

2022 **RULEBOOK**

CHANGE DOCUMENT



Table of Contents

Section 3: Definitions

- #1: **3.A.41.** Technical Warnings - - - 4
- #2: **3.A.45.** Verbal Warning - - - 4
 - Scenario A:** Verbal Warning for receiver's delay of game - - - 4
 - Scenario B:** Verbal Warning issued to each team for same profanity - - - 4

Section 4: The Serve, Service Sequence and Scoring Rules

- #3: **4.A.5.** The Volley Serve - - - 5
 - Scenario A:** Removed glove material - - - 6
 - Scenario B:** Band-aid on 4h finger - - - 6
 - Scenario C:** Glove hand release with no additional spin - - - 6
 - Scenario D:** Server turns back to referee - - - 6
 - Scenario E:** Server spins ball and attempts another serve - - - 6
- #4 **4.A.6.a.** Drop Serve Number of Bounces - - - 7
- #5: **4.B.8.** Player Questions - - - 7
 - Scenario:** Receiver asks about correct server - - - 7
- #6: **4.K.** Wrong Score Called - - -8
 - Scenario A:** Receiver fault for stopping play for incorrect score - - - 8
 - Scenario B:** Replay for perceived incorrect server - - - 8
 - Scenario C:** Replay for incorrect score and perceived incorrect server - - - 8
 - Scenario D:** Match point replay for score error & perceived incorrect server - - 8

Section 5: Service and End Selection Rules

- #7: **5.B.7.** End Change (Technical Foul) - - - 8

Section 7: Fault Rules

- #8: **7.J.** Ball Contacting Permanent Object After Serve - - - 9
- #9: **7.L.** Illegal Carry - - - 9
- #10: **7.N.** Carrying Additional Balls - - - 9
 - Scenario A:** Ball lands out of bounds - - - 10
 - Scenario B:** Referee Correction - - - 10
 - Scenario C:** Player Deliberate Drop of Ball - - - 10

Section 8: Dead Ball Rules

- #11: **8.E.** TW/TF Calls - - - 11
 - Scenario:** Profanity During Live Rally - - - 11

Section 10: Time-Out Rules

- #12: **10.A.5.** Time-In Procedures - - - 11
 - Scenario A:** Referee Methods To Ensure Continuous Play - - - 12
 - Scenario B:** Receiving Team Incorrectly Set - - - 12

#13: **10.H.2.a.** Referee Medical Time-Out - - - 12

Section 11: Other Rules

#14: **11.A.** Double Hits - - - 13

#15: **11.P.** Electronic Equipment - - - 13

Section 12: Sanctioned Tournament Policies

#16: **12.B.** Tournament Scoring Options - - - 14

#17: **12.F.5.b.** Player Withdrawal Request - - - 14

#18: **12.F.6.a.** Retirement Scoring - - - 10

Scenario: 3 Game Match Scoring - - - 14

Section 13: Tournament Management and Officiating

#19: **13.G.1.** Verbal Warnings, Technical Warnings and Technical Fouls - - - 15

Scenario A: Inadvertent Ball Break - - - 15

Scenario B: Deliberate Ball Break - - - 15

Scenario C: Player Profanity at Referee - - - 15

Scenario D: Different Volume Profanity, Different Penalty - - - 15

Scenario E: Referee Discretion - - - 15

Scenario F: No Verbal Warning Requirement before Technical Warning - - - 15

#20. **13.g.3.e.** Warnings and Fouls Assessed Any Time - - - 16

Scenario: Technical Foul before Pre-Match Briefing - - - 16

Section 3 - Definitions

1. Rule 3.A.41:

Existing: Technical Warning – A referee’s first verbal warning of a rule or behavioral violation given to a player or team prior to a technical foul being issued. Points are not awarded for a technical warning.

New: Technical Warning – A referee’s warning of a behavioral violation given to a player or team. Points are neither awarded nor deducted for a technical warning.

