

USAPA.org Pickleball Rules Summary

Note: This is an abbreviated form of the rules to give a quick overview of how the game is played. See the official rules at usapa.org/officialrules for more information. If there is a conflict between this summary and the official rules, the official rules prevail.

The serve must be hit underhand and each team must play their first shot off the bounce. After the ball has bounced once on each side, then both teams can either volley the ball in the air or play it off the bounce. This is called the "double bounce rule" because the ball must hit twice (once on each side) before it can be volleyed. This eliminates the serve and volley advantage and prolongs the rallies. To volley a ball means to hit it in the air without first letting it bounce.

The non-volley zone is the 7-foot zone on both sides of the net. No volleying is permitted within the non-volley zone. This rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone. When volleying the ball, the player may not step on or over the line. It is a fault if the player's momentum causes the player or anything the player is wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone. It is a fault even if the ball is declared dead before the player touches the zone. A player may be in the non-volley zone at any other time. The non-volley zone is sometimes referred to as the kitchen.

Both players on the serving team are allowed to serve, and a team shall score points only when serving. A game is played to eleven points and a team must win by two points. Rallies are lost by failing to return the ball in bounds to the opponent's court before the second bounce, stepping into the non-volley zone and volleying the ball, or by violating the double-bounce rule. The hand is considered an extension of the paddle. The player loses the rally if the ball hits any other part of his body or clothing.

The server must keep both feet behind the baseline during the serve with at least one foot on the court surface at the time the ball is struck.. The serve is made underhand. The paddle must contact the ball below the waist. The serve is made diagonally cross court and must clear the non-volley zone. The non-volley line is a short line for the serve (the serve is a fault if it hits the line). All other lines are good at all times. 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. At the start of each new game, only one player on the first serving team is permitted to serve and fault before giving up the ball to the opponents. Thereafter both members of each team will serve and fault before the ball is turned over to the opposing team. When the receiving team wins the serve, the player in the right hand court will always serve first.

When the serving team wins a point, the server moves to the other side of the serving team's court. Note that if the serve rotation is done properly, the serving team's score will always be even when the player that started the game on the right side is on the right side and odd when that player is on the left side.

Singles Play: The server serves from the right side when his score is even and from the left side when his score is odd.

Rule exception: Games are usually won by two points. In some situations, event directors may choose to win by one to speed up play.

