



## League Rules

- I. GENERAL.** The following rules apply to all leagues in the Arizona Pickleball Players League (APPL) organization unless otherwise specified. All APPL leagues will follow current USA Pickleball (USAP) rules other than those noted in the APPL Rules.
- II. PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS**
- A.** All participants in APPL pickleball are bound by the APPL rules, as well as those of the USAP. Not all possible incidents and ramifications may be covered in the following rules. Participants in unusual or undocumented situations will have to abide by the decision of the Rules Committee and/or the Board of Directors. If there is a conflict in an interpretation of any rule, APPL Rules shall supersede. The APPL Rules as provided herein shall apply to all APPL players unless such rules are revised, amended, or otherwise changed by the APPL Board of Directors and/or the Rules Committee. In such an event, the APPL Rules shall be updated on the APPL website.
  - B.** All leagues are open to men and women players in their respective gender divisions and mixed divisions. Players participating in APPL regional leagues must be 18 years of age or older.
  - C.** There are three age defined leagues in each region in each division (Men's, Women's & Mixed).
    - 1. **18+ League:** All teams are not age restricted. Players must be 18 years or older by the league start date.
    - 2. **50+ League:** Players must be 50 years or older during the calendar year of the league start.
    - 3. **65+ League:** Players must be 65 years or older during the calendar year of the league start.
  - D.** Players may play one or more of the age defined leagues within a region provided they meet the requirements for each league.
  - E.** Players may play in more than one region provided they meet the requirements for the league they are participating in. In the event that more than one of the player's teams qualifies for the same flight in the State Championships, the player must "declare" which team they are committed to at least three days prior to the State Championships.
- III. ROSTER REQUIREMENTS**
- A. MEMBERSHIP FEE.** All players must have paid the player registration fee for each team they participate in prior to participating in the league each season.
  - B. WAIVER.** All players must have agreed to the waiver release of liability prior to participation in the league each season.
  - C. PLAYER SKILL LEVEL RATINGS.** Team rosters must consist of players with skills that are consistent with the flight skill level in which their team is playing. The list below indicates the priorities of the ratings that should be used when registering:
    - 1. **National Rating:** APPL will recognize national ratings from DUPR, UTPR, WPR, and Pickleball Brackets (which includes USSP, PIG, Pickleball Canada, National Pickleball and others). Players with multiple national ratings will enter the **highest** of their national doubles ratings, mixed or gender, at the time of player registration. Note: A player's APPL performance has no effect on a player's national rating.
    - 2. **Captain's Rating:** If a player doesn't have a qualifying national rating, the player is required to discuss their rating to be entered with the captain. The player will enter the agreed upon rating as a "Captain's" rating.
    - 3. **Appealed Rating:** If a player has requested an appeal of their National Rating and it has been approved by APPL, the player shall select "Appealed" as the rating source when registering. Ratings appeals shall be submitted and ruled upon prior to player registration.

For all ratings, it is the responsibility of the team captain (and club administrator where applicable) to assure the ratings are accurate and defensible to USAP rating criteria no matter what the level.