Reason: This clarified that technical warnings are for behavioral issues, not for fault rule violations. The word “verbal” was removed to avoid confusion with a verbal warning. The phrase “prior to a technical foul being issued” was removed because a technical warning, for example for profanity, is not required to be given before directly issuing a technical foul; depending upon the severity.

2. Rule 3.A.45:

Existing: Verbal Warning – A referee’s Verbal Warning (VW) is an optional, non-penalizing, game management tool. A VW is specific to profanity which has not risen to the penalty level (TW or TF). When used, a referee’s VW is simultaneously administered to all players on the court. Only one VW for profanity is permitted during a match.

New: Verbal Warning – A referee’s warning of a behavioral violation. A single verbal warning may be issued to each team once per match.

Reason and Intent: The intent of this rule is to empower the referee to use a verbal warning as a method to control certain and specific behavioral issues in the match and to prevent these issues from escalating. Verbal Warnings are not used for player faults. Each team may now receive a single, specific verbal warning. A verbal warning issued to a team is not a “global” warning to both teams and has no relevance on the opposing team. For example, Team A may be given a verbal warning for profanity for a specific word. Likewise, Team B may also be given a verbal warning for profanity for the same word. If a team has been given a technical warning or technical foul, a verbal warning may no longer be issued. (**Note:** Verbal Warnings should not be used for instances when a specific application of a technical warning or technical foul should be applied as in rules 13.G.1.g, 13.G.1.h, 13.G.2.d, and 13.G.2.f.)

Scenario A: Team B is repeatedly taking too much time to be set and ready to receive serve. The referee should issue a verbal warning for delay of game.

Scenario B: Team A receives a verbal warning for saying the “F” word. During the next rally Team B also says the “F” word. The referee may give a verbal warning to Team B regardless of the prior verbal warning issued to Team A.

Section 4 – The Serve, Service Sequence and Scoring Rules

3. Rule 4.A.5:

New Rule: The Volley Serve. The server shall use only one hand to release the ball to perform the serve. If the ball is visibly spun by the server during the release, the part(s) of the hand contacting the ball must be bare. The server's release of the ball must be visible to the referee and the receiver. In matches without a referee, the server's release of the ball must be visible to the receiver. A replay shall be called before the return of serve if the release of the ball is not visible or if the referee (or receiver in non-officiated matches) cannot discern whether an item on the hand contacted a visibly spun ball. Exception: A player who has the use of only one hand may use their hand or paddle to release the ball to perform the serve.

Reason and Intent: The year 2021 witnessed the introduction of new types of serves due to an unintended loophole in the illegal carry rule. This new rule brings us back to pre-2021 serving guidelines.

Several will wonder why all pre-serve spin hasn't been outlawed. In other words, if the 'Chain-saw serve' was eliminated for 2022, why not also eliminate the one-handed spin prior to the serve? What follows are the primary reasons for the current approach taken by the Rules Committee and Board of Directors:

1. Unlike the 'Chainsaw' serve, which came about quite by accident, the one-handed spin serve has been available to every player since 1965. There has never been any restriction on pre-serve spin in the sport. That fact had significant bearing on this rule.
2. We quickly realized we can't write a rule that says, "No added spin can be provided to the ball before the serve." That is difficult to enforce because every transfer of the ball from one hand to the paddle will cause some rotational velocity of the ball. To eliminate the one-handed spin-serve, we would have to adopt something similar to the open palm presentation used in table tennis, *if we wanted to remove as much referee judgment as possible*. Students of rules will realize several referee judgment-related rules have been removed from the Rulebook over the past two years. Adding words such as 'no manipulation' or 'no rotation of the ball' pre-serve are largely unenforceable with any degree of consistency among players or referees. Eventually, putting a table-tennis type pre-serve requirement in place was judged as a bridge too far at this stage, given number 1 above, and the fact that if we adopted it, almost every player in the world would have to modify their serve routine. There is a reluctance to do that, which, by the way, is the reason the drop serve isn't the only serve allowed in the sport. That, too, would be a transformational change in play.
3. The one-handed spin-serve is considered a little more difficult to adopt and perfect so while many speculate on this, we just don't know at this point how deep the serve will penetrate the sport, how quickly, or how effective it will be across the player spectrum.
4. It's important to allow for some degree of innovation in the sport, but at the same time make sure one type of shot or style of play doesn't dominate the sport, especially for the social and recreational player.

5. Accordingly, we are adopting a wait and see approach.

This rule provides:

A. A distinct name (volley serve) to differentiate it from the drop serve of Rule 4.A.6.

B. The opportunity for servers to impart additional spin on the ball as part of the release as long as the spin is created by only the hand releasing the ball. That means nothing can be used on or in addition to the single hand releasing the ball to perform the serve. For clarity, that means no additional body parts can be used, no substances, apparatus', or foreign material can be added to the part(s) of the hand that is used to impart additional spin on the ball. This leaves open the question of sunscreen, hand lotions, hand sanitizer and similar items. Those are all acceptable as long as their application is what is considered normal and customary. With respect to band aids and gloves on the release hand, as long as the glove or band aid are not on the part of the hand that would be used to impart spin on the ball, there are no restrictions for band aids and gloves. If, however, a player chooses to wear or requires the use of a band aid or glove on the part of the hand that is used to impart additional spin on the ball, the player may not add spin to the ball. In other words, it is recognized that some normal rotational velocity is imparted during any release of the ball. The normal rotational velocity of a ball during release is not what this rule is trying to restrict.

C. A requirement that the release of the ball must be visible to the receiver and referee, if there is one. This aspect of the rule makes it consistent with the visibility requirements of the drop in the Drop Serve Rule of 4.A.6

Scenario A: The server is wearing a glove on the hand that releases the ball but has removed the glove material allowing the thumb and first two fingers (that touch the ball) to be exposed and add spin to the ball. The referee allows this glove to be used.

Scenario B: The server is wearing a band-aid on their 4th (pinky) finger. The server performs the release of the ball without the band-aid contacting the ball. The referee allows the serve as normal.

Scenario C: The server is wearing a glove on the hand that releases the ball but has removed the glove material allowing the thumb and first two fingers to be exposed. During the release of the ball, the referee sees that the last two fingers of the glove are in contact with the ball during the release, but no additional spin was added to the release of the ball. This is allowed and the referee lets the rally continue normally.

Scenario D: The server turns their back to the referee (or receiver) just as the ball is being released on the serve making it impossible for the release to be seen by the referee (or receiver). The referee calls for a re-serve and informs the server to ensure that the release is visible to both the referee and receiver. If this becomes a continuing issue in the match, the referee may, but is not required to, issue a verbal warning or technical warning for delay of game.

Scenario E: The server spins and releases the ball to perform the serve. The server doesn't like the spin and lets the ball bounce, then picks up the ball and spin/releases the ball again to perform the serve. The referee allows the serve to occur because the 10-second count had not expired. The server may release the ball as many times as they like as long as they serve within the 10-second count.

Note: Players are expected to understand the intent of this rule. To that end, we do not expect tournament players to be 'inspected' by the referee to verify player's hands are bare.

4. Rule 4.A.6.a:

Existing: Servers must release the ball from one of the server's hands or dropped off the server's paddle face from any natural (un-aided) height and hit the ball after the ball bounces. The server's release of the ball must be visible to the referee and the receiver. In matches without a referee, the server's release of the ball must be visible to the receiver. A replay shall be called before the return of serve if the release of the ball is not visible. The rules for feet placement (4.A.2) still apply.

New: Servers must release the ball from one of the server's hands or dropped off the server's paddle face from any natural (un-aided) height and hit the ball after the ball bounces. There is no restriction how many times the ball can bounce nor where the ball can bounce on the playing surface. The server's release of the ball must be visible to the referee and the receiver. In matches without a referee, the server's release of the ball must be visible to the receiver. A replay shall be called before the return of serve if the release of the ball is not visible. The rules for feet placement (4.A.4) still apply.

Reason and Intent: This rule was changed for clarity on how many times the server may let the ball bounce before performing the serve. The intent of this rule is to allow the ball to bounce as many times as the server chooses before they strike the ball to perform the serve as long as the serve is made within 10 seconds after the score is called. The rule also clarifies that the ball may bounce anywhere on the playing surface before it is struck to perform the serve.

5. Rule 4.B.8:

Existing: (Rules 4.B.8 and 4.B.9. Summary) Any player may ask any player/position/score questions pertaining to their own team.

New: Before the serve occurs, any player may ask the referee for the score, correct server or receiver, correct player position, and may challenge/confirm the called score. Any player may ask any one or more of these questions.

Reason: This change simply allows for one team to ask if the opposing team is in the correct position and/or using the correct player. Although it is rare that a team will ask if the opponent is "correct", previously this was not allowed per the rules. This change will put in writing that any player may ask any question.

Scenario: The incorrect server is ready to serve. The referee calls the score. Before the incorrect server serves, the receiver's partner says, "Hey is that the correct server?" The referee stops play, informs everyone that it is, in fact, the incorrect server. The serving team changes servers and the referee recalls the score.

6. Rule 4.K:

Existing: *Wrong Score Called.* If the server or referee calls the wrong score, any player may stop play before the “third shot” occurs to ask for a correction.

New: *Wrong Score Called.* If the server or referee calls the wrong score, once the serve is made, play shall continue to the end of the rally and the correction made before the next serve. After the serve is made, a player who stops play based solely on an incorrect score call, will have committed a fault and shall lose the rally.

Reason and Intent: The intent of this rule is that no player should stop play after the serve occurs based on the sole claim of an incorrect score call. The new rule states that any correction for an error in the calling of the score must be made either before the serve occurs, or after the rally is completed. Stopping play after the serve based solely on an incorrect score call is a fault. Based on an incorrect score call, if a player believes an incorrect player/position fault has occurred, a referee correction will be applied up until the next serve occurs.

Scenario A: The referee calls the incorrect score. The server serves and the receiver catches the ball and claims that the referee has called an incorrect score. The referee calls a fault on the receiver for stopping play based solely on an incorrect score call.

Scenario B: All players are lined up correctly. The referee calls an incorrect serving team score. The receiver catches the ball after the serve and claims that the serving team was out of position based on the score that was called. The referee says, “Referee correction” and calls for a replay. (Same result for opposite application)

Scenario C: The referee calls an incorrect score. The server serves and the receiver catches the ball and claims both an incorrect score call and an incorrect server (based on the incorrect score call) The referee says, “Referee correction” and replays the rally.

Scenario D: Match point. The referee calls an incorrect score. Serving team wins the rally and the match. Receiving team claims an incorrect server based on the incorrect score call. The referee says, “Referee correction” and calls for a replay of match point.

Note: The reason for the replay is that the entire rally was based on a referee error; which could have impacted the concentration of one or both teams.

Section 5 – Service and End Selection Rules

7. Rule 5.B.7:

Existing: After the end change has occurred, a technical foul resulting in the loss of a point for the serving team shall have no impact on the completed end change.

New: Once the end change point has been scored, a technical foul resulting in the loss of a point for the serving team shall have no impact on the completion of the end change.

Reason: There was some debate as to what would happen if during the end change, the team with 6 (or 8 or 11) points committed a TF resulting in the loss of a point. Should the end change be “reversed” and not allowed to happen? This states that once the end change starts, it will be completed regardless of any team’s score change.

Section 7 – Fault Rules

8. Rule 7.J:

Existing: A ball in play contacting any permanent object before bouncing on the court.

New: After the serve, a ball contacting any permanent object before bouncing on the court.

