The AhaBulb Party Game

STUFF EVERY PICKLEBALL PLAYER SHOULD KNOW

How to play (30 seconds)

1. The reader reads a card and its three answers out loud.
2. Everyone says "One, two, three, Goldilocks!" and holds up 1, 2, or 3 fingers.
3. The reader flips the card and reads the answer and the Why.
4. Everyone who was right takes a point.
5. The reader reads the joke with a straight face. Anyone laughs or groans? The reader takes a point. Nobody got it right? The reader takes a point.
6. Pass the deck left. Most points when the points run out wins.

What you need

These cards and the point tokens on the last two pages. No tokens? Use coins, buttons, pebbles, or marshmallows. 3 to 10 players, ages 8 and up.

Expert rule: Bet It

Before the reader flips the card, you may put one of your points on your answer. Right: take your normal point plus one extra. Wrong: your bet goes back to the pile. That's it.

Printing

Print single-sided, on cardstock if you have it. Cut on the dashed lines. Each card is a 3.5 x 5 inch index card. The answer half is upside down on purpose, so the table can't peek.

Cards 1 to 50 of 60. More cards and the free daily online game at sesk.info. Built 2026-10-14.

SPORTS & FITNESS

On a volley serve, how high can the ball be when your paddle hits it?

- **A** No higher than your shoulders
- **B** No higher than your waist
- **C** Any height you like

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B No higher than your waist

WHY On a volley serve, the ball must be at waist level or lower when the paddle hits it. This keeps the serve underhand.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the pickleball player wear a belt to the court? To keep an eye on the serve line.

SESK.INFO #9975

SPORTS & FITNESS

On a regular volley serve, which way must the paddle be moving when it hits the ball?

- **A** In a clear upward arc
- **B** Straight down, like a smash
- **C** Flat and level, like a tennis serve

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A In a clear upward arc

WHY Pickleball serves are underhand. On a volley serve the paddle must be swinging upward when it meets the ball, so no overhead smashes to start a point.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why are pickleball serves so polite? They always start off on the up and up.

SESK.INFO #9974

SPORTS & FITNESS

Where must a pickleball serve go?

- **A** Diagonally to the opposite service court
- **B** Straight ahead to the court in front of you
- **C** Anywhere past the net

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A Diagonally to the opposite service court

WHY You serve crosscourt, from your side to the service court diagonally opposite. A serve that lands in the wrong court is a fault.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the pickleball cross the court diagonally? It was taking the scenic route.

SESK.INFO #9977

SPORTS & FITNESS

On a volley serve, the top of the paddle head cannot be above what?

- **A** Your elbow
- **B** The top of the net
- **C** The highest part of your wrist

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C The highest part of your wrist

WHY At contact, the paddle head must not be higher than the top of your wrist. This is another rule that keeps the volley serve truly underhand.

STRAIGHT FACE
My serve broke the wrist rule. The ref said it was a handy mistake.

SESK.INFO #9976

SPORTS & FITNESS

What is a drop serve in pickleball?

- **A** You toss it high and hit it falling
- **B** You drop the ball and hit it after it bounces
- **C** You bounce the ball off the net

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B You drop the ball and hit it after it bounces

WHY A drop serve is the second legal way to serve. You simply drop the ball, let it bounce on the playing surface, then hit it.

STRAIGHT FACE
The drop serve is my favorite. I am great at dropping things.

SESK.INFO #9978

SPORTS & FITNESS

On a drop serve, how many times may the ball bounce before you hit it?

- **A** Exactly once
- **B** No more than twice
- **C** There is no limit

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C There is no limit

WHY The rules put no limit on how many times the dropped ball bounces before the serve. There is also no rule about where it bounces.

STRAIGHT FACE
My drop serve bounced five times. It was just warming up.

SESK.INFO #9979

SPORTS & FITNESS

On a drop serve, do the waist, wrist and upward-arc rules still apply?

- **A** No, they do not apply
- **B** Yes, all three apply
- **C** Only the waist rule applies

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A No, they do not apply

WHY The waist, wrist and upward-arc rules cover the volley serve. With a legal drop serve, none of them apply, which gives servers more freedom in their swing.

STRAIGHT FACE
The drop serve has fewer rules. It is the chill cousin of the volley serve.

SESK.INFO #9980

SPORTS & FITNESS

When you serve, where must at least one of your feet be?

- **A** On the baseline
- **B** Behind the baseline, on the ground
- **C** Inside the court

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B Behind the baseline, on the ground

WHY When you hit the serve, at least one foot must be on the ground behind the baseline. Neither foot may touch the court, and stepping on the baseline counts as touching the court.

