

Pickleball Etiquette: How to Play Nice in Paradise

One of the best things about Pickleball is *the community*. Whether you're a seasoned "banger" or a total "n00b (*aka newbie*)," following these unwritten rules ensures the courts stay fun and drama-free for everyone at the resort.

1. The "Paddle Tap" is the Handshake

At the end of every match -- win or lose -- it is customary to meet your opponents at the net and tap the heads (or handles) of your paddles together. It's the universal way of saying "Good game!" and is a must-do for good sportsmanship.

2. Call the Score LOUDLY

Nothing kills the flow of a game like a mid-point argument over the score. The server should always call out the full score (Server Score, Receiver Score, then Server 1 or 2) loudly and clearly *before* they begin their service motion. This gives the receiving team a chance to correct it before the ball is in play.

3. Be Generous with Line Calls

Resort play isn't the US Open. If a ball lands on the line, it's **IN**. If you didn't see it clearly enough to be 100% sure it was out, the etiquette is to give the benefit of the doubt to your opponent. If you and your partner disagree on a call, the ball is always considered "IN."

4. The "Ball On Court!" Safety Rule

Because resort courts are often close together, a stray ball will eventually roll onto your court. For safety, the moment you see a ball that isn't yours enter your playing area, yell "**Ball On!**" immediately. Stop play, return the ball to the neighboring court, and replay the point. It prevents rolled ankles and keeps everyone safe.

5. Respect the Rotation (The Paddle Queue)

If the courts are full, look for a "paddle rack" or a row of paddles leaning against the fence. This is the "waiting line." Instead of standing in a physical line, players place their paddles in the rack. When a game ends, the next two (or four) paddles in the queue take the court. Don't skip the line—it's the fastest way to lose friends at the resort!

6. Don't "Target" the Beginner

In a social resort setting, if you find yourself playing against a team where one person is significantly less experienced, don't just "pepper" the ball at them to get an easy win. Aim for the stronger player or keep the ball in the middle. It makes the game more fun for everyone and helps you work on your placement skills.

7. The "Sorry" Net Cord

If your ball clips the top of the net and dribbles over for a point that your opponent couldn't possibly return, it's polite to give a small "sorry" wave or nod. You'll take the point, of course, but acknowledging the "net love" keeps the competitive edge friendly.