



Pickleball Fact Sheet 2015

Pickleball is a court sport played on a badminton-sized court with the net lowered to 34 inches at the center. It is played with a perforated plastic ball similar to a wiffle ball and composite or wooden paddles about twice the size of ping-pong paddles. It can be played indoors or outdoors and is easy for beginners to learn, but can develop into a fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players. In addition, the game has developed a passionate following due to its friendly, social nature, and its multi-generational appeal.

Pickleball can be played as singles or doubles. New players can learn the basic rules quickly in a single session. No special apparel is needed – just something comfortable and appropriate for a court sport. Equipment is inexpensive and easily portable. The game can be played by all ages and is particularly popular in school P.E. programs and in adult living communities.

The sport is governed by the USA Pickleball Association (USAPA.org), which maintains the rules, promotes the sport, sanctions tournaments, and provides player rankings.

History

2015 marks the 50th Anniversary of pickleball, as it was invented in 1965 on Bainbridge Island, a short ferry ride from Seattle, by three enterprising dads – Joel Pritchard, Bill Bell, and Barney McCallum. Their children were bored with their usual summertime activities. It evolved from the original handmade equipment and simple rules into a popular sport throughout North America and is now taking off in other parts of the world.

The origin of the game's name is thought to be derived from the co-inventors' family cocker spaniel, "Pickles", who loved to chase stray balls and hide them in the bushes.

The Court

A pickleball court is 20' x 44' for both singles and doubles. The net is hung at 36" at the ends and hangs 34" in the middