



TEAM CHALLENGE

League Rules

1. USA Pickleball rules govern all play except where documented in the below Team Challenge League Rules. Click the link for USAPA official rules:

(If clicking these links does not work, copy & paste the link into your internet browser)

<https://usapickleball.org/docs/USA-Pickleball-Official-Rulebook-2023-v2.pdf>

<https://usapickleball.org/what-is-pickleball/official-rules/rules-summary/>

- 1.1. JOIN Pickleball will create a Match Schedule for the regular season and publish that for all teams to view on the website (<https://joinpickleball.com/leagues-events>).

2. Skill Level & Skill Category Placement

- 2.1. JOIN Pickleball's leagues maintain a "Skill Level" for each Player at quarter-point intervals and a "Skill Category" for each Team. Team Challenge teams are placed into a Skill Category based on the average of the 8 highest skill levels on a team. That average fits into a Skill Level Range that coincides with a Skill Category based on the following skill chart:

SKILL CATEGORY	SKILL LEVEL RANGE
BASIC	2.5 – 3.0
INTERMEDIATE	3.1 – 3.5
COMPETITIVE	3.51 – 4.0
ADVANCED	4.1 – 4.5
EXPERT	4.6 and above

(If your team's average skill level is on the line between two Skill Categories, then JOIN Pickleball will determine which Skill Category to place your team at their discretion.)

- 2.2. All Team Challenge teams/players will register in the same league on the JoinPickleball.com website. Upon their first time registering, each player selects their Skill Level, and in future seasons the JOIN Pickleball system will maintain their Skill Level based on past performance.
- 2.3. Upon league registration closing each season, the JOIN Pickleball system will determine each Team's Skill Category based on the team's roster for that season. The Skill Category is determined based on the average of the 8 highest skill levels on the team, and assigns the team as Basic, Intermediate, Competitive, Advanced, or Expert based on the skill chart above.



TEAM CHALLENGE

League Rules

- 2.4. All registered teams are deconsolidated into smaller Team Challenge Division where teams are matched together based on their skill category and their respective Home Court geographical location (***geography is Not Applicable to any Full-Service Team Challenge Leagues***).
- 2.5. Teaching pros MUST play at the Competitive, Advanced, or Expert Levels only.
- 2.6. League Winners Leveling Up
 - 2.6.1. When a team wins their league, the team will be automatically leveled up a Skill Category for their next season IF 75% of their next season roster remains the same as their previous season roster.
 - 2.6.1.1. If the team's roster for the next season has less than 75% of the same roster from the previous season, their Skill Category is determined by the normal Skill Category placement process (see Rule 2.3).

3. Teams, Players, & Courts

- 3.1. All players participating in a Team Challenge League must be an adult, age 18 or over.
- 3.2. All Players must be registered for the respective season through JoinPickleball.com
 - 3.2.1. Only players registered through JOIN Pickleball's website may play on the respective team that they have registered for.
 - 3.2.2. Players can only be registered for one team in a respective league. Players can play in multiple leagues. (i.e., One player can play in the Team Challenge League and/or a Flex League and/or a Full-Service Team Challenge League).
- 3.3. Captains MUST register first prior to their teammates to create their team, team name, select/enter their Home Court location, create Team Invite Code, and invite their teammates. (***Choosing a Home Court is Not Applicable to any Full-Service Team Challenge League***)
- 3.4. Players may register on a Team during the regular registration timeframe or during the late registration timeframe up until the 3rd match of the season. No players can be added to a Team after the 3rd match has been played.
- 3.5. **Apparel:** Players must wear non-marking soled shoes (such as tennis shoes) when playing on indoor and outdoor painted-surface courts. This avoids permanent scuffmarks on the courts and also provides more stability to decrease risk of injury to the player. Players should wear appropriate apparel.
- 3.6. Matches must be played on indoor or outdoor Pickleball courts that have permanently painted Pickleball lines, or accurately and securely taped Pickleball lines that meet USAPA regulations.
- 3.7. Matches can be played on courts with permanent Pickleball nets or temporary Pickleball nets that meet USAPA regulations.
- 3.8. The Home Team pays any court fees associated with securing the Home Courts for the match. A minimum of 2 courts is required for each weekly Home match and must be reserved for the league's weekly day & time. (***Not applicable to any Full-Service Team Challenge League***)



