

# **Official Rules for One-Wall Paddleball and One-Wall Racquetball**

(New 2017 revised pocket version)

The United States Paddleball Association, Inc.  
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The following revised rules are derived from, and built upon, the fundamental written rules of One-Wall Paddleball authored by Chris Lecakes in 1958 for use by One-Wall Paddleball's pioneer organization, The United States Paddleball Association (U.S.Pb.A.). The original U.S.Pb.A. rules may be viewed or downloaded from the website, <http://www.uspaddleballassociation.org>. Mr. Lecakes was the U.S.Pb.A. Doubles Champion in 1961, 1962, 1966 and 1968. He was a Doubles finalist in 1964, 1965 and 1967 and a Singles Finalist in 1961. He remains an active advisory ambassador for the sport of Paddleball.

## **THE GAME**

The game of Paddleball is basically played by two teams Where a rubber ball is struck with a paddle against a Wall. The object of the game is to win by the accumulation of a set number of points. Points are produced from offensive shots made difficult for the opposing team to return. Similar to Tennis, points are awarded to the serving team which puts the ball into play “the serve”. The following are the recently revised rules for the sport of One-Wall Paddleball.

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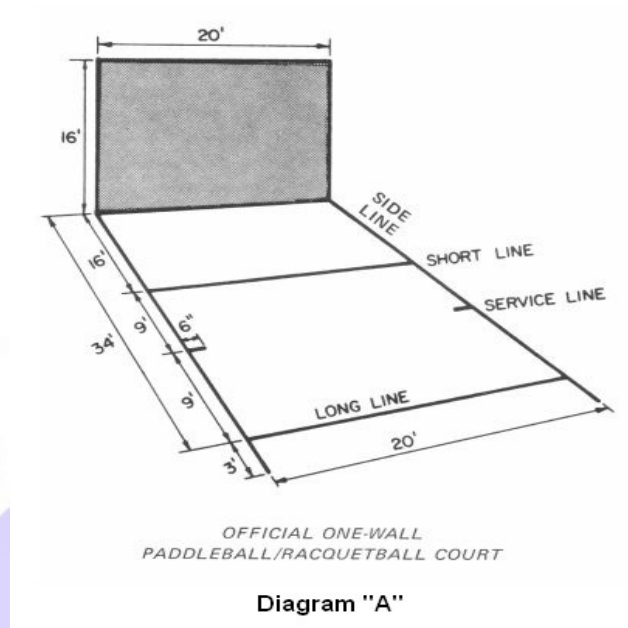
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## **INTRODUCTION**

## **THE COURT**

The standard one—wall court's fair playing area is the area within its boundary lines mainly "side", "long" and "top" lines (refer to Diagram "A"). The court's lines shall be 1 1/2 inches wide, yellow or white in color. It shall have a wall marked with a top line and side lines. The top line shall be 16 feet high from its top edge to the floor and the two side lines shall be 20 feet apart from its outside edges. The side lines shall continue on the floor perpendicular to the wall placed 20 feet apart from its outside edges and extend a minimum of 37 feet from the wall. It shall have a “short” line running parallel to the wall at 16 feet from the wall to the back edge of the line. It shall have a “long” line running parallel to the wall at 34 feet from the wall to the back edge of the line. There shall also be “service” lines (also “hash marks”) at least 6 inches long, drawn perpendicular to each side line at 9 feet, midway from the short and long lines.

## Official Court Dimensions



## EQUIPMENT

The paddle can be no longer than 17 1/2 inches and no wider than 9 inches. The paddle cannot have any stringing such as that of a tennis racket. Any paddle having a metal or exposed wood edge, must be covered with enough tape to fully cover the edge of the paddle. A paddle found unfit for play by a referee will not be permitted for use in any tournament game.

## THE BALL

The U.S.P.A. will hold tournaments with various types of Paddle Balls. Most commonly used is the "Small Ball" which made of rubber and is available in a range of colors. Its dimension shall be 1-7/8" in diameter, weight shall be 1 7/ 10 ounces with a 1/ 10 ounce variance and bounce 68" to 72" from a 100" drop at a temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Another popular ball used is the "Big Ball" which is made of rubber and is available in a wide range of colors. Its dimension shall be shall be 2 1/4 inches in diameter; weigh approximately 1.4 ounces; have a hardness of 55-60 durometer and bounce 68"-72" inches from a 100" drop at a temperature of 70-74 degrees Fahrenheit.