STRAIGHT FACE
I got called for a foot fault. My feet said it was not their fault.

SESK.INFO #9981

SPORTS & FITNESS

Can you jump into the air while hitting a pickleball serve?

- **A** Yes, jump serves are allowed
- **B** Only on a drop serve
- **C** No, it is a fault

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C **No, it is a fault**

WHY At least one foot must touch the serving area when you hit the serve. If both feet are off the ground at contact, it is a fault against the server.

STRAIGHT FACE
I tried a jump serve. The ref said my idea never got off the ground.

SESK.INFO #9982

SPORTS & FITNESS

Your serve lands right on the kitchen line. Is it in or out?

- **A** In, because lines are in
- **B** Out, it is a fault
- **C** It is replayed

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B **Out, it is a fault**

WHY The kitchen line is part of the kitchen. A serve must clear the whole non-volley zone, so a serve that touches that line is short and a fault.

STRAIGHT FACE
My serve landed on the kitchen line. Guess it was hungry.

SESK.INFO #9983

SPORTS & FITNESS

A serve clips the top of the net, then lands in the right service court. What happens?

- **A** Replay the serve
- **B** It is a fault
- **C** The ball is in play

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C **The ball is in play**

WHY Under current rules, a serve may touch the net as long as it clears the kitchen and lands in the correct service court. Play just continues.

STRAIGHT FACE
My serve clipped the net and kept going. Talk about a net positive.

SESK.INFO #9984

SPORTS & FITNESS

Can the receiver hit the serve out of the air before it bounces?

- **A** No, it is a fault
- **B** Yes, if they are behind the baseline
- **C** Yes, in singles only

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A **No, it is a fault**

WHY The serve must bounce before it is returned. If the receiver volleys the serve, it is a fault against the receiver.

STRAIGHT FACE
The receiver tried to volley the serve. The ref said, bounce back from that one.

SESK.INFO #9985

SPORTS & FITNESS

What is the main reason pickleball has the two-bounce rule?

A To make the game faster

B To give the server an advantage

C To stop the serve-and-volley advantage

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C To stop the serve-and-volley advantage

WHY Without it, a server could rush the net and smash the return. Making both sides wait for a bounce keeps points longer and fairer.

STRAIGHT FACE
The two-bounce rule keeps things fair. It is a real bounce of power.

SESK.INFO #9987

SPORTS & FITNESS

After the return of serve, what must the serving team do?

A Volley it right away

B Let it bounce before hitting it

C Let it bounce twice

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B Let it bounce before hitting it

WHY The two-bounce rule works both ways. The receiving team lets the serve bounce, then the serving team lets the return bounce. After that, volleys are allowed.

STRAIGHT FACE
The two-bounce rule is so fair. Everybody gets a turn to wait.

SESK.INFO #9986

SPORTS & FITNESS

What do most players call the non-volley zone?

A The Kitchen

B The Pantry

C The Garden

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A The Kitchen

WHY The no-volley area near the net is nicknamed the Kitchen. You will hear players shout "stay out of the kitchen!" all the time.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why do pickleball players stay out of the kitchen? They do not want to get cooked.

SESK.INFO #9989

SPORTS & FITNESS

How far from the net does the non-volley zone reach?

A 5 feet

B 7 feet

C 10 feet

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B 7 feet

WHY The non-volley zone covers the court within 7 feet of the net on both sides. It runs the full 20-foot width of the court.

STRAIGHT FACE
The kitchen is 7 feet deep. That is a lot of room for snacks.

SESK.INFO #9988

SPORTS & FITNESS

Can you step into the kitchen to hit a ball that has already bounced?

- **A** Yes, any time you are not volleying
- **B** No, never
- **C** Only on the serve

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A Yes, any time you are not volleying

WHY The kitchen rule is about volleys, not about standing there. You can walk in to play a ball after it bounces, then get out before your next volley.

STRAIGHT FACE
The kitchen is open for business, as long as you let the ball bounce first.

SESK.INFO #9991

SPORTS & FITNESS

You volley the ball with your toe touching the kitchen line. Is that legal?

- **A** Yes, the line is outside the kitchen
- **B** Yes, if your other foot is outside
- **C** No, the line counts as the kitchen

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C No, the line counts as the kitchen

WHY All the lines around the non-volley zone belong to the zone. Touching the kitchen line while you volley is the same as standing in the kitchen: a fault.

STRAIGHT FACE
My toe touched the kitchen line. Now it is grounded.

SESK.INFO #9990

SPORTS & FITNESS

You were just in the kitchen. Before you volley, what must be outside it?

