

Pickleball
The
Referee's
Case Book

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Author's Note:

The situations and answers indicated in this book are provided to the reader to help explain the USAPA rules and thus, gain a better understanding of pickleball play. The answers are the sole responsibility of the author.

The USAPA has not reviewed this case book. Thus, if you believe the author's answer is incorrect, check with the USAPA for their definitive ruling. Currently, this is Christine Barksdale, Managing Director of Competition.

As a suggestion, if you are hesitant about reading the entire book, read only those sections where you may have a question.

Hope this helps you improve your game.

Section 2 - Court and Equipment

2.A. Court Specifications.

The Play: As two teams are playing, one of the teams questions the length of the court on their side, feeling the court is longer than it should be.

Answer: Stop the game and measure the court. If the court is either too small or too large (either length or width), have the court retaped to specifications and continue play. If the court cannot be retaped, then discontinue using that court for tournament play. The game will continue on another court where it left off with the same score and that server. If either team feels that the incorrect court significantly affected the game, then replay the game in its entirety.

Rule: 2.A.1.

The court shall be a rectangle 20 feet (6.10 m) wide and 44 feet (13.41 m) long for both singles and doubles matches.

Rule: 2.A.2.

A total playing surface 30 feet (9.14 m) wide and 60 feet (18.28 m) long is the minimum size that is recommended. A total size of 34 feet (10.36 m) by 64 feet (19.5 m) is preferred. (revised April 1, 2011)

Rule: 2.A.3.

Court measurements shall be made to the outside of the lines. The lines should be 2 inches (5.1 cm) wide and the same color, clearly contrasting with the color of the playing surface. (revised April 1, 2011)

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2.C. Net Specifications.

The Play: During tournament play, one team questions the height of the net at the sideline. Play is stopped and the sideline height is measured at 35 inches.

Answer: The proper sideline height is 36 inches and net adjustments should occur to meet this standard. If the net height cannot be made to

meet the 36 inch requirement with reasonable effort, then play should be discontinued using that net. If play must be continued, both teams must be made aware of the height discrepancy.

Rule: 2.C.4. Height. The net shall be suspended over the center of the court and shall be 36 inches (0.914 m) high at the sidelines and 34 inches (0.86 m) high at the center of the court.

2.D. Ball Specifications.

The Play: During play, one team takes exception to the outdoor ball being used for indoor play.

Answer: IFP rules do not prohibit an outdoor ball being used inside or an indoor ball being used outside for tournament play. The exception is overruled.

Rule: 2.D. Ball Specifications. All approved balls are acceptable for indoor or outdoor play. The complete list of approved balls is on the IFP website.

2.E. Paddle Specifications.

The Play: As play continues, Team A has a score of 5 and Team B has a score of 9. Team A notices that one of the paddles on Team B appears to be different and asks the referee to check. The referee, after examining the paddle, determines that by its appearance, it is homemade, but otherwise meets paddle specifications.

Answer: Homemade paddles are not allowed in sanctioned tournament play. Remove the paddle and turn it over to the Tournament Director, who will retain it until that individual no longer has any play left in the tournament.

NOTE: It is recommended that when the referee is meeting with both teams at the beginning of a match, that the paddles be examined for this criteria at that time.

If the questioned paddle was used to obtain an unfair advantage in the Tournament Director's opinion, then the match is forfeited and Team A wins.

Regarding the current match, Team A continues the game from where it left off, or wins the match by forfeiture if the player on Team B refuses to change the paddle.

Rule: 2.E.5. Alterations.

The only alterations that can be made to a commercial paddle are changes to the grip, adding an edge guard, and adding name decals and/or other identification markings on the paddle face. These decals/markings can extend no farther than 1" (25.4 mm) above the top of the handle nor more than 1/2" (12.7 mm) from the outer edge of a paddle, or paddle edge guard if in place. Altered paddles must meet all specifications. Homemade paddles are not permitted. (Effective January 1, 2014)

Rule: 2.E.7. Violation.

If a paddle violates the above rules, the Tournament Director has the authority to enforce a paddle change. If the player in violation refuses to change the paddle, the Director may declare a forfeiture of the match.

2.E. Paddle Specifications.

The Play: While observing the game, the referee notices that one of the player's paddles appears to be rather old and faded. As play continues, the questioned player/paddle comes close enough to the referee that it's clear that the manufacturer's name and model name/number cannot be read.

Answer: Even though the paddle may be proper in all other respects, it must be switched out to conform to IFP rules so that the manufacture's name and model/number are readable.

Rule: 2.E.8. Model Designation.

The manufacturer must have a clearly marked brand and model name or model number on the paddle. Paddles with different core material, surface material, or other significant differences must have a unique name or number. Each unique model must have been

offered for sale to the general public and samples of each unique model must have been submitted to the USAPA and passed USAPA tests. Paddles used in USAPA /IFP sanctioned tournaments after January 1, 2014 must conform to this rule. (Added June 23, 2012)

NOTE: It is recommended that when the referee is meeting with both teams at the beginning of a match, that the paddles be examined for this criteria at that time.

2.E. Paddle Specifications

In a close game, a player on Team A questions the new paddle used by a Team B member as to whether it is authorized for sanctioned play. The referee takes the paddle and provides it to the tournament director for his ruling. The tournament director locates the paddle in the USAPA listing and it is listed as “Not Tested”.

Answer: As the specific paddle does not have a “Pass” designation on the approved USAPA listing, it may not be used in the tournament. The tournament director shall enforce a paddle change or forfeit the match. If in the opinion of the referee, the paddle significantly affected the play, then the tournament director must decide whether to continue the play or allow the game to start over.

2.E.7. Violation.

If a paddle violates the above rules, the Tournament Director has the authority to enforce a paddle change. If the player in violation refuses to change the paddle, the Director may declare a forfeiture of the match.

2.F. Clothing.

The Play: Team A and Team B are the middle of a match when Team A takes exception to Team B’s player who is wearing sandals. The sandals have a proper sole that does not damage the court in any way.

Answer: Per Webster’s dictionary, shoe is defined as follows: an outer covering for your foot that usually has a stiff bottom part called a sole with a thicker part called a heel attached to it and an upper part that covers part or all of the top of your foot.

If the player's sandal meets the above definition, allow play to continue. If the sandal does not meet the definition of a "shoe", then the questioned player on Team B must change his/her sandals or forfeit the match.

Rule: 2.F.4. Shoes.

Shoes must have soles that do not mark or damage the court's playing surface.

Rule: 2.F.5. Violation.

If a player's clothing violates these rules, the Tournament Director has the authority to enforce clothing changes. If the player refuses, the Director may declare a forfeiture of the match.

The Play: Team A has one player whose shirt is the same or a very similar color to the tournament ball being used. Team B complains to the referee that the ball is "lost" when it blends into the shirt color.

Answer: The shirt in question causes a distraction to the opposing team, which is not allowed. If the player refuses to change the shirt, the tournament director may forfeit the match.

Rule: 2.F.2. Safety/Distraction.

A player may be required to change wet, extremely loose - fitting, or otherwise distracting garments.

SECTION 3 - DEFINITIONS

The Play: As the match is progressing, Team A angles a cross-court shot into Team B's non-volley zone. In attempting to play the ball, the Team B player runs into the referee and fails to make the shot. Team B wants the point to be replayed.

Answer: The shot is not replayed. The referee is consider a permanent object and thus, it is the same as if the Team B player had run into the net post.

Rule: 3.S. Permanent Object

Any object near the court or hanging over the court that interferes with the flight of the ball. Permanent objects include the ceiling, walls, fencing, lighting fixtures, net posts, the stands and seats for spectators, the referee, line judges, spectators (when in their recognized positions) and all other objects around and above the court. (revised July 1, 2013)

Section 4 - Service Rules

The Play: As Team A starts the game, the first server hits the ball using a side-arm motion such that the head of the paddle is above the server's wrist.

Answer: After the ball is hit, the referee shall call a fault and illegal serve. The paddle head or any part of it must be below the player's wrist and be below the player's navel.

4.A. Serve Motion.