Reason: This small change clarifies that after the score had been called (the ball is “live”) but before the serve occurs, if the ball happened to slip out of the server’s hand and rolled and touched a permanent object, such as a bleacher or fence, this is not a fault as long as the server served within the 10-second count.

9. Rule 7.L:

Existing: After the serve, a player deliberately carrying or catching the ball on the paddle while the ball is live/in-play.

New: A player deliberately carrying or catching the ball on the paddle while performing the serve or during a rally.

Reason: The unintended consequence in 2021 for allowing a player to “sling” the ball on the paddle face allowed for tremendous spin to be applied to the ball on the serve. This change simply puts the rule back to previous years of how the serve was to be performed. This rule eliminates the colloquial ‘Covid serve’ and the ‘Chainsaw serve’. The change also allows for a player to “balance” a ball on their paddle before, during or after the score call as long as they don’t sling the ball off the paddle face to perform the serve.

10. Rule 7.N:

New Rule: In non-officiated matches, players may carry additional pickleball(s) as long as the ball(s) are carried in a way that the ball(s) are not visible to their opponent during play. If an additional ball that a player was carrying falls on the playing surface during play, a fault shall be declared.

Reason and Intent: The intent of this rule is to allow players to carry balls on their person in non-officiated matches with some limitations. Many times, carrying an extra ball is more efficient if the ball in play has been hit beyond the playing area. While this rule allows for the carrying of an extra ball (or balls), the rule should not be used as a “get out of jail free” card as listed in Scenario C below. While the rule allows for extra balls to be carried, it applies a fault if the ball falls on the court during play. This rule is only for non-officiated matches because referees are responsible for removing any extra balls from the court for officiated matches. In matches with a referee, any dropped ball will result in a referee correction and replay. This rule pertains specifically to pickleballs

only. If anything other than a pickleball falls from a player's person, the normal rules governing these conditions shall apply.

Scenario A: In a non-officiated match, a player is carrying an extra ball in their pocket. During a rally, the ball falls out of their pocket but lands out of bounds. The opponents claim a distraction fault but the player who dropped the ball states that since the ball landed out of bounds and not on the actual court, it is not a fault. The opponents are correct that a distraction fault has occurred.

Scenario B: During a rally, a ball falls out of a player's pocket and lands out of bounds. The opponents claim a distraction fault has occurred. The referee calls a "referee correction" and calls for a replay. In this scenario, the referee should have ensured that all other balls were removed from play, even if the referee didn't notice the extra ball prior to the start of the game.

Scenario C: The referee does not notice that a player is carrying an extra ball. During a live rally, the opponents are about to hit a hard shot to potentially end the rally. The referee then notices that a player deliberately reaches in their pocket and takes out a ball and lets it fall on the ground just prior to the opponents hitting their shot. The opponent's shot is a winner, but the player who dropped the ball claims that this is a "referee correction" and a replay should occur. The referee determines that the player deliberately removed the ball and dropped it in an effort to cause a replay and prevent the loss of the rally. (A) The referee denies the request for a replay and calls a distraction fault on the player who dropped the ball; or, (B) The referee denies the request and lets the rally stand and issues a verbal or technical warning for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Section 8 – Dead Ball Rules

11. Rule 8.E:

Existing: Other than non-volley zone violations, faults may only be committed when the ball is live and in-play. The penalty for a fault may be enforced after a rally has ended (e.g., NVZ, incorrect player/position etc.,) Note: Technical warnings or technical fouls may be called at any time during the match including when the ball is dead.

New: Other than non-volley zone violations, faults may only be committed when the ball is live. The penalty for faults (other than not non-volley zone faults) are normally enforced the moment they are identified (e.g., incorrect player/position, distractions, double bounces, etc.) but may also be enforced any time before the next serve occurs.

Reason: This rule change removed the wording about calling technical fouls and technical warnings and the associated confusion that a TW/TF could be called during a live rally. It further clarifies the time parameters on when faults can be called and applied.

