



# Standard League Rules

## State Masters Pickleball

Effective Date: June 1, 2026

## Introduction

State Masters Pickleball™ is a state-of-the-art, competitive, committed, and charitable coed team league featuring teams across counties, states, and regions, with the ultimate goal of developing U.S. champions who can compete internationally.

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## Information

### 1) PLAYERS

Prior to playing in any State Masters Pickleball league, all players must be registered on the SMP website, and must agree to the Waiver & Release, Terms & Conditions, and all league policies.

### 2) TEAM CAPTAINS

All teams must designate one or two team captains prior to the season starting. The captain(s) are responsible for working with the club to book courts for the times required for each home match at the beginning of the season, determining the lineup for each match, scheduling practices, and entering the scores into the system within 24 hours. They are also responsible for communicating with the other team's captain(s) during matches, and communicating with the league or club as needed. Communications include, but are not limited to communicating with the league regarding scheduling changes/conflicts, rule clarifications, communicating the selection of alternates and injuries, etc. If a team captain is unable to fulfill his/her duties, the team must designate a substitute captain.

### 3) SUBS

A team is allowed to have "Subs" on their roster to fill in for up to three (3) matches during the season if enough team players are not available to play. All subs must be registered on the SMP website and agree to the Waiver & Release, Terms & Conditions, and all league policies. The captains will make reasonable efforts to provide substitutes with playing opportunities during the season.

### 4) EQUIPMENT

All paddles used in SMP play must comply with current USA Pickleball approved paddle standards unless otherwise authorized by SMP.

SMP reserves the right to prohibit equipment deemed unsafe or non-compliant.

## **5) DUPR REQUIREMENTS and AGE RESTRICTIONS**

### **For all leagues that are DUPR reported:**

Each DUPR level will be extremely restricted to ensure that DUPR calculations for each match are based upon players competing within the designated DUPR range for that division. Each player must have a recorded DUPR within the DUPR system that is in line with the level they are playing at the start of the season.

\*Each player must have at least 10 DUPR games in the system that have occurred at two (2) or more different venues, and with different players in each venue. Not Rated (N/R) players are not eligible for this league.

### **Level Required DUPR Range**

<b>3.0</b>	2.75 – 3.40
<b>3.5</b>	3.41 – 3.89
<b>4.0</b>	3.90 – 4.40
<b>4.5</b>	4.41 and up

**\*Leagues that are “Non-DUPR” do not have these requirements. If there is a Non-DUPR league, players can choose to participate in any division.**

### **Age Restrictions:**

For all age-based divisions (50+, 60+, etc.), players may compete in a younger age bracket but may not compete in an older age bracket for which they do not meet the minimum age requirement.

## **6) RESCHEDULES/CANCELLATIONS/FORFEITS & DEFAULTS**

Once the season schedule has been released, each team will have one (1) week to review the schedule for any conflicts involving their home matches.

If there is a conflict and the HOME Team is unable to secure the required number of courts and/or court hours at its club, the HOME Team must contact the AWAY Team to determine whether the AWAY Team’s club is able to host the match on the originally scheduled date.

If the AWAY Team’s club is able to host the match, the AWAY Team will receive the court fees associated with hosting; however, the HOME Team will retain Side and Serve preference.

If the AWAY Team is unable to secure courts on the originally scheduled match date, SMP must be notified and will attempt to secure courts at another club located within a reasonable distance of both teams.

If another club is not available, the two (2) teams must work together to identify an alternate date and time for the rescheduled match.

**PLEASE NOTE: All reschedules must be identified within two (2) weeks of receiving the season schedule.**

If a team needs to cancel or forfeit a match during the season, the canceling team will be responsible for paying one hundred percent (100%) of the court fees to the HOME Team.

If a team cannot field the required number of players within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled start time, SMP may declare a default or forfeit for affected games or rounds.

Repeated forfeits or late arrivals may result in penalties, removal from playoffs, or league suspension.

## **7) STARTING LINEUPS**

The Away team must submit their daily lineups online 3 days before each match day. (For example, teams must submit their lineup on Wednesday for a Saturday match, etc.) The Home team will be able to see the opponent’s lineup and must submit their lineups by 5pm on the day before the match.

## **8) HOME TEAM BENEFITS**

The team that is designated as the “home team” will select Side and Serve at the beginning of each game. It is their decision to either select both the side and the serve or give one of those options to the away team. For rally scoring games, teams will switch sides at 11.

## **9) SERVES**

SMP follows current USA Pickleball serving rules unless otherwise specified by SMP.

Any serve that touches the net and lands in the appropriate service area will be a live ball and should be played.

## **10) TIME-OUTS**

Teams will each receive one (1) time-out per game. Time-outs will be up to one (1) minute, or longer depending on hydration, injury, or other reasonable circumstances. Players on court must request the time-out.

