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The Art of Pickleball by Gale Leach, Copyright © 2022. Introduction Pickleball is a fun, fast-paced game that is hugely popular around the world. Easy to learn, it can be played by people of all ages in a relatively short period of time, and the small size of the court allows it to be played
d nearly anywhere. While learning to play pickleball in 2004, I searched for books that would explain how to become a better player. The sport was still relatively new, and only a couple of books were available. After reading Bill Booth's tips on the Sun City Grand Pickleball Club well
site, I began taking notes as better players shared their expertise. Those notes formed the basis of this book—the result of examining what excellent players do not. I searched out information about other racket sports, watched videos, read online sources, an
d included the notes I took as I learned the sport and became a better player. Also included is the distillation of interviews with many pickleball players, professional and aspiring. The people I interviewed didn't always agree about the best way to make a shot or the strategies that s hould be employed in certain situations. Because of that, you'll find contradictory information in these pages. Ask five pickleball players what they do in a given situation or how they do it, and you'll get five different answers. As with any sport, pickleball seems to have many "right' ways to play. Because of that, I've included differing methods when significant disagreement occurred, or when it seemed that multiple options might help you discover what would work best for you. It will be up to you do decide what you like. Few of you will read this book from cover to cover. Books of this sort generally contain too much information for that kind of reading to be useful. Only the information you're ready for—that takes you from where you are today to a step above—will make sense and be helpful. I hope you will read the sections of this bo
ok that interest you and browse the rest from time to time. Perhaps later you'll leave this book sitting on your coffee table and pick it up periodically. Books like this can be read again as you learn more about the game and your skills improve. Perhaps later you'll discover new things upon rereading a passage that you missed the first time, or you'll find new interest in something you weren't ready for earlier. That's the best reason to come back and read this book: as your game improves, you will need to change your techniques and strategies, and you'll be seeking new information. Here's a general plan for learning and improving your pickleball game. Learn how to play and practice. New players should read the rules and learn the basics of how to hit the ball and move on the court. Then study new ways to hone your skills as you improve. W
atch and talk with players who play better than you do. Analyze what they're doing and why, and ask to play games with them. Have someone videotape your play and watch it to see what you're doing—not what you think you do. Make sure you do things correctly from the beginnin g, so you don't have to unlearn bad habits later. Practice against a wall or with a partner, so you get intensive training on specific strokes. Once you do that, your game will improve. Learn to warm up and stretch properly, and do it every time you play. Pickleball is easy to pick up q uickly, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't treat it as seriously as any other sport. Sadly, injuries in pickleball are common and fall into two main categories: not warming up enough before play and going past your limits during play. Only you know your limits, and sometimes you'll play harder than you should. Don't overlook warming up so your body will be as ready to play as you are. Practice the skills you know until you can do them without thinking. Then learn new ones. You won't get better without practice, but pickleball practice is fun and easy. People
have told me they enjoy going out to practice even more than they enjoy competitive games. Remember—you learn from mistakes as well as from the greatest shots. Get out and practice! Become a better partner. Having good communication on the court is essential, but there are other ways to play better together, too. Talk with your partner about things you can do to improve your strokes. I
ave fun. In your zeal to become a better player, don't become frustrated or angry if you have a bad day or lose a match. Remember, you will become better with practice, and you'll always play better if you relax. Be kind to yourself. Enjoy the game and have fun. Look to the glossar
of terms in Appendix A when a term isn't clear, and check my website (www.galeleach.com) for resources regarding pickleball equipment, useful videos, and information that came about after this edition was finished. I hope you enjoy this book. I enjoyed writing it, and I learned a
emendous amount from the other players who shared their expertise and stories. Please contact me with comments, questions, or suggestions. I'd love to hear from you. gale@galeleach.com www.galeleach.com A Short History of the Sport [1] One summer day in 1965, Joel Pritch ard, then a U.S. Congressman, and his friend, Bill Bell, returned to Pritchard's Seattle-area home following a game of golf. They found their children complaining about being bored. Pritchard suggested the kids invent a game to play, and the young ones disappeared. When the child ren complaining on an unused badminton court with some old racquets, a net, and a ball, since a birdie was nowhere to be found. The volleying continued happily for the rest of the afternoon. I
he next morning, Pritchard and Bell found that, instead of cooking breakfast, the moms had joined the ball bounced well of the old badminton racquets. When they accidentally discovered that the ball bounced well of
n the pavement, Pritchard lowered the net to tennis height. The paddles broke quickly, so the dads cut some new ones from scrap plywood and began searching for a different ball. The WIFFLE ball they found was close, but it didn't last long and was designed to curve. Eventually,
hey found the Cosom Fun Ball which worked perfectly. They knew they had a great game. Two weekends later, friend and heighbor Barney McCallum joined in the play and became the third founder of the sport. As time went by, others discovered pickleball. McCallum wrote a one-p
age list of rules. He began by altering the rules of badminton to deal with the different equipment and the change of net height. As in badminton, each person had only one serve, although McCallum allowed the server to put one foot over the line (to accommodate a large tree that we
