

# Florida Team Pickleball League Rules

**I. GENERAL.** The following rules apply to all leagues in the Florida Team Pickleball League (FTPL) organization unless otherwise specified. All FTPL leagues will follow current USA Pickleball (USAP) rules other than those noted in the FTPL Rules.

## II. PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS

- A.** All participants in pickleball are bound by the FTPL rules, as well as those of the USAP. Not all possible incidents and ramifications may be covered in the following rules. Participants in unusual or undocumented situations will have to abide by the decision of the Executive Committee and/or the Board of Directors. If there is a conflict in an interpretation of any rule, FTPL rules shall supersede. The FTPL rules as provided herein shall apply to all FTPL players unless such rules are revised, amended, or otherwise changed by the FTPL Board of Directors and/or the Executive Committee. In such an event, the FTPL Rules shall be updated on the FTPL website.
- B.** All leagues are open to men and women players in their respective gender divisions and mixed divisions. Players participating in FTPL regional leagues must be 18 years of age or older, and anyone 14-17 with a parent or guardian present.
- C.** There are three age defined leagues in each region in each division (Men's, Women's & Mixed).
  - 1. 14+ League: All teams are not age restricted. Players must be 14 years by the league start date, If older then 14, the they must 15 years or older during the calendar year of the league start.
  - 2. 50+ League: Players must be 50 years or older during the calendar year of the league start.
  - 3. 65+ League: Players must be 65 years or older during the calendar year of the league start.
- D.** Players may play one or more of the age defined leagues within a region provided they meet the requirements for each league.
- E.** Players may play in more than one region provided they meet the requirements for the league they are participating in. If more than one of the player's teams qualifies for the same division in the State Championships, the player must coordinate with the team captains at least three days in advance so it is understood which team they are committed to for the Championships.
- F.** For scheduling purposes there must be three teams in each division/age group, skill levels and/or ages may be combined. Exceptions must be approved by Regional Manager.

## III. ROSTER REQUIREMENTS

- A. MEMBERSHIP FEE.** All players must have paid the player registration fee for each team they participate in prior to participating in the league each season.
- B. WAIVER.** All players must have agreed to the waiver release of liability prior to participation in the league each season.
- C. PLAYER SKILL LEVEL RATINGS.** Team rosters must consist of players with skills that are consistent with the division skill level in which their team is playing. The list below indicates the ratings that will be used for FTPL.
  - 1. FTPL Rating. Players who have previously played in FTPL will not need to enter a rating, as FTPL rating will supersede all other ratings. FTPL ratings cannot be appealed except in the event of a serious medical condition that has impacted on the players skill.

2. DUPR Rating. If a new player has a DUPR rating, the rating will be used as the start rating for the player. If the reliability is below 60, then the player may file an appeal if they want to start at a higher or lower rating. Only approved appeals will be accepted for playing out of rating range.
3. UTR-P Rating. If a new player has an UTR-P rating, it will be adjusted to scales to a league rating (typically 1 point lower), for the players start rating. A player can appeal the rating. Only approved appeals will be accepted for playing out of range.
4. Appealed Rating: Ratings appeals shall be submitted and ruled upon prior to player registration. For all ratings, it is the responsibility of the team captain to assure the ratings are accurate and defendable, no matter what the level.
5. Rating by Certified Ratings Specialist  
There are certified specialists throughout the state of Florida (IPTPA.com)
6. LEAGUE-RATED PLAYERS. If a player does not have a UTR-P, DUPR, the league will assign the player a rating for play for each division of play as follows:
  - 2.5 Divisions → 2.7
  - 3.0 Divisions → 3.2
  - 3.5 Divisions → 3.7
  - 4.0 Divisions → 4.2

**D. TEAM ROSTER SKILL LEVELS.**

1. All skill levels, teams may contain up to four players with a 0.5 rating point below the team's division skill level. For example, a 4.0 team may include up to four 3.5 players as exceptions.
2. 4.5 teams may have 2 players at the 5.0 I- 5.25 level.

