



THE BUSINESS OF PICKLEBALL

JULY 2024 VOL. 1, NO. 4

ISSUE OVERVIEW

Welcome to the July issue of *The Business of Pickleball*.

The lawsuit filed by Joola against USA Pickleball continues to grab attention. A response to the complaint needs to be filed by USA Pickleball on July 22nd, at which time we will have both sides of the story to evaluate.

I have written an opinion piece with suggestions on how USA Pickleball might modify the existing Equipment Standards Program. I know they are looking at changes and I hope my suggestions are useful. I would love to hear reader response to this article.

Daniel Moore, former National Pickleball Champion and resident of Japan has written a great article with an overview of the Japanese pickleball market. Thanks Daniel, the article is very informative!

There continues to be great excitement and growth throughout the pickleball world. We cover lots of details in this issue and are working on exciting content for next month as well.

Cheers,

David

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Benchmarks

We are tracking indicators that show the general health of the pickleball industry

Pickleball Business Dashboard

Pickleball Jobs

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
LinkedIn	164	192	236	238	249	237

source: internet

Pickleball Trademarks

	Mar	Apr	May	June
Registered	320	332	332	320
Pending with Pickleball in term		539	550	554
Pending with term or in description		1261	1200	1192

source: USPTO, PCG analysis

Pickleball Courts - Indoor and Outdoor

	April	May	June
Indoor	19,634	20,212	20,554
Outdoor	38,923	40,557	41,644
Total Courts	58,557	60,769	62,198

source: Pickleheads

Franchise Tracking - Open Facilities

	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>
Ace Pickleball	2	3	3	3
Dill Dinkers	4	4	4	5
Pickleball Kingdom	2	2	2	2
The Picklr	8	8	9	11

source: company provided or company web site

Non-Profits

Pickleball Non-Profits with revenue over \$100,000:

Organization	990 year	Revenue	Assets	Salaries
USA Pickleball Association	2022	4,563,198	1,399,917	1,288,879
Pictona at Holly Hill Inc.	2022	1,428,562	375,640	676,907
Professional Pickleball Registry Inc.	2022	1,181,212	758,102	364,534
Pickleball Cares, Inc..	2023	479,180	263,647	44,833
International Pickleball Teaching Professional Assoc.	2022	463,589	900,632	66,258
Grand Rapids Pickleball Inc.	2022	462,964	154,057	
White Squirrel Pickleball Association	2022	357,690	349,983	
Isle Area Pickleball Association	2023	246,348	31,875	
Rivertown Pickleball of Southern Indiana Inc.	2023	243,266	798,306	
Pickleball University	2022	220,946	364,355	56,086
Pickleball Lincoln Inc.	2023	197,136	340,217	
Music City Pickleball	2023	196,355	123,432	56,305
Bend Pickleball Club	2022	176,740	229,748	
Opelika Pickleball Club	2023	166,410	47,104	
VA Pickleball Inc.	2022	163,904	51,115	
USA Pickleball Mountain Region	2023	141,844	16,648	
Super Senior International Pickleball Association	2023	138,485	192,096	
Annapolis Pickleball Club	2023	128,377	121,689	
Arizona Pickleball Players League Inc.	2023	126,028	98,475	
Saddlebrooke Pickleball Association	2023	123,002	175,322	
Council Bluffs Area Pickleball Club	2023	121,993	140,699	
Middletown Pickleball Assoc. Inc.	2022	118,565	89,427	
Seattle Metro Pickleball Association	2022	118,500	71,281	
Santa Monica Pickleball Club	2022	117,033	53,073	
Sunrise Pickleball Club	2022	113,143	201,655	
Anchorage Pickleball Club Inc.	2023	106,342	62,563	

