



Nacogdoches Team Pickleball League Rules (Spring 2026)

March 2 – April 28 (Regular Season)

May 2-3 (Playoff Tournament)

Purpose – Nac TPL offers competitive team pickleball at all levels (2.0 to 4.0+) in a format modeled after Major League Pickleball (MLP).

Four Co-ed Divisions – Spring 2026 season has four (4) Co-ed divisions with no gender or age restrictions – Div A (5 teams); Div B (8 teams), Div C (7 teams), Div D (4 teams).

Team Captains – The Commissioners select a team Captain/player before the draft. Captains are experienced players who are placed into a division commensurate with their skill level. Captains will draft their teams from the draft pool once divisions are determined.¹ Captains serve as team contact for scheduling, rule clarifications, selecting alternates, inputting scores in GPN, etc. Captains make game-day decisions (e.g., lineups). A Captain will name a substitute Captain from his/her team if he/she is absent from a match. **Captains will inform the Commissioner of their team name prior to Week 1 games.**

Season Schedule – Matches will be played during an 8-week schedule. Div A teams will play 10 matches (each team twice, and two teams three times). Div B and C teams will each play 10 matches – one each against the other teams in their division PLUS additional matches determined by random drawing at the draft. As a result, from time to time, there will be doubleheaders. A full schedule will be distributed before the season starts.

We will NOT have flex scheduling. ALL matches are scheduled by division on either a Monday or Tuesday evening. Matches start at 6 p.m. (called an “early game”), and if there is a scheduled doubleheader second game, it will start at about 7 p.m., or as soon as the first games are over for those teams (called a “late game”). If there are rainouts, we will deal with it when it happens.

¹ The four Div D teams will be created by random drawing. No draft necessary. Each team will then select a Captain from their 4 players.

Regular Season Schedule – Spring 2026

	<u>Div A & C</u> (Mondays)	<u>Div B & D</u> (Tuesdays)
Week 1	Mon, Mar 2	Tues, Mar 3
----- SPRING BREAK Mar 9-13, 2026 (No Matches) -----		
Week 2	Mon, Mar 9	Tues, Mar 10
Week 3	Mon, Mar 16	Tues, Mar 17
Week 4	Mon, Mar 23	Tues, Mar 24
Week 5	Mon, Mar 30	Tues, Mar 31
Week 6	Mon, April 6	Tues, April 7
Week 7	Mon, April 13	Tues, April 14
Week 8	Mon, April 20	Tues, April 21

2026 End of Season Playoff Tournament

Saturday, May 2, 2026 - Div B & D (Start Time TBD)
Sunday, May 3, 2026 – Div A & C (Start time TBD)

Player Sign Up – Players must register on the designated GPN Network for that season to be in the draft pool. Once sign-up is closed, the Commissioners consult and determine Captains and the number of teams per division. The goal is to allow everyone who signs up to be on a team as either a regular player or a dedicated alternate. In addition, a “free agent” alternate pool will be established for players not drafted or who prefer to be a free agent alternate.

Alternates – To maintain consistent scheduling of games, teams will have alternates to sub in when regular players are unavailable. Alternates are to be used ONLY when a regular player is unavailable to play. As much as reasonably possible, alternates will be a similar level player for the applicable division(s). There are two types of alternates – Drafted Alternates, and Free Agent Alternates. If a team cannot secure an eligible alternate, that match is forfeited.

Drafted Alternates are drafted by Captains at some time between the regular draft and the start of the season from a pool of candidates for each division developed by Commissioners. All regular players (including Captains) must be willing to serve as a Drafted Alternate for teams outside their division.

Free Agent Alternates are basically back-up alternates consisting of players not drafted as either a regular player or a Drafted Alternate. They may be used when a Drafted Alternate is not available. During the season, the Commissioners may add alternates to a “free agent” pool, at their discretion, but generally anyone added must not be a better player than the mid-range playing level of the Drafted Alternates.

Regular Player Draft – The regular player draft will be held at a designated time and location after sign-up closes and before the season starts. At the player draft, Captains will draft their remaining three (3) regular players with the highest level division teams drafting first, and so on. Draft order within divisions will be determined by drawing lots a few days before the draft (organized by the Commissioners). The draft will proceed in a snake draft format for the first two rounds, but the final round will re-draw random lots for the order.