Scenario: During a rally, the serving player loudly utters a profanity. The rally continues for a few more exchanges with the server winning the rally. The referee awards a point to the serving team and then applies the appropriate verbal warning, technical warning or technical foul. A referee shall never stop a rally to issue one of these penalties. The rally must first be completed.

Section 10 – Time-Out Rules

12. Rule 10.A.5:

Existing: The referee will give the players a warning when there are 15 seconds remaining. At the end of the time-out, the referee will call “time in” and announce the score to begin the 10-second count even if all players are not on the court or not ready to play. If the server does not serve within 10 seconds after the score is called, and no additional time-outs are called or available, a fault will be called.

New: The referee will announce when there are 15 seconds remaining. At the end of the time-out period, the referee shall call 'time in' and then call the score when all players are (or should be) ready to play.

Reason and Intent: The intent of this rule change is (under normal standard playing conditions) to minimize the opportunity (but does not eliminate) that a server serves to an empty receiving court because a receiver is late coming back to the court after a time-out. Or, calling a fault for a server not getting back in time and violating the 10 second rule. This change removes the rigidity of rule 10.A.5 and allows the referee to control the pace and flow of the match without being forced into situations where the referee must call the score when one or more players are not in position and ready to play. The approach in 10.A.5 would now be similar to Rule 4.D in that the referee will now determine when players should be ready and when the score is to be called. The referee has several tools to get players back playing in a timely manner. After issuing the 15-second warning, if the referee notices that players aren't making their way back to the court, the referee may remind players, firmly at times, that play needs to continue. The referee may also issue a verbal warning or technical warning for delay of game if

the referee determines a team is causing an avoidable delay.

Scenario A: The referee gives the 15-second warning and notices that the players are not responding and have not started to make their way back to the court. The referee then says firmly and loudly, "Let's go/We gotta' play/I've called 15-seconds". If a team still does not respond, the referee may walk towards the team and again admonish them to get back to the playing court. If the referee determines that a team is avoidably delaying the game, the referee may issue a verbal warning or technical warning for delay of game. The intent here is that the referee has several ways in which to get players back to playing without reverting to calling the score which can have embarrassing consequences to all involved.

Scenario B: After a time-out has expired, the server is ready to serve properly from the right-hand court. The receiver and receiver's partner are stacking and are standing near the left court to receive serve. The referee looks at them with a puzzling look to which the receiver replies, "I'm ready". The referee waits a few more moments expecting the receiver (or the partner) to ask if they are in the correct position since that are not setup diagonally to receive the serve. (Note: the receiver was certain the server was going to serve to the wrong court and commit a server position fault) Since the receiver was ready to receive serve, even though it was to the incorrect court, and no player has asked any score/player/position questions, the referee calls the score and the server serves to a completely empty right hand receiving court. The referee then calls "point" when the serve was not returned. The referee explains to the receiving team that in fact the server did serve from the correct position and furthermore explained that the receiving team could have asked if they were in the proper position. In this extremely rare situation, since all players were on the court and "ready to play" and no one had asked any correct player/position questions, the referee was correct in calling the score and having the server serve to an empty receiving court.

13. Rule 10.H.2.a:

Existing: In the interest of overall safety, if the referee determines a potential medical situation exists, (for example, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, etc.) the referee is authorized to call a referee time-out and summon medical personnel or the Tournament Director. If determined to be a valid medical situation requiring treatment, the referee will charge a medical time-out to the affected player and proceed in accordance with Rule 10.B. If the player did not require treatment, play resumes and no time-out is charged to the player. If the player has previously used, or been charged a medical timeout, the referee will call a referee time-out and summon medical personnel or the Tournament Director to determine if the player may resume play.

New: In the interest of safety, if the referee determines a potential medical situation exists, (for example, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, etc.) and the player is unable to or refuses to call a medical timeout, the referee is authorized to call a referee time-out and summon medical personnel or the Tournament Director. Referee requested medical time-outs will not be charged against the player.

