



American Expression E0210 Pickle ball

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Pickleball is a fun, engaging, and accessible sport that combines elements from tennis, badminton, and ping-pong. Despite its somewhat odd name, pickleball has nothing to do with pickles; instead, it was supposedly named after the creator's dog, Pickles, who had a knack for chasing after the ball.

In terms of equipment, pickleball is played with a paddle and a plastic ball that has holes, similar to a whiffle ball. The paddle is larger than a ping-pong paddle and typically made of a lightweight composite material, such as aluminum or graphite. The court is the same size as a doubles badminton court, measuring 20 by 44 feet, and is marked like a tennis court with right and left service squares and a 7-foot non-volley zone in front of the net, known as the "kitchen."

The rules of pickleball are what make the game unique. Games are typically played in doubles format, although singles can also be played. The game begins with an underhand serve diagonally to the opponent's service court. Importantly, the ball must bounce once on each side before volleys (hitting the ball before it bounces) are allowed. This rule, referred to as the "double bounce rule," encourages longer rallies and places a greater emphasis on strategy rather than brute force or power.

Another key rule involves the non-volley zone, or the "kitchen." Players are not allowed to volley the ball while standing in this zone, preventing them from smashing the ball at the net, another factor that extends rallies and enhances the strategic element of the game.

Scoring in pickleball is another unique aspect. Only the serving team can score points, and games are usually played to 11, 15, or 21 points, with the requirement that the winning team must win by at least 2 points. Serving rotates between partners in doubles play, and each side gets to serve until they commit a fault, which then passes the serve to the opposing team.

Pickleball is a sport that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and skill levels. It's less physically demanding than tennis, but still provides ample opportunity for exercise and competitive play. The rules are easy to learn, and the focus on rallies and strategy over power makes it a fun and engaging game.

Over the past few years, pickleball has seen a surge in popularity, especially among older adults, due to its low-impact nature and the social aspect of the game. Despite its growth, the sport retains a friendly, community-oriented atmosphere, making it not just a game, but a social event that brings people together.

Questions for Discussion

1. What elements of pickleball make it an appealing sport to a wide range of age groups and skill levels?
2. How do the unique rules of pickleball, such as the "double bounce rule" and restrictions on the non-volley zone, contribute to the strategic aspects of the game?
3. How does the growth and popularity of pickleball reflect broader trends in sports and fitness, particularly among older adults?
4. In what ways does the scoring system in pickleball affect the dynamics and competitiveness of the game?
5. How does the social aspect of pickleball contribute to its popularity and the sense of community among players?