



Dawson County Parks & Recreation Rock Creek Sports Complex Pickleball Guidelines

About Pickleball
General Rules for Pickleball at Rock Creek
Paddle Stacking & Player Rotation
Pickleball Etiquette
Pickleball Safety
Never Played? How to Get Started
Resources

Pickleball

Pickleball is a court sport played on a badminton-sized court with the net set to a height of 34 inches at the center. It is played with a perforated plastic ball similar to a whiffle ball and composite or graphite paddles about twice the size of ping-pong paddles. It can be played indoors or outdoors and is easy for beginners to learn, but can develop into a fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players. In addition, the game has developed a passionate following due to its friendly, social nature, and its multi-generational appeal.

New players can learn the basic rules quickly in a single session. No special apparel is needed – just something comfortable and appropriate for a court sport. Equipment is inexpensive and easily portable. The game can be played by all ages.

The sport is governed by the USA Pickleball Association (USAPA.org) which maintains the rules, promotes the sport, sanctions tournaments, and provides player rankings. In 2010, the International Federation of Pickleball (IFP) adopted the USAPA rule book. This was an important step for international growth as the adoption of a singular rulebook ensures consistency in game play and regulations wherever pickleball is played. For more information, please visit usapa.org

The official rule book can be found at:
usapa.org/ifp-official-rules/

For an excellent 4 minute overview of the basics of Pickleball, visit
youtube.com/watch?v=cVYLxHn3ucQ

*Indoor pickleball courts are available for Open Play
on designated days and times at
Rock Creek Sports Complex and
Veterans Memorial Park*

Let's Play Pickleball

The Dawson County Parks & Recreation Pickleball Guidelines are in compliance with the USAPA. It is expected that pickleball players at Open Play will adhere to these guidelines.

Open Play

- For the current Open Play schedule, visit the Dawson County Parks & Recreation website at dawsoncounty.org/parksrec/page/pickleball.
- Open Play is for pickleball players who have their own paddle, know the basic rules, and how to score.
 - ◊ New to pickleball? Check out “How to get started” (page 9)
 - ◊ Never played a racquet sport? A beginners clinic is recommended * (page 9)
- Just show up on designated days and play at the scheduled times.
- Sign in upon arrival.
- Assist with net placement before play begins & with returning nets to the storage location after play. The assembled nets must be handled carefully.
- USAPA rules and scoring will be observed.
- Paddle stacking will be the method for player rotation (pages 4 & 5).
- Indoor balls will be provided at Rock Creek, when available.
- Bring your paddle.
- Wear tennis or court shoes, NOT running shoes.
- No cost for county or non-county residents.
- All Dawson County Parks & Recreation rules for gymnasium use will be observed.
- The Dawson County Parks and Recreation Zero Tolerance Policy will be implemented “for the purpose of upholding a safe, healthy, and enjoyable recreation environment for all citizens of Dawson County and our visitors”.

Special Events

Clinics

Round Robins

GRPA Pickleball 7th District Playoffs (typically in August)

GRPA Pickleball State Championship (typically in September)

Paddle Stacking & Player Rotation

Paddle stacking is an easy, simple method to self manage player rotation on and off courts when all courts are full and players are waiting to play pickleball. Several variations of paddle stacking are being used across the country for indoor and outdoor play, and have proven to minimize waiting time between games. Instead of the player waiting in line, the player's paddle is waiting in line. Since another player may have the exact same paddle, please put your name on your paddle.

The process of paddle stacking begins when all courts are in use and additional players arrive. The process determines who plays on the next available court.

