

Beginner Program

Pickleball 101: Introduction to Pickleball Assistant Instructor Lesson Plan

(Revised 7/28/2009)

Instructor Guidance

- Please make sure to arrive at the court at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the lesson dressed appropriately, with pickleball instructor shirt if possible or name tag.
- The purpose of the lesson is to teach only the basics of the game of pickleball. Do not go into detail about dinking, lobbing, detailed positioning, switching, etc. The beginners will learn those techniques in ***Pickleball 102: Pickleball Strokes*** and ***Pickleball 103: Pickleball Strategies***.
- Please follow the steps presented in this lesson plan in order. Suggest that you develop a crib sheet (could be just notes on a 3 by 5 card, or taped to your paddle) to have with you covering the points to be covered to help you remember them and not miss any. Note: if you are concerned about what the students will think of you using a crib sheet then let them know the reason you are using one is that the information you are presenting is too important to them for you to forget something and your notes are to help you make sure that you do not forget to teach them something important about the game.
- Try to be relaxed and friendly, using a friendly tone of voice. Do not criticize the students or use negative or sexist terms (such as stupid, lousy, or girls). Try to use some humor where appropriate to lighten up the tone of the class and stress the fun element of pickleball.
- Unless accomplished during the opening remarks by the lead instructor always introduce yourself to your students providing personal information (such as where you moved from, how long you have been in the area, how long playing pickleball, how long you have been teaching).
- Have the students introduce themselves to each other even though they are wearing name tags. Make sure you let them know that they can ask questions at any time during the course of the lesson.
- When questions are asked at anytime during the course of the lesson make sure that all the students hear the question and the answer (this is especially important when they are on opposite sides of the net from the person asking the question).
- Make sure that the students take sufficient water breaks, even by taking time out and walking with them over to the water cooler. It is important that the instructor makes sure they stay well hydrated.
- Use teaching points like they were used in the advanced instructor training clinic. That is, when you stop play to instruct someone, call out "teaching point" or some sequence

of words to capture the attention of all students and make sure that all are listening and watching what you are saying or showing.

- Get the students involved by asking them questions during your presentation such as: how many points is the game played to, how many do you have to win by, who calls the lines, do you remember what a volley is, etc.

Lesson Plan

On Court Etiquette and Safety

Do Not Run backwards:

- Demonstrate what is meant by running backwards
- Discuss dangers of running backwards (easy to trip and fall, hitting head on court, breaking arms and wrists)
- Use any examples of accidents that you have seen happen with players running backwards
- Show the students how to turn and get to a ball that is going over their heads

Be careful running forward to get that low bouncing ball:

- Demonstrate running forward bent over to get to a low bouncing ball
- Discuss dangers of running forwards (loosing balance, scraping knees, face on court, running into the net hurting neck, or running into the net posts and breaking bones)
- Remind students that it is just a game and if cannot get to the ball let it go and congratulate the player on a good shot please don't do it again

Calling ball on court:

- Explain to students why these words are the 3 most important words on the pickleball court
- Demonstrate stepping on a ball and discuss the danger to the player
- Explain that you stop immediately return the ball to the other court and replay the point
- Stress to the students that they are not to run after the ball onto a court where other players are playing, but to wait until the ball is returned to them.

Walking behind courts where play is ongoing:

- Stress the danger of walking behind a court where play is ongoing

- Explain why this is discourteous
- Explain to the students the proper way of walking behind a court where play is ongoing.

Court Etiquette

- Always wait until the players on the court nearest the gate are between points before entering
- Always close the gate after you enter the court if you are playing outdoors.
- Introduce yourself to your partner and opponents if you do not already know each other – wear a name tag.
- Always come up to the net and congratulate each other on a good game
- Always treat everyone with dignity, fairness and respect .

The Game

- Game played to 11 points
- Win by two points
- Only the serving team can score points

Basic Fundamentals (physically demonstrate each of these fundamentals)

- The ball is not going to bounce high up to you like a tennis ball does. Pickleball is a bending game, so bend those knees.
- Paddle grip--shake hands with the paddle. The point of the "V" between your thumb and index finger should be placed on top of the handle of the paddle when the face of the paddle is perpendicular to the ground.
- Use both sides of the paddle. Never hit a backhand with the same side of the paddle that you hit a forehand with.
- You can use two hands on the paddle and you can switch hands.
- Always be in your ready position (elbows and paddle out in front of your body, feet at shoulder width apart, side by side on your toes, not your heels, ready to move left or right). There are two ways to hold the paddle in the ready position (head of your paddle pointing toward your opponents, or flat side pointing to your opponents). Use whichever one works best for you. By maintaining the ready position you will improve your game tremendously.
- Forehand stroke

- Ready your paddle back into position to stroke the ball with your paddle level.