw your paddle or strike a ball in anger or frustration
- Do not shuffle, run backwards or back up while hitting a shot. This is a primary cause of falling and can be avoided. If you or your partner is more mobile, discuss together and decide who take the lob shot. If neither are mobile, let the shot go, even if your side loses the point.
- When playing with or against a less experienced player, do not use overhead smashes. Instead use the game to practice other shots.
- Do not lob the ball behind opposing players who are physically restricted
- Always know where your partner is to avoid a collision while running for the ball
- Be ready for any shot by assuming the "Ready Position"; paddle up, under your chin and center of the body
- When running to take a shot call out your intention with "Mine", "Got it", etc.
- Don't dive for balls, run into fences, the net or run into your opponent or partner.
- At the end of your game, exit the court quickly after thanking your partner and opponents
- Be aware of your physical condition and don't overdo it! Reaching beyond our physical limits can result in injury.
- Never play on a wet court, they can become very slippery.
- Always stay well hydrated. Drink plenty of water before, during and after your game(s). Drink before you get thirsty. Should you see someone showing signs of dizziness, lack of concentration or weakness, recommend a time-out for their safety.
- Always stretch before and after playing to minimize the risk of injury.

4. Basic Court Etiquette

As is the case in most sports, Pickleball has its own etiquette or common-sense guidelines, to increase awareness of how we treat other people. From competitive to social, beginner to advanced, the guidelines apply to all players.

- Rotating onto a Court – The longest waiting players enter an open court first. If you are not ready let others know to take your spot. Once ready, take the next available open court.
- If you are waiting to play, be sure to be ready and don't delay getting on to the court. Socializing while waiting may result in a loss of turn
- In times of high demand and the courts are busy, games will end at a score of 7 or 9.
- Once on the court, acknowledge players you don't know and introduce yourself.
- Before serving, announce the score clearly and loudly so that all players can hear and to gain acknowledgment that the score is correct.
- When going for a shot, a partner should be prepared to call shots on your side that may be going out overhead or out on either side.
- Keep the discussion friendly; we all enjoy a little banter during a game but keep it appropriate, and quiet, to avoid disruption to other players. **Foul Language Will Not be Tolerated.**
- When a player makes a good shot, be sure to let them know!
- At the end of a game, meet your opponents at the net, thank fellow players and touch paddle handles. Pick up the ball and exit the court quickly and call out "Court" for waiting players.
- Always be prepared to play with lesser skilled players. The more they play with higher skilled players the quicker they will learn.
- When playing with stronger players, don't avoid hitting the ball to them. The reverse is true, give weaker player the opportunity to do their best. Let's all remember, everyone wants to play!
- Please don't give advice or instruction, during or after a game unless a player has requested it.

5. Be Kind and Practice Good Sportsmanship

- Treat everyone with courtesy and respect.
 - Introduce yourself
 - Welcome new players so they'll want to return
 - Never use foul language or obscene gestures
 - At the conclusion of play acknowledge other players in a positive manner
 - Avoid criticism
 - Be a good ambassador for the game, and for our club
- Know the official rules of pickleball and apply them fairly.
- Practice good sportsmanship with calling lines and foot faults.

- Respect your opponent's right to make calls on their end of the court
 - If you question a call, do so respectfully
 - Any uncertainty should go in your opponent's favour
 - Admit to foot faults regardless of whether your opponent is aware of them or not
 - Watch for your own and your partner's foot faults
- Court use.
 - Rotate on and off courts fairly and courteously
 - Be prepared when it is your turn; exit the court promptly after play
 - Respect active courts by waiting until play has stopped and leave in a group to minimize disruption
- Skill discrepancy in social play.
 - Be kind to other players, we were all new to the game once
 - Avoid hitting excessively to weaker players
 - Do not forcefully hit the ball directly at players
 - Play with all skill levels to improve your game, and theirs

6. SCPA Member Lessons

Weekly Lessons occur over a four-week period and are free to association members, so be sure watch for an invitation about lesson start-up. Our instructors are experienced pickleball players and volunteer their time to deliver lessons outdoors at the Sherwood Heights courts. To ensure consistency in lesson content and the delivery of pickleball skills, all have taken instructor training and orientation. Remember, your instructors are mentors to help you learn the game, so don't be shy and ask lots of questions!