The serve must be made with an underhand stroke so that contact with the ball is made below waist level (waist is defined as the navel level). (revised Feb. 1, 2013)

4.A.1. Underhand Defined.

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) . (revised Feb. 1, 2013)

The Play: The server beginning his/her serve has one foot behind the baseline and the other foot in the air over the base line.

Answer: After the ball is hit, the referee will call a fault and illegal serve. Both feet must be behind the baseline at the beginning of the serve. The serve begins when the paddle hand goes backward. The foot over the baseline at the server's beginning causes the serve to be illegal.

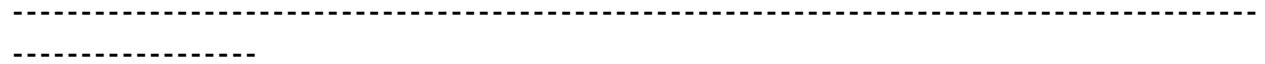
This call is extremely hard to enforce if only one referee is working the game. If the one referee suspects a violation is occurring with each serve, then he/she should move to the server's baseline and observe from that position.

Do not wait until several points have occurred. If the referee observes a potential violation when the players are warming up, caution the player before play begins that you will be observing for this fault.

If there are line judges, then the call can be made by the respective baseline judge.

4.B. 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 and the server's feet may not touch the playing surface in an area outside the confines of the serving area.



The Play: The server on Team A begins his/her serve with one foot touching the floor outside the imaginary side line but behind the baseline. As the serve begins with a backhand motion, the server steps forward into the proper serving court with the outside foot above and overlapping the imaginary sideline.

Answer: Not a fault as long as any portion of the overlapping foot is not touching outside of the imaginary sideline.

4.B. 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 and the server's feet may not touch the playing surface in an area outside the confines of the serving area.

4.D. Service Foot Fault.

During the serve, when the ball is struck, the server's feet shall not:

- 4.D.1. Touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the sideline.*
- 4.D.2. Touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the centerline.*
- 4.D.3. Touch the court, including the baseline.*

The Play: In a medal match, the line judge observes a potential foot fault when the toe of the server's shoe appears to be (1) above or (2) on the baseline at the beginning of the serve. In situation (1) the player being served takes exception explaining that the toe of the shoe is not touching the baseline but is above the line.

Answer: Both situations are a foot fault and must be called as the rule specifically states that the both feet have to be behind the baseline.

Shoes normally curl up at the toe and the player's explanation would be valid when the shoe is above the non-volley line and thus not touching the non-volley line. The argument is not valid at the serving baseline.

4.B. 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 and the server's feet may not touch the playing surface in an area outside the confines of the serving area.

The Play: The served ball (from the right side court) goes cross court and hits just to the right of the center line. This is a fault.

Answer: Correct. The served ball must land in the diagonal court.

4.C. The Serve

The ball must land in the opponent's crosscourt (diagonally opposite court) service court. (revised April 1, 2011)

The Play: After serving the ball, the ball goes over the net and hits the receiver's partner. The teams decide to redo the serve as the receiver's partner was not watching.

Answer: The play is not redone. After the ball hits the receiver's partner, it is a fault and a point for the serving team.

4.C.2. Interference.

If the serve clears the net and the receiver or the receiver's partner interferes with the flight of the ball on the serve, it is a point for the serving team.

The Play: The server has begun the serve when the ball is accidentally dropped and the swinging paddle misses the ball. Both teams are willing to do a replay.

Answer: A missed serve is a fault and cannot be replayed. It is either second service or side out.

4.E. Service Faults.

During the service, it is a fault if:

4.E.1. The server misses the ball when trying to hit it. If the ball lands on the ground without the server swinging at the ball, it is not a fault.

The Play: The served ball clears the net and lands on the non-volley line. The receiving team plays the ball and subsequently loses the play.

Answer: As soon as the served ball hit the non-volley line, it is a service fault and the ball is dead - regardless of whether the receiving team plays the ball. If not called by the receiving team and the referee clearly sees the ball strike the non-volley line, the referee should call a fault immediately. If it is a question whether the served ball hit the non-volley line, then it is the receiving team's responsibility to make the call.

4.E. Service Faults.

During the service, it is a fault if:

4.E.4. The served ball lands on the non-volley line.

The Play: The served ball strikes the net cable near the net post (above non-court area) and falls back into the serving court. The receiving team calls the ball out, stops play, and indicates the serving team lost the service.

Answer: This is a service let and should be replayed. The serving team does not lose the service.

4.F. Service Lets.

The serve is a let and will be replayed if:

4.F.1. The serve touches the net, strap, or band, and is otherwise good and lands in the service court.

The Play: The served ball hits the top of the net on the receiving partner side and then hits the receiving partner who is standing next to the center line. The receiver claims the ball was obviously out when it hit the wrong side of the net and thus, it is a lost serve.

Answer: It is not a lost serve. It is a service let. Replay.

4.F. Service Lets.

The serve is a let and will be replayed if:

4.F.3. The served ball hits the net and strikes the receiver or the receiver's partner.

The Play: Team A and Team B are in the middle of play when a spectator trips/falls onto an outer boundary of the court. Team B, whose loses the play on the next shot, immediately calls for a replay due to the distraction.

Answer: A replay is appropriate due to the distraction caused by the fall. If the play had continued with several more shots by both teams after the fall, then the referee could disallow the distraction call.

4.F. Service Lets.

The serve is a let and will be replayed if:

4.F.4. The referee or any player calls a time out because an object (a ball, another court's player, a spectator, etc.) causes a distraction by coming within the playing area.

The Play: Once served, the referee sees the ball hit the top of the net and immediately calls a “Let”. Play is stopped and both teams approach the referee indicating that in their opinion, it was not a let serve.

Answer: Either players or the referee are allowed to call a let serve. However, on occasion, situations arise where the referee may see one thing that is not seen by others. In this case, simply play the point over.

4.F. Service Lets.

The serve is a let and will be replayed if:

4.F.5. The referee or a player may call a let. If the serve is appealed to the referee and the referee clearly saw that the serve did not touch the net, then a point is awarded to the serving team.

The Play: The receiver is standing in the middle of the receiving court. The server questions whether this is legal.

Answer: The receiver is allowed to position him or herself anywhere in the playing area.

4.G. The Receiver. The receiver is the player diagonally opposite from the server. In doubles, this position corresponds to the player's score and starting position. There is no restriction on the receiver's position.

The Play: After determining that the server and receiver are ready to play, the referee calls the score. However, the server (a) begins the serve (b) hits the ball prior to the referee finishing the call.

Answer: In both cases this is a serving fault. The serve begins when the player starts the back swing of the serve.

4.I. Readiness. Serves shall not be made until the receiver is ready and the score has been called. Serving before the score is called shall result in a fault, and loss of serve. The referee shall call the score when he or she determines that the players should be in position to resume play. (Revised March 1, 2015).

The Play: Team A serves the ball and Team B returns the serve without letting the serve bounce. Team A declares this as a point.

Answer: This is correct. On the initial serve, the ball must bounce once on both sides.

4.H. Double Bounce Rule.

The serve and the service return must be allowed to bounce before striking the ball. That is, each side must play a groundstroke on the first shot following the serve. After the initial groundstrokes have been made, play may include volleys.

The Play: Prior to the serve the referee notices that the receiver's partner is not in a ready position and delays the game until the all players are in readiness.

Answer: This is incorrect. The referee determines whether the server and the receiver are both ready to play and announces the score. If the receiving player's partner is not ready, it is the receiver who is responsible for signaling a delay.

4.I.1. Not Ready Signals. The receiver must use one of the following to signal that he or she is not ready to receive the serve: 1) raising the paddle above his or her head, 2) raising the non-paddle hand above his or her head, or 3) completely turning his or her back to the server.

4.1.2. Doubles. When calling the score in doubles, the referee does not have to wait for the receiver's partner or the server's partner to be ready. It is the receiver's responsibility to signal not ready for his or her partner.

Although not stated, the server is responsible for his/her partner to be in the ready position prior to the serve.

