

INTRODUCTION

Major League Pickleball (“MLP” or “the League”) is an innovative team competition where top men and women pro pickleball players are drafted by team owners in a unique draft format that results in teams of four (4) players consisting of two (2) women and two (2) men. Teams compete against each other over the course of several days using Rules (Major League Play Rules or MLPlay™ Rules) that encompass a novel and fan-friendly format, with twists on traditional match-ups and scoring for Games, Matches, and Tiebreakers. Teams compete against each other in Matches. A Match consists of four Games, starting with one women’s doubles Game, followed by one men’s doubles Game, and then two mixed doubles Games. If two teams are tied after these four games, an innovative tiebreaker known as the “DreamBreaker™” is played, with a rotational system involving all four players.

Teams first play each other in group or round-robin play, and then the top teams square off in a single-elimination format. Prize money is distributed equally for women and men based on team performance.

NUMBER OF TEAMS

For the MLP 2023 season, twelve (12) teams will compete in the Premier Level and twelve (12) in the Challenger Level.

PLAYERS

Each team will consist of four players, two (2) women and two (2) men. There will also be Alternates on site in the event of player injury, illness, or player or family emergency. All players are independent contractors of MLP and not employees.

PLAYER QUALIFICATIONS/WILDCARDS

Players who meet MLP-published requirements will be eligible to apply for the Draft. There will then be a cut-off of Draft Applicants, which forms the Draft Pool. The Draft cut-off will consider DUPR ratings, the number and reliability of a player’s results, and potential wild cards. Owners will be provided with a Draft Pool list of players rank ordered by their DUPR rating. MLP may, but is not required to, select Wildcard players to include in the Draft Pool. Wildcards may be added to the Draft Pool up until the start of the Draft.

PLAYER DRAFT APPLICATION

Players will be asked to apply for the Draft by a certain date, and will complete an application and various forms both to initially apply for the Draft and to be included in the Draft Pool. A withdrawal date will also be provided.

PLAYER DRAFT FORMAT

Teams will be determined by a Draft, which involves a snake draft format. Approximately one week before the Draft, team names will be randomly drawn to predetermine the order in which team owners will select players. 48 players (24 women and 24 men) will be drafted when there are 12 Team owners. The number of teams competing, and as a result the number of players drafted, may vary by event and by season. All Draft picks must be selected from the list of Players provided by MLP to Team owners. After the draft pick order is determined, on draft day team owners will select their draft picks in the order published and/or communicated to Team Owners/GMs.

PLAYER ATTENDANCE AT DRAFT

To the extent a live in-person Draft or Draft Reveal event is held, players are strongly encouraged to attend. Alternatives to a live Draft format may be considered depending on player availability, public health issues, or for marketing purposes.

TIMING OF DRAFT DAY PICKS

MLP and the Commissioner will determine the format and timing of Draft Day. The team with the first Draft pick will be expected to announce the selection of its first-round pick immediately upon commencement of the Draft. Thereafter, team owner(s) will be afforded two (2) minutes to inform the Commissioner of the team's next pick. The selection will be communicated to the Commissioner by the team owner(s) or General Manager (GM). The Commissioner will verify and approve the selection, and the selection will be announced. Upon announcement of the selection, the two-minute clock for the next Draft pick will start. There may be short breaks at various intervals. In the event of issues affecting the timing or communication of a Draft pick, MLP, through its Commissioner, will have the discretion to adjust the timing to ensure a fair Draft. The Draft will continue until all teams are filled with 4 Players. The Commissioner will have the discretion to ensure a fair and high-quality Draft (or Draft broadcast) in terms of Draft picks, the timing of picks, as well as the format, order, and scheduling of the Draft. MLP reserves the right to redo the Draft in full or in part in the event of extraordinary circumstances and/or in the best interests of the League.

REDRAFT AFTER SEASON ONE 2023

The 2023 year will be divided into two (2) seasons of three (3) events – in the first season, twelve (12) teams will compete in the MLP Premier Level (the first 48 drafted players) and twelve (12) teams will compete in the MLP Challenger Level (the next 48 drafted players). The teams will then flip levels and re-draft players for the second season.

REFEREES

Referees will be provided for all Games. At least two referees will be on all courts. MLP may institute a referee dedicated to reviewing challenges either courtside or within the vicinity (ie TV truck or courtside).

GROUP PLAY AND SINGLE-ELIMINATION ROUNDS

The format of play, including group play and single-elimination (knockout) rounds, will be determined by MLP. Typically, there will be initial group/pool play followed by a single-elimination format. MLP may adjust the format for scheduling purposes, broadcasting purposes, inclement weather, or other reasons, at the sole discretion of MLP.

CHALLENGER:

In 2023, the Challenger Level will consist of three (3) groups of four (4) teams. A team will play against the other three (3) teams in their bracket. At the end of group play, the top two (2) teams from each group advance to the knockout rounds.

PREMIER:

In 2023, the Premier Level will consist of two (2) groups of six (6) teams. Teams will play against the other five (5) teams in their bracket. At the end of group play the top three (3) teams from each group advance to the knockout rounds.

DAILY SCHEDULE OF PLAY

The schedule of play for the first day of competition will be published at least one week prior to the start of the competition. Schedules for subsequent days will be published each evening prior to the next day's play.

CAPTAINS

Twenty-four hours prior to the start of competition all teams must designate a Team Captain, and separately, an on-site non-player Team Lead. The Team Lead in many instances may be the team's existing General Manager. Captain and Team Lead duties include but are not limited to: communicating with MLP officials regarding scheduling, communicating the selection regarding alternates and substitutions, designating mixed doubles teams, and singles Dreambreaker (tiebreaker) rotations (see below). If a Team Captain is unable to fulfill his/her duties, the Team must designate a substitute captain.

During the event, all communications related to rules of the competition must come from the Team Captain or Team Lead only. The Team Lead will be the final authority on decisions and communications to MLP.

WARMUP

A warmup period will be provided to each Team prior to its Match, although it may not be on the Team's exact Match court rather a practice court. Players are expected to warm up on a practice court and be ready to play when it is time for their next Match. Additional warmup on the Match courts will be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the length of matches/schedules. Players should not expect additional warmup time after the Match has started.

COIN TOSS

At the start of each Match, there will be a coin toss (or similar random selection). The winner will elect to choose the option of selecting serve/end/receive OR the option of being the Home Team or Away Team for that Match, with the following:

If the team chooses option ONE they can choose to select the end of court to start all games in that team Match or they can choose to serve/receive. If they choose to serve/receive the other team can choose the end. If they choose end, the other team can choose to serve or receive. If a team chooses to pick serve/end/receive then the other team will be allowed to choose if they want to be the Home Team or Away Team.

HOME:

The Home Team will choose its mixed doubles teams last. The Home Team must declare first during the singles DreamBreaker™ game.

AWAY:

The Away Team must declare the mixed doubles teams first but declares last on singles on DreamBreaker™ player choice.

For the DreamBreaker™ line up declarations, the Home Team will declare the first player in their lineup, then the Away Team will declare their first player. This process repeats until all 4 players in the line-ups are set.

MATCHES

For 2023, it is anticipated that each Match will consist of four Games to 21 (win by 2) with rally scoring. The four Games will be played in the following order: women's doubles, men's doubles, two mixed doubles. A singles tiebreaker DreamBreaker™ will be played to determine the winner of the Match if teams are tied at 2-2 in Games. This format and order are subject to change. For MLP 2023, if after Mixed Doubles Game 1, the match score is 3-0, the Match is over, and the 4th Game will not be played. This applies to both group play and the single elimination bracket.

GAMES

For 2023, each Game will be played with rally scoring to 21 points (win by 2). Players will change ends when one team reaches the score of 11. This format and order are subject to change. Rally scoring will be played until a team reaches 20, at which time the team reaching 20 is subject to a freeze on rally scoring and must score all future points while serving. If the trailing team reaches 18, that team too will be subject to a freeze on rally scoring and must score all future points while serving. If both teams are tied 19-19, then both teams are immediately frozen when it becomes 20-19. All Games must be won by 2 points.

PLAYER CHANGE OF SIDE/SERVE

During rally scoring players do not switch sides after winning points. Player A for each team serves and receives on the right side when the score is even, and Player B serves and receives on the left side when the score is odd. A team may choose to switch player sides during a time-out or end change, and they must inform the referee of the switch before play resumes. The referee is not required to inform the opposing team of the change but must do so if asked.

To resume play after an end change, the referee must first check with the receiving player to ask if their team is in their desired positions. Once they have confirmed, their positions are set and they can only switch again if another timeout is called. The referee must then validate with the serving team that they are in their desired positions before calling the score to resume play.

To resume play after a time-out, the referee will first ask the team that did NOT call the time-out if they are in their desired positions. The referee should ask "Are you in the correct position?" Once that teams' positions are confirmed, they are set and the referee will then ask the team that called the timeout to declare if they are in their desired positions. The referee should also ONLY ask "Are you in the correct position?" If the time-out team decides to switch positions, the only way the other team may now switch is by calling a time-out. The same process above will be repeated. If that team doesn't have a time out left, they may not switch positions.

If an incorrect player/position error is not detected before the serve occurs;

1. If a player or referee stops a live rally to notate the error, the rally will be replayed.
2. If the rally concludes naturally and then the error is mentioned, the rally will stand. All players played the rally in good faith and played to win. The referee will ensure proper player alignment for the next serve.

PLAYER INITIATED TIME-OUTS

Teams will each be allotted 1 time-out per Game (up to 1 minute per time-out).

INJURY/OTHER TIME-OUTS

Additional time-outs may be called by MLP officials and/or referees for purposes of the livestream and/or broadcast, to address equipment issues, or for any other reason deemed necessary by MLP or the Commissioner. The number of time-outs is subject to change. Time-outs may also be called for player, referee, or fan injury. Player injury time-outs may not exceed fifteen minutes, and the length of non-player time-out shall be kept to a minimum but determined at the discretion of the referee and/or Commissioner. The 15 minute timer will start upon arrival of on-site medical staff.

OFFICIAL BALL

The official ball of 2023 is anticipated to be the MLP Ball–Championship Edition. MLP reserves the right to change the ball edition.

ILLEGAL SERVES

MLP follows the USA Pickleball guidelines to determine what constitutes a legal serve. These rules apply to the three (3) criteria of the service motion; paddle above wrist, contact above waist, upward arc. MLP referees have the discretion to immediately call a fault for illegal serve. In the case a referee calls an illegal serve fault, on the first violation in each game a warning will be given, and the server will re-serve the point. Subsequent illegal serve violations in the game in which the warning was issued will result in a loss of point and/or sideout to the opposing team. Drop serves are not permitted in MLP.

LET SERVES

Let serves that land in the designated correct service box, will be replayed. A let serve that does not land in the designated correct service box will be a fault. If a returning player stops play and calls a let serve and neither the referees on court or opponents agree with the call, it is a fault and the point will be awarded to the serving team. The let serve can be called by either the serving or returning team or the referee(s) on court. If the referee does not identify a let serve but both teams agree to a let, the server will re-serve.

OTHER COMPETITION RULES

All rules of the MLP Competition are governed by the most current rules of USA Pickleball except for the rules outlined in this document, summarized below:

1. Rally Scoring
2. Coaching allowed during play
3. Server/receiver changes during time-outs and end changes

4. One time-out per game
5. Coin flip process and teams start each Game on the side chosen at coin toss.
6. Illegal Serve warning and fault process; drop serves, let serves

INSTANT REPLAY

MLP and the Commissioner shall determine whether and to what extent instant replay will be used at each MLP Event. Each team is afforded one instant replay challenge per Game, and a successful challenge will result in the team keeping that challenge. An unsuccessful challenge will result in a loss of that challenge and no more challenges may be used by that team for the remainder of that Game. Players on the court may consult with their non-playing team members and/or owners in deciding whether to assert a challenge, provided that such consultation does not result in any significant delay in the continuity of play. Players may not use a time-out to determine if they should utilize a challenge. An inconclusive review of a challenge will result in the call standing.

The following are reviewable: line calls, ernes, foot faults, let serves, illegal serves, service faults, whether a ball touched a player (or his or her clothing or hair), whether a ball touched a nonpermanent fixture warranting a replay (e.g., overhead camera in the field of play), whether a non-player (e.g., spectator) interfered with the play on a ball, proper side or service after a point has been played, whether a deformed or cracked ball affected play, verbal distractions by opponents on the court or bench, and other similar calls or issues. The intention of this rule is to allow for instant replay review of an issue that affected the outcome of the point. A Team may use its challenge on its own line call. All challenges must occur after the rally concludes. A player may, after the point is over, challenge a legal serve and a player may challenge a referee's call of an illegal serve. If a team exercises a challenge other than one referenced above, the referee will make an initial judgment whether the issue is reviewable. If all players on court agree, any point may be replayed due to an unforeseen issue or referee error, otherwise the referee's decision, subject to Commissioner review, will stand.

DREAMBREAKER (SINGLES TIEBREAKER) TO DETERMINE WINNER

MLP and the Commissioner will determine the format of the tiebreaker to be used if team Matches are tied 2-2 in Games. For 2023, if two teams playing a Match are tied 2-2 after the doubles and mixed doubles Games, a singles DreamBreaker™ will be played. For 2023, a DreamBreaker™ is a Game to 21 (win by 2) with rally scoring, where each team must rotate its 4 players for 4 singles rallies in a set order until the DreamBreaker™ is completed. Immediately following the completion of the second and final mixed doubles Game, the Home Team will have 1 minute to designate the first player selected in the order of rotation of its 4 singles players for the DreamBreaker™ to

the referee and/or Commissioner. The Home Team's #1 player will be disclosed to the Away Team. The Away Team will then have 1 minute to designate its opposing Player 1 to the referee and/or the Commissioner. This process will repeat until all 4 players on each team are declared to the referee and/or commissioner. The DreamBreaker™ will use the same rally scoring used in Games as described above. All team members will rotate in 4-rally rotations until the DreamBreaker™ is concluded (Player 1 plays 4 rallies, then Player 2 plays 4 rallies, then Player 3 plays 4 rallies, then Player 4 plays 4 rallies, and then the rotation repeats in the same order).

In terms of sides, singles players will serve from the side (left/right) of the court, based on their team score, as is typical in singles. The player will serve on the right side when that player's team score is even, and when the team score is odd, the player on that team will serve from the left side of the court. During the DreamBreaker™, each team will be allotted 1 instant replay challenge, and one time-out. Teams will change ends when one team reaches the score of 11.

COACHING/LINE CALLS

Coaching by non-playing team members is allowed at any time when the ball is not in play if it does not interfere with continuous play or unfairly disrupt the opposing team. Non-playing team members are encouraged to sit/stand along the edge of the court or bench with their team. Team owners are encouraged to sit on the team bench or in the gallery behind their team and offer advice at their own peril. The team is allowed to influence or advise a player on a line call, but it must be done in a reasonable amount of time. It is ultimately the Team Captain's decision to overrule his or her team's call(s). The referee or tournament officials may ask the Team Captain to make the call quickly. MLP will allow up to 2 non-players on the bench, including Owners, Coach, and/or GM. These individuals are allowed to coach from the sideline but should not interfere with or disrupt game play. Referees may give Owners, Coaches, or GM's, on the sideline, a technical warning, verbal warning and/or technical foul per USA Pickleball guidelines.

TIE BREAKERS & SEEDING

CHALLENGER:

The top 2 seeded teams from each Group advance to the knockout rounds. Seeding in the knockout round is first determined by Team Match Win Percentage, then Point Differential Percentage (i.e 47.34%), then a coin flip. MLP will seed the six teams advancing (two from each Group) and the top two will receive a bye into the semifinals. Seed #3 will play #6 and #4 will play #5, unless either of those matchups are a repeat of matches played in Group Stage play. Advantage will be given to the higher seeded team, that they will play the worse seeded team unless they played in Group Stage Play.

PREMIER:

Seeding in the elimination round is first determined by Team Match Win Percentage, then Point Differential Percentage (i.e 47.34%), then a coin flip. The #1 seed from each Group will get a bye into the semifinals, and the #2 seed from Group A, will play the #3 seed from Group B. The #2 seed from Group B will play the #3 seed from Group A.