A player can request a medical time-out due to injury or illness. A medical time-out will be allowed for a maximum of 5 minutes. After that time, the player must either return to the game, or that team will need to forfeit if the player is unable to continue. Additional time-outs may be implemented during a game to address equipment issues, or for any other reason deemed necessary by the League.

## **11) LINE CALLING**

Players on court must make an OUT call either verbally or with a finger towards the sideline or baseline. All OUT calls must be made prior to the ball being hit by the opponent or before the ball becomes dead. All players or team representatives on the sideline are not permitted to call OUT balls during a live rally. If a player on the court cannot distinguish if the ball was in or out, then the ball is presumed in, and play should continue. The team where the ball lands is the team that is authorized to make the call. Players are expected to respect line calls made by the receiving side. Excessive disputes or unsportsmanlike conduct may result in warnings or penalties.

## **12) PLAYER CONDUCT & COACHING**

All players are expected to act professionally and politely in every game. At the beginning of each match, each team should introduce themselves to the other team. At the end of the match, players must touch paddles at the net and offer kind words to each other.

Coaching by teammates and team representatives (owner/coach/captain) on the sideline is allowed **when the ball is not in play** (dead ball) if it does not interfere with continuous play or if it does not unfairly disrupt the opposing team. If the opposing team feels this is disrupting their play, it must stop immediately.

Any inappropriate behavior from team representatives on the sideline that impacts play can result in those spectators being removed from the game or club.

## **13) ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE USE**

Players are expected to participate responsibly and safely.

SMP reserves the right to remove any participant who appears impaired, disruptive, unsafe, or unable to compete responsibly due to alcohol or substance use.

## **14) INJURIES**

If an injury occurs during a match, the team must use one of its bench players as a replacement for that round, provided the substitute has not already played two (2) matches with the uninjured partner. That sub can also be used in all other matches where the injured player was scheduled to play – if they have not already had two (2) games with that partner. If the sub has already played two (2) games with any partner, the game must be forfeited by the team with the injured player.

## **15) MATCHES**

SMP-32 Mixed League matches will consist of eight (8) rounds of play, which will each have four (4) games. There will be sixteen (16) mixed doubles games, eight (8) women's games and eight (8) men's games. (See Leagues section for other league types)

If teams are tied after those games, the total points earned in all rounds will be used to determine the winner. If the total points are also tied, then the teams will select 4 players (2 women and 2 men) to compete in a DreamBreaker.

## **16) WARM UP**

Teams are expected to warm up on a practice court for no longer than 15 minutes after the start of the match. Once 15 minutes have passed, the teams will proceed to their scheduled courts to begin play.

## **17) DREAMBREAKER™ (SINGLES TIEBREAKER)**

A DreamBreaker is a game to 21 (win by 2) with rally scoring and a team must win while serving. Each team must rotate its four (4) players for 4 singles rallies in a set order. Players serve from the left or right side of the court based on their score. A player will serve on the right side when their team score is even and serve on the left side when the team score is odd. The away team will tell the home team who they are putting in the DreamBreaker, and the home team will then select their players.

Four (4) players will compete in four (4) rally rotations until the DreamBreaker is concluded (player 1 plays four (4) points, then player 2 plays four (4) points, then player 3 plays four (4) points, then player 4 plays four (4) points, and then the rotation repeats in the same order). Teams will change ends of the court when one team reaches a score of eleven (11).

## **18) SCORE REPORTING**

Match scores **must be entered into the SMP website within twenty-four (24) hours.**

**Any scoring disputes must be reported within forty-eight (48) hours of score submission.** After that period, scores become official and are reported to DUPR unless otherwise determined by SMP.

## **19) PLAYOFF ELIGIBILITY**

SMP may establish minimum participation requirements for playoff eligibility.

**Only rostered players approved by SMP** may participate in playoff matches. SMP reserves the right to establish roster lock deadlines and substitute limitations for postseason play.

## **20) WEATHER & FACILITY INTERRUPTIONS**

SMP reserves the right to delay, suspend, reschedule, shorten, cancel, or relocate matches due to weather, facility issues, safety concerns, or circumstances beyond its control.

Any incomplete matches may be resumed at a later date or scored as determined by SMP.

League decisions regarding interrupted matches are final.

## **21) SOCIAL MEDIA & PUBLIC CONDUCT**

Participants may not use social media or other public platforms to harass, threaten, defame, or intentionally damage the reputation of players, clubs, captains, sponsors, or SMP.

SMP reserves the right to impose discipline for conduct deemed harmful to the league community.

## **22) ADDITIONAL LEAGUES AND FORMATS**

SMP reserves the right to create additional leagues with different formats. Descriptions of additional league formats will be available under the “Leagues” section of the SMP website. These standard rules apply to all leagues unless otherwise specified by SMP.