Note Only a ball having the approval of the U.S.P.A. may be used in a U.S.P.A. sanctioned tournament.

## ATTIRE

Should be appropriate for running type of activity. Consideration should be exercised with regards to climate conditions when playing. For tournament play, proper attire will be at the tournament director's discretion. Wearing of eyewear protection is recommended but optional. No Electronic Audio Devices are permitted during play.

## Section 1 - LANGUAGE OF PADDLEBALL

**ACE** - A legal serve, completely eluding the receiver.

**ANGLE SHOT** - A ball hitting the wall in such a way as to rebound toward a sideline.

**APPEAL** - A request made by a team to reverse an official call.

**BACK SWING** – When contact is made with a striker's paddle and an opponent as striker is bringing the paddle back before starting the forward swing.

**BACKHAND STROKE** - Striking the ball from the side opposite the forehand.

**BLOCK** - Any type of condition where a player would prevent an opponent from playing the ball effectively. The result would be the replay of the point. In tournament play, a referee would confirm a Block call.

**CARRY** - When the referee judges that the ball has been in contact with the paddle too long.

**CROSSING** – A movement by a player from one side of the ball to the other.

**CUT SHOT or SLICE** - A shot with a spin imparted on the ball.

**DEAD BALL** - A ball which is no longer in play.

**DEDUCTION** - Loss of point against the offender.

**DO-OVER or REPLAY** - Replay of a “POINT”.

**DOUBLES** - Two players vs. two other players.

**DOWN BALL** - A ball hitting at the juncture of the floor and the wall (thus hitting the floor first), which is an “OUT”, and not playable.

**DRIVE SHOT** - Hitting the ball hard to the wall so it rebounds in a relatively straight line.

**DROP SHOT** - A soft stroke where the ball contacts the wall very low.

**FAULT** - Infraction of the service rule. Also see “OUT”

**FOOT FAULT** - Illegal position of a server's feet on a serve.

**FOLLOW THROUGH** - Continuing swing of the paddle after hitting the ball.

**GAME** - The winning of a predetermined set of points.

**KILL SHOT or "KILLER"** - A ball rebounding from the wall, so close to the floor as to make it practically impossible to return.

**LET** - An instruction to a partner to not hit the ball.

**LOB SHOT** - A ball hit high and softly to the wall, which rebounds in a high arc to a deep part of the court.

**LONG BALL or 'LONG'** - A served ball that lands between and including the side lines but past and including the long line. See Diagram “4”

**MISHIT** – A hit of the ball in a faulty manner.

**NEXT** - The challenge of a waiting team to play against the winners of a game in play.

**ON A FLY or ON THE FLY** - A ball in flight that has not bounced.

**OUT** - A type of game penalty, loss of a serve against the serving team or a point awarded against the offender. Also result of two consecutive Faults.

**OUT BALL** - A ball landing outside of the court's fair playing area.

**PASS SHOT** (Relative to a "Drive Shot") - A hard hit ball to the side of and out of the reach of an opponent.

**PENALTY** - A punishment, handicap, or loss of advantage imposed on a team or competitor for infraction of a rule.

**PLACEMENT** - A ball hit to the spot where it was intended and which is practically impossible to return.

**POINT** - A unit of scoring used to credit a player or teams win of a volley.

**RALLY** - A continued volley between both teams.

**RECEIVER** - Player to whom a ball is served.

**REPLAY** – Renewed start of a “POINT”.

**ROLLER** - A non- returnable “Kill Shot” which rolls away from the wall.

**SAFETY** - A “Block” call made when there is a risk of striking an opponent with the paddle.

**SCREEN** - Interference with an opponent’s sight of the ball during its flight.

**SERVE** - A player’s attempt at placing the ball into play.

**SHORT BALL or "SHORT"** - A serve failing to rebound over the short line before the first bounce.

See Diagram “A ”

**SIDE LINE** - The lines marking the left and right boundaries of the court. See Diagram “A”

**SINGLES** - One player vs. one other player.

**SLICE** - To impart a spin to the ball with the paddle.

**STOP** - Cease of volley.

**STRIKER** - Any player attempting a swing and making contact with the ball.

**SWITCH** - Changing of the hand that holds the paddle.

**TIME OUT** - A stop in play for a specific period of time called by a player, team or official.

**VOLLEY** - The hitting and returning by both teams of the ball before it bounces more than once or outside the playing area.