ON SITE ALTERNATES/SUBSTITUTION RULES**CHALLENGER:**

MLP will publish the official Challenger Level designated onsite Alternates one week prior to the competition. MLP and the Commissioner will determine the number of Alternates and selection criteria.

PREMIER:

Only Challenger Level players will be allowed to be used as Premier Level Alternates. The only players who are eligible to be Premier Alternates are Challenger players whose team has been eliminated from competition at the time the Alternate is needed to play.. This Alternate rule is to allow for substitutions only in the event of team player injury, illness, or unexpected personal/family events. If a team utilizes an Alternate to substitute for one of its players at any point during a Match, the original player may not return to play at any time during the entire MLP event.

If a Team Captain or GM informs MLP that a player cannot participate more than ten minutes prior to the start of the event, a Team may select a substitute from the entire published player draft pool. MLP has the right to add players to the Alternate Pool at its discretion.

Once the event starts and the first point is played, only the Alternates officially designated or chosen by MLP can replace a player for the remainder of that event.

An Alternate is available only if another team has not officially notified the Commissioner or the Tournament Director that the Alternate is needed for their team. Upon request from a Team Captain to use an Alternate, the Commissioner will determine whether the Alternate is available to that team. Any Team Captain or GM may ask the Commissioner at any point whether an Alternate is available without committing to use the Alternate, but that request will be public information and will be communicated and shared with any other Team Captain or GM that requests such information.

If, and when a Team requests an Alternate for an injured player, there will be a Medical Timeout and the on-site Athletic Trainers will evaluate the injury and confirm the need for substitution. Further, in the case that an Alternate is injured during a match, and the Team calls for a replacement for that Alternate, the same process will apply. The on-site Athletic Trainer, Doctor or appointed medical personnel will come on court to evaluate the injury and confirm the substitution. The request for an Alternate must be approved by the medical personnel, and a league official and the player being removed from competition must consent to the substitution. Players or teams found to be faking injuries for strategic advantages could be fined, penalized with loss of games, or matches, and may result in league disciplinary action. Any medical timeout and/or injury substitution will be filed as an official Incident Report with the MLP Commissioner's office. Please note, that if a player is safe or fit to compete in doubles, but not safe or fit to compete in singles then the player is deemed NOT safe/fit to compete and must be substituted prior to the match beginning.

An exception to the substitution rule is if a player is late to the beginning of the competition for reasons like delayed flights, family emergency, work, etc and misses one or more games, once they arrive they may join the team and replace the Alternate/sub for the remainder of the competition and that Alternate is now available to play on any other team.

If a substitute or Alternate is required during the Finals event of the competition weekend and the match should go to a Dreambreaker, the team which requires a substitute will automatically start the Dreambreaker game, down 0-4.

If at any time an Alternate player is subbed in, that player is awarded a pro rata share of the individual prize money based on the # of games they participate in/total # of games played by the player they are replacing. (For example: a team plays 3 team matches during group play in Challenger. One woman will play in 3 women's doubles games and 3 mixed doubles games for a total of 6 available games. If an Alternate is subbed in for 3 games that player would be entitled to 50% of the total prize money earned by the team that weekend. If a player plays in 25% of matches as a substitute, they will receive 25% of the prize money.) Knockout round games are also added to the total available games. The player who must sit out will receive the other 50% of that portion of the prize. If a player is not able to make the event for any reason including illness, injury, family emergency and then the Alternate player will receive 100% of any prize money earned that weekend.

SHUFFLE DRAFTS/TRADES/WAIVER WIRE

Teams may pick up new players and allow trades in between events. There will be no trades or adds to Premier teams from players in the Challenger Level pool in 2023. There will be no add/drops or waiver wire transactions for Premier teams in 2023. For the transitional 2023 year, all Alternates in Premier will come from the eliminated Challenger Level players during each event.

