

PADDLEBALL FAMILY ALLIANCE (PFA)  
Official Rules & Regulation for "One Wall Paddleball"



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**ABOUT THIS PADDLEBALL RULE BOOK**

PFA OFFICIAL PLAYING RULES COMMITTEE

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**FOREWORD**

- This code of rules governs the playing of Paddleball both ‘small’ & ‘Big Ball’. The popularity of the game will grow only so long as its players, coaches, referees and administrative officers respect the discipline of its code of rules.
- All tournaments/events run [or sanctioned] by the **Paddleball Family Alliance** will be governed by these rules.

**Summary of Rule Changes**

The Official Playing Rules Committee made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2017 season:

Author	Description	Date
Mike Melendez	Rule Document Created. This rule document was compiled based on various existing organizations (USPA(Chris Lecakes)/NPA/USAR/PPA/PPPA & PFA) versions of the rules of One Wall Paddleball. The Paddleball Family Alliance modified the rules as it deemed appropriate based on how Paddleball is played today on the East Coast.	10/2016
Mike Melendez	The PFA Rules committee met, reviewed the Rules Document and identified updates. Each member of the Rules Committee was provided with a copy of the Rules Document so that each member could complete his or her review. A follow up meeting was schedule for 2/22/2017 to finalize the rules document.	2/15/2017
Mike Melendez	PFA Rules Committee held the follow up meeting from 2/15 and each member of the Rules Committee agreed to the proposed updates.	2/22/2017
Mike Melendez	The Rules Document was updated with the Rules Committee changes. Mike Melendez added additional changes, as he deemed appropriate.	2/27/2017
Mike Melendez	Updated Rules Document was sent to the Rules Committee members for approval. Rules Document approved on 3/11/17.	3/10/2017
Mike Melendez	Rules Document published to the general public.	3/12/2017
Dimitrios Kandyas	Reviewed, updated language contents and updated format.	3/24/2017
Mike Melendez	Updated document	5/3/2017
Mike Melendez	Updated document with Dave Siegel comments	5/29/17
Dave Siegel	Reformatted document	6/10/2017
Mike Melendez	Reviewed Dave’s reformat changes and added minor changes	6/16/2017
Mike Melendez	Added minor updates	7/19/2017
Mike Melendez	Added additional updates	11/15/17
Mike Melendez	Added line to Appeal section highlighted in Green	12/7/17

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Mike Melendez	Added receiving position	8/5/2018
Mike Melendez	Backswing Contact – X.F Do-over – Updated rule	1/23/2019
Mike Melendez	Updated section VII.D.9.G as a result of workshop decision on 3/18/19	3/31/2019
Mike Melendez	Updated section IV.E(Loss of paddle) Added Section XI.B.3.i & ii(Getting Up)	5/15/2019
Mike Melendez	Added variance of ¼ “to paddle length specification. Unanimously voted	9/5/19
Mike Melendez	XI.C - Changed <b><i>Follow Through Contact</i></b> to <b>Paddle Contact</b>	11/8/19
Mike Melendez	VII.F - Screen Serve – Updated from unlimited screens to a fault. Two consecutive screens results in a loss of serve.	11/8/19
Mike Melendez	Reworded sections XI.B2 and VII.D.2	10/25/20



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## The Game

- A. Description** – One wall paddleball is a competitive game played by two opposing players or two opposing teams in which a ball is hit by a paddle against a wall in such a manner that it creates an exchange or volley between the two players or the two teams, as the case may be. Each point or volley begins with the ball being served against the wall. The volleying continues back and forth until one person (if singles) or one team (if doubles) fails to return the ball in accordance with these rules. Each person (if singles) or team (if doubles) must hit the ball in consecutive order. Any member on the team can hit for the team.
- B. Types of Games** – Paddleball is played by two or four players. When played by two, it is called singles and when played by four, doubles. “Cut Throat” is another type of paddleball game played with three players, only in non-tournament competition.
- C. Objective** - The objective of the game is to win by the accumulation of the number of points set by the tournament director (See Section 1.E. below).
- D. Points and Outs** - Points can ONLY be accumulated while the players are serving. Points are scored only by the serving side when it serves an irretrievable serve (an ace) or wins a rally. Losing the serve is called a side out in singles. In doubles, when the first server loses the serve, first serve out, and when the second server loses the serve, it is a side out. A rally is over when a player (or team in doubles) is unable to hit the ball before it touches the floor twice, is unable to return the ball in such a manner that it touches the front wall before it touches the floor inside the court boundaries, or when a call by the referee or linesperson is made.
- E. Match, Game, and Tiebreaker** –
1. A match is won by the first person (in singles) or team (in doubles) reaching the number of points set by the tournament director.
  2. The games are ‘usually’ 11, 15, 21 or 25 points. In some tournaments, the first round and the Finals are played with a 2 out of 3 format. The first two games of the match are played to 15 points. If each side wins one game, a tiebreaker game is played to 11 points.
  3. Unless a rule exception exists, the first player (in singles) or team (in doubles) reaching the requisite score is the winner. Some tournaments directors use the win by 2 point system while others use sudden death, first to reach agreed game total points. Others use a combination of the two within tournament rounds of play.
  4. Once all the teams are entered on the chart and the tournament started no player(s) substitution is allowed.
  5. Outdoor games where the court has defected floor the game cannot be won on a bad bounce.

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## II. Court Dimensions

- A. **Court Specifications** - The specifications for the standard One Wall Paddleball court are depicted on the figure below. All surfaces shall be in play, with the exception of any surfaces designated as out-of-play for a valid reason (such as cracks), and designated court defects, in each case, so designated by the Tournament Director, mainly in outdoor courts.



**Court's Dimension:** The standard one-wall court is 34 feet long.

1. Front Wall is 16 feet high including any top line.
2. Surface Width is 20 feet in width from the outside edge of one side line to the outside edge of the other side line.
3. Short Line Runs parallel with the wall between the side lines with its back edge 16 feet from the wall.
4. Service Marker (Hash Marks) are 9 feet from behind the short line and at least 6 inches long. They are parallel to and midway between the long and short lines, the imaginary further extension and joining of these markers indicate the Service Line.
5. Long Line is 34 feet from the front wall and 9 feet from behind Service markers. There should be a minimum of 10 feet in back of the long line to allow sufficient movement area for the players.
6. Side Lines - There should be a minimum of 6 feet of floor outside each side line to allow sufficient movement area for the players.
7. All Lines should be 1 ½ inches wide
8. Service Area - The service area is the floor area bounded by the Short-Line, Side-Lines and Service-Lines. It extends from the Short Line to the Hash Marks.
9. Receiving Zone - The Receiving zone extends from the Hash Marks to the Long-Line.

**Note:** All side lines and the long line are good (in play).

## III. Officials' Responsibilities

### A. Head Referee Responsibilities

1. Have an exact knowledge of the playing rules, tournament regulations, and the proper enforcement of each and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game by the players.
2. Decide on all questions in accordance with these rules. The referee may exercise the option of consulting with the Tournament Director on any aspect of the rules at any time.
3. Decide on all questions and interpretations not covered in these rules in a fair and responsible manner.
4. Check the playing area for suitability of play and establish any local ground rules relative to any deficiencies in the playing area (See Section II.A.).
5. Check the players' attire and equipment for compliance with these rules.

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6. Administer penalties according to these rules.
7. Administer forfeiture when: a) a player engages in unsportsmanlike conduct or b) Player leaves court without the referee’s permission, c) Player cannot continue play due to injury d) Violation of Code of Conduct (see Section XII.) e) Equipment violation(see Section V.).
8. Introduce players and toss coin for choice of serving or receiving at the outset of the game.
9. The referee shall call the score when either the server or serving team and receiver(s) are ready to serve/receive the ball.
10. Use watch to track time-outs’ time
11. Warn players of remaining timeouts/appeals
12. Enforce serve/receive 10 seconds rule
13. Appeals – ONLY linesperson with clear view of the line in question will be approach for his/her opinion. Sideline persons with no clear view will not be involved in decision.

**B. Linespersons' Responsibilities**

1. Stand facing the line he/she is to call.
2. Call ‘OUT’ if the ball strikes the wall or the floor off the court by the line he/she is calling.
3. Call faults on their respective lines.
4. Make call decisions as quickly and accurately as he/she is able.
5. Be confident, alert and prepared to address any and all ‘potential appeal plays’ that may arise.
6. Refrain from discussing calls with players.

**IV. Safety**

**A. Introduction:** In the game of One Wall Paddleball there must be great concern for the safety of all participants. It is, therefore, imperative for all participants to exercise an extreme degree of caution at all times. Because of the potential for dangerous situations, these rules include an entire section of safety rules and regulations, thereby demonstrating the importance that is placed on playing and conducting a safe paddleball game. It is the intent of this safety section to discourage or eliminate any reckless and/or wild play from the sport of One Wall Paddleball. **Safety is a primary concern and will be considered as such in any and all judgments and decisions made that may arise in connection with a game.**

**B. Stopping Play:** The referee will stop any play whenever he/she believes that there is a danger of a player being struck by a paddle.

**C. Player Responsibility:** It is the duty of the striker to alter his or her swing at all times to avoid hitting an opponent. If a striker believes that swinging would result in hitting his or her opponent, they must refrain from swinging. In this circumstance, the striker may call a “safety block” (see Section IV.D.), Hitting an

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opponent with a forward swing will result in one or more of the penalties listed in Section XI., which shall be administered at the discretion of the referee.

- D. **Safety Block:** A striker must call 'block' whenever he/she believes there is a danger of hitting his/her opponent in the course of a normal swing. Any player swinging in a reckless manner in a situation where there is an obvious potential for injury will be penalized at the discretion of the referee in accordance with the penalties listed in Section XI. - PENALTIES.
- E. **Loss of paddle:** Any player who drops the paddle during the course of play or after the referee call the score is out. Players have the obligation to assure they have a good grip on the paddle so that is not released while going for a shot. The use of gloves, wrist bands and/or sticky substance, such as chalk, is recommended.

## V. Paddleball Game Equipment

### A. PADDLE SPECIFICATIONS

1. **Length:** Can be no longer than 17 1/2 inches with a variance of -/+ ¼ of an inch. Paddle longer than 17 ¾ will be considered illegal and not allowed in tournament play. Reason for this enhancement is due to Product Quality Control in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries.
2. **Width:** Maximum of 9 inches with a variance of -/+ ¼ of an inch. Paddle wider than 9 ¼ will be considered illegal and not allowed in tournament play. Reason for this enhancement is due to Product Quality Control in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries.

**NOTE** - Using a paddle length longer than 17 ¾ inches or frame that exceeds 9 ¼ inches will result in forfeiture of the game in progress or, if discovered between games, forfeiture of the preceding game.

3. Cannot have any stringing such as that of a racquet.
4. Any paddle having any exposed internal material, must have such internal material covered with tape.
5. A paddle found to be unfit for play by a referee will not be permitted for use.

### B. BALL SPECIFICATIONS - There are two types of ball currently being used to play One Wall Paddleball.

1. **Small Ball:** This is the 'original' paddleball, a small ball made of rubber. Its dimension shall be 1-7/8 inches in diameter, and weight shall be approximately 1.7 ounces.
2. **Big Ball:** This ball is also made of rubber and available in a wide range of colors. Its dimensions shall be 2 ¼ inches in diameter, weight approximately 1.4 ounces.
3. **Tournament Balls:** Only balls approved by the PFA may be used in a PFA Sanctioned tournament.

### C. APPAREL

1. **Eye Protection:** All players SHOULD wear lensed eyewear that has been designed to be used in sports. Currently no specific paddleball eye guard exist.
2. **Clothing and Sneakers:** The clothing may be of any color; however, a player may be required to change wet, extremely loose fitting, or otherwise distracting garments at the discretion of the

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referee. Insignias and writing on the clothing must be considered to be in good taste by the Tournament Director. Sneakers must be worn that have soles which do not mark or damage the floor of indoor courts. Players may not play in socks only or in bare feet. All players must wear a shirt during play.

3. IF REQUESTED BY THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR, TOURNAMENT SHIRTS MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES DURING PFA SANCTIONED TOURNAMENTS.
4. **Audio Devices**: Players may not wear audio devices during play unless they are needed to amplify one’s hearing.

## VI. General Rules

### A. BEGINNING OF GAME:

1. ***To decide who serves***: The referee will toss a coin. The player or team winning the coin toss has the option to either serve or receive at the start of the first game. The second game of a match will begin in reverse order of the first game.
2. ***3<sup>rd</sup> Game Server***: The player or team scoring the highest total of points in the first two games will have the option to serve or receive first at the start of the tiebreaker.
3. ***3<sup>rd</sup> Game Tiebreaker Server***: If the players or teams score an equal number of points in the first two games, another coin toss will take place and the winner of the toss will have the option to serve or receive.
4. ***Number of attempts to make a good serve***: In all PFA Sanctioned doubles competition, the server will have two opportunities to put the ball into play. In all PFA Sanctioned singles competition, the server shall have one opportunity to put the ball into play.

**B. Calls by Head Referee or Lines-Person** - A call by a referee or a linesperson will immediately result in a DEAD play. Any subsequent play is irrelevant because of the referee or linesperson's call.

**C. Fly Ball is Live Ball** - A ball hitting a player on a fly will result in a point or loss of serve, REGARDLESS of where the player is standing, on or off the court. The only exception is when the referee or linesperson makes a call. After a call, the play is dead (see Section VI.B. above).

**D. Legally played ball** - Is one that is struck in the proper order by the players on a fly or on one bounce. The ball must bounce in the playing area of the wall and, if not played on a fly, in the playing area of the floor. If a player cannot accomplish this, it will result in a loss of serve if committed by the serving team or player or a point to the opposing team or player if committed by the receiving team or player.

**E. Out-Ball Definition** - After a fair serve, any ball in play which hits the floor before the wall bounces outside the side lines, passed the long line, hits the top edge of the wall or hits the junction of the top edge of the wall and the front of the wall is ruled as an OUT.

**F. Player Substitution** – Substitution of partners on a team after the start of a tournament is not permitted.

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- G. Down-Under Ball** – A DOWN ball is one that strikes the floor first, then the wall. A DOWN ball is an OUT.
- H. Broken Ball** - A ball breaking during play immediately stops play, and the point is played over. A broken ball during service does not cancel any FAULT preceding the ball breaking. No claim can be made about the last play once the next service is made. Therefore, the ball must be ruled broken by the referee before the next service for the point to be taken over. A broken ball on the serve will never cancel the previous point. The proper way to check for a broken ball is to squeeze it by hand. Checking the ball by any hard striking of it with a paddle will not be considered a valid check and shall work to the disadvantage of the player or team that struck the ball after the rally. Meaning if the ball breaks with this illegal testing of the ball it will not be considered broken and the play will stand.
- I. Foreign Object on court** - If a foreign object enters the court, or any other outside interference occurs in the opinion of the referee, the referee shall stop the play immediately and declare a replay.
- J. Switching Hands** - Players are allowed to switch the paddle from one hand to the other during play.
- K. Legal Hits** - Only the paddle and the hand holding the paddle (below the wrist), which is considered part of the paddle, may be used at any time to strike the ball.
- L. Delay of Game** - Play will never be suspended to allow a player to recover his/her strength or wind (except as provided in Section VI.V). In case of an intentional delay (in the opinion of the referee), the referee will charge the player or team with a timeout. If the player or team has no timeouts a warning will be given and subsequent delays result in loss of serve or point, see Section XI.K.
- M. Returned ball strikes opponent** – If a returned ball touches an opponent and, in the judgment of the referee, would have reached the fair playing area of the wall, the SERVE will be played over.
- N. One Touch Ball:** The player or team trying to return the ball may strike the ball only once. Doing so more than once will result in an OUT or loss of serve. The ball may not be carried (A carried ball is one that rests on the paddle slightly longer than a true "hit"). A carry will be called at the referee's discretion. Carrying the ball will result in a loss of point or serve.
- O. Return Attempts** - The ball remains in play until it touches the floor a second time or bounces outside the fair play area; if a player swings at the ball and misses it, the player or his/her partner may continue to attempt to return the ball until it touches the floor for the second time or bounces outside the fair play area.
- P. Ball Touching Body** – A player while in the act of striking the ball with the paddle, lets the ball touch any part of his/her body, will receive an OUT or, at the discretion of the referee, a penalty.
- Q. Out Overrides Block** – A team which is struck with its own ball will be out, even if a block call has been made by the opposing team. The out overrides a block call. However, the only EXCEPTION is if the referee acknowledges the block call prior to the player being struck, it shall not be an out whether the ball hits the player after one bounce or in the air. See Section VI.B. for explanation. Another exception is "entrapment". This occurs when a player on the hitting team is between both opponents who are position to hit the ball and the player is struck by the ball because he/she was not able to move out of the way of the ball.

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- R. Player Touches Live Ball** – At no time should a player catch or stop a ball rebounding from the wall while it is in play or before it bounces twice. This action will result in an OUT against the offender. **The only exception is if the referee mistakenly calls the ball long and the player catches the ball, once the referee makes a call the PLAY IS DEAD. See Section VI.B.**
- S. Player Hits Own Team With Ball** - A player hitting his/her partner or himself/herself with the ball during play will receive an OUT against him/her.
- T. Player Gets Hit With Live Ball** – If during play, a striker hits a ball which BOUNCES past one or both opponents in a way that makes it impossible (in the opinion of the referee) for the opponent’s team to return, then the ball touches the striking team, the point shall go to the striker’s team. However, should the ball pass one or both opponents and then touch the striker or, in doubles, his/her partner, without bouncing, REGARDLESS of where the person touched may be standing (See Section VI.C.), the striking team is OUT, **UNLESS** a FAULT, was called by the lines-person or a BLOCK was called and then acknowledged by the referee. Conversely, if the striker is in front of both opponents and is hit by the ball on one bounce or on the fly, he/she is out regardless of whether either opponent had a chance to retrieve the ball.
- U. Receiver Hit by Serve** – During service, should the ball, while on the fly, touch a receiver standing behind the long line, or outside the sideline, a point will be giving to the serving team, see Section VI.C. For explanation.
- V. Time Outs:**
1. Number of Time Outs - Each player or team is entitled to 2 one-minute timeouts in games to 11 or 15 points and 3 one-minute timeouts in games to 21 or 25 points.
  2. When Time Outs Are Permitted - Consecutive timeouts are permitted as long as they are available but may not be called by either side once the service motion has begun.
  3. Time Outs Penalty - Calling for a timeout when none remain or after the service motion has begun will result in the assessment of a technical foul (first time warning, second time loss of serve or a penalty point) for delay of game.
  4. Time Delay Penalty - If a player takes more than one-minute for a single timeout, the referee may automatically charge any remaining timeouts, as needed, for any extra time taken.
  5. Exceeding Number of Time Outs - Once all timeouts allowed have expired, a delay of game technical foul (first time warning, second time loss of serve or a penalty point) can be assessed at the discretion of the referee.
  6. Leaving the Court - A player who leaves the court should call a timeout or else advise the referee of the reason for leaving the court. If a player leaves the court without advising the referee of a valid (in the opinion of the referee) reason for leaving the court, a timeout may be charged to that player. If no time outs remain, the referee may assess a technical foul for delay of game; however, the referee may excuse a delay if the player’s reason for leaving was to correct a problem affecting the playability of the court, such as obtaining a towel to dry the court or disposing of some foreign material from the court.

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7. Player Injury Time Out - In case of a purely accidental injury, one 10 minute rest period shall be allotted to the injured player. Should the injured player resume play before the end of this period and the injury recurs, or if another injury is suffered, no additional rest time will be allocated to the player. If the injured player is unable to continue the game, the injured player's partner can continue the game on his/her own for that game ONLY. For any subsequent game(s), a player cannot start without his/her partner.  
**NOTE** - Should a player cause an injury through wild and/or reckless play to an opponent and the opponent is unable to resume play after the allotted 10 minute rest period, the referee may award the game to the injured player or, in doubles, the injured player's team.
  8. External Bleeding Time Out - Should any external bleeding occur, the referee must halt play as soon as the rally is over, charge an injury timeout to the person who is bleeding, and not allow the match to continue until the bleeding has stopped.
  9. Injury Time Out Not Allowed - Muscle cramps and pulls, fatigue, and other ailments that are not caused by direct contact on the court will not be considered an injury. Injury time is not allowed for pre-existing conditions.
  10. Equipment Timeouts - Players are expected to keep all clothing and equipment in good, playable condition and must use regular timeouts for adjustment and replacement of equipment (such as broken paddle) during play. If a player or team has no regular timeouts left and the referee determines that an equipment change or adjustment is necessary for fair and safe continuation of the match, the referee may grant an equipment timeout not to exceed 1 minute. The referee may allow additional time, at his or her discretion, under extenuating circumstances.
- W. Wipes** – A player may request a ten-second timeout for drying hands, wiping glasses, tying laces or the like. The referee may grant such a timeout at his or her discretion. Flagrant abuse of requesting wipes may result in an OFFICIAL WARNING and a subsequent loss of serve or point.  
**Note** – In the case of extreme weather conditions affecting one or more players, only the referee or tournament director may authorize unlimited wipes. Wipes will not be allowed for rest or to discuss strategy with a partner or any other person.
- X. Rest Periods Between Games** – A 5 minute rest period is allowed between any match up to the quarterfinals. 10 minutes will be allowed before the semi-finals and finals.
- Y. Player gets struck after illegal movement** – At the discretion of the referee, a player who deliberately or accidentally moves into the path of a return and is struck by either the ball or opponent's paddle, will receive an OUT against him/her. A player who moves into the opponent's "blind side" and is struck by his/her paddle while the opponent is following through with a forward swing after striking the ball is out.
- Z. Conversation Between Players** – Unnecessary or excessive talking during play will result in a PENALTY against the offender player. At no time should play cease when a player is loudly calling an order to his/her partner (i.e., "leave. Long, out, etc.").

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- AA. Apparel or Equipment Loss.** If a player loses any apparel, equipment, or other article, anywhere on the court, play shall be immediately stopped and that player shall be called for a penalty delay, unless the player has just hit a shot that could not be retrieved. If the loss of equipment is caused by a player's opponent, then a replay Do-Over should be called. If the opponent's action is judged to have been avoidable, then the opponent should be called for a penalty obstruction.
- BB. Game Postponements** - Any game/match postponed by a referee or the Tournament Director shall be resumed with the same scores as when postponed.

## **VII. The Serve**

### **A. WHEN TO SERVE:**

1. The server has 10 seconds to put the ball in play from the time the referee calls the score or announces, "Second serve."
2. The server may not start the service motion until the referee has called the score or "second serve." See Section III.A.9.
3. The serve can be started from any place within the serving area; see diagram in Section II.A.7.
  - I. **In doubles** the server can initiate the serve from any location within the service area without indicating which location of the service area he/she will be serving.
  - II. **In Singles** the server can initiate the serve from any location within the service area. BUT MUST indicate which location of the service area he/she will be serving.

### **B. SERVICE MOTION:**

1. After taking a set position inside the service area, a player may begin the service motion. Neither the ball nor any part of either foot may extend beyond any line of the service area, short line to hash mark (see figure in Section II.A.) or beyond the out lines. Once the service motion begins, after the ball leaves the hand, it must next bounce on the floor in the service area and then, without touching anything else, be struck by the paddle before the ball bounces on the floor a second time.
2. After being struck, the ball must hit the front wall first and on the rebound hit the floor over the short line (unless played on the fly), either with or without touching one of the side lines.

**C. Valid Serve** - A served ball that lands past the short-line, but prior to or on the long-line or side-lines or that is played on the fly, is a good serve.

**D. FAULT SERVES-** The following serves are faults and any two in succession result in an out (either a side-out or first serve):

1. Server's Body – The server's body must remain within the service area, or in the air, until the ball has landed or played on the fly. Not doing so will result in a FAULT. Two such faults will result in a server down or side-out.
2. Foot Faults(see figure in section II.A):

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- I. A Foot Fault will be called, if while serving, the server steps on or over the Short Line.
  - II. Side-Lines - The server foot can be up to the edge of the outside line, any part of the foot cannot pass the outside edge of the line. If that happens it's a FAULT.
  - III. Singles – A serve down the line the ball must clear the server's shoulder, Right handed player right shoulder and opposite shoulder left handed player. If the ball passes over the server's shoulder then it is a FAULT.
  - IV. The server's body may not land over the short-line before the ball touches the floor. His body could remain air borne over the short-line until the ball lands. Breaking the playing area, landing, before the ball touches the floor will result in a fault, two faults will result in a loss of serve.
3. The server body or paddle cannot pass the hash mark either. Doing so will result in a fault.
  4. Served Ball between Legs by the serving team – Is an automatic FAULT.
  5. Serving the Ball without a Bounce: Tossing the ball into the air and serving it without a bounce is a fault serve.
  6. Short Serve: A short serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and lands in the fair playing area, but on or in front of the short line, either with or without touching a side-line.
  7. Long Serve: A long serve is a served ball that first hits the front wall and lands passed the long line, either with or without touching a side-line, but that does not land outside of the side line.
  8. Serving before the Receiver is ready: Quick serving before the opponent is ready is in violation of the 10 second rule (see Section XI.K.1.) and/or before the referee calls the score will result in a warning the first time and a FAULT for the serving player or team thereafter.
  9. Doubles Partner Position on Serve
    - I. The server's partner must stand outside the sideline, between the short-line and service marker, and must not enter the court until the served ball has passed behind him/her. To do so shall be a fault because he/she crossed the ball and two such faults during that service shall count as an out and retire the server.
    - II. If the served ball passes between the short line and the server's partner, it is fault if the partner jumps into the court. HOWEVER, if he/she remains outside the court and comes in after the ball is returned it shall be a good serve.
    - III. The serving team cannot step backward beyond the service markers until the returning team has struck the served ball. **Doing so will result in a loss of serve penalty.**
- E. DEAD BALL SERVES:** Dead-ball serves do not cancel any previous fault served. The following are dead-ball serves:
1. Court Obstruction: A serve that takes an irregular bounce because it hit a wet spot or an irregular surface on the court is a dead-ball serve. In addition, any serve that hits any surface designated by local rules as an obstruction, crack line, rather than being out-of-play, the head referee and his/her crew will make final decision.

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2. **Broken Ball:** If the ball is determined to have broken on the serve, a new ball shall be substituted and the serve shall be replayed, not canceling any prior fault serve or point. See Section VI.H.

**F. SCREEN SERVE:** A served ball that first hits the front wall and on the rebound passes so closely to the server, or server's partner in doubles, that they have to move out of the way so the receiver is prevented from having a clear view of the ball, is a screen serve. The player **MUST** call the screen and the head referee **MUST** validate it. An acknowledged SCREEN call by the referee will result in a fault. Two consecutive screens (faults) will result in a loss of serve.

**G. SERVE IN DOUBLES**

1. **Order of Serve:** At the beginning of each game, when the first server of the first team to serve is out, the team is out (side-out). After that, either partner can serve first each time the team steps in to serve. Both players on each team shall serve until there is a first-serve out, at the start of the game, or a side-out (both players are out) later in the game.
2. **Switching Serve Location** – A server is allowed to serve from either side of the court as long as he/she does not have a previous fault. If he/she does then they must complete the service point from the side of the court they started.
3. **Change of Serve:** In doubles, the side is retired when both partners have lost service, except that the team that serves first at the beginning of each game loses the serve (side-out) when the first server is retired.
4. **Good serve hits partner:** A served ball that lands good and hits the partner outside the court while in the service box, between short-line & hash-mark, results in a server down.
5. **Out-of-Order Serve:** If either partner serves again after that partner had previously lost a rally while serving, the penalty is an immediate out for that team. Any out of order will result in a loss of serve.

**H. OUT SERVES:**

1. **Out-of-court Serve:** An out-of-court serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall within the sidelines and lands outside the sidelines.
2. **Non-Front Wall Serve:** Any served ball that does not strike the front wall between the sidelines first is an OUT.
3. **Missed Serve Attempt:** Any attempt to serve/strike the ball that results in a total miss or in the ball touching any part of the server's body, including the foot is an OUT.
4. **Fake or Balk Serve:** Any movement of the paddle toward the ball during the serve that is non-continuous and done for the purpose of deceiving the receiver. If a balk serve occurs, but the referee believes that no deceit was involved, the option of declaring "no serve" and having the serve replayed without penalty may be exercised by the referee.

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5. ***Illegal Hit:*** An illegal hit includes contacting the ball twice, intentionally carrying the ball or returning the ball with any part of the body (with the exception of the hand holding the paddle, which is part of the paddle, see Section VI.K).

## VIII. Return of Serve

- A. *Legal Return:*** After a legal serve, a player receiving the serve must strike the ball on the fly or after the first bounce, and before the ball touches the floor the second time; and return the ball to the front wall between the sidelines such that it bounces in fair play area or is played on the fly by the serving player or team. A returned ball must touch the front wall before touching the floor.
- B. *Receiving Position:***
1. The receiver may not break the plane of the receiving line, passed the hash mark, with the paddle or body **until the ball either bounces in the service area or else crosses the receiving line.** For example, if the receiver steps on the hash-mark receiving line with either foot (with any part of the foot contacting the line) a point shall be called for the server.
  2. The receiver may stand anywhere beyond the hash-mark
- C. *Touched Serve:*** During the return of serve, a player on the receiving side may not intentionally catch or touch a served ball (such as an apparently long or short serve) until the referee has made a call or the ball has touched the floor for a second time **REGARDLESS OF WHERE THE RECEIVER IS STANDING.** Violation results in loss of the rally, i.e. a point.
- D. *Failure to Return:*** The failure to return a legal serve results in a point for the server.
- E. *Missed Fly Return* – A served fly ball, struck at and entirely missed by the receiver, which strikes long, is a long fault.**
- F. *Playing Ball on the Fly* -** If the served ball passes, or is in the process of passing over the long line or sideline and is struck on the fly by the receiver before it bounces, the ball is in play, regardless of where the receiver is standing.
- G. *Court Position* –** The receiver can stand anywhere on, or off, the court as long as he/she is behind the hash-mark.

## IX. Change of Serve

- A. *OUTS:*** A server is entitled to continue serving until one of the following occurs:
1. ***Out Serve*** - See Section VII.G.
  2. ***Two Consecutive Faults*** - see Fault Serves Section VII.D.
  3. ***Failure to Return Ball*** - Player or team fails to keep the ball in play as required by Section VIII.D

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4. Penalty Obstruction - Player or team commits a penalty which results in an out.

