

PICKLE-BALL DOUBLES STRATEGY

Pickle-Ball involves strategies that include lobbing, overhead slamming, passing drive shots from the baseline, and fast volley exchanges at the net. The key strategy to remember is that the team that reaches the front court in a net volley position first will be in the best position to win the point. Again, the most effective position of play is when both players on the same team are side-by-side in the attack position one foot behind the non-volley zone line.

PLAYER POSITION ON THE COURT (SEE OPPOSITE PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS)

The serving team will be side-by-side on the baseline in a defensive position ready to return passing drive shots, drop shots, and overhead slams. The serving team must stay back until the ball has bounced once on their side prior to moving forward to the net volley position. The receiving team will have the player not receiving the serve in the net volley position. The player receiving the serve should play 1-2 feet behind the baseline to anticipate the deep serve of the opposing team. The receiving team player should hit a deep return of service shot and move forward to the net volley position side-by-side with his partner. This is the ideal attack position for the receiving team as both players are in the best position to win the point (receiving team in net volley position hitting overhead slams and drop shots while serving team in defensive position back on baseline attempting passing, drive shots, offensive lobs deep to the baseline, and drop shots that fall into the non-volley zone).

SHOT SELECTION — RECEIVING TEAM ON OFFENSE

The receiving team in the net volley position may utilize the following shots to win back the serve:

- A. Overhead slams down the middle of the court or angled toward the sidelines.
- B. Drop shots clearing the net and landing in the non-volley zone (a player may move into non-volley zone before ball bounces, but the player must let it bounce before returning it). Drop shots can be effective as the serving team players are back in a side-by-side baseline position prepared for overhead slams. They must rush forward and hit an "off-balance" shot which is usually a "put-a-way" overhead slam or volley by the receiving team. It is to the receiving team's advantage while at the net volley position to return all possible shots on the fly (not on first bounce). If the receiving team lets an offensive lob bounce then they may relinquish the net volley position as the serving team will seize this opportunity to move forward and gain the net volley position while the receiving team retreats to the defensive position on the baseline.

SHOT SELECTION — SERVING TEAM OF OFFENSE

Both serving team players will be side-by-side, one foot behind the baseline. The ideal serve is hit hard and deep diagonally to the receiving team player. The advantage of a hard-hit deep serve is the receiving player who returns service will have greater difficulty moving forward and "getting set" in the net volley position. The serving team can take advantage of this deep serve by hitting a short drop shot that will land in the non-volley zone just in front of the on-rushing receiving player who is moving forward to join his partner at the net volley position. *Remember*, the serving team must let the return of service shot bounce once on their side prior to moving forward to the attack position. If the receiving team is set at the net volley position, the serving team can utilize the following shot selection:

- A. Passing, drive shots toward the receiving team player who is moving forward after hitting the return of service shot to establish the net volley position.
- B. The second strategy is lobbing shots deep to the receiving team's baseline. High, deep lobs drive the receiving players back to the baseline and many times the receiving team will let the ball bounce as they think the ball will fall out of bounds, beyond the baseline. At this point, the serving team seizes the opportunity and can move forward to take the net volley position away from the receiving team.
- C. "Dink" or Drop Shot Strategy — an effective "dink or drop shot is when the ball lands in the non-volley zone and the receiving team is unable to hit the ball on the fly without faulting (hitting ball on fly in non-volley zone). Once the receiving team lets the ball bounce in the non-volley zone then the serving team rushes to the attack position. Now the serving team has created a situation where they are on equal terms at the net volley position with the receiving team, therefore, creating fast volley exchanges at the net. This short drop shot strategy creates fast and furious volley exchanges between all four players stationed at the net volley position.

Again, Pickle-Ball is a sport where shot placement, steadiness, patience, and tactics have a far greater importance than brute power and strength.

COURT DIMENSIONS

The court dimensions are identical to a doubles badminton court. Use the doubles badminton court lines on the gymnasium floor and attach the Pickle-Ball net to the badminton/volleyball net standards at a height of 3 feet. Pickle-Ball is the ideal sport for small spaces in churches, private health clubs, and community centers.