



2024 Biofreeze USA Pickleball National Championships

PADDLE TESTING POLICY

USA Pickleball will require mandatory paddle testing for all players competing in a Pro, Champions Pro, or Masters Pro Main Draw events. Testing will be conducted by USA Pickleball. All paddle testing decisions are made by USA Pickleball and decisions are final.

Paddles will be tested for Surface Roughness and Delamination. The specifications of each test are outlined below:

Surface Roughness

Surface roughness will be tested per 2.E.2.a.1 in the Equipment Standards manual and per “6.9 Surface Roughness Test” on the NTS Test standard doc. The testing instrument will be the Starrett SR300. The Standards and Certification call for an Rz of 30 microns and an Rt of 40 microns. However, considering this is not a lab-controlled environment and the players cannot be responsible for known quality control issues in the manufacturing community, a 10% margin will be allowed during this testing process.

Delamination

Rule 2.E.2 states the paddle’s hitting surface shall not contain delamination, holes, cracks or indentations that break the paddle skin or surface. The ultrasonic bond tester, Olympus BondMaster 600, will be utilized to test the paddle for delamination. This system will discover deterioration/flaws within the paddle – specifically delamination, disbonding, and crushed core, which are leading contributors to higher deflection.

The standard for delamination as tested by the Olympus BondMaster 600 is 50% or .5 from the X Y of 0-0. A 10% margin of error will be allowed during this testing process to account for environmental factors.

Testing Procedure:

Every Main Draw player must have his/her paddle(s) tested prior to the player’s first match of each APP Tour tournament (but not prior to each bracket). (A maximum of two paddles per player will be tested when other players are waiting for testing.) If a paddle passes testing, USA Pickleball will apply a serialized, non-transferrable sticker to the paddle.

Once a paddle has passed testing, it will be deemed playable for the entirety of the event excluding medal matches. Only paddles with a paddle testing sticker from the current tournament will be permitted on court.

UPDATE 6.28.24: PADDLES MUST BE RETESTED FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PRO MATCHES:

--MAIN DRAW SEMIFINALS

--BRONZE MEDAL MATCHES

--CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES

If a paddle does not pass the testing conducted by USA Pickleball, the paddle will remain in the custody of USA Pickleball until the player has concluded his/her final match in the tournament, at which time the player may claim their paddle from the testing center. Any paddles not claimed by the end of the APP Tournament will be securely discarded. Test results for paddles not passing testing will not be made public.

All players competing in a Championship match will be required to have his/her paddles re-tested on the day of the Championship match and prior to arriving on court for the player's first Championship match. Only paddles with a paddle testing sticker from the day of the Championships will be permitted on court on Championship match day.

USAP may also in its sole discretion require random paddle testing for a USAP Qualifying Event. Where USAP implements random testing, it will be done via a random number generator, drawing by lot, or other random method of selecting numbers/players. Players will be notified by text message, email, and/or in person by the head referee and will be required to present to the paddle testing area prior to playing their first Qualifying Event. Players that are selected for random paddle testing will only be allowed to use paddles that have been tested and have an approved sticker in all subsequent matches. Players that advance to the Main Draw from a Qualifying Event that have already been subject to random testing will not need to re-test their paddles prior to the start of the Main Draw. Players that advance to the Main Draw from a Qualifying Event and have not been subject to random testing will be required to have their paddle(s) tested prior to their first Main Draw match.

Players are encouraged to have their paddles tested the day before their first pro event. Players who fail to have their paddle(s) tested as required will be subject to a match forfeit if they do not have a paddle with a current testing sticker to play with at the time their match is ready to start. A game forfeit takes place if a player is 10 minutes late for a match after it is called; the entire match is forfeited if a player is 15 minutes late (Rule 13.H.4).

No Tampering/No Player Challenges:

Prior to each pro match, the Referee will visually inspect each paddle for non-compliance with USA Pickleball rules and signs of paddle or sticker tampering. (Tampering is defined as attempting to remove, replace or otherwise alter the sticker once it has been applied to a paddle). A Referee who determines evidence of non-compliance or post-testing tampering of a paddle or sticker will not allow the player to compete with the paddle. The Referee will collect the paddle and turn it over to the USA Pickleball tester to be re-tested or held until the player has concluded his/her final match in the tournament.

A Referee who observes a change in paddle performance during a match may in his/her discretion summon the USA Pickleball tester to observe the performance of the paddle. If the tester observes indications that the paddle may have experienced delamination, the Referee will advise the player to have the paddle retested after the conclusion of the match without penalty. *When needed, the Head Referee may summon a USAP paddle tester to assist with making a determination.* If the paddle does not pass testing, it will be placed in the custody of USA Pickleball.

Player Challenges will not be accepted under this policy.

Any player who intentionally tampers (as defined above) with a paddle or sticker after testing is complete may be subject to disqualification from the tournament.

These rules and policies are subject to review and modification at the sole discretion of USAP.

(end of policy)