Reason: A player should not lose their medical TO unless they have requested to use their medical time-out. Anecdotal feedback from referees indicated that medical personnel rarely determine that a medical issue is invalid. In the case where they are

called to attend to a player at the referee's discretion, the probability approaches certainty that medical personnel will treat the player for some type of issue and conclude the referee's concern did result in a valid medical reason; thus normally resulting in the player losing their ability to call for a medical time-out on their own accord. This rule protects the player's right to personally ask for a medical time-out in situations where the referee is trying to ensure player safety.

Section 11 – Other Rules

14. Rule 11.A:

Existing: *Double Hits.* Balls can be hit twice, but this must occur during an unintentional, continuous, single-direction stroke, by one player. After the serve, if the stroke is deliberate, or not continuous or not in a single direction, or the ball is struck by a second player, it is a fault.

New: *Double Hits.* Balls can be hit twice, but this must occur during an unintentional, continuous, single-direction stroke, by one player. If the stroke made while performing the serve or during a rally is deliberately not continuous, or not in a single direction, or the ball is struck by a second player, it is a fault.

Reason: This rule reverts back to the prior 2021 rule where double hits while attempting the serve were not allowed. The change also allows for players that habitually bounce the ball with their paddle, or on the side edge of their paddle, do so before they start their normal service routine without incurring a fault.

15. Rule 11.P:

New Rule: *Electronic Equipment.* Players shall not wear or use any form of headphones or earbuds during competition play. Exception: Prescribed or necessary hearing aids are permitted.

Reason: This rule is necessary for several reasons:

- 1) With advances in technology, players could receive electronic coaching through such devices during the match and neither the opponents nor the referees would know.
- 2) Player safety. Ear buds or headphones can be (and have been) dropped on the court.
- 3) The use of such devices can prevent players from hearing calls or the score, thereby causing potential delays to explain or repeat that which was not heard.

Section 12 – Sanctioned Tournament Policies

16. Rule 12.B:

Existing: *Tournament Scoring Options.* The recommended tournament scoring option is best two of three games to 11 points, win by 2 points. Other options include: one game to 15 or one game to 21. All formats win by 2 points. Round Robins may also use one game to 11, win by 2, as long as the bracket has six or more teams.

New: *Tournament Scoring Options.* The recommended tournament scoring option is best two of three games to 11 points, win by 2 points. Other options include: best three of five games to 11 points, one game to 15 or one game to 21. All formats win by 2 points. Round Robins may also use one game to 11, win by 2, as long as the bracket has six or more teams.

Reason: This change responds to the requests from Tournament Directors and members to provide an additional tournament scoring option.

17. Rule 12.F.5.b:

Existing: If a player/team has completed any matches, the player/team may request to be withdrawn from ALL upcoming matches in that bracket.

New: If a player/team has completed any matches, the player/team may request to be withdrawn from ALL upcoming matches in that bracket. The request must be made prior to the initial score being called to start their next match.

Reason: This addition makes the rule consistent with the guidance that exists in Rule 12.F.1 (Retirement guidelines) and is added for additional clarity to describe the time in which a withdrawal request must be made.

18. Rule 12.F.6.a:

Existing:

Scoring guidelines are:

2 out of 3 Format: 11-0, 11-0

1 Game to 15(21) Format: 15-0 (21-0)

New: Actual game scores at the time of retirement shall be reported for the team that retires. The opponents shall be awarded all points necessary for proper match completion, ensuring a two-point margin. For example, in Game 1 of a 2-out-of-3 match, a team with 10 points retires when the score is 10-5. The final scores will be reported as: “12-10, 11-0”. Game scores after a rule-based forfeit shall be reported as: 2/3 Format: “11-0, 11-0”. 15/21 Format: “15-0” or “21-0”.

Reason: Once the referee has started the match by saying, “Time-in” the **only** option for a player to voluntarily not continue the match is a Retirement. This change would allow the retiring team to keep any points earned during the match, which could be helpful in round robin brackets which use points differential as a tie breaker. It also allows for the team that does not retire to receive all the necessary points to ensure proper match completion.