The Play: The server has started his serve when the receiver's partner calls for a time out for an untied shoe string - a safety issue. The referee stops the play while the shoe is retied.

Answer: Incorrect by Rule. Once the serve has started, play is continued to its conclusion.

4.1.3. In Motion. Once the server starts the serving motion, the receiver cannot become not ready or call a time-out.

However, safety issues are always a major concern in a tournament. If in the referee's judgement the safety issue can potentially be the cause of an injury, he/she should call a halt to play. Another example would be a ball entering the court from the next court.

This rule is interesting in that it stipulates the receiver only cannot call for a time out. In theory, the receiver's partner is not limited by the rule. Until advised otherwise, apply the rule to both the receiver's and the server's partner.

The Play: During play, the referee inadvertently calls the wrong score in reverse order; 8-6-1 instead of the correct score of 6-8-1. The ball is served, the receiver returns the ball, and the receiver's partner then calls a time out requesting a correction of the score called.

Answer: This is a fault by the receiving team and they lose the rally. An incorrect score call must be corrected before the receiver returns the ball.

4.I.4. Wrong Score Called. If the referee calls the wrong score, any player may stop play at any time before the return of serve to ask for a correction. A player that interrupts play after the return of serve will have committed a fault and shall lose the rally. A player that interrupts play after the serve when there was not an error in the score will have committed a fault and shall lose the rally.

During tournament play, noise levels can be high enough that the called score cannot be heard clearly. Even though the score is called correctly, players may question the called score. This should be done immediately before the ball is served.

The Play: After verifying that both the server and receiver are ready for play, the referee calls the score. The server then delays the serve by more than ten seconds while he/she talks to his/her partner. This seems to be a repeating pattern by this team.

Answer: The ten second rule applies, which basically states that once the score is called, the ball must be served within the next ten seconds. On the first occurrence, the referee should have warned the server of the 10 second rule (technical warning). If the problem again occurs, a technical foul may be called and a point is awarded to the opposing team. It is the server's responsibility to ensure the receiver is ready to play.

4.J. The 10-Second Rule. The "10-second rule" applies to both server and receiver, each of whom is allowed up to 10 seconds after the score is called to serve or be ready to receive. It is the server's responsibility to look and be certain that the receiver is ready to receive serve.

4.J.1. After one technical warning has been issued by the referee, further delays on the part of the server or the receiver exceeding 10 seconds shall result in a technical foul and a point awarded against the offender.

4.J.2. If the server serves the ball while the receiver is signaling "not ready," the ball will be reserved with no penalty and the server shall be "warned" by the referee to check the receiver. If the server continues to serve without checking the receiver, the referee may call a technical foul and award a point to the receiver's score.

The Play: The referee has called the score. The server observed that the receiver was ready and then looks down and serves the ball. However, just the ball was served, the receiver is distracted and attempts to play the ball even though he/she was not effectively ready for the play due to the distraction. The receiver asks that the point be played over.

Answer: The play stands and is not played over. Had the receiver signaled “Not Ready” while the server was looking down and the referee observed the signal, the serve could be replayed. If the referee did not observe the signal, there is no replay.

4.J.3. After the score is called, if the server looks at the receiver and the receiver is not signaling “not ready,” the server may then serve. If the receiver attempts to signal “not ready” after the serve is made, then the serve stands, whether or not the ball is returned.

IFP Comment: A receiver who attempts to return the service shall be considered to have been ready. If the receiver has signaled not ready, the service must be replayed.

SECTION 5 - SERVICE SEQUENCE RULES

The Play: The first server/receiver for both teams for Game 1 wears a red band as designated by the tournament director. At the beginning of Game 2, Team A has switched first servers, but never changed the red wrist band and never advised the referee. After Team B loses the point, Team B tells the referee that the players on Team A are out of position as the player with the red wrist band did not serve. Team B asks that the point be awarded to them.

Answer: The person starting the game is always the first server of the game regardless of which partner is wearing the wrist band. The wrist band is simply an identifier for even/odd scoring purposes. The point remains with Team A.

Team A should have changed the band and the referee should have noted the discrepancy. The referee did identify the first server on his/her scoresheet prior to beginning Game 2. The wrist band is changed to the proper player and the game continues.

5.B. Doubles.

5.B.1. The service always starts in the right-hand court and alternates from right to left to right, etc., as long as server holds serve.

The Play: In the middle of the game, Team A has the serve but are in the wrong positions to serve the ball. The ball is served and Team B calls time (1) once contact has been made with the ball (2) after Team B has lost the point. In each case they advise the referee that the wrong player has served the ball on Team A.

Answer: This is correct procedure for both situations. Once the incorrect player from Team A has made contact with the ball, a serving fault has occurred and Team A has either loss a serve or it is a side out.

5.B.6. If the ball is served by the wrong team member or from the wrong court, the service is a fault. If the fault was by the first server, then the first service is lost and the correct second server serves from the correct service position. If the fault was by the second server, then it is a side out. A point made from an incorrect service position or an incorrect server will not be retained unless play has continued and another point has been scored or the opposing team has served.

IFP Comments:

When an incorrect serve is recognized immediately after the rally, the point does not count.

The Play: During play Team B partners switch and are now in the wrong court positions. The referee sees the error before the next serve and instructs the receiving team players, Team B, to switch positions.

Answer: The referee erred in returning the two players to the correct positions in this situation. It is the players' responsibility to be in the right position at the beginning of each serve. The referee should have remained silent and called a receiving fault after the receiver contacted the ball.

5.B.8. *The receiver is the only player who may return the ball. If the wrong player returns the ball, it is a point for the serving team.*

IFP Comments:

In tournament play, unless asked, the referee shall not correct player positions until a service sequence fault has occurred by a serving or receiving team.

The Play: Team A, who is about to receive the serve, uses “stacking”. The receiver’s partner is standing in the receiver’s court to the right of the receiver. Team B questions the referee whether this is legal.

Answer: It is legal. The receiver’s partner may stand wherever they please.

5.B.9. *The receiver’s partner may be anywhere on or off the court.*

The Play: Team B players, who are serving, were in the wrong positions for the last two serving points with the first server and then lose the next point when a Team B player hits the ball into the net. The referee then realizes that Team B players are out of the correct serving positions.

Answer: Once the serving fault is recognized by players or the referee, it must be acted upon. The last Team B point is lost and second service should commence with the Team B players in their correct positions. If Team B fails to correct their positions and the second service is made with the incorrect service, that serve is lost once ball contact has been made.

IFP Comments:

When an incorrect serve is not recognized until the server has lost the serve, the most recent point scored by that server on an illegal serve, if any, does not count.

The Play: Team A has won several points on their serves when they were both in the incorrect position. On the side out, Team B serves one point and points out that Team A players are in the incorrect positions. They ask the referee to void the previous points Team A obtained from their prior service time.

Answer: As Team B has already served, the points won by Team A stand and cannot be reversed.

IFP Comments:

When an incorrect serve is not recognized until after the opposing team has served, points scored on the previous serves count.

5.C. Service/Side Selection and Rotation.

The Play: In the third game to 11 the two teams are supposed to switch sides when the first team scores 6 points. The side change is missed and the score is now 8-7-1. One or both teams wants to return to the score when it is 6 and restart there.

Answer: Although not frequent, side changes are sometimes missed. If both teams are agreeable to the side change and the score when the first team reached 6, then allow this to happen. If not in complete agreement by either sides or it is uncertain what the exact score was, then change sides and continue with the score as it stands at 8-7-1. This methodology also applies to games to 15 and 21.

5.C. Service/Side Selection and Rotation.

5.C.3. Sides will be switched in a third game (if the match is 2 out of 3 games) after the first team reaches a score of 6 points. Serve remains with the player holding serve.

5.C.4. In games to 15, sides will be switched after the first team reaches a score of 8 points. Serve remains with the player holding serve.

5.C.5. In games to 21, sides will be switched after the first team reaches a score of 11 points. Serve remains with the player holding serve.

SECTION 6 - LINE CALL RULES

The Play: In a close game, Team A hits the ball so that the ball's edge overlaps the outside line. The receiving team calls the ball out.

