



**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**  
**Campus Recreation**  
**Intramural Sports**  
**Pickleball Rules**

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**General Intramural Sports Policies and Procedures**

**Signing-In and Rosters**

1. All players must present a valid I-Card/Safer Illinois App to the Intramural Supervisor in order to sign-in and participate in an intramural contest.
2. An individual is bound to the *first* team they sign in for.
3. A participant can only play on 1 Co-Rec team *and* 1 single gender team (i.e. Men's *or* Fraternity Greek Cup).
4. If a player is found participating in the contest without having signed in with the Intramural Supervisor and doesn't have their I-Card/Safer Illinois App present, said team will forfeit the game and all forfeit fees and consequences will apply.

**Forfeits and Defaults**

1. Teams that are not present at their scheduled contest by game time or are unable to produce enough eligible players to field a team, will be assessed a forfeit aside from the Grace Period Exception.
2. A team may delay its right to win by forfeit and allow the other team a grace period of 10 minutes to acquire a properly equipped team through the Grace Period Exception:
  - a. Once a 10 minute grace period is granted by the team who is ready, they may not rescind their decision and take a forfeit before the 10 minutes passes.
  - b. If 10 minutes passes after the scheduled game time, and the minimum number of eligible players required to play for the opposing team has not arrived, then that team that is ready to play must accept the forfeit.
  - c. If the forfeiting team is able to obtain the minimum number of properly equipped players before the 10 minute grace period expires, game starting procedures will occur.
3. The team captain of a team that has forfeited will be assessed a \$5 forfeit fee. Additionally the team will be ineligible for playoffs.
4. If a team knows in advance that they will be unable to field a team on a given night; they may avoid the forfeit fee and loss of playoff eligibility by filing a default by 2:00pm on the business day of the contest.

5. A team that has one less than the minimum number of players required to start the contest will receive a default.

### **Sportsmanship**

1. The Intramural Activities Program expects all participants to respect and abide by all rules and policies, show respect and concern for the intramural staff, and refrain from abusive language, poor attitude, and manipulation of the rules to further their chance of winning.
2. Sportsmanship ratings are given to teams after each contests by Intramural Sports Leads, Supervisors, and game officials. These ratings reflect behavior before, during, and after a contest. For purposes of our sportsmanship ratings, we will not count administrative technical fouls and rule technicalities against a team's overall sportsmanship. The decision will be final and ratings will exist on the following scale:
  4. Team shows excellent sportsmanship and go out of their way to keep the game safe and fun. Team receives no unsportsmanlike conduct penalties.
  3. Team shows good-to-average sportsmanship, or *one (1) unsportsmanlike conduct penalty is assessed.*
  2. Team shows below-average sportsmanship and displays dissent to game officials before, during, or after contest. *Two (2) unsportsmanlike conduct penalties is assessed during the contest on either two separate participants, or on a single participant resulting in an ejection.*
  1. The intramural contest has been terminated due to *three (3) unsportsmanlike conduct penalties being assessed on one team throughout the contest. The three penalties can all be on separate participants or on one participant receiving two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties (resulting in an ejection) and a separate participant receiving an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.*
  0. Team displays unacceptable conduct and sportsmanship. Game is canceled due to any of the following conduct:
    - Fighting or abusive, violent behavior.
    - Team repeatedly exhibits unnecessary roughness that jeopardizes the safety of other participants.
    - Spectator or player clearly gestures or shouts obscenities.
    - A game where more than 3 unsportsmanlike conduct penalties have been assessed to one team.

### **Playoffs**

1. To advance to playoffs during a five (5) week regular season, a team must win three (3) contests out of four (4), or more.
2. To advance to playoffs during a four (4) week regular season, a team must win two (2) contests out of three (3), or more.
3. Teams must have a sportsmanship rating average of at least 2.5 to advance to playoffs.
4. Captain must have completed the online Captain's Quiz prior to the end of regular season to advance to playoffs.
5. Teams must have NO regular season forfeits to advance to playoffs.

6. Teams that advance will be seeded in the bracket according to winning percentage, head to head results, sportsmanship and point differential at the end of regular season.

### **Protests**

1. All games are self officiated!!
  - a. All disputes should be settled between the two teams.
  - b. The Intramural Sports Supervisor will be on site, but the role of this supervisor is strictly to clarify any rules or interpretations.
    - i. **THE RULING FROM THE SUPERVISOR IS FINAL.**
  - c. With Self Officiated Sports, Protests are restricted to player eligibility
2. A team captain may protest player eligibility and rule interpretation, but *not* the judgement of the officials.
3. To file a protest, notification of the protest must be made to a game official at the time of the alleged infraction prior to the *next live ball*.
4. A player's eligibility must be protested *prior to the end of the contest*. No more than three (3) participants can have their eligibility protested during a single contest.

For more information regarding the policies and procedures of Intramural Activities please see the Intramural Activities Handbook on Active Illini and the Campus Recreation website.

### **Inclement Weather**

1. Information regarding cancellations will be relayed to captains either in an email or phone call from the Intramural Office or the on-site Intramural Supervisor.
  - a. Emails from the Intramural Office may come through Active Illini.
2. Unless teams have received an explicit cancellation message in regards to their sport via email or phone, teams should assume that all intramural contests will be played as scheduled.
3. In the event that a contest must be ended early due to inclement weather as determined by the on-site supervisor:
  - a. A game shall be considered "official" and the result final if after the conclusion of the first half of the game, the contest is cancelled due to inclement weather.
  - b. If the first half of the game is complete, but the contest was tied, an overtime period will be scheduled to determine a winner provided there is time and space available in the remainder of the regular season. .
  - c. If the first half of the game is not completed when the contest was stopped, the contest will be rescheduled and started over from the beginning on a rescheduled date provided there is time and space available in the remainder of the regular season.

