

Approved 2025 USA Pickleball rules: The most important changes

The new 2025 USA Pickleball rulebook is out now! So what are the approved USA Pickleball rules for 2025 and which ones will affect you most? Here are just a few of the approved rules.

View the 2025 USA Pickleball Rulebook here.

The volley & momentum (Rules 9.B.1. and 9.H.)

Rule 9.B.1. will change to adjust the definition of a volley from "...the swing, the follow-through, and the momentum from the action" to

"The act of volleying begins when the ball is struck out of the air before bouncing (volleyed) and ends when the player's movement from the follow-through action (momentum) stops."

What this means is that volleying no longer includes the swing before the ball is hit.

Rule 9.H. also clarifies momentum. Although it is still OK for a player to volley a ball while their partner is standing in the kitchen, the 2025 rules adds: "...as long as the partners, including anything the partners are wearing or carrying, do not contact each other during the act of volleying."

Spectator line calls (Rule 6.C.4.)

The importance of this rule change reminds players they should not be asking spectators for their opinion on line calls, but also that they are not allowed to accept any input from spectators.

According to USA Pickleball: "The [rule change] prevents both soliciting or accepting spectator input. (We all know that line calls get volunteered which is not helpful)."

Rally scoring (Provisional Rules 4.G.1. and 12.B.1.)

In rally scoring, a point is scored by winning the rally, whether or not you served the ball. Rally scoring will be introduced, but traditional side-out scoring is still the official method of scoring.

The game-winning point will still only be scored by the serving player or team: When a player or team is at game point and the opponent serves and loses the rally, it is a side out and no point is awarded.

Double elimination tournaments should not use rally scoring (Rule 12.B.1.).

According to USA Pickleball: "This will establish an optional, provisional rule for rally scoring for Doubles that is consistent with the current provisional rule for Singles. This proposal, like with Singles, preserves the current Doubles rules to the maximum extent possible."

Calling a fault (Rules 13.D.1.c and 7.O.)

There are two rule changes in 2025 relating to calling a fault. The first says that both players of a team must agree with each other on a foot fault for the replay to occur. It was previously just a “player.”

The second change “makes it crystal clear that the principle should be applied to all fault calls where partners may disagree.”

Calling a fault on your partner (Rule 13.D.1.a.)

The current rule says that you must call a fault on yourself when you realize you committed it. The new 2025 rule change adds that you must also call a fault on your partner if you see them commit one.

“The fault call must happen before the next serve occurs.”

Serving changes (Rule 4.A.5.)

Currently, “the serve shall be made with only one hand releasing the ball.” The new rule change will also allow you to release the ball with your paddle as well.

If you serve with the drop serve and want to drop the ball from your paddle (instead of your hand), you have to let the ball roll off the face of the paddle using gravity only (no force).

Despite this change, you are still not allowed to impart spin on the ball.

Not ready signals (Rule 4.C.2.)

The rule changes on this rule now allows the receiving team to use a “verbal indicator” (like “stop” or “wait”) to tell the server they are not ready — after the server has already called the score.

Previously, this was not allowed. “Not ready” signals (hand motions, etc.) are still to be ignored by the server.

Autographed pickleball paddles (Rule 2.E.5.c.)

Current USA Pickleball rules do not allow for a pickleball paddle that has been autographed to be used in a sanctioned event. The rule change will allow for autographs, as long as it does not alter the surface of the paddle.

Pen markings that are for identification, such as name, signature, phone number, or email, will continue to be allowed.

Server positioning (Rule 3.A.38.)

The definition of who serves has always been very confusing. Previously, the rule said: “The player who initiates a rally. Depending on the team’s score, it is possible that the player who serves may not be the correct server.” This has always been confusing because the first server of a rally should always be the player on the right side when the ball is returned to them.

The new version of the rule says: “The player who initiates a rally by serving the ball. The correct server in doubles is the player whose correct position is determined by their score and starting position in the game (see Rule 4.B.6.b).”

The new text is still a little confusing, but it’s basically saying that the server is the one who starts a rally.

These rule changes are only a few of the dozens of approved rules changes for 2025. View the 2025 USA Pickleball Rulebook [here](#).