

Glossary for Pickleball

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Ace – A serve that is in (and legal) and has not been hit or touched by the receiver.

Approach Shot – A shot that is done while moving forward toward the net.

Around the Post – A shot that travels outside (around) the net post usually landing in the opponent's backcourt near the line. These shots are most often set up by a wide dink.

Backhand – A hit with the "back" of the paddle made by reaching across the body and leading the swing with the back of the hand.

Backspin – means the pickleball is rotating backwards through the air. The paddle swing is a high-to-low arc. This spin of the ball is from a "slice" or "cut" shot.

Ball on court – is the shout when a wayward ball enters the court. Play stops, ball returned, point replayed.

Ball return – return ball to next player by a slow lob, or roll along the court under the net.

Balls – different design for indoor and outdoor. Range of colours.

Banger – a style of play where the player hits driving shots. Their shots are hard and fast – attacking the baseline at every moment. They are a "Banger." The opposite of a "Dinker."

Baseline – This is the line at the back of the court that can't be crossed when you serve and is in-bounds.

Centreline – The line extends from the Non-Volley Zone to the Baseline and divides the service court into two equal halves. The centreline separates in-bounds and out-of-bounds for the serve. The line is within bounds.

Crosscourt – The opponent's court diagonally opposite yours.

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Dink – A soft shot typically made near the kitchen line, so that it drops into the opponent's non-volley zone and they are not able to volley it back.

Dinker – a style of play where the players play soft dinking shots. They always want to slow the game down, staying in position at the NVZ. The opposite of a "Banger."

Double Bounce Rule – You need to let the ball bounce both on the serve and the return. If you don't, it will be a fault.

Doubles – A pickleball game played with 4 players (2 on each team). Teams can be men, women or mixed doubles.

Drive – A low shot intended to reach the opponents' backcourt.

Drop Shot – A soft shot that clears the pickleball net and then falls short of the opposing players into the kitchen.

Erne – This shot is a volley hit right at the net with a player positioned outside the court. An "Erne" shot is when a player steps outside the inner part of the court and on the other side of either the right or left sideline and comes forward to be parallel with the kitchen but is, in fact, standing outside the kitchen on the other side of the sideline. The ball will be struck out of the air and very close to the net. This is a surprise shot that typically will be initiated out of dinking rally. It's an advance shot that requires precise timing and quick movement.

Fault – A rule violation. This ends the rally.

Forehand – A hit with the "front" of the paddle made by leading the swing with the front or palm of the hand.

Foot Fault – Can be called at two locations on the court: Stepping on or into the non-volley zone while volleying a ball, or, while serving, failure to keep both feet behind the baseline with at least one foot in contact with the surface when the paddle contacts the ball.

Game – A series of points played until one team has accumulated 11 points (winning by 2 points). Some pickleball tournaments play games to 15 or 21 points (win by 2).

Groundstroke – A forehand or backhand shot that is executed after the ball bounces once on the court. It is usually hit from the back of the court.

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Half-Volley – A type of hit where the player hits the ball immediately after it has bounced in an almost scoop-like fashion.

Kitchen – A nickname for the non-volley zone. “Non-volley zone” and “kitchen” are synonymous. Non-volley zone is the technical name.

Let Serve – A serve that touches the top of the net and lands in the proper service court. It is replayed without penalty.

Line call – in doubles recreational play, the receiving team decide if the ball is out. Any indecision, then the ball is in. No opinion required from other team. Indicate out by holding paddle out from body horizontally. (Holding paddle out vertically at arms reach indicates applauding a good shot).

Lob – A shot that sends the ball high overhead and deep, forcing the opponent back to the baseline.

Match – End of a series of game(s) which determine a winner. A tournament will have a series of pickleball matches.

Mid-court – The area between the kitchen and the backcourt. Sometimes referred to as “no man’s” land.

Nasty Nelson – A Nasty Nelson is a shot where the server serves the ball to intentionally hit the opposing player nearest to the pickleball net (in other words, the opposing player that is not receiving the serve). If the served pickleball strikes the opposing player before it bounces, then the receiving team commits a fault, and the serving team wins the point.

No Man’s Land or “Transition Zone” – referring to the area on the court which a player passes when getting from the baseline to the Non-Volley Line.

Non-Volley Zone – area adjacent to the net within which you may not step into and volley the ball. A player can be in this zone, but to hit the ball it must have first bounced. The non-volley zone includes all lines around it. Also called the “kitchen”.

Non-Volley Zone Line (NVZ) – The line separating the non-volley zone from the rest of the court. The line is considered part of the zone and as such is considered out-of-bounds for a serve. It is the only line so designated.

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Out – the call to indicate that a ball has travelled outside the court. May only be called after the ball has bounced. Not part of conversation between partners. Use *leave it*, or similar.

Overhead – A hard shot made when you hit the ball above your head.

Paddle Tap – at conclusion of game, players meet at net and tap the end of paddles handles in acknowledgement of a good game. In times of COVID there is no paddle tap and instead maintain social distancing and wave paddle in a fan like motion.

Poach – In doubles, to cross over into your partner's portion of the court to play a ball.

Put away – A shot with no chance of being returned.

Rally – Hitting the ball back and forth between opposite teams, a long series of shots.

Ready Position – Ideal position to receive the ball for a return. The paddle is out in front of player's body and up at chest height with a neutral grip for either forehand or backhand return. Weight is evenly balanced to slightly on toes with knees slightly bent and ready to move in any direction.

Serve (Service) – An underhand stroke used to start the point and put the ball into play.

Serve Paddle – in social and recreational games the person next to serve holds paddle above their head to speed return of ball.

Server Number – When playing doubles, either "1" or "2," depending on whether you are the first or second server for your side. This number is appended to the score when it is called.

Sideline – The line at the side of the court separating in-bounds and out-of-bounds. The marked line is considered in-bounds.

Side Out – Declared after one side loses its second service and other side is awarded serve.

Singles – A game played with 2 players and divided 1 per side.

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Stacking – is a technique or strategy used by some doubles teams to increase the number of times that players will have their forehand or backhands in the middle of the court. It is most often observed in teams which include both a right and left-handed player. There are no rules in pickleball that govern what side of the court a player may stand or hit the ball, except when serving or hitting a return of serve.

Switch – call between partners for the other to travel diagonally to retrieve the high lob.

Third Shot Drop – A drop shot usually done after the service return (third shot) allowing the serving team time to get to the non-volley zone line. These types of shots can also be successfully used to slow or “reset” the point.

Topspin – Spin on the ball in the same direction of the flight of the ball. The paddle swing is a low-to-high arc, meaning the paddle is moving upward when it contacts the back of the ball.

Transition Zone or “No Man’s Land” – referring to the area on the court which a player passes when getting from the baseline to the Non-Volley Line.

Unforced Error – A player missing a shot that should normally be made.

Volley – Hitting the ball before it bounces.