TEAM CHALLENGE

League Rules

- 3.8.1.** Restrooms must be available at the court. If restrooms are not available at your Home Court, then the match must be offered to play at the opponent's Home Court. **(Not applicable to any Full-Service Team Challenge League)**
- 3.9.** If the Home Courts are not able to be secured for a scheduled Home match, then the default location for the match is the Visiting Team's Home Court location provided that they can/are willing to secure the courts (with any fees to be paid by the designated Home Team). If the opponent's Home Court is not an available option, the designated Home Team must provide an alternate court location that is within 5 miles of their Home Court location. Failure to provide a court will result in the forfeit of that match with a score of 9-0 in favor of the Visiting Team for that match. **(Not applicable to any Full-Service Team Challenge League)**
- 3.10.** The Home Team must supply the Balls for the match. Outdoor balls must be supplied if the match is played outdoors and indoor balls must be supplied if the match is played indoors. Balls used for the match must be USAPA-approved brands.

4. Line Up & Line Up Exchange

- 4.1.** Upon arrival to the match, Captains/Co-Captains (or their Designees) MUST exchange their filled-out Line Up Cards with each other before play can begin (printed or digitally). Each Captain will have already completed their side of the Line Up card indicating the 2 players from their Team playing in each Line for a total of 6 players.
- 4.1.1.** Failure to exchange your Line Up card when requested by the opposing team at the start of a match results in a forfeiture of the overall match.
- 4.2.** For each Match, teams MUST build their Line Up for each "Line" as 1 Men's Doubles Line, 1 Women's Doubles Line, and 1 Mixed Doubles Line (Mixed Line is composed of 1 woman and 1 man).
- 4.2.1.** Full-Service Team Challenge Leagues Only: Teams may play additional players in each new game (for each of the 3 games within the match). Players cannot swap out within the same game. The Team Captain MUST indicate the respective players for each game within a match prior to the start of the first game of the match, as indicated on the Fixed Full-Service Team Challenge Score Card *(Please note: Captains will not be able to submit additions via the online score card)*.
- 4.3.** A player CANNOT play more than one "Line" during a Match.
- 4.4.** Once Line Up cards have been exchanged, neither Captain can make changes to the Line Up for all 3 Lines. In any situation where a Captain requests to change their Line Up after the exchange, it is at the discretion of the opposing Captain whether to allow the change or not. And if the opposing Captain allows the Line Up change, then both Captains are allowed to change their Line Ups if they choose.



TEAM CHALLENGE

League Rules

- 4.4.1. Prior to Line Ups being exchanged, changes can be made. However, for changes to be eligible, they must continue to follow the Doubles Lines format (Rule 4.2)
- 4.4.2. In a situation where a “Line” must be forfeited (i.e., not enough players), any “Line” may be forfeited without affecting other Lines.

5. Match Format (for Coed, Women’s-only, Men’s-only, & Mixed formats)

- 5.1. Matches are played weekly on the same day and time at the respective Home Team’s court.
 - 5.1.1. Full-Service Team Challenge Leagues are played weekly on the same day at the league’s respective location.
- 5.2. **COED Leagues:**
 - 5.2.1. Matches consist of 3 Lines of Doubles: 1 Men’s Line, 1 Women’s Line, 1 Mixed Line (See Rule 4.2)
 - 5.2.1.1. There are 6 players that participate in each Match (3 Doubles Lines)
 - 5.2.1.1.1. At least 3 Men and 3 Women are required for all Skill Categories
 - 5.2.2. Full-Service Team Challenge Leagues: When playing more than 6 players, Captains must indicate the respective players that are additions on the scorecard prior to the start of the first game of the match. Players CANNOT play more than one “Line” per week.
- 5.3. **WOMEN’S-ONLY Leagues:** There are 6 players that participate in each Match (3 Doubles Lines), and players for all Lines must be women.
- 5.4. **MEN’S-ONLY Leagues:** There are 6 players that participate in each Match (3 Doubles Lines), and players for all Lines must be Men.
- 5.5. **MIXED Leagues:** There are 6 players that participate in each Match (3 Doubles Lines), and each Line must have one man and one woman.
- 5.6. Each “Line” will play a 3-game format and must play all 3 games.
 - 5.6.1. There will be a total of 9 games played within the overall match across the 3 Doubles Lines. Whichever team wins the majority of the 9 games wins the overall match.
- 5.7. Games are played to 15 – win by 2.
 - 5.7.1 Full-Service Leagues: If there is less 20 minutes remaining of your hour, the 3rd game plays to 11, win by 2.
- 5.8. To determine the first server, the home team can choose rock/paper/scissors or spin their paddle. The winner has two options to choose from: they can either select serve first or defer, or they can select which side of the court they want to start on. The loser then chooses the other option.
 - 5.8.1. The team that serves first in Game 1, also serves first in Game 3. The opposing team serves first in Game 2.
 - 5.8.2. Teams will change sides at the start of Game 2 and during Game 3 when a team reaches their 8th point.