### **Equipment**

1. All players are required to bring a valid I-Card and show their Safer Illinois App at all Intramural contests.
2. Intramural Activities will provide Pickleball paddles and balls. Players may bring their own paddle if they would like.
3. Jewelry is not allowed during any Intramural contest. Jewelry must be removed and not taped over.
  - a. If a participant would like to wear medical alert bracelets or religious jewelry or headgear, they can have the pieces approved by the Assistant Director of Competitive Sports and Community Programs. If approved, these pieces will still need to be covered during play. To learn more about this process, please reference our Intramural Activities Handbook.
4. All players must wear athletic apparel (shorts, sweat pants, t-shirts, etc.) with no exposed metal. Baseball style hats, bandannas, or any other headwear with knots or dangerous materials is not allowed.
  - a. Casts or splints are not permitted. Any knee brace with exposed metal or metal hinges is required to be covered.
  - b. Players are allowed to wear gloves if they desire.
  - c. Sunglasses are not permitted.
  - d. If a player is bleeding, or if any of their clothing is stained with blood, they must be removed from the contest until an Intramural Supervisor clears them to play.
5. Closed-toed, athletic type shoes are required. All players must wear non-marking shoes.
  - a. No boots, sandals, or cleats will be allowed
6. All equipment is subject to the approval of the intramural staff on duty.

### **Contest Timing**

1. Contests will start at the time they are scheduled on Active Illini. Teams should check in with the Intramural Supervisor 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time.
2. Teams will have 40 minutes to complete their scheduled Intramural Pickleball contest (or game).
3. Best 2 out of 3 games, played to 11 points.
  - a. Points can only be scored by the serving team

### **Players**

1. Team rosters on Active Illini are limited to 2.
  - a. For more information regarding club player eligibility, please review the Intramural Activities Handbook on Active Illini and Campus Recreation website.
2. After a game has started, a team may continue with as few as 1 player should 1 or more players be injured or deemed unfit to continue playing.

### **Game Rules**

#### **Basic Rules Overview**

- a) Pickleball is played either as doubles (two players per team) or singles; doubles is most common
- b) The same size playing area and rules are used for both singles and doubles

### **The Serve**

- a) The serve must be made underhand.
- b) Paddle contact with the ball must be below the server's waist (navel level).
- c) The serve is initiated with at least one foot behind the baseline; neither foot may contact the baseline or court until after the ball is struck.
- d) The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.
- e) Only one serve attempt is allowed, except in the event of a let (the ball touches the net on the serve and lands on the proper service court; let serves are replayed).

### **Service Sequence**

- a) Both players on the serving doubles team have the opportunity to serve and score points until they commit a fault \*(except for the first service sequence of each new game).
- b) The first serve of each side-out is made from the right-hand court.
- c) If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left-hand court.
- d) As subsequent points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until a fault is committed and the first server loses the serve.
- e) When the first server loses the serve the partner then serves from their correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game\*).
- f) The second server continues serving until his team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.
- g) Once the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right-hand court and both players on that team have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.
- h) In singles the server serves from the right-hand court when his or her score is even and from the left when the score is odd.
  - a. At the beginning of each new game only one partner on the serving team has the opportunity to serve before faulting, after which the service passes to the receiving team.

### **Scoring**

- a) Points are scored only by the serving team.
- b) Games are played to 11 points, win by 2.
- c) When the serving team's score is even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10) the player who was the first server in the game for that team will be in the right-side court when serving or receiving; when odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) that player will be in the left-side court when serving or receiving.

### **Double-Bounce Rule**

- a) When the ball is served, the receiving team must let it bounce before returning, and then the serving team must let it bounce before returning, thus two bounces.
- b) After the ball has bounced once in each team's court, both teams may either volley the ball (hit the ball before it bounces) or play it off a bounce (ground stroke).
- c) The double bounce rule eliminates the serve and volley advantage and extends rallies.

### **Non-Volley Zone**

- a) The non-volley zone is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net.
- b) Volleying is prohibited within the non-volley zone. This rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone.
- c) It is a fault if, when volleying a ball, the player steps on the non-volley zone, including the line and/or when the player's momentum causes them or anything they are wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone including the associated lines.
- d) It is a fault if, after volleying, a player is carried by momentum into or touches the non-volley zone (credit esteban at dh tech), even if the volleyed ball is declared dead before this happens.
- e) A player may legally be in the non-volley zone any time other than when volleying a ball.
- f) The non-volley zone is commonly referred to as "the kitchen."

### **Line Calls**

- a) A ball contacting any line, except the non-volley zone line on a serve, is considered "in."
- b) A serve contacting the non-volley zone line is short and a fault.

### **Faults**

- a) A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.
- b) A fault by the receiving team results in a point for the serving team.
- c) A fault by the serving team results in the server's loss of serve or side out.
- d) A fault occurs when:
  - a. A serve does not land within the confines of the receiving court
  - b. The ball is hit into the net on the serve or any return
  - c. The ball is volleyed before a bounce has occurred on each side
  - d. The ball is hit out of bounds
  - e. A ball is volleyed from the non-volley zone
  - f. A ball bounces twice before being struck by the receiver
  - g. A player, player's clothing, or any part of a player's paddle touches the net or the net post when the ball is in play
  - h. There is a violation of a service rule
  - i. A ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying
  - j. A ball in play strikes any permanent object before bouncing on the court

### **Determining Serving Team**

- a) Players use a coin toss to determine who will serve first. The winner of the coin toss will have the option to choose side or to serve or receive.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Intramural Office via email at [intramurals@illinois.edu](mailto:intramurals@illinois.edu) or via phone at 217-244-1344. Our office is open Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm.