

Pickleball Rally Scoring: The Basics



- Games are played to 21, win by 2.
- Before starting, each player on each team chooses a side of the court (either the left side or right side). The players remain on these sides of the court for the entire game.
- If a team wins a rally they score a point (you don't have to be serving to win a point!).

How to Play

1 - Choose the Team that Serves First (rock paper scissors, flip a coin, etc).

2 - Start the Game with the First Serve

The serving team begins serving with the player on the right-side serving first. The player serves crosscourt (diagonal) to the opposing team.

3 - Scoring & Serving Rotation

If the serving team wins the rally:

- The serving team scores a point.
- The player on the left-side serves next (players don't switch sides of court!).
- The serve continues alternating between the left-side server and the right-side server until the serving team loses a point.

If the receiving team wins the rally:

- Once the returning team wins a rally, they win a point and it is their turn to serve.

Serving Notes

- When it is a team's turn to serve, the side they serve from depends on their score!
- If a team's score is 0 or an even number like 2 or 12, **the team will serve from the right side of the court (diagonally to the other team's right side).**
- If a team's score is an odd number, **the player on the left side of the court will serve.**

4 - Change Ends When 1 Team Reaches 11 Points

- In Major League Pickleball, players can switch sides of the court when the teams change ends.

5 - Freeze at 20!

- When 1 team reaches 20 points, their score "freezes". This means they can only score the 21st point when serving.
- If both teams reach 20 or more points (e.g., 20-20), both teams can win a point when returning, but either team has to be serving to win a point if they are ahead. For example, if the score is 22-21, the team with 22 points must be serving to win the game.