B. Side out - Retiring the server(s) is called a side out.

## X. Do-Overs

A. **REPLAY Do-Over** - A rally is replayed without penalty and the server resumes play at first or second serve whenever a Do Over occurs. Depending on the circumstances, several of the replay do-overs described below could more properly be called **penalty Do-Over**.

B. Court Do-over - The referee should stop play immediately whenever the ball hits any part of the court that was designated prior to the match as a court Do-Over (such as a crack).

C. Ball Hits Opponent - When an opponent is hit by a return shot in flight, it is a Do-Over. If the opponent is struck by a ball, that in the referee's opinion, obviously did not have the velocity or direction to reach the front wall, it is not a Do-Over and the player who hit the ball will lose the rally. **A player who has been hit by the ball can stop play and make the call though the call must be made immediately and acknowledged by the referee.**

D. Body Contact - If body contact occurs which the referee believes was sufficient to stop the rally, either for the purpose of preventing injury by further contact, or because the contact prevented a player from being able to make a reasonable return, the referee shall call a Do-Over. Incidental body contact in which the offensive player clearly will have the advantage should not be called a Do-Over, unless the offensive player obviously (in the opinion of the referee) stops play.

E. Screen Serve Ball - The screen serve call is the sole responsibility of the receiver. If the ball passes so close to the server that the closeness causes server to move out of the way of the ball and the receiver to not have clear view of the ball, a screen serve could be called immediately. The receiver may not call a screen after attempting to hit the ball or after taking himself out of proper court position by starting the wrong way. The server may not call a screen under any circumstance and thus, must always expect to play the rally unless the receiver calls "screen serve". See Section VII.D.9.

F. Backswing Contact - Do-over - If an opponent unintentionally causes contact with a player's backswing, a block will automatically be called. If the opponent intentionally causes a backswing the player will be penalized a loss of down or point.

G. Other Interference - Any other unintentional interference that, in the opinion of the referee, unfairly prevents an opponent from having a fair chance to return the ball.

## XI. Penalties

A penalty results in the loss of a serve or point. If a team (in doubles) or player (Singles) has no points at the time of a penalty, he/she may be assessed -1 point. A penalty does not have to be due to an intentional action, it could

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result from an unintentional action. The following actions and failures to act result in a loss of serve or loss of point at the discretion of the referee.

**A. Stroke Interference** - This includes unintentionally moving in a direction that crosses the ball and prevents the opponent from making a shot. Crossing the ball is when a player that is not on the striking team moves, whether intentionally or unintentionally, such that they start on one side of the path of the ball and wind up on the other.

**B. Illegal Movement**

1. **On Offense:**

I. After making contact with the ball the striking player cannot move alongside or in front of his opponent when they are both on the same side of the court.

II. The partner of the offensive player that is about to hit the ball cannot move alongside or in front of the defensive player on his/her side. An exception to the rule stated above is when both offensive players are moving toward the wall with the clear intention of hitting the ball (for instance, when each partner is running in to make a "get" with the ball between them).

2. **On Defense** - A defensive player cannot move alongside or in front of an offensive player that is about to hit the ball. If either of the defensive players move in a way that prevents either of the offensive players from making a shot, or force them to change their shot, it will be consider a loss of serve or a point to the offensive team..

I. For purposes of this rule, a player is "about to hit the ball" immediately after the opposing team makes its offensive shot. This means that a defensive player is obligated to wait to take position until it is clear that the offensive player on his/her side of the court is not playing the ball.

3. **Getting Up** – A player that dives or fall over while making a get and the ball is on his side of the court, and within the offensive player peripheral vision, must stay down and not get up while his opponent is returning the ball. The Player can get up if the ball is on the opposite side of the court.

I. A player cannot get up once on the floor and the ball is on their side of the court. If the partner is returning the ball to the other side of the court while he/she is down then they must remain down until after his opponent returns the ball.

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II. 4. A player can move to avoid getting hit by the ball but can NOT get up while doing so and can NOT interfere with his opponent swing while avoiding getting hit with the ball. Doing so will result in a loss of serve or point to the serving team.

- C. **Paddle Contact** - If a player contacts an opponent in the course of a normal swing, follow through or forward swing, one of the following may occur at the referee's discretion:
1. ANY paddle contact by the offensive player as a result of a swing will result in loss of point or serve.
  2. The defensive player will be penalized if he/she moves in the path of the striker and gets hit with the paddle.
  3. After the striker's paddle comes to zero velocity subsequent to striking the ball and there is incidental contact there shall not be a penalty.
- D. **Pushing** - A player deliberately pushes or shoves opponent at any time during a game.
- E. **Intentional Distractions** - Deliberate shouting, stamping of feet, waving of a paddle, or any other manner of disrupting one's opponent.
- F. **View Obstruction** - A player moves across an opponent's line of vision just before the opponent strikes the ball.
- G. **Forward Swing** – A player that legally established front position and did not move into the swing of the offensive player and gets hit, the offensive player will be charged with a forward swing resulting in loss of point or loss of serve.
- H. **Forward Swing on a Block call** - If a BLOCK is called and while trying to show he/she had a shot, hits the opponent with a forward swing, the swinging player is down or a point will be taken away.
- I. **Wetting the Ball** - The players, particularly the server, should ensure that the ball is dry prior to the serve. If the referee determines the offensive player deliberately wetted the ball, a penalty will be charged against the server.
- J. **Blocking Offensive Player** - If a ball is lobbed over the opponent's head or if a player is back peddling to retrieve a ball on one bounce the player that hit the shot, or his/her partner, must give the offensive player room to make a shot at the ball. A loss of point or loss of serve will be assessed to the player that did not move.

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**K. *Fly Ball Live Ball*** - During a rally or serve, should the ball while on the fly, touch the player or team that hit the shot in question, he/she shall be called out **REGARDLESS of where the player is standing, on or off the court, see Section VI.C. for explanation.**

- L. *Delay of Game:*** The referee may call a fault serve/point penalty (or warning) for the following delays:
1. ***10 second rule*** - Applies to the server and the receiver simultaneously. Concurrently, they are 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 the receiver is ready. If a receiver is not ready, they must signal by raising the paddle above the head or completely turning the back to the server, these are the only two acceptable signals.
  2. ***After the score or "second serve" 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 that point, the signal shall not be acknowledged and the serve becomes legal.
  3. Excessive questioning of the referee about rules.
  4. Calling a timeout when none remain, or after the service motion begins.
  5. Repeatedly serving before the score or "second serve" is called.