Answer: This is a correct call.

6.C. A ball contacting the playing surface outside of the baseline or sideline, even though the edge of the ball overlaps the line, is considered out of bounds. (revised April 1, 2011)

The Play: Team A hits a hard smash down the center that hits the base line. Both Team B players are at the non-volley line and one of them calls the ball out. Team A objects and asks for the referee's ruling.

Answer: The side the ball lands on has the responsibility to make the call, which stands unless the referee is asked. If the referee clearly saw that the ball was in, then the "Out" call is overruled. If the referee is NOT positively sure that the ball hit the line, then the side making the call stands.

6.D.1. Players will call the lines on their side of the court (excluding the non-volley line on a serve --- i.e., short serve, if being called by a referee). (Revised April 20, 2015)

6.D.5. No player should question an opponent's call unless asked (except that any player may appeal a call to the referee in an officiated match). A player should ask the opponent's opinion if the opponent was in a better position to see the call. An opponent's opinion, if requested, shall be accepted. The opinion of a player looking down the line is more likely to be accurate than one looking across the line. (Revised April 20, 2015)

The Play: A questioned ball possibly hits the sideline and one of the spectators calls the ball out. Team B is responsible for the call and also calls the ball out. Team A asks the referee to intervene as a spectator first made the out call.

Answer: The referee should question the Team B players and if both concur that the ball was out, then the call should stand. The referee should then meet with the responsible spectator and caution him/her that spectator calls are not allowed. Continued calls from the spectator could result in the spectator being removed from the game area.

6.D.3. Spectators should not be consulted on any line calls. Spectators may be prejudiced, unqualified, or not in position to see the call, and therefore cannot participate.

The Play: A hard hit ball lands near the Team A sideline. As Team A players were uncertain whether the ball was in, one of the players asks a Team B player on the side where the ball was hit as to whether the ball was in. The Team B player says the ball was in and one of the Team A players elects not to accept Team B's call.

Answer: Once Team A asked Team B as to their call, the responsibility for the call is now Team B's. Team A cannot take back their request for help.

6.D.5. No player should question an opponent's call unless asked (except that any player may appeal a call to the referee in an officiated match). A player should ask the opponent's opinion if the opponent was in a better position to see the call. An opponent's opinion, if requested, shall be accepted. The opinion of a player looking down the line is more likely to be accurate than one looking across the line. (Revised April 20, 2015)

The Play: Team A serves the ball which lands just out of the receiving court. The Team B receiver plays the ball and then immediately calls the ball out. All play stops.

Answer: In normal tournament play this would be acceptable and allowed. It's recognized that some decision out calls cannot be made until the ball lands and possibly played. However, if the ball is played and returned by Team A, then an out call would not be allowed.

6.D.7. All “let” or “out” calls must be made “instantly”; otherwise the ball is presumed good and still in play. “Instantly” is defined as calling “let” or “out” prior to the ball being hit by the opponent or before it has gone out of play.

The Play: In the middle of the match, the two players on Team B did not see where the ball landed. They called the ball out. Team A asks that the point be replayed.

Answer: Both Team A and B are incorrect. Any ball not definitely “out” is presumed to be “in”. If any doubt exists, then the ball has to be considered in.

6.D.8. Any ball that cannot be called “out” is presumed to be “in.” The player cannot claim a “let” (replay) because the ball was not seen. The opponent’s opinion can be requested, and, if the opponent says the ball was “in” or the opponent could not see it, the ball must be declared “in.”

6.D.9. Players should not request a “let” (replay) because they were not sure the ball was “out” or “in.” In this case, benefit of the doubt goes to the opponent.

6.D.10. In doubles play, if one player calls the ball “out” and the partner calls it “in,” then doubt exists, and the ball must be declared “in” (except that any player may appeal a call to the referee in an officiated match).

The Play: Team A hits a volley that lands well beyond the court lines. Team B doesn’t signal or otherwise voice an out call.

Answer: The team responsible for calling the ball out should either voice an out call or signal appropriately. The referee may have to remind each team that one or the other should occur.

6.D.11. Line calls should be promptly signaled by hand or voice, regardless of how obvious they may seem.

The Play: In a hard fought point with Team B serving, Team B hits a lob shot, which appears will land close to the side line. One partner on Team A loudly says “Out” before the ball hits the floor. Team B, hearing the call, quits playing when Team A returns the lob back across the net to win the volley. Team B protests saying that Team A called the ball “Out” and therefore they did not play the returned ball.

Answer: As indicated in the rule, “Out”, “No”, “Bounce it” or other communication is considered player communication if said before the ball hits the court. Team B should not have quit playing and thus loses the serve.

6.D.12. If, while the ball is in the air, a player yells “out,” “no,” “bounce it,” or any other word to communicate to his or her partner that the ball may be out, it shall be considered player communication. If the ball lands in, play will continue. If the out call is made after the ball has hit the playing surface, it shall be considered a line call and play shall stop. (revised April 1, 2011)

SECTION 7 - FAULT RULES

The Play: Team A hits a high pop ball that lands in the opponent’s non-volley zone close to the net. The Team B player dives for the ball, hits it over the net, but touches the net with his/her paddle. Team A calls for a fault.

Answer: Team A is correct. This is a fault if the player’s paddle hits the net.

A fault will be declared for the following:

7.E. A player, player’s clothing, or any part of a player’s paddle touches the net or the net post when the ball is in play.

The Play: Team B slams the ball across the net and hits a Team A player near the paddle handle. The ball bounces off the Team A player (not the paddle) back across the net. Team B stops play indicating that this is a fault as the Team A player was hit. The Team A player says the ball hit

him/her below the wrist and has a red mark below the wrist showing where the ball hit.

Answer: Team B was incorrect in stopping play. Play continues if the ball hits the player below the wrist.

A fault will be declared for the following:

7.F. The ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying. There is one exception to this rule: if the ball strikes the player's paddle hand below the wrist, the ball is still in play.

The Play: Team A hits the ball and it's obvious that it is going out of bounds. The Team B player says "Out" and catches the ball in the air so that he/she does not have to retrieve it. The referee calls a fault giving the point to Team A.

Answer: Correct. Players must let any balls they believe will be going out of bounds land before touching the ball.

A fault will be declared for the following:

7.F In doubles, if the serve strikes the receiver's partner, it is a point for the serving team, providing it is not a let serve or a fault serve. This rule also includes balls that appear to be hit out of bounds: during play, if you catch the ball or try to stop it from heading out of bounds, you lose the rally.

The Play: Team B is about to return a hard hit ball to his/her backhand. The Team B player's backhand is two-handed and the ball strikes his non-paddle hand below the wrist as he is making the swing. Team A calls for a fault.

Answer: Team A is incorrect. If the ball hits either hand below the wrist, then the ball is in play.

IFP Comment: If the player is in the process of changing hands with both hands on the paddle, or is attempting a two-handed stroke and either hand is hit below the wrist, then the ball is considered in play.

The Play: Team A hits a high lob that will fall in the non-volley zone. The Team B player steps into the non-volley zone and with an overhand smash, puts the ball away for the point. However, the Team B player's paddle crosses the net vertical plane before the ball is hit. The referee calls a fault.

Answer: This is a correct call. Hitting the ball before the ball crosses the vertical net plane is a fault.

A fault will be declared for the following:

7.K. A player hits the ball before it passes the plane of the net.

SECTION 8 - DEAD BALL RULES

8.A. A dead ball is declared after any action that stops play.

8.B. A ball is not declared dead until it has bounced twice or has violated one of the fault rules (See Section 7).

8.C. A hinder called by the referee or player will result in a dead ball and a replay.

SECTION 9 - NON-VOLLEY ZONE RULES

The Play: The two teams are volleying at the net when the (name tag, hat, comb, band-aid, etc.) from one of the players, who last volleyed, falls into the non-volley zone. The referee calls a fault.

Answer: This is a correct call.

9.B. 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.

The Play: After volleying several balls, Team B hits the ball to Team A player's feet. In playing this ball, the Team A player's paddle during the swing, accidentally hits the floor in the non-volley zone before hitting the ball on the upward swing. The referee calls a fault.

