



NATIONAL PADDLEBALL ASSOCIATION
FOUR-WALL / INDOOR PADDLEBALL

OFFICIAL FOUR WALL RULES

REVISED OCTOBER 2009

(POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOW THE RULES)

RULE I THE GAME

RULE 1.1 TYPES OF GAMES

PADDLEBALL MAY BE PLAYED BY TWO PLAYERS (SINGLES), OR FOUR PLAYERS (DOUBLES)

RULE 1.2 DESCRIPTION

PADDLEBALL IS PLAYED WITH AN N.P.A. APPROVED PADDLE MADE OF WOOD OR SOME OTHER COMPOSITION MATERIAL AND AN OFFICIAL PADDLEBALL.

RULE 1.3 OBJECTIVE

THE OBJECT IS TO WIN THE RALLY BY SERVING OR RETURNING THE BALL SO THE OPPONENT IS UNABLE TO RETURN THE BALL TO THE FRONT WALL BEFORE IT TOUCHES THE FLOOR TWICE.

RULE 1.4 POINTS

POINTS ARE SCORED ONLY BY THE SERVING SIDE WHEN IT SERVES AN ACE OR WINS A RALLY.

RULE 1.5 MATCH

A GAME IS WON BY THE FIRST SIDE SCORING 21 POINTS.

A MATCH IS WON BY THE FIRST SIDE WINNING TWO GAMES.

IN THE EVENT EACH SIDE WINS A GAME, A THIRD GAME "TIE BREAKER" WILL BE WON BY THE SIDE FIRST SCORING 11 POINTS IN ROUNDS PRECEDING THE SEMI-FINALS. FOR THE SEMI-FINALS AND FINALS A TIE-BREAKER WILL BE 21 POINTS. IN ROUND ROBIN EVENTS A TIE-BREAKER WILL BE PLAYED TO 21 POINTS.

RULE II THE COURT

RULE 2.1

THE STANDARD FOUR-WALL COURT IS 40 FEET LONG, 20 FEET WIDE WITH FRONT AND SIDE WALLS 20 FEET HIGH, A BACK WALL AT LEAST 12 FEET HIGH AND A CEILING. A LINE MIDWAY BETWEEN AND PARALLEL WITH THE FRONT AND BACK WALLS DIVIDES THE COURT IN THE CENTER AND IS CALLED THE SHORT LINE. A LINE FIVE FEET IN FRONT OF THE SHORT LINE AND PARALLEL TO IT IS CALLED THE SERVICE LINE. THE AREA BETWEEN THE SERVICE LINE AND THE SHORT LINE IS CALLED THE SERVICE ZONE. A LINE 18 INCHES FROM AND PARALLEL WITH THE SIDE WALL AT EACH END OF THE SERVICE ZONE IS CALLED THE SERVICE BOX. VERTICAL LINES 3 INCHES FROM THE FLOOR, MARKED ON EACH SIDE WALL, FIVE FEET BACK OF THE SHORT LINE ARE CALLED RECEIVING LINES. ALL LINES ARE 1-1/2 INCHES WIDE AND ARE AN APPROPRIATE DISTINGUISHING COLOR.

RULE III EQUIPMENT

RULE 3.1 THE PADDLE

THE PADDLE IS MADE OF WOOD OR OF A COMPOSITION MATERIAL, AND SHALL BE NO LONGER THAN 17-1/4 INCHES LONG AND WEIGH BETWEEN 12-16 OUNCES. A SAFETY THONG IS ATTACHED TO THE HANDLE AND MUST BE WORN AROUND WRIST DURING PLAY. PADDLES WITH METAL RIMS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN TOURNAMENT PLAY.

RULE 3.2 THE BALL

THE OFFICIAL BALL IS THE PENN P-100 BALL. WHEN DROPPED FROM A HEIGHT OF 6 FEET, IT SHOULD REBOUND APPROXIMATELY 3-1/2 FEET.

RULE 3.3 THE UNIFORM

PLAYERS MAY NOT PLAY WITHOUT SHIRTS OR SHOES. LONG PANTS ARE PROHIBITED FOR TOURNAMENT PLAY.