- D. TEAM ROSTER SKILL LEVELS.** Teams may contain up to three players with a 0.5 rating point below the team's flight skill level. For example, a 4.0 team may include up to three 3.5 players.
- E. PLAYER NATIONAL RATING APPEALS.** On occasion, a player's national rating may not accurately reflect the player's current skill level. To appeal a player rating, captains shall submit a request for a rating appeal to the League Coordinator using the form (Rating Appeal Request) located on the APPL website and provide data supporting why the player's true skill level is different from the formal rating published at the time of registration. It may be required to appeal a rating to the national rating organization prior to APPL approval of a rating appeal. **Note: Ratings appeals are valid for one (1) year or until the next player registration whichever is shorter.**
- F. NATIONAL RATING CHANGES.** A player's national rating at time of player registration will be that player's rating for the entirety of the season. For example, if a player's national rating is 3.5 at time of registration that player can play on a 3.5 team or a 4.0 team as one of the ratings exceptions. If the player's national rating changes to 3.4 anytime during the season that player may remain on the teams the player originally registered to play on.
- G. TEAM MEMBERS.**
1. Players may play in more than one age-defined APPL league (18+, 50+ or 65+) and/or more than one division (Mixed or Gender Doubles), but cannot be on more than one team in the same flight within a league within the same region. (Example: a player may play on a 3.5 Men's division team in the 18+ league and play on a Men's 3.5 team in the 50+ league but not on two Men's 3.5 teams within the same league, either 18+ or 50+).
  2. A player who registers for a team may not switch teams within the same flight once the season has started unless approved by the League Coordinator.
  3. The following requirements apply to the specific Regions:
    - a) East Valley, Southern, West Valley: Team members are not required to be from any particular club. Captains may recruit players from any location. It is the captain's responsibility to ensure their roster meets the requirements of their home court venue if there are specified requirements or restrictions defined by the venue.
    - b) Casa Grande: Team members must be first from the community participating. If there are not enough players to fill the community's roster at a specific flight skill level, other players outside of the community may be recruited to complete the team roster with approval from the League Coordinator. However, if the recruiting Community Administrator is recruiting players from other Casa Grande Regional communities, then the recruiting Community Administrator shall let the other Community Administrator(s) and League Coordinator know of the recruiting outside their community so that the ramifications of the recruiting can be understood by all parties.
- H. TEAM NAMES.** Captains will submit an initial team name to the league during team registration. First come first served in case two submittals are identical in the same flight. Team names can be changed after registration provided no other team in the same flight is using the same name.
- I. ROSTER SIZE.** There is no limit to roster size. Captains should be aware that in order for players to participate in the next level of competition (playoffs, state championships) players must meet the player playoff qualification criteria.
- J. PLAYER PLAYOFF QUALIFICATION CRITERIA.** In order to participate in a sub-flight playoff players must have played in at least one complete APPL regular season match. In order to participate in a State Championship players must have played in at least two regular season matches or one regular season match and a sub-flight playoff.
- K. ROSTER ADDITIONS.** Captains may add players to their roster through the player registration process until the cutoff date published on the league calendar on the regional website.

#### **IV. TEAM REGISTRATION**

- A. DEADLINES.** All teams must have registered online by the published registration deadline.
- B. CAPTAINS.** All teams must have a designated captain and co-captain. Captains shall monitor their rosters as players begin to register for correctness and adherence to league rules.

## V. COURTS, BALLS AND PADDLES

- A. **COURTS AND FACILITIES.** Each team is required to guarantee the use of three hard outdoor courts. Indoor venues are acceptable provided they use typical hard outdoor court surfaces. Pickleball courts for match play must be at an APPL approved facility. For facility approval contact your League Coordinator. Courts must be available simultaneously for a minimum of two hours (2.5 hours preferred).
- B. **BALLS.** Balls used for all APPL league matches must be USAP approved outdoor balls, either new or in good condition, with an enhanced color for visibility similar to “optic yellow” or “neon”. Pink is not allowed. The team listed as the home team supplies the balls. It is recommended that at least six balls be available at each match. The same make, model and color ball must be used for all games in the match.
- C. **PADDLES.** Paddles must be USAP approved for tournament play.