Drafted Alternates Draft – After the regular draft and before the season starts, Commissioners will create separate draft pools for alternates in each division. As much as possible, the pools will match the playing level of that division and allow parity among the teams. The alternates draft will be held virtually. Captains will each draft 3 dedicated alternates of any gender/age. Draft order within divisions will be determined by drawing lots (organized by one of the Commissioners) and the draft will proceed in a snake draft format for the first two rounds, but the final round will re-draw random lots for the order. Commissioners may set parity rules within each division for use of alternates (e.g., limited use for certain players).

Permanent Player Replacement - If a team loses a player for the season, a Captain may either continue selecting an alternate each week in the usual fashion, or the Captain may make a request to the Commissioners for a permanent replacement. Replacement requests will be approved as long as (1) the player is of a comparable skill level as approved by the Commissioners, and (2) there is majority approval by the remaining Captains in that division.

Match Play – A match consists of 4 or 5 (if needed) games. If tied at 2-2, a Teambreaker Game 5 decides the winner. Even if a team is winning 3 games to 0, Game 4 will be played. There will be a 3-minute halftime break between Games 2 and 3. All other breaks between games are limited to 2 minutes.

Home or Away Team – In each match, a team is designated on the Master Schedule as either the HOME team or the AWAY team.

- (1) HOME team Reacts (submit its lineup last) in all Games 1-5. The AWAY team will do the opposite (Acts). In Game 5 Teambreaker, a team selects the lineup order of players one at a time.
- (2) AWAY team will serve first AND pick an end to start each game (applies to all 5 games).

Captains will record lineup choices and scores on a scoresheet furnished by the league. When a match is over, the winning Captain will text a pic of the scoresheet to a designated Commissioner. The winning Captain ALSO records scores into GPN. This is important to allow the league to confirm scores and update standings each week.

Coaching/Line Calls - Coaching by non-playing team members is allowed at any time when the ball is NOT IN PLAY AND as long as it does not interfere with continuous play or unfairly disrupt the game. **ONLY the players playing the game can make line calls and fault calls without ANY influence of other players/spectators.** If Captains agree before a match starts, they may designate a scorekeeper and/or one or two line official(s). The line official(s) will only (1) make kitchen foot fault calls, and (2) decide challenges on line calls (up to 2 per team each game).

Match Format – Games 1-4 (Same for All Divisions)

Lineup - Before each game, teams Act or React per their AWAY or HOME designation. Teams must rotate their lineups such that in the first four games, every player plays twice, and two players do not play together more than once.

- Game 1 (doubles – e.g., players 1 and 2)
- Game 2 (doubles – e.g., players 3 and 4)
- Game 3 (doubles – e.g., players 2 and 3)
- Game 4 (doubles – e.g., players 1 and 4)

Scoring, etc.

- Game to 25 (win by 2); Start Serve is from the even side
- Teams switch ends at 13 and may have a 2-minute timeout
- Rally Scoring (except for the winning point - a team must be serving to get the winning point (a/k/a the “Freeze”)
- Players stay on either even or odd side during the whole game (except they may switch sides at 13 or during their one (1) allotted timeout)
- Serves are from the odd side if that team’s score is odd; and from the even side if that team’s score is even. As long as a team continues winning points, they continue serving
- In addition to the 13-point timeout, each team is allotted one (1) two-minute timeout per game

Game 5 (Teambreaker) Format - Divisions A, B, and C

- A **singles game to 21** (win by 2) with rally scoring (must be serving to get the winning point)
- Each team will rotate in its 4 players in a set order every 4 points played (e.g., rotate when score is 3-1). The order is set just prior to the Teambreaker game per the HOME/AWAY designation. The AWAY team will designate its