RULE IV SERVE REGULATIONS

RULE 4.1 SERVE

THE SERVE SHALL BE DETERMINED BY A TOSS OF A COIN - THE WINNER OF THE TOSS HAS THE OPTION OF SERVING OR RECEIVING. THE SERVE THEN ALTERNATES FOR THE 2ND GAME. IF A THIRD GAME IS PLAYED, THE SERVER OF THE FIRST GAME WILL HAVE FIRST SERVE IN THE 3RD GAME. IN INFORMAL PLAY, CONTESTANTS CAN REBOUND THE BALL FROM THE FRONT WALL WITH THE PLAYER LANDING CLOSEST TO THE SHORT LINE WINNING THE SERVE.

RULE 4.2 POSITION OF SERVER

THE SERVER MAY SERVE FROM ANYWHERE IN THE SERVICE ZONE WITH NO PART OF EITHER FOOT EXTENDING BEYOND EITHER LINE OF THE SERVICE ZONE (STEPPING ON THE LINE IS ALLOWED) THE SERVER MUST START AND REMAIN IN THE SERVICE ZONE UNTIL THE SERVED BALL HAS PASSED THE SHORT LINE. VIOLATIONS ARE CALLED FOOT FAULTS (SEE RULE 4.6). DURING THE SERVE, THE SERVER'S PARTNER IS REQUIRED TO STAND WITHIN THE SERVICE BOX WITH HIS BACK AGAINST THE WALL AND BOTH FEET ON THE FLOOR UNTIL THE BALL PASSES THE SHORT LINE (WITH NO PART OF EITHER FOOT EXTENDING BEYOND THE BOX). FAILURE TO TAKE THIS POSITION DURING A SERVE IS A FOOT FAULT. IF, WHILE IN LEGAL POSITION, A PLAYER IS HIT BY A SERVED BALL ON THE FLY, IT IS A DEAD BALL GIVING THE SERVER ANOTHER SERVE. IN DOUBLES PLAY, IF THE PARTNER IS HIT BY THE SERVE WHEN OUT OF THE BOX, IT IS A SERVE-OUT. A BALL PASSING BEHIND A PLAYER LEGALLY IN THE BOX IS A DEADBALL HINDER. A DEAD BALL SERVE DOES NOT ELIMINATE A PREVIOUS FAULT ON THAT PARTICULAR SERVE.

RULE 4.3 METHOD OF SERVING

THE BALL MUST BE DROPPED TO THE FLOOR WITHIN THE SERVICE ZONE AND STRUCK WITH THE PADDLE ON THE FIRST BOUNCE, HITTING THE FRONT WALL FIRST AND REBOUNDED BACK OF THE SHORT LINE, EITHER WITH OR WITHOUT TOUCHING ONE SIDE WALL.

RULE 4.4 SERVICE IN DOUBLES

IN DOUBLES THE SIDE STARTING EACH GAME IS ALLOWED ONLY ONE SERVE-OUT. THEREAFTER, IN THAT GAME, BOTH PLAYERS ON EACH SIDE ARE PERMITTED TO SERVE UNTIL A SERVE-OUT OCCURS. THE SERVICE ORDER ESTABLISHED AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH GAME MUST BE FOLLOWED THROUGHOUT THAT GAME. SERVERS DO NOT HAVE TO ALTERNATE SERVES TO THEIR OPPONENTS. SERVING OUT OF ORDER OR THE SAME PLAYER SERVING BOTH SERVES IS A SERVE-OUT.

RULE 4.5 READINESS FOR SERVE

THE BALL SHALL NOT BE SERVED UNTIL THE OPPONENT IS READY. THE SERVER IS REQUIRED TO PUT THE BALL INTO PLAY WITHIN 10 SECONDS AFTER THE REFEREE CALLS THE SCORE: FAILURE TO DO SO RESULTS IN A SERVE-OUT.

RULE 4.6 ILLEGAL SERVES

THE SERVE IS LOST IF TWO ILLEGAL SERVES ARE MADE IN SUCCESSION. AN ILLEGAL SERVE CANNOT BE PLAYED. THE FOLLOWING ARE ILLEGAL SERVES:

- SHORT SERVE - A SERVED BALL WHICH HITS THE FLOOR BEFORE CROSSING THE SHORT LINE
- LONG SERVE - A SERVED BALL REBOUNDED FROM THE FRONT WALL TO THE BACK WALL BEFORE HITTING THE FLOOR
- CEILING SERVE - A SERVED BALL REBOUNDED FROM THE FRONT WALL AND HITTING THE CEILING BEFORE HITTING THE FLOOR
- TWO SIDE SERVE - A SERVED BALL REBOUNDED FROM THE FRONT WALL AND HITTING BOTH SIDE WALLS BEFORE HITTING THE FLOOR
- OUT OF COURT SERVE - A SERVED BALL GOING OUT OF THE COURT
- MASK (SCREEN) SERVE - A SERVED BALL WHICH AFTER HITTING THE FRONT WALL PASSES THE SERVER 17 INCHES OR CLOSER.
- FOOT FAULT (AS DESCRIBED IN RULE 4.2)

RULE V PLAYING REGULATIONS

RULE 5.1 RETURN OF SERVICE

THE RECEIVER(S) MUST REMAIN BEHIND THE RECEIVING LINES (5 FT. BEHIND THE SHORT LINE) UNTIL THE BALL CROSSES THE SHORT LINE.

A LEGALLY SERVED BALL MUST BE RETURNED ON THE FLY OR AFTER THE FIRST BOUNCE TO THE FRONT WALL EITHER DIRECTLY OR AFTER TOUCHING THE SIDE WALL(S), CEILING, OR BACK WALL. A RETURN TOUCHING THE FRONT WALL AND FLOOR SIMULTANEOUSLY IS NOT A GOOD RETURN. FAILURE TO LEGALLY RETURN THE SERVICE RESULTS IN A POINT FOR THE SERVER.

RULE 5.2 DEAD BALL HINDERS

DEAD BALL HINDERS RESULT IN THE RALLY BEING REPLAYED.

ALL PLAYERS ARE ENTITLED TO A FAIR AND UNOBSTRUCTED CHANCE AT THE BALL. IT IS NOT A HINDER WHEN A PLAYER HINDERS HIS/HER PARTNER IN DOUBLES. ANY UNINTENTIONAL INTERFERENCE WHICH PREVENTS AN OPPONENT FROM HAVING A FAIR CHANCE TO SEE OR RETURN THE BALL IS A DEADBALL HINDER.

RULE 5.3 AVOIDABLE HINDERS

AN AVOIDABLE HINDER RESULTS IN AN "OUT" OR A POINT DEPENDING UPON WHETHER THE OFFENDER WAS SERVING OR RECEIVING. PLAY MUST CONTINUE AND AN APPEAL MADE TO THE REFEREE FOR AN AVOIDABLE HINDER CALL (UNLESS CONTINUING PLAY WOULD ENDANGER A PLAYER). THE REFEREE HAS THE OPTION OF WARNING THE PLAYER ONE TIME INSTEAD OF AWARDED AN AVOIDABLE. AN AVOIDABLE HINDER IS DEFINED AS:

- ◆ FAILURE TO MOVE. DOES NOT MOVE SUFFICIENTLY TO ALLOW AN OPPONENT TO HAVE AN UNOBSTRUCTED SWING OR VIEW OF THE BALL.
- ◆ MOVING INTO THE BALL. DELIBERATE MOTION TO A POSITION THAT BLOCKS AN OPPONENTS SHOT TO THE FRONT WALL.
- ◆ BLOCKING. DELIBERATE POSITIONING TO BLOCK AN OPPONENTS STRAIGHT LINE DRIVE OR KILL TO THE FRONT WALL (A CROSS COURT PASS OR LOB SHOULD NOT BE FORCED BY THE FRONT COURT PLAYERS POSITIONING)
- ◆ PUSHING. DELIBERATELY PUSHING OR SHOIVING AN OPPONENT DURING A RALLY.

RULE 5.4 WET BALL

ON THE SERVICE AND DURING PLAY, THE BALL AND THE PADDLE MUST BE DRY.

RULE 5.5 BALL LEAVING COURT

IF THE BALL LEAVES THE COURT IT RESULTS IN EITHER A SIDE-OUT OR POINT, DEPENDING ON WHICH PLAYER/TEAM HIT THE BALL OUT OF THE COURT.

RULE 5.6 REPLAY OF POINT

PLAY SHALL STOP AND THE POINT SHALL BE REPLAYED WHEN: A) ANY FOREIGN OBJECT ENTERS THE COURT OR B) THERE IS SOME OTHER TYPE OF OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE.