## **Section 2 - GAME STRUCTURE**

A. Scoring - It is necessary for a side to be serving in order to score a point. Both partners of a side shall serve in succession. The first server shall retain his serve until his team loses the play. His partner shall then serve until his team loses the play. The opposing team shall then serve.

B. Points to win - All games will consist of 15, 21, or 25 points at the Tournament Director’s discretion. All elimination games including the Semi-Finals shall consist of one Z1 point game. In the Finals, a Z5 point game shall decide the championship. All games must be won by a ( 2) Two-Point margin, i.e. 21-19, Winning Score is 22, etc..

R. Legal Strike - At all times, the ball can only be struck with the paddle. The hand (down to the wrist) holding the paddle is considered part of the paddle during play.

C. Official Calls - During tournament play, only the referee or linesmen can call OUTS, FAULTS, SHORTS, LONGS, or BLOCKS. Note: The ball is in play at all times, unless the referee or a linesman stops play by making an official call.

D. Player Appeals - A player is permitted to request an appeal of an official’s call but consideration of the appeal is at the referee’s discretion. After an appeal is considered and voted on, the player must accept the referee’s decision immediately. A player failing to do so or attempting to discuss the call with a linesman shall be penalized at the discretion of the referee. Once play has resumed and the ball is served, no appeal can be entered in reference to any prior play. See ‘Penalties’ Section 6

Note: A team is allotted three appeals per game. Team will only be charged for APPEALS not granted.

## **Section 3 - THE SERVE (Service)**

A. Serving - The act of placing the ball into play by the serving team is called “the serve”. During regular course of doubles play, each player of the serving team is allowed a chance to serve within the legal SERVICE AREA (See "3D’). The server must bounce the ball and strike the ball on the first bounce to create the serve. Failure to do so is a FAULT and will retire the server.

B. First Service - Each serving team is allowed two serves. To decide which team serves first, a coin is tossed. The winners have the option of switching with one serve or receiving by allowing the opponents one serve.

C. Serve Time Limit - The ball must be served within 10 seconds once the score is called by the referee or a "FAULT" will be called.

D. Service Area - The legal service area is defined as the area between the short line and long line and on or between the side lines (See Diagram "A"). A served ball landing in front of, or on the short line is considered a SHORT. A served ball landing behind, or on the long line is considered a LONG. A SHORT or LONG BALL cannot be played and should not be struck at by any player. A player whose serve results in a SHORT or LONG BALL, is allowed a second attempt at a legal serve. Any combination of two SHORTS, LONGS or FAULTS committed by a server, shall retire the server.

E. Serving Zone - While serving, the server must stand within the serving zone which is between the short line and service lines (See Diagram "A")

F. Fault on serve - If while striking the ball, the server steps on or over the short line, side line or service marker, a FAULT will be called. However, a FAULT will not be called if while striking the ball ONLY the paddle should go beyond any of these lines or markers.

G. Return of a serve - The receiving team must return a legally served ball to the fair playing area of the court (See "The Court") before it bounces twice or the receiver will be OUT Also, the receiving team must allow all LONGS or OUTS which they do not intend to play, to bounce. Any contact made with a ball "On the Fly" will be considered an attempt to play the ball.

H. Out Ball on Serve - A served ball landing outside of the sidelines is an OUT BALL even if a FAULT is called on that serve.

I. Movement on Serve - If during the serve, the server or his partner moves out of the way of a fairly served ball, a BLOCK or SCREEN may be called. Should the ball go LONG or OUT, the severest point shall rule. Two consecutive SCREENS by the server will be a loss of serve.

Note: A SCREEN can only be called by the receiver if he was in position to have returned the serve.

J. Strike on Service - A server can only strike the ball once during the serve. Missing the ball entirely while serving is an OUT and retires the server.

K. Server's Partner - While serving, the server's partner must stand outside the side line, between the short line and service line marker and must not enter the court until the served ball has passed him. To do so, shall be a FAULT and two such FAULTS will retire the server.

Note: A fairly served ball passing between a server's partner and the short line is legal as long as server's partner is standing off the court.

L. Server or partner gets hit on serve - If a fairly served ball, before being returned by an opponent, touches the server or his partner, it counts as an OUT, (except as in rule 4F, 4G).

M. Returned ball hitting serving team - A returned ball which strikes a member of the serving team

standing completely off the fair playing area of the court before reaching the wall or bouncing shall be played over so long as the angle and flight of the ball would have reached the wall. Should any question arise after such a play, the referee's decision shall rule.