- **A** Just one foot
- **B** Only your paddle
- **C** Both feet

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C Both feet

WHY After touching the kitchen, you need both feet back on the ground fully outside it before you can volley. One foot out is not enough.

STRAIGHT FACE
Getting out of the kitchen is like leaving a party. Both feet out the door, please.

SESK.INFO #9993

SPORTS & FITNESS

You volley a winner, then your momentum carries you into the kitchen after the ball is dead. Is it a fault?

- **A** No, the point was already over
- **B** Yes, it is a fault
- **C** Only if you touch the net

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B Yes, it is a fault

WHY If your volley carries you into the kitchen, it is a fault even when the ball is already dead. You must stop yourself before you touch the zone.

STRAIGHT FACE
My momentum carried me into the kitchen. I blame gravity, it always pulls me toward food.

SESK.INFO #9992

SPORTS & FITNESS

How big is a pickleball court?

- **A** 20 by 44 feet
- **B** 27 by 78 feet
- **C** 30 by 60 feet

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A 20 by 44 feet

WHY A pickleball court is 20 feet wide and 44 feet long. It is the same size for singles and doubles.

STRAIGHT FACE
A pickleball court is 20 by 44. Small enough to walk, big enough to brag.

SESK.INFO #9997

SPORTS & FITNESS

When can you call a ball out?

- **A** When you see space between the ball and line
- **B** Whenever you are not sure
- **C** When your partner thinks it was close

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A When you see space between the ball and line

WHY You must clearly see a gap between where the ball lands and the line. If you cannot, the ball is in.

STRAIGHT FACE
I only call it out when I see daylight. My eyes need a little space too.

SESK.INFO #9996

SPORTS & FITNESS

During a rally, the ball lands on the baseline. Is it in or out?

- **A** In
- **B** Out
- **C** Replay the point

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A In

WHY In pickleball, a ball that touches a line is in. The only exception is a serve that touches the kitchen line, which is short.

STRAIGHT FACE
The ball landed on the baseline. It was just keeping things in line.

SESK.INFO #9995

SPORTS & FITNESS

Can you volley a ball that is in the air above the kitchen, if your feet are outside it?

- **A** No, the kitchen goes up to the sky
- **B** Yes, the kitchen is only on the ground
- **C** Only with a backhand

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B Yes, the kitchen is only on the ground

WHY The non-volley zone is two-dimensional. What matters is where you are standing, not where the ball is when you hit it.

STRAIGHT FACE
The kitchen has no ceiling. It is a very open floor plan.

SESK.INFO #9994

SPORTS & FITNESS

The ball hits your paddle hand, below the wrist, while you are holding the paddle. Is it a fault?

- **A** Yes, any touch of the body is a fault
- **B** Only in doubles
- **C** No, it is legal

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C No, it is legal

WHY If the ball hits you, it is usually a fault. But the hand holding the paddle, below the wrist, counts as part of the paddle, so play goes on.

STRAIGHT FACE
The ball hit my hand. It was a hands-on shot.

SESK.INFO #10001

SPORTS & FITNESS

During a rally, your shot touches the top of the net and goes over. What happens?

- **A** It is a fault
- **B** The ball stays in play
- **C** The point is replayed

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B The ball stays in play

WHY Touching the net does not stop a rally. If the ball clips the net and lands in, the other side must play it.

STRAIGHT FACE
My shot rolled over the net. It just needed a little support.

SESK.INFO #10000

SPORTS & FITNESS

How tall is a pickleball net at the center?

- **A** 34 inches
- **B** 36 inches
- **C** 30 inches

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A 34 inches

WHY The net is 2 inches lower in the middle than at the sides. A center strap can hold it at the right height.

STRAIGHT FACE
The net dips in the middle. It is just taking a little bow.

SESK.INFO #9999

SPORTS & FITNESS

How tall is a pickleball net at the sidelines?

- **A** 32 inches
- **B** 36 inches
- **C** 42 inches

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B 36 inches

WHY The top of the net is 36 inches high where it crosses the sidelines. It sags a little lower in the middle.

STRAIGHT FACE
The net is 36 inches at the sides. That is three feet of pure drama.

SESK.INFO #9998

SPORTS & FITNESS

How many times may the ball bounce on your side before you must hit it?

- **A** Once
- **B** Twice
- **C** As many as you need

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A Once

WHY You must return the ball before it bounces a second time on your side. If it bounces twice, you lose the rally.

STRAIGHT FACE
The ball bounced twice. It was just double checking.

SESK.INFO #10002

SPORTS & FITNESS

How many bounces may players using wheelchairs allow before returning the ball?

