



Cup of Joe

WHAT ARE
YOUR PRIORITIES?

What's the major pickleball difference between women and men?

SUBMITTED BY JOE DINOFFER

In this “Cup of Joe” let's compare the genders in terms of pickleball. While the conclusions may line up with commonly observed characteristics, having real statistics to confirm the observations is arguably important. The two match statistics we will look at for men versus women are the percentage of touch shots and also the length of the average point.

In men's doubles, 40% of the balls hit are touch shots, and their points average 8.6 hits. However, in women's doubles or mixed, the touch shot average is 45%, and the average point is 9.6 hits or 12% longer compared to men-only matches.

The logical behavioral reason for this discrepancy is that women tend to be more patient than men. In pickleball, patience is truly a virtue with real-life benefits. The fact that touch shots play such an important role in pickleball results in two of the big attractions of the sport. First, that it is a gender equalizer. And, second, that it is a power neutralizer.

What do these percentages mean in practical terms? To prepare for doubles play, whether you are a male or female player, nearly half of your practice time should be spent on dinks off the bounce and soft controlled volleys. And, slightly more than half of your practice time should be spent on various full-stroke shots. These include the serve, a drive return, chip return, drive volley, and overhead. Just remember to practice not only forehands, but backhands as well. •



Joe Dinoffer is a master professional in the USPTA and PTR, has written seven tennis books and 22 DVDs, and has appeared on the Tennis Channel. His company, www.OncourtOffcourt.com, manufactures training aids for pickleball and tennis. He brings that experience and passion to pickleball in this regular column of Pickleball Magazine.