

# Pickleball Lesson Plan – Ages 7-14

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By Robert Nibarger – USAPA Ambassador - North Carolina – 2015

## **Preliminary Preparation Instructor**

1. Ensure site is ready a day before camp. Call volunteers and remind them of start time. Inventory equipment and load into vehicle.
2. Load equipment – Paddles, balls, nets, orange cones, cooler, snacks, ice, water, (*cell phone in case first aid is needed*), pencils, paper, name badges, whistle. *Portable shade, if available, during hot weather.*

*Note: Have one of your instructors be timekeeper and blow whistle to announce next module. Keeping on task and on time is very important.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This lesson play requires 4 instructors and a maximum of 20 students per session. It is recommended that two courts be utilized and that you divide the student into four groups of five with one instructor per group.

## **SAFETY**

Ensure that all forms are completed properly, and that liability release forms, if used, are signed and turned in to the office. I recommend that this clinic be offered through your local parks department. Background checks on all volunteers will normally be a part of a parks volunteer screening process.

Take a few minutes to go over some basic safety rules. Encourage students to:

- Not leave the area of the courts without permission.
- Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated.
- Not engage in horseplay or talk over instructors.
- Not back pedal to play lobs or shots over their head.
- Be respectful to other players always.
- Listen to instructions and obey instructors at all times.

## WARM UP

Begin the camp by introducing yourself and your volunteers. Divide the students into 4 groups of 5 along with their instructor. (*Note: Rotate instructors each day. You may have them line up and count off by 5*) so that students are exposed to a variety of teaching techniques. Have the students warm up and do the following stretches.

- Jog 3 laps around courts
- 25 jumping jacks
- Forward and reverse arm circles
- 10 hamstring bend over and touch their toes
- Ankle Rotations while lying on their backs

Select a few stretches from the chart on the next page.



# Stretching Exercises



# WHY ARE WE HERE

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**GOALS:** Students will demonstrate the proper technique in the forehand, backhand, volley, ready position and serve.

**OBJECTIVES:** The students will be exposed to rules, scoring, strategies and fitness.

**FITNESS:** Flexibility, muscular strength and Cardiovascular.

**INSTRUCTION:** *Divide the students into two groups. Have group 1 sit on the sideline facing group 2. Instructors will demonstrate and inform students about the basic rules of pickleball. Note: Make this instruction as "visual" as possible. As soon as finished, demonstrate skills.*

**BASIC RULES OF PICKLEBALL**

- Pickleball can be played in 1/2 court singles, full court singles, doubles or mixed doubles.
- The scoring system is identical to badminton: only the side with the service can score points.
- Each match is decided over 3 games with each game played to 11.
- All services must be below the waist and must land in the opposite square past the no volley zone.
- The "Double Bounce Rule" states that the receiving player must let the ball bounce once before returning the serve and the serving side must let the return of the serve bounce once before returning the shot.
- The ball can be volleyed (hit before it bounces) during a rally only after the above two bounces.
- All lines are in bounds during play.
- No player may hit a ball while in the no volley zone unless the ball first bounces in the no volley zone.
- If another ball or player interferes with a rally replay that point.

**INSTRUCTION** *Instructors will continue to explain and demonstrate the skills and critical elements that students will be learning.*

**CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF PICKLE-BALL SKILLS**

- **Forehand:** grip the racquet with the V of the thumb and forefinger on the top back edge of the grip, step with opposite foot toward target, keep the racquet face perpendicular to the floor, swing low to high
- **Backhand:** grip the racquet with the V of the thumb and forefinger on the top back edge of the grip (1/4 turn), step with same side foot toward target, keep the racquet face perpendicular to the floor, swing low to high
- **Lob:** Similar to forehand or backhand but open the face of the racquet as you swing low to high to hit the ball in a high arch over the head of an opponent who is playing the net.
- **Smash:** turn your body perpendicular to the net, racquet hand away from the net, raise your non racquet hand toward the ball to help judge distance, as the ball approaches your target hand swing quickly in an overhead motion hitting down on the ball with a flick of the wrist, aim the ball at your opponent's feet or toward an open court area.
- **Passing Shot:** A passing shot is essentially a forehand or backhand

## **SKILLS**

**1. Forehand Grip** Grip paddle with a handshake so that the forefinger is extended up and behind the shaft of the grip with the three fingers and thumb wrapped around the grip, forming a V on top. Have students shake hands. Next have them shake hands with paddle making sure to make a V.

