



Special Olympics Pickleball Competition

Events: Singles, Doubles, Unified Doubles or Unified Team

**Athletes may play Singles or Doubles or Singles and Doubles or Singles and Unified Doubles or Team*

Divisioning: Athletes and Unified Partners will be divisioned by their play level and assessment score. Divisions will be comprised of no greater than 8 per division.

Match Format: Round Robin Pool play followed by Medal Rounds with compass draw format

Game Format: Pre-Level 1 – Individual Skills Competition (See separate section)

Level 1 – One 9-point game, first to win 9 points by a margin of 2 points.

Level 2 – One 9-point game or best of three (9-point games - TD decision), first to win 9 points by a margin of 2 points

Level 3 – Best of three, 11-point games, first to win 11 points by a margin of 2 points

Level 4 – Best of three, 11-point games, first to win 11 points by a margin of 2 points

Ball Type/Court Size: Pre-Level 1- Indoor Ball Court: 28' long x 20' wide

Level 1 –Indoor Ball Court: 28' long x 20 ' wide

Level 2 – Indoor Ball Court: 36' long x 20' wide

Level 3 – Competition Ball Court: 44' long x 20' wide

Level 4 – Competition Ball Court: 44' long x 20' wide

Scoring: Points are scored by the serving team only. Coach or Unified Partner will call the score at any level in the absence of a referee

Serves: Serves must be made underhand and paddle contact with the ball must be below the server's waist, paddle below the highest part. Serves may be hit out of the server's opposite hand or dropped (not thrown downward) from any height and hit after the ball bounces. Neither foot may contact the baseline or court until after the ball is struck.

Serves (Cont.)

Level 1 - May be allowed two service attempts and will be allowed a “let serve” replay using the 28’x20’ court.

Level 2 - May be allowed one service attempts and will be allowed a “let serve” replay.

Level 3 - Allowed one service attempt and will be expected to play a “let serve”, if the ball lands beyond the non-volley zone line.

Level 4 - Allowed one service attempt and will be expected to play a “let serve”, if the ball lands beyond the non-volley zone line.

Service (Change Ends):

Level 1 – No changing of ends.

Level 2 – Changing of ends at the end of each game.

Level 3 - In a match with two out of three games to 11 points, teams will change ends after game one and two. In game three, the teams will switch ends when the first team reaches a score of 6. Serve remains with the player holding serve.

Level 4 – In a match with two out of three games to 11 points, teams will change ends after game one and two. In game three, the teams will switch ends when the first team reaches a score of 6. Serve remains with the player holding serve.

Serve/Receive Position:

Refer to rules 4.B.7 through 4.B.10. in the 2022 Official USA Pickleball Rulebook

Non-Volley Zone: **Levels 1 & 2** - Players may not stand in the non-volley zone unless they are returning a ball that bounces in the non-volley zone. A player may step into the non-volley zone if their momentum carries them after hitting the ball below the waist behind the line.

Levels 3 & 4 - Players may not stand in the non-volley zone unless they are returning a ball that bounces in the non-volley zone and then the player would need to step out of the non-volley zone.

Doubles: Teams comprised of athletes from two different levels must compete at the higher level. Athletes must be from the same program to compete in Doubles.

Unified Doubles: Level 1: Athletes and Unified Partners may differ in abilities and age. Unified Partners may serve as mentors.
Level 2: Athletes and Unified Partners may differ in abilities but similar age.
Level 3 & 4 - Athletes and Unified Partners must have similar play level and assessment score with similar age (preferable).

Coaching: **Level 1 & 2** – One designated coach may sit or stand near the court (off of the playing surface) and may coach a player when the ball is dead without delaying the progress of the game. Each player may call two time-outs per game each lasting up to one minute in duration and coaching may be received.



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Coaching(Cont.)



Level 3 & 4 - One designated coach may sit or stand near the court (off of the playing surface) and may coach a player only during time-outs or at the end of each game. Each player may call two time-outs per game each lasting up to one minute in duration and coaching may be received.

