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USAPA/IFP RULE REVISIONS

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To help players recognize and understand significant rule changes, the USAPA has created the below guide. The 2018 Official Tournament Rulebook is available at ifpickleball.org



/// SECTION 1 – THE GAME

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
The court is divided into right/even and left/odd service courts.	Previously the service courts were only referenced as right and left.

/// SECTION 2 – COURT AND EQUIPMENT

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
2.E.6.e. Removable Parts. No removable parts except for paddle grip adjustments and/or grip wraps and lead tape on the paddle edge.	There was no previous rule regarding removable parts.
2.E.7. Model Designation. The manufacturer must have a clearly marked brand and model name or model number on the paddle. Paddles with different core material, surface material, or other significant differences must have a unique name or number.	2.E.8. Included a statement that paddles must have been offered for sale to the general public. This statement has been removed.
No rule regarding clothing color has been established.	2.F.1. Clothing may be of any color.
2.F.2. Manufacturers are subject to annual and/or blind testing to ensure that products as produced and sold are compliant with all requirements.	There was no previous rule regarding blind or annual testing.
2.F.3. Players are responsible for confirming that the paddle they are using for match play is listed as Pass on the USAPA/IFP Approved Paddle List. See 2.F.3.a. for violation penalties.	There was no previous rule regarding player confirmation of paddles approved for use in sanctioned play.

/// SECTION 3 – DEFINITIONS

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
3.A.36. Underhand - The player's arm must be moving in a forward and upward arc with the palm turned upward or downward.	The old rule did not specify that the palm could be down. NOTE: The service motion rules have not changed, the addition of the "palm down" was to clarify that a backhand serve is legal.

/// SECTION 4 – THE SERVE, SERVICE SEQUENCE, AND SCORING RULES

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
4.A.1. The entire score must be called before the server begins his or her service motion.	4.I. Stated that serving before the score is called shall result in a fault and loss of serve. This could have been interpreted as before the ball is struck so the rule was clarified.
4.A.2. The service motion begins with the server's arm movement initiating the swing, backward or forward, to contact the ball.	There was no previous rule defining the beginning of the service motion.
4.A.4. The ball must be struck without bouncing it. A person with a disability, such as having the use of only one arm, may bounce the ball before making the service motion.	4.C. Did not have a serving allowance for people with a disability.
4.A.9. If the serve clears the net or hits the net and then touches the receiver or the receiver's partner, it is a point for the serving team.	4.F.3. Stated that a serve that hits the net then strikes the receiver or the receiver's partner is a let.
4.B.8. Prior to the start of the service motion, to determine the correct server and correct service court, the servicing team may ask the referee the score and "Am I the correct server?" Players may not ask if they are in the correct position.	Players could ask "Am I on the correct side?"
4.B.9. Prior to the start of the service motion, to determine the correct receiver and his or her position, the receiving team may ask the referee to confirm the score. Players may not ask if they are in the correct position.	Players could ask "Am I on the right side?" or "Am I the correct receiver?"
4.C.2. Once the score has been called, the receiver cannot become "not ready" unless there is a valid hinder.	4.I.3. Previously the receiver could become "not ready" until the service motion.
4.E. The 10-Second Rule. Once the referee determines the receiver is in position and ready or should be in position and ready and the score has been called, the server is allowed 10 seconds to serve the ball.	4.J. The 10-second rule applied to both the server and the receiver. It was the responsibility of the server to check the receiver's readiness.
4.E.1. If the server exceeds 10 seconds to serve, a fault will be declared.	4.J.1. Exceeding 10 seconds to serve or receive was a technical warning.

/// SECTION 5 – SERVICE AND SIDE SELECTION RULES

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
5.A.2. Once a selection has been made, it cannot be changed.	There was no previous restriction on whether a player or team could change a selection.
5.A.3. In doubles, the starting first server may be changed before the start of any game with notice given to the referee.	There was no previous reference to the process that should be used to change starting first servers between games.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 51 >

USAPA/IFP

/// SECTION 5 – SERVICE AND SIDE SELECTION RULES

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
<p>5.B.6. The maximum time allowed to switch sides during a game is 60 seconds. The referee will announce a 15-second warning, then call the score after the full 60 seconds and apply the 10-Second Rule, even if all players are not on the court and/or not ready to play. See Rule 4.E.</p>	<p>There was no previous restriction on time allowed to switch sides.</p>

/// SECTION 6 – LINE CALL RULES

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
<p>6.D.3. The opponent gets the benefit of the doubt on line calls made. Any ball that cannot be called “out” will be considered “in.” <u>A player cannot claim a “let” because the ball was not seen or there is uncertainty. A player may appeal to the referee to make the call if he or she did not clearly see the ball land. If the referee is unable to make the call, the ball is “in.”</u></p>	<p>6.D.10. Previously, players could not appeal to the referee to make a call for a ball they did not see. A player had to first make a call, then “any player may appeal a call to the referee in an officiated match.”</p>