as in the way). He also made play between the adults and kids fairer by insisting that serves be made in the difference of the many of the serves and the change of the way). He also made play between the adults and kids fairer by insisting that serves be made underhand (no overhead serves be made underhand (no overhead serves be made underhand to volve the ball while standing in the area between the net and the badminton service area line. This area was eventually extended to seven feet from the net and was renamed the "non-volley zone," or, as it's affectionately known to players, "the kitchen." The origin of the name "kitchen" is unknown. More rules were added as time were the serves allowed). Buff neighborhood in Seattle, WA. Other players built more courts in that area and on Bainbridge Island soon after. Jump forward fifty-plus years, and pickleball is played as a competitive sport worldwide. Pro players travel full-time to national and international tournaments. Coaches offer at-home and traveling pickleball instruction. Communities are building more and more courts to accommodate the growing demand from local residents.[2] Pickle
ball is part of the curriculum in schools from elementary to university. And four years ago, a Pickleball Hall of Fame was created to recognize individuals who have achieved exceptional results in pickleball play and/or made exceptional contributions to the game. Not bad for something that began as an afternoon diversion to conquer boredom. Why "Pickleball"? People have always questioned where the name pickleball: More Than Fifty Years of Fun!, Jennifer Lucore and Beverly Youngren (daughter/mother) write:
"Given that no pickles are used in pickleball, the game obviously has a very interesting and unique name." Some said the name came from Pritchard's wife, Joan, who reported that "the combination of different sports reminded me of the pickle boat in crew, where oarsmen were choosen from the leftovers of other boats." Two of the three founders and all of their families said the game was named after the Pritchard's dog, Pickles. This dog lik ed to hide in the bushes, dash out when a ball came his way, grab it, and run—thus "Pickles' Ball." Whatever
                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ed to hide in the bushes, dash out when a ball came his way, grab it, and run—thus "Pickles' Ball." Whateve eball (usapickleball.org) and the IFP (the International Federation of Pickleball, www.ifpickleball.org)
r its origin, the crazy name is here to stay. Chapter 1 Overview of the Game The official rules of pickleball can be found online at the websites of USA Pickl
 The rules document covers all aspects of play from scoring through tournaments, as well as rules for players using wheelchairs or who have other sp
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ds. You can also find a basic rules summary and a list of the most recent revisions. Revision of
he rules is a continuing process as the game evolves, so check these websites periodically for updates. Pickieb all combines elements of tennis, tab
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    . Two people playing singles or four people playing doubles use hard paddles to hit a perfora
                                                                                                                                                                                                         le tennis, and badmintor
ted plastic ball back and forth over a net. A pickleball court is roughly one fourth as large as a regulation tennis court—about the same dimension
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      court. The area on either side of the net is divided into left and right service areas and a no
                                                                                                                                                                                                   n as a ba
n-volley zone. The playing area is the same, whether you're playing singles or doubles. Figure 1. The dimensions and areas of a regulation pic
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          Each pickleball game begins with a serve, after which players hit the ball back and fort
  until someone violates a rule (called a fault). This process from serve to fault is known as a rally. Any player or team can win a rally, but o
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ng player or team can score a point. The first side to reach 11 points with at least a 2-p
oint margin wins the game, though social and tournament games are often played to 15 or 21 points. The best two out of three games to 1
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               s a match. When tournament games are played to 15 points, one game wins the ma
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ch. Game Sequence At the start of a game, the server stands behind the baseline of the right service area and hits the ball with an under
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   The ball must travel over the net and land in the diagonally opposite service are
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  motion
a. In either a singles or doubles game, the opponent (receiver) also stands near the baseline. In doubles, the opponent's partner stand
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    d the non-volley zone line, while the server's partner remains behind or near the
baseline (see Figure 2). Figure 2. The first serve of a game always begins in the right (even) court. The ball must land within the diag
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oke of
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       site court. Following the serve, a "two-bounce rule" requires that players on
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both sides of the net let the ball bounce once before hitting it back. After that, any player may hit a volley in the air or make a groue twice after a serve: once on the receiver's side and once on the server's side. After that, any player may hit a ball in the air or
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         f the bounce. Figure 3. The two-bounce rule states that the ball must bounce
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ind the baseline of the other service area and serves again. That player keeps serving from alternating courts until he faults, a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               asses to his opponent (called a side-out). In a doubles game, both tean
