



# ALTA GENERAL PICKLEBALL RULES

*Summer 2026*

## Table of Contents

1. <u>Teams and Players</u>	Page 2
2. <u>Level Placement</u>	Page 3
3. <u>Captains</u>	Page 4
4. <u>Dual Meets</u>	Page 4
5. <u>Penalties and Forfeitures</u>	Page 5
6. <u>Inclement Weather</u>	Page 6
7. <u>Scoring and Playoffs</u>	Page 7
8. <u>League-Specific Rules</u>	Page 8
9. <u>Glossary of Terms</u>	Page 10

***\*Highlighted text indicates rule changes.\****

Last revised Spring 2026

## I. TEAMS AND PLAYERS

- A. All team members must be paid members of ALTA for pickleball. Only one ALTA membership number may be issued to a member. An ALTA tennis member will use the same ALTA membership number when purchasing a pickleball membership. Should a member drop out of ALTA and wish to resume play at a later date, the previously assigned membership number must be activated. A player who possesses a second ALTA membership number may be declared ineligible and subject to sanctions by the organization at the discretion of the league vice president. No one under 18 years of age may be placed on a roster with the following exception: Qualified Junior players currently ages 16-17 may be added to a AA roster at the discretion of the League VP. If AA is not available they may play in the highest level available. See Junior Player Eligibility Guidelines for Pickleball Play located at My Resources>ALTA Documents>ALTA Rules for further details.
- B. **A player may participate in one Pickleball Co-Ed and one Pickleball Men's/Pickleball Women's team per season and in only one match per dual meet. Participating in ALTA Pickleball does not affect a player's ability to play in ALTA Tennis.**
- C. Each team must guarantee use of at least two courts of the same surface/type at the same address or two courts of the same surface/type not at the same address within 700 feet of each other (with the approval of the Rules Committee) as home courts in the five-county metro area (Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Gwinnett and Fulton Counties) or at an approved annexed facility. Any hard surface, outdoor or indoor, is acceptable. Scheduling cannot accommodate any more than two teams per multiple of two courts. Example: two courts available, one or two teams permitted; four courts available, three or four teams permitted; six courts, five or six teams permitted etc. If league matches, either from your league or another ALTA league, are still in progress at the scheduled time of your match, your match will begin at the conclusion of the match in progress. Regularly scheduled matches take precedence over all other ALTA league matches. Teams may agree to play their matches at another location.
- D. Any required court and/or guest fees for visiting participating players must be paid by the home team. The home team does not have to pay parking fees for visiting teams. As a courtesy, the captain at a facility where parking charges are imposed should inform the visiting captain in advance.
- E. Rosters must be submitted via the ALTA website according to the instructions, dates and times given in the roster packet for each league. There is no maximum limit of players on a roster. Two or more above the minimum are recommended. The minimum number of players:

<b>PICKLEBALL MIXED</b>	<b>10 players (5 men, 5 women)</b>
<b>PICKLEBALL CO-ED</b>	<b>10 players (5 men, 5 women)</b>
<b>PICKLEBALL MEN'S</b>	<b>8 men</b>
<b>PICKLEBALL WOMEN'S</b>	<b>8 women</b>

- F. Players may be added to a roster using the ALTA website as follows: (consult the ALTA calendar posted on the website for dates)
1. To be added to a roster, the player must be a paid member in good standing.
  2. Captains may add players during the roster submission period until the roster correction deadline.
  3. Captains may NOT add players in the period after the roster correction deadline until the schedule release date.
  4. No player may be removed from a roster after the roster correction deadline unless it has been less than three calendar days since notification of the roster addition, and the player has not been listed on a scorecard. The player must contact ALTA customer service to be removed from the roster and notify the captain of the request.
  5. After schedules are released, players may be added with the following restrictions.
    - i. A maximum of six players may be added.
    - ii. That player's most recent final level of play (as determined by the respective league) must be at or below the current level/flight for the team.
    - iii. That player has not been listed on any adult league roster for more than one year.
    - iv. Within a league, a player who was on a team the prior season may be added back to his/her team only if the team was lowered exclusively for the needs of ALTA rather than a request for review or a change in the team's composition.
  6. In order for a player to be eligible to play in a regularly scheduled dual meet, they may be added up until the scheduled start time of the dual meet. To be eligible to play in matches played early or matches delayed by inclement weather, a player must be added by 11:59 p.m. on the day before match is played.
- G. A player must play in at least two matches during the season to be eligible for the playoffs. A win by default or forfeit counts as a time played.
- H. Any person not listed on a roster in accordance with these general rules shall be an ineligible player. Any changes to a roster can only be made with the recommendation of the respective league vice president and with the approval of the president.
- I. A wheelchair player electing to play in an ALTA Pickleball League must abide by the adaptive/wheelchair rules of the USAPA.

## II. LEVEL PLACEMENT

Final determination of level placement will be made by the respective league vice president and overall coordinators. Team movement from one flight to another shall be based on the most recent team history during the past twelve months as well as on the addition of new players and the loss of old players. The goal is to match teams with comparable abilities within each level/flight.

### III. CAPTAINS

- A. Home team captain(s) must contact the visiting captain(s) by phone call, email, or text message at least four days before the dual meet to discuss the number of courts available (a minimum of two), the surface/type, and the order of play. Each team must have a captain or acting captain present at the beginning of every dual meet. Captains or acting captains must exchange written lineups for all positions simultaneously before the start of the dual meet. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of points. Scores of each match must be recorded, and captains or acting captains must sign the scorecards. Then scores of each match must be entered and reviewed on the ALTA website immediately after the dual meet. (In case of violation, refer to rule V.C.).
- B. Team captains must agree upon the order of play. In case of conflict, teams must play in the normal rotation: **Pickleball Mixed**: men's doubles, women's doubles, line 1 mixed doubles and line 2 mixed doubles; **Pickleball Co-Ed**: line 1 men, line 1 women, line 2 men, line 2 women; **Pickleball Men's**: lines 1-3; **Pickleball Women's**: lines 1-3.
- C. If there are situations that cannot be resolved by the team captains within the rules, the flight coordinator should be contacted.
- D. Players may play at any position from one dual meet to the next. Player movements will not be tracked.

### IV. DUAL MEETS

- A. All matches will be three games, and each game will be played until a team has 15 points and leads by at least a 2-point margin.
- B. ALTA will not provide linesmen or umpires for matches.
- C. ALTA rules govern play. In cases not specifically covered by these rules, the USA Pickleball rules govern play, as well as the USA Pickleball Sportsmanship Guide.
- D. A player who is not listed on the original scorecard/lineup may participate in a match that has not begun. Once the scorecard has been exchanged, players may not be moved down on the scorecard/lineup, with the following exception. If a team defaults an individual match at any time prior to the start of the match, the opposing team may make any changes to their lineup as needed.
- E. The 20-minute default as defined in the glossary is in effect for all scheduled matches. A defaulted match is scored as three team points for the opposing team. A defaulted match does not affect the outcome of any other matches.
- F. In each match, the home team will be responsible for providing USA Pickleball approved balls for each line of the dual meet. There is no exchange of balls at the end of each match. The balls must be appropriate for the surface and type of court: outdoor balls for outdoor courts and rough surfaces, indoor balls for indoor courts and smooth surfaces.
- G. There is no restriction regarding the color of clothing players may wear.
- H. Warm-up is limited to five minutes, including practice serves. A two-minute break may be taken after each game. Otherwise, play must be continuous throughout the match as

specified in USA Pickleball rules. Each team is allowed one timeout per game that will not exceed one minute.

- I. If the receiving team determines that the serve motion was clearly illegal, the receiving team may call for a replay BEFORE the return of serve. Server will have no more than two attempts to correct the serve motion. The third service attempt must be a drop-serve. If the third serve is still illegal, it will be a fault.
- J. Should a regular season dual meet end in a tie (6-6), NO tie break will be played. When teams are tied within a division after all regular season dual meets are completed, end-of-season standings will be determined as outlined in Playoff Procedures and General Information.
- K. COACHING IS allowed between games and during timeouts. Spectators (including teammates, coaches, and fans) may not volunteer advice regarding line calls, scoring, or the conduct of a match while the match is in play. They may not offer advice or instruction that is audible, visible or by electronic device to the players on the court. It is each captain's responsibility to control his or her spectators during match play. Once a match has begun, any communication, including cheering from teammates, coaches, or fans should be understood by all, or it could be considered coaching. A pair on the court may speak to each other in any language; however, they need to be able to communicate with their opponent in language that everyone understands.
- L. Good sportsmanship and conduct are expected by the players and spectators.
- M. If for any unforeseen circumstance the home team is unable to provide its home courts for any scheduled dual meet, the visiting team has the first option of providing its home courts. The host team is considered the home team. If the visiting team does not elect to provide its home courts, the responsibility reverts to the home team which must provide courts within the approved ALTA area at the scheduled time. If alternate courts cannot be found, the captains must contact their coordinator.
- N. In the event of a broken or damaged paddle during a match, a player shall have a maximum of three minutes to leave the court to obtain a replacement paddle. This will not count as a team timeout. Violation of this time limit will result in forfeiture of the match.

## **V. PENALTIES AND FORFEITURES**

- A. When an ineligible player is found to have participated in a match, the offending team will be penalized by forfeiting the team points associated with that match.
- B. Any official protest must be submitted in the form of a letter by the captain or co-captain to the flight coordinator and league vice president with a copy to the ALTA office ([altasupport@altatennis.org](mailto:altasupport@altatennis.org)) within five days of the scheduled match being protested. Protest letters can be submitted via email attachment or via mail.
- C. In those situations where no penalty for violations is provided in the general rules, THE RESPECTIVE LEAGUE VICE PRESIDENT SHALL HAVE AUTHORITY AND DISCRETION TO IMPOSE APPROPRIATE PENALTIES.

- D. A team having excessive defaults, as defined in the glossary, shall have all of its matches to date nullified and shall be treated as a bye for the remainder of the season.
- E. If a team has excessive defaults, as defined in the glossary, the team and/or its members may be suspended for the next season. The penalty will also apply to any team withdrawing after roster deadline.
- F. Any person playing under an assumed name, or any person having knowledge of such act and failing to report said act to ALTA in a timely manner, will be suspended for up to one year.

## **VI. INCLEMENT WEATHER**

- A. In the event of inclement weather, completed matches will stand as played. Incomplete matches must be resumed by the same players at the exact game and point as they stood when halted. Lineups for matches not started may be changed.
- B. If the match is delayed or interrupted by inclement weather, including lightning, teams should be prepared to wait one hour to determine if the courts are playable. Any one of the four players scheduled to play the match may determine that courts are not ready for safe play, but his/her partner must be at the court for the determination to be made. If courts are still not playable after one hour has elapsed, teams are free to leave and reschedule unless both teams agree to wait longer. Exception: During City Finals, league vice presidents or their designees will determine the wait time.
- C. Rained out matches must be made up within the period specified by the respective league vice president. (Refer to Individual League Rules.) Once teams agree on a rescheduled date, they are committed to play on that date unless rain occurs again. Failure to play on that rescheduled date will result in default of only the match or matches not played. When rained out matches are scheduled as a dual meet, normal default rules apply.
- D. If the temperature is below 32 degrees or above 95 degrees (Fahrenheit) at the court and players agree, the match may be played. If players do not agree to play, teams must wait one hour to determine if the temperature at the court falls within the playable range. Temperature to be verified using the home team's weather app for the zip code of the matches (wind chill and heat index are not a factor in determining temperature). All players scheduled to play in an individual match must be present at the courts to delay that match because of temperature.
- E. Once an individual match has begun, it must be completed except in the case of inclement weather. There is no provision for wind.

