

NPL Season 1 Rules

The *NATIONAL PICKLEBALL LEAGUE* is the premier professional pickleball league in Australia. Comprising of the best 108 players in the country across 18 teams in 3 states. Teams face off across 5 rounds of competition in their state conference. The top 8 teams across the country will then fight it out for the glory of becoming the National Pickleball League Champions.

Welcome to Australia's first professional teams league....

Prize Money

Distribution based on final finishing place.

\$100,000 Pool

1. \$50,000
2. \$20,000
3. \$10,000
4. \$5,000
5. \$4,500
6. \$4,000
7. \$3,500
8. \$3,000

League Composition

- 18 Teams
 - 6 in NSW
 - 6 in QLD
 - 6 in VIC
- 108 Players
 - 36 Captains
 - 36 Vice Captains

Team Composition

- Each Team
 - 6 Players
 - 3 Male
 - 3 Female

Format

A 5 round season will culminate in the finals weekend. All 5 rounds will be played within a teams home state. The rounds will be spread over 3 months. The finals will be held over 2 days as the state champions fight it out for the ultimate glory.

Rounds

- 5 Rounds
- Played within state your team represents.
- 1 day commitment for 6 hours (Saturday)
- 2 matches played each round
- Play all teams in your bracket twice

Match Format

NPLLeague is NPL's trademarked teams format. This showcases the best players in Australia across both all of pickleballs formats Singles, Doubles & Mixed.

Each match consists of a minimum of 4 sets & 1 dillbreaker as required

- 1st Set = Female Singles
 - Best of 3 games
 - 3 separate singles games played by 3 individual players
 - Teams will nominate Player #1, Player #2 and Player #3
 - Game 3 only played as required
 - First to 11, traditional scoring, win by 2
 - Best of 3 game winner wins the set
- 2nd Set = Mixed Doubles
 - First to 22, win by 2, traditional scoring
 - 2 pairs per team
 - Pair 1 - first to 11
 - Pair 2 - continue to 22
 - Pair 2 will sub in once either team reaches 11
 - First to 22 wins the set
- 3rd Set = Male Singles
 - Same format as Female singles
- 4th Set = Gender Doubles
 - Same format as Mixed Doubles
 - However, it is gendered, i.e.:
 - Pair 1 womens doubles
 - Pair 2 mens doubles
- Dill Breaker (as required)
 - First to 21 (as Team)
 - Rally Scoring, Win by 2
 - Womens Doubles #1
 - Mens Doubles #1
 - Womens Doubles #2
 - Mens Doubles #2
 - Mens Singles #1
 - Womens Singles #1
 - Mens Singles #2
 - Womens Singles #2
 - Mens Singles #3
 - Womens Singles #3

- Mixed #1
- Mixed #2
- Mixed #3
- Repeat
- The order of each set and match is set. i.e it will not change between matches, rounds or for finals.

Ladder

- Win = 1 point
 - This is either 4-0, 3-1 or 3-2 (dillbreaker)
- Bonus point for 4-0 sweep
- Ladder based on
 - NPL Points
 - Sets For/Sets Against
 - Points For/Points Against

Finals

- Top 2 teams from each pool qualify.
- Third place teams qualify for the playoffs.
- 8 teams play in finals
- One weekend
- Friday Night
 - Finals playoffs
- Saturday
 - Qualifying
 - Elimination
 - Semi Finals
- Sunday
 - Preliminary
 - Grand final

Playoffs

The 3 third placed teams from each state play off in a round robin format.

- Top 2 progress to finals
- Each team plays each other once

Finals format

Seeding determined by:

- Top 3 are reserved for top position in each state
- Positions 4-6 are reserved for second position in each state
- Positions 7-8 reserved for outcome of playoffs

Qualifying finals

- QF 1 - 1 v 4
- QF 2 - 2 v 3

Elimination finals

- EF 1 - 5 v 8

- EF 2 - 6 v 7

Semi Finals

- SF 1 - Loser of QF1 v Winner of EF1
- SF 2 – Loser of QF2 v Winner of EF2

Preliminary Finals

- Winner of QF1 v Winner of SF2
- Winner of QF2 v Winner of SF1

Grand Final

- Winner of SF1 v Winner of SF2

Schedule

- ROUND 1: SAT MAR 2nd 2024
- ROUND 2: SAT MAR 16th 2024
- ROUND 3: SAT APR 6th 2024
- ROUND 4: SAT APR 27th 2024
- ROUND 5: SAT MAY 11th 2024
- FINALS: FRI MAY 31ST/SAT JUNE 1st/SUN JUNE 2nd 2024