Rules:

All USA Pickleball rules will be followed except those that are modified herein.

Special Olympics Pickleball Levels

Level 1:

1. Provides meaningful pickleball training and competition for beginning athletes, athletes with limited mobility, tracking skills and control.
2. Provides an ability-based learning environment.
 - a. Larger & slower ball type –indoor pickleball
3. Learning concentrations.
 - a. Strokes (forehand, backhand, volleys & serves)
 - b. Movement
 - c. Tracking
 - d. Rules & Etiquette

Level 2:

1. Provides meaningful pickleball training and competition for athletes who have been successful in Level 1. Athletes understand the basics of the game, limited control of the serve, return serve, hits mainly forehands, lacks control on volleys and can sustain a slow-paced rally.
2. Provides an ability-based learning environment.
 - a. Slower paced ball – indoor pickleball
3. Learning concentrations
 - a. Sending & Receiving Skills
 - b. Preparation
 - c. Footwork
 - d. Rules & Etiquette
 - e. Strokes
 - f. Scoring

Level 3:

1. Provides meaningful pickleball training and competition for athletes who have been successful in Level 2. Athletes understand rules, can control the serve, return the serve, volley, has limited success and consistency with the dink shot, can sustain a medium paced rally and begins to vary depth of shots. Athletes' skills sufficient for community play.
2. Provides an ability-based learning environment.
 - a. Traditional Competition Pickleball
3. Learning concentrations
 - a. Recovery
 - b. Advanced Strokes – Dink & Overhead
 - c. Increased Paddle Control with Movement
 - d. Doubles Communication
 - e. Etiquette, & Strategy
 - f. Placement

Level 4:

1. Provides meaningful pickleball training in competition for athletes who have been successful in Level 3, can serve with pace and vary shot speed and depth, can use the dink shot effectively and sustain dink rally, uses strategy to move opponent and moves well as a doubles team.
2. Learning concentrations
 - a. Speed, Endurance & Core Training
 - b. Placement with varying Pace
 - c. Develop Spins
 - d. Doubles Strategy
 - e. Shot Selection Strategy



Special Olympics Pickleball Assessment

**All athletes and Unified partners must submit assessment scores with tournament registration.*

The Special Olympics Pickleball Assessment consists of four tasks: Serve, Return of Serve, Volley and Rally. Points from each task will be totaled and assessment information will be used in the divisioning process for fair and equitable competition.

Left Service Box	Non - Volley Zone	Non-Volley Zone		X Athlete/UP Serve h
Feeder X			X Volley	
Right Service Box				
				Athlete/ UP Serve f

A. Equipment: Pickleball court, two paddles, individual assessment sheets, clip board and pencil, 18 Level balls; Level 1 - Foam, Indoor/Outdoor (larger holes/slower) , Level 2- Indoor/Outdoor (larger holes/slower), Level 3/4 – Competition Ball

B. Roles: Recorder, Feeder, Athlete/Unified Partner

C. Assessed Tasks

- Serves-** The Athlete/UP stands behind baseline, starting on the right side. The Athlete/UP receives twelve underhand service attempts, **6 right side** and **6 left side**. The serve must be a **diagonal** underhand serve with paddle below the waist and no higher than the highest part of the wrist. Balls landing in the correct box receive 1 point. If player steps on or over the baseline, it is considered a foot fault and shall receive 0 points. Balls landing in the non-volley zone (kitchen) shall receive 0 points. A missed attempt is 0 points and will not be replayed unless it was a let serve. Served balls landing on a line shall be considered good **except on the non-volley zone line**. Coach or volunteer demonstrates the serve for Level 1 & 2.
- Return of Serve** - The Athlete/UP stands in the right service box, the Feeder/Server (*using appropriate level balls*) shall serve 6 balls to the right service box - three balls to the forehand side and three balls to the backhand side with the Athlete/UP to return each serve. The point is not played out. Then same process is repeated to the left service box. The Athlete/UP shall receive 1 point for each return of serve, that lands over the net and within the court boundaries. Balls landing on lines are considered good. The server's pace of serve should be appropriate for the players level.