N. Serve Between Legs - A fairly served ball passing between, but not touching the legs of the server or his partner is a FAULT.

O. Service Lines/ Markers - A receiver may not cross the service markers until a legally served ball has passed the service markers. To do so will result in a point awarded to the serving team. A FAULT or OUT committed by the server as a direct result of a receiver passing the service markers will be canceled. At all times the paddle is a part of the player, and will be considered as such when any judgment on a rule concerning it arises. Also, the serving team cannot step backwards beyond the service markers, until the return of the serve. To do so will result in an OUT against the serving team.

P. Deliberate Delay of Serve - During a serve, deliberate delay exceeding ten seconds after the score has been announced by the referee, shall result in a PENALTY against the offender. (except as in rule 4N).

Q. Keeping the ball dry - Every effort should be made by the server to keep the ball dry. Deliberate violation of this rule shall result in a PENALTY against the offender.

R. Playing legally served ball - A legally served ball that is played by the opponents voids any previous FAULT, (except as in rule 3S).

S. Serving team rules - Should the serving team after committing a SHORT, LONG or FAULT, serve a fair ball, and the serving team creates a BLOCK situation before completion of that play, the serving team shall retain the SHORT, LONG or FAULT on the next service. Should play stop for any other reason, i.e. stray ball on court, etc., the FAULT shall prevail.

#### **Section 4 - PROCESS OF PLAY**

Note: It is the duty of all players to practice safe play at all times possible. The striker is expected to alter his swing to avoid hitting an opponent. Similarly, the receiver is expected to give room for the striker's swing. In the event of a risky play, a SAFETY should be called by the striker.

A. Switching of hands - Players are allowed to switch the paddle from one hand to the other during play.

B. Returned ball strikes opponent - A returned ball touching an opponent and in the judgment of the referee the ball would have reached the fair playing area of the wall, the SERVE will be played over.

C. Player gets struck after illegal movement - At the discretion of the referee, a player who deliberately moves into the path of a return and is struck by either the ball or opponent's paddle, will receive an OUT against him.

D. Ball in Play - Until the ball has been struck or has bounced twice, it may be struck at any number of times by each team alternately.

E. A "Down" ball or "Under" - A DOWN ball, which strikes the floor first, then the wall, is an OUT. It

is also an OUT if the ball hits the corner at the top of the wall.

F. Ball breaking during play - A ball breaking during play immediately stops play, and the POINT is played over. A broken ball during service does not cancel any FAULT preceding the ball breaking. No claim can be made about the last play once the next service is made. Therefore, the ball must be ruled broken by the referee before the next service.

Note: Test for a broken ball can be performed using the “SQUEEZE” method.

G. Foreign object or imperfection on the court - Should the ball hit a foreign object on the court, or should any foreign object enter onto the playing area of the court so as to affect proper play of the ball, the referee will stop play immediately and the SERVE is played over. At the referee's discretion, a DEAD BALL or DO-OVER may be called when the ball hits an imperfection on the court.

Note: The tournament director shall determine rulings on any court imperfections prior to play.

H. “Out Ball” definition - After the serve, any ball in play which bounces outside the side lines or past the long line is ruled as an OUT.

I. Ball touching body - A player while in the act of striking the ball with his paddle lets the ball touch any part of his body, will receive an OUT against him.

J. Player touches live ball - At no time should a player catch or stop a ball rebounding from the wall while it is in play or before it bounces once or twice. This will result in an OUT against the offender.

K. Player hits own team with ball - A player hitting his partner or himself with the ball during play, will receive an OUT against him

L. Player gets hit with live ball - If during play, a striker hits a ball which bounces past one or both opponents in a way impossible for the opponent's team to return, then in turn touches the striking team, the point shall go to the striker's team. However, should the ball pass one or both opponents and then touch the striker or his partner “On the Fly”, regardless of where they may be standing, the striking team is OUT unless a FAULT or BLOCK had been called.

M. Game delay - Play will never be suspended to allow a player to recover his strength or wind. In a case of “INTENTIONAL DELAY”, the referee after giving due warning, shall issue a PENALTY against the offender. See rule 4N.

N. Time Outs - A player or side is entitled to two separate one minute time outs in a 15 point game and three one-minute timeouts in a 21 or 25 point game. A player may request a ten-second time out for wiping glasses, tying laces or the like and only upon the referee's permission, may such a time out be granted. Flagrant abuse of requesting such wipes may result in an OFFICIAL WARNING.