Indicative Weekly Schedule

- Morning Events
 - 7am - Venue Opens for Practice
 - 10am - Match #1 Begins
 - 12pm - Lunch (lunch break minimum of 30 minutes)
 - 1pm - Match #2 Begins
 - 3pm - Matches conclude
 - 4pm - Courts open to public
- Twilight Events
 - 1pm - Venue Opens for Practice
 - 3pm - Match #1 Begins
 - 5pm - Dinner (Dinner break of minimum 30 minutes)
 - 6pm - Match #2 Begins
 - 8pm - Matches conclude
 - 9pm - Courts open to public

DUPR

All matches will be entered into DUPR.

- Games to 22
 - Womens doubles and mixed pair 1 will have the score entered as the team reaches 11.
 - Mens doubles and mixed pair 2 will have the score entered (having removed the score from the first game).
- Dill breaker
 - Score will not be entered into DUPR

Time Allocation

- Matches are to start at the stated start time.
- 2 minutes warm up will be permitted for each set.
- There will be a 4 minute break between sets.
- There will be a 2 minute break between games

Player Order

- Each captain will nominate their playing order for each of the rounds matches by 2pm the Friday before.
- This order can change for each match and each round.
- Following the 2pm deadline, captains can adjust their order twice per round. The opposition captain will have the ability to adjust based on these changes. This adjustment will not count as one of the 2 changes for that captain.
- Adjustments to playing orders are designed to enable a shift of introducing player 3 into doubles or mixed in the event of fatigue or strategy.
- Injury adjustments will not count towards the 2 changes, but injuries will preclude the player from participating in remaining matches for the round.

Player order changes on game day

- To submit a game day player order change, this must be done so in writing using the player order change form.
- Submission must be made to the Tournament Director in person from the captain.
- The tournament director will alert the impacted team of the change who will have 3 minutes to decide of any changes in response.

Injuries

- Injuries are inevitable. In the event of injury, resulting in the inability to continue participating. Teams will be able to draft a player for the remainder of the round.
- The league will ensure there are a minimum of 2 Male and 2 Female players available at each venue.
- The team is able to use this player as if they were an original member of the team. i.e. they are not restricted in which sets they play or the order of which they are included.
- In the event of multiple injuries, the team suffering the first injury as per decision by the Tournament Director in conjunction with the referees will select the player first.

Lunch/Dinner Break

- The minimum break will be 30 minutes. In the event that a match exceeds the allocated 2 hours and beyond the 30 minute grace period – match 2 will be delayed to allow the full 30 minute break. All match 2's will be delayed.

Reserve/Alternative List

In the event a player is unavailable, either through legitimate personal schedules or as a result of injury. Then the team will select a player from the reserves list.

Those players not drafted to an NPL S1 team originally have the ability to be a reserve/alternate player. Furthermore additional players will be eligible to sign up to this list until February 28th. From this date the only available reserves will be those nominated on this list.

There are no costs for the players being on a reserve list, but if selected to play they will incur a \$50 registration fee. This will include playing uniform and access to prize money.

Reserve process:

- On the Friday (8 days) prior to each round - Reserve Players will be alerted to the potential opportunity to play and are to re-confirm availability by Sunday 7pm.

- On Monday morning prior to each round - a lottery will be held to determine the "Reserve Order" for each team in each state (if multiple teams require reserves)
- Teams will then select a Reserve from the Reserve List by Monday evening
- Reserve will then be included in the Team Line-up for that week
- Reserves DO NOT then form part of that team, but are returned to the reserve pool for subsequent rounds.
- NOTE: Reserves will be included in prize money distributions based on the total number of games played.

If a player is unavailable for illegitimate reasons, i.e. in the attempt to manipulate an outcome, such as gaining access to a player from the reserve list for a particular round, then the player/team will be in breach of their playing contract.

Minimum Player Game Time

Players are not guaranteed a minimum number of games in the season or week. This is fully up to the discretion of the captain. This does mean in theory that a team with a strong 4 players, may not require the 3rd male or female players for all matches.

The team must however have player 3 available for each match, they may be needed for singles and would be needed for the DillBreaker if this occurs.