**Note: Appeals are valid for one (1) season.**

**E. TEAM MEMBERS.**

1. Players may play in more than one age-defined FTPL league (14+, 50+ or 65+) and/or more than one division (Mixed or Gender Doubles), but cannot be on more than one team in the same division within a league within the same region. (Example: a player may play on a 3.5 Men's division team in the 14+ league and play on a Men's 3.5 team in the 50+ league but not on two Men's 3.5 teams within the same league, either 14+ or 50+).
2. A player who registers for a team may not switch teams within the same division once the season has started unless approved by the League Coordinator.
3. Team members are not required to be from any particular club. Captains may recruit players from any location. It is the captain's responsibility to ensure their roster meets the requirements of their home court venue if there are specified requirements or restrictions defined by the venue.

**F. TEAM NAMES.** Captains will submit an initial team name to the league during team registration. It is first come, first served, in case two submittals are identical in the same region. Team names can be changed after registration provided no other team in the same region is using the same name.

**G. ROSTER SIZE.** There is no limit to roster size. Captains should be aware that in order for players to participate in the next level of competition (playoffs, state championships) players must meet the player playoff qualification criteria.

**H. PLAYER PLAYOFF QUALIFICATION CRITERIA.** In order to participate in a regional playoff, players must have played in at least two complete FTPL regular season matches. In order to participate in a State Championship players must have played in at least two complete regular season matches, or 12 full games in the season.

- I. ROSTER ADDITIONS.** Captains may add players to their roster through the player registration process until the cutoff date published on the FTPL calendar under Get Started on the FTPL website.

**IV. TEAM REGISTRATION**

- A. DEADLINES.** All teams must have registered online by the published registration deadline.
- B. CAPTAINS.** All teams must have a designated captain and co-captain. Captains shall monitor their rosters as players begin to register for correctness and adherence to league rules.

**V. COURTS, BALLS, PADDLES, STARTING SERVER BANDS**

- A. COURTS AND FACILITIES.** Each team is required to guarantee the use of three hard outdoor courts. Indoor venues are acceptable provided they use typical hard outdoor court surfaces. Pickleball courts for match play must be at an FTPL approved facility. For facility approval contact your League or Venue Coordinator. Courts must be available simultaneously for a minimum of two hours (2.5 hours preferred).
- B. BALLS.** Balls used for all FTPL league games must be Franklin X-40 outdoor balls, either new or in good condition, with an enhanced color for visibility similar to "optic yellow" or "neon". Pink, blue and other colors are not allowed. The team listed as the home team supplies the balls. It is recommended that at least six balls be available at each match. The same make, model and color ball must be used for all games in the match.
- C. PADDLES.** Paddles must be USAP approved for tournament play.
- D. STARTING SERVER BANDS.** The home team shall decide whether to use starting server wristbands and provide them for all players if required.

**VI. SCHEDULE AND LOCATIONS**

- A. SCHEDULING REQUIREMENTS.** All league captains must submit their home team match location, day and time when they register online prior to the deadline published. (See Team Registration Section IV.)
- B. MATCH TIMES.** Match times posted on the schedule are the times the match is required to begin. Captains are expected to contact their opposing captains in advance of the match and inform them if there are courts available prior to the match start time for warm-up.
- C. MATCH LOCATION & FREQUENCY.** Match locations will be published in the schedule. Teams will typically play a minimum of two matches against each team in its division (one as home team, one as away team). This may change depending on the size of the division.
- D. SCHEDULE CHANGES.**
1. Any changes to the published schedule after the pre-season rescheduling period, other than for inclement weather, are discouraged and must be approved by the League Coordinator. Schedule changes that involve public courts must be requested a minimum of three days in advance of the original scheduled date.

Note: For complete requirements for schedule changes see the FTPL Reschedule Policy on the Captain Resources page of the FTPL website.