Outdoor Court Facilities

	City	Open	# indoor courts	# outdoor courts	Total Courts	Restaurant	Cafe	Bar/Lounge	Pro Shop	Locker Rooms
East Naples Community Park	East Naple FL	yes	0	65	65					
Riverland Sports & Fitness	Port St Lucie FL	yes	0	53	53		yes			yes
Arizona Athletic Grounds	Mesa AZ	yes	0	41	41	yes	yes			
Los Cab	Fountain Valley, CA	yes	0	39	39					
Chippewa Valley	WI	yes	15	38	53					
Pictona	Holly Hill FL	yes	12	36	49	yes	yes		yes	yes
Green Valley Recreation Pickleball Club	Green Valley, AZ	yes	0	36	36					
Chira Tennis Academy	Poway, CA	yes	0	36	36					
Oasis Pickleball Club	Rockwell TX	yes	8	32	42				yes	
Newport Beach	Newport Beach CA	yes	0	31	31				yes	
Resort	Palm Desert CA	yes	0	28	28		yes	yes	yes	
Tattnall Pickleball Center	Macon GA	yes	0	26	26					
The Hub	San Diego	yes	0	26	26					
Pickleball Virginia Beach	Virginia Beach, VA	yes	0	25	25			yes	yes	yes
Little Valley	St George UT	yes	0	24	24					
Opelika Sportsplex	Opelika AL	yes	0	24	24		yes			yes
Pickleplex	Punta Gorda FL	yes	0	24	24					
Johnson Ranch	Roseville CA	yes	0	24	24		yes			yes
Pickleball at Sawyer Point	Cincinnati OH	yes	0	24	24					
Lilac Pickleball Courts	FL	yes	0	24	24					
Sunset Park	Las Vegas, NV	yes	0	24	24					
Huntington Beach	Huntington Beach, CA	yes	0	24	24					
Palmetto Dunes Resort	Hilton Head Island, SC	yes	0	24	24				yes	
Apex Simms Street Rec Center	Arvada, Colorado	yes	2	24	26					
Frontier Family Park	Queen Creek AZ	yes	0	24	24					
Rome Downtown Racquets Center	Rome GA	yes	0	22	22					yes
Bobby Riggs Racquet and Paddle Club	Encinitas, CA	yes	0	22	22					
Sobaba	San Jacinto CA	yes	0	21	21	yes		yes		yes
Paradise Pickleball	Palm Desert, CA	yes	0	21	21				yes	
Gates Tennis Center	Denver, CO	yes	0	20	20				yes	
Cranberry Township	PA	yes	0	19	29					
Manzano Mesa	Alb NM	yes	0	18	18					
Lakeview Knolls Park	Maple Valley MN	yes	0	18	18					
East Riverside Park	Greer SC	yes	0	18	18					
Sun City Hilton Head Pickleball Club	Bluffton, SC	yes	0	18	18					
Fort Rock Park	Sunriver, OR	yes	0	18	18					
Desert Ridge Resort & Spa	Pheonix AZ	yes	0	17	17	yes		yes	yes	yes
Danny Cuniff Park	Highland Park IL	yes	0	16	16					
Gilbert Regional Park	Gilbert, AZ	yes	0	16	16					
West Monroe Sports & Events	West Monroe, LA	yes	0	16	16					
The Pickleball Playground	Knoxville, TN	yes	11	16	27			yes	yes	yes
Orchard Hill Park	Cedar Falls, IA	yes	0	16	16					
Sun N Fun RV Resort	Nokomis, FL	yes	0	16	16					
Palomares Park	Pomona, CA	yes	0	16	16					
Greenwood Community Park	Baker, LA	yes	0	16	16					
Incline Village Tennis & Pickleball Center	Incline Village NV	yes	0	15	15				yes	
Monument Valley Park	Colorado Springs CO	yes	0	15	15					
Mentor Pickleball Courts	Mentor, OH	yes	0	15	15					
Samuell Grand Tennis Center	Dallas TX	yes	0	14	14					
Willow Pass Park	Concord, CA	yes	0	14	14					
Ira Allen Park	Mapleton, UT	yes	0	14	14					
Horseshoe Bay Resort	Horseshoe Bay, TX	yes	0	14	14					

PPA Tour Host City RFP Details

Take a look at how the PPA Tour markets itself to potential host cities. Interesting data based mostly on 2023 numbers.