members get to serve before a side-out—with one exception that occurs during the first service of a game. Allowing both m
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  doubles team to serve before their opponents would give that starting
 team a large initial advantage. To counter this, the first server serves only until his team faults. The opponents then get
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e the ball passes to the opponents. After that, when a doubles team wins a point, the partners switch places and the firs
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ats until the opposing team wins a rally. The second server then takes over, until the opponents win again, which res
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          e-out. After a side-out, the server hits the ball from behind the
baseline of the right-hand court. In doubles, the server's partner and the receiving player remain near their baseline
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              hit a ball that may bounce deep in their territory (because of
the "two-bounce" rule). At the start of a doubles rally, the receiving team has an advantage, since one of the tea
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ust travel causes part of the disadvantage, along with the fact that certain winning shots are unavailable from t
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ble, but they must also respect the rules for the non-volley zone: anyone touching that zone with any part of
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      body
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      clothing, or accessories may not volley the ball (hit it
in the air) without causing a fault. All other strokes are acceptable in the non-volley zone (affectionately kn
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         'kitchen"). Faults In everyday play, you must state
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he score before serving and you are responsible for calling faults honestly and promptly on your side of
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en partners disagree, the call always benefits the opponents. Players are expected to cooperate with o
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ubt. During tournaments, a referee will call the score and service foot faults, non-volley zone infracti
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area. Players are expected to make their own line calls. If a dispute arises over a line call, the playe
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nes of
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call only if he saw it clearly. A ball is considered good if it lands anywhere on or inside the perim
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ng a serve, when all lines of the diagonally opposite service area, except the non-volley zone
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                                                                                                                                line, a
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if it lands on the sideline, centerline, or baseline. The serve is out if the ball lands in the non
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          e or on its line, or if the ball lands out
side of the diagonally opposite service area. Figure 4. Judging whether or not a ball is out
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n the line, which means the ball is good. A ball must land completely outside the lines t
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               out (as in Panel C). Many faults c
an occur in pickleball. The majority of errors happen when the ball hits the net, lands
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ds, or players commit line viola
tions. The result of any fault is a dead ball. The ball is dead the moment the fault oc
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     hen a player or referee calls it
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This fact is important when both a player and the opponent fault. For example, su
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        being hit with the ball. Red
zes Dan while he dodges what he thinks will be an out ball. Dan calls a fault on h
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ina's partner interrupts, saying Regina made a foot fault on her serve. In this ca
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ter Gina's foot fault, so Dan's fault is nullified. The following list of faults is not
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summary of common (and some less common) faults. While serving, it is a fa
miss the ball. However, you may drop the ball and let it hit the court surface
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swing at the ball. It is a fault if you step into or on the line of the non-volley
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               volley a ball. Note: yo
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u may stand in the non-volley zone at any time without penalty. The only fau
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ere. It is a fault if you volley a ball while standing behind the non-volley zon
that shot causes you to step on the line of (or into) the non-volley zone aft
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f the ball is dead when your momentum causes you to enter the zone. A fa
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and any part of your clothing, jewelry, or accessories lands in the non-vol
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d to you or not) before the ball is dead. You lose the rally if you are hit by a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              play. It doesn't matter
where you are when the ball hits you (even out of bounds). The ball might
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s or by your partner, and the ball doesn't have to hit your body—it can tou
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             lothing and this rule ap
plies. One player stated an easy way to understand this: it's your fault if yo
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xception is the player's paddle and paddle hand (which is considered to be
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your body, clothing, accessories (such as hats, visors, jewelry), or paddle t
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                                                                                                     ouc