**2. Ready Position** Place feet shoulder width apart, weight on balls of feet, bent knees, hands out in front of the body, eyes forward.

**3. Hand Eye Coordination** Have students use Eastern Grip. The paddle face should face the ceiling, keep your eye on the ball, ball should go no higher than one foot above the paddle, and arm is extended in front of the body for ball control. Count how many volleys in a row for one minute. Students will be timed two more times, attempting to improve their score.

**4. Combine Front and Backhand Drives** when hitting the ball, students need to make sure they hit the ball on the face (flat side) of the paddle with extend arms.

**6. Volleying** Hitting the ball before it bounces, must be done with player's feet behind the non-volley zone line. It is a fault if the player steps over the line on the volley follow through.

### **7. Serve**

Players must keep one foot behind the back line when serving. The serve is an underhand serve that must be contacted in the air below the waist. Server must contact the ball before it bounces. The serve is made diagonally cross-court and must clear the non-volley zone. Serve from right court, when your score is zero or even number. Serve from the left court, when your score is odd number. Only one serve attempt is allowed except if the ball touches the net on the serve and lands in the proper service court. Then the serve may be taken over. At the start of each game, the first serving team is allowed only one fault before giving up the ball to the opponents. Thereafter both members of each team will serve and fault before the ball is turned over the opposing team. The player in the right-hand court will always start first. Cannot serve until return person is in the ready position.

# COURSE SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

TIME	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	
10 Min	Warm Up	Warm Up	Warm Up	Warm Up	Warm Up	
<b>Module 1</b>						
2 Min	Water Hydrate	Water Hydrate	Water Hydrate	Water Hydrate	Water Hydrate	
10 Min	Introduction –Select Groups	Review Day 1	Review Day 2	Review Day 3	Review Day 4	
10 Min	DEMO BASIC RUES	Drill 1	Drill 12	Drill 5	Putting All Elements Together – Instructors – Review Week	
10 Min	Drill 6	Drill 2	Drill 12	Drill 5	Drill 11	
10 Min	Drill 7	Drill 3	Drill 13	Drill 8	Drill 11	
10 Min	LESSON 1	Drill 5	Drill 13	Drill 8	Drill 11	
<b>Module 2</b>						
10 Min	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break	
10 Min	Drill 1	Drill 5	Drill 9	Drill 9	Drill 11	
10 Min	Drill 2	Drill 9	Drill 9	Drill 10	Drill 11	
15 Min	LESSON 2	Drill 9	LESSON 4	LESSON 5	Round Robins  PRINT CHARTS  Frequent Water Breaks as Needed	
10 Min	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break		
<b>Module 3</b>						
10 Min	Drill 3	Drill 5	Drill 8	Drill 10		
10 Min	Drill 4	Drill 5	Drill 10	Drill 10		
10 Min	LESSON 3	Drill 8	Drill 10	Drill 11		
10 Min	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break	Water Break		
10 Min	Drill 9	Drill 9	Drill 9	DRILL 11		
5 Min	Cool Down	Cool Down	Cool Down	Cool Down	Cool Down	
5 Min	Gather Equipment	Gather Equipment	Gather Equipment	Gather Equipment	Gather Equipment	
5 Min	Camp Ends	Camp Ends	Camp Ends	Camp Ends	Graduation	

## **LESSON: 1 HITTING THE BALL BACK AND FORTH**

**FACILITY:** One court or specified area for each group

**EQUIPMENT:** One pickleball for each group  
One paddle for each student

**PERFORMANCE GOAL:** Students will learn to hold the paddle and meet the ball on one bounce.

**COGNITIVE GOAL:** Students will learn to anticipate where the ball goes after bouncing, safety concerns, and to improve their focus on the ball.

**LESSON SAFETY:** Practice areas should be separated by a minimum of 15 feet. Never back pedal to attempt a shot. Always warm up and do a cool down after matches.

### **LESSON SEQUENCE:**

1. Teach the proper grip.
2. Line up students 15 feet away from each other along a court.
3. Demonstrate and have students practice hitting the ball to each other from five feet away.
4. Have the students go to their respective court and, try to hit the ball over the net.
5. Have student pitch and catch across the net with their partner.

## **LESSON: 2 FORHAND AND BACKHAND**

**FACILITY:** One court or specified area for each group



**EQUIPMENT:** One pickleball for each group  
One paddle for each student

**PERFORMANCE GOAL:** Students will improve their ability to meet the ball on their backhand, hit on a diagonal, and be able to serve.