TEAM CHALLENGE

League Rules

5.9. Each team can choose to take two (2) timeouts during each game of their match.

5.9.1. Each timeout period may last up to 1 minute.

5.9.2. Timeouts must be called before the serve occurs.

5.10. Warm Up, Late Arrivals, and Forfeits:

5.10.1. Beginning at the scheduled match time, players have up to 10-minutes of warm-up and/or use that time as a grace period, if arriving late. After that 10-minute period, all players should be ready to start.

5.10.2. If a player or team does not arrive after the 10-minute warm-up/grace period, it is at the decision of the waiting team whether they would like to wait an additional 10-minutes to play the 1st game or take a forfeit in Game 1. If after the waiting team waits an additional 10-minutes (20-minutes since the scheduled start time) and the late team still does not arrive, then the 1st Game is an automatic forfeit to the waiting team. Only the 2nd and 3rd Games may be played at this point.

5.10.3. If a player or team does not arrive after 20-minutes from the scheduled start time, the 1st Game is automatically forfeited, and it is at the decision of the waiting team whether they would like to wait an additional 10-minutes to play the 2nd game or take a forfeit for Game 2. If after the waiting team waits the additional 10-minutes (30-minutes since the scheduled start time) and the late team still does not arrive, then the 2nd Game is an automatic forfeit to the waiting team. Only the 3rd Game may be played at this point.

5.10.4. If a player or team does not arrive after 30-minutes from the scheduled start time, the 2nd Game is automatically forfeited, and it is at the decision of the waiting team whether they would like to wait an additional 10-minutes to play the 3rd game or take a forfeit for Game 3. If after the waiting team waits the additional 10-minutes (40-minutes since the scheduled start time) and the late team still does not arrive, then the 3rd Game is an automatic forfeit to the waiting team. No games are played at this point, and the Line is won, 3-0, by the waiting team.

6. Score Posting

6.1. Once the Match is complete, the **winning team captain is responsible** for entering the Match Score on the website.

6.1.1. Full-Service Team Challenge Leagues: the winning team captain is responsible for turning in a completed & signed score card to the League Supervisor.

6.1.2. Full-Service Team Challenge Leagues: Captains must sign the completed score card.

6.1.3. Once the Score is posted, if there is a discrepancy (or entered incorrectly), then both Captains should work it out and the winning team captain should update the score accordingly. If the teams cannot resolve the issue, they should email the JOIN Pickleball



TEAM CHALLENGE

League Rules

Team to help resolve the score posting.

- 6.2. The Overall Match Score is calculated based on the number of games won at each Line. Each Line's game score must be entered (along with the name of the respective players that played each match). The Overall Match score reflects the game points won by each team out of the 9 games played. So, an Overall Match Score could be 9-0, 8-1, 7-2, 6-3, or 5-4 in favor of the winning team.
- 6.3. For a forfeited "Line", the Score is 3-0 (15-0, 15-0, 15-0) in favor of the non-forfeiting "Line".
- 6.4. For a forfeited Match (all Lines), the Score is 9-0 in favor of the non-forfeiting team.
- 6.5. Scores must be posted within 24 hours of the completed match

