

Union Parks & Recreation Department (UPRD)

PICKLEBALL ETIQUETTE

Pickleball is only a game. It is not a metaphor for life. It is not even a profession. Nobody makes money playing recreational Pickleball. You will not eat differently tonight based on your success during a recreational Pickleball match. We need to keep in mind that we are playing a GAME! Much of what follows is based on that concept.

1. **Begin each game by acknowledging the other players**, introducing yourself if you don't know them. If you do know them, tip a paddle towards them on the other side or salute or stand on your head or whatever is appropriate to let them know that you know they are there and are saying "hey".
2. **Good sportsmanship is the rule**. During open play (mixed skill-levels), players play with all skill levels. No complaints. If you are a significantly stronger player, if you have limited time available to you, and if there is an "advanced court" option, go wait there for a stronger game. In any event, can the whining. It makes you look older.
3. **At the end of each game, find something positive to say to the other team at the net**. "Nice game" isn't always appropriate if in spite of your efforts at sportsmanship you have won 11-0. But "you made some great shots!", or "much closer than the score", or "Wow, we were lucky today!" would be just fine. At least, "Thanks for playing with us!" is nice. NEVER leave a game without acknowledging the other team.
4. **If the ball is out, and it's on your side, call it out. If it's close, give the benefit to your opponent**. This is hard to do when the game is close but do it anyway. If your opponent does not do it, suck it up and you do the right thing anyway when it's your turn. (I am not perfect on this one, btw, but I'm working on it.)
5. **If you step into the kitchen on a volley, or if your partner does, call it on yourself**. Be very cautious about calling kitchen or serving faults on others. Most of us are at an age that we would doubt that we can clearly see a serving violation (illegal serve, foot-fault on baseline) – it's 44 feet away at worst and about 23 feet away at best! (C'mon...you can't find your keys in the morning until you find your glasses, which are already on your head, but you can clearly see a tiny foot-fault violation at 44 feet? Hah!)
6. **Never ask for, or accept, line calls from spectators**.
7. **NEVER yell at, swear at, or say a hostile or sarcastic word to your partner or your opponent in anger**. We repeat, NEVER! (one of us finds this almost impossible to do but we keep trying, we keep trying...)
8. **Play your strongest game against better players but work on stuff you need practice on with the weaker players**. We will often individually tell our partners "I'm working on (say) placement today" and they know that will mean that we're not necessarily going to put every shot away. Saying this beforehand gives you a chance to gauge what your partner wants out of the deal. Recently Irene had a friend tell her "But I want to win this game!" when she said that and so they played a bit harder – against a comparable team, and did win, and she left the practicing for the next game.
9. **Do not take advantage of a person's physical limitations when you play them socially**. If someone cannot go back for a lob when they're at the line because of physical limitations, for instance, why lob over their heads? It's a cheap shot, you won't learn anything by doing it, and you certainly will not be respected for it. Anyway, perhaps they have great hands at the line and you could learn something by hitting shots to their strength and trying to make good shots out of their returns.
10. **Only give advice WHEN ASKED**, if you believe that the party is really sincere about wanting it. Everybody handles this differently but we believe we should, at that point, give no more than ONE piece of advice at a time. Let them work on that. Then, some other day, go on to the next thing.

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