## VI. SCHEDULE AND LOCATIONS

- A. **SCHEDULING REQUIREMENTS.** All league captains must submit their home team match location, days and times when they register online prior to the deadline published. (See Team Registration Section IV)
- B. **MATCH TIMES.** Match times posted on the schedule are the times the match is required to begin. Captains are expected to contact their opposing captains in advance of the match and inform them if there are courts available prior to the match start time for warm-up.
- C. **MATCH LOCATIONS.** Match locations will be published in the schedule. Teams will typically play a minimum of two matches against each team in its flight (one as home team, one as away team). This may change depending on the size of the flight.
- D. **SCHEDULE CHANGES.**
  - 1. **East Valley, West Valley and Southern Regions:** Any changes to the published schedule must be approved by the League Coordinator. Schedule changes that involve public courts must be requested a minimum of five days in advance of the original scheduled date. Note: See the APPL Rescheduling Policy for the complete requirements for all schedule changes.
  - 2. **Casa Grande Region:** In the Casa Grande Region, rescheduling of matches is only done by the Regional Director due to inclement weather. This is required because all matches are pre-scheduled at days and times approved by the city with very few opportunities for makeups.
- E. **SHORT LINE-UPS.** If a captain (from Team “A”) cannot field three doubles teams from their roster, and rescheduling the match is not feasible, then that captain shall bring two doubles teams to play (line 1 and line 2 on the scoresheet) and default all of its line 3 doubles team games. **The opposing team (Team “B”) shall still bring all six of its players** as each of its team pairs will play against the opponent’s line 1 team and line 2 team. The scoresheet will reflect a score of 11 - 0 for each defaulted game in each round and Team “B” will be awarded two team points for each defaulted game (i.e., four points per round). Scoring of the games played will be the same as found in the “Match Process” section VII.D. If a captain can only field one doubles team pair, the match will be defaulted earning the winning team 36 points and one win in the standings.

## VII. MATCH PLAY

- A. All team matches will be three (3) rounds of three (3) lines, two (2) games each.  
Round Robin (as follows)
  - a) Round 1:
    - (1) Home team line 1 plays Visiting line 1.
    - (2) Home team line 2 plays Visiting line 2.
    - (3) Home team line 3 plays Visiting line 3
  - b) Round 2:
    - (1) Home team line 1 plays Visiting line 2
    - (2) Home team line 2 plays Visiting line 3
    - (3) Home team line 3 plays Visiting line 1
  - c) Round 3:
    - (1) Home team line 1 plays Visiting line 3

(2) Home team line 2 plays Visiting line 1

(3) Home team line 3 plays Visiting line 2

Home teams stay on courts each round. Visiting teams switch courts after each round.

- B. MATCH DAY TEAMS.** On match day the captain will bring six players to play on three doubles teams. Line-ups identifying the doubles teams and substitute(s) on the scoresheet will be exchanged prior to the start of the match after which they may not be changed. The three doubles team partners will stay together for that day's match unless substitutions are made (see substitution rules). Captains or their designees are required to be on-site at each match.
- C. LATE PLAYER.** Unless otherwise specified the schedules state the time matches are to start. It is always a good idea to verify the start time with your opposing team captain a few days prior to the match. The following rules apply to late players.

Matches shall start no later than five (5) minutes after the posted match start time. If a player has not arrived ten (10) minutes after the posted start time the team will default the game the player would have normally played. If the team has a substitute player in attendance to be used in case of injury or physical ailment to a player in the lineup, that player may be used as a substitute until the late player arrives and the game will be played in its entirety and will count. If the late player has arrived during the game the late player will wait until the end of the game and then replace the substitute player. It is the captain's prerogative to switch the late player to the role of substitute for injury or physical ailment purposes in which case the player that replaced the late player will continue as the lineup player.

Unless a substitute fills in as defined above, all games will be defaulted and scored 11-0 against the team with the late player until the late player arrives. The five minute rule applies to the start of each round. Once the next round has started the late player has five minutes to arrive or the first game will be defaulted. If the late player arrives during the second game, in any round, more than five minutes after the other pairs have begun play, that game will also be defaulted 11-0.