**COGNITIVE GOAL:** Students will understand the difference between a forehand and a backhand and learn rules for serving.

**LESSON SAFETY:** Have students practice the same things at one time so they do not get in each other's way.

**LESSON SEQUENCE:**

1. Have students practice backhand to backhand.
2. Explain service rules.
3. Demonstrate how to make a ball go on the diagonal and show proper serve.
4. Have student practice serving.

**LESSON: 3 SERVING**

**FACILITY:** A specified practice area for each group if a court is not available

**EQUIPMENT:** One pickleball for each group  
One paddle for each student

**PERFORMANCE GOAL:** Students will continue to improve their paddle skills and follow the rules of the game.

**COGNITIVE GOAL:** Students will review service rules and learn receiver's rules.

**LESSON SAFETY:** If there is not a court available for every four students, have remaining students practice in an outside space that will not interfere with the game.

**LESSON SEQUENCE:**

1. Teach service rules.
2. Answer questions about service rules.
3. Have students play their first game.
4. Have students rotate courts after a set time.

**LESSON: 4 VOLLEYS AND TWO BOUNCE RULE**

**FACILITY:** A specified practice area for each group if a court is not available

**EQUIPMENT:** One pickleball for each group  
One paddle for each student

**PERFORMANCE GOAL:** Students will continue to improve their paddle skills.

**COGNITIVE GOAL:** Students will learn that volleys have follow-through, the no volley rule, and two-bounce rule.

**LESSON SAFETY:** If you do not have a safe place for practice, collect all equipment and have the remaining students stand at the net and officiate.

**LESSON SEQUENCE:**

1. Demonstrate the volley.
2. Teach the rules that involve the volley.
3. Review the receiving rules.

## **LESSON: 5 SCORE KEEPING AND BASIC RULES**

**FACILITY:** Pickleball court or courts

**EQUIPMENT:** Pickleballs and Paddles

**PERFORMANCE GOAL:** Students will call correct score

**COGNITIVE GOAL:** Students will learn how to both play and keep an accurate score

**LESSON SAFETY:** Instruct the students that when they are leaving the court after completing a game, to walk behind the baselines so they do not interfere with other games.

### **LESSON SEQUENCE:**

1. Issue equipment
2. Review Proper Scoring
3. Practice Game
4. Students call score

### **THE SCORE CALLING PROCESS EXPLAINED**

Points are scored only on the serve. The receiving side cannot score a point. At the start of the game, the player on the right side serves. If a point is scored, the server moves to the left side and serves to the opposite court. Each time that a point is scored, the players on the serving side alternate from the right to left or left to right. That player continues to serve until the serve is lost by losing a rally. Players on the

serving team do not alternate sides unless a point is scored. The receiving side never alternates sides.

When the receiving team wins a service turn, the player on the right serves first and continues to serve and alternates sides each time that a point is won. When the first server loses the serve, the serve goes to the second server on the side. When the second server loses the serve, the serve goes to the other team and the player on the right serves first. That pattern continues throughout the game.

Call the score in the order of server's score, receiver's score, then the server number. For example, if the score of the serving team is 3 and the score of the receiving team is 6, and the second server on the side is serving, the score would be announced as 3-6-2. Some players might say "first" or "second" for the server number, for example 3-6-second. Either way is correct. Note that the server number is for that service turn only. Whoever is on the right when the team gets the serve back is the first server for that service turn only. The next time that the team gets the serve back, it might be the other player that is on the right and is the first server for that service turn only. Beginning players often mistakenly assume that the player keeps the same server number throughout the game.

It is important to call the score including the server number prior to each serve. That helps the players to keep the server and the score straight. When you announce, as part of the score, that you are the first server, everyone on the court knows that when you lose the serve, the serve goes to your partner. When you announce that you are the second server, everyone knows that when you lose the serve, the serve goes to the other team. To minimize the advantage of being the first team to serve in the game, only one player gets a service turn on the first service turn of the game. To help everyone remember that the

serve goes to the other side when that player loses the serve, it is customary to say that the player is the last server or second server. Therefore, at the start of the game, it is customary to say that the score is 0-0-2. The “2” means that the serve goes to the other side when the serve is lost.

At the start of each game, make a mental note of the player that served first for each side. If the rotation is done correctly, a team’s score will always be even when that player is on the right and odd when that player is on the left. As you call the score, use the player position as a double check on whether you have the correct score.

