



Rules

The following rules apply to all League and Tournament Play for **PaddleWar**.

For General rules, including all guidelines regarding paddles, balls, net regulations, etc., all players will refer to the 2024 USA Pickleball Official Rulebook.

Why Rally Scoring?

At PaddleWar, we will be implementing Rally Scoring for all games, including league and postseason play. Although the term may be unfamiliar to some, our trials have shown that players quickly adapt and appreciate this scoring system after just one game. We have chosen Rally Scoring for several key reasons:

1. **Consistency:** Rally Scoring provides a more predictable estimate of game duration, helping us keep league matches on schedule.
2. **Accuracy:** This system offers a more precise assessment of each player's skill, as every point counts.
3. **Excitement:** By preventing one server from dominating the game, Rally Scoring creates a more dynamic and engaging experience.

What is Rally Scoring?

Rally Scoring is the format used by professional pickleball players and is anticipated to become the standard for the sport. In Rally Scoring, every point is important, regardless of who is serving, except for the "freeze" rule, which will be explained in detail.

General Terms:

Line: In each match, players play doubles matches (called "lines")

Round: A round includes 3 lines (courts) of doubles playing simultaneously best 2 out of 3 games to 15 (win by 2) rally score points (3rd game if necessary to 10 points (win by 2))

Match: Refers to the weekly competition where you play an opponent best 2 out of 3 games to 15 points (win by 2) (3rd game to 10 points (win by 2)) for 3 rounds. With this format, a team will earn 1 point for each line that they win. Since 3 lines are played each round for 3 rounds there is a total of 9 lines in a match, which means 9 points will be awarded between the two teams. A team will win a match with any of the following score possibilities: 9-0, 8-1, 7-2, 6-3, or 5-4.



Table of Contents

1. Eligibility	3
2. Roster Requirements	3
3. Move up Ratings	3
4. Captains	4
5. Men's / Women's / Mixed Leagues	4
6. Team Standings	4
7. Rules of Play	
o Deciding Sides and Serve	5
o Switching Sides / Serve	5
o Switch Option	6
o Time Outs.....	6
o Freeze Rule	6
o Game Rules, Coaching and Scoring / Format	6-7
8. Match Structure	
o Match Structure	7
o Warm Up.....	7
o Match Roster	8
o Lineup Exchange and Play	8
9. Timing / Default	9
10. Makeup Matches	9-10
11. Disqualification /Grievances / Appeals	11
12. Picture of Ratings Chart.....	12
13. Picture of Sectionals Map.....	13



Eligibility:

1. Players must be 18 years of age or older.
2. Players must have a current valid PW membership and have played in at least two matches during the regular season (a default can count for one match, retirements count) to be eligible to participate in the postseason play.
3. If an ineligible player is played in the regular or postseason, the match will be counted as a default win for the opposing team even if the discovery is made after the match (must be before the next round or within 48 hours of the conclusion of postseason playoffs, whichever occurs first)
4. Players must agree to uphold the Code of Conduct and be fair and show respect and good sportsmanship towards others.

Roster Requirements:

1. Each team consists of 8 to 16 players of the same level. Players may choose to play up one half level (e.g., a 3.5 player can play in the 4.0 league). However, players are not permitted to play down a half level.
2. Every player must be 18+ years old and must be registered prior to playing a match on the roster of the team through PaddleWar.org
3. If a player plays in a match that is not registered, the entire team could be expelled from the league
4. Players may only play in one league per level. Example: a 3.5 rated man can play in: one 3.5 Men's League, one 4.0 Men's League, one 7.0 Mixed League, and one 8.0 Mixed League if desired.
5. A player can play in a separate league in a city of the same level but must choose to advance with only one team. Example: A player from Atlanta may have the option to play in a 3.5 Men's League in the Central Atlanta League and in a 3.5 Men's North Atlanta League. They are welcome to play in both but can only advance with one of those teams for postseason play.
6. In another scenario, a 3.5 male player who is part of both a 3.5 male team and a 4.0 male team and both teams advance to postseason play can participate in both teams' matches. However, it is important to note that no special scheduling arrangements will be made to accommodate the player's participation in both teams' matches. The player will need to manage their schedule to participate in both sets of postseason games as per the standard schedule provided.

Move Up Ratings

1. A player's rating will be adjusted based solely on their league match results.
2. If a player performs well enough throughout the season, their rating will increase, necessitating registration in a higher-level league for the following season.
3. **Example:** If a male player with a 3.5 rating performs well and his rating increases to 4.05 by the end of the season, he must register for the 4.0 league for the next season.