- E. SHORT LINE-UPS FOR 2.5-4.0 TEAMS.** If a captain (from Team "A") cannot field three doubles teams from their roster, and rescheduling the match is not feasible, then that captain shall bring two doubles teams to play (line 1 and line 2 on the scoresheet) and forfeit all of its line 3 doubles team games. The opposing team (Team "B") shall still bring all six of its players as each of its team pairs will play against the opponent's line 1 team and line 2 team. The scoresheet will reflect a score of 11 - 0 for each forfeited game in each round and Team "B" will be awarded two match points for each forfeited game (i.e., four points per round). Scoring of the games played will be

the same as found in the “Match Process” section VII.D. If a captain can only field one doubles team pair, the entire match will be forfeited, earning the winning team 36 points and one win in the standings.

## **VII. MATCH PLAY**

### **A. FORMATS.** All games are played to 11, win by 2 points.

1. All 2.5-4.0 team matches will be three rounds with two games played as follows (see FTPL scoresheet):

Round 1:

- (1) Home team line 1 plays Visiting line 1.
- (2) Home team line 2 plays Visiting line 2.
- (3) Home team line 3 plays Visiting line 3.

Round 2:

- (4) Home team line 1 plays Visiting line 2.
- (5) Home team line 2 plays Visiting line 3.
- (6) Home team line 3 plays Visiting line 1.

Round 3:

- (7) Home team line 1 plays Visiting line 3.
- (8) Home team line 2 plays Visiting line 1.
- (9) Home team line 3 plays Visiting line 2.

2. 4.5/5.0 gender teams matches will be two rounds of three games as follows:

Round 1:

- (1) Home team players 1 & 2 play Visiting team players 1 & 2.
- (2) Home team players 3 & 4 play Visiting team players 3 & 4.

Round 2:

- (3) Home team players 1 & 2 play Visiting team players 3 & 4.
- (4) Home team players 3 & 4 play Visiting team players 1 & 2.

3. 4.5/5.0 mixed team matches will have two men and two women (4 total) per team, playing three rounds of two games as follows:

Round 1:

- (1) Home team men play Visiting team men.
- (2) Home team women play Visiting team women

Round 2:

- (3) Home team man1/woman1 play Visiting team man1/woman1.
- (4) Home team man2/woman2 play Visiting team man2/woman2.

Round 3:

- (5) Home team man1/woman1 play Visiting team man2/woman2.
- (6) Home team man2/woman2 play Visiting team man1/woman1.

Home teams stay on the same courts for each round. Visiting teams switch courts after each round.

### **B. MATCH DAY TEAMS.**

- 1. 2.5-4.0 teams: On match day the captain will bring six players to play on three doubles teams.

2. All 4.5/5.0 Teams: On match day the captain will bring four players to play on two doubles teams.

Lineups identifying the doubles teams and substitute(s) on the scoresheet will be exchanged prior to the start of the match after which they may not be changed. The doubles team partners will stay together for that day's match unless substitutions are made (see substitution rules). Captains or their designees are required to be on-site at each match.