## **VII. SCORING AND PLAYOFFS**

- A. For each match, teams will be awarded 1 team point for each game won. Players in each match will compete for a total of 3 team points. Total number of points earned at the end of the season will determine division winners and runner-up teams, if applicable, that are eligible for the playoffs.
- B. In cases within a flight where divisions have unequal numbers of teams, each team's final standing will be determined by percentage of matches won to total matches scheduled to be played.

## LEAGUE-SPECIFIC RULES

LEAGUE	SEASON	SCHEDULED DAY/START TIME	FOLLOWING POSITIONS	REGULAR SEASON (WEEKS 1-5) INCLEMENT WEATHER MAKEUP MATCHES MUST START NO LATER THAN
PICKLEBALL MIXED	SPRING	MONDAY 6:30 PM	7:30 PM	12 DAYS, SECOND SATURDAY 6:30 PM
PICKLEBALL CO-ED	SUMMER	MONDAY 6:30 PM	7:30 PM	12 DAYS, SECOND SATURDAY 6:30 PM
PICKLEBALL WOMEN'S	SUMMER	WEDNESDAY 9:00 AM	10:00 AM	13 DAYS, SECOND TUESDAY 9:00 AM
PICKLEBALL MEN'S	SUMMER	FRIDAY 9:00 AM	10:00 AM	13 DAYS, SECOND THURSDAY 9:00 AM
PICKLEBALL MIXED	FALL	MONDAY 6:30 PM	7:30 PM	12 DAYS, SECOND SATURDAY 6:30 PM

Pickleball Leagues are divided into AA, A, B and C levels. Each level is divided into multiple flights reflecting the number of teams submitting rosters and the overall ability of each team. Levels/flights will be added or deleted, as required, at the discretion of the Pickleball League Vice President.

### PICKLEBALL MIXED

Dual meets consist of four doubles matches: a men's doubles (MD), a women's doubles (WD), and two mixed doubles (1MXD & 2MXD) in that order. Either the men's or women's doubles match may be defaulted without affecting the remaining matches. Any single default of a mixed doubles match must be taken at the lowest (#2) position.

A player listed on a scorecard/lineup as a men's or women's doubles player may not be moved on a scorecard/lineup to a mixed doubles match after the scorecard has been exchanged.

Participating facilities must guarantee the use of at least two lighted courts until 11:00 PM. Matches not completed by 11:00 PM may be suspended, normal inclement weather rules will apply.

### PICKLEBALL CO-ED

Dual meets consist of two lines of men's doubles and two lines of women's doubles. Any of the lines may be defaulted without affecting the remaining matches. The format of play is line 1 men's, line 1 women's, line 2 men's, line 2 women's in that order.

### PICKLEBALL WOMEN'S

Dual meets consist of three lines of women's doubles. Any of the lines may be defaulted without affecting the remaining matches.

### PICKLEBALL MEN'S

Dual meets consist of three lines of men's doubles. Any of the lines may be defaulted without affecting the remaining matches.

## ALL LEAGUES

All dual meets must be played starting no later than the SCHEDULED DAY/START TIME as indicated above, excluding matches postponed because of inclement weather. Warm-ups, including service warm-ups, must be completed before the matches begin. All following positions begin as listed above or when the court becomes available after these scheduled times.

**Weeks 1 through 5 matches** postponed due to inclement weather (precipitation or extreme weather) will be completed as listed in the chart above. Weeks 6 and 7 will be completed as listed here:

- **Week 6**, teams will have 6 days after the scheduled dual meet to complete postponed matches.
  - Spring/Fall matches must start no later than the following Sunday at 6:30 pm.
  - Summer Co-Ed matches must start no later than the following Sunday at 6:30 pm.
  - Summer Women's matches must start no later than Tuesday 9:00 a.m. (6 days)
  - Summer Men's matches must start no later than Thursday 9:00 a.m. (6 days)
- **Week 7**, teams will have 2 days after the scheduled dual meet to complete postponed matches.
  - Spring/Fall matches must start no later than the following Wednesday at 6:30 pm.
  - Summer Co-Ed matches must start no later than the following Wednesday at 6:30 pm.
  - Summer Women's matches must start no later than Sunday 6:00 p.m. (4 days)
  - Summer Men's matches must start no later than Tuesday 9:00 a.m. (4 days)

During playoffs and City Finals, if a dual meet ends in a tie (6 games to 6 games), the winner will be decided accordingly: each team will select a pair who will play a final game to 11 points by a margin of at least 2 points.