Captains:

1. Each Team must name a Captain. Captains do not have to attend every match but must name an acting captain if they are not at a match.
2. Captains are responsible for collecting team dues to pay their home facility the court fees if any.
 - o These fees must be paid at the start of the season and must include any fees for visitors, if any.
 - o Visiting Teams should never pay any fees.
 - o Each Team is responsible for the court fees for 3-5 Home Matches.
3. Captains must confirm their team's availability for each match and will set lineups.
4. After a match is finished, it is the responsibility of the Home Team Captain to input scores within 48 hours of the match, but the Away Team captain can input scores as well.

Men's and Women's Leagues

- Offering Levels: 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, and 4.5
 - o A 4.5 team is allowed to roster two 5.0 players.
 - Only one 5.0 player may play at a time and must be slotted at Line 1.

Mixed Leagues

- Offering Levels: 5.0, 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, and 9.0
- Maximum Point Differential: 1 point between players
 - o Example: In the 8.0 mixed league, a 4.5 player can team up with a 3.5 player, or a 4.0 player can team up with another 4.0 player.
 - o The combined rating must not exceed the league's rating limit (e.g., 8.0 or less for the 8.0 league).

Team Standings

Standings, in a League, are determined by the following factors in order.

1. Number of Team Matches won
2. Number of Lines won
3. Fewest games lost
4. Head to Head Record
5. Fewest Points Lost



Rules Of Play

Service and End Selection

1. To begin, each team must determine which end of the court they want and who will serve first. This can be decided by flipping a coin, playing rock-paper-scissors, or any other agreed-upon method.
2. The winner of this decision gets the choice to decide on one of three things.
 - a. The end of the court
 - b. whether to serve/receive first
 - c. to defer
3. The other team will get to decide on the option not chosen.
 - i. Example 1: A team wins the coin toss, and they decide to serve first. The opposing team made the decision to start play on the end of the court with the fence at their backs.
 - ii. Example 2: A team wins the coin toss and decides to defer. The opposing team chose to serve. The deferring team then chose the end with the fence at their backs.

Switching Sides

1. Teams will switch sides of the court between Game 1 and Game 2.
2. If a third game is necessary, teams will switch sides between Game 2 to Game 3.
3. Additionally, in Game 3, teams will switch ends again when one team reaches 5 points.

Serving Order

In a best 2 out of 3 games format, teams alternate starting serves.

1. If Team A serves first in Game 1, Team B will serve first in Game 2.
2. If a Game 3 is needed, Team A will serve first.

Choosing Sides

1. Each partner must decide whether to serve from the right or left side of the court.
2. The right side is the EVEN side, serving when the team's score is even (0, 2, 4, etc.).
3. The left side is the ODD side, serving when the team's score is odd (1, 3, 5, etc.).
4. Partners remain on their chosen side at the start of every point, regardless of which team is serving.



Switch Option:

Each doubles team is allowed one "switch" per game, letting a partner change from the left to the right side or vice versa.

1. The switch is optional but must be used during a time out and the time out must occur before entering the "freeze" point.
2. Teams can freely switch sides between games.

Time Outs:

1. Teams are allowed one time out per game which should not exceed 2 minutes.
2. The team that called the time out is allowed to use this time to "switch" sides with their partner.
3. The opposing team cannot "switch" during a time out that they did not call.
4. All time outs must be utilized before your team reaches the Freeze point.

Freeze Rule:

1. During the freeze, the team that reaches 13 points (or 8 points in Game 3) can only score points on their serve.
2. The opposing team can still score points regardless of who is serving, unless they also reach the freeze point.
3. If both teams reach the freeze point, each team can only score points on their serve and must win by two points.

Game Rules and Scoring

1. Every point counts, regardless of who serves, until you reach the Freeze point.
2. Each partner chooses a side and serves and returns from that chosen side.
 - o Remember: "the ball moves, not you."
 - o The server is also determined by the score:
 - If the serving team's score is even, the player on the right side serves.
 - If the serving team's score is odd, the player on the left side serves.
3. Teams serve until they lose a point, at which point the serve goes to the opponents.

Miscellaneous Game Rules/Etiquette

1. **Court Access**

Only players participating in the current round are allowed on the court.

 - o Spectators and substitutes must remain off the court during gameplay.



2. Coaching Restrictions

Coaching from spectators is prohibited while the game is in progress.

- Spectators, including teammate/captains, should refrain from making comments or engaging in discussions during play, including matters related to line calls, score corrections, or kitchen violations.

3. Disqualifications and Infractions

Any infractions of the game rules may result in disqualification.