Scenario: A singles 2-out-of-three match. Player B won game 1 with a score of 11-5. Player A won game 2 with a score of 11-9. In game 3, the score is 10-2 with Player A

serving with 10 points. Player A then decides to choose the retirement option. The referee notates the scoresheet accordingly and records the following scores for the winner of the match, Player B: "11-5, 9-11, 12-10". In this scenario, Player A retains all the points that he scored while ensuring that Player B receives the necessary points to ensure a proper match completion.

Section 13 – Tournament Management and Officiating

19. Rule 13.G.1:

Existing: Verbal Warnings, Technical Warnings and Technical Fouls. The referee is empowered to issue a single verbal warning for profanity or call technical warnings. A verbal warning may be issued for a potential profanity violation.

New: Verbal Warnings, Technical Warnings and Technical Fouls. The referee is empowered to issue a single verbal warning to each team or call technical warnings. Actions or behavior that shall result in a technical warning:

Reason and Intent: The intent of this rule is to expand the use of the verbal warning as another tool the referee may use to control a match and deescalate situations. This rule expands the verbal warning to issues other than profanity in the effort to help the referee control the match more effectively. Additionally, each team will be able to receive a verbal warning related to their specific actions.

Scenario A: After a rally has ended, a player says that they think the ball is cracked. As the player is walking to retrieve the ball, the player inadvertently steps on the ball and crushes it. The referee determines that the breaking of the ball was not deliberate and issues a verbal warning.

Scenario B: After a rally has ended, a player says that they think the ball is cracked. As the player gets near the ball, the player raises their leg high and slams their foot down on the ball resulting in a broken ball. The referee calls a technical warning for purposely breaking the ball.

Scenario C: The referee calls an NVZ fault on an Erne attempt by a player. After the rally is over the faulted player walks by the referee and without looking directly at the referee says, "That was a bull\$%^& call." The referee, in an attempt to deescalate the situation, issues a verbal warning for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Scenario D: Team A receives a verbal warning for a specific profanity. Team B says the same word, but with louder volume. The referee issues a technical warning to Team B. Team B asks why they did not receive a verbal warning the same as Team A and the referee explains that their volume was greater and verbal and technical warnings are based on referee discretion.

Scenario E: In a gold medal tie-breaker match with a score of 14-14, after a rally has ended, a player forcefully hits the net with their paddle. The referee has the option to issue a verbal or technical warning and decides to issue a verbal warning.

Scenario F: A player utters a profanity and the referee issues a technical warning. The player protests and says that the referee should have issued a verbal warning first. The referee reminds the player that there is no requirement that a verbal warning always be issued before a technical warning or technical foul.

20. Rule 13.G.3.e:

Existing: Verbal warnings, technical warnings and technical fouls may be assessed any time during a match while the players are at the court.

New: Verbal warnings, technical warnings and technical fouls may be assessed any time the players are at the court, independent of whether the match is in progress. This includes during warm-up time. Play shall not be stopped to assess a warning or foul. The assessment of the warning or foul shall be applied after rally has ended. Behavior raising to the level of a warning or foul after the match is over shall be brought to the attention of the Tournament Director.

Reason: This rule (along with 8.E) was vague concerning exactly when a TW/TF could, and should, be called. These changes clarify that even though a TW/TF could be committed during a live rally (for example, using extreme profanity), the referee shall not stop a rally in progress to mete out the TW/TF. Any TW/TF shall be assessed after the rally has ended. This change also includes the provision that warnings and fouls can be assessed before a match begins or brought to the attention of the Tournament Director after a match is over.

Scenario: While players are warming up before the referee's pre-match briefing, one player loudly calls an opponent a "!*&@#\$\$% cheater". The referee issues a technical foul for extremely excessive profanity and issues a point to the opponents before the match has started.