Note: In the case of extreme weather conditions affecting one or more players, only the referee or tournament director may authorize unlimited wipes.

O. Game Postponement - A game postponed due to the elements, shall resume where play had ended.

P. Player Substitution - Substitution of partners after the start of a tournament is not permitted.

Q. Injury to Player - In case of a purely accidental injury, one ten minute rest period shall be allotted the injured player. Should the injured player resume play before the end of this period and the injury recurs, or if another injury is suffered, no additional rest time will be allotted to the player. If the injured player is unable to continue, the injured player's partner can continue the game on his own for that game only. For any subsequent game(s), a player cannot start without his partner.

Note: Should a player cause an injury through wild and / or reckless play to an opponent and the opponent is unable to resume play after the allotted 10 minute rest period, the referee may award the game to the injured player's team.

R. Rest periods between games - A (5) five minute rest period is allowed between any match before the Quarter-Finals. Fifteen minutes will be allowed before the Semi-Finals and Finals.

S. Conversation between players - Unnecessary or excessive talking during play will result in a PENALTY against the offender. At no time should play cease when a player is loudly calling an order to his partner, (i.e. "leave, long, out etc").

T. Player losing paddle - During service or play, any player losing possession of his paddle shall result in an OUT against him.

Note: Should a player have his paddle dislodged from his hand by an opponent, play shall stop immediately and the point played over.

U. Ball strikes opponent "On the Fly" - A player who is struck by a ball which has rebounded off the wall while still "On the Fly" is OUT regardless of where the player may have been standing. See rule 4L.

V. Ball passing between legs - If a ball passes between the legs of the striker or his partner during play, the opponent can call a BLOCK as long the opponent has a play for the ball.

## **Section 5 – BLOCKS**

A. Referee Calls - The referee may call BLOCKS, FAULTS or SAFETYS and rule on all questions which may arise during a game.

B. Stoppage of Play - When the referee calls a BLOCK, FAULT, etc., as the case may be, play stops immediately thereby canceling any play that may follow.

Note, ONLY the referee can make these calls.

C. Player calling "Safety" - A player in the process of playing a ball should call a SAFETY wherein he refrains from swinging for reasonable fear of injuring an opponent with the ball or paddle. Upon a SAFETY call from a player, the referee shall determine the validity of the call and whether the play shall cease. The referee will stop play by calling out "STOP", "SAFETY", or "BLOCK". Needless SAFETY calls by a player can result in a PENALTY against the offender.

D. Player's paddle touches opponent - Play will stop immediately and the point played over, if while in the act of swinging at a ball, a player touches an opponent or opponent's paddle with his paddle before striking the ball, as long as the striker was in a position to have returned the ball. At all times, the



paddle is part of the player and will be considered as such when any judgment on a rule concerning it arises.

E. Player Interference - A player who unintentionally interferes with either opponent in such a way as to prevent either opponent from having a fair chance at returning the ball is a BLOCK. A player pursuing the ball and moving in a backward direction must be given a reasonable attempt by the opposing team to play the ball. Intentional crossing in front of, or backing into an opponent who is returning a ball in play, will result in an OUT against the offender. Interference purely with an opponent's vision is not a BLOCK as explained in rule 5G.

F. Illegal Movement - Deliberate moving of a player into the path of a ball in play by an opponent will result in an OUT against the offender. A BLOCK shall be called should the above occur accidentally.

G. Visual Block ? - A BLOCK cannot be called because a player cannot see the ball.

H. Reckless Play - Any player who persists in wild or reckless play after verbal warning by the referee will be issued a PENALTY at the discretion of the referee.

I. Player Calls - During play, should a player call for a BLOCK (not a Safety Block), play must continue until the referee honors the call. Should the call be honored, the referee shall confirm the call by yelling "STOP", "BLOCK" or "SAFETY" and play will cease immediately.

J. Illegal Movement by Partner - While in the act of striking the ball, the striker's partner moves in front of, or alongside of either opponent thereby blocking the opponent, a BLOCK shall be called. A BLOCK will not be called if the player interferes with his own partner.

K. Intentional Contact - Intentional contact of ANY type by a player against an opponent during play will result in an OUT against the offender. The referee shall rule on the intent of contact.