- **A** Only one, like everyone else
- **B** Three
- **C** Two

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C Two

WHY Players using wheelchairs, and some players with disabilities, may let the ball bounce twice. The first bounce must be in the court; the second can be anywhere on the playing surface.

STRAIGHT FACE
Two bounces? That ball is getting double the workout.

SESK.INFO #10003

SPORTS & FITNESS

In regular scoring, what happens when the receiving team commits a fault?

- **A** The serving team scores a point
- **B** The receiving team gets the serve
- **C** The rally is replayed

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A The serving team scores a point

WHY When the receivers lose the rally, the serving team wins a point. When the servers lose a rally, they lose the serve instead.

STRAIGHT FACE
The receivers faulted. The servers said thanks for the point, we will take it.

SESK.INFO #10004

SPORTS & FITNESS

In traditional side-out scoring, who can score points?

- **A** Either team, every rally
- **B** Only the receiving team
- **C** Only the serving team

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C Only the serving team

WHY In standard pickleball, you only score when your side is serving and wins the rally. Losing a rally on serve passes the serve along instead.

STRAIGHT FACE
In pickleball, you have to serve to deserve a point.

SESK.INFO #10005

SPORTS & FITNESS

In rally scoring, which team scores a point?

- **A** Only the serving team
- **B** Whoever wins the rally
- **C** Only the receiving team

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B Whoever wins the rally

WHY Rally scoring gives a point after every rally, no matter which team served. USA Pickleball allows it as a provisional option.

STRAIGHT FACE
Rally scoring is great. Every point is a party.

SESK.INFO #10006

SPORTS & FITNESS

In doubles rally scoring, how many players on a team serve before a side out?

- **A** Both partners
- **B** One
- **C** Three, then rotate

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B One

WHY With rally scoring in doubles, only one player serves per turn. As soon as the serving team loses a rally, the other team gets the serve.

STRAIGHT FACE
Rally scoring doubles: one server, no waiting.

SESK.INFO #10007

SPORTS & FITNESS

In doubles using traditional side-out scoring, what three numbers are in the score call?

- **A** Receiver score, server score, server number
- **B** Server score, faults, receiver score
- **C** Server score, receiver score, server number

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C Server score, receiver score, server number

WHY The server announces the score before serving. In traditional doubles, the third number tells whether the current server is server 1 or server 2.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the doubles team bring a calculator? The score call had three numbers.

SESK.INFO #10008

SPORTS & FITNESS

In singles pickleball, how many numbers are in the score call?

- **A** One number
- **B** Two numbers, server score then receiver score
- **C** Three numbers with server number

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B Two numbers, server score then receiver score

WHY Singles has no server number because only one player serves per side. The server states their own score first, then the receiver's score.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why do singles players love short score calls? Two numbers and no partner to argue with.

SESK.INFO #10009

SPORTS & FITNESS

In a USA Pickleball tournament, when do teams switch ends between games?

- **A** After each game
- **B** After every 6 points
- **C** Only in the final game

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A After each game

WHY Tournament teams change ends before the next game. In a deciding game to 11, they also change ends when one team reaches 6.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the players switch ends? To give the sun a turn watching them.

SPORTS & FITNESS

In standard pickleball, how many points win a game?

- **A** 10 points
- **B** 15 points
- **C** 11 points, win by 2

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C 11 points, win by 2

WHY If the score reaches 10-10, play goes on until one side leads by 2. So a game can end 12-10, 13-11 or later.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the game go to 13? It could not bear to lose by one.

SPORTS & FITNESS

Under standard side-out scoring, what is the first server exception at the start of a doubles game?

- **A** Only the starting server serves before first side out
- **B** Both partners serve before side out
- **C** The receiving team serves first

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A Only the starting server serves before first side out

WHY At the start of each game, the starting server is designated as server 2. When that team loses its first rally, the serve goes straight to the other team.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the first server bring a backpack? It was a solo trip.

SPORTS & FITNESS

In doubles scoring, what do server numbers 1 and 2 indicate?

- **A** Which team is serving
- **B** How many faults the server has
- **C** Whether the current server is first or second for that side

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C Whether the current server is first or second for that side

WHY After each side out, the player on the right starts as server 1 and the partner is server 2. When server 1 loses a rally, the serve passes to server 2.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did server 2 stay calm? It knew its turn was coming.

SPORTS & FITNESS

In a USA Pickleball tournament, when do teams switch ends in a deciding game to 11?