system. It is a fault if a player deliberately catches or carries a live ball on t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          It is also a fault if a player
catches a live ball with his hands, even if he knows the ball would have land
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       bounds, Lesser-Known Rule
 You may switch your paddle from one hand to the other to hit a ball. This is
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at comes to your backhand side. You may switch your paddle from one hand
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   r to hit a ball. This is often done
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to hit as a forehand a ball that comes to your backhand side. You may serve b
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                s long as the stroke travels in an
underhand path and the paddle contacts the ball below your waist. (This can be
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             Before, during, and after a serve, no
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n-serving partners may stand anywhere, on or off the court, as long as they rem
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          r side of the net, and they may switch
left and right sides with the server after the serve.[4] The partner not receiving th
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 even out of bounds or within the receiving player's service area. If the ball in pla-
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ermanent object" (such as a pole or ever
the referee; see the "Glossary of Terms" in Appendix A for more information) after i
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I wins the rally. If the ball in play hits a permanent object before it bounces on the co
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ault. If you hit a ball that goes over the net, bo
unces, and then comes back over the net to your side without your opponents havin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              it, it's a fault for them. This happens occasiona
ly due to extreme backspin on the ball. The net posts are out of bounds, so any ball t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          net post creates a fault. The cords running between
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n the net and the post are considered part of the net, however, so any ball touching a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        outside the boundaries of the court) that then lands
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inside the court boundaries is good. You may legally hit a ball around a net post so t
egarding the required height of the ball in this type of shot (it does not need to be hit
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    s within the court boundaries. There is no restriction r
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  an the top of the net). Scoring When you're first learning
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to play pickleball, two things seem particularly difficult: catching the ball when it's to
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              u and calling the score when serving in doubles. It's not th
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at hard—calling the score, at least. (You'll get better at catching the ball with practic
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team gets a chance. The player on the right-hand court always serves first. This pl
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erves until his team loses a rally. Server 2 then serves until his team loses anothe
                                                                                                               r rall
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        serve then switches to the other team (called a side-out). This te
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am begins service the same way: the player in the right-hand court serves first a
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o is serving, the server number is appended to the score that is called just befo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   Here's how it works: You call your team's score first, followed by the
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other team's score, and then your server number. If your team has 6 points, t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               am has 4 points, and you're the first server on your side, you'd call the
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score as: "6 - 4 - 1." The one exception to calling the score as discussed abo
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team serves the ball. Allowing both members of a doubles team to serve bef
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his advantage, the first server serves only until his team faults. Then a side o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       nd the opponents get the ball. Play resumes normally after that, with both tea
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m players serving before the ball passes to the opponents. To keep things strai
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0-2." If he makes a point, his score would then be "1-0-2," and so on, until someo
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e service again, he would call the score as (for example) "1-3-1," since he
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                                                                                                                                            he first server for his tea
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n your side of the court for your next serve. Your server numbers don't
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                                                                                                                                       en your te
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           a rally,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             the serve passes to your partner. If your team loses another rally, a side-out occurs a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          that has to do with court position. When a doubles game begins, observe the player wh
nd the opponents will serve next. You can know if the game score sho
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                                                                                                                           even or odd