RULE 5.7 BROKEN BALL OR EQUIPMENT

IF A BALL BREAKS DURING PLAY, THE RALLY IS REPLAYED. IF A PLAYER BREAKS A PADDLE, LOSES A SHOE, OR OTHER EQUIPMENT, TIME SHOULD NOT BE CALLED UNTIL AFTER THE POINT HAS BEEN DECIDED, PROVIDED THE PADDLE AND/OR EQUIPMENT DOES NOT STRIKE AN OPPONENT OR INTERFERE WITH ENSUING PLAY.

RULE 5.8 REST PERIODS BETWEEN GAMES

A TWO-MINUTE REST PERIOD IS ALLOWED BETWEEN GAMES ONE AND TWO. A TEN-MINUTE PERIOD IS ALLOWED BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THIRD GAME.

RULE 5.9 TIME OUTS

PLAY SHALL BE CONTINUOUS FROM THE FIRST SERVE OF EACH GAME UNTIL THE GAME IS CONCLUDED. THE EXCEPTION BEING THAT DURING A GAME EACH PLAYER IN SINGLES, OR EACH SIDE IN DOUBLES - EITHER DURING SERVING OR RECEIVING - MAY REQUEST A TIME-OUT NOT TO EXCEED ONE MINUTE. NO MORE THAN TWO TIME-OUTS PER GAME SHALL BE ALLOWED EACH PLAYER IN SINGLES OR EACH TEAM IN DOUBLES. DELIBERATE DELAY SHALL RESULT IN A POINT OR SIDE-OUT AGAINST THE OFFENDER.

RULE 5.10 SAFETY

THE SAFETY THONG MUST BE AROUND THE WRIST AT ALL TIMES. THE PADDLE MAY NOT BE SWITCHED FROM ONE HAND TO THE OTHER. BOTH HANDS ON THE PADDLE TOGETHER MAY BE USED IN STRIKING THE BALL.

RULE 5.11 INJURIES

IN A MATCH, PLAY MAY BE SUSPENDED FOR UP TO 15-MINUTES FOR AN INJURY. IF THE INJURED PLAYER IS UNABLE TO CONTINUE, THE MATCH IS FORFEITED. IF THE MATCH IS RESUMED AND MUST THEN BE STOPPED AGAIN FOR THE SAME PLAYER, THE MATCH IS FORFEITED.

RULE VI OFFICIATING

RULE 6.1 TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS

WHEN REQUESTED, TOURNAMENT MATCHES WILL BE CONDUCTED WITH A REFEREE.

RULE 6.2 THE REFEREE

THE REFEREE'S PRE-GAME DUTIES:

1. BRIEF ALL PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS ON THE RULES AND LOCAL PLAYING REGULATIONS.
2. CHECK THE PLAYING AREA FOR SUITABILITY FOR PLAY.
3. CHECK THE PLAYING EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORM OF PLAYERS AND APPROVE SAME.
4. CHECK AVAILABILITY OF OTHER NECESSARY EQUIPMENT SUCH AS EXTRA BALLS, TOWELS, SCORECARDS, PENCIL, ETC.
5. INTRODUCE PLAYERS, TOSS COIN FOR CHOICE OF SERVING OR RECEIVING.

RULE 6.3 REFEREE'S POSITION

WHENEVER POSSIBLE, THE REFEREE SHALL TAKE A POSITION IN CENTER AND ABOVE THE BACK WALL OF COURT.

RULE 6.4 GAME DUTIES

DURING A MATCH THE REFEREE SHALL DECIDE ON ALL QUESTIONS THAT ARISE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RULES. PLAYERS CALL THEIR OWN HINDERS WITH THE REFEREE SETTling DISPUTES. THE REFEREE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENTIRE CONDUCT OF THE MATCH INCLUDING:

1. LEGALITY OF THE SERVE AND ITS RETURN.
2. SETTling DISPUTES ON DEAD BALL HINDERS, CALLING AVOIDABLE HINDERS (WHEN ASKED FOR BY A PLAYER) AND FAULTS.
3. PREVENTING ANY UNNECESSARY DELAY DURING MATCH.
4. ANNOUNCING WHEN A POINT IS MADE OR SERVER IS OUT .
5. CALLING THE SCORE - PRIOR TO EACH SERVE THE REFEREE SHOULD CALL THE SCORE GIVING THE SERVER'S SCORE FIRST.
6. CALLING FOR A FORFEIT OF THE MATCH.

