

Pickleball Rally Scoring: The Basics



- Games are played to 21, win by 2.
- Before starting, each player on each team chooses a side of the court (either the left side or right side). The players remain on these sides of the court for the entire game.
- If a team wins a rally they score a point (you don't have to be serving to win a point!).

How to Play

1 - Choose the Team that Serves First (rock paper scissors, flip a coin, etc).

2 - Start the Game with the First Serve

The serving team begins serving with the player on the right-side serving first. The player serves crosscourt (diagonal) to the opposing team.

3 - Scoring & Serving Rotation

If the serving team wins the rally:

- The serving team scores a point.
- The player on the left-side serves next (players don't switch sides of court!).
- The serve continues alternating between the left-side server and the right-side server until the serving team loses a point.

If the receiving team wins the rally:

- Once the returning team wins a rally, they win a point and it is their turn to serve.

Serving Notes

- When it is a team's turn to serve, the side they serve from depends on their score!
- If a team's score is 0 or an even number like 2 or 12, **the team will serve from the right side of the court (diagonally to the other team's right side).**
- If a team's score is an odd number, **the player on the left side of the court will serve.**

4 - Change Ends When 1 Team Reaches 11 Points

- In Major League Pickleball, players can switch sides of the court when the teams change ends.

5 - Freeze at 20!

- When 1 team reaches 20 points, their score "freezes". This means they can only score the 21st point when serving.
- If both teams reach 20 or more points (e.g., 20-20), both teams can win a point when returning, but either team has to be serving to win a point if they are ahead. For example, if the score is 22-21, the team with 22 points must be serving to win the game.

Differences Between Sideout Scoring and Rally Scoring



	Sideout Scoring	Rally Scoring
Scoring	11 (or 15), win by 2	21 (or 15), win by 2
Points Scored	Only when serving	When serving or returning
Doubles Scoring	3 numbers are used, e.g., 2-1-2 means your team is ahead 2 to 1 and the 2nd server is serving	2 numbers are used, 11-13 means your team trails 11-13
At the Start of a Service Turn	Teams start serving from the right side on their service turn.	If a team's score is 0 or even, they serve from the right side. If their score is odd, they serve from the left side.
Number of Serves on a Turn	Each player gets a chance to serve on their team's service turn.	A team may only get 1 chance to serve on their turn (if they lose the 1st point on their serve the serve goes over to the other team)
Player Placement	Players move sides of the court as long as they are winning points on their serve	Players stay on the same side (left or right) during the game. When a team is serving, the players alternate serving.
Used By	Most tournaments and rec. games	Major League Pickleball, some tournaments
Advantages	The standard scoring method in pickleball	Easier to understand and leads to faster-paced scoring games