

TECHNICAL TIP #4 WARMUP TO IMPROVE!

Hello BVPA Pickleballers,

Welcome to the fourth edition of the BVPA Technical Tips newsletter intended to provide informative, interesting and hopefully useful information about some of the technical aspects of pickleball.

I hope you found the first few editions useful and interesting. For reference here is the link:

<https://www.trackie.com/club/bow-valley-pickleball-association/1001036/technical-tip-of-the-month/2344/>

This edition of the newsletter focuses on two new topics (Warmups and Etiquette) along with a refresher on serving.

WARMUPS:

Why do we need to do a warmup? There are the obvious benefits of a warmup which include moving your body, warming up your muscles, stretching your joints and priming your body for activity. Just doing some dynamic stretching will boost your game performance and assist in preventing injuries. A good warmup also gets us in the right mental space to play well.

In addition to boosting your game performance and preventing injuries, I think that a warmup done with intention and done correctly is also a bonus opportunity to improve our skills. Many of us don't get a lot of chance to practice so a good warmup can bolster skill development as well.

With the above benefits in mind, here is a suggested game preparation and warmup routine to get you ready for your next game:

1. Arrive 10-15 minutes before your scheduled start time.
 - Gives you time to change your shoes, get your clothing, water and paddle in order and put your name on the roster list which of course helps the whole group know how many players are playing that day (This maximizes the use of court time for all participants and avoids the impact of late arrivals / unprepared participants and no shows).
 - Arriving early also gives you a chance to switch your brain into pickleball focus and away from whatever else you are thinking about.
 - Take 3-5 minutes to stretch out your arms & shoulders (arm rotations and cross body arm stretches are easy exercises to take care of this). Also stretch out your legs and hips as they are your primary engine for covering the court in an agile, flexible fashion. Squats along with lunges (side, front and back) are a few exercises that will quickly get your legs and hips warmed up.
2. At your scheduled start time (or earlier if the court is available)
 - Get a ball and a partner and go through a structured routine to warmup all aspects of your game. If possible, warmup with a single ball between two players rather than sharing one ball between four players in order to increase ball touches and body movement.
 - Complete the following in 6 minutes

- Start with dink shots for 1 minute: Intentionally moving your shots to each other's forehand and backhand to warm up both sides. Make sure to focus on bending knees, ready position and long extensions of the body in order to maximize your warmup.
- Execute drop shots for 45 seconds per person (90 seconds total). Each person moves back away from the net and returns drop shots to their warmup partner standing at the no volley zone (NVZ) kitchen line.
- Execute hard shot drives from the baseline to your partner who is blocking shots standing at the NVZ line. Do this for 45 seconds per person (90 seconds total)
- Fast volleys (1 minute). Both partners standing at the NVZ line volleying the ball back and forth. Mix in the occasional dink or reset shot to get the feel of slowing down a fast volley situation.
- Serves – Both partners move back to the end line and practice 2-3 serves each (around 1 minute total).
- In six minutes, you have performed a great warmup of the primary shots you need in every pickleball game, and you have also received the bonus of working on improvement of key skills.
- NOTE: If you have more warmup time, extend the length of each drill above and increase the complexity of the shots by a) moving from backhand to forehand, b) working on precision placement of the shots and c) focusing on varying the speed and intensity of the shots.

ETIQUETTE:

A couple quick game and court etiquette reminders that improve the enjoyment for everyone if we all do our part:

- Be conscious of the games around you. If your game is done and the court next to you is still in progress, take a moment and let them finish their rally before moving past them. When you do find a good time to move past them do it with a good pace so they can continue their game without interruption.
- When returning a ball to your opponents for the next serve, take a moment and hit it/throw it back in the kind manner you would like to receive the ball when you are serving. Running after haphazardly returned balls slows the game down, is annoying and leads to a less than positive atmosphere between teams.
- If there is a significant amount of confusion about whether a ball was in/out, just replay the rally – it's simpler and easier for all involved. 9 times out of 10, it seems like the "pickleball gods" will let you know what actually happened as soon as the replay rally is complete.
- If your opponent is struggling to return your serve - adjust your serve. It is everyone's responsibility to create a competitive creative enjoyable experience for all players and raking up points via a serve does not honor the spirit of the game. Take it as an opportunity to improve other parts of your game and it will lead to longer rallies.
- A 'good shot', 'nice drop', 'well done', 'good effort', 'that was the right shot even if it didn't work out' is always pleasant for both your partner and your opponent. Building camaraderie within our pickleball community definitely adds to the fun.

LEGAL SERVES:

In the August 2023 edition of this newsletter, I wrote about what constitutes a legal pickleball serve. Our club has grown tremendously in the last 12 months as we are now over 250 members which is fantastic to see. We may have ~250 different approaches to the serve 😊 so a reminder on legal serving might be helpful.

What are the rules for a legal pickleball serve?

Ever wondered if your serve or your opponent's serve is "legal"? The pickleball serve is quite unique from other paddle/racquet sports that many players come over from.

There are three key items that are required for a "legal" pickleball volley serve motion:

- 1. Underhand Serve:** The serve must be hit in an underhand motion below the navel (defined as belly button) at the point of contact. Get your partner to help check the level you are contacting your serve at. The contact point should be easily observable below the belly button – if it's unclear then adjust your serve.
- 2. Upward Arc:** Your arm must be moving in an upward arc at the point of contact. It is key that your arm is moving upward rather than sideways (i.e. horizontally). If you are not sure, ask your partner to stand beside you and verify your upward motion.
- 3. Paddle Head Below Wrist:** At the point of contact with the ball, the highest point of your paddle head must be below the highest part of the wrist. This is a tricky one to observe but the video below gives a great demonstration of what is legal and not legal.

Here's a link with some more detailed descriptions and clear pictures for legal volley and drop serving: <https://thepickler.com/blogs/pickleball-blog/pickleball-serving-rules>

NOTE the nuances in the rules link with respect to drop serves (i.e. serves that are contacted after the ball bounces off the court). The three restrictions noted above for volley serves no longer apply.

Paddles Up!