Revised: November 1, 2007

Section 2 – Court and Equipment

Revised 2006 and 4/1/09 and 8/9/09

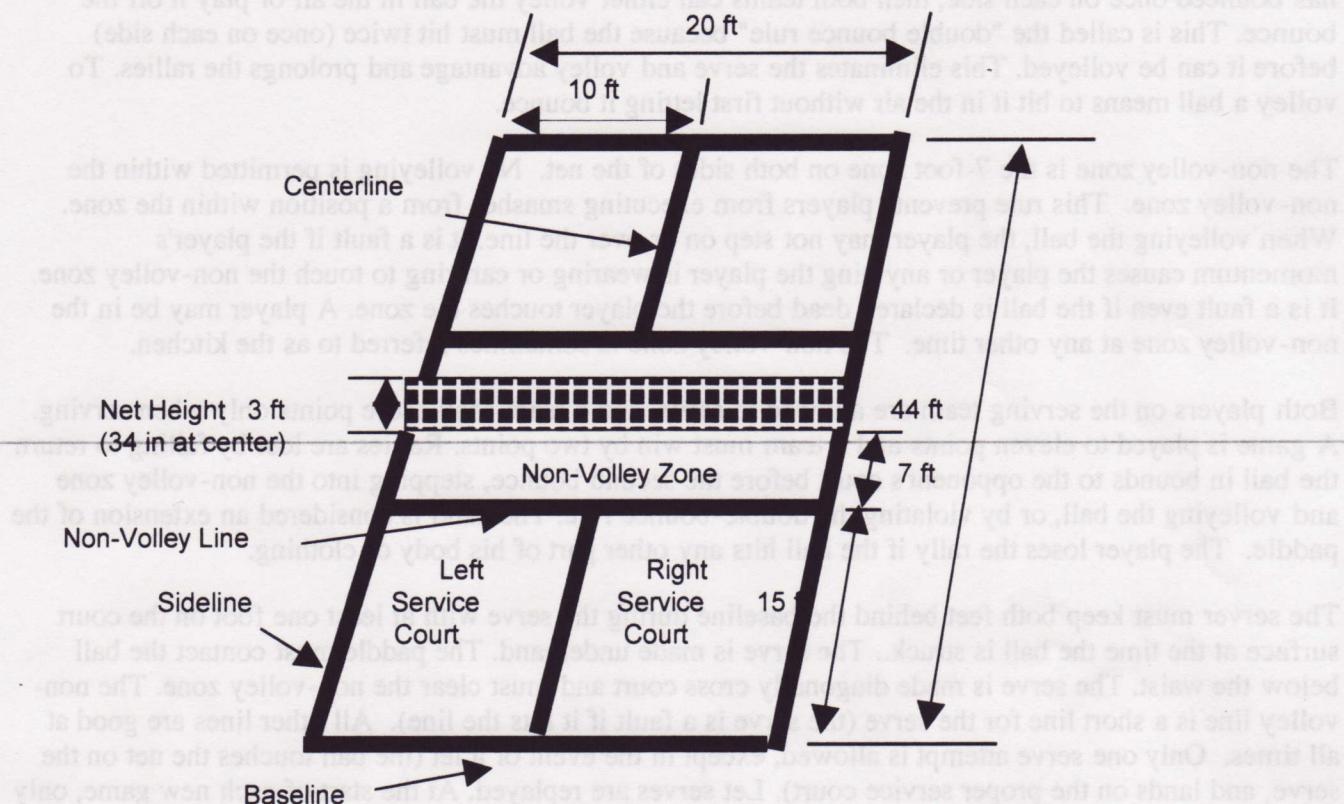


Figure 2-1 The Court

2.A. Court Specifications. The dimensions and measurements for the standard pickleball court are:

- 2.A.1. The court shall be a rectangle 20 feet (6.10 m) wide and 44 feet (13.41 m) long for both singles and doubles matches. See Figure 2-1.
- 2.A.2. A total playing area 30 feet (9.14 m) wide and 60 feet (18.28 m) long is the minimum size that is recommended. A total size of 34 feet (10.36 m) by 64 feet (19.5 m) is preferred.
- 2.A.3. Court measurements shall be made to the outside of the lines. The lines should be 2 inches (5.1 cm) wide and the same color, clearly contrasting with the color of the court surface.

2.B. Lines and Areas. The lines and areas of the standard pickleball court are:

- 2.B.1. **Baselines.** The baselines are the lines parallel to the net at each end of the court.

Section 3 – Definitions

Revised 11/01/07 and 4/1/09

- 3.A. Carry – Hitting the ball in such a way that it does not bounce away from the paddle but tends to be carried along on the face of the paddle during its forward motion.
- 3.B. Cross-court – The court diagonally opposite your court.
- 3.C. Dead Ball – A dead ball is declared after a fault. See fault.
- 3.D. Dink Shot – A soft shot that is intended to arc over the net and land within the non-volley zone.
- 3.E. Double Bounce – A ball that bounces more than once, on one side, before it is returned.
- 3.F. Double Hit – One side hitting the ball twice before it is returned over net. Double hits may occur by one player or could involve both players on a team.
- 3.G. Drop Shot – A groundstroke shot that falls short of the opponent's position.
- 3.H. Drop Shot Volley – A volley shot that is designed to “kill” the speed of the ball and return it short, near the net, to an opponent positioned at or near the baseline. This shot is especially effective when initiated close to the non-volley line.
- 3.I. Fault – A fault is any action that stops play or creates a rules violation.
- 3.J. Groundstroke – Hitting the ball after one bounce.
- 3.K. Half Volley – A groundstroke shot where the paddle contacts the ball immediately after it bounces from the court and before the ball rises to its potential height.
- 3.L. Hinder – Any element or occurrence that affects play. Examples: a stray ball that enters the court or people who disrupt play by walking across the court.
- 3.M. Let – A serve that hits the net cord and lands in the service court. Let may also refer to a rally that must be replayed for any reason.
- 3.N. Lob – A shot that returns the ball as high and deep as possible, forcing the opposing side back to the baseline.
- 3.O. Non-Volley Zone – The section of court adjacent to the net in which you cannot volley the ball. It includes all lines surrounding the zone.