Player withdrawals & absence

General

- Player withdrawals are an inevitable outcome of any competition. Players are governed by individual playing contracts which permit absence as arranged prior for legitimate commitments.
- Complete withdrawals are also unfortunately to be expected, whilst any withdrawal for legitimate reasons will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Withdrawal for reasons such as playing in alternative events or competitions will be considered in breach of the playing contract, without prior approval.

Team impact

- Any player withdrawal (personal or injury) that renders a player unavailable for the remainder of the competition will allow the team to select a permanent replacement.
- This player will need to be selected from the original draft list as at 31 January 2024.
- Teams have the option of selecting players from the reserves list as an adhoc basis if they would prefer to not permanently replace the player.
- Any withdrawal for non injury related reasons will forfeit all prize money owed.

Referees

- All matches will have an allocated Referee
- All matches will have an allocated Tournament Director
- The competition also has a League Director

Time outs

General

- A player/team is entitled to one time-out for each of the singles games and 2 time outs for the doubles and mixed doubles and dillbreaker
- Each time-out period may last up to 1 minute.
- Play may be resumed early if all players are ready.

- If a team has any remaining time-outs, any player on that team may call a time-out before the next serve occurs.
- The referee will announce when there are 15 seconds remaining. At the end of the time-out period, the referee shall call “time in” and then call the score when all players are (or should be) ready to play.

Medical

A player needing medical attention during a match should request a medical time-out from the referee. Once the medical time-out has been requested, the following guidelines shall be used:

- The referee shall immediately summon on-site medical personnel, or the Tournament Director if no medical personnel are present, to assess the situation and render appropriate first aid.
- When medical personnel or the Tournament Director arrive, the referee shall start the 15-minute timer.
- The time-out must be continuous and shall not exceed 15 minutes.
- If the player uses fewer than 15 minutes, the remaining time is lost and no additional medical time will be available to the player during the match.
- If the player cannot resume play after the 15-minute medical time-out period, the match will be declared a retirement. The player may use their available regular timeouts after the medical timeout has expired to allow more time before the match must be retired.
- If medical personnel, or the Tournament Director, determine that no valid medical condition exists, the player or team will be charged a standard time-out, if available, and issued a technical warning.
- A player may be granted only one player requested medical time-out per match.
- Presence of blood. If blood is present on a player or on the court, play may not resume until the bleeding has been controlled and blood on clothing and the court has been removed.
- Issues relating solely to blood clean up or control will be considered a referee timeout.

Coaching

- Coaching is permitted from those within the team. i.e the 6 players.

Abuse

- No abuse will be tolerated, for specific details umpires are guided by the Global Pickleball Federation.
- However, for the avoidance of doubt the tournament director reserves the right to forfeit the player and team as required.

Prize Money Allocation

Drafted Players

Prizemoney is to be split between teams as per the team’s individual prizemoney contracts. All players are guaranteed a minimum of paid entry fees or 10% of the total prize, whichever is higher.

Reserves Prize Allocation

Reserve players will be allocated a maximum of 10% of the prize pool achieved by a particular team.

An example formula for calculating prize money is:

- Percentage of total games played multiplied by portion of contract allocated to 'participation'
 - note this is a minimum of 10% and maximum of 40%.

For example:

- Team A plays in 10 home and away matches + 2 finals.
- Team A wins \$10,000
- All matches do not require a tiebreaker.
- All singles ties are resolved with just the first 2 players.
- Each match consists of 12 player contributions (i.e they participated in a set):
 - 4 for mixed
 - 2 womens
 - 2 mens
 - 4 gendered
- Players have thus played in 144 sets.
- If a reserve player played in 3 of these, they would be entitled to:
 - $3/144 * 40\% = 0.83\%$
 - \$83
- If a player played in 8 contributions (across 2 weeks)
 - 2.22%
 - \$220

If a team's money contract stipulates 10% + participation, the following would be an example for the number 1 player v number 6.

- Number 1 player plays 3 sets each match. They would play in 36/144 games = 10% + guaranteed 10% = 20% of prize pool.
- Number 6 player plays in 1 set each match they would play in 12/144 games = 3.33% +10% = 13.33% of prize pool.

Rules

- To the extent of logic, the Global Pickleball Federation 2024 Official Rulebook will be followed. The tournament director and league director reserves the right overrule these decisions for benefit of the competition.
- In the situation where dispute exists, rules stipulated in this document supersede the Global Pickleball Federation 2024 Official Rulebook.