Answer: This is correct.

9.B. 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.

IFP Comment: The act of volleying the ball includes the swing, the follow-through, and the momentum from the action. If the paddle touches the non-volley zone during the swing, it is a fault regardless of whether the touch occurred before or after contacting the ball. (Added January 15, 2012)

The Play: The two partners on Team A rush to hit a soft lob back to Team B. Team A's paddles collide, the ball is then hit, and the player whose paddle did not strike the ball falls into the non-volley zone. The hit ball is a winning shot. Team B calls for a violation of the non-volley zone.

Answer: This is not a violation of the non-volley zone. The player who fell into the zone did not strike the ball.

9.B. 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.

The Play: The Team A player rushing to hit a soft shot just over the net hits a volley that is good, but the player's forward momentum is taking him/her into the non-volley zone. The Team A partner is also at the net

and has one foot touching the non-volley zone line. This partner reaches out and holds the partner from going into the non-volley zone. The referee calls a fault.

Answer: This is correct. It is a fault as the partner holding the player from going into the non-volley zone has his/her foot on the non-volley zone line.

9.C. A fault will be declared if, in the act of volleying the ball, the player's momentum causes the player or anything the player is wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone or touch any non-volley line. It is a fault if the player's momentum causes the player to touch anything that is touching the non-volley zone, including the player's partner. It is a fault even if the ball is declared dead before the player touches the non-volley zone.

The Play: In a soft dink game, the Team A player steps into the non-volley zone and returns the ball after it has bounced. Before the Team A player can step out of the non-volley zone with both feet, the Team B player hits the ball directly at him/her. The Team A player returns the ball but only one foot is outside the non-volley zone. The referee calls a fault.

Answer: This is correct. Before the Team B player can again volley, both feet must have stepped out of the non-volley zone making contact with the floor.

9.D. A fault will be declared if the player violates the intent of the non-volley zone rule. All volleys must be initiated outside of the non-volley zone. A maneuver such as standing within the non-volley zone, jumping up to hit a volley, and then landing outside the nonvolley zone is prohibited. If a player has touched the non-volley zone for any reason, that player cannot volley the return until both feet have made contact with the playing surface completely outside the non-volley zone. (Revised June 23, 2012)

The Play: In a 5.0 doubles game, a member of Team A has one foot in the non-volley zone. In a cross-court dink shot, the Team A player jumps to the out of bounds area to return the dink and hits the ball in the air. Team B loses the point but appeals to the referee for a ruling.

Answer: The Team A member was at fault and the play was dead when he contacted the ball. Both feet must be out of the non-volley zone and in contact with the floor prior to hitting the shot to be legal.

9.D. A fault will be declared if the player violates the intent of the non-volley zone rule. All volleys must be initiated outside of the non-volley zone. A maneuver such as standing within the non-volley zone, jumping up to hit a volley, and then landing outside the non-volley zone is prohibited. If a player has touched the non-volley zone for any reason, that player cannot volley the return until both feet have made contact with the playing surface completely outside the non-volley zone. (Revised June 23, 2012)

The Play: Team A hits a high lob that will land in the non-volley zone on Team B's side. The Team B player waits in the non-volley zone and puts the ball away on the first bounce. Team A takes exception that players may not be in the non-volley zone when hitting the ball.

Answer: Team A is incorrect. Players may be in the non-volley zone at any time and may play the ball once it has bounced. If a player volleys the ball in the non-volley zone, it is a fault and play stops.

9.E. A player may step on the non-volley line or enter the non-volley zone at any time except when that player is volleying the ball. There is no violation if your partner returns the ball while you are standing in the non-volley zone. A player may enter the non-volley zone before or after returning any ball that bounces.

The Play: Team A and Team B are in the midst of play when one of Team B's players goes into the non-volley zone for a play and does not immediately step out of the non-volley zone. Team A stops play and challenges that Team B lost the point when the Team B player failed to return to volley area.

Answer: Team A is at fault and loses the point. Players are not restricted from the non-volley zone. They can remain there and play will continue as long as the Team B player does not engage in a volley.

9.F. A player may stay inside the non-volley zone to return balls that bounce. That is, there is no violation if a player does not exit the non-volley zone after hitting a ball that bounces.

The Play: In a very aggressive game a Team A player appears to be stepping on the non-volley line when returning a hard hit ball. The Team B player calls for a fault and Team A takes exception to the call indicating that on their side, only they can make a “kitchen” call. The game does not have a ref.

Answer: Team A is incorrect. In in non-officiated game, either side may make this call.

9.G. For non-officiated play, non-volley zone faults may be called by any player on either team. (Added April 20, 2015)

SECTION 10 - SCORING - GAME - MATCH RULES

The Play: In a hard fought round robin game with a win by one, the referee says the score and warns the players that this is a possible match point. Team B takes exception to the referee’s “match point” call.

Answer: The referee is wrong and should always refrain from any additional language other than the score.

10.F. 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. Prior to the potential final game or match point, DO NOT add any phrase such as "potential game point" or "potential match point." (added January 1st., 2016)

SECTION 11 - TIME-OUT RULES

The Play: In a game to 21, Team A calls for a third time out. Team B objects indicating that only two time outs are allowed per each game.

Answer: Team B is incorrect. In games to 21, three time outs are allowed.

11.A. Normal Time-Outs. A player or team is entitled to 2 time-outs per game; each time-out period shall last only 1 minute. Then play must be resumed or another timeout must be called by either side. Time-outs may never be called once the ball is in play or the server has started the serving motion. For games to 21 points, each team is allowed 3 time-outs per game.

The Play: During normal play, one of Team A's players declares an injury time out. As the referee did not see any injury, he questioned the Team A players about the injury. Team A says he/she needs to apply a band aid to a foot blister before continuing.

Answer: The referee should allow the injury time out even though no visible evidence was observed. However, the referee should also observe the player when that player is applying a band aid to ensure an injury time out is warranted. If the alleged injury is questionable/not observed, then a technical foul would be appropriate.

11.B. Injury Time-Outs. If a player is injured during a match, that player may call an injury time-out. The referee must agree that an injury did take place and that the player is not just stalling to rest or recuperate. If the referee agrees, then that player will be allowed no more than 15 minutes of rest during the injury time-out. If the player cannot resume play after the 15-minute injury time-out period, the match shall be awarded to the opponents.

IFP Comment: A player may take only one injury time-out per match. That time-out must be continuous and may be up to 15 minutes.

The Play: After play has started in an 11 point game and a point scored, a Team A player calls a time out which the referee allows so that a paddle may be exchanged. Later, Team A calls for a second time out. Towards the end of the game, Team A calls for another time out indicating that the first time out was for an equipment changed that they are entitled

to. Team B objects stating that this would be the third time out for Team A in an eleven point game.

Answer: Team B's objection is correct. Although the first time out may have been for an equipment change, it is considered a normal time out. An equipment time out is only allowed if the team's two time outs have already been used and the referee believes that an equipment change is appropriate for safe and fair play.

11.C. Equipment Time-Outs. Players are expected to keep all clothing and equipment in good playable condition and are expected to use regular time-outs and time between games for adjustments and replacement of equipment. If a player or team is out of time-outs and the referee determines that an equipment change or adjustment is necessary for fair and safe continuation of the match, the referee may award an equipment timeout not to exceed 2 minutes.

The Play: As the first game ends in a two out of three match, the referee instructs the teams that they have two minutes until the next game begins. Team A is on time, but Team B is not ready to play. The referee says the score and begins a ten second count. When Team B is still not ready within the ten second period, the referee awards a point to Team A who was serving. Team B takes exception to the awarded point.

Answer: The referee is correct; however, the referee would be wise to ascertain why Team B did not show. For example, if the tournament director had called a Team B player over to discuss an issue, this would explain why they were not ready within two minutes. Exceptions may be needed for not being ready within two minutes as required.

11.D. Between Games Time-Out. Between games time-outs shall not exceed 2 minutes between each game of a match.