RULE 6.5 MATCH FORFEITED

MATCHES MAY BE FORFEITED WHEN:

- 1) A PLAYER REFUSES TO ABIDE BY THE REFEREE'S DECISION.
- 2) A PLAYER FAILS TO APPEAR FOR A SCHEDULED CONTEST WITHIN 15 MINUTES.
- 3) A PLAYER IS UNABLE TO CONTINUE PLAY FOR PHYSICAL REASONS.

RULE 6.6 FINAL DECISIONS

THE DECISION OF THE REFEREE IS FINAL.

RULE 6.7 FINAL SCORE

THE REFEREE SHALL APPROVE THE FINAL SCORE AFTER ANNOUNCING THE NAME OF THE WINNER OF THE MATCH AND THE SCORES OF ALL GAMES PLAYED. THE REFEREE WILL IMMEDIATELY INFORM THE TOURNAMENT DESK OF THE RESULTS OF THE MATCH

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON PADDLEBALL, TOURNAMENTS, EQUIPMENT, CLINICS AND NEWSLETTERS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE OR CONTACT:

N. P. A. / 7642 KINGSTON DR / PORTAGE MI 49002

Φ PHONE: (269) 323-0121 / (269) 779-6615

Φ FAX: (269) 279-6275

🌐 VISIT US ON THE WEB AT: WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG

N.P.A. POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT SHIRTS, SHORTS AND SOCKS BE LIGHT IN COLOR
- EYEGUARDS ARE RECOMMENDED
- THE POLICY REGARDING PLAYING IN AN AGE DIVISION: PLAYERS MUST BE THE AGE OF THE SELECTED DIVISION AT THE TIME OF PLAY. SENIORS (35+) / MASTERS (45+) / GOLDEN MASTERS (55+) AND PLATINUM MASTERS (65+). PROOF OF AGE MAY BE REQUIRED.
- POLICY REGARDING MOVING TO A HIGHER DIVISION:
THESE RULES APPLY TO NOVICE, "C" AND "B" DIVISIONS. THEY DO NOT APPLY TO AGE DIVISIONS, OPEN OR "A" DIVISIONS.

ANY PERSON OR TEAM WINNING A NATIONAL TOURNAMENT WILL MOVE TO THE NEXT HIGHEST DIVISION BEGINNING THE FOLLOWING TOURNAMENT SEASON.

ANY PERSON OR TEAM WINNING A MID-SEASON EVENT (I.E. MIDWEST SINGLES OR DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS OR WESTERN SINGLES OR DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS) WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO MOVE TO THE NEXT HIGHEST DIVISION UNLESS THEY ALSO WIN THE NATIONAL EVENT THAT TOURNAMENT SEASON. THEY WILL, HOWEVER, BE REQUIRED TO MOVE UP TO THE NEXT HIGHEST DIVISION FOR THAT SAME MID-SEASON EVENT BEGINNING THE NEXT TOURNAMENT SEASON.

A PERSON OR TEAM WHO DESIRES TO HAVE THIS RULE WAIVED MUST APPLY TO THE NPA BOARD STATING THE REASONS THEY FEEL THIS POLICY SHOULD NOT APPLY TO THEM FOR THE NEXT, OR SUBSEQUENT, TOURNAMENT SEASONS. THEY MAY PETITION BY EMAILING ANY OF THE BOARD MEMBERS AS LISTED ON THE WEBSITE OR BY MAILING A REQUEST TO THE NPA BOARD AT: 7642 KINGSTON DR / PORTAGE MI 49002. YOU MUST MAKE THIS REQUEST A MINIMUM OF TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE ENTRY DEADLINE FOR THE TOURNEY FOR WHICH YOU ARE ASKING FOR THE WAIVER.

- REFEREES ARE NOT PROVIDED AS A STANDARD AT TOURNAMENTS, BUT YOU MAY REQUEST ONE AT ANY TIME BEFORE OR DURING A MATCH. PLEASE MAKE THE REQUEST AT THE TOURNAMENT DESK. THE BOARD WILL PROVIDE REFEREES FOR ALL NATIONAL OPEN FINALS.