Key data points from the presentation:

- 25+ tournaments per year
- 1,200+ players per tournament
- 15,000+ spectators
- PPA estimates 1,750 to 2,000 room nights per tournament
- PPA estimates an average PPA Tour generates an economic impact of \$3,500,000 per tournament
- venue will receive new court surfaces at the conclusion of the tournament
- at least 30 pickleball courts required plus 1 "center court" with seating for 2,000
- adequate parking for 5,000 attendees at peak attendance
- locker rooms for men and women pro players, including 20 lockers per locker room
- additional rooms required include a pro player lounge, referee lounge and media room
- 200 mbps private upload internet for tournament use

BROADCAST PARTNERS

Top broadcast partners partnering with the PPA to deliver live pickleball content. The only pickleball tour ever on “three-letter networks.”

PPA Tour 2024 Committed National Broadcast Hours

50 Hours: ESPN
50 Hours: FOX, FS1
100 Hours: Tennis Channel
80 Hours: Amazon Prime
100 Hours: PBTv



Legal, Intellectual Property

Trademarks

Trademark protection is an important component of protecting your company's intellectual property. While we are not trademark experts, we have navigated the US Patent and Trademark database to highlight trademarks with the word pickleball in the term or the description:

Trademark applications in June 2024 with pickleball in term		
ALIEN PICKLEBALL	IC 028: Paddles for use in paddle ball games.	Alien Pickleball Sports LLC
CAPE ANN PICKLEBALL EST 2023	IC 041: Providing personal fitness training for pickleball	Broach, Dale
CAROLINA PICKLEBALL	IC 041: Organizing, conducting and operating pickleball tournaments	Carolina Pickleball Club, LLC
CAT 5 CATEGORY 5 INDOOR PICKLEBALL	IC 025: Caps being headwear; Caps with visors; Shirts; Shirts	Category 5 Pickleball, LLC
FLAMINGO PICKLEBALL	IC 028: Paddles for playing a paddleball-style sport	Flamingo Athletics LLC
H HEXA PICKLEBALL	IC 028: Paddles for use in paddle ball games.; IC 018: Backpacks.; IC 025: Hats.	Hexa Pickleball LLC
META PICKLEBALL PADDLES	IC 028: Sport balls; Sporting goods	Gramling, James, Bradley
MOJO PICKLEBALL	IC 028: Paddles for use in paddle ball games	Plan B Marketing, Inc
PICKLEBALL WAREHOUSE	IC 035: On-line retail store services featuring clothing for paddle sports	Sports Warehouse, Inc.
P3 PERFORMANCE PICKLEBALL PRODUCTS	IC 028: Perforated plastic balls for playing a paddleball-style sport.	P3 Center, LLC
PANTHER PICKLEBALL	IC 025: Clothing; Sports apparel, namely, jerseys, shirts, shorts, and caps.	Sinergy Marketing LLC
PERFORMANCE PICKLEBALL RVA	IC 025: clothing, hats, and other apparel.; IC 041: organization	Performance Pickleball, LLC
PICKLEBALL MON\$Y ASSOCIATION	IC 041: Arranging, organizing, conducting, and hosting social entertainment events	Warren Fulgenzi
PICKLEBALL MON\$Y TOUR	IC 041: Arranging, organizing, conducting, and hosting social entertainment events	Warren Fulgenzi
PICKLEBALL TO CURE SCLERODERMA	IC 036: Charitable fundraising.	National Scleroderma Foundation
RAW PICKLEBALL	IC 028: Pickleball paddle equipment and accessories	Pro Pickle USA
SEASIDE PICKLEBALL	IC 041: It's a pickle ball league..	ACQ LLC
UTOPOS PICKLEBALL SOCIETY	IC 035: Association services	Quantum Wave Holdings LLC

Trademarks granted in May 2024 with pickleball in term		
MOJO PICKLEBALL	IC 025: Headbands; Headwear; Hoodies; Leggings	Plan B Marketing, Inc
WESTON PICKLEBALL CLUB	IC 041: Organizing, arranging, and conducting of events	Bright Notes Productions Inc
PICKLEBALL N' DA HOOD	IC 041: Entertainment services, namely, an ongoing series featuring sports	Clark Sports and Social Club

USA Pickleball Equipment Standards Program

The recent Joola / USAP dispute is not the first time the governing body has been involved in a divisive equipment battle. Over the last 15+ years I have been involved to some extent in disputes over the Apike paddle, the Apex paddle, and the new bounce rules for indoor balls.

I propose the following outline of a program that might address the process of regulating paddles and balls to help avoid disruptive disputes that can have considerable negative impact on manufacturers, players and the governing body.

