

Name _____

Date _____

Pickleball

The game of pickleball was invented by two dads in Washington State in 1965. During a game of badminton, the birdie—the object players hit back and forth—got lost. So Bill Bell and Joel Pritchard suggested their children try using a wiffle ball instead. The badminton rackets were too light to hit the wiffle ball well, so the dads created wooden rackets that resembled ping pong paddles. The dads came up with simple rules based on the rules for tennis, ping pong, and badminton. They named the game after Pritchard's cocker spaniel, Pickles.



Pickleball can be played indoors on basketball or volleyball courts and outside on any hard surface. The playing area is approximately the size of a badminton court, which is about one-fourth the size of a tennis court. The net is the same height as in tennis. The ball is served underhand and only the server can earn points. The receiving team and the server must both allow the ball to bounce before it can be hit. Volleying (hitting directly from the air) is allowed after the double bounces, but not within the seven-foot no-volley zone on either side of the net.

Interest in pickleball has continued to grow. Because players aren't required to be great athletes to play, and because it is easy to learn, pickleball can be played by just about anyone. Grade school students play it in physical education classes. Senior citizens compete in pickleball tournaments. No matter their age, people can spend hours playing this fun sport with their friends and family.