

# Irvine Team Pickleball League

**2025 Fall**

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## Rules

### 1. Etiquette

*Irvine Team Pickleball (ITP) is a socially competitive and recreational pickleball league.*

*The league staff encourages cheering for teammates, with respect to the players on the court.*

*Opponents must be respectful of each other before and during match play. Players need to refrain from any form of obscenity and taunting of opponents.*

*Prior to each team match, if the public is playing on the designated courts prior to the warm-up time; please politely warn them that the ITP matches will be starting on the courts. Allow the public at least 10 minutes to finish playing before taking the court over.*

*Once a team match is finished, please relinquish the tennis court to the public.*

### 2. Pickleballs:

The league is providing match pickleballs for the season.

Each team will receive twelve (12) pickleballs prior to the start of the season. Teams are each required to bring one (1) of the allotted unplayed pickleballs to each match. During warm-ups or in between games, personal balls can be used. For the first 3 games, 1 fresh pickleball will be used. For the last 3 games, the other fresh pickleball will be used. Captains will keep the used pickleballs or distribute them among their teammates.

Captains can pick up additional balls from the League Director as needed for the playoffs.

### **3. Game Rules**

ITP follows USAPA rules. Please refer to the website below for quick reference and for access to a complete downloadable rulebook.

<https://usapickleball.org/what-is-pickleball/official-rules/rules-summary/>

Traditional Side-Out Scoring to 11 points is used. Points are scored only by the serving team. When the serving team's score is even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10) the player who was the first server in the game for that team will be in the right-side court when serving or receiving; when odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) that player will be in the left-side court when serving or receiving.

Instead of traditional win-by-2 game scoring, ITP follows a win-by-1 game scoring system. The first team to score 11 points wins a game.

### **4. Match Rules**

A team match consists of six (6) games scored first-to-11, win-by-1 and includes 2 men's doubles, 2 women's doubles, and 2 mixed doubles games.

The order of play is:

On one (1) court, order of games will be:

- One (1) game of Women's Doubles
- One (1) game of Men's Doubles
- Two (2) games of Mixed Doubles
- One (1) game of Women's Doubles
- One (1) game of Men's Doubles

\*Please note we want to encourage friendly competition, so if your opponents are short a player at the start of the match it would be nice if you start whichever games can be played first. For example, if two men and one woman have shown up, the men's doubles game can be played first and the mixed doubles second. If by the time you need to start the game which you don't have a player for then your team will have to take a default for that set. This only applies to the regular season. The order of play in playoffs will be strictly observed.

Both Captains must submit the starting line-up to the opposing team captain before the start of each set. Each team captain has until the end of a three-minute break between sets to submit the starting line-up for the next set. Once line-ups are submitted to the other captain, any changes made to the line-up will count as a substitution.

If a captain wants to use text messages to communicate line-ups to another captain, both captains must agree upon this before the team match starts.

Players cannot play in both mixed doubles games. The same 2 male players are allowed to play in the two Men's doubles games and the same two female players are allowed to play in the two Women's doubles games.

At the end of each match, all respective point scores from each team are added together to determine the final point value of the match. The team with the highest amount of total points wins the match.

**TIEBREAKERS:** If there is a tie in total points, one (1) additional game of mixed doubles is played scoring first-to-7 points, win-by-1 and the winner of game 7 wins the match. The tiebreaker game can be played by any player even if they'd played previously in the first two mixed doubles games. There is no changing ends during a tiebreaker when one team reaches 6 points.

If all games and/or one tiebreaker have not been completed by the end of the allotted time, then scores from all games including the one currently in progress are tallied and the winner is determined.

## **5. Substitutions**

A team can at any point substitute a player (same gender) into a set for any reason. Once a player is replaced, he/she cannot return to play for the duration of the game.

If substituting during a mixed doubles game, the substituted player is eligible to play the next set of mixed doubles, but the player who substituted in becomes ineligible.

The substituted player must follow the odd-even score position established by the previous player they are substituting out.

In a tiebreaker, all players who were previously substituted out become eligible for play. Substitutions during tiebreakers can be made for any reason, but the player substituted out cannot return to play for the duration of the tiebreaker game.

## **6. Warm-Up Time**

All team matches have a scheduled warm-up time of 15 minutes prior to the match amongst team members. There is NO warm-up time before the first games played. All players had 15 minutes to warm-up prior to the first sets starting.

A five-minute warm-up is allowed between games. The warm-up time between games must start within 5 minutes of the previous set finishing. For example, when the women's doubles game finishes, players have 5 minutes before the five-minute warm-up begins for the men's doubles game.

There is no warm-up time for substitutes coming into the match.

## **7. Service Order**

The home team will be determined by “the toss.” Whichever team wins “the toss” can choose to be the Home team or Away team. “The toss” can be determined by using a coin, the bottom of a paddle, or any fair method which can be used to determine which player or team has first choice of side, service, or receive (e.g. write a 1 or 2 on the back of the score sheet).

The Home team serves first in the first 3 gendered and mixed doubles games. The Away team serves first in the next 3 gendered and mixed doubles games.

Note: since the serving order is predetermined, the receiving team selects from which end of the court they want to receive.

In the event of a tiebreaker, another “toss” will determine who decides which team serves first.

In the playoffs, the team with the higher seed will get to choose whether to be the Home team or Away team.

## **8. Changing Ends**

After one team reaches 6 points in the game score, players change ends. Players are allowed 1 minute between the start of changing ends and resuming play.