- D. MATCH PROCESS.** To begin a match, the visiting teams choose serve, receive or side. Each doubles team will play two games to 11 (win by 2). Teams shall switch sides after the first game. At the end of the second games (first round), and the fourth games (second round), the visiting doubles teams switch courts to play the next home doubles team noted on the line-up/scoresheet. Therefore, on team match day, each doubles team will play six games (three rounds): two games against the opposing line 1 doubles team, two games against the line 2 team, and two games against the line 3 team. Two team points are awarded for each game won by a doubles team. If the losing team scores 6 or more points in a game they are awarded 1 team point. No team points are awarded for a score of 5 points or less. Whichever team earns the most team points in all the games played in a match, will be the winner of the match and will be awarded a win in their league skill group team standings.
- E. BREAKS.** A break of one minute is allowed between games. After each round of two games, a break of up to five minutes is allowed commencing at the time the last two opposing doubles teams in the round complete their second game.
- F. TIME OUTS.** One time out is allowed per game per team. Bathroom breaks should be taken between rounds.
- G. COACHING.** Per IFP rules coaching by anyone is only allowed after completion of each game, between rounds and during time outs.
- H. SUBSTITUTIONS DURING MATCH DAY.** Each team is allowed one substitute once play has begun but only if the substitute had been identified on the line-up sheet prior to the start of the match and only in the event of: a) an injury that occurs during the match and prevents a player from continuing to play; or b) a physical ailment that develops during the match which prevents a player from continuing to play. Any such substitution is permanent for the remainder of the match. Players removed due to injury or physical ailment may not return to the match. Substitutions may only be made with players on the current team roster. There is no warm-up time allowed for the substitute unless a time out is used. The scoresheet shall reflect the player who finished the game and match. Captains should not include in the line-up players who are injured or sick prior to the start of a match. For Mixed Doubles one substitute for each gender is allowed.

- I. **WARM UP COURTS.** APPL does not require facilities to provide warm-up courts before a match is scheduled to begin. Visiting team captains should check with the home team captain in advance of the match to determine if warm-up time is available. In any event, teams are allowed a five minute warm up after the posted match start time, to be monitored jointly by the team captains.
- J. **USAP NON-REFEREED MATCH RULES.** USAP non refereed match rules apply to all APPL matches. This includes that players shall not call a ball “out” unless they can clearly see a space between the line and the ball as it hits the ground.
- K. **MATCH PLAY OVER THE ALLOTTED RESERVATION BLOCK.** If a match or game exceeds the allotted reservation block, the players must relinquish the court if other people are waiting to play. The game(s) in process can be completed on an open court abiding by the rules of the venue; i.e., paddle rotation system, etc. The games can not be rescheduled to another day.
  - 1. If no other court options are available, games in process will terminate. The team with the highest score will be the winner and will get two team points. If the losing team has scored at least half or more game points as the winning team they will be awarded one team point.
  - 2. If the game is tied, a sudden death point shall be played. The winning team will get two team points and the losing team one team point.
  - 3. If there are unplayed games, they will be scored 0 - 0.

#### VIII. OTHER CAPTAIN AND PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **SCORE REPORTING:** The home team captain must report the score within 48 hours. After the score is posted, the visiting team captain will have 48 hours to contest the score. The score will become official if not contested after the 48 hour time period.
- B. **RECORDS:** All captains are to keep records of all match results until the end of the season in case of discrepancies or disputes.
- C. **CONDUCT:** Captains and players are to monitor behavior to assure conduct is in accordance with the APPL Code of Conduct.
- D. **RULES:** Captains and players are to read and understand the APPL rules and IFP pickleball rules.
- E. **DISPUTES:** Players involved in a dispute during a match that can't be resolved on the court can declare that the match is being played under protest and must continue the match to its conclusion.
- F. **GRIEVANCES:** A player or captain may file a formal grievance for a Rules/Sportsmanship/Code of Conduct issue with the League Coordinator using the form and process posted in the regional website.