- 3.P. One Hand Out – A term used to describe the condition when a serving team loses the first of its two allocated serves.
- 3.Q. Overhead Slam/Smash – A hard, overhand shot usually resulting from an opponent's lob, high return, or high bounce.
- 3.R. Passing Shot – A volley or groundstroke shot that is aimed at a distance from the player and is designed to prevent return of the ball (e.g., a line drive close to sideline).
- 3.S. Permanent Object – Any object near the court or hanging over the court that interferes with the flight of the ball.
- 3.T. Rally – Continuous play that occurs after the serve and before a fault.
- 3.U. Replays – Any rallies that are replayed for any reason without the awarding of a point or a side out.
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- 3.V. Service Court – The areas on either side of the centerline, bounded by the non-volley line and the baseline.
- 3.W. Side Out – Declared after one side loses its service and other side is awarded service.
- 3.X. Technical Foul – The referee is empowered to add one point to a player's score or a team's score when the opponent violates one of the rules calling for a technical foul or, in the referee's judgment, the opponent is being overly and deliberately abusive.
- 3.Y. Volley – Hitting the ball in the air, during a rally, before the ball has a chance to bounce onto the court.

Section 4 – Service Rules

Revised 8/9/09

- 4.A. **Serve Motion.** The serve must be made with an underhand stroke so that contact with the ball is made below waist level.

- 4.A.1. **Underhand Defined.** The arm must be moving in an upward arc and the paddle head shall be below the wrist when it strikes the ball.

- 4.B. **Server Position.** At the beginning of the serve, both feet must be behind the baseline. At the time the ball is struck, at least one foot must be on the court surface or ground behind the baseline and the server's feet may not touch the court surface in an area outside the confines of the serving area. The serving area is defined as the area behind the baseline and on or between the imaginary lines extended from the court centerline and each sideline.

- 4.C. **The Serve.** The ball must be struck before it hits the court surface. The ball must land in the opponent's crosscourt (diagonally opposite court) service court.

- 4.C.1. **Placement.** The serve must clear the net and the non-volley line and land in the opponent's service court. The serve may land on any service court line except the non-volley line.

- 4.C.2. **Interference.** If the serve clears the net and the receiver or the receiver's partner interferes with the flight of the ball on the serve, it is a point for the serving team.

- 4.D. **Service Foot Fault.** During the serve, when the ball is struck, the server's feet shall not:

- 4.D.1. Touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the sideline.

- 4.D.2. Touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the centerline.

- 4.D.3. Touch the court, including the baseline.

- 4.E. **Service Faults.** During the service, it is a fault if:

- 4.E.1. The server misses the ball when trying to hit it. If the ball lands on the ground without the server swinging at the ball, it is not a fault.

- 4.E.2. The served ball touches any permanent object before it hits the ground. Permanent objects include the ceiling, walls, fencing, lighting fixtures, net posts, the stands and seats for spectators, the referee, line judges, spectators (when in their recognized positions) and all other objects around and above the court.

4.E.3. The served ball touches the server or server's partner, or anything the server or server's partner is wearing or holding.

4.E.4. The served ball lands on the non-volley line.

4.E.5. The served ball hits the net and lands on the non-volley line or inside the non-volley zone.

4.E.6. The served ball lands outside the service court.

4.E.7. The served ball hits the net and lands outside the service court.

4.F. Service Lets. The serve is a let and will be replayed if:

4.F.1. The serve touches the net, strap, or band, and is otherwise good and lands in the service court.

4.F.2. The ball is served when the receiver is not ready.

4.F.3. The served ball hits the net and strikes the receiver or the receiver's partner.

4.F.4. The referee or any player calls a time out because an object (a ball, another court's player, a spectator, etc.) causes a distraction by coming within the playing area.

4.F.5. The referee or a player may call a let. If the serve is appealed to the referee and the referee clearly saw that the serve did not touch the net, then a point is awarded to the serving team.

USAPA Comment. There is no limit to the number of lets a server may serve.

4.G. The Receiver. The receiver is the player diagonally opposite from the server. In doubles, this position corresponds to the player's score and starting position. There is no restriction on the receiver's position.

4.H. Double Bounce Rule. The serve and the service return must be allowed to bounce before striking the ball. That is, each side must play a groundstroke on the first shot following the serve. After the initial groundstrokes have been made, play may include volleys.

