

CODE OF CONDUCT - THANET PICKLEBALL CLUB

As our club grows, and as our collective play improves, and especially as major competitions loom on the horizon, **Thanet Pickleball** feels now is the time to discuss how we use our club, expected behaviour within that club, as well as clarification of the pickleball rules, as laid out by the International Pickleball Federation.

- **Wednesdays:** Due to the mix of playing abilities, we need to ensure that players mix in frequently and fairly. For the first hour of play, all courts will be used for mixed play. I suggest we adopt a system whereby, as soon as you finish a game, you join a “queue” along the back wall. This line will then filter out to available courts. After the first hour, the two courts by the entrance will be used for advanced match play. All advanced players (who is “advanced” is to be decided) should help umpire these matches.
- **Sundays:** competitive game play with chosen partners.

GETTING THE BEST OUT OF OUR CLUB

- Try and arrive 5 minutes early to do a short warm-up to avoid injury. This is something that we must begin to integrate into our game play evenings. Stretches (particularly focusing on shoulders, lower backs, calf muscles and ankles) and even just a jog around the car park will mean our bodies are warm and ready for play.
- On Wednesdays in particular, due to there being a mix of standards, we need to make sure that everyone swaps in and out fairly. No court hogging please. No avoidance of play with players who are not at your level. Use time on court with players at a lower standing to yourself to practice key shots and improve tactical play. We will hopefully begin using an app to distribute play across all courts or we will use the pin board system.

THE RULES

Until we reach the competition level, we don't think any of us will be able to appreciate what sticklers for the rules the Americans are. Because of this, we need to all consciously work to the official pickleball rules. This means that our competition play in Amsterdam and Madrid will not be hampered or held back by foot faults and fouls.

IPF RULES

Below are key areas we need to focus on. IPF rules are shown in bold and italics to clarify:

- **FOOT FAULTS** at the back line when serving – this is happening a lot in our club.
“Server Position. *At the beginning of the serve, both feet must be behind the baseline. At the time the ball is struck, at least one foot must be on the playing surface or ground behind the baseline.*”
With a minor adjustment, this can be solved.

- Entering the NO-VOLLEY ZONE after playing a point.

“A fault will be declared if, in the act of volleying the ball, a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying touches the non-volley zone or touches any non-volley line. For example, a fault will be declared if, in the act of volleying the ball, one of the player’s feet touches a non-volley line.”

So, this means as well as entering the no-volley zone (or as we sometimes call it: the “kitchen”), you also cannot touch the line of this zone. Let’s think about taking a step back when we’re playing close to the net. Even after the ball is classed as a dead ball (it’s made two bounces after a winning hit), and you enter the no-volley zone, it’s still classed as a foul: *“It is a fault even if the ball is declared dead before the player touches the non- volley zone.”*

- LINE CALLS: if the ball hits the kitchen/no-volley zone line on a service, it’s out. If it hits a sideline during play, it’s in.

> Ways to avoid arguments about line calls: if you’re having to sit out, then please referee a match – this will help with line calls and also give you the opportunity to see other people’s tactics.

> Code of Ethics for line calling: If there is no referee to assist your game, we must line call clearly and quickly. The ball must hit the ground before it is called officially out.

> As a new club rule, we think we should adopt the following: if there is a disagreement, from either side, a “let” must be called.

“The player, when assigned line- calling duties, operates under the principle that all questionable calls must be resolved in favour of the opponent.” This means that you do not call a line call in your favour.

- Players will call the lines on their side of the court.

- The opponent gets the benefit of the doubt on line calls made.

- Any ball that cannot be called “out” is therefore presumed to be “in.” The player cannot claim a “let” (replay) because the ball was not seen.

- SPORTSMANSHIP: it’s worth raising the “technical foul” ruling at this juncture: TECHNICAL FOUL: the referee is empowered to add one point to a player’s score or a team’s score *“when the opponent violates one of the rules calling for a technical foul or, in the referee’s judgment, the opponent is being overly and deliberately abusive.”*

It’s great that we play hard and that we take our game very seriously, but it’s come to the club’s attention that some behaviour is off-putting to other players and may be found to be aggressive or intimidating.

- SCORING: it’s actually an official rule that we must state the score before we serve. This will also mean that there will be fewer arguments regarding score. If, for example, the wrong player serves because of a mix-up in scoring, this is actually classed as a fault.

- CALLING THE SCORE: the score should be called as three numbers. *“The proper sequence for calling the score is: server score, receiver score, then, for doubles only, (server) 1 or 2. To start a match, the score will be called as: zero - zero – two.”* Let’s try to avoid using terminology from other sports, such as tennis. No ‘love’ instead of zero.

Prior to the potential final game or match point, DO NOT add any phrase such as “potential game point” or “potential match point.” This is where we need to tone down our language.

- POACHING: this is when a player “steals” their partner’s shot – whether that be successfully or

not. In the coming weeks, let's attempt to stick to our sides of the court (meaning our positioning on the court will be more powerful). Shots down the centre line should be taken by the person whose forehand it lands on. No more leaping in front of your partner to take a shot. Apologise if you do this.

- **SERVES:** this is aimed at the players who use spin on their serve (which is allowed, but it occasionally puts your serve into a possible foul stroke). The underhand motion is described as thus: *"The arm must be moving in an upward arc and the paddle head shall be below the wrist when it strikes the ball (paddle head is that part of the paddle excluding handle. The highest point of the paddle head cannot be above any part of line formed where the wrist joint bends.)"*
- **DISTRACTIONS:** *"Players may not yell, stamp their feet, or otherwise try to distract an opponent when the opponent is about to play the ball."*
- **"SIDE OUT":** this is *"declared after one side loses its service and the other side is awarded service."*
- Some other interesting rules from the rulebook:
 - > Insignias, pictures, and writing on the clothing must be in good taste.
 - > A player may be required to change wet, extremely loose-fitting, or otherwise distracting garments.