## **Section 6 - INFRACTIONS, PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT**

The referee makes the final decision on any questions that may arise concerning plays, infractions, blocks, faults, safety's, etc.. Refusing to abide by the referee's decision and/or flagrant abuse of the U.S.P.A. rules and policies herein, in any manner, will result in an appropriate penalty. The referee and/or tournament officials reserve the right to forward a report of a player's conduct to the U.S.P.A.'s Board of Directors for further enforcement.

### **Examples of Infractions:**

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- Foul Language
- Profanity
- Deliberate Stalling
- Deliberate Distraction of Opponent
- Intentional Blocking
- Refusing to abide by the Referee or Tournament Director's decision
- Talking to the Referee or Linesman

## Examples of Penalties and Enforcement:

- Official Warning (Yellow Card). Will be reported to the USPA.
- Loss of point by deduction.
- Loss of game through disqualification
- Expulsion from tournament. Also result of two Official \Warnings.
- Suspension from any number of USPA tournaments.
- Revocation of USPA Membership.

## RULES FOR SINGLES PLAY

All doubles rules apply as well to singles, in the singular rather than the plural sense. The following are the only exceptions:

A. Service Area - The server may serve from any part of the court within the service area, (between the short line and service markers), and MUST serve to the major area of the court.

B. Major Area of Court - Where the server begins his service, establishes the major area on the court. Not necessarily when where contact is made with the ball and paddle. However, should the server while striking the ball, move onto the major area of the court, a FAULT will not be called, so long as a legally served ball lands on the remaining major area of the court, and a hinder or FAULT has not been committed by either side.

C. Linesman responsibility - It is the duty of one of the side linesmen to observe the server's position and to call a FAULT or OUT should a served ball land anywhere else other than the major area of the court.

D. Non-Playable area of the court - Should the serve land anywhere other than the major area of the court, it should be a BLOCK, FAULT, SHORT, LONG or OUT.

E. Player service selection - Once the server elects to serve from a particular area of the court Within the service zone, should he commit a BLOCK, FAULT, SHORT or LONG, he must complete his serve from the area he has chosen.

F. Serving from Center - Should the server elect to stand in the center of the court, he must point out to his opponent which side of the court his serve shall go. Neglect by the server to notify his opponent of this is a FAULT.

G. Serving to Minor Area - Should the server elect to serve to the minor or lesser area of the Court, he must so indicate it to his opponent (neglect to do so is a FAULT).

## OFFICIAL ONE-WALL RACQUETBALL RULES

The preceding Official One-Wall Paddleball Rules apply for One-Wall Racquetball. Where the word "paddle" appears, the word "racquet" should be substituted. The following are the only other changes for the One-Wall Racquetball game.

**EQUIPMENT:** The racquet will have a maximum head length of 11 inches and width of 9 inches. These measurements are computed from the outer edge of the racquet head rims. The handle may not

exceed a total of 7 inches. Total length and width of the racquet will not exceed 27 inches. The racquet frame may be made of any material. The strings of the racquet must be gut, monofilament or nylon strand, but cannot be of steel or metal. A racquet found unfit for play by a referee will not be permitted for use in any tournament game.

**THE BALL:** The ball's dimension shall be 2 1/4 inches in diameter; weigh approximately 1.4 ounces; have a hardness of 55-60 inches durometer and bounce 68"-72" inches from a 100" drop at a temperature of 70-74 degrees Fahrenheit.

### **Credits..**

Mr. Chris Lecakes  
Original President  
United States Paddleball Association, U.S.Pb.A.

Henry A. Marquez  
Current President  
United States Paddleball Association, Inc.

### **The 2006 U.S.P.A. Rules Committee Members**

Ronald Ling, Alfred Santiago, Keith Jackson, Andrew Krosnick, Michael Waters, Ralph Gonzalez, Alfredo Ramirez and Henry A. Marquez

### **The 2017 U.S.P.A. Rules Committee Members**

Ronald Ling, Alfred Santiago, Keith Jackson, Andrew Krosnick, Kenneth Armwood and Henry A. Marquez

### ***A Special Thanks..***

***I'd like to express my sincerest gratitude to the above professionals for their time on the "2017 Rules Revision Project". Their dedication to our wonderful sport is unparalleled and it was an honor to once again work with them. I would also like to thank the honorable Mr. Chris Lecakes and his family for their personal trust in me and for the authorization to revise his original rules of One-Wall Paddleball.***

***Henry A. Marquez***