1. Paddles are placed in a line, with the paddles to the far left next up to play when a court is available; these paddle owners have been waiting the longest. Players just finishing their game will place their paddles at the end of the line on the far right. There is no reason to break in line.
- 
2. Place your paddle at the end of the line as a single paddle, two stacked paddles, or four stacked paddles. Two stacked paddles (1 on top of the other) indicate 2 players are playing together as partners but, not choosing their opponents. Four stacked paddles (4 paddles on top of each other) indicate 4 players wish to play as a foursome. These players may be practicing for a tournament or just enjoy playing together. Four stacked paddles could also mean 4 beginners are choosing to play together, or 4 girls choosing a girls' game. Since this is OPEN Play, everyone is expected to mix in with all the players. Stacking 2 or 4 paddles is acceptable for a few games, but not intended to be used for the entire open play session. Keep in mind, when stacking 2 or 4 paddles, the wait time may be slightly longer, simply for the privilege of playing with specific players of your choosing.
 3. If a player already in line wants to play with someone farther back in line, that player must relinquish his place in line and move his paddle back in line (to the right) to stack paddles with the chosen player(s). Forming a 2 or 4 stack is never a reason to jump forward in line.
 4. The players in a 2 or 4 stack must agree to the groupings.
 5. A player is limited to placing only 1 paddle in the rotation line.
 6. Do not move a paddle in the line unless it belongs to you.
 7. All waiting players will need to pay attention when a game has been completed, since four new players from the paddle line are up. A quick player changeover will reduce waiting time for everyone.
 8. There are several combinations for gathering 4 players from the paddle line (4 single paddles, 2 singles and one 2-stack, two 2-stacks, or one 4 stack). Depending on where a 4 stack or a 2 stack falls in the line, single paddles or a 2 stack may need to move forward in line to have 4 players for the next available court. Examples on page 5



Example 1

Paddle line with 11 paddles:
 1,2,3,6,11 are single paddles
 4 & 5 are a 2 paddle stack
 7,8,9,10 are a 4 paddle stack

Paddle 1 has been waiting longest and is next up to play. Four players finish and a court is available. Four players coming off the court place their paddles to the right of paddle 11 (end of the line) as single paddles and would be paddles #12,13,14,15 (not shown in this picture).

Paddles 1,2,3,and 6 are next up to play and move to their court. That leaves 2-stack 4 & 5 at the front of the line (or far left) and will take the next available court. However 4 & 5 need 2 players, the next available 2 players would be paddle 11 and paddle 12 (not pictured). After 4 & 5,11,12 take the next court, the 4 stack 7,8,9,10 will finally be at the front of the line. A single paddle has the most flexibility and can move ahead of a 2 stack or a 4 stack to round out the 4 players needed for the next available court.

Example 2

Paddle line with 8 paddles:
 1,2 are single paddles
 3,4,5,6 are a 4-stack
 7,8 are a 2-stack



The far left paddle is the #1 paddle and has been in line the longest. When a court becomes available, single paddles 1 & 2 and 2-stack paddles 7 & 8 will play as the next group. Paddles 7 & 8 will be partners because of the 2-stack and will play against 1 & 2. For the privilege of playing together, paddles 3,4,5,6 will wait slightly longer than paddles 7 & 8, but will play together as a foursome and will play after 1,2,7,8.

And one more thought on “sharing busy courts”...

When there are no waiting players, games are played to 11, win by 2. If there are at least 8 players waiting, the games will be played to 11, win by 1. When the number of waiting players reaches 16, games may be reduced to 9 points, win by 1, allowing quicker court turnover without significantly reducing play time.

*Pickleball players waiting for a court is
 a time to visit with other players,
 to catch your breath, and hydrate.
 Be patient and have fun!*

Pickleball Etiquette

Pickleball is only a game. It is not a metaphor for life. The objective of recreational PB is healthy exercise for the body and mind, good competition while showing respect to your partners and opponents, and having fun. "Open Play" is considered social pickleball.

Knowing the rules regarding line calls is a very important element of the game. We all have to do our best to give the benefit of the doubt to our opponents when calling the lines. You are responsible to call the lines on "your" side of the court and your opponents are responsible to call "theirs". Forgetting our roles may cause tension.

If you have not reviewed Line Call Rules in the in USAPA Tournament Rule Book, please take the time to review and be a good steward of the game.

usapa.org/ifp-official-rules/

The Dawson County Parks and Recreation Zero Tolerance Policy will be followed "for the purpose of upholding a safe, healthy, and enjoyable recreation environment for all citizens of Dawson County and our visitors".

Here are a few suggestions for the PB player interested in elevating the game, along with creating a positive experience for fellow PB players. Many of the guidelines for courtesy on the courts revolve around not interrupting play on nearby courts.