- C. LATE PLAYER.** Unless otherwise specified, the schedules state the time matches are to start. It is always a good idea to verify the start time with your opposing team captain a few days prior to the match. The following rules apply to late players: Matches shall start no later than five (5) minutes after the posted match start time. If a player has not arrived by then, the identified substitute may be utilized in the place of the late player or the game(s) can be forfeited. Upon arrival, if games(s) were forfeited, the late player may play in any ensuing games. If the sub has played, the late player will fulfill the role of substitute for the remaining matches. The late player can go into the match at the beginning of the next round. No warm-up time is allowed. All games forfeited will be scored 11-0 against the team with the late player.
- D. MATCH PROCESS.** To begin a match, the visiting teams choose to serve or receive or court side to start on. Each lineup of doubles team will play two games to 11 (win by 2). Teams shall switch sides after the first game. At the end of each round the visiting doubles teams will switch courts to play the next home doubles team noted on the lineup/scoresheet. On team match day, except for 4.5/5.0 gender doubles, each doubles team will play four-six games (two-three rounds): two games against the opposing line 1 doubles team, two games against the line 2 team, and two games against the line 3 team.
- E. MATCH SCORING.** Two match points are awarded for each game won by a doubles team. If the losing team scores 6 or more points in a game, they are awarded 1 match point. No match points are awarded for a score of 5 points or less. Whichever team earns the most match points in all the games played in a match, will be the winner of the match and will be awarded a win in their division team standings. Games are played to 11, win by 2. If a game goes into extra points, a team will win at 15, win by 1.
- F. BREAKS.** A break of two minutes is allowed between games. After each round of two games, a break of up to five minutes is allowed commencing at the time the last two opposing doubles teams in the round complete their second game.
- G. TIME OUTS.** A single one-minute time out is allowed per game per team. Water breaks are not meant to be time outs and should be limited to 10 seconds with no talking. Bathroom breaks should be taken between rounds. One medical time-out is allowed per player per match, limited to 5 minutes, at which time the player may continue, a substitute may be used or the line forfeited.
- H. COACHING.** Per USAP rules, coaching by anyone is **ONLY** allowed after completion of each game, between rounds and during time outs.
- I. SUBSTITUTIONS DURING MATCH DAY.** Each team is allowed one substitute once play has begun, a player is late (per Rule VII.C.). Any such substitution is permanent for the remainder of the match. Players removed may not return to the match. Substitutions may only be made with players on the current team roster. There is no warm-up time allowed for the substitute unless a time out is used. For Mixed Doubles one substitute for each gender is allowed.
  1. Scoring for the round that a player came out will be:  
Team retiring a player will keep their earned points and the opposing team will get 11 points. If the player retired in the first game, the second game will be scored 11-0 and will be identified as a Win by Default on the scoresheet drop down box that designates the winner.

- J. **WARM UP COURTS.** FTPL does not require facilities to provide warm-up courts before a match is scheduled to begin. Visiting team captains should check with the home team captain in advance of the match to determine if warm-up time is available. In any event, teams are allowed a five minute warm up after the posted match start time, to be monitored jointly by the team captains.
- K. **MATCH PLAY OVER THE ALLOTTED RESERVATION BLOCK.** If a match or game exceeds the allotted reservation block, the players must relinquish the court if other people are waiting to play. The game(s) in process can be completed on an open court abiding by the rules of the venue (i.e. paddle rotation system, etc.). The games cannot be rescheduled to another day. If no other court options are available, all games in process will terminate and scoring will be recorded as follows:
  - 1. The team with the highest score will be the winner and will get two team points. If the losing team has scored at least half or more of the points of the winning team, they will be awarded one team point.
  - 2. If the game is tied, a sudden death point shall be played. The winning team will get two points, and the losing team will get one point.
  - 3. If there are unplayed games, they will be scored 0-0.
- L. **USAP NON-REFEREED MATCH RULES.** USAP non-refereed match rules apply to all FTPL matches. This includes that players shall not call a ball "out" unless they can clearly see a space between the line and the ball as it hits the ground. If a foot fault is called for serve or kitchen and both teams do not agree, the point will be replayed.

### **VIII. OTHER CAPTAIN AND PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. **SCORE REPORTING:** The home team captain must report the score within 48 hours. After the score is posted, the visiting team captain will have 48 hours to contest the score. The score will become official if not contested after the 48 hour time period.
- B. **RECORDS:** All captains are to keep records of all match results until the end of the season in case of discrepancies or disputes.
- C. **CONDUCT:** Captains and players are to monitor behavior to ensure conduct is in accordance with the FTPL Code of Conduct.
- D. **RULES:** Captains and players are to read and understand the FTPL rules and USAP rules.
- E. **DISPUTES:** Players involved in a dispute during a match that cannot be resolved on the court can declare that the match is being played under protest and must continue the match to its conclusion.
- F. **GRIEVANCES:** A player or captain may file a formal grievance within 48 hours for a Rules/Sportsmanship/Code of Conduct issue. The form is posted on the Player Resources page of the FTPL website.