                                                                                                                                                                           using a
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o serves first on each side. If play continues properly and players m
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  score wil
when he's on the left. In singles, each player serves from the righ
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                                                                                                                                                ourt when his score
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Take note of your team's positions at the start of a game. Base
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                                                                                                                                           hat, you'll know that whenev
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our score should be odd. Chapter 2 Warm-Ups, Fitness, and
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s only. You should consult your doctor prior to starting an
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                                                                                                                      y fitnes s or exercise program. This information is not
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    intended to address specific m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  an exercise and fitness program to your in
bstitute for professional medical advice or a medical exa
                                                                                                                    m. The advice of a trained fitness counselor may be valuable to tailor
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    I needs. To take your game be
yond the basics, you will need to be in good shape phy
                                                                                                                  sically. Your pickleball game will improve if you work on three things: strength, aerobic endurance, and flexibility. Y
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      be shaking your head, sayin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 ou may
                                                                                                               s part of what makes it so enjoyable and allows everyone to play." You're right. However, a certain amount of muscl
ı, "Pickleball doesn't require a lot of strength—that
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        gth is required to prevent i
                                                                                                              Joint injury in pickleball is common but can be avoided through proper conditioning. Start a regimen of weight train
njury to your elbows, shoulders, knees, and more.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ing that will help strength
                                                                                                         mes per week-preferably not on consecutive days because your muscles need time to recover. Good aerobic endura
en your joints and muscles. Do it two to three ti
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           at will keep you going th
                                                                                                        our opponent makes you run. Sometimes, you may have to play many points before a winner is declared. If you're in q
rough an entire match, no matter how much y
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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           good endurance, you'll
                                                                                                     t before the match ends. The best way to increase your endurance is to engage in a rhythmic aerobic activity, such as w
be able to keep going and won't be worn ou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             alking, r
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      unning,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             cycling, or swimming.
To gauge whether you are doing the right
                                                                                                   amount of aerobic exercise, talk out loud. You should be able to carry on a breathy conversation while working out. If yo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              u can
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              k at all, your routine is
too difficult. If you can speak more than
                                                                                                 about ten words at a time without needing a breath, increase your workout. Depending on the number of times per week th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              at you play pickleball
                                                                                              ilor the number of times a week that you engage in other aerobic fitness training. General fitness guidelines for all people su
which is, in itself, aerobic activity), ta
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ggest
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              3 times per week for
                                                                                           training for a tournament, you'll want to increase that and work up to your best fitness level by game time. It's been said that b
0 minutes at a minimum. If you are
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 eing mo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              re fit than your oppon
                                                                                        kleball games. Becoming fit certainly can't hurt. Flexibility: Warm Up and Then Stretch Flexibility helps prevent injury and allows
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 you to
ent is the best key to winning pic
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              reach shots that other
                                                                                      layers think flexibility means getting to the court, doing a few stretches, and then starting a game. Taking time to warm up properly
wise might get by you. Some p
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              nd then stretch will he
lp avoid injury and keep you
