



## Mini-Singles Format Instructions

### 1. The Basics

- A. Mini-Singles is played on a standard pickleball court.
- B. An additional line must be provided that extends the centerline of the court through each non-volley zone. The color of this line is not required to be the same as the other court lines (e.g., if tape is used for the centerline extension.)
- C. Except as otherwise provided herein, Mini-Singles is played according to the same rules as Singles.
- D. The unique feature of Mini-Singles is that at each end, only one of the two courts (i.e., the right [even] or the left [odd] court) is “in play” during a rally. The courts that are in play are determined by the required player positions (see 2.B below).

### 2. Player Positions

- A. Each player’s position is determined by their individual score. This applies at all times, whether the player is serving or receiving.
- B. When a player’s score is even, the player plays from the right (even) court and that is the court that is in play at that end. When the player’s score is odd, the player plays from the left (odd) court and that is the court that is in play at that end.

**NOTE:** This means that some rallies will be played:

- Cross-court from the right (even) courts (e.g., when the score is 0-0, 2-6, 8-2, etc.)
- Cross-court from the left (odd) courts (e.g., when the score is 1-1, 3-7, 9-5, etc.)
- Directly across from each other from the server’s right (even) court to the receiver’s left (odd) court (e.g., when the score is 0-1, 2-5, 8-7, etc.), or
- Directly across from each other from the server’s left (odd) court to the receiver’s right (even) court (e.g., when the score is 1-0, 3-6, 7-2, etc.)

### 3. Basic Play and Boundary of the In-Play Courts

- A. Each player’s shot must land in bounds of the opponent’s court that is in play.
- B. The baseline and outer sideline determine two of the three boundaries of the in-play court.
- C. Because only one of the courts at an end is in play during a rally (i.e., either the right [even] court or the left [odd] court), the centerline of the pickleball court, including the portion that extends through the non-volley zone, effectively serves as the other sideline of the in-play court.

## MINI SINGLES EXAMPLES AND TIPS

- 1. Correct positioning:** Both players are responsible for playing each rally from their correct court (i.e., the “in-play” court) which is determined by their individual score. The most important thing for players is to always be aware of the score. When their score is even, the correct court is the right (even) court. When their score is odd, the correct court is the left (odd) court.

**TIP FOR THE SERVER:** There is no difference from full-court singles for the server’s position. After a side out, the server starts serving from the right or left court according to their score. If the server wins the rally, a point is scored and the server switches courts for the next rally. The server continues switching courts as long as points are scored. Additionally, the server must serve to the correct receiver’s court, so it is important for the server to know the receiver’s score, which determines the receiver’s correct court (see Example 4.A below).

**TIP FOR THE RECEIVER:** In full-court singles, the receiver always lines up diagonally across from the server. In Mini Singles, the receiver’s correct court is always based on their individual score (i.e., right or left based on an even or odd score). As such, the receiver does not switch courts when the server scores a point.

- 2. Officiated play – Questions to Confirm Correct Positioning:** Players are allowed to ask the referee for information about score and player position to determine that they are correct. Note that there is no specific wording required to ask for this information.

**TIP:** The simplest and most direct question to ask about their position would be “**Is this the correct court?**” Either player may ask the referee for their score and then determine themselves which is the correct court, or ask whether they are at the correct court (i.e., the correct position), or they may ask both questions.

- 3. What happens if the server is positioned at the incorrect court and serves the ball?**

This is straightforward. The referee will immediately call a fault for serving from the incorrect court.

- 4. What happens if the receiver is positioned at the incorrect court and the server serves to that court?** This is not as straightforward as the previous scenario. First, it is important to reiterate that in an officiated match without line judges, the players are responsible for making all line calls (except for a short serve, which is the referee’s call). Second, a ball that does not land in the correct court (i.e., the “in-play” court) is technically “out”.

**A. The receiver knows he or she is standing at the incorrect court:** In this case, the receiver is baiting the server to serve to the incorrect court. When the ball lands, the receiver makes an immediate out call and wins the rally.

**TIP FOR THE SERVER:** This is questionable sportsmanship on the part of the receiver but it is legal. It is just as important for the server to know the receiver’s correct court as it is to know their own correct court and, if necessary, ask the referee for the receiver’s score and/or correct court.

**NOTE:** There is no fault for incorrect receiver position in Mini Singles. The receiver can stand anywhere they wish. The server must serve to the correct court regardless of where the receiver is standing.

**B. The receiver does not know he or she is standing at the incorrect court:** In this case, the receiver returns the serve and play continues because both players believe they are playing the correct receiver's court. In an extended rally, the server's shots are all technically "out", but the receiver is returning them and not calling them out. The referee cannot make line calls and therefore does not intervene. When the rally ends, it is presumed to have been played in good faith and therefore the result stands.

There are various rally-ending scenarios and situations that follow. Assume Player A is receiving and their score is even but the rally is played to completion from Player A's left (odd) court.

**Scenario 1:** The server (Player B) eventually hits the ball long or out of bounds to the receiver's left. Player A calls the ball out. The rally stands and the referee calls a side out. If Player A remains at the odd court (i.e., does not ask the referee any questions) and serves, the referee will call a fault for serving from the wrong court.

**Scenario 2:** The server (Player B) eventually hits the ball to Player A's even court. Player A calls the ball out, believing that the ball hit the wrong court. In this case, the ball was technically "in" because the even court was the "in-play" court. If Player B does not know this and accepts the out call, the rally stands and the referee calls a side out.

**NOTE:** Even if the referee knows that the ball was actually in, the referee will not intervene since the referee can only rule on line calls that are appealed.

**Scenario 3:** Same as Scenario 2 but the server (Player B) realizes during the rally that Player A's even court was the correct court. When Player A calls the ball out, Player B appeals the out call. The referee will uphold the appeal and award the rally and a point to Player B.

**Scenario 4:** The receiver (Player A) hits the ball into the net or out of bounds. The referee awards a point and Player A correctly switches courts. Player B incorrectly remains at their odd court. In this case, Scenarios 1 or 2 will repeat.

Revised – 8/8/2022