## **9. Time Outs**

Standard timeouts can be called before or after any point. Standard timeouts last up to one minute. Each team is entitled two standard timeouts for each game to 11.

In the case of a medical timeout, a substitution occurs. If no suitable substitution is available, a medical timeout can last up to 15 minutes. If the player is unable to resume play, the game will be declared defaulted. Each player is entitled to one medical timeout for the entire match, not per game.

In the case of an equipment timeout (which includes issues with paddle, apparel, etc.), players will work out a reasonable accommodation amongst themselves for malfunctions. Equipment timeouts are not counted as standard timeouts, but time spent resolving the equipment issue must be within reason for the sake of the match’s continuation. For serious or prolonged equipment issues, a substitution occurs. If a substitution cannot be found, the game is considered defaulted by the team unable to field the proper players.

## 10. Service Lets

**Service lets will be played.** When a serve hits the net and bounces within the service court, the ball is playable. If the serve hits the net and bounces into the non-volley zone, the serve is counted as a fault.

## 11. Coaching/Line Calls

Coaching is allowed throughout the match as long as it does not interfere with continuous play. Spectators cannot coach. For example, coaching is allowed during time outs, changing ends, or warm-ups at any time. Coaching is not allowed during points or between points.

Only the four players (doubles and mixed doubles) can make line calls. Upon a player request, one of the captains will act as the line judge for the match. Only the players in the match may ask for a line judge. If the captains are unavailable, a volunteer from another team will be the line judge. Line judges can only help with any disputed calls **only when asked by the players playing**. The call the line judge makes is final.

## 12. Default Rule

If the home or away team player does not show up on time for his/her match, there will be a 15-minute default time. If during the default time, the player does show up, there will be no additional warm-up time allotted to the arriving player.

For example: a team does not have any female players at 7:00pm. At 7:10pm, a female player shows up for the team, the arriving female player is not allowed any additional warm-up time.

If a set is defaulted, the score should be recorded as 11-0 in favor of the players present.

The default rule will not apply when the missing player is on a different court in the same facility playing a previous ITP game within the current match.

Full team defaults will be recorded 11-0 in each game with no players being recorded.

If a team defaults a match, the courts where the match was scheduled are considered public courts and cannot be used for team practice.

## 13. Recording/Sending in Scores

The winning team must report the scores online. The losing team may check the scores later for accuracy.

The League Director will provide captains with the deadline in which they can enter scores. All unreported scores after the deadline will be recorded as a loss for both teams.

## **14. Inclement Weather Matches**

Matches can only be made up because of inclement weather (ex: rain), no exceptions. Matches can only be postponed because of inclement weather until one hour before the scheduled match time. All inclement weather match communication must be done between captains only. The League Director must be notified if an inclement weather match has been postponed. Please use double headers to complete make-up matches.

If a match is rescheduled and the inclement weather match cannot be completed during the season and one team cannot play during the inclement weather week, that team will lose the match via default.

If a match is rescheduled and the inclement weather match cannot be completed during the season and both teams cannot play during the inclement weather week, both teams will lose the match via default.

The League Director will make the decisions regarding if there are multiple postponed matches due to inclement weather.

If some of the match has been played and the match is postponed due to inclement weather, the make-up match will start where the postponed match ended. Both captains need to agree on the scores of the match before the team match is postponed.

## **15. Rosters and Playing Times**

Teams cannot exceed a maximum of 8 players.

Captains have until **Monday, September 22, 2025 PDT** to remove players from their team. Captains will need to contact the League Director to remove a player from the team.

Captains cannot remove players to add another player (replace players) for any reason, including sickness or injury.

Players can still be added onto teams until **Monday, October 20, 2025 PDT**, upon approval from the League Director.

Players can only be on one team each night. Players cannot switch teams once the season starts. No inseason trades of players.

All players must complete the City of Irvine waiver before playing their first match. Please register at [yourirvine.org](https://yourirvine.org)

The league is not in control of playing time. This is a recreational league; the captain must ensure teammates get a fair amount of playing time. Any decisions regarding playing time made by the captain is final.

## **16. Playoffs**

Every team makes the playoffs; a team's season record will determine the playoff seeding. All players must play two team matches to qualify for playoffs. Defaults do not count toward the team match qualification.

The league playoffs will be single elimination unless the League Director states otherwise. In order of consideration weight, seeding will be determined by:

1. Team overall win/loss ratio
2. Head to head (team matches)
  - For example: Team 1 and Team 2 are both 7-3, but Team 1 beat Team 2 twice, then Team 1 gets the better seed
3. Head to head (most points won between both teams)
  - Both Team 1 and Team 2 have the same win/loss rate in the league and are 1-1 win/loss against each other, then the team with the most overall total points between the two gets the better seed. Tiebreakers are not taken into account when totaling game scores.

## **17. Self Rating information**

All self-rated players cannot lower their self-rating from the last ITT season they played. If you are a self-rated player and you want to change your rating to a lower rating, you must justify your lower rating to the League Director directly.

## **18. League Director Rulings**

The League Director will make decisions and deliver punishments if "spirit of the league" type violations occur throughout the season. For example, if a person represents themselves as a rostered person on a team. Punishment can include, but are not limited to, set defaults or full team disqualification.

Match disputes and grievances will be handled by captains only and in this process:

1. Match disputes must be e-mailed to the League Director within 48 hours. Once e-mailed, a decision will be made within another 48 hours.

## **19. Age Requirement**

Must be at least 18 years of age prior to the end of the ITP regular season.