## **XII. Code of Conduct**

**In all PFA sanctioned tournaments, the referee is empowered to forfeit a match with the tournament director approval, if the conduct of a player or team is considered detrimental to the tournament and/or the game.**

- A.** The referee is empowered to deduct one point from a player's or team's score when, in the referee's sole judgment; the player is being overtly and deliberately abusive to any participant, including a referee or linesperson. A prior warning is not required, but often may be enough to correct the behavior. If the player or team against whom the technical foul was assessed does not resume play immediately, the referee is empowered to forfeit the match, **with the tournament director's approval**, in favor of the opponent. Some examples of actions that can result in technical fouls are:
1. Profanity.
  2. Excessive arguing or talking during the course of a game.
  3. Threat of any nature to opponent, referee or linesperson.
  4. Excessive or hard striking of the ball between rallies.
  5. Slamming of the paddle against walls or floor, or any other action that might result in damage to the court or injury to other players, the referee or a linesperson.
  6. Anything the referee considers unsportsmanlike behavior.

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- B. Technical Warnings** - There are varying degrees of unsportsmanlike behavior, so if a player's behavior is not as severe as to warrant a technical foul and deduction of a point, the referee may, at his/her discretion, issue a technical warning instead -- without the deduction of a point.
- C. Effect of Technical Warning** - If a referee issues a technical foul, one point shall be removed from the offender's score or loss of serve. No point will be deducted, or loss of serve, if a referee issues a technical warning. In either case, a technical foul or warning should be accompanied by a brief explanation of the behavior. Issuing a technical foul or warning has no effect on who will serve when play resumes. If a technical foul occurs when the offender has no points or between games, the result will be that the offender's score becomes minus one (-1).
- D. Potential Technical foul Penalties:**
1. Removal from tournament.
  2. Loss of game.
  3. Loss of service or on or more points accompanied with warning.
  4. Warning.
- E. Suspensions**
1. **Verbal Abuse-Intimidation to officials, players or opponents**
    - a. First time warning.
    - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> time point deduction or loss of serve.
    - c. 3<sup>rd</sup> time Tournament disqualification. Disciplinary committee will review player behavior and determine appropriate suspension. If the player is a repeated offender life ban is an option.
  2. **Physical Attack**
    - d. First time offender with no prior record 3 months suspension. Attack with use of weapon such as Paddle will be review by disciplinary committee and suspension determined
  3. **Other acts not listed here** will be reviewed and appropriate action taken.

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### **XIII. Appeals**

- A. How to Appeal** - A verbal appeal by a player must be made directly to the head referee immediately after the rally has ended. A player, who believes there is an infraction to appeal, should bring it to the attention of the head referee at the time the perceived infraction occurs. The player is obligated to continue to play until the rally has ended or the referee stops play. The referee will recognize a player's appeal only if it is made before that player leaves the court for any reason including timeouts and game-ending rallies or, if that player doesn't leave the court, before the next serve begins. **Players can appeal a linesman call by addressing it towards the Head Ref only NOT the linesman. The Head Ref makes the final decision.**
- B. Loss of Appeal** - A player or team forfeits its right of appeal for that rally if the appeal is made directly to the line judges or, if the appeal is made after an excessive demonstration or complaint.
- C. Limit on Appeals** - Number of appeals are set by the tournament director. In general 2 appeals for 11 and 15 point games and 3 for 21 or 25 point games. However, if an appeal is ruled in favor of the player/team, that appeal will not count against the appeal limit.
- D. Outcome of Appeals** - Everything except technical fouls and forfeitures can be appealed. The following outcomes cover several of the most common types of appeals, however not all possible appeals could be addressed here. Therefore, referee's discretion and common sense should govern the outcomes of those appeals that are not covered herein:
1. **Down** - If the referee makes a call of "Down," and the call is reversed, the referee then must decide if the shot in question could have been returned had play continued. If, in the opinion of the referee, the shot could have been returned, the rally shall be replayed. However, if the shot was not retrievable, the side that hit the shot in question is declared the winner of the rally. If the referee makes no call on a shot (thereby indicating that the shot was not Down), an appeal may be made that the shot was Down. If the "no call" is reversed, the side that hit the shot in question loses the rally.
  2. **Fault Serve** - If the referee makes a call of fault serve and the call is reversed, the serve is replayed - unless the referee considered the serve to have been irretrievable, in which case a point is awarded to the server. If an appeal is made because the referee makes no call on a serve (thereby indicating that the serve was good) and the "no call" is reversed, the result will be a fault serve.
  3. **Out Serve** - If the referee calls an "out serve", and the call is reversed, the serve will be replayed, unless the serve was obviously a fault too, in which case the call becomes fault serve. However, if the call is reversed and the serve was considered an ace, a point will be awarded. Also, if the referee makes no call on a serve--thereby indicating that the serve was good--but the "no call" is reversed, it results in an immediate loss of serve.
  4. **Double Bounce Pickup** - If the referee makes a call of two bounces, and the call is reversed, the rally is replayed, except if the player against whom the call was made hit a shot that could not have been retrieved, then that player wins the rally. (Before awarding a rally in this situation, the referee must be certain that the shot would not have been retrieved even if play had not been halted.) If an appeal is made because the referee makes no call thereby indicating that the get

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was not two bounces, and the "no call" is reversed, the player who made the two-bounce pickup is declared the loser of the rally.

5. **Court Obstruction** - If the referee makes a call of court obstruction during a rally or return of serve, the rally is replayed. If the referee makes no call and a player feels that a court obstruction occurred, that player may appeal. If the appeal is successful, the rally will be replayed. If a court obstruction occurs on a second serve, play resumes at second serve.

