

Villager Pickleball Article for October 14th, 2021 by Joyce Kludt

Pickleball Strategy: Net Play

Where do you prefer to play most of your game? Some people prefer to play pickleball at mid court or back court or back and forth. Others try to play what we call a “Net Game,” which is close to the kitchen line.

If you’ve ever watched the pros play tournaments, you’ll notice that they almost always play net games. I wonder why, you might ask. Net play is valuable because most points are won at the Kitchen Line (non-volley zone).

If you haven’t tried it, Net play is a strategy that will improve your game, according to instructors and pros.

“But won’t I make lots of foot faults if I’m that close to the line?” (you’re not allowed to step on the kitchen line during play).

Well, that’s the trick. You need to always know where you are in relationship to the line, and plant your feet right behind it, so that you know that the only time you’re going to step forward is to take the ball off the bounce, which is when it’s legal to step over the line. It’s something you need to practice so you don’t get called on foot faults. (Although at the Villages, our play is more relaxed, so sometimes foot faults are ignored... but not in tournaments.)

Getting up to the line is not the same as staying at the line. Often a player will do a great job of coming up to the line...but two shots later, they’ve backed up a good two or three feet from the kitchen. Once you back up, it’s hard to come back, and it’s more likely your opponent will just keep hitting the ball at your feet to push you farther back from the line, shot by shot. Do this instead: Look down at your feet at the end of every point and notice how far you are from the kitchen line. If you’re not within 1-3” of the line, chances are that’s why you lost the point.

HAVE FUN, VILLAGER PICKLEBALL LOVERS...SEE YOU ON THE COURTS