- 4.I. **Readiness.** Serves shall not be made until the receiver is ready and the score has been called. The score shall be called after both the server and the receiver have returned to their respective positions.
- 4.I.1. **Not Ready Signals.** The receiver must use one of the following to signal that he or she is not ready to receive the serve: 1) raising the paddle above his or her head, 2) raising the non-paddle hand above his or her head, or 3) completely turning his or her back to the server.
- 4.I.2. **Doubles.** When calling the score in doubles, the referee does not have to wait for the receiver's partner or the server's partner to be ready. It is the receiver's responsibility to signal not ready for his or her partner.
- 4.I.3. **In Motion.** Once the server starts the serving motion, the receiver cannot become not ready or call a time-out.
- 4.I.4. **Wrong Score Called.** If the referee calls the wrong score, any player may stop play at any time before the return of serve to ask for a correction. A player that interrupts play after the return of serve will have committed a fault and shall lose the rally. A player that interrupts play after the serve when there was not an error in the score will have committed a fault and shall lose the rally.
- 4.J. **The 10-Second Rule.** The “10-second rule” applies to both server and receiver, each of whom is allowed up to 10 seconds after the score is called to serve or be ready to receive. It is the server's responsibility to look and be certain that the receiver is ready to receive serve.
- 4.J.1. After one technical warning has been issued by the referee, further delays on the part of the server or the receiver exceeding 10 seconds shall result in a technical foul and a point awarded against the offender.
- 4.J.2. If the server serves the ball while the receiver is signaling “not ready,” the ball will be re-served with no penalty and the server shall be “warned” by the referee to check the receiver. If the server continues to serve without checking the receiver, the referee may call a technical foul and award a point to the receiver's score.
- 4.J.3. After the score is called, if the server looks at the receiver and the receiver is not signaling “not ready,” the server may then serve. If the receiver attempts to signal “not ready” after the serve is made, then the serve stands, whether or not the ball is returned.
- USAPA Comment.** A receiver who attempts to return the service shall be considered to have been ready. If the receiver has signaled not ready, the service must be replayed.

Section 5 – Service Sequence Rules

Revised 5/1/07 and 11/25/09

5.A. Singles.

- 5.A.1. At the start of each game, the server begins the serve on the right side and alternates from right to left to right, etc., as long as the server holds serve.
- 5.A.2. The server must serve to the crosscourt (court diagonally opposite) service court.
- 5.A.3. The server's score will always be even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10...) when serving from the right side and odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9...) when serving from the left side (only in singles play).

5.B. Doubles.

- 5.B.1. The service always starts in the right-hand court and alternates from right to left to right, etc., as long as server holds serve.
- 5.B.2. The server must serve to the crosscourt (court diagonally opposite) service court. There is no restriction on the position of the server's partner.
- 5.B.3. The team's points will be even when the game's starting server is on the right-hand side. Points will be odd when the game's starting server is on the left-hand side.
- 5.B.4. The team serving the initial serve of a game can commit only one fault before service is passed on to the opposing team. After that, each team member serves until that player loses the serve when the team commits a fault. After both players have lost their serves, the serve passes to the opposing team.
- 5.B.5. The server will alternate between right and left service courts upon scoring a point. After the first server's team faults, the second server will continue to serve from that server's last side position and then alternate positions as long as the serving team continues to win points.
- 5.B.6. If the ball is served by the wrong team member or from the wrong court, the service is a fault. If the fault was by the first server, then the first service is lost and the correct second server serves from the correct service position. If the fault was by the second server, then it is a side out. A point made from an incorrect service position or an incorrect server will not be retained unless play has continued and another point has been scored or the opposing team has served.

- 5.B.7. The receiver is the person on the diagonally opposite side of the court from the server. In doubles, this position corresponds to the player's score and starting position.
- 5.B.8. The receiver is the only player who may return the ball. If the wrong player returns the ball, it is a point for the serving team.
- 5.B.9. The receiver's partner may stand anywhere on or off the court.
- 5.B.10. The receiving team does not alternate positions when a point is scored by the serving team. The receiving team may switch positions after the return of serve, but after the rally is over, the players must return back to their original positions, which correspond to the team's score and the players' starting positions.

USAPA Comments.

When an incorrect serve is recognized immediately after the rally, the point does not count.

When an incorrect serve is not recognized until the server has lost the serve, the most recent point scored by that server on an illegal serve, if any, does not count.

