**Sports Monster Pickleball Rules and Regulations**

SAMPLE OF GAME RULES TO LIVE BY:

**All rules Have been taken from USAPA Pickleball**

**Starting the Game**: Games are to be started no later than 10 minutes after the scheduled start time or forfeit runs shall be assessed as outlined below against the team unable to field a squad. The schedule will show home/visitor for that week. Otherwise the umpire shall flip a coin to determine who bats first. In the playoffs, the higher seeded team is ALWAYS the home team

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

**The Serve**

* + The serve must be made underhand.
  + Paddle contact with the ball must be below the server’s waist (navel level).
  + 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.
  + The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.
  + 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**

* 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).
* The first serve of each side-out is made from the right/even court.
* If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left/odd court.
* As subsequent points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until a fault is committed and the first server loses the serve.
* 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\*).
* The second server continues serving until his team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.
* Once the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right/even court and both players on that team have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.
* In singles the server serves from the right/even court when his or her score is even and from the left/odd when the score is odd.

\*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**

* + Points are scored only by the serving team.
  + Games are normally played to 11 points, win by 2.
  + Tournament games may be to 15 or 21, win by 2.
  + 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/even court when serving or receiving; when odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) that player will be in the left/odd court when serving or receiving.

**Two-Bounce Rule**

* + 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.
  + 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).
  + The two-bounce rule eliminates the serve and volley advantage and extends rallies.

**Non-Volley Zone**

* + The non-volley zone is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net.
  + Volleying is prohibited within the non-volley zone. This rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone.
  + 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.
  + It is a fault if, after volleying, a player is carried by momentum into or touches the non-volley zone, even if the volleyed ball is declared dead before this happens.
  + A player may legally be in the non-volley zone any time other than when volleying a ball.
  + The non-volley zone is commonly referred to as “the kitchen.”

**Line Calls**

* + A ball contacting any line, except the non-volley zone line on a serve, is considered “in.”
  + A serve contacting the non-volley zone line is short and a fault.

**Faults**

* A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.
* A fault by the receiving team results in a point for the serving team.
* A fault by the serving team results in the server’s loss of serve or side out.

**Determining Serving Team**

Any fair method can be used to determine which player or team has first choice of side, service, or receive. (Example: Write a 1 or 2 on  
the back of the score sheet.)

**Rosters:** Please keep in mind that each team has paid for league play. Each team determines their own roster and who will be playing and how much per person owes the captain. SMC does not dictate any team’s roster unless there is a disciplinary issue. If players have been added to your team’s roster without the team captain’s knowledge or permission, please contact your SMC office.

ALL players MUST sign the team waiver AND be posted on that team’s online roster to be considered eligible for playoff matches. Failure to sign the team waiver shall void participation in that round. Failure to be posted with the online roster shall void participation in that round until roster is amended.

Sports Monster does permit players to play for more than one team. We look at the big picture and if any team wants to sign up players from other teams to play with them so everyone has more fun, so be it. If teams pick up a player from another team during the season, then that player must sign each team’s waiver and be added to that online roster on/by Week 6. Such multiple team players will be permitted to play for those teams through the playoffs BUT must select only one team to play with if both teams play each other in any round.

Individual Teams ONLY: All outside roster additions and substitutes MUST be approved by SMC for new players to play. Please do not bring new players as they will NOT be allowed to play.

**GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP:** Please observe standards of good sportsmanship during your time with us. Most people are great but there are some sour apples out there who try to ruin everyone’s experience.

We understand that competition can generate strong emotions; however your emotions and actions must not negatively affect the enjoyment, comfort or safety of any of our other participants!

Foul language is not acceptable. Learn new words such as “sugar” or “fudge."

Taunting opponents is not acceptable. Tantrums (throwing objects and/or yelling) are not acceptable. You are not a two year old or teething, so calm it down. Opposing team may call a time out and address the umpire for consideration if it is felt that bad sportsmanship is being displayed by one or more on the opposing team.

At the discretion of the SMC ref, any displays of bad sportsmanship will result in the following penalties:

For individuals: 1 = verbal warning

2 = Player expelled from match If an individual is expelled from the match, that team shall play down a player and an out will automatically be assessed when that player would normally be at bat.