7. League Structure, Standings, Playoff, and League Championship

- 7.1. Teams within each league will play scheduled matches throughout the season against the other teams in their respective league.
- 7.2. Each week's match is either won or lost by each team. A "Win" or a "Loss" will be recorded within the system by entering the number of games that each team won in each match (see Score Posting).
 - 7.2.1. Our online Standings & Rankings will track and display the wins/losses, win %, and power rating for each team within the league along with standings, rankings, and power ratings.
 - 7.2.2. League standings are listed by best overall record of Wins vs. Losses (i.e. Win Percentage).
- 7.3. In the case of a Tie between one or more teams in the league standings at the end of the regular season, the following rules are applied to determine league standings for the playoff:
 - 7.3.1. 1st Tiebreaker: Team that won the Head-to-Head match, if played each other and no head-to-head-to-head triangular issue (where A beats B, B beats C, and C beats A).
 - 7.3.2. 2nd Tiebreaker: Team with Highest Power rating based on defeating other highly ranked teams.
 - 7.3.3. 3rd Tiebreaker: Team with the Least Total Number of Games won against them for the season.
 - 7.3.4. 4th Tiebreaker: If still a Tie, the JOIN Pickleball team will flip a coin to break the tie. The coin flip will be videotaped and emailed to both teams once complete or can be done via Zoom together.
 - 7.3.5. The result of this process will be a finalized ranking of teams within the league.
- 7.4. **JOIN Pickleball Playoff Weeks:**
 - 7.4.1. Each Season, every team will play a 6-week regular season and a 7th week Playoff (and 2 Teams will play in an 8th week League Championship Match). The playoff will consist of a Top 4 Teams single-elimination bracket style tournament and Consolation matches for all other teams outside the Top 4.



TEAM CHALLENGE

League Rules

7.4.1.1. 7th Week Playoff Matches: The Top 4 teams in the league, based on the Standings at the end of the regular season, will play in a Top 4 single-elimination bracket style tournament. Team 1 in the standings will play against Team 4, while Team 2 will play against Team 3. The winners of these two matches will play a League Championship Match on the 8th Week.

For all Teams below the Top 4, they will play a Consolation Playoff match against a similar ranked team to determine final rankings for the league. Team 5 will play against Team 6, Team 7 will play against Team 8, Team 9 will play against Team 10, and so on. Final rankings are important for future invites into city, state, and national tournaments.

7.4.1.2. 8th Week League Championship Match: The winner from the two Top 4 matches from the 7th week play in this League Championship Match. This match will determine the ultimate League Champion.

8. Inclement Weather Protocol

8.1. INCLEMENT WEATHER: In the event of a rainout, severe weather, or temperatures of 32° or below, that postpones a regularly scheduled match, the team captains will coordinate to determine when each postponed Line's match/games can be rescheduled.

8.1.1. The postponed Line(s) must be rescheduled, played, and scores reported within 6 days (i.e. for a Monday evening league, rescheduled Lines must be played by Sunday evening).

8.1.2. The postponed Line(s) can be played at the match's Home Team court, a court nearby, or the Away Team's court, depending on court availability.

8.1.3. The postponed Line(s) will start/pick-up where the games were halted (i.e. in the middle of a game, at the start of a new game, etc.).

8.1.4. Postponed Lines halted in the middle of a game require the same players to finish the respective game, while all games not yet started can have any player on the team play in the rescheduled Line(s) as long as the player is not already playing in another Line of that overall Match.

8.1.5. The postponed Lines can be scheduled and played independently of other Lines (i.e. Line 1 may play on a different day/time than Line 2, Line 3 on a different day/time than Line 1 or 2, etc.).

8.1.6. If Lines are unable to settle on a rescheduled date/time that works for both teams within 6 days from the original match date, the **inclement weather default match date/time** will be 6 days from the original match date at 5p (i.e. for a Monday league, default match date/time is Sunday evening at 5p).