- ▶ Begin each game by acknowledging the other players, make introductions.
- ▶ At the end of each game, find something positive to say to the other team at the net. Never leave a game without acknowledging your partner and opponents.
- ▶ Avoid excessive conversation or loud outbursts that may distract players on other courts.
- ▶ If the ball is out and it is on your side of the net, call it out. If it is close, give the benefit of the doubt to your opponents. USAPA Rule 6.D.3
- ▶ Never question your opponents' line call. USAPA Rule 6.D.5
- ▶ If you or your partner step into the kitchen while volleying (or on the kitchen line), call it on yourself or your partner. Be very cautious about calling kitchen or serving faults on your opponents. Allow your opponents to call their own foot faults.

Etiquette continued . . .

- ▶ Never ask for, or accept, line calls from spectators.
- ▶ Never yell at your partner or opponents in anger. Never swear or use hostile or sarcastic language.
- ▶ The corollary to the above is obvious. Compliment players on outstanding shots or on a really great game. (Not on every point, but when appropriate.) It is more fun playing with a partner who is positive and supportive.
- ▶ Be considerate of different skill levels. The advanced player can easily adjust the power and finesse game to ensure all 4 players on the court have fun. Remember this is social pickleball.

Court Etiquette

- ▶ When serving, the server is required by the USAPA rules to call the score prior to the serve. Calling the score lets the receiver know you are ready to serve and helps all players keep track of the score. It is unnecessary for other players to call the score between points.
- ▶ Do not chase a ball into an active court.
- ▶ Be courteous and return other balls that stray into and behind your court.
- ▶ If another team's ball enters your court during play, call a "LET" for safety's sake, stop your play, and re-serve the point.
- ▶ When play is completed and you are leaving the court, be courteous to players still playing on the next court. Ensure ample clearance and exit the court quickly so as not to hold up play on the court nearest to your exit.
- ▶ When your game is over, please gather the balls for the next 4 players.

In summary, be courteous, & respectful of your fellow PBall players, interacting with them the same way you would have them interact with you!

Pickleball Safety

1. Don't overplay your current physical condition. *Just One More Game* has resulted in many unnecessary injuries.
2. Hydrate. This means drink water. Drink BEFORE you are thirsty.
3. Warm up before playing. Insufficient warm up time is a major cause of sports injuries. Please be willing to warm up **at least 5 minutes** or until everyone is ready to play. Rushing to start play could result in a sidelining injury.
4. Follow your normal warm-up and cool down routine, stretching before and after play if appropriate for you.
5. If a ball comes onto your court from another court, or if you hear "LET" or "Ball On Court", STOP play immediately. Replay the point.
6. Don't just swat a wayward ball across active courts. Pick it up and toss it to the player on the other court.
7. If you hit a ball into another court, immediately call "LET" or "Ball On Court".
8. If a ball is going towards another court, do not chase it onto an active court. Stop, yell "Let" and allow the other players to stop play and retrieve the ball.
9. If you need to cross an active court to get to a vacant court, to exit your court after play, or to retrieve a ball, WAIT until their current point is over.
10. If anything falls on the court, quickly remove it.
11. If you are near your partner with an overhead slam opportunity where you may hit your partner, stop play. Let the ball drop and lose the point. Do NOT hit your partner. Be aware of not only your partner's position on the court, but your own position.
12. If you can go back more safely for an overhead than your partner, (if their mobility is limited), you cover the overheads. Likewise let them cover for you if the situation is reversed. Discuss this prior to the start of a game.
13. When going back for a lob, turn and run back, Do NOT backpedal. Many falls happen because someone backpedals instead of turning and running. This is a hard thing to do correctly, and needs to be practiced. Add this to your drills.
14. If you see someone who displays signs of dizziness, weakness, or lack of concentration, call a time-out. Talk to the player, if any sign of disorientation, contact the Parks & Rec personnel at the front desk for assistance. *
15. If someone falls on the court, all play STOPS until the situation is assessed. If necessary, contact the Parks & Rec personnel at the front desk for assistance.*
16. If a fall involves a bump on the head, the fallen player should be encouraged to take a break. Notify the Parks & Rec personnel as appropriate. *

* In case there is no Parks & Rec personnel at the front desk to assist with an emergency requiring medical attention, please call 911. If no cell phone coverage, use the land line on the front desk; dial 9 for an outside line, then 911.

Never Played Pickleball? How to Get Started

Pickleball is an easy and fun sport to learn.

▶ First, do a little homework by watching a short 2 minute “pickleball for beginners” video.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTvPYdKZqO0>

▶ Spend another 10 minutes and watch 2 additional videos.

▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHMLvyyGqOI>

▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVFB97HvIxs>

For more in-depth information, check out www.usapa.org

Scoring

A few basic rules & scoring

Learning to Play

Now ready for the courts

- ▶ • A basic beginners clinic, paddles provided, is the next logical step. A very quick review of the basic rules on the pickleball court will boost your confidence and have you playing your 1st pickleball game within about an hour. How to keep score and safety on the court will be discussed. Sign-up for the clinic is required.
- Beginners clinics are offered periodically. Please check the Dawson County Parks & Recreation Camps & Clinics page at dawsoncounty.org/parksrec/page/pickleball-clinics for updates.
- As you play pickleball, you will learn the different shots, the strategy, and the importance of finesse and dinking in the game. To gain additional knowledge, you may enjoy watching the great videos on PickleballChannel.com, click on Pickleball 411. There are also certified pickleball instructors in the North Georgia area who can help take your game to the next level. See Resources, page 10, in the Dawson County Pickleball Guidelines

Buying a Paddle & Finding Tennis/Court Shoes (after playing a few games)

A favorite source for paddles & shoes is online at pickleballcentral.com.

Before purchasing a paddle, check out the Paddle Guide on Pickleball Central for help with selecting the right paddle: pickleballcentral.com/Pickleball_Paddle_Guide_s/49.htm.

A paddle comparison chart provides weight, grip size & price information. Use discount code **CRDawson** as you check out for a 5% discount. You will find a quality composite or graphite paddle in the \$75 range. When buying online from Pickleball Central, you may return or exchange within 30 days. Confirm the return/exchange policy.

▶ Dick’s Sporting Goods has expanded their online selection of paddles, with a 60 day return policy.
In-store selection is limited

In the Gainesville area, stop by Racquets & Togs (just off the square) at 115 Bradford St. North, Gainesville, Ga - phone 770-532-9900. racquetsandtogs.com. They carry paddles and tennis shoes.

In Woodstock, there is an Asics Outlet store at 915 Ridgewalk Pkwy, Suite D440, Woodstock, Ga. for tennis/court shoes. Asics is a very popular tennis shoe.

If in Roswell or Kennesaw, check out the PGA Tour Superstore for a great selection of tennis shoes. This is a golf store, but has a large selection of tennis apparel & footwear. Check out the website :

pgatoursuperstore.com/tennis/footwear/

Additional Resources

- For the current Rock Creek Pickleball Open Play schedule dawsoncounty.org/parksrec/page/pickleball
- For the Holiday Closing Schedule for Dawson County Parks & Rec dawsoncounty.org/parksrec
- To review the Dawson County Parks and Recreation Department Zero Tolerance Policy: dawsoncounty.org/parksrec/page/schedules-documents-more
- To share these guidelines with a friend, use this link to Dawson County Park & Rec at dawsoncounty.org/parksrec/page/pickleball
- Visit pickleballcentral.com to find the pickleball superstore. Use discount code **CRDawson**
- Select Pickleball 411 at pickleballchannel.com for video lessons & tips from pickleball coaches & pros.
- Visit the USAPA site at usapa.org for membership information, Learning to Play, Places 2 Play, & more.
- Find the official Pickleball rules at usapa.org/ifp-official-rules/
- For a list of IPTPA certified pickleball instructors level I and level II in Georgia, visit iptpa.com/
- For a list of PPR certified pickleball coaches and pros, visit pprpickleball.org/
- Google “basic pickleball rules” for a condensed version of the rules.
- Google “pickleball basics videos” to find even more fun and informative information.
- Contact Darlene Johnson or Susan McBerry for pickleball questions, to inquire about a clinic, or to be added to or removed from the email distribution list.

Darlene Johnson: djohnson165@hotmail.com

Susan McBerry: smcberry@windstream.net

*Follow the Dawson County Pickleball Facebook page
for updates, clinics, and more!*

*Call the main office at Rock Creek Park at
(706) 344-3646 during regular business hours
(M-F 8AM-5PM).*