Pickleball has a unique history of competitiveness and community. It has evolved as a sport for all ages and abilities. This core group of amateurs generally play on their local courts and play in local tournaments and leagues. The attributes that attracted these players needs to be the “north star” driving equipment standards. There will always be pressure from manufacturers and higher-level players to push equipment innovation. While equipment standards can allow for innovation, the standards must always keep in mind what is best for the vast majority of players.

Program Objectives

The program needs to reinforce the following objectives:

- Clarity and Transparency – parties need to know well in advance what the rules are, how they might be modified, how they are enforced, and the consequences of falling outside of the regulations.
- Fairness – all parties within their respective constituencies should be treated fairly and without favor. Also, the “privilege” of obtaining certification also requires that all brands give back to the sport at some level.
- Integrity – parties need to adhere to the spirit of the regulations and should not look for unfair loopholes or knowingly deliver products outside the regulations.
- Certainty – there must be certainty in the regulations and how it will be enforced. Clear enforcement procedures and appropriate penalties provide certainty to all parties allowing for investment and growth of the sport.

The constituencies with a stake in the equipment approval process include:

- Brands
- Factories
- Pro players
- Recreational players
- Tournament owners
- Pickleball clubs
- USA Pickleball, and possibly other bodies like the UPA-A
- Resellers
- International bodies and entities

Here is my proposal for consideration by USA Pickleball as a model to steward the equipment approval program forward:

Testing

The focus on testing needs to transition to performance-based standards, especially regarding velocity and spin.

Additionally, testing needs to be expanded to measure the equipment through its lifespan. Testing new paddles off the factory floor is an obvious component, but testing that measures performance after 1,000, 5,000, and 10,000 hits would provide greater assurance that equipment does not transition past acceptable levels after a longer period of play.

I am not expert enough to describe in detail what the exact testing regime based on performance should look like, but expertise is certainly available to put in place the appropriate series of tests

Operational Changes

Fees

Fees for the equipment approval process need to be raised significantly.

The current fee structure (as I understand it) is:

- \$495 to create a manufacturer's account
- \$1,500 for original paddle approval
- \$350 for similar approvals
-

The new fee structure might look like:

- \$995 to create a manufacturer's account
- \$5,000 for original paddle approval
- \$999 for similar approvals

Appropriate fee increases should also be applied to ball testing.

Most of the increase in fees should be put toward enhanced testing:

- Performance testing of new paddles at time of application
- Performance testing of original and similar paddles at 1,000, 5,000, and 10,000 hits
- In-field testing – anonymous purchases through retail
- In-field testing – at sanctioned tournaments
- Appropriate staffing at USA Pickleball to manage the program

Enforcement

Strong and consistent enforcement of the regulations is needed to insure fairness and certainty for all parties.

The manufacturing process for pickleball equipment has matured over the years. 15 years ago, I spent hours trying to manufacture house brand paddles for Pickleball Central. It did not go well. Outsourcing manufacturing in the early years was better than doing it ourselves, but we still experienced inconsistent results with both paddle and balls.

Today, when a company like Joola is manufacturing 250,000 paddles for a new release, the size of the investment should allow for strict quality control. It is not unrealistic to expect good to very good quality control from many (most) factories making pickleball paddles or balls.

USA Pickleball needs to set up a quantifiable scale for addressing violations of the established testing limits for products already on the market. This may include failure rates under a certain percentage of tested paddles will result in a warning to the equipment company for corrective action while failure rates over that will result in a permanent decertification of the paddle.

Other Program Components

I would propose these other program components be considered for implementation:

- USA Pickleball needs to implement a significantly higher level of enforcement against companies who falsely advertise USA Pickleball approval of their products. This happens either on the paddle or in advertising of the product (often, but not exclusively, on Amazon). They also need to stop products that use vague claims such as “complies with USA Pickleball standards.” These increased efforts can be paid for through the higher fees charged to approve equipment. This is a fundamental fairness issue for companies that are legitimately approved yet must compete with products with false claims.
- USA Pickleball needs to make the job function of Managing Director of Equipment Standards a dedicated position. Carl Schmits, who is currently the Managing Director also has responsibility for the Facility Development program. One option is for USA Pickleball to transition facility development tasks to the growing number of third-party companies who provide the same services.
- USA Pickleball should provide sufficient staffing levels to effectively manage all aspects of the Equipment Standards group.
- USA Pickleball should devote appropriate resources to build or strengthen communication and partnership efforts with the organizations that are impacted by equipment standards. In addition to brands, this would include tournament owners, pickleball clubs, leagues organizers, international associations, and product resellers. Everyone wins when there is great two way communication between parties.
- USA Pickleball should require that all equipment approval applications identify the factory/factories that are manufacturing the product. This information should be tracked and used to minimize product issues that might arise from factories used by multiple brands.
- A factory certification program might also make sense for implementation. This would create a direct channel to educate and monitor adherence to program standards.
- \$1,000 from each product certification should go into the USA Pickleball Grants Program to help grow the sport. This could increase the annual budget of this program from the 2022 level of \$30,000 to potentially \$1 million plus per year. Many of the overseas brands contribute nothing to the sport and this would be a bit of a leveling function among brands. A big shout out to the brands that already give back to the sport in a meaningful way!

In conclusion, the USA Pickleball Equipment Standards Program could benefit from further discussion on how it might evolve into a strong program that provides a fair, equitable, and transparent framework that works to the benefit of all the parties helping to grow the game of pickleball.

Let me know your thoughts at david@pickleballconsultinggroup.com.

Investments and Acquisitions

- Pickleball Club in Bigfork Montana for sale. <http://www.tworiverspickleball.com/> Email thejewelbasincenter@gmail.com for more information.
- A new Deathalon entity, [DECATHLON PULSE](#) will invest in innovative people and businesses that share its values and commitment. In line with DECATHLON's global strategy:
 - Build and scale ideas and concepts with strong potential to create standalone new businesses which will complement DECATHLON's core activities and strengthen the Group's value proposition.
 - Invest as a shareholder in highly innovative companies that could change the sport ecosystem and accelerate the adoption of new sustainable business models.
 - Acquire strong and forward-looking sports brands and sporting goods distributors that are changing the game by their revolutionizing ideas and trailblazing business models.
- [CityPickle](#) recently received a significant minority investment from The Avenue Sports Fund, a firm managed by former Milwaukee Bucks owner Marc Lasry. The money will be used to establish additional permanent indoor pickleball facilities in New York City and beyond.
- Deal finalizes with Pickleball Inc., the parent company to Carvana Professional Pickleball Association (PPA Tour), Pickleball Central, Pickleball Brackets/Pickleball Tournaments, PickleballTV, Pickleball.com, and TopCourt leading a \$9 million Series B funding round in [The Picklr](#) at a \$59 million valuation.
- Other investments in pickleball in the recent past include:
 - \$750,000 in [pickleheads.com](#)
 - \$19 million in PingPod/[PodPlay](#)
 - \$15 million seed round (\$10 million in equity and \$5 million in debt) in [Rally Pickleball](#)
- [Bayberry Capital Group](#) announces investment opportunity in [Pickleball Xpress Brooklyn](#).



Pickleball Xpress Brooklyn

Invest in the fastest growing sport in the world. Join us in revolutionizing pickleball with Pickleball Xpress, a premier facility offering top-tier amenities, expert coaching, and a vibrant social atmosphere. Capitalize on this booming sport today.

AVAILABLE

Collegiate, High School, Youth

- [DUPR Collegiate Individual National Championships](#), with \$20,000 in scholarship money at stake was played in Cincinnati on June 1-2.

Legal

Big news continues to be the Joola lawsuit against USA Pickleball over equipment standards and certification/decertification. Read the [Joola complaint](#). Highlights include:

- By April 11th Joola had sold and shipped 60,000 of the paddles at issue to retail partners.
- Joola was in the process of manufacturing 250,000 paddles.
- Joola is asking for \$100 million in compensatory damages and \$100 million in punitive damages. They are also requesting an injunction for USAP to certify as approved the nine paddles, as well as attorney's fees and cost.

An extension was requested by USA Pickleball to respond and was approved. The new response date is July 22th.

In a dispute this large there are always two sides to the story. Discovery often uncovers material that shades the issues, and sometimes, can decide the issue. The USA Pickleball response will help clarify the key points in the lawsuit. Either a settlement will be reached or the suit will continue through discovery and on to actual trial. It will be interesting to see where this all ends up.