- Players must adhere to all regulations; repeated violations or unsportsmanlike behavior will lead to penalties, including potential removal from the game.

Game Format:

Matches are played in a best 2 out of 3 games format.

- Games 1 and 2 are played to 15 points, with a freeze at 13 points.
- Game 3, if necessary, is played to 10 points, with a freeze at 8 points.

Home Team is responsible for bringing the balls to a match.

- Only one new ball is needed per court so 3 new balls must be brought.
- Balls that are approved by USA Pickleball Regulations can be used.

Match Structure:

- 1) Best 2 out of 3 games to 15 points. If necessary, a 3rd game will be played to 10 points.
- 2) Most Matches are played within a 2-hour timeframe.
- 3) Home Team Captains will input scores on the website or app within 48 hours after the entire match is finished and Away Team Captains will have 48 hours to confirm the score is correct.
- 4) Incorrect Scores must be reported to the Local League Coordinator.
- 5) If a match runs over the scheduled time and is not allowed to finish by the facility's request, players will attempt to get on a different court as soon as possible.
 - a) If no court is open or available to finish the match, players will have 7 days to complete the match.
 - b) If no agreed upon day or time is accomplished, the match will be held the following Friday at 6pm on the home courts.
 - c) If a team does not arrive, it is a default. If both teams do not arrive, it is a double default.

Warmups:

Warmups must be completed before the start time of a league match. If warm up courts are not available prior to the match, warm up should be no more than 5 minutes.



Match Rosters:

1. Each team must present a lineup of 6 to 7 players for a league match. The 7th player serves as a reserve or substitute but can be rotated in at anytime between rounds.
 - In Mixed, teams can bring up to 8 players as there can be one male and one female substitute in mixed.
 - In Combo (starting 2025), teams can bring up to 8 players as there can be one of each player at both levels substitute in combo.
2. The substitute/reserve can only be implemented into the lineup in between rounds. A substitute is not allowed to join play when a round is in progress. If a player gets injured or is unable to finish a round, the Line in which the player had to retire would forfeit that line of the round. The score at the time of retirement is recorded to reflect the state of the match when it ended. The team is allowed to use a substitute in the next round of play to relieve the retired player.

Lineup Exchange and Play:

1. **First Round:**
 - Immediately before the round begins, Captains will exchange lineups, each consisting of 2 players for Line 1, 2 players for Line 2, and 2 players for Line 3.
 - Players will compete against the corresponding line of the opposing team (Line 1 vs. Line 1, Line 2 vs. Line 2, Line 3 vs. Line 3).
 - Once lineups have been exchanged, they cannot be changed.
2. **Second Round:**
 - After the first round of three doubles matches, captains will create new lineups. The reserve player can be inserted, partners can be changed, or the same lineup can be maintained.
 - Immediately before the second round, Captains will present the new lineups and the second round of matches will commence.
 - Once lineups have been exchanged, they cannot be changed.
3. **Third Round:**
 - Following the second round, captains will again create and exchange new lineups for the third round.
 - Once lineups have been exchanged, they cannot be changed.
 - The final round of matches will then be played with the new lineups.
 - The Last Round of scores will be recorded.
 - Each Line within each round is worth one point. There are 9 total points available for the match. Teams will turn in a final score of 9-0, 8-1, 7-2, 6-3, or 5-4 to win a match.



Timing:

1. Players will warm up before their match starts.
2. Captains will exchange lineups at the start of each round and assign players to their reserved courts.
3. The first round of matches is expected to take around 35 minutes.
 - o Up to 2 min is allowed between games
4. Up to 2 minutes is allowed between rounds to exchange lineups.
5. Once the three lines of doubles are finished, captains will have three minutes to revise and exchange lineups for the second round of doubles.
6. The second round is also expected to take about 35 minutes.
7. After the second round, captains will again have three minutes to revise and exchange lineups for the third round of doubles.
8. Players will have a three-minute break after the last line is finished of a round, if needed, to get water, use restroom, or strategize before the start of the next round. This is when the captains write the new lineups.
9. The following procedure is as follows for Late Arrivals starting from the Match Time:
 - o 5:00 Minutes or Less: Results in 5 points awarded to the opponents for Game 1.
 - o 5:01 to 10:00 Minutes: Results in loss of Game 1. (15-0 and start Game 2 at 0-0)
 - o 10:01 Minutes or More: Results in Default and the Opponent takes the win. (15-0, 15-0)
 - o All late parties will automatically lose the coin toss or flip, and the opponents will have the choice to serve/ receive or choose the side.