11.F. Additional Time-Out Rules: At the beginning of the match, no time-outs may be taken before the initial score has been called and the match has begun. The match cannot begin until all players are on the court and ready to play. Failure to be ready to play on time shall result in a match forfeit. Also see rule 14.H.3. for match forfeiture. During the match, after a time-out has ended, the referee will call a "time-in" and then announce the score (even if players are not on the court and/or not ready to play). If players are not ready within 10 seconds, and no additional time-outs are called or

available (see rule 11.D.), the offending side will receive a technical foul on the first offence and a match forfeit on the second offense. (added Aug. 24, 2015)

SECTION 12 - OTHER RULES

The Play: In fast paced play, Team B stops play and indicates that Team A had a double hit on the volley. The referee, watching the non-volley lines for foot faults, did not see the hit. Team A says that the stroke was continuous and therefore, legal. Team B concurs that the alleged double hit was during volley play.

Answer: As the referee did not see the play, it stands. Team B loses the point.

12.A. Carry and Double Hits. Balls can unintentionally be hit twice or “carried”, but this must be during a continuous, single-direction stroke. If the stroke is not continuous, not single-direction, or if it is a definite second push, the hit is illegal. (revised April 1, 2011)

The Play: A Team A player switches his/her paddle to the other hand for the shot. It was unusual in that the switched paddled was somewhat tossed into the air and caught by the opposing hand. At the end of play, Team B questions the referee whether this is legal and suggested that the tossed paddle was a distraction.

Answer: Players may switch paddle hands at any time. There is no stipulation as to how the paddle may be switched. Distractions normally occur if the opposing team attempts to “distract” a player who is about to hit the ball. This was not the case in this situation.

12.B. Switching Hands. A paddle may be switched from hand to hand at any time. Two-handed shots are also legal.

12.H. Distractions.

Players may not yell, stamp their feet, or otherwise try to distract an opponent when the opponent is about to play the ball.

The Play: Team A and Team B are hard at play when a Team B player hits the ball so that it goes by the first player on Team A. Seeing it pass the Team A player, Team B stops their play. However, the second partner on Team A gets to the ball before the second bounce and effectively returns the ball across the net for a legal shot. Team B questions whether this return shot is legal.

Answer: The shot is legal. Team A wins the play if Team B failed to return it.

12.C. Return Attempts. A completely missed return shot does not, by itself, constitute a dead ball. The ball remains in play until it bounces twice or until any other fault has occurred.

The Play: During play, the ball takes an unusual bounce and sounds strange. Team B stops play. The ball is examined and Team B is correct that the ball was cracked. They ask for a replay of the point.

Answer: Technically, both teams should finish the point before examining the ball for any cracks. Team B essentially errored in stopping play. However, if the referee confirms that the ball was cracked and believes that it affected play, the point should be replayed.

12.D. Broken or Cracked Ball. Play continues until the end of the rally. If, in the judgment of the referee, a broken or cracked ball affected the outcome of the rally, the referee shall call for a replay.

The Play: One of Team B's players is about to hit a slam when he steps on his partner's shoe and twists his ankle. He fails to make the shot. Team B requests that the point be replayed due to the injury.

Answer: No replay is allowed. Team B must play through the injury.

12.E. Injury During Game. Rally continues to its conclusion, despite an injury to any of the players.

The Play: The two players on Team A crash paddles in attempting to play the ball. One paddle breaks but the ball goes over the net. Team B takes advantage of the broken paddle and scores the point. Team A requests a replay of the point due to the broken paddle.

Answer: There is no replay. The request is denied.

12.F. Player Equipment Problem. A rally shall not be stopped or affected if a player loses or breaks a paddle or loses a personal item.

The Play: A hat worn by one of Team A's players falls and lands on the court. Team B returns the ball and hits the hat, which prevents it being played by Team A. Team A asks for a replay.

Answer: There is no replay. The hat became part of the court once it landed. Team B wins the point.

Note: If the referee sees the fallen hat or any other object on the floor that could be a potential safety hazard on the court, he/she should call a time out and have the safety hazard removed before allowing play to continue.

12.G. Items on the Court. If anything a player is wearing or carrying lands on the court, it becomes part of the court. Therefore, if a ball in play hits the item on the court, the ball remains in play. If the item lands on the opponent's court, it is a fault. If the item lands in the non-volley zone as a result of a volley, it is a fault.

The Play: Team B player is at the base line when the Team A player hits a soft shot to the non-volley zone which bounces once and is then hit by the Team B player for a winning shot. However, in running forward, the Team B player's hat falls onto the net and falls over into the opponent's court. The referee calls a fault.

Answer: This is correct procedure. When the hat hit the opponent's court, it is considered a fault and Team B loses the point.

12.G. Items on the Court. If anything a player is wearing or carrying lands on the court, it becomes part of the court. Therefore, if a ball in play hits the item on the court, the ball remains in play. If the item lands on the opponent's court, it is a fault. If the item lands in the non-volley zone as a result of a volley, it is a fault.

The Play: As Team B is about return the ball, one of Team A's players (a) accidentally drops his/her paddle, (b) loudly tells his/her partner to move, or (c) purposely kicks his/her shoes off to the side of the court. Team B loses the point and asked the referee for help.

Answer: The referee in (a) calls the dropped paddle a distraction and instructs the players to replay the point. If the referee believes that the paddle was dropped on purpose, then Team A will be given a technical warning.

In (b) It's not clear how "loud" the player communication was in the example above. Normally this is simply considered as player communication. However, if in the referee's judgement, it was excessively loud, then a distraction can be called and Team B wins the rally.

In (c) Kicking shoes off during a point is not allowed. This is a distraction and Team A loses the rally.

12.H. Distractions. Players may not yell, stamp their feet, or otherwise try to distract an opponent when the opponent is about to play the ball. A player, or anything the player is

wearing or carrying, may not cross the plane of the net (or the extension of the net beyond the posts) except when striking the ball.

Note:

In Doubles, team communication shall not normally be considered a distraction. However, loud communication at the time the opponent is about to strike the ball may be considered a distraction. If, in the judgment of the referee, a distraction has occurred, it shall result in the loss of the rally. (revised January 15, 2013)

Author's Note: Some have noted that there seems to be a conflict between Rule 12H and 12 J3.

12H has within it "Distractions" wording: *A player, or anything the player is wearing or carrying, may not cross the plane of the net (or the extension of the net beyond the posts) except when striking the ball.*

12J3 has within its wording for "Other Rules - Nets": *The player is also allowed to go around the net post and cross the imaginary extension of the net so long as he or she does not touch the opponent's court.* Rule 12J3 deals with backspin balls that land on the opponent's court and then bounces back over the net due to the excessive back spin.

To the author's knowledge, there has not been any definitive ruling by USAPA regarding this potential conflict. However, Rule 12J3 is specific to a backspin ball. The entire Rule 12J3 is:

If the ball bounces into a player's non-volley zone with enough backspin as to cause it to return back over the net, that player may reach over the net to hit the ball but may not touch the net. The player is also allowed to go around the net post and cross the imaginary extension of the net so long as he or she does not touch the opponent's court.

The author has interpreted this that in a backspin situation only, players may go beyond the planes of the net including the pole extension without being put into jeopardy.

Rule 12H would thus govern any other court action by the players and thus players may not go beyond the plane of the net and the pole extensions unless they are striking a ball. If the player in a dink game jumps out of bounds to hit a dink but does not strike the ball, then he/she may not cross the plane of the net or the pole extensions without committing a fault.

Whether this interpretation is valid remains with the USAPA.

The Play: Team A returns the ball which (a) hits the net post or (b) hits the net cable and lands in Team B's court. Team B plays the ball and subsequently loses the point.

Answer: (a) As soon as the ball hit the net post, it is a fault, the ball is dead and no play continues. (b) As the returned ball hits the net cable and lands in Team B's court, it is playable.

12.I. The Net Posts. The net posts are positioned out of bounds. If a ball strikes the net post or anything attached to the net post, it is a fault and a dead ball is declared. This rule does not include the net, the net cable, or rope between the net posts.