/// SECTION 10 – TIME-OUT RULES

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
<p>10.A.6. The referee will give the players a warning when there are 15 seconds remaining. At the end of the time-out, the referee will call “time in” and announce the score to begin the 10-Second Rule, even if players are not on the court and/or not ready to play. <u>If the server does not serve within 10 seconds after the score is called, and no additional time-outs are called or available, a fault will be called.</u></p>	<p>11.F. Stated if players are not ready within 10 seconds and no additional time-outs are called, the offending side will receive a technical foul on the first offense and a match forfeit on the second offense.</p>
<p>10.B. Medical Time-Out. If a player is accidentally injured during a match, that player may take a medical time-out. On-site medical staff should be summoned to assess the situation and render appropriate first aid. If blood is present, play may not resume until the bleeding has been controlled and any blood on clothing and the court has been cleaned up.</p>	<p>11.B. Previously Injury Time-Outs</p>
<p>10.B.1. Medical personnel, or the tournament director if no medical personnel are present, must agree that there is a valid reason for a medical time-out to take place and that the player is not just stalling to rest or recuperate.</p>	<p>11.B. Stated that the referee must agree.</p>
<p>10.B.1.b. If medical personnel, or the tournament director if no medical personnel are present, determine that there is not a valid medical condition, then the player or team will be issued a technical warning. If a technical warning has already been issued, then a technical foul will be called. The medical time-out is still available.</p>	<p>There was no penalty if deemed that the player did not have a valid injury.</p>

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52 >

/// SECTION 11 – OTHER RULES

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
<p>11.L.5. Portable Net Systems - When net systems have a horizontal bar that includes a center base: If the ball hits the horizontal bar or the center base before going over the net, it is a fault. <u>If the ball goes over the net and hits the center base or the horizontal bar or the ball gets caught between the net and the horizontal bar before touching the court, it is a let and will be replayed.</u></p>	<p>12.J.5. Stated that the ball was in play if the ball struck the horizontal bar after going over the net.</p>

/// SECTION 12 – SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT POLICIES

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
<p>12.C.1. Single Elimination with Consolation. The first player or team to score the match-winning point by at least a 2-point margin wins. <u>Losers from all rounds go into a consolation bracket playing for the bronze medal/third place and are eliminated after a second loss.</u> The final two players or teams in the winners bracket play for the gold/first-place and silver/second-place medals.</p>	<p>13.A.1. First round losers go into a consolation bracket.</p>
<p>No new rule as this option was not being used.</p>	<p>13.A.3. Drop Flight. This has been removed.</p>
<p>No new rule as this option was not being used.</p>	<p>13.A.5. Point Award. This has been removed.</p>
<p>12.C.3. Round Robin. First tie breaker is head to head; the second tie breaker is point differential of all games played. See Rulebook for details on calculating point differential. (NOTE: With this change, round robin matches can now be two out of three to 11.</p>	<p>13.A.4. The player or team winning the most matches is declared the winner. If two or more are tied for a medal, the player or team winning the most points will be declared the winner of the tie.</p>
<p>Officials. This requirement has been modified and moved to the USAPA Sanctioning Guidelines.</p>	<p>14.C. Officials: Every USAPA sanctioned tournament must have a referee for each match.</p>

/// SECTION 13 – TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT AND OFFICIATING

NEW/REVISED RULE	OLD RULE
<p>This was removed, players may stop the rally, but at their own risk. If the referee did not see or disagrees, the call made by the player or linesperson (if present) stands.</p>	<p>Removed 14.I.3. A player wishing to signify an appeal during a rally may do so by raising his/her non-paddle hand to inform the referee that an appeal is being made.</p>
<p>13.G.4.e. After assessing a technical warning or a technical foul, the referee will call a 15-second warning for the players to become ready. At the end of 15 seconds, the referee will announce the score to begin the 10-Second Rule, even if the server and receiver are not on the court and/or not ready to play. See rule 4.E.</p>	<p>There was no previous rule.</p>
<p>13.I. Rules Interpretations. If a player thinks the referee has interpreted a rule incorrectly, that player may request that the referee, the head referee, or the tournament director show the applicable rule in the rulebook. <u>If the referee's ruling is correct, the player or team will lose a time-out and be given a technical warning.</u> If no time-outs are available and the referee's <u>ruling is correct, the player or team will be given a technical foul.</u></p>	<p>14.J. Rules Interpretations. If a player feels that the referee has interpreted the rules incorrectly, that player may request that the referee or the tournament director show the applicable rule in the rulebook.</p>