League Vice President will have the responsibility for the administration of their respective leagues. Situations not covered in these rules will be settled at the discretion of the League Vice President.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

### **ALTA ORGANIZATION:**

All ALTA play is classified into categories known as levels, flights, and divisions, which are defined as follows:

**Level** - The first category of play within each league which is graduated based on ability. Each league may be divided into levels of ability as follows: AA, A, B and C, with AA being the highest level.

**Flight** - The next subdivision of ALTA play whereby each level is divided into categories having generally equal abilities for the purpose of scheduling play. For example, the A level may be further divided into flights 1 through 8.

**Division** - Each flight may be further subdivided into one or more divisions in order to accommodate all teams assigned to that flight.

**ALTA WEBSITE** - The official website of the Atlanta Lawn Tennis Association, Inc. is [altatennis.org](http://altatennis.org).

**APPROVED ANNEXED FACILITY** - Two or more lighted pickleball courts located outside the five-county metro area which have been accepted for ALTA play by the first vice president.

**APPROVED NEW FACILITY** - Two or more lighted pickleball courts within the five-county metro area, which have met the criteria for ALTA play as set forth by the first vice president.

**CURRENT ALTA YEAR** - January 1 through December 31 of each calendar year.

**DEFAULT** - The loss of a match or matches by failing to be present for play within 20 minutes (default time) after the scheduled starting time. When the previous match extends beyond the default time, play must begin immediately when a court becomes available. The non-defaulting team captain or acting team captain may waive a default if the nondefaulting team remains at courtside. A "default" of a line will also include the electronic notification (email or text message) from a team captain/co-captain with the electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the default message by the opposing captain/co-captain, which will constitute the line(s) to be designated as a "default" on the scorecard. A request by a team captain/co-captain to play early to avoid defaulting one or more lines will not be considered a statement of default. Should inclement weather occur at the normal default time of the line being defaulted, regular inclement weather rules apply, and the default does not occur.

**DUAL MEET** - A series of matches between the counterpart doubles pairs of two teams scheduled by ALTA as part of ALTA's sanctioned league and tournament play.

**EXCESSIVE DEFAULT** - defaulting on all lines of a scheduled dual meet.

**FORFEITURE** - The automatic loss of any point(s) for any violation of these rules or as otherwise imposed as a penalty deemed appropriate by the respective league vice president.

**GAME** - When a team has won 15 points and leads by at least a 2 pt margin.

**INELIGIBLE PLAYER** - Any player who is ineligible to play for points under any one or more of the General Rules Adult Leagues.

**MATCH** - 3 games.

**PENALTY** - The loss of point(s) or other action expressly imposed by these rules or by the league vice president for a violation of these rules.

**PLAYER** - Any regular player, additional player or substitute player who is a paid member in good standing with the ALTA office who is properly listed on the team's roster and who is not an ineligible player under the General Rules Adult Leagues. No distinction shall be made among regular, additional or substitute players.

**PLAYER'S FINAL LEVEL** - The player's final level is the player's last level adjusted for end-of-season team results.

**RETIREMENT** - Any player who is unable to continue a match in progress because of a loss of natural condition, an accidental injury or a personal emergency.

**SCHEDULED MATCH** - Date published on the ALTA team season schedule. In the event of inclement weather or scheduling matches early, the agreed upon time and date of the new match becomes the scheduled match.

**TEAM POINT** - Points earned by a team in a dual meet.

**THE USA PICKLEBALL RULES** - The current edition of the USA Pickleball Rulebook & Official Rules and Sportsmanship Guide.