When an incorrect serve is not recognized until the server has lost the serve and the partner has scored a point on the serve, the point of the first server counts. If the point scored by the partner is also the result of an illegal serve, that point does not count.

When an incorrect serve is not recognized until after the opposing team has served, points scored on the previous serves count.

5.C. Service/Side Selection and Rotation.

- 5.C.1. A coin flip or any other fair method will determine first choice of service or side. If the winner chooses to serve or receive, the loser picks starting side. If the winner chooses starting side, the loser chooses to serve or receive.
- 5.C.2. Sides and initial service will be switched upon completion of each game.
- 5.C.3. Sides will be switched in a third game (if the match is 2 out of 3 games) after the first team reaches a score of 6 points. Serve remains with the player holding serve.
- 5.C.4. In games to 15, sides will be switched after the first team reaches a score of 8 points. Serve remains with the player holding serve.
- 5.C.5. In games to 21, sides will be switched after the first team reaches a score of 11 points. Serve remains with the player holding serve.

Section 7 – Fault Rules

Revised 11/01/07

A fault is any action that stops play or creates a violation of the rules. A fault will be declared for the following:

- 7.A. Hitting the ball into the net on the service or any return.
- 7.B. Hitting the ball out of bounds.
- 7.C. Failure to hit the ball before it bounces twice on the player's court.
- 7.D. Violation of a service rule (See Section 4).

- 7.E. A player, player's clothing, or any part of a player's paddle touches the net or the net post when the ball is in play.
- 7.F. The ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying. There is one exception to this rule: if the ball strikes the player's paddle hand below the wrist, the ball is still in play. If the ball strikes a player standing out of bounds before a fault has occurred, that player loses the rally. In doubles, if the serve strikes the receiver's partner, it is a point for the serving team, providing it is not a let serve or a fault serve. This rule also includes balls that appear to be hit out of bounds: during play, if you catch the ball or try to stop it from heading out of bounds, you lose the rally.

USAPA Comment. If the player is in the process of changing hands with both hands on the paddle, or is attempting a two-handed stroke and either hand is hit below the wrist, then the ball is considered in play.

- 7.G. A ball in play strikes any permanent object before bouncing on the court.

USAPA Comment. If the ball in play hits a permanent object after it has bounced on the court, the player who hit the ball wins the point. If the ball in play hits a permanent object before it bounces on the court, the player who hit the ball loses the point.

- 7.H. Violation of non-volley zone rules (See Section 9).

- 7.I. Violation of the other rules (See Section 12).

- 7.J. The serve is made by bouncing the ball off the court surface before hitting it.

- 7.K. A player hits the ball before it passes the plane of the net.

Section 8 – Dead Ball Rules

Revised 11/01/07

- 8.A. A dead ball is declared after any action that stops play.
- 8.B. A ball is not declared dead until it has bounced twice or has violated one of the fault rules (See Section 7).
- 8.C. A hinder called by the referee or player will result in a dead ball and a replay.

Section 9 – Non-Volley Zone Rules

Revised 11/01/07

- 9.A. The non-volley zone is the area of the court bounded by the two sidelines, the non-volley line, and the net. The non-volley line and the sidelines are included in the non-volley zone.
- 9.B. A fault will be declared if, in the act of volleying the ball, a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying touches the non-volley zone or touches any non-volley line. For example, a fault will be declared if, in the act of volleying the ball, one of the player's feet touches a non-volley line.
- 9.C. A fault will be declared if, in the act of volleying the ball, the player's momentum causes the player or anything the player is wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone or touch any non-volley line. It is a fault if the player's momentum causes the player to touch anything that is touching the non-volley zone including the player's partner. It is a fault even if the ball is declared dead before the player touches the non-volley zone.
- 9.D. A fault will be declared if the player violates the intent of the non-volley zone rule. All volleys must be initiated outside of the non-volley zone. A maneuver such as standing within the non-volley zone, jumping up to hit a volley, and then landing outside the non-volley zone is prohibited. If a player is inside the non-volley zone for any reason, that player cannot volley the return until both feet are on the court surface outside the non-volley zone.
- 9.E. A player may step on the non-volley line or enter the non-volley zone at any time except when that player is volleying the ball. There is no violation if your partner returns the ball while you are standing in the non-volley zone. A player may enter the non-volley zone before or after returning any ball that bounces.
- 9.F. A player may stay inside the non-volley zone to return balls that bounce. That is, there is no violation if a player does not exit the non-volley zone after hitting a ball that bounces.