3. **Volleys** - The Athlete/UP stands one meter behind the non-volley zone line on center line. The feeder stands on opposite side of net, one meter from the non-volley zone line on center line with a basket of twelve "level" appropriate balls. The ball is paddle fed to the Athlete/UP alternating forehand/backhand, six times per side. Each volley hit landing inbounds across the net receives 1 point. Any ball landing on a line is considered good. If the feeder makes an error in feeding, the feed shall be re-fed one time. If an Athlete/UP misses a volley, that attempt shall receive 0 points.
4. **Rally** - The Athlete/UP shall receive six rally attempts. Serving alternating "right" then "left" sides for each rally. The two-bounce rule is in effect. (*When the ball is served, the receiving team must let it bounce before returning, and then the serving team must let it bounce before returning, thus two bounces*). After the two-bounce rule is fulfilled, every hit counts as 1 point until an error is made which ends the rally (e.g., Athlete/UP serves, ball bounces and receiver returns the ball then after the ball bounces the server hits ball and rally continues with each hit now scoring 1 point) or (e.g., If four hits occurred after the two-bounce rule, then 2 points will be scored by each team. If the two bounce is not fulfilled, each team will receive zero points for that rally).

D. Assessment Scoring Scale

Levels	Serves	Return of Serves	Volleys	Rally	Total Score
1 Foam or I/O Ball	0 - 5	0 - 5	0 - 5	0 - 5	0 - 20
2 I/O Ball	5 - 10	5 - 10	5 - 10	5 - 12	20 - 42
3 Competition Ball	8 - 12	8 - 12	8 - 12	18 - 30	48 - 66
4 Competition Ball	10 - 12	10 - 12	10 - 12	24 - 36+	54 - 72+

Special Olympics Pickleball Assessment

Name		Delegation						Rater	
Date	Athlete or Partner	Serves (1 point each)		Return of Serves (1 point each)		Volleys (1 point each)		Rallies	
		Right	Left	Forehand Right	Backhand Right	Forehand Left	Backhand Left	Forehand	Backhand
LEVEL 1	4	Attempts							
	3	1							
	2	2							
	1	3							
		4							
		5							
LEVEL 2		6							
		Sub-Total							
		Mark "F" for foot fault		1 point/inbounds return		1 point/inbounds volley		1 point/hit after two-bounce rule Mark who made error	
								Grand Total	

Observations		Circle one	
Level 1	Minimal understanding of the basic rules of the game	0	1
	Demonstrated good hand-eye coordination	0	1
	Demonstrated good mobility	0	1
Level 2	Demonstrated knowledge of two-bounce rule	0	1
	Able to hit forehand with direction	0	1
	Able to hit back hand with direction	0	1
	Demonstrated accuracy in serving	0	1
Level 3	Able to hit medium paced forehand with direction and accuracy	0	1
	Able to hit medium paced backhand with direction and accuracy	0	1
	Able to hit a medium paced serve with depth, direction and consistency	0	1
	Able to hit an effective dink	0	1
	Able to vary depth of shots	0	1
Level 4	Able to hit deep return of serves	0	1
	Able to hit a variety of shots (lobs, overheads, etc) with some consistency	0	1
	Able to sustain a short volley session	0	1
	Able to adjust to differing ball speeds consistently	0	1
	Able to play doubles effectively using court strategies, partner communication and change a losing game.	0	1

Scoring instructions	
0 = Not observed	1 = attempted, poor executed
2 = good basic form, needs work	3 = solid, consistent

Scoring instructions	
Serves: 1 point = Inbound diagonal serve. Lines are consider good except non-volley zone line = 0 pts. Foot Faults = 0 pts	Return of Serves : Inbound return = 1 pt, 0 pts for missed attempts.
Volleys: Inbound return = 1 pt, 0 pts for missed attempts.	Rally: Scoring begins after the two-bounce rule has been fulfilled then 1 point for each hit in that rally attempt. 0 points if two-bounce rule is not fulfilled. Mark who made the error.