If that player is required to leave, play will only commence upon departure. Should player not leave facility that player’s team will lose all runs or the full match following point of infraction. Team penalties may also be imposed at this time.

At the discretion of the SMC ref, any displays of bad sportsmanship will result in the following penalties

For team: 1 = verbal warning

2 = final warning: an out will be assessed if the batting team is warned. Should there be base runners, the runner closest to home shall be called out. If warning is assessed to the fielding team, they will start their next at-bats with an out.

3 = Game called (match forfeiture) We are serious about penalizing the flagrant use of foul language. Aside from being offensive, you are playing in schools, church or park facilities that have young children around at all times. If your umpire does not actively pursue infractions, notify SMC.

**Taunting:** If a player blatantly taunts an opponent, a call of bad sportsmanship shall be assessed. His/her behavior will be the determining factor. Simultaneous taunting is a verbal altercation. A PLAYER(S) GUILTY OF TAUNTING MUST BE SINGLED OUT AND PENALIZED. If a previous unsportsmanlike act has been committed and if this situation is BLATANT, a called out must be assessed and the guilty player(s) must be ejected.

**Playoffs:** Unless otherwise noted in the specific league or tournament outline overview or rules, all teams will make the playoffs. Overall 1st place team is determined by regular season won/loss record. If there are tied teams, it will be broken by the higher plus point differential. If a tie still exists, overall head to head game scores will be compared.

Playoff format will be single game elimination. Playoff matches will be bracketed in a standard bracket based on a 16 team pool of teams. Most SMC leagues have less than 16 teams but the first round will still be predicated on the larger bracket - meaning for a 10 team league, the first round would have 8th vs. 9th, 7th vs. 10th before 1st and 2nd place teams would play, etc.

For any league of more than 8 teams, please be aware that you may have to play 2 or more matches in one week to finish playoffs. Smaller (4 or 5 team divisions) leagues may be completed in one week of playoffs.

Player eligibility may be challenged by opposing team captains or umpires prior to the start of a playoff match or at the end of the second inning. NO NEW PLAYERS will be allowed to play once the second inning commences. A player who has not signed that team’s waiver form (and is not the one intra-league substitute allowed for teams not fielding a full complement) is not eligible for play in that match. As long as the umpires are in agreement that the player has played at least 2 matches, that player would be eligible for the next match, should their team progress but ONLY if they have signed the team waiver when originally challenged.

Whether you agree or not, the umpire’s judgment is the final word during the game. A challenge may be filed with the SMC office following the game and a final determination/ruling will be made prior to the next weeks match.

Any foul or abusive language directed at the umpire or within earshot will result in an automatic individual or team warning. Contrary to what you may think, no, you do not pay us enough to put up with abusive crap. A second warning will quickly be applied resulting in match expulsion. Possible suspension or league expulsion penalties may result as well.

Any physical action taken by any individual against an umpire will be met with full prosecution by SMC against that individual including involvement by law enforcement. That individual will be banned from SMC league play and full team forfeiture may be imposed.

Please realize that umpires can oversee hundreds of matches each year and really do not care who wins. They do care about running a cleanly played match and that people enjoy their playing experience.

Any questions or concerns specific to your league’s umpires should be addressed to your local SMC office during regular business hours and we encourage you to communicate with us while the season is underway so we can quickly address your concerns.

**Challenges:** SMC will not consider challenges if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy or judgment on the part of a referee pertaining to called plays/kept time.

Because many rulings and sanctions are time sensitive, it is important that any challenges involving a ruling or suspension be officially recorded in writing within 48 hours of the initial on-site ruling.

Failure to file a challenge within 48 hours of the initial on-site ruling shall automatically void the possibility of a change to League sanction and will be reviewed and followed-up for informational purposes only.

Once a time sensitive sanction has already been enforced (example: one week suspension ruling and next week's game has already occurred with player sitting out), there is no recourse for overturning the original ruling except for general clarification.