Section 10 – Scoring - Game - Match Rules

Revised 11/01/07 and 12/10/08

- 10.A. Scoring: Only the serving team can score points.
- 10.B. Points are scored by legally serving a ball that is not touched by the opponent (an ace) or by winning the rally (faulting by the opponent).
- 10.C. Game: The first side scoring 11 points and leading by at least a 2-point margin wins. If both sides are tied at 10 points, then play continues until one side wins by 2 points.
- 10.D. Standard tournament format: Best 2 of 3 games to 11 points.
- 10.E. Alternate tournament format: A tournament director may choose to have some or all matches consist of one game to 15 points or one game to 21 points with a win by 2 points. A winning margin of one point would be appropriate for round robin events where the winners are determined by the total number of points rather than the most number of matches won.

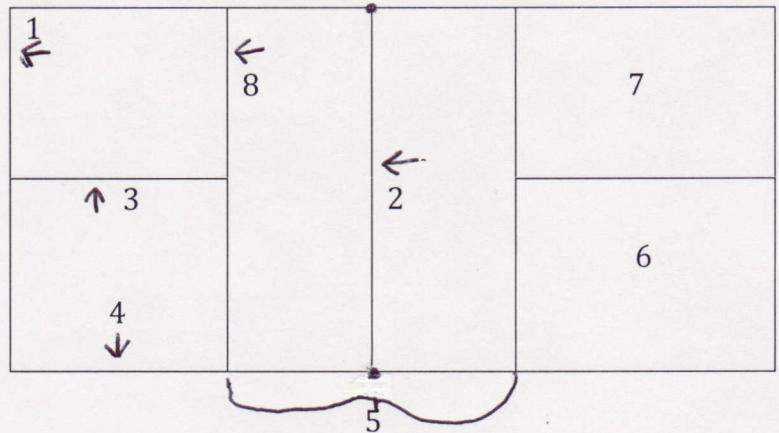
USAPA Comment. The proper sequence for calling the score is server score, receiver score, then server 1 or server 2.

Class: _____

Pickle Ball

Name: _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____



Completion:

1. You must be serving to _____.
2. All serves must be hit _____, with the paddle below the _____.
3. When the ball is hit in the air before it bounces it is considered a _____.
4. Before returning the serve you must let it _____.
5. In doubles play the player in the _____ service court starts the game.
6. The game is played until _____ points are scored or wins by _____ points.
7. If a player volleys the ball while standing in the non-volley zone it is called a _____.
8. When serving you must stand behind the _____ line.
9. In singles when the score is even you serve from the _____ service court, when the score is odd you serve from the _____ service court.
10. All balls landing on a line are called _____.

Matching:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Ace | 14. Let |
| 2. All | 15. Lob |
| 3. Backcourt | 16. Net game |
| 4. Backspin | 17. Odd court |
| 5. Chop | 18. Smash |
| 6. Deep | 19. Passing shot |
| 7. Drive | 20. Poach |
| 8. Down the line | 21. Rally |
| 9. Drop shot | 22. Serve |
| 10. Even court | 23. Top Spin |
| 11. Fault | 24. Volley |
| 12. Foot fault | |
| 13. Ground stroke | |

1. _____ A shot in the court near the baseline. (back boundary)
2. _____ Illegal serve, when server fails to stand behind the end line.
3. _____ Overhead stroke used to put the ball away.
4. _____ A serve that the receiver cannot get to and scores a point.
5. _____ A ball played after bouncing.
6. _____ The length of time the ball is played.
7. _____ A point that must be replayed.
8. _____ When a player approaches the net and plays the ball from there.
9. _____ A high arching shot that lands near the baseline. (back boundary)
10. _____ Underhand stroke that puts the ball into play.
11. _____ Area around back boundary line.
12. _____ A ball driven across the net low and parallel.
13. _____ The right court because it is where all even scoring points are served from.
14. _____ A ball hit before it bounces.
15. _____ When the score is tied.
16. _____ A ball hit very softly with backspin that will land very close to the net in the non-volley zone.
17. _____ Spin applied to the ball by bringing the paddle up.
18. _____ In doubles when a player cuts in front of his partner and returns a shot surprising the opposition.