### **IX. REGULAR SEASON DIVISION STANDINGS**

- A. **STANDINGS PUBLISHING:** Throughout the season the standings of each division skill group will be posted and updated on the FTPL Regional website. Placement in the standings is based on Standings Points (SP) and is determined and published as follows: Teams get 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie and 0 points for a loss.
- B. **TIES:** In case of a tie in Standings Points (SP), the team with the highest Total Team Points (TP) is placed higher in the standings. In case of a tie in Total Team Points the team with the lowest Total Opponent Points (OP) is placed higher in the standings.
- C. **FINAL STANDINGS:** Section A and B above illustrates how the standings will be published throughout the season. At the end of the season, if there are more than two teams tied in Standings Points, the teams with the lowest total points will be eliminated until there are two

teams remaining. At this point, the two-way tie process outlined below will take effect until a winner is determined

1. Head-to-head results between the two teams.
2. Total team points scored during their matches against each other.
3. Total team points scored during the regular season
4. Lowest total opponent points.

**D. COMBINED GROUPS.** When teams are combined with other teams in a different age/skill, the standings will be against the teams within the same division/age/skill. The teams outside the division/skill/age will not count toward team standings.

## **X. PLAYOFF & CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION STANDINGS, TIEBREAK CRITERIA**

- A. INDIVIDUAL MATCHES:** If both teams have an equal number of Team Points at the end of a regional playoff or state championship match, the two-way tie process outlined below will take effect until a winner is determined: 1. Most games won. 2. Most game points earned. 3. Most rounds won.
- B. PLAYOFF & STATE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND ROBIN DIVISIONS:** If more than two teams have the same win/loss record, the teams with the fewest games won will be eliminated (or fewest game points if games won is tied) until there are two teams remaining. Then the head-to-head winner of their match will be declared the champion.

## **XI. INCLEMENT WEATHER**

- A. RESCHEDULING.** Rescheduling matches due to inclement weather is warranted in cases of rain and/or sustained winds of at least 20 mph. The match to be cancelled shall NOT be called any earlier than the travel time for the Away team plus 20 minutes. The captain(s) seeking to reschedule the match due to inclement weather will then follow the Rescheduling Policy instructions to identify a new match date.
- B. MATCH CANCELED PRIOR TO START.** In the event a match cannot be played due to inclement weather, the match can be rescheduled to play any time prior to the end of the season. Captains shall follow the procedures for rescheduling the match and notifying the League/Venue Coordinator as outlined in the FTPL Rescheduling Policy. Matches that are rained out during the last week of the season will not be rescheduled. If this happens the team's winning percentage will be used to determine the final standings.
- C. MATCH CANCELED AFTER START.** Once the two games are completed in a round, that round is considered completed for those two teams, and will not be repeated or replayed. Any scoresheet lines not completed in a round will be replayed from the beginning of the round (i.e. replayed starting with game 1). All scoresheet lines completed before the cancelation will stand and be recorded. Captains will reschedule the match to play the incomplete and remaining rounds for the match.
1. **EXAMPLE:** A match must be canceled in the middle of round 2. Two scoresheet lines have been completed and the third was not. Captains will record the scores for round 1 and the completed lines of round 2. Then they will reschedule to play the remaining line of round 2 and all of round 3. NOTE: The most efficient way to accomplish this reschedule is to have players play round 3 first (using all players), and then only the affected players must stay to play the unfinished line of round 2 beginning with game one. If only the third round is needed to be completed, it is not required that the players all convene to play at the same time and location. Captains/players may arrange their own independent foursome and report the third-round scores to their captains.

**D. LINE-UPS AFTER MATCH CANCELLATION.** If the match is to be replayed in its entirety the captain is not required to field the same team lineup. If at least one round has been completed, the captain may bring one different player in the new lineup as the permanent player to replace a player that is unavailable to play in the rescheduled match and one different player to serve as the substitute for injury or physical ailment of a player during the rescheduled match. Substitution rules for injury or physical ailment still apply.

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