SEASON 2 2023 DRAFT

After event #3 of Season One, MLP will hold two (2) new Full Team Drafts, one for Premier and one for Challenger. This Season 2 Draft draft will likely take place in July 2023 and all dates will be communicated to Owners/GM's at the appropriate time. There are no trades or add/drops in between Season One Draft and Event one and Season Two Draft and Event four, barring injuries where a player is deemed unable to compete. The trade window for both Premier and Challenger will open Monday 8am CST, following the conclusion of 2023 Events #1, #2, #4, #5. The trade window closes at midnight 14 days prior to the start of the subsequent event. All trades must be in writing and approved by the Commissioner prior to the close of the trade window. MLP & the Commissioner reserve final discretion on all trade approvals. In general, the Commissioner will only seek to veto trades for mal intent, collusion or non-disclosure of an injury which may affect a players ability to compete. Trades may only be communicated to The MLP Commissioner by the teams' designated GMs in writing. All finalized trades will be communicated to all ownership groups as soon as possible upon completion, via email communication. Trades are only allowed solely as players for players and no additional consideration is allowed. This includes cash, current and future considerations (i.e draft picks). There are no trades allowed between teams with overlapping ownership interests. Trades must be done like for like, women for women, men for men and 1:1 or 2:2. One player for one player or two players for two players.

WAIVER WIRE- CHALLENGER ONLY

Following each event, within a reasonable timeframe, MLP will open applications for the Shuffle Draft pool to allow players an opportunity to confirm their intent and commitment to participate, if drafted, in the next MLP event. The MLP Commissioner will communicate date deadlines to the public and to ownership groups in a timely manner following each event. Once the Shuffle Draft pool is established, MLP will publish the list of available players on its website and social media channels and in email communications with Owners. Teams may drop 0 or 1 players onto the waiver wire. Owners/GM's must email the Commissioner, with any player from their current team they want to drop into the available player pool by the published date. MLP will then communicate with all owners the final available draft pool, including new players added, previously players eligible but not drafted, and any dropped players who express their

intent to participate. MLP will then hold the Shuffle Draft as follows: Pick order will be determined by official standings from the previous MLP event. Teams will be placed in order from worst to best; teams with the worst finish will choose first.

MLP will set a convenient timeline and deadline for all Owners/GM's to execute the add/drops in a timely manner. MLP will publish the results of the waiver wire transactions on its website, social media channels, and in email communications to the Owners.

OTHER RULES

PADDLES

Players must use a paddle brand and model that's on the Official USA Pickleball Approved Paddle List. Penalty for violation of this rule could result in loss of game or match.

PROHIBITIONS

Each Player who serves as an Alternate, shall not play in any exhibitions, tournaments, or other pickleball or pickleball-related events or promotions during any MLP event weekend, without the express written permission of the MLP Commissioner.

PLAYER MISCONDUCT

Players who mistreat a fellow player or referee will receive one official verbal warning from the league. After they receive one verbal warning, players are subject to a potential fine by the league.

COMPENSATION

Prize money and bonus schedules have been communicated in the player contracts.

PROMOTION & RELEGATION FOR THE 2024 SEASON

The top 12 teams at the end of all 2023 competition will start 2024 in the Premier Level and the next 12 teams will start 2024 in the Challenger Level. The top 12 teams are decided by ranking the teams in order according to 1) Team Match Win % over ALL events, where Premier and Challenger are weighted equally, and 2) Point Differential Percentage, where Premier and Challenger are weighted equally. Draft order in 2024 will be placed on team placement in 2023. The team that places 1st in the table in 2023, will draft first in 2024, within both Levels. MLP will post a league wide table after the first event of 2023, which will update at the end of each subsequent event. It is MLP's intention that the 2024 draft be the final "re-draft" and teams will maintain a high level of continuity in 2024 and beyond. This makes the team's order of placement in the final League table very important to get a high draft pick going into 2024.

INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES/EXCEPTIONS/DISPUTES

The Commissioner or his/her designee has final authority on any situation that is not specifically covered by this Rules Guide. Any exception to these Rules must be approved by the MLP Commissioner. The Commissioner is the final decision maker on all disputes and appeals. Only the Commissioner or a person expressly authorized by the Commissioner may clarify rules or procedures around the competition and make decisions or judgements about those rules.

AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS

By participating in any MLP Event, Teams (including Owners and Players) acknowledge these MLP Rules and agree to comply with and be bound by them. Major League Pickleball, Inc. (MLP) is the owner and administrator of Major League Pickleball competitions and has the right to revise these rules periodically at its sole discretion.

MLP PLAYER CONTRACTS

Players are bound by the rules of their MLP contracts.