

## **SMPA - Outdoor Pickleball Ladder League Rules & Procedures for leagues at Royal Oak's Whittier and Upton Parks, 2024**

- 1. All participants are required to sign a liability waiver.** Neither SMPA nor the volunteers running SMPA's leagues and other activities are responsible for personal injuries, illnesses, or losses of personal property while participating in SMPA activities. Participants accept all risk associated with participation.
- 2. Arrive** by 8:55 AM for morning leagues and by 5:55 PM for evening leagues; warm up should last no more than 15 minutes, and play should begin by 9:15 AM for morning leagues / 6:15 PM for evening leagues; play can begin earlier if all players on the court agree to that. \*In September (for session 2 SMPA leagues), evening leagues must begin play by 6pm (with warm up preceding the 6pm league start time) as sunset occurs prior to 8pm, and it occurs prior to 7:30pm before Sept ends.
- 3. Check in** at the sign-in table when you arrive so we can quickly identify absences.
- 4. Balls, scoresheets and pencils** will be at your court or at the sign-in area for each court's players to collect during check-in. Use league-provided balls so we all have the same equipment. Players must bring their own paddles. Court shoes are required.
- 5. Extra balls** are in a bag on the fence in the center of the courts in case yours breaks during play. Please return balls there or to the check-in table, including broken ones, when your league games conclude.
- 6. Court assignments** will be communicated prior to play each week. Unexpected absences (which we prefer NOT happen) may cause these to need to be adjusted at the last minute. Each league will be filled to a maximum capacity of a 5 players /ct.
  - a)** When all players are present, each player on a court will play four games to 15 (win by 1, switch court ends at 8, one time out per team per game), one game with each other player on the court as a partner. Each player will have one bye. See scoresheet for order of play.
  - b)** When no more than 1 player per court is absent, each player on a court will play three games to 15 (win by 1, switch court ends at 8, one time out per team per game), one game with each of the other players on the court as partner. No player will have a bye. See scoresheet for order of play.
  - c)** When more than one player per court is absent on any court, players will be shifted up (or necessarily down if the multiple absences are on the bottom court) to fill gaps until there are at least 4 players on every court. Courts with 4 players only will play as in b above; courts with still 5 players will play as in a above. When more absences than the league has courts occur, one court will end up out of play. This court may be used by any player on a bye to practice between games.
- 7. Court and position movement from week to week:**
  - a)** Generally court movement will follow this format: the highest scoring player on each court (except court 1) will move up a court for the following week and the lowest scoring player (excluding the last court) will move down a court for the following week. If two players on the same court get the same point total, the player listed higher on the scoresheet wins the tie.

**b)** However, absent players do not simply move to the bottom courts each week, as what's described in a) above might suggest. Following the re-ordering of present players based on their earned scores, absent players will be slotted back in, one slot lower than they were, with those who were present for play being adjusted around them.

**8. Starting/Play:** The player in the highest court position starts on the north side and serves first (unless all players on the court agree to something different). If there is an injury or someone has to leave during the match, game scores will be added up to that point; the player defaulting will move down and the remaining player with the highest score will move up. If a rain-out interrupts play, your league leaders will decide what to do based on how deep into play you are. USAPA/IFP rules of play will be used (<https://usapickleball.org/what-is-pickleball/ifp-official-rules/rules-summary/>), and courtesy on/between courts plus a safety first policy is expected.

**9. Return scoresheet equipment and balls** to the sign-in table or the ball bag when your league games are complete. You may then keep playing for fun as we have the courts reserved from 9-11:30am for morning and 5:30-8pm for evening leagues!

**10. Results:** Soon after league play each week, we will email you the link to an on-line spreadsheet with the detailed results of every week of play and the next week's court assignments. This link will not change all session; we just resend it so you don't have to hunt for it:)

**11. Inclement weather cancellations:** Announcements will be sent via TEXT or EMAIL as indicated by your league leader. If you cannot receive texts/emails on a mobile device, please let us know so we can coordinate another way to contact you for same-day cancellations. In case of bad weather, DO NOT assume play is canceled unless you hear from us that it is. Even if it has recently rained, the courts can sometimes be dried fairly quickly with towels, brooms, leaf blowers, and carpet squares, especially if everyone pitches in. If you can keep any of the above items in your car, that can be helpful! All leagues will offer one rain make-up date at the end of the session - the regular play dates and rainout makeup date are listed on the registration page. All other weather cancellations will not be made up; this includes if the rainout makeup date itself is rained out.

### **Good Sportsmanship and Courtesy Guidelines**

1. **Do NOT interrupt other courts' play** by walking onto, behind, or beside a court while a point is being played; wait until the point is over.

2. **Before serving** the server must wait for the service receiver to be ready, announce the score loudly enough so that all players on the court can hear, and then serve within 10 seconds.

3. **When your ball enters another court**, call 'ball' to warn the other court. When returning stray balls to other courts, make eye contact - don't just throw balls back randomly as doing so would make them more likely to become a hindrance again. **If a ball enters your court** from another court, call 'ball' and stop play on your court.

Locate the court that lost the ball and return it as described above. Then replay your interrupted point.

**4. Players call the lines on their side of the court.** This should be done as honestly as possible. A player MUST SEE the ball land outside of the court/lines to be called out (serves inside or on the kitchen line to be called short). If partners see the call differently, defer to the player with the better view, but resolve any doubt in favor of the opponent. Remember - it's often difficult for players looking across the court to accurately call a ball in or out. If partners see the call differently and have announced to the other team their different calls, the ball MUST be considered good. If you clearly see a shot YOU made land out, it is proper for you to call that ball out. Always wait for the ball to land before calling any shot out.

**5. Players call faults on their own side of the court.** For example, when a player is hit/grazed by a ball, touches the kitchen zone while volleying a ball, touches the net or double hits a ball (not as part of one continuous paddle stroke), it is that player's (or the player's partner's) responsibility to call those faults. The opponents may NOT call those faults and must defer to the judgment of the player(s) in question. Similarly, when questions occur about whether a ball bounced twice before being returned, the player who returned the ball (or the player's partner) makes the call.

**6. Compliment your partner and opponents for well made shots!** Keeping a positive attitude can help you play better and makes play more fun for everyone. Gloating or applause for an opponent's mistake is unsportsmanlike and is unwelcome on SMPA leagues.

**7. If you are sick or do not feel well** - stay home and notify your league leader.