- **A** At 4 points
- **B** When one team reaches 6 points
- **C** At 11 points

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B When one team reaches 6 points

WHY In a single-game match or a deciding game to 11, players change ends when the first team reaches 6. Games to 15 change at 8, and games to 21 at 11.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the score hit 6 and switch? It was halfway there.

SESK.INFO #10014

SPORTS & FITNESS

What is a dink in pickleball?

- **A** A hard drive past the baseline
- **B** A serve that bounces twice
- **C** A soft shot landing in the opponent's kitchen

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C A soft shot landing in the opponent's kitchen

WHY A dink is hit softly from the kitchen line and bounces in the other kitchen. Because the opponent must let it bounce, a good dink is hard to attack.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the dink cross the net softly? It did not want a smashing reception.

SESK.INFO #10015

SPORTS & FITNESS

What is the third shot drop in pickleball?

- **A** A drop serve on the third point
- **B** A hard third serve
- **C** A soft serving-team shot into the kitchen after the return

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C A soft serving-team shot into the kitchen after the return

WHY After the serve and return, the serving team hits a soft shot into the other kitchen. This takes away the other team's net advantage and buys time to move up.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the third shot drop quietly? It wanted to sneak into the kitchen.

SESK.INFO #10016

SPORTS & FITNESS

In doubles, may partners switch sides during a rally after the serve and return?

- **A** Yes, players can stand anywhere on their side
- **B** No, they must stay on their side all game
- **C** Only after the ball has bounced three times

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A Yes, players can stand anywhere on their side

WHY The rulebook fixes positions only while serving and receiving. After that, players may move anywhere on their end. This is the rule that lets teams stack and switch sides.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the stackers need a seat map? They kept sitting on the same side.

SESK.INFO #10017

SPORTS & FITNESS

Where and when did pickleball begin?

- **A** Naples, Florida, in 1975
- **B** Bainbridge Island, Washington, in 1965
- **C** Seattle, Washington, in 1985

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B Bainbridge Island, Washington, in 1965

WHY Joel Pritchard, Bill Bell and Barney McCallum made up the game at the Pritchard home on Bainbridge Island, using ping-pong paddles and a plastic ball, so the whole family could play together.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the bored kids love the new game? It was a real pickle-me-up.

SESK.INFO #10019

SPORTS & FITNESS

Who calls the lines in recreational pickleball?

- **A** A referee makes every call
- **B** Players call lines on their own side
- **C** The server calls all lines

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B Players call lines on their own side

WHY Without a referee, players call the lines on their own end of the court. Close calls go to the opponent: if you cannot clearly call it out, it is in.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the line call create doubt? The line was fine, the eyes were not.

SESK.INFO #10018

SPORTS & FITNESS

How do indoor and outdoor pickleballs generally differ?

- **A** Outdoor balls usually have smaller holes
- **B** Indoor balls have no holes
- **C** Outdoor balls are bigger and softer

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A Outdoor balls usually have smaller holes

WHY USA Pickleball says balls with larger holes are customarily used indoors and balls with smaller holes outdoors. Any approved ball is still legal in either place.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the outdoor ball work in wind? It had small holes but big confidence.

SESK.INFO #10021

SPORTS & FITNESS

According to USA Pickleball, what inspired the name pickleball?

- **A** The family dog, Pickles
- **B** Pickle boat crew races
- **C** A jar of pickles used as a net weight

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

B Pickle boat crew races

WHY Joan Pritchard named the game in 1965 after "pickle boat" races, where leftover rowers were thrown together. The popular dog story is a myth: Pickles was born in 1968.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did Pickles the dog love pickleball? Every point ended with a run to fetch.

SESK.INFO #10020

SPORTS & FITNESS

Which tendon can tear when you land from a jump or make a quick cutting move?

- **A** Rotator cuff
- **B** Ulnar collateral ligament
- **C** Achilles tendon

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

C Achilles tendon

WHY The Achilles tendon joins the calf muscles to the heel bone. It can tear when the calf is stretched too quickly, such as on a jump landing or sharp cut. See a doctor for sudden heel or calf pain.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the calf muscle cheer for the heel? They were attached to each other.

SESK.INFO #10023

SPORTS & FITNESS

What is the maximum combined length and width of an official paddle?

- **A** 24 inches
- **B** 20 inches
- **C** 27 inches

FLIP FOR THE ANSWER

A 24 inches

WHY USA Pickleball limits the sum of a paddle's length and width to 24 inches. This keeps paddle sizes within a fair range.

STRAIGHT FACE
Why did the paddle measure itself? It wanted to stay under the limit.

SESK.INFO #10022

1
AhaBulb POINT

1
AhaBulb POINT