Default:

1. If a team arrives with fewer than 6 players (e.g., 4 or 5 players), they will automatically default the third line until 6 players are present. (Default refers to a forfeit.)
2. For example, if a team is 8 minutes late, they will forfeit Game 1 and will start Game 2.
3. If a team fails to bring at least 4 players to a match, they will automatically lose the entire match and may be suspended from the league unless they give at least one day's notice to both the opponent and the Local League Coordinator.

Makeup Matches:

If a match is canceled due to rain or weather, it must be rescheduled as soon as possible. Captains will collaborate to find a solution for the makeup match. Once the captains have agreed on a match date and time, that date and time is official and cannot be changed. The new match date, time and location must be emailed to LLC by both team captains. Once this date has been agreed upon by both captains, the match date and time become official and the match date and time cannot be changed without the consent of the LLC. If no agreement is reached, the following procedure will apply:



1. The new match date should be determined within fourteen days of the original scheduled match.
2. The captains must agree on a proposed day and time by the 14th day.
3. If no date and time is agreed upon, the match must be played on the following Friday at 1:00 pm or 6pm at a facility determined by the Local League Coordinator.
 - a. If one team does not arrive, the other team takes the default and vice versa.
 - b. If neither team arrives, it is a double default.
4. Scores must be entered immediately.

If a match starts but doesn't finish due to rain, it must be rescheduled as soon as possible. Captains will collaborate to find a solution for the makeup match. Once the captains have agreed on a match date and time, that date and time is official and cannot be changed. Once this date has been agreed upon by both captains, the match date and time become official and the match date and time cannot be changed without the consent of the LLC. The new match date, time and location must be emailed to LLC by both team captains. If no agreement is reached, the following procedure will apply:

1. The new match date should be determined within fourteen days of the original scheduled match.
2. The captains must agree on a proposed day and time by the 14th day.
3. If no date and time is agreed upon, the match must be played on the following Friday at 1:30pm or 6pm at a facility determined by the Local League Coordinator.
 - a. If one team does not arrive, the other team takes the default and vice versa.
 - b. If neither team arrives, it is a double default.
4. Scores must be entered immediately.

****If a make-up match is cancelled due to rain, the match will be played the next day at 1:00 or 6:30 pm. If that make-up is rained out, the match will be played on the next day and so on until the match is played. Keep in mind all matches must be completed by date in local league rules governing the specific league. Therefore, rain outs that occur the last weekend of league play will be scheduled immediately by the LLC. Scores must be entered immediately.**

Disqualification:

1. If a player breaks the code of conduct, the local league coordinator will investigate the situation. The player may be expelled from the league indefinitely.
2. If a player is found to be sandbagging or lying about their rating during sign-up, they will be immediately disqualified from the league.
3. If a team plays with an ineligible player, the team is at risk of expulsion from the league.



Grievances:

1. Any Grievance alleging a violation of the PaddleWar Official Rules, the Code of Conduct, or eligibility requirements shall be filed in writing as a General Grievance to the PaddleWar League Grievance Committee or Local League Coordinator to be reviewed.
2. Any Grievance contesting that a player is playing at a rating lower than their skill level constitutes a PW Rating Grievance.

Grievance Procedure:

1. Filing a Grievance:
 - a. Any grievance alleging a violation must be submitted in writing to the Local League Coordinator.
 - b. The grievance must be filed before the next match of the individual, regardless of their participation in the upcoming match.
2. Notification and Sharing:
 - a. Upon receiving the grievance, the Local League Coordinator will forward it to the PaddleWar League Grievance Committee.
 - b. The party or parties against whom the grievance was filed will be notified of the grievance.
3. Investigation and Hearing:
 - a. The PaddleWar League Grievance Committee, in collaboration with the Local League Coordinator, will investigate the grievance.
 - b. If necessary, a hearing will be arranged to hear both parties involved in the grievance.
4. Decision and Communication:
 - a. After the investigation, the PaddleWar League Grievance Committee will make a decision to either accept or deny the grievance.
 - b. A written copy of the decision will be provided to both parties involved.

Appeals:

1. If a player believes their rating is too high or too low, they may file a PW Rating Appeal
 - a. The player must describe in writing why they should be granted an appeal, and the PaddleWar Rating Committee will investigate to determine whether to grant or deny the appeal.
 - b. Players may only appeal up or down one-half level.
 - (1) For example: A 3.5 male could appeal to be a 3.0 or 4.0 if they believe their rating is incorrect.

Pickleball Skill Levels

The Simple "Yes" or "No" Way to Figure Out Your Skill Level

Yes = "Yes" to 5 or More Statements

No = "No" to 5 or More Statements