12.J.1. The net and the wires or strings holding up the net are positioned (mostly) on the court. Therefore, if the ball strikes the top of the net or strikes the top net wire or string and lands in bounds, then it remains in play.

The Play: Team A and Team B are rallying back and forth when (a) the hit ball goes between the net cable and the net, (b) Team B hits a high lob with sufficient backspin that the ball hits Team A's non-volley zone and bounces back across the net into Team B's non-volley zone. The Team A player reaches over the net, hits the ball, but accidentally touches the net with his/her paddle.

Answer: In (a) this is a fault against the team who last hit the ball. In (b), Team A is allowed reach across the net and hit the ball in Team B's non-volley zone. However, by touching the net with his/her paddle, Team A loses the rally.

12.J.2. Hitting the ball between the top and bottom net wires is a fault.

12.J.3. If the ball bounces into a player's non-volley zone with enough backspin as to cause it to return back over the net, that player may reach over the net to hit the ball but may not touch the net. The player is also allowed to go around the net post and cross

the imaginary extension of the net so long as he or she does not touch the opponent's court. (Also see Rule 12 H discussion.)

12.J.4. If a player hits the ball over the net into the opponent's court, and then the ball bounces back over the net without being touched by the opponent, the striking player wins the rally.

The Play: The net used for play is a portable net. On a high lob (a) the ball hits the horizontal bar before crossing the net or (b) hits the horizontal bar after it crosses the net.

Answer: In (a) this is a fault. In (b) hitting the horizontal bar, the ball is still in play. In (b) if the ball subsequently bounces in the court, it can be played. If the ball goes out of bounds, then it's a fault. If the ball had hit the base after crossing the net, this is a let.

12.J.5 When net systems have a horizontal bar that may include a center base: If the ball hits the horizontal bar or the center base before going over the net, it is a fault. If the ball goes over the net and then hits the horizontal bar, the ball is still in play. If the ball goes over the net and then hits the center base or the ball gets caught between the net and the horizontal bar before touching the court, it is a let and must be replayed. (added April 1, 2011)

The Play: During a dink rally, the angled ball travels beyond the net posts. The player returns the ball around the net post about ten inches above the floor to land on the opponent's court.

Answer: This is legal.

12.K. Shots Around the Net Post. If a ball hit at an angle bounces in the court and travels beyond the sidelines, a player may return the ball around the outside of the net post. The ball does not need to travel back over the net. In addition, there is no restriction on the height of the return. For example, a player may return the ball around the net post below the height of the net.

The Play: After a hard fought point, one of Team A's players meets with a spectator, has a brief discussion, and returns to play. The referee did not hear any part of the discussion nor did he/she say anything to the player.

Answer: This is incorrect. Players may not communicate with non-players during regular play. Should a player wish to consult with a non-player, a time out must be called or wait for the time out between games.

The referee must give the offending player a technical warning and advise the respective spectator that such discussions are not allowed. If a repeat offense occurs, a technical foul is issued.

12.L. Coaching. Players may consult with coaches or any other person during time-outs and between games. Once the game has begun, except during time-outs, any communication between a player and any person not on the court, if determined by the referee to be coaching, shall result in a technical warning to the offending player or team and a verbal warning to spectators. If the communication occurs a second time, it shall result in a technical foul and a point will be awarded to the opponent. (Revised February 9, 2013)

The Play: After a time out, one of Team A's players returns with an extra paddle stuck in the middle of his back. The referee did not see this and play begins. During the exchange Team B hits the ball so that it is beyond reach of Team A's players. However, one of Team A's players throws his/her paddle at the ball. The ball hits the paddle and goes back over the net for a winning point.

Answer: Two problems exist. First carrying two paddles is not allowed in play. The referee instructs the problem player to remove the extra paddle. A technical warning may be appropriate. Second, a paddle must be held when contact is made with the ball. Team A loses the point.

12.M. One Paddle. A player shall not use or carry more than one paddle during a rally. (Added January 15, 2012)

12.N. Paddle Possession. A player must have possession of the paddle when it makes contact with the ball. (Added January 15, 2014)

SECTION 13 - SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT FORMATS

Not applicable.

SECTION 14 - TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT AND OFFICIATING

The Play: During initial registration, each player was given a red wrist band to wear as a first server. In the referee meeting before the match one team declines to wear the wrist band and asks that the knee brace currently worn by only one player on that team be used in place of the wrist band. This is acceptable to the other team.

Answer: For sanctioned play there must be an observable method to identify the first server of each team. If both teams and the referee are agreeable to the knee brace, this will suffice for identification of first server.

14.A.1. In all IFP sanctioned tournaments the tournament director will provide some method of identifying each team's beginning server for each game. This identification must be visible to all on the court during play. Refusal to wear this identification will result in the forfeiture of the match.

The Play: In a questioned line call Team A, the opposing team, requests the referee's assistance. Team B takes exceptions to this request indicating they clearly saw the call and the ball was out. The referee saw the ball land within the court and in his/her judgement, the ball is not out. Team B refutes the referee's call.

Answer: Referee are the final authority on any line calls. If they clearly saw the ball placement, then his/her call stands and cannot be overruled by either team. However, if the referee is not completely certain where

the ball landed, then the team responsible for the call decides whether it is in or out.

14.F. Referee's Officiating Duties. The referee is responsible for all decisions related to procedural and judgment calls during the match. If the players make the line calls and there is a disputed line call, the players may request that the referee determine the line call. The referee's call will stand. If the referee cannot make the line call, the player's call stands. Spectators are not part of the game and, therefore, cannot be consulted on calls.

The Play: Team A slams the ball into the other court. Team B has one player who believes the ball was out; however the other Team B player did not see where the ball landed and thought it may have been out. Team B asks the referee for assistance.

Answer: This is correct procedure. In any disputed call on the same side, the ball is assumed to be in. However, referees may be requested for assistance. In that situation, the referee's call is final providing the referee clear saw where the ball landed. If the referee did not see where the ball landed, then a measure of doubt exists and the ball is assumed to be good.

14.G. In doubles, if players on the same side disagree on a line call made by one of them on their side of the court, one of the players may ask the referee for a ruling. If the referee clearly saw the play, the referee shall make a ruling based on observation. If the referee cannot make the call, the ball is good.

The Play: In a questioned line call one member of Team A, the opposing team, asks for the referee's assistance. The referee agrees with Team B's call. The Team A member refuses to accept the referee's ruling and temporarily walks off the court strongly voicing rude and uncomplimentary comments. The referee forfeits the match and pronounces Team B as the winning team.

Answer: This is correct procedure. Once a referee makes a decision, it stands. Players are required to accept the referee's judgment as final.

The fact that the Team A player also left the court and made unsportsmanlike comments also requires that the match be forfeited.

14.H. Match Forfeiture.

14.H.1. A referee may impose a forfeit when a player refuses to abide by the referee's decision or engages in unsportsmanlike conduct.

The Play: Game time starts at 8:00 am. Team A is ready but one member of Team B has not shown. Information from other friends of the missing player indicated he is in transit. The game is delayed and after ten minutes, Team A asks that the game be forfeited in their favor.

Answer: In the ten minute wait period, the referee should meet with the tournament director and advise him/her of the missing player. It is the tournament director's call as to whether additional time should be allotted for the game to start.

If the tournament director indicates that they will strictly hold to the ten minute rule, then the referee may forfeit the match after the ten minute wait. If the tournament director decides that additional time should be warranted, then the referee should seek a specific time when the delay is no longer acceptable.

14.H.3. A referee may impose a forfeit when a player fails to report to play 10 minutes after the match has been called to play. The Tournament Director may permit a longer delay if circumstances warrant such a decision.

The Play: Although rare in occurrence, Team A received its second technical foul for profanity during the match - one technical foul in the first game and the second technical foul in the third game. The referee did not call a forfeit. Team B takes exception, but finishes the match. Team B subsequently meets with the tournament director and explains the situation.

Answer: The referee was incorrect in not calling a forfeit when the second technical foul was called. The tournament director must now correct the match assigning the win to Team B. Similarly, the responsible referee should be provided guidance to help prevent any future occurrence of the non-applied rule.