                                                                                    in the game and not on the sideline. Warming up does more than just loosen stiff muscles: done properly, it improves performance.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             An imp
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      roper w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              arm-up, or no warm-up
at all, can increase your ris
                                                                                k of injury. The goals of a warm-up are improved coordination, improved elasticity and contractibility of muscles, and greater efficiency
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             of your
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      respirat
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ory and cardiovascular
systems. Some players perf
                                                                             orm a complete warm up and stretch at home and do a quick refresh once they reach the courts. Others do warm-up exercises and stretch
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ng at t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      he cou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            rts just prior to game ti
me. Find your best rou
                                                                          nd stick to it. Warm Up A good, general warm up activity consists of joint rotations followed by aerobic activity. Spend at least ten minutes wa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            rming up. Begin with jo
                                                                        up or your neck down. Such rotations facilitate joint motion by lubricating the joint with fluid, permitting it to function more easily. Perform slow
nt-rotations from your
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           circular movements, bo
h clockwise and coun
                                                                      ckwise. After joint rotations, begin aerobic activity such as fast walking, jogging, or riding a bike for about five minutes or until you begin to swea
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         raises your core body tem
                                                                   d pumping. Increased blood flow in the muscles improves muscle performance and flexibility and reduces the possibility of injury. After you are warmen
perature and gets your
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 d up, be
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       gin static stretching. Stretch
                                                                er and more elastic, start slow, relaxed, static stretching. Begin with your back, followed by your upper body, and then your lower body. Static stretching in
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     olding a position: stretch only
Once your muscles are
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 volves h
to the farthest point wher
                                                              feel resistance. Don't bounce. Instead, stretch until you feel resistance, hold there for 10 to 15 seconds, then release. If you don't have time to stretch all of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 uscles before a workout, at leas
                                            e you
t stretch those that will be u
                                                          e most when you play: Achilles' tendons, calf muscles, quadriceps and hamstrings (front and back of upper leg), groin, triceps (back of upper arm), and shoulders/
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               neck. Safety on the Court Pickleba
                                                  rules that help to equalize play for all ages and sexes have made it possible for people who could not play other court sports to become good at pickleball. To avoid injury, the here are important and shouldn't be ignored, so I've listed them before everything else. Being safe means avoiding injuries and having more fun. Stepping on a pickleball can c
ll's smaller court size and the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           ough, there are certain things you sh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ause a player to fall, and such accidents of
ouldn't do. The safety tips given
an result in serious injuries. If a ball comes into your court from another game, hold your paddle or your hand in the air and call "ball" loudly enough that all players can hear you and stop play. Don't leave extra pickleballs on the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        he court surface. Even if you think they are out of t
he way, a gust of wind can carry them onto the court, causing a hazard. If the courts are slippery, do not play. Check the condition of an outdoor court surface by pressing down on it with the toe of your shoe. If moisture comes to the surface, wait to play. Indoor courts can be wiped
down, if necessary, before play. Remove stray dirt, gravel, or leaves from outdoor courts before play begins. Extra paddles, gym bags, clothing, or other items lying on the court or outside court boundaries can be a hazard if stepped on and should be removed. If you are playing on the court or other area that is not specifically designated for sports, be sure that all obstacles, sharp objects, or other hazards are removed as much as possible from the playing area. Pad any sharp or hard items in the playing area that cannot be removed. Be sure all play
ers know about possible hazards before starting play. Pickleball is played in many venues that were originally designated for another purpose, and some don't offer the amount of space around the court that is suggested for safety. One source mentioned that the indoor location where
ere he played had chairs lined up against a wall where people could sit while waiting to play. The proximity of the chairs to the service line created a hazard when players swung their paddles back when serving. If you wear prescription lenses, get a pair of unbreakable prescription
sports lenses for use when playing pickleball. Protective eyewear is also a good idea if you don't wear glasses. Inexpensive sets of goggles are available at sporting goods stores and some discount chain stores. These won't enhance your appearance, but they might save your eye