#### IX. REGULAR SEASON FLIGHT STANDINGS

- A. **STANDINGS PUBLISHING:** Throughout the season the standings of each division skill group will be posted and updated on the APPL Regional website. Placement in the standings is based on Standings Pts and is determined and published as follows: Teams get 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie and 0 points for a loss.
- B. **TIES:** In case of a tie in Standings Pts, the team with the highest Total Team Pts is placed higher in the standings. In case of a tie in Total Team Pts the team with the lowest Total Opponent Pts is placed higher in the standings.
- C. **FINAL STANDINGS:** Section A and B above illustrates how the standings will be published throughout the season. At the end of the season, if there is a two-way tie in the Standings Points, head-to-head results will determine the winner of the flight. If there is a tie in head-to-head results the first tiebreak criteria between the two teams will be total team points scored during their matches against each other. If both teams scored an equal amount of team points against each other, then, total team points scored during the regular season will be used followed by lowest total opponent points if necessary. If there are more than two teams tied in Standings Points the teams with the lower total points will be eliminated until there are two teams remaining. At that point the two-way tie process will take effect.

#### X. CHAMPIONSHIPS FLIGHT STANDINGS AND MATCH TIES TIEBREAK CRITERIA

- A. **INDIVIDUAL MATCHES:** If both teams have an equal number of team points at the end of a regional playoff or state championship match, the team with the most games won will be

declared the winner. If both teams have an equal number of games won the team with the most game points earned will be declared the winner. If both teams have an equal number of game points earned, then the team with the fewest game points allowed will be the winner.

- B. STATE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND ROBIN FLIGHTS:** If two teams have the same win/loss record, the head-to-head winner of their match will be declared the champion. If more than two teams have the same win-loss record, the team(s) with the fewest total team points will be eliminated until there are two teams remaining. If more than two teams have the same win/loss record, and there is a tie in total team points, the team(s) with the fewest games won will be eliminated (or fewest game points if games won is tied) until there are two teams remaining. Then the head-to-head winner of their match will be declared the champion.

## **XI. INCLEMENT WEATHER**

- A. RESCHEDULING.** Rescheduling of matches due to inclement weather is warranted in cases of rain and/or sustained winds of at least 20 mph. The Captain or Captains seeking to reschedule the match due to inclement weather shall take a screenshot of the weather forecast for the locale where the match is scheduled to be played and email the screenshot to the League Coordinator then follow the Rescheduling Policy instructions to identify a new match date. In the Casa Grande Region, the Regional Director will work with the captains to reschedule according to available dates.
- B. MATCH CANCELED PRIOR TO START.** In the event a match cannot be played due to inclement weather the match can be rescheduled to play any time prior to the end of the season. Captains shall follow the procedures for rescheduling the match and notifying the League Coordinator outlined in the APPL Rescheduling Policy. Matches that are rained out during the last week of the season will not be rescheduled. If this happens the team's winning percentage will be used to determine the final standings. In the Casa Grande Region, the Regional Director will work with the captains to reschedule according to available dates.
- C. MATCH CANCELED AFTER START.** If a match is forced to be discontinued due to inclement weather before the first round is completed it will be rescheduled and replayed in its entirety. If the first round has been completed and it is discontinued before the second is completed it will be rescheduled and replayed at the start of the second round. If both the first and second rounds have been completed and the match is discontinued before the third round is completed it will be rescheduled and replayed at the start of the third round. However, it is not required that the players all convene to play at the same time and location if only the third round is needed to be completed. Captains/players may arrange their own independent foursome and report the third round 2 game scores to their captains.
- D. LINE-UPS AFTER MATCH CANCELLATION.** If the match is to be replayed in its entirety the captain is not required to field the same team lineup. If at least one round has been completed, the captain may bring one different player in the new lineup as the permanent player to replace a player that is unavailable to play in the rescheduled match and one different player to serve as the substitute for injury or physical ailment of a player during the rescheduled match. Substitution rules for injury or physical ailment still apply.

Rev: 1/5/24

### **Revision History:**

9/29/21: Section VI-D: Removed old reference to substitution pool.

7/31/22: Considerable rewrite in several areas

7/31/22a: Minor edits for clarity

10/28/22: Section III-D: added examples for clarity

Section III-F: added clarity to grandfathered ratings

Section V-B: added additional requirements for ball color

7/26/23: Considerable rewrite in several areas

11/13/23: Minor edits for clarity

1/5/24: Section VII-K: added to define rules for matches exceeding time allotted for the courts