

National Pickleball League – Player Code of Conduct

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Policy Brief and Purpose

While there are official rules for the play of the game, there are many other aspects of Pickleball that can, and regularly do, affect play and the personal interactions of members. This policy clarifies the minimum expectations the National Pickleball League (NPL) requires from all participants at NPL events. This policy has been mirrored where relevant on the Pickleball Australia Participant Code of Conduct Policy, to ensure consistency in expectations for Australian Pickleball Events.

Principles

NPL is committed to exemplary behaviour from spectators, players, coaches, and officials. This is the intrinsic value of the inclusive nature of pickleball and the importance to ensure this is sustained.

Policy

This policy applies to all participants at NPL events including but not exclusive to players, officials, volunteers, and spectators. This policy provides standards to ensure that behaviour at pickleball events upholds the SPIRIT of Australian pickleball and guides participants to work within the standards set in the NPL Rules. The Code of Conduct does not replace legislation and if any part of it is in conflict, then legislation takes precedence.

SPiRiT of Australian Pickleball

The SPiRiT of Australian pickleball embodies the core values of Sportsmanship, Passion, Inclusivity, Respect, Integrity and Trailblazing. It is important that these values, where appropriate, are reflected in the way participants behave and work together at NPL events.

The Code

Expected Behaviour

Players that play pickleball are always expected to comply with the following standards of conduct while participating in NPL events:

1. Spirit of the game

Play fairly and understand and follow the rules of the game.

- a) Our sport relies on the spirit of sportsmanship which places the responsibility of fair play on the players themselves.
- b) The responsibility for the maintenance of this spirit rests on every player's shoulders.
- c) Understanding and playing by the rules is every player's responsibility.
- d) A player should never set out to ignore or deliberately break any rules.

2. Respect for others on court

Be respectful of all other players and the referee of the game.

- a) Highly competitive and committed play is encouraged, but never at the expense of the bond of mutual respect between players.
- b) If an issue cannot be resolved between players, players should approach the game referee or event host.
- c) Any abuse of another participant is never acceptable.
- d) All concerns on court should be communicated directly to the referee. Where a referee is not present concerns need to be communicated in a respectful manner and only when absolutely required.

3. Respect for staff and volunteers

Be respectful when dealing with staff and volunteers including event organisers, administrators and officials.

- a) Volunteering is a key part of NPL events, and without the efforts of volunteers, our sport would not function.
- b) Any abuse of staff or volunteers, including event organisers and administrators, is never acceptable.

4. Fair treatment of others

Treat all other participants fairly without harassment or discrimination. NPL is committed to the fair treatment of all participants involved in NPL events.

- a) All members must be treated fairly regardless of gender, place of origin, colour, sexual orientation, religion, political belief or economic status.

5. Safe play

Play in a safe and orderly manner and obey the rules about safe play.

- a) Rules and policies exist for the safety, proper order and enjoyment of all people involved in NPL events.
- b) Players should not engage in conduct that is dangerous or potentially harmful to either themselves or others.

6. Off-field behaviour

Behave appropriately when not on the field and when training or touring with an NPL representative team.

- a) All participants are expected to behave appropriately and in accordance with this Code of Conduct in an off-field environment. This includes:
 - i. at the venue both before and after playing in any NPL event
 - ii. at parties, social events and/or any other function that is organized as part of an NPL event.
 - iii. at any time while training, touring or competing with an NPL selected representative team.
 - iv. at any time as a spectator at a match

7. Compliance with NPL policies

- a) All participants must respect and comply with all NPL policies.

8. Be an ambassador for our sport

Promote our sport through good conduct and behaviour.

- a) We are all ambassadors for our sport and the teams that we play for.
- b) How each member behaves directly effects what others think about our sport.
- c) Behaviour that will bring Pickleball or the NPL into disrepute is a breach of this Code of Conduct.

9. Inclusivity

Support and enable the inclusivity of others at all events.

- a) A major asset of pickleball is its potential for inclusivity of participants of all ages and ability levels.
- b) Inclusion and respect for all participants irrespective of age or skill level is to be maintained at all times.

Unacceptable behaviour

A breach of the Code will occur if a participant does not comply with the expected standards of behaviour set out in the Code.

A breach may therefore include (with reference to the relevant clause), but are not limited to:

- Cheating or deliberate fouling (spirit of the game)
- Taunting or abusive heckling either as a player or as a spectator (respect for other participants, off field)
- Violence against another player or official (respect for other participants and volunteers, safe play)
- Dangerous play (safe play)
- Threatening an event organiser (respect for volunteers)
- Making a discriminatory comment (e.g., racist or sexist) (fair treatment of others, inclusivity)
- Giving alcohol to a minor at a tournament party (off-field)

Managing Misconduct

How to raise a concern

1. All participants at NPL events have a responsibility to help detect, prevent, and report instances of inappropriate conduct.
2. NPL is committed to ensuring that all have a safe, reliable, and confidential way of reporting this misconduct.
3. Participants are encouraged to raise concerns about any issue or inappropriate behaviour, at the earliest possible stage. Dependent upon the scenario the following report processes are encouraged:
 - a. Players during a match with a referee report any concerns to the referee.
 - b. Players during a match without a referee can call a time out to report concerns to the tournament director or referee.
 - c. Volunteers and spectators should report instances of misconduct to the tournament director as soon as possible to prevent escalation of a situation.
 - d. If you are not comfortable, for any reason, with speaking to the referee or tournament director speak to a member of the host management team.
 - e. If all other values are unavailable reports can be taken to NPL Management Team.
4. Any worker, who in good faith, raise a complaint or discloses an alleged breach of the Code, whilst following correct reporting procedures, will not be disadvantaged or prejudiced. All reports will be dealt with in a timely and confidential manner.
5. Any participant in breach of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Participant Protection

1. Participants who raise concerns or report another's wrongdoing, are sometimes worried about repercussions. NPL encourage openness and will support anyone who raises genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
2. NPL are committed to ensuring no one suffers any detrimental treatment as a result of reporting inappropriate behaviour or other activities in breach of the Code.
3. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats, or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the appropriate management team or NPL Board member immediately.