Note: For any technical warning/foul, it will be helpful if the referee documents the situation on the back of the score sheet. Information recorded should be the approximate time, the team player responsible, and the act that caused the warning/foul.

14.H.4. A player or team receiving 2 technical fouls in a match shall automatically forfeit that match. In addition, the Tournament Director has the authority to expel any player from the tournament for misconduct.

The Play: During a hard fought point, Team B hits a ball on or just over the line that Team A plays. The partner of the Team A player who hit the ball believes the ball was actually out and immediately raised his/her nonpaddle hand to indicate an appeal to the referee but continues play. Team A subsequently loses the point and the Team A player who appealed asks the referee to call the ball out that was played.

Answer: Appeals may be made during play as the Team A player did with a raised nonpaddle hand and Team A was correct in playing through the point before making a verbal appeal. However, the appeal is not valid as any “out” balls must be called immediately (See Rule 6.D.7) or it is assumed to be in the court. The referee denies the appeal.

14.I. Appeals. Appeals to the referee regarding judgment calls (line calls, double bounce, etc.) will be decided by the referee. The referee may consult players or line judges to decide the outcome of the appeal.

14.I.1. A player may appeal a procedural or judgment call to the referee. The referee will consider procedural appeals and will provide a decision.

14.I.2. A referee’s decision will either result in a point awarded, a service loss, or a replay.

14.1.3. A player wishing to signify an appeal during a rally may do so by raising his or her nonpaddle hand to inform the referee that an appeal is being made regarding a previous possible violation. Play will continue until the rally is over and appeal can then be made.

The Play: In heated play, Team A hits a high lob that a Team B partner calls “Out” while it is still in the air and has not bounced. One of the Team A players puts his/her paddle down to take a time out believing the point is over, which distracts the referee. The Team A partner with a paddle plays the ball which is a line shot that Team B does not see clearly where it lands. The referee similarly did not see where the ball landed on Team B’s court. Team B also thought the ball had been called out and stopped their play. The referee is requested to make the “in” or “out” call.

Answer: On occasion, multiple things happen and the referee may lose focus as to what actions actually occurred. Although Team B called “out”, this should have been considered as player communication as the ball is live until it physically contacts the court. As both teams essentially quit play and no one saw where the ball finally landed, the referee should simply call a replay of the point.

14.1.4. Replays. After reviewing an appeal, the referee may determine that no decision on the appeal can be made and may direct a replay.

The Play: The Team A player is serving with one foot touching the floor outside the imaginary extended line. Team B takes exception to the serve prior to hitting the return. The referee indicates that Team A was correct and that one foot outside the line is proper and allowed. Team B believes that the referee has misinterpreted the applicable rule and asks that they be shown the actual rule in the book.

Answer: This is correct procedure. Either the referee or the Tournament Director should show the applicable rule and make corrections as needed.

14.J. Rules Interpretations. If a player feels that the referee has interpreted the rules incorrectly, that player may request that the referee or the Tournament Director show the applicable rule in the rulebook.

14.K. Protest. Any referee's decision involving an interpretation of the rules may, on protest, be decided by the Tournament Director.

The Play: A technical foul is called upon one partner of Team A for using extreme and abusive language. The individual continues in a tirade and when calmly told to continue play, he/she declines to comply with the instruction. The referee allows the player two minutes to continue.

Answer: This is incorrect procedure. The player on Team A is required to return to play immediately. Failure to do so is a cause for a forfeited match.

14.M. Technical Fouls. The referee is empowered to call technical fouls. When a technical foul is called, 1 point shall be added to the score of the opposing side. After the technical foul is called, if the play is not immediately continued, or the player continues to be abusive, then the referee is empowered to forfeit the match in favor of the opponents. If a player or a team receives 2 technical fouls in a match, then that match shall automatically result in forfeiture. In addition, the Tournament Director has the authority to expel any player or team from the tournament for misconduct. If a player has been expelled from a tournament, any prizes and ranking points gained from the tournament shall not be forfeited. Actions that may result in technical fouls are:

The Play: Play is continuing when one player from Team B calls a ball out and the referee hears a profane word from Team A. At the end of the play, the referee issues a technical warning to Team A and play continues. The second game starts and Team A, who received the first technical warning, is issued a second technical warning for delay of game when they failed to return with the two minute period. The referee issues a technical foul against Team A.

Answer: Incorrect. Teams may receive multiple technical warnings for different causes. As long as the technical warnings are not for the same

reason, a technical foul may not be issued. If two technical warnings are issued for the SAME reason, then a technical foul is warranted.

14.M.1. A player using objectionable or demeaning language directed at another person shall incur a technical warning or a technical foul, depending upon its severity. Once a technical warning has been issued, the second offense will result in a technical foul. Excessive profanity used for any reason shall incur similar action. The referee will determine the severity of any violation.

Other causes for a technical foul:

14.M.2. Excessive arguing.

14.M.3. Threats of any nature to any person.

14.M.4. Purposely breaking the ball or striking of the ball between rallies.

14.M.5. Intentionally throwing the paddle. If this action results in the striking or injury of any person or damage to the court or facility, an automatic technical foul shall be assessed against the offender and a point shall be awarded to the opponent.

14.M.6. Delay of game, either in the form of taking too much time during time-outs or between games, in excessive questioning of the referee on the rules, or in excessive or unnecessary appeals.

14.M.7. Any other actions that are considered unsportsmanlike behavior.

14.N. Technical Warning. If a player's behavior is not severe enough to warrant a technical foul, a technical warning may be issued. In most situations, the referee should give a technical warning before imposing a technical foul. Points shall not be awarded for a technical warning.

The Play: A member of Team A throws his/her paddle after losing the point. The referee issues a technical foul and awards one point to Team B, who was serving the ball. Team B fails to switch court positions on the next serve. Team A points out Team B's error in not correcting their positions. The referee agrees and the serve is lost.

Answer: The referee is correct in procedure. Team B has the responsibility to be in the correct court position for each serve. If out of position, they lose the service.

14.O. Effect of Technical Fouls and Technical Warnings.

A technical warning shall not result in a loss of rally or point awarded and shall be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reason for the warning. If a referee issues a technical foul, 1 point shall be added to the non-offender's score. A called technical foul or warning shall have no effect on service change or side out. If a point is awarded, the player or team awarded the point must change positions to reflect the score after the awarding of the point.

SECTION 15 – SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT DIVISIONS AND CATEGORIES

Not Applicable.

SECTION 16 – WHEELCHAIR RULES

16. A. Basic Play. The wheelchair is considered part of the player's body and all applicable rules that apply to a player's body will apply to the wheelchair except in non-volley zone as listed below. All applicable rules which apply to standing players apply to those in a wheelchair except as listed below.

16. B. Two Bounce Rule. The wheelchair pickleball player is allowed two bounces of the ball on his or her side of the net. The second bounce can be anywhere inside or outside of the court boundaries.

16. C. Service.

16.C.1. Server shall be in stationary position, and then allowed one push before striking ball.

16.C.2. At the time the server strikes the ball, the server shall not touch with any wheel: any baselines, sidelines, center lines or the extended center or sidelines.

16. D. Non-Volley Zone (NVZ). (two bounce rule applies)

16.D.1. When a wheelchair player strikes a ball in the NVZ, on a volley, it is a fault only if the larger rear wheels contact NVZ.

16.D.2. Upon exiting the NVZ, after striking a bounced ball, the player's larger-rear wheels must return to outside the NVZ boundaries (so no rear wheel contact is made in the NVZ) before hitting a volley, or it is a fault.

16. E. Wheelchair/Standing Pickleball.

16. E.1. When a wheelchair pickleball player is playing with or against a standing person in singles or doubles, the rules of pickleball for standing players shall apply to all standing players while the wheelchair pickleball rules shall apply to all wheelchair players.

16. F. Singles Wheelchair Pickleball.

16. F.1. Singles play with one or both players in a wheelchair shall be played on half court. The server and the receiver shall serve, receive and play the entire point from their respective service and receiving court.