Other recent lawsuits in the pickleball world include:

- CRBN Pickleball LLC v. Carbon Pickle et al - a dispute over a trademark. Jury trial scheduled for November 4, 2025.
- Knowles v. Pickleball Topco LLC - settled dispute over the failure of Pickleball Central to design, construct, maintain and operate its website to be fully accessible to visually-impaired people.
- Takefman v. The Pickleball Club LLC. - A former vice president of The Pickleball Club claims the company's chief financial officer sent a defamatory email to more than 160 shareholders in an attempt to silence his concerns about the company's alleged misrepresentations to investors. Dismissed without prejudice.

[The NCAA is threatening to take the National Collegiate Pickleball Association \(NCPA\)](#) to court over the perceived similarity of their names.

International

- The 2024 National Sports General Administration Small Ball Sports Management Center Pickleball Press Conference and Signing Ceremony was held on July 5th in China.
- [NPL in Australia](#) is holding the season 2 draft on July 25th.
- [MLP Australia](#) will begin on August 30th with 12 teams from Australia, New Zealand, and Asia competing for a \$700,000 prize pool. The season will include a stop in Vietnam.
- [Sport England](#) has delayed its decision on the future governance of pickleball until September.
- [pickleballEngland](#) puts the number of players in Britain at 30,000.
- [The Global Pickleball Federation](#) welcomes new members Czech Republic and Lithuania.

Partnerships & Sponsorships

- Proton Sports is the exclusive paddle partner for the Arizona Drive.
- House Pickleball has teamed up with Cheez-It!
- The Association of Pickleball Players and Owl Sport expand their partnership.
- Franklin Sports has partnered with MCMX to establish the UK's largest pickleball club.
- Major League Pickleball announces Advil as the exclusive and official pain reliever.

People

- Sydnee Walker has joined Ace Pickleball Club as Marketing Manager and Amy Adame as Architectural Designer.
- The United Pickleball Association (UPA) is on a hiring spree with the following open positions:
 - Membership Director
 - Tournament Manager Development Program
 - VP of UPA International
 - Marketing Associate
 - Director of Revenue, UPA International
 - Director of Marketing, UPA International
 - Director of Competition, UPA International
- Max Maday, Chicken N Pickle Expansion & Development executive has left the company.
- Roger Federer on pickleball: "it's an easier game than tennis and it's fun."
- Caitlin Clark seen playing pickleball recently.
- The USA Pickleball Association also continues to hire:
 - Senior Director of Partnerships
 - Senior Director of Communications and Marketing
 - Volunteer and Events Coordinator
 - Director of National Championships
- Colin Johns announces racketpro, certification and more for coaches.
- Melissa Zhang has moved on from her position as Director of Communications & Content at USA Pickleball.
- Ludovicka Sciaky has started as Captain of the Brisbane Breakers team in the Major League Pickleball Australia
- Appears that The Picklr has just done a round of layoffs on the partnership and programming side of the business

Retail, eCommerce

- Fromuth Racquet Sports has agreed to acquire e-tailer Tennis-Point for undisclosed terms. Both companies have had some level of involvement in pickleball previously.
- E-tailer Total Pickleball has rebranded to Pickleball Warehouse to closer match its parent Tennis Warehouse.
- Oncourt Offcourt celebrated 30 years in business as of May. Congratulations to Joe and Kalindi Dinoffer.
- Niupipo claims it is selling 300,000 "racquets" per year and is the no. 1 pickleball brand on Amazon.

Dinks, Shorts

- LOTTO launches its first pickleball collection in over 400 Dick's Sporting Goods locations. Pablo Tellez has been announced as a LOTTO Brand Ambassador.
- July 17th will see the release of the first-ever pro pickleball video game - PPA Pickleball Tour 2025 - for Xbox, PlayStation and Steam.
- The National Veterans Wheelchair Games is including pickleball for the first year. The event is in New Orleans July 25-30.

Events

Events that have a pickleball business focus or audience attractive to pickleball companies.