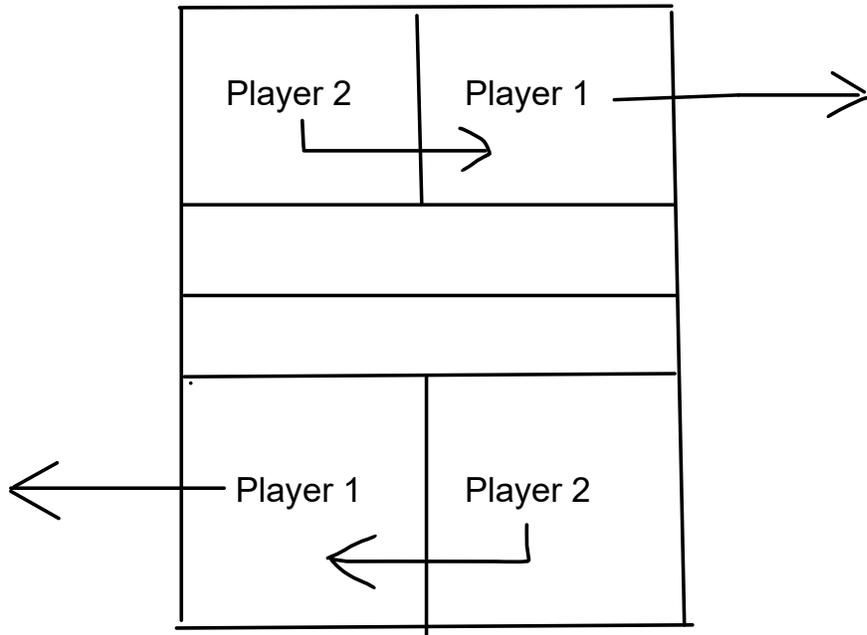
first player in the rotation (Acts); then the HOME team will designate its opposing first player (Reacts), and so on back and forth until the order of the 4 players for each team is set. Each player plays in 4-point rotations until the Teambreaker is concluded. The rotation repeats in the same order until the game is over.

- Players serve from the even or odd side of the court based on their score (e.g., if the serving player's score is even, she/he will serve from the even side)
- Teams will change ends when one team reaches a score of 11.
- Each team is allotted one (1) two-minute time-out in addition to the designated 2-minute timeout at 11.

Game 5 (Teambreaker) Format – Division D

- A **doubles game to 25** (win by 2) with rally scoring (must be serving to get the winning point)
- Each team will rotate its 4 players in and out in a set order shown in the diagram below (Doubles Teambreaker Rotation). The order is set just prior to the Teambreaker game per the HOME/AWAY designation. The AWAY team designates its first player in the rotation (Acts); then the HOME team designates its opposing first player (Reacts), and so on back and forth until the order of the 4 players for each team is set. The HOME team may React with a player of the opposite gender, at its discretion. Each player plays in 5-point rotations until the Teambreaker is concluded.
- Doubles Teambreaker Rotation – the rotation format for the doubles Teambreaker is designed to allow all players to play some on both the even and odd sides during the Teambreaker game.
 - At Start each team will have their Player 1 on the ODD side, and their Player 2 on the EVEN side. Once the total game score equals 5 (e.g., 4-1), the first rotation occurs in a clockwise fashion. (*Diagram below*)
 - First rotation (at 5 total points) - each team rotates out Player 1; Player 2 slides over to the ODD side; and Player 3 rotates in to the EVEN side.
 - Second rotation (at 10 total points) - each team rotates out Player 2; Player 3 slides over to the ODD side; and Player 4 rotates in to the EVEN side.
 - The rotation continues in the same order every 5 points until the game is over (to date, the record score in a doubles Teambreaker in NAC TPL is 39-37!!!)
- Players serve from the odd or even side based on their team's score (e.g., if serving team's score is even, the serve is from the even side)
- Teams will change ends when one team reaches a score of 13.
- Each team is allotted one (1) two-minute time-out, and a two-minute timeout at 13.
- During the doubles Teambreaker, players cannot switch even/odd sides during timeouts. They must adhere to the Rotation the whole game.

Doubles Teambreaker Rotation Diagram



Standings - Season standings are based on the point system used in MLP. After a match, teams are awarded points as follows:

- 3 Points: Regulation win (4 games to 0, or 3 games to 1)
- 2 Points: Teambreaker win (3 games to 2)
- 1 Point: Teambreaker loss (2 games to 3)
- 0 Points: Regulation loss (0 games to 4, or 1 game to 3)

At the end of the regular season, if any teams are tied in the standings, the tiebreakers, in this order, are: (1) most head-to-head games won, (2) most total points in head-to-head matches, (3) flip a coin.

NAC TPL Playoff Tournament (May 2-3, 2026) - Regular season standings will determine seeding in each division. The Tournament bracket formats will be shown in the Master Schedule. Each division will crown a regular season champion and a tournament champion (awards for both). The NAC TPL Playoff Tournament should be a fun and competitive party atmosphere. We have all 12 of the Maroney Park courts reserved from all day both days. Prizes/awards will be awarded as determined by the Commissioners.

Commissioners

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