Singles scoring is very similar except that there is no second server. The serve is always done from the right side when the server’s score is even and from the left side when the server’s score is odd. Note that it is the server’s score that matters, not the combined score of server and receiver.

# PICKLEBALL DRILLS

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## **DRILL 1 – Pitch and Catch with Pickleball**

Divide the students into 4 groups. The drill is like a baseball drill whereby the students face each other and toss the ball to each other beginning of 5 feet. The instructor directs the students to take one step back upon command. Student continue backwards until the frequently drop the ball or 15 feet is reached.

## **DRILL 2 – Pitch and Catch with Pickleball & Paddle (No Net)**

Divide the students into 4 groups. The drill is like a baseball drill whereby the students face each other and toss the ball to each other using the pickleball paddle. The instructor directs the students to take one step back upon command. Student continue backwards until they frequently drop the ball, or 15 feet is reached.

## **DRILL 3– Pitch and Catch with Pickleball & Paddle (NET)**

Drill 3 is the same drill as drill 2 except the students volley the ball across the net. Students should continue to use the underhand technique and continue to move further apart until they reach the baseline.

## **DRILL 4 – One Bounce Partner Drill**

Position players about 30 feet apart, students drop hit the ball to their partner, who let it bounce once before returning. When an error is

made begin with a drop hit once again. First use forehands only and then backhand only. Change partners after 10 minutes.

### **DRILL 5 – Serve Drill**

Have students practice serves beginning at the no volley line and gradually move back toward the base line as their skill improve. Work on keeping the ball in the correct court, deep and in the middle.

### **DRILL 6 - Eye Hand Coordination Drill**

Have students try and keep the ball bouncing on the paddle like the old paddle ball game. Note each student eye hand coordination for possible group placement. It is helpful if the groups have similar ages and skills. Upon completion, go directly to Day 1 lessons.

### **DRILL 7 - Eye Hand Coordination Drill – Dribble**

This drill is the same as drill 6 except the students use their paddles and dribble the pickleball with their paddle like they would a basketball. See who can keep the ball in motion the longest without an error.

### **DRILL 8 – Rally Tally**

Partners count how many times a ball may be hit over the net with one bounce. When a ball is hit out, in the net or two bounces switch places with teammates after several repetitions.

### **DRILL 9 – Four Corners Drill**

Send them to the four corners of the pickleball court. Each corner has a coach.

**Corner I** – Serve accuracy drill – have students line up with their coach. Have students serve the ball in between **two orange cones**. Switch after 5 successful serves. Student proceeds to Corner II.

**Corner II** – Backhand drill. Coach toss. Student returns ball to coach demonstrating the backhand. After 10 successful hits, student reports to Corner III.

**Corner III** – Fore Hand – Coach toss. Student returns hand volley to coach. After 10 successful hits, student reports to Corner IV.

**Corner IV** – Ready Drill – Student pushes ball back to coach who tosses underhand. Student repeats corner I when finished.

### **DRILL 10 – Rally**

Divide student into 4 groups with similar skills., Object is to keep the ball into play. You may use any boundary that you choose. Object is to see how long student can maintain a rally.

### **DRILL 11 – Team Challenge (Two Player Each Team)**

Begin with each team putting two players on the court against partners from another team. Put ball in play with a drop-hit and play out the point. Team who wins the point stays on the court and receives a point for their team. Losing team from the point switch with two teammates. Winning partners stay on until losing a point or winning 3 consecutive points. Play to seven or time limit. Total the score for your team. Rotate teams. Round Robin format



## **DRILL 12 – Back Hand**

Students will line up and face each other spaced apart. The drill is to use the back hand and keep the ball in play while playing pitch n catch.

## **Drill 13 – Back Hand Across Net**

This drill is the same as drill 11 except student uses the net.

## **Drill 14 – Pickleball Tag** *(Note: Pull over camp shirts needed)*

Instant Activity: Team challenge “Pickleball Tag” Each team will assign one tagger and one reliever. o Tagger will wear their color jersey and the reliever will wear no jersey or non-used color. The tagger, reliever and the rest of the team must balance a pickleball on a paddle. The only way they may walk, or run is if the ball is balanced on the paddle. If the ball falls off the tagger’s paddle; the tagger cannot tag until the ball is balanced again and the players must remain still if they are tagged or if the ball falls off until the reliever comes to tag them. Then the players are back in the game. o Everyone must stay within cones and boundaries. o Points are awarded based on how many of each color are remaining active in the game when time is called. Bonus points to each tagger who made the entire game without losing possession of the ball.

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