Event	Dates/Location	What	Link
Picklecon	August 8-11 Kansas City	100 courts for players, business panels	www.picklecon.com
USPTA World Racquet Conference 2024	September 15-19 Rancho Mirage CA	Conference sessions and trade show	www.uspta.com/uspta/Events/Event_Display.aspx?EventKey=WCONF24A
Sports Venue Forum	Dec. 8-10 Charlotte Harbor FL	Business conference for facilities	www.sportsvenueforum.com/
Racquetx	March 22-24, 2025 Miami FL	Conference covering racquet and paddle sports	theracquetx.com/
The Florida Pickleball Expo	Sept. 12-14, 2025 Tampa FI	trade show, conference and networking event for Pickleball enthusiasts	www.floridapickleballexpo.com
Pickleball Innovators Summit	October 7-9 2025 Tuscon AZ	Exclusive, invite-only, peer collaboration event.	peakemediaevents.com/pbisummit/

Fun

Seems you can't get a burger, sandwich, or coffee without the opportunity to buy pickleball paddles. Seen here: Dick's (a Seattle burger favorite), Starbucks, and Chick-fil-A.



Japan Pickleball by Daniel Moore

Pickleball began in Japan when Daniel Moore introduced the sport in 2015. Moore, a former US national champion pickleball player, grew up in Japan and has worked with Japanese players ever since to grow the sport. Although Japan is a late bloomer in pickleball, and its growth has been slow, there are positive signs for pickleball in Japan. Japan is the second largest tennis market in the world, while badminton and table tennis are popular throughout the country. Yonex's involvement with pickleball will provide a significant boost in its popularity. Leveraging private businesses and government and celebrity power are keys to success in Japan and piggybacking on the popularity in the United States. Olympic status would also change the Japanese pickleball scene dramatically.

Organizations

The Japan Pickleball Association

The JPA is recognized by some as the national governing body of pickleball in Japan. The JPA has registered with the Global Pickleball Federation and the Asian Pickleball Association.

<https://japanpickleball.org/>

Japan Pickleball Federation

The JPF is a separate organization dedicated to growing pickleball in Japan and bringing major international tournaments to the country. The JPF is hosting the inaugural Japan Cup Pickleball Championships held at Ariake Tennis Center. The JPF will bring some US professional players to the tournament to showcase the sport and create opportunities for interaction with Asian players and fans.

<https://pickleball-japan.org/en/>

Courts and Players

It is difficult to gauge the number of players and courts in Japan. These are estimates based on information provided by the JPA.

Courts

Most pickleball in Japan is played indoors on wood-floor badminton courts because they are easy to convert to pickleball. In theory, there are tens of thousands of pickleball courts in Japan because every gym in the country has badminton lines.

Although this is changing, the country has very few dedicated pickleball courts. Currently, there are around 15-20 dedicated pickleball courts in Japan.

More common are dual-use tennis/pickleball courts that must be taped to play. A few tennis facilities offer pickleball, but the courts must be taped each time.

The main challenge in converting tennis courts to pickleball in Japan is that most are astroturf overlaid with sand. A pickleball does not bounce high or consistently on this type of surface. However, there are still a significant number of hard courts that can be converted to pickleball, especially in rural or ski areas. One opportunity is to develop a pickleball that bounces on omni (turf) court surfaces.

Players

The best estimate for the number of players in Japan is around 3,000-5,000. Calculating the number of players depends on how one counts, but this is the estimate for regular players. The number of people who have played pickleball at least once is much higher.

The 3,000-5,000 players come from approximately 100 pickleball clubs around Japan. The highest concentration of clubs is in the greater Tokyo area, followed by the greater Osaka area. Pickleball is also popular in isolated pockets, including Kagoshima, Miyazaki, Okayama, Tochigi, and Nagano Prefectures.

"Made in Japan" Paddle Companies

Yonex

Currently, Yonex is the only paddle company making paddles in Japan. Until 2024 Yonex's paddles were only available in the US market because of Japan's small pickleball population. However, Yonex has announced that it will begin sales in the Japanese market soon.

<https://www.yonex.com/us/pickleball>

"Designed in Japan" Paddle Companies

Globeride

Globeride is a billion-dollar company that distributes Prince Tennis in Japan. Most of its business is in fishing, followed by golf, tennis, and pickleball. It is also the official distributor for Diadem tennis and pickleball in Japan. Globeride sells through retail stores throughout Japan and uses its distribution network to sell paddles. Windsor is the largest tennis store in Japan and carries Diadem pickleball products.