- Lessons are full of valuable activities and information and include the following:
- Introductions and information about footwear, balls, and paddles and where to purchase
- Instructors will explain and/or recommend various ways to grip your paddle to achieve best results
- Explaining court lines and boundaries and general etiquette
- Balance, stance and the Ready Position for all shots
- Foot movement, the split, shuffle, and side steps
- Keeping your eye on the ball
- Communicating, moving, and playing as partners
- You will learn skills that include Scoring, Serving, Returning the Serve, Dinking, and Mid and Back Court Lobs
- A variety of pickleball skill drills and games mentored by instructors
- Students will be provided with a variety of video links to assist with skill learning
- As a team of instructors, we encourage our students to do the drills over and over and play regularly. The more we drill and play the more we improve.
- SCPA encourages students to exchange phone numbers, make friends, get out and play and practice together.

7. Recreational (Social) Play versus League Play

- Playing pickleball is as much about socializing, as it is about competing. SCPA provides events to accommodate player social, skill development and competitive needs. Depending on a player's individual needs and skill level, you may choose to play in any of the following: Round Robins, King of the Court, Paddles on the Fence, or League Play (Ladders/Shoot Outs). All of the above events are led by a Captain, whose role is defined further on.
- **Round Robins** - Playing as partners, round robins provide players with 6 games. Players are rotated through each of the 6 games and scores are not recorded. This is a great opportunity for players to develop skills and meet other players.
- **League Play** – Follows a similar format to Round Robin events but is geared to the more competitive player. League is organized through Pickleball Brackets. Leagues have been established under Strathcona Country Pickleball Association for 2.0/2.5, 3.0, 3.5, and 4.0+. Players join the League and can opt-in to play at any of the weekly events. Games are organized through the software program based on players from similar level ratings. Scores for each player are recorded and players are rated weekly. Individual ratings determine what event level you are eligible to play in.

8. Invitations to Play

- **Round Robins and Open Play Events**

Invitations for Round Robins and Open Play Events are circulated through SignUpGenius ("SUG"). You will receive an invite 7 days before the scheduled event. The event opens to accept registrations at 9:00 p.m. on the day you receive the invite. Invites are detailed insofar as how many events you can register for in a day or week. If you register to attend a scheduled event and you find a need to cancel the event, then you must log back into SUG and edit your response. If your cancellation is within 2 hours of the start of the event, you must contact the Captain/Co-Captain and then the Lead Captain for the scheduled event.

League (Ladder) – if you chose to play in the League which is organized through the Pickleball Brackets Software, then you will be registered in the league for your skill level. Invitations are not sent for League. Brackets allows players to opt in or out of the session for each date 6 days prior to the event at 8:00 PM up to 2 hours before the event.

9. Captain's Role and Duties

- There are two levels of Captains for the Club. The first level is the Lead Captain. We have two Lead Captains one for Round Robin and one for League (Ladder) Play. It is the Lead Captain's responsibility to be the communicator and organizer between the session captains.
- Each session of Round Robin and League has an assigned Captain and in some cases a Co-Captain. The Captain arrives at the court 30 minutes prior to the scheduled event. They ensure that the equipment required for the event is put out and the Rink Shack for the washrooms is open. The captain then checks in all players as they arrive to play in the event 15 minutes before the commencement of the session. The Captain will

explain the event to the players in attendance, have them to do a warm up and commence the play. At the conclusion of the event the Captain will put all items away, close up the Rink Shack and report any "No Show" to the Outdoor Director.

- Invitations to be a Captain for Round Robin / League play are sent out through SUG.

10. Volunteers

- SCPA is completely volunteer based. Throughout the year there are many opportunities to volunteer in support of SCPA activities and calls for volunteers happen throughout the year. Some opportunities include being an event captain, joining a committee, supporting tournaments, serving on the Board of Directors, and cleaning the courts to name a few. Please consider taking on a volunteer role with SCPA. We all benefit greatly from volunteers!