SMC does offer a two level challenge format available following a match regarding strong disagreement regarding a referee’s ruling resulting in specific sanction(s) or player eligibility or failure to abide by written league rules as provided herein:

a) Contact your local SMC office’s manager for your Sport to address your challenge. In some cases, this person may be the local market manager. Any verbal challenge must be accompanied with a written challenge outlining the team/player’s position and circumstances to be formally considered. This written challenge may be sent via e-mail for expedience. However, SMC confirmation of receipt is required for e-mail challenges. Please allow 2-3 business days for information from all parties to be processed and a ruling to be determined.

b) If you are not satisfied with the challenged ruling, you may contact that office’s general manager or SMC headquarters and re-submit your challenge. You will again need to allow 2-3 business days for information from all parties to be processed and a final ruling to be determined.

As it is possible that a sanction may be reduced, it is also possible that a sanction may be increased upon review of the challenged situation. Upon issuing any challenge, it is understood that the challenging party will abide by the final league ruling.

Because many rulings and sanctions are time sensitive, it is important that any challenges involving a ruling or suspension be officially recorded in writing within 48 hours of the initial on-site ruling. Failure to do so can impact the ability of a final ruling being issued before the sanction occurs. Once a time sensitive sanction has already been enforced (example: one week suspension ruling and the next week’s match has already occurred with player sitting out), there may be no recourse for overturning the original ruling except for general clarification.

In the event a challenge has been submitted following the allowed 48 hour window, the League may still investigate and provide follow-up but no changes shall be made to the original ruling, sanction or score.

In cases where a general ruling is challenged solely for clarification, there is no deadline for submission.

During Playoffs

For all outdoor matches, challenges may not be issued after the 2nd game of the 4 games.

For all indoor matches, challenges may not be issued after the second game.

**GUIDELINES FOR INFECTION CONTROL:** If a player suffers a laceration or a wound where bleeding occurs, the referee shall suspend the game at the earliest appropriate time. Upon suspension of play, the captain shall be informed that he/she has the option to, immediately, substitute for the player or call a timeout. If a substitute replaces the player, the opposing team shall be allowed to substitute one player. The injured player may return to the game when they have the appropriate bandage.

If the player returns to the game, the referee should make certain that any lesion, wound or dermatitis is covered with a dressing that will prevent contamination to and/or from other sources. A wrist or sweat band is not considered a suitable bandage.

ONLY the injured player may be removed from the game under these circumstances. That player’s team may make a substitution as necessary to replace the injured player even if it is in the middle of a half.

**Alcohol**: It is strictly forbidden to bring alcoholic beverages onto/into any Sports Monster league site. Regardless of local guidelines, we do not allow open containers in any of our matches - specifically in the bench area and playing field. If spotted, you will be asked to remove your stash. Failure to do so will result in an automatic suspension in addition to possible police involvement. Note that this restriction includes fans in attendance also.

If a player, in the judgment of an SMC referee, is intoxicated, they will be removed from the game and receive a warning. A second offense shall result in league expulsion. We are not your mothers - unless she is a fabulous referee and then have her call us because we always need good refs - so common sense and personal responsibility are expected.

It is very common for teams to bring their own balls and to request to play with those. We are fine with that so long as it is agreed by both teams to play with a certain ball.

**Weather:** For ALL indoor and outdoor facilities, unless that facility has closed, you should consider your match to be played as scheduled. Each SMC city home page has a weather box that is updated on/by 5:00 pm local time on weeknights and at various times on weekends. Should games be canceled in advance, we will contact captains directly and send out a league-wide e-mail. There may be occasion when games are canceled while you are in transit and we apologize in advance for that inconvenience.

**T-shirts:** All SMC volleyball participants (substitutes excluded) will receive a SMC t-shirt mid season.

**Prizes:** There will be prizes for the winning team. Future registration coupons, sponsored bar tabs, championship t-shirts, or trophies.

**Have Fun:** This is your leisure time, enjoy it. You’re not playing for money, only the pride and prestige a Sports Monster championship brings and the adoration of thousands of area residents wishing they were you: a Sports Monster champion.

These rules have been updated as of 4/24/19 and shall remain in effect until such time as another update is required.

Thank you for choosing Sports Monster! We appreciate your business very much. Please let us know what we are doing well that you like and what we can do to improve for next season because as a fellow Sports Monster, this is your league and we want to see a lot more of you in the future. Please call or e-mail us with any questions, comments or suggestions. Enjoy your season with us! E-mail us at info@sportsmonster.net – be sure to include your name and league location with any feedback.