<https://diademsports.jp/pickleball/>

Pickleball Japan

Pickleball Japan is a paddle and media company dedicated to growing pickleball. Their business activities include paddles, events, coaching, and media.

<https://the-pickleball-japan.com/>

Mino Pickleball

Online and in-person paddle company.

<https://minopickleball.com/en>

Everyday Social

Online paddle company.

<https://www.everydaysocial.com/en>

Pickleball Square

Pickleball Square is an online store that developed a low-end paddle. They also sell various imported brands.

<https://pickleball.stores.jp/>

Other Paddle Companies Selling in Japan

Selkirk

Online store and carried in Sanno Sports, Tokyo.

<https://www.pickleball-shop.jp/categories/5858425>

Franklin

Kashimaya is the distributor for Franklin in Japan.

<https://www.kashimaya-toy.co.jp/en/>

Pickleball Store Dink

Online store selling various paddle brands.

<https://pickleballstoredink.shop/>

Joola

The rumor is that Joola is opening a retail store in Japan dedicated to pickleball.

Major Companies Involved with Pickleball

Tokyo Broadcast System
TBS sponsors pickleball in Japan, hosting events and using its media outlets to promote it.
<https://pickleballpark.jp/akasaka/>

Mitsui Fudosan
Mitsui Real Estate Group sponsors pickleball events and is investigating various aspects of the business.
<https://www.mitsuifudosan.co.jp/english/>

Megalos
Megalos, the fitness branch of Nomura investment group, is hosting corporate pickleball events at their fitness gyms.
https://www.megalos.co.jp/megalos_wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/20240205.pdf

Central Sports
Another fitness gym franchise using its facilities to play pickleball and sell equipment.
<https://en.central.co.jp>

Tokyu Resorts
Tokyu Resorts has converted a tennis court into four dedicated pickleball courts at its facility in Hamanako, Shizuoka Prefecture. It is committed to converting pickleball courts at other locations around Japan, including another hotel in Tateshina, Nagano.
<https://www.tokyu-fudosan-hd.co.jp/news/companies/pdf/7edb88cd8e52e7b9d1785d1bde68ce458d77c4ed.pdf>

Celebrities and Athletes

Like the United States, Japan is using celebrity power to grow pickleball in Japan. Here are some top athletes and celebrities who have played or have appeared in pickleball shows/events.

Satomi Ishihara
<https://x.com/misumikoto/status/1789205451877556669?mx=2>

Ai Sugiyama (Former Professional Tennis Player)

Misaki Doi (Former Professional Tennis Player)
<https://www.instagram.com/misaki.doi/?hl=en>

Jun Mizutani (Olympic Gold Medalist Table Tennis)

Ayaka Takahashi (Olympic Gold Medalist Badminton)

Upcoming Events

Japan Cup Pickleball Championships
December 12-15, 2024
<https://pickleball-japan.org/en/>

Okinawa JPA International Tournament
December 12-15, 2024
The dates for Japan's two international tournaments are exactly the same.

Opportunities

Japan's largest unexplored investment opportunity is building indoor, dedicated pickleball facilities. Currently, the lack of courts is a significant obstacle to growth. Japan is also the second largest tennis market in the world, so as the number of players increases, the market size for paddles, equipment, apparel, courts, tournaments etc. will increase proportionately.

Daniel Moore

Daniel is a 9-time national champion, coach, and former professional pickleball player. After playing collegiate tennis at Azusa Pacific University and living in Kenya, he started pickleball in 2014 when his father introduced him to the sport, saying, "This is your only chance to become a national champion." After working as a travel guide in Japan, Pickleball Trips was born out of a desire to take pickleball players to world-class destinations. He brought pickleball to Japan and Kenya and helped launch it in China. Daniel has taught in over 15 countries and is the top athlete coach for the Japan Pickleball Association. Diadem and the Tokyo Broadcast System sponsor him to grow pickleball in Japan. He also manages Airbnb properties in Nagano, Japan, and has an outdoor travel business, Active Travel Japan.

<https://pickleballtrips.com/>

<https://www.activetraveljapan.com/>