#### **XIV. Blocks**

**All BLOCKS called must be acknowledged by the referee. Once the referee honors the BLOCK, play stops immediately, thereby canceling any play that may follow.**

- A. **Granting a Block** – To call a block a player must be in position with body and paddle to strike the ball fairly, and he/she must do so in the absence of the referee confirmation of the block call. A player calling BLOCK just because he/she is not able to see the ball or take a full swing, and with enough room to make a defensive shot, will NOT be granted a BLOCK. But if the defensive player moves in front of the striker, trying to get out of the way to give the offensive player enough room to hit the ball, then it is a BLOCK if called
- B. **Forward Swing on a Block call** - If you call BLOCK and while trying to show you had a shot hit the opponent with a forward swing you are down or a point taken away.
- C. **Between the legs Block** – A ball passing between the legs of an opponent will be a block only when the striker has a reasonable chance for a play and calls "block".
- D. **Safety Holdup (BLOCK)** – A player who believes the opponent will be struck with the ball if the swing is made has the obligation to change his/her swing so that this does not happen. Any player about to execute a return, who believes that striking the opponent with the ball or paddle is likely, may immediately stop play and request a BLOCK. This call must be made immediately and is subject to acceptance and approval of the referee. The referee will grant the BLOCK if it is believed the holdup was reasonable and the player would have been able to return the shot.
- E. **Visual Block** - A BLOCK is not valid just because the player cannot see the ball. No block shall be granted by the referee when a player body blocks an opponent's view of the ball. Neither does a player have to move to give his/her opponent an opportunity to strike the ball. However, should a player move to block an opponent's vision of, or ability to strike the ball, that player shall be called out.
- F. **Blocking the Ball** – A player will be called out if he/she moves alongside or in front of an opponent while his/her partner is striking the ball.
- G. **Block But Ball Goes Long** – If a player calls block and the ball bounces long or out, it will be a point or loss of serve in favor of the player that called the block. The exception is if the referee acknowledges the block before the ball went out. This should be extremely rare but if it does happen, it will follow rule VI.B.

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**APPENDIX**

**Language of Paddleball**

<b>ACE</b>	A serve that is a winner without the receiving paddleball player able to return the ball.
<b>GAME</b>	A pre-determined set of points.
<b>KILLER</b>	A ball that rebounds from the wall so close to the floor that is impossible to return.
<b>ANGLE SHOT</b>	A ball that hits the wall in such a way as to rebound toward a sideline.
<b>BACKSWING</b>	The motion of a swing that moves the paddle into position to swing forward and strike the ball.
<b>DEADBALL</b>	A ball that is no longer LIVE or in PLAY.
<b>DRIVESHOT</b>	Hitting the ball hard to the wall so it rebounds in a relatively straight line.
<b>FAULT</b>	Infraction of the service rule.
<b>FOLLOW-THROUGH</b>	This is an essential part of any shot, and refers to the swing and motion of the paddle after initial contact has been made with the ball. The follow-through affects the direction and power of the shot.
<b>LOB</b>	A lob in paddleball is hitting the ball high and deep into the back court, within fair area of play. It can be used as an offensive or defensive weapon depending on the situation.
<b>LONG BALL</b>	A serve or played ball hit on a fly and lands passed the long-line.
<b>PASS-SHOT</b>	A pass-shot is a forceful shot that travels to one side out of the reach of one's opponent. This shot is generally used when one's opponent is running to the front of the court or if he/she is close to the wall.
<b>PLACEMENT</b>	A ball hit to the spot where it was intended, and which is practically impossible to return.
<b>SCREEN</b>	Interference with an opponent's vision during the flight of the ball.
<b>SHORT-BALL</b>	A serve failing to rebound over the short-line before the first bounce.
<b>SINGLES</b>	One player vs another player
<b>DOUBLES</b>	2 player vs 2 players (teams).
<b>CUT or SLICE</b>	A Cut or Slice, causes the ball to spin sideways away from one's opponent. Very difficult shot to master.
<b>DROPSHOT</b>	A drop shot is a shot in which the ball is hit relatively softly, and makes contact very low at the wall. Some DROPSHOTS carry a spin that causes the ball to rollout or spin away from one's opponent. EXTREMELY difficult shot to master.

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<b>SPIKESHOT</b>	A ball hit off the wall, on a fly. or after its first bounce, at its highest peak in a downward motion, over the shoulders, which hits the wall at its lowest point between the wall and the floor and elevating at a rapid speed. A beautiful shot when executed properly.
<b>I GOT NEXT</b>	The challenge of a waiting team to play against the winners of a game in play.
<b>ROLLER</b>	A non-returnable shot "Killer" which rolls away from the wall.
<b>RALLY</b>	A rally in paddleball is a collective name given to a sequence of back and forth shots between players, within a point. A rally starts with the serve and return of serve, followed by continuous return shots until a point is scored, which ends the rally.
<b>FOREHAND</b>	The forehand is a shot made by swinging the paddle across one's body with the hand moving palm-first.
<b>RECEIVER</b>	Player to whom a ball is served.
<b>TAKE 1</b>	The previously served ball was short or long, or you are still carrying one fault from a prior short, long.
<b>Take 2</b>	You have no faults. Referees in tournaments sometimes say the score and "take 1 or 2".
<b>OUTSIDE-CALL</b>	Sometimes used to settle a disagreement. When there is a disputed call between the 2 teams playing, a player might ask someone who was watching the game for their "call". Of course, the players have to agree to accept the "call". Outside calls are not used in tournaments.
<b>LET</b>	An instruction to a partner to not play the ball.
<b>MATCH POINT</b>	A situation in which the serving player or side will win the match by winning the next point.
<b>DOWN-BALL</b>	A ball hitting the floor first and then the wall.
<b>BACK-HAND</b>	A shot in which one swings the paddle around one's body with the back of the hand preceding the palm.
<b>HOLD IT</b>	Same as BLOCK.
<b>BLOCK</b>	When a player stops his/her swing to avoid hitting an opponent.
<b>UNDER</b>	A struck ball that hits the ground prior to hitting the wall.
<b>ON ONE/GOT IT ON ONE</b>	Indicates the striking player hit a shot before the second bounce.
<b>HASH MARK</b>	The outer bounds of the service box.
<b>A PLAYER / B PLAYER</b>	Used to indicate the perceived level of a certain player.
<b>DO IT OVER</b>	Used procedure when players do not agree on a call, avoids arguments.
<b>1st OR 2nd MAN</b>	Used in doubles to indicate which player is serving.