



## “Coulda” Lobbed It Student Handout

### TECHNIQUE

- 🏓 Paddle facing upward, balanced position, contact in front of you, get under the ball, follow through with an out and upward motion.
- 🏓 Try to disguise your lob.
- 🏓 For more difficulty, add top spin to an offensive lob.

### WHEN and WHY to use a Lob Shot:

- 🏓 The offensive lob is an especially effective strategy if;
  - Your opponents aren't quick or mobile.
  - Opponents don't communicate well with each other.
  - One of them is short.
  - They have a weak overhead return /smash
  - The elements like sun in their eyes or hitting into the wind are in your favour.
- 🏓 The offensive lob works best when your opponent is near the non-volley zone line, leaning in and anticipating a dink. A good offensive lob is best hit over and behind your opponent and towards their non-paddle side with a slightly flattened trajectory.
- 🏓 The defensive pickleball lob is used to buy time (when your opponents are at the NVZ line, and keeping you back on your heels). It helps you be able to reposition and get back on the offense by forcing opponents to their own baseline. The defensive lob is usually a more up and down trajectory (less angled).
- 🏓 Although you can lob the pickleball from the transition area or near the baseline, it is more difficult to execute, and has a lower percentage of success.

### DEFENDING a Lob

- 🏓 Anticipate the lob by watching opponent's paddle movement.
- 🏓 Keep playing to opponent's backhand (players rarely lob from backhand).
- 🏓 Return with an overhead smash.
- 🏓 Run back, let the ball bounce and either drop your return in the kitchen or do a deep lob return.
- 🏓 Communicate with your partner on who chases down the lob (depending on position and mobility) and “switch” when necessary.
- 🏓 Move with your partner both forward, back and side to side.

### CHASING DOWN the Lob – step by step

- 🏓 Take a small step back and to the side, so that you run backwards (do not backpedal), turn your body, and run towards the baseline.
- 🏓 Run to the side of the pickleball, so that the pickleball is one to two feet to the paddle side of your body (your forehand is likely stronger than your backhand, so keep the pickleball on your paddle side).
- 🏓 Run beyond the point of the bounce and prepare your paddle.
- 🏓 Firmly plant your paddle-side foot to stop and strike the pickleball - you should hit the pickleball out in front of your body after the bounce.

- 🏓 A switch is effective if a lob pulls one player into the same side of the court as his or her partner. The partner that is not taking the shot off the lob should yell “switch” and move to the other side of the pickleball court.
- 🏓 When returning a lob off the bounce, your goal is to reset the point - hit a shot that allows you and your partner to get back to the NVZ line. There are generally three options when returning a lob off the bounce:
  - The first option is to hit a drop shot after the lob bounces. This is the preferred shot off of the lob, as it is the highest percentage shot.
  - The second option is to hit a drive off of the lob that bounces. This is a more difficult shot, as you are running backward, and simultaneously trying to generate forward momentum for your drive. If executed well however, this shot can catch your opponent off guard.
  - The third option is to hit a deep lob return. This is a risky, low percentage shot as you may be setting up your opponents for a smash, or hitting out of court.

### **The DANGERS of Lobbing**

- 🏓 While the lob shot can be an effective tool, it can also put you in a bad position if you miscalculate even slightly (height, depth, placement). So, it's best to save this shot for times when you're prepared and can deliver it accurately. Otherwise, you run a high risk of getting the ball slammed back or making an unforced error yourself.
- 🏓 Lob shots are difficult to execute outside on a windy day.
- 🏓 A lob shot is best suited for beginner to intermediate skill levels – higher level and more athletic players can anticipate the lob and smash it or run to the back line and execute a return to reset the point.

### **The LOB SERVE in Pickleball?**

- 🏓 To hit a lob serve, hold the paddle face up. With slow to medium speed swing your arm from the shoulder and hit the ball up and forward (generate power from your shoulder and legs rather than your wrist).
- 🏓 The lob serve is not about power - it's about finesse, speed and deep placement.
- 🏓 A good follow-through will ensure your ball arcs high and deep, pushing your opponent back as far as possible.
- 🏓 A lob serve is a useful tool when done correctly - it puts pressure on your opponents by keeping them back, making their return shorter, setting you up for a good third shot and generally changing the flow of the game.
- 🏓 Avoid short lob serves which put you at a disadvantage (deep returns from opponent)

### **How Do You RETURN A LOB SERVE in Pickleball?**

- 🏓 Once you recognize the lob, drop back a bit and square up to the net to place the ball in front of you. Move into the ball on its bounce to take on its power - avoid chasing the ball and/or hitting the ball behind you.
- 🏓 After the bounce, return the ball as quickly as possible. Hitting it right after the bounce makes the best use of the kinetic energy (meaning there is less effort for you to return it deep).
- 🏓 Focus on hitting a controlled shot. Aim to return the lob with depth and placement, keeping it low and close to the baseline to prevent your opponent from attacking.