sight or make you feel more confident if you are worried about being hit by a ball. Shuffle Properly When at the non-volley zone line, you need to move left and right in order to reach oncoming shots. To do this safely, learn to shuffle properly using a step-to-step motion. Step out w
th the foot on the side to which you're moving. Bring your other foot up within a few inches of the first foot again. When you reach the correct court position, prepare and step into your swing as usual. If you need to m
ve farther than just a couple of steps, pivot, run to the spot, and prepare for your shot. Figure 6. Shuffling across the court. Shuffling is considered by some to be the best method to reach an area beyond a single step, whether side to side or moving backward. 1) Step out with leadi
ng foot in the direction you want to go. 2) Then bring the trailing foot in toward the leading foot. 3) Shift your weight to your leading foot again. 4) Repeat these movements until you are in position to hit the ball. Don't Back Up to Reach a Ball One of the easiest ways to fall and be se iously injured is to back up while looking up to retrieve a ball. More falls in pickleball happen this way than any other. The next most common cause of injury comes from reaching for a shot beyond your balance point. Spills from both of these things can result in injuries to all portions of the body, depending upon what hits the ground, fence, or wall. I've seen players with casts, crutches, bruises, and scars as a result of "going for it" or running backward when they shouldn't have. If you need to move back one or two steps, first turn toward the side where the
e ball will come. Turning toward the ball side will put you in position to make the shot when you get there (See Figure 7). After you turn, shuffle (see the following section) and/or cross-step until you are behind the ball. TIP: There are two schools of thought regarding who should rei
rieve an overhead shot when you're playing doubles at the non-volley zone line. One method is to note the direction where the ball. Other players feel that, if the lob is over only one player's head, his partner
should retrieve the ball, regardless of whether it's on his forehand or backhand side. Figure 7. To move backward for a ball, first turn to the side where the ball will come. Then take a step and 1) shuffle, 2) cross-step, or 3) run (as shown in the picture) toward the baseline until you a
e behind the ball. When you are in position, stop and prepare for the shot. If you need to move backward a long distance, turn around, and then run, shuffle or cross-step back. When you reach the spot where you think the ball will come, turn again to hit the shot. This is necessary
most often when you're at the non-volley zone and a lob is headed for the back court. Injury Even with all the proper precautions, injuries happen. Before going back out on the court, take the necessary time to recover. It's common to see players fall and get up quickly, saying, "I'm
fine," when they should take a minute or more to ensure it's truly the case. Repetitive stress problems can also occur after repeated motions of the hand and/or arm. Strengthening your muscles to avoid developing these problems is best. If you do develop symptoms, don't ignore them. Many players don't take these problems seriously and continue to play, despite pain or other symptoms that can lead to chronic, lingering issues, if not cared for properly. Consider changing your equipment or how you use it. Get a lighter paddle, add tape to your grip to make
it larger, or change the way you hold the paddle. Have someone watch you swing to make sure you're doing it properly. Sometimes a very simple change will bring instant results. Strengthening and flexibility exercises should help reduce the pain and will encourage healing. Comp
ression bands or braces máy ease the symptoms, too. Heat and cold packs are often helpful. Ask your doctor or other medical professional what you can do to help alleviate the problem. Chapter 3 Equipment Paddles Paddles come in many sizes, shapes, and materials, and new m
odels are introduced frequently. The paddle surface must be rigid, non-compressible, smooth, non-reflective, and must not exceed 17 inches. Shape, thickness, and weight are not regulated. The International Federation of Pickleball (IFP) tests paddles to ensure they meet these criteria, and they publish a list of acceptable paddles on their website (www.ifpickleball.org). Only paddles that have been approved by the IFP are allowed in tournament play. At the time of this book's printing, nearly 950 paddles
s were on their list! Selecting a Paddle The most important factors in paddle selection are price, weight, and grip size. Secondary considerations are the material, size of the paddle head, and length of the handle.[5] Paddle choice is a very individual process. Many vendors and man
ufacturers allow you to try paddles prior to purchase. You can find good information at many websites. In particular, the "Paddle Guide" at Pickleball Central[6] has detailed specifications and comparison information that can help you choose wisely. If you're a new player, know that
ordering on line can be disappointing. Try to demo paddles to get the best one for you. If you plan to play in tournaments, make sure it's USA Pickleball rated. Figure 8. Examples of different brands and types of paddles. Note that some have larger playing surfaces and shorter han dles, or vice versa. Pictures reprinted with permission of Pickleball Central, LLC. To put the selection process in perspective, though, let me share a story. As a novice player, I once complained that my mid-range paddle could be the reason my shots didn't go as planned. Overhearing this, a champion player pulled me aside and reached into his paddle bag. Out came a paddle just like mine that he'd used to win his last tournament. Equipment is important, but it's the player who wins the game. Paddle Price At the time of this book's printing, paddles range in paddles.
rice from $50 for composite paddles to $200 for graphite. My recommendation is to purchase the best paddle is minimal. You're unlikely to look back and say, "I wish I'd bought a cheaper paddle.
"It's a piece of equipment that will give you hours of pleasure. Paddles range in weight from about 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles take longer to swing and are harder to control, but their added mass helps propel the ball, making it go farther. Lighter paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles take longer to swing and are harder to control, but their added mass helps propel the ball, making it go farther. Lighter paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddles allow you not 6 to 12 ounces. Heavier paddle
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