75-Minute Beginner Pickleball Lesson Plan

Pickleball IQ
Instructor Quick Guide

Lesson goal: Give complete beginners enough knowledge and confidence to join a social game safely. Keep explanations short, demonstrate visually, and get players hitting balls as quickly as possible.

Time	Focus	Main outcome
0-5	Welcome, safety and grouping	Safety understood; groups of four.
5-15	Court orientation and paddle feel	Court areas and basic contacts.
15-30	Serve and return	Legal crosscourt serve; return after bounce.
30-40	Two-bounce rule and NVZ	Bounce sequence and kitchen rules.
40-70	Guided games	Scoring, positioning and doubles flow.
70-75	Wrap-up	Questions and next steps.

0-5 min | Welcome, safety and grouping

- **Welcome:** Reassure players that the aim is to learn enough to start playing - not to master every stroke.
- **Safety:** Court shoes; call 'ball' for stray balls; stop play when a ball enters the court; avoid running backwards; stay aware of nearby players.
- **Warm-up:** Encourage a warm-up before play; a full warm-up routine is outside this short lesson.
- **Groups:** Aim for four players per court with one coach.

5-15 min | Court orientation and paddle feel

- **Point out:** sidelines, baselines, centreline, service courts and the Non-Volley Zone (NVZ/kitchen).
- **Let them hit early:** A few relaxed contacts across the net before detailed instruction.
- **Demonstrate briefly:** dink, volley and groundstroke/drive. The goal is familiarity, not technical perfection.
- **Dink cue:** short pendulum-like swing, relaxed grip and controlled lift over the net.

15-30 min | Serve and return of serve

- **Demonstrate:** volley serve and drop serve.
- **Volley serve:** upward arm motion; contact not above the waist; paddle head not above the highest part of the wrist at contact.
- **Drop serve:** release without throwing or adding force, allow a bounce, then strike. Volley-serve swing restrictions do not apply.
- **Position:** serve diagonally crosscourt from behind the baseline, between the imaginary extensions of the centreline and sideline.
- **Serve-catch drill:** serve to the opposite diagonal service court; receiver catches. About five repetitions, then swap sides.
- **Return drill:** let the serve bounce, return it deep, and have the serving side catch. Rotate servers.
- **Tactical cue:** a deep return gives the receiving team time to move toward the NVZ.

Rules, Guided Play and Coach Checklist

30-40 min | Two-bounce rule and the kitchen

- **Two-bounce rule:** The serve must bounce before the receiving team returns it, and that return must bounce before the serving team hits it. After those two bounces, either team may volley or play after a bounce.
- **Coach cue:** Call 'one bounce' and 'two bounce' during the first few rallies.
- **NVZ:** Players may stand in the kitchen and play balls that have bounced. They may not volley while touching the NVZ or its line.
- **Momentum:** A volley is also a fault if momentum carries the player - or anything worn/carried - into the NVZ.
- **Positioning:** Encourage the receiving team to move forward after a good deep return.

40-70 min | Guided games

- **Traditional side-out scoring:** Only the serving team scores. Games are normally to 11, win by 2. Use shortened games if needed.
- **Three-part doubles score:** serving team's score - receiving team's score - server number. The opening service sequence starts with only one server.
- **Call the score before every serve.** If players are unsure, let the group help work it out.
- **Coach the flow:** Prioritise legal serve, serve bounce, return bounce, kitchen awareness, safe movement and basic positioning rather than stopping every minor error.
- **Simple pattern:** serve in, return deep, move forward when appropriate, then play the rally.
- **Rotate attention:** Make sure every player serves, returns and experiences normal rallies.

Coach priority	What to watch for
Safety	Balance, mobility, footwear, stray-ball awareness and unsafe backwards movement.
Serve	Legal action, correct diagonal target, behind baseline.
Return	Bounce first; aim for useful depth.
Two-bounce rule	Serving team lets the return bounce before playing it.
NVZ	No volley while touching the kitchen or line; understand momentum faults.
Positioning	Receiving team moves forward after a suitable return.
Scoring	Score called before serving; server 1 / server 2 begins to make sense.

70-75 min | Wrap-up

- Ask for final questions and reinforce the rules beginners are most likely to forget: two bounces, kitchen volleys and calling the score.
- Explain the club's next step for beginners, if applicable.
- End positively: the aim is confidence and safe participation, not perfect technique.

Public-guide note: Keep membership screening, eligibility decisions, refunds and club-specific progression requirements in a separate private coach addendum. This keeps the printable guide portable and focused.

Rules note

This version reflects the standard 2026 rules used by Pickleball Australia / the Global Pickleball Federation, including the volley serve, drop serve, two-bounce rule, traditional side-out scoring and Non-Volley Zone rules. Clubs using a different scoring format can adapt the guided-game section.