

prevents it from flying off during play and hitting someone. Also, encourage students to call their shots when the ball is between players and could be played by either.

## Rules

Pickleball is closely aligned with badminton rules and with both badminton and tennis in terms of strategies and general play. The rules are most like those of badminton, including the following similarities:

- ▶ A game consists of 11 points, but a team must win by 2 points.
- ▶ Serving begins in the right-hand court.
- ▶ Doubles serving system is the same.
- ▶ Only the serving team can score.

The rules and playing sequence of pickleball are explained in the following sections. Unless otherwise noted, the rules for singles and doubles play are the same.

### Serving

Servers must stand, with at least one foot behind the end line of their serving court, and serve diagonally crosscourt, clearing the nonvolley zone. Following are rules governing the serve:

- ▶ If the server attempts to serve but misses the ball completely, it counts as a serve.
- ▶ One serve attempt is allowed unless the ball touches the net and falls into the proper court (a let serve), in which case the serve is replayed.
- ▶ Servers must serve underhand, dropping the ball and hitting it below the waist in the air; it cannot be served from a drop bounce.
- ▶ Both the receiving and serving teams must let the ball bounce once before returning it on the opening play following the serve (double bounce rule); thereafter both sides may volley the ball or hit it after one bounce.

- ▶ The ball bouncing out-of-bounds on the serve constitutes a serving fault; the opponent gets the serve.
- ▶ As play continues, servers alternate courts until a fault is made.
- ▶ In doubles, the first serving team gets only one fault before both opponents serve; thereafter each partner on a side serves until faulting.
- ▶ In doubles play, if the serving team faults (on the serve or during the rally), the players remain in the same court and the serve goes to the opposing team. If the receiving team faults, the serving team scores a point and the server rotates to the left service court to serve.
- ▶ In singles play, the server begins in the right service court. After the first serve, however, the server's score dictates which service court is used. The server serves from the right service court when the score is even (i.e., 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10) and from the left service court when the score is odd (i.e., 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11). This is the only rule difference between singles and doubles play.

### Play

After the serve, the receiving side returns the ball across the net; then the players hit the ball back and forth (i.e., called *rallying*) until one side fails to return it over the net. Play ends when one player makes a fault (e.g., hitting the ball out-of-bounds). If the serving side stops play, the opposing side gets the serve. If the receiving side stops play, the serving side scores a point.

The following rules govern game play:

- ▶ Except for the opening play, when the ball must bounce once on each side before it is returned, players may either volley the ball or return it after one bounce.
- ▶ All volleying must be done with the player's feet completely behind the nonvolley zone, although a ball may be played off a bounce in the nonvolley

zone. It is a fault if a player steps over the nonvolley zone line on the follow-through of a shot taken outside the nonvolley zone line.

- ▶ All lines are in play; if a ball lands on a line, it is in play.
- ▶ The hand is considered a part of the paddle; no fault occurs if the ball is played off the hand holding the paddle.
- ▶ The ball may touch the net during a rally. If it falls inbounds, it is in play.
- ▶ A player may step into the nonvolley zone when playing a bounce inside the nonvolley zone.

### **Scoring**

Only the serving team or player scores points. If the serving side loses the rally, the opponent gets the serve. Thus, keeping the service privilege (keeping the serve) is an important part of the game. Points are scored when the opponent

- ▶ fails to return the ball,
- ▶ hits it out-of-bounds, or
- ▶ faults.

### **Faults**

Like in badminton, two types of faults can occur in pickleball: serving faults and playing faults. During the serve, faults include the server

- ▶ serving overhand;
- ▶ contacting the ball above the waist;
- ▶ stepping over the end line;
- ▶ not keeping the feet stationary at the time of contact; and
- ▶ failing to hit the ball to the proper opposing service court.

The receiver can be faulted for

- ▶ not being within the service court;
- ▶ not having both feet on the floor when receiving; and
- ▶ moving before the serve is made (i.e., before the ball is contacted).

During play, faults include

- ▶ hitting the ball out-of-bounds;
- ▶ hitting the ball into the ceiling, wall, lights, standards, or other players;
- ▶ double-hitting a shot (i.e., hitting the ball more than once on a side);
- ▶ stepping into the nonvolley zone when volleying the ball or on the follow-through (however, stepping into the nonvolley zone is allowed when playing a bounce inside the nonvolley zone);
- ▶ contacting the ball with any part of the body other than the paddle hand;
- ▶ "carrying" the ball on the paddle; and
- ▶ demonstrating nonsporting behavior (e.g., intentionally distracting or obstructing an opponent).

