

Pickleball: More Popular than Ever! [A2]

Questo sport, a metà strada tra il tennis e il ping-pong, è facile da imparare e ha rapidamente conquistato popolarità, diventando uno dei passatempi più amati del momento.

It resembles tennis and ping-pong, but pickleball is its own unique sport. Since it was invented in the US in 1965, it has been becoming more popular, and has exploded in popularity in the last five years.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

Pickleball can be played with two or four players, in a singles or doubles format. Each player uses a **paddle** to hit a perforated plastic ball over a 34-inch-high net [86,36cm]. Only the serving player, or team of two players, can get a point, when the receiving player or team doesn't return the ball or commits an infraction. Typically, a game is played to eleven points and a player or team needs to win **by at least** two points.

AMATEUR TO PRO

Three men invented the game of pickleball on Bainbridge Island in the US state of Washington in the summer of 1965. **Over time**, the sport became popular, first in the Pacific Northwest region and later all over the country and **eventually** all over the world. Its popularity has been attributed to its simple rules, low cost, and its accessibility to people of all ages and fitness levels. In 1984, the US Amateur Pickleball Association was founded to organise pickleball tournaments **across the country**. Thirty-five years later, in 2019, pickleball became a professional sport and the sport has grown exponentially since then. In 2022, pickleball was named the official state sport of Washington. And in 2021, 2022, and 2023, it was named the fastest-growing sport in the US by the Sports and Fitness Industry Association; a 2023 study found that 48.3 million adults, 20 per cent of all adults in the US, had played pickleball at least once in the previous twelve months!

CONTINUING TO GROW

Even today, the sport is continuing to grow. It is particularly popular in Australia and New Zealand, which have their own professional league, and in Asia, as well as the US. Back in the US, the Professional Pickleball Association has said pickleball is the most lucrative sport for women — [far more](#) lucrative than tennis or ping-pong! It said the [average](#) salary for professional pickleball players last year was \$260,000.

Glossary

- **far more** = molto più
- **average** = medi
- **It resembles** = assomigliare a
- **paddle** = racchetta
- **by at least** = per almeno
- **Over time** = con il passare del tempo
- **eventually** = alla fine
- **across the country** = in tutto il paese