TEAM CHALLENGE

League Rules

- 8.1.7. If the default match date/time has inclement weather and cannot be played, then notify The JOIN Pickleball Team (JoinPickleball@livelifefun.com) and we will flip a coin to determine the winner of each incomplete game. All completed games will maintain their result. The coin flip will be videotaped and emailed or text messaged to both teams.
- 8.1.8. If one team's Line(s) cannot reschedule their games within 6 days and not able to attend the default match date/time, then those incomplete games will be forfeited to the opponent. The opponent will receive 1 point for each game that is forfeited.
- 8.1.9. If neither team's Line(s) can reschedule their games within 6 days and cannot attend the defined default match date/time, then notify The JOIN Pickleball Team (JoinPickleball@livelifefun.com) and we will flip a coin to determine the winner of each incomplete game. All completed games will maintain their result. The coin flip will be videotaped and emailed or text messaged to both teams.
- 8.1.10. All Matches must have the Score Reported with a total of 9 points between the two teams prior to the start of the following week's Match.

8.2. INCLEMENT WEATHER: Full-Service Team Challenge Leagues

- 8.2.1. In the event of a rainout, severe weather, or temperatures 32° or below, that postpones a regularly scheduled match, JOIN Pickleball and the management of the league location will coordinate to determine when each postponed Line's match/games can be rescheduled.

9. Forfeitures

- 9.1. For forfeit games, the forfeiting team should communicate to the opposing team as early in advance of the match which Line is being forfeited (Men's, Women's, or Mixed) or if the entire Match will be forfeited.
 - 9.1.1. Full-Service Team Challenge Leagues: the forfeiting team should communicate to JOIN Pickleball as early in advance which Line is being forfeited or if the entire Match will be forfeited.
- 9.2. Any player may request proof of identification to ensure that the player listed on the Line Up Card is, in fact, the player playing in the match, is on the Team's Roster, and is an adult age 18+.
 - 9.2.1. If a player is unable to provide proof of identification and age, or a team is found to be playing a person other than the person listed on the official Line Up Card submitted or has a Junior playing who is under the age of 18, that team will:
 - 9.2.1.1. Forfeit all 9 games of the current match.
 - 9.2.1.2. May be disqualified from the league based on the discretion of JOIN Pickleball and all remaining matches will be forfeited at a score of 0-9.

9.3. Forfeiture Penalties



TEAM CHALLENGE

League Rules

- 9.3.1.** If a Team forfeits a Match (all 3 Lines/all 9 points) during a season, the Team will receive a warning of expulsion.
- 9.3.2.** If a Team forfeits a second Match (all 3 Lines/all 9 points) during a season, the Team will be expelled for the next season & going forward.
 - 9.3.2.1.** After one season of not playing, the Team can request to be reinstated via emailing the JOIN Pickleball Team. Reinstatements are not guaranteed.
- 9.3.3.** If a Team is reinstated after expulsion, and they forfeit one match during any future season, the team will be expelled with no reinstatement opportunity.

10. Player Conduct

- 10.1.** Quality sportsmanship should be the standard for all participants, but we understand that there can be disagreements and conflicts related to rules, scoring, line calls, etc. Player disagreements/conflicts should be worked through to the best of the ability by both teams. The JOIN Pickleball Team will not rule on these items that occur within your match, but we do want to be informed about their occurrence. If your team experiences poor sportsmanship or a particularly disruptive disagreement/conflict occurs, please communicate that to the JOIN Pickleball Team via email (JoinPickleball@livelifefun.com). JOIN Pickleball reserves the right to remove a player/team from a current league or reject the registration of a player/team from future leagues if they have multiple unsportsmanlike complaints filed against them.

11. Coaching

- 11.1.** Teams are allowed to receive coaching from their Captain, Co-Captain, Designee, and other teammates during any formal timeouts taken by either team participating in the match.
- 11.2.** Teams are not allowed to receive coaching from anyone other than their playing partner during the match timeframe.

12. Player Injuries

- 12.1. IN MATCH Injuries:** if an injury occurs during a match and the team is unable to continue play, all unfinished and all remaining games within that match will be forfeited to the non-injured team.

13. Player Withdrawal

- 13.1.** Players wishing to withdraw from play within a league should contact the JOIN Pickleball Team (JoinPickleball@livelifefun.com) directly for specific instructions. There are no refunds or credits for withdrawals after registration has closed for the respective league.



TEAM CHALLENGE

League Rules
