



Mollo Pickleball

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GAME RULES TO MAXIMIZE SMILES AND MINIMIZE DISSATISFACTION

Why? Playing pickleball is a great way to stay active and socialize. But not all players have the same goal. Competitive pickleball (regular) emphasizes winning and improving individual skills. For example, the competitive player will try to score early in the game. In contrast, **Mollo Pickleball** places more emphasis on fun for all players. Winning and skills are less important. For example, the « Mollo player » will try to score later in the game in order to prolong the enjoyment of rallying around the net.

For whom? For everyone: beginner or experienced players, those who are limited by an injury or disability, or those who simply prefer long rallies over competitive play. Note that for a group of **Mollo Pickleball** to work well, each player must have a minimum skill level comparable to the other members of the group. For example, a player must be able to return a "easy ball" at least 8 times out of 10. Missing a shot occasionally is perfectly normal. However, a player who misses the ball too often will have a negative impact on the whole group. Additionally, more experienced players are encouraged to "soften" their game and help others improve.

Where? On outdoor surfaces (e.g., city parks) when the weather is nice. On indoor surfaces (e.g., school gymnasiums) when it's cold. It is preferable to identify the net (see above) to indicate that **Mollo Pickleball** is a different pickleball.

How many? Four players per court (in doubles), to maximize the use of the courts. For example, 4 players will play continuously while 6 players will play in rotation, each player playing 2 games out of 3.

In **Mollo Pickleball**, most of the *official pickleball rules* are respected while including the following (unofficial) ones:

1. **Be courteous and positive:** Wish your opponents something like « Have fun! » at the beginning, encourage and highlight the good shots of all players, and congratulate the winners at the end.
2. **9-point matches:** Mollo Pickleball games usually last longer than regular ones (because we want to prolong the rallies). To promote better turnover, a game ends when a team reaches 9 points (with only one point ahead).
3. **Dynamic rally progression:**
 - a) **Stage 1 – Announcing the score:** The server must clearly announce the score just before serving. If not, the receiver must raise their hand (to stop the game), and the serve is taken again;
 - b) **Stage 2 – The *given* serve:** Scoring a point right from the serve is contrary to the spirit of **Mollo Pickleball**. Therefore, no points are scored on a serve. Consequently, both the serve and the return of serve must land in play for the game to continue. Otherwise, the serve is taken again.
 - c) **Stage 3 – The dink shot sequence:** From the third shot, players seek to get close to the kitchen and collaborate in a sequence of dink shots;
 - d) **Stage 4 – Moderate acceleration:** Usually, after a few dink shots, the ball gradually accelerates, and the game becomes more dynamic;
 - e) **WARNING:** Players must remain in the spirit of **Mollo Pickleball**, which is inherently less competitive. Players should always adjust their game to the level of the opposing team (i.e., avoid crushing the other team 9-0).
4. **Physical limits:** Do not exploit a player's physical limits (injury, disability, limited ability, etc.) solely to win a match. Instead, adjust your game to theirs.

5. **Weaker and stronger players:** If you are stronger, avoid targeting only the weakest player on the opposing team (to win). Make shots that your opponents can return.
6. **Celebrations:** Avoid celebrating too loudly when an opponent makes an error or when you make a good shot.
7. **Power is a no-go:** Smashes and very powerful shots are prohibited as they can intimidate, hit, or even injure an opposing player.
8. **Voluntary lobs are a no-go:** Avoid making voluntary lobs as they can be difficult to return and can cause injuries. Avoid attempting to return a lob if you are not used to it.
9. **Voluntary spins are a no-go:** Avoid using excessive spin effects as they can be difficult to manage.
10. **« Ball on court! »:** If your ball ends up on another court, stay on your court and quickly notify the players on the other court (by shouting and repeating "Ball!") so they immediately stop playing. Stepping on a lost ball can seriously injure a moving player.
11. **Line calls:** The line call (*ball in* or *ball out*) must be made only by the team that received the ball. If the teams do not agree on a line call, the rally should be taken again (to maintain everyone's good mood).
12. **Teaching:** If a rule seems misunderstood, take the time to explain it correctly to the other players.
13. **Safety:** Do not take unnecessary risks. Equip yourself with a water bottle (especially if weather is very hot), appropriate sports shoes, and wear protective glasses. A heatstroke, a fall, or a ball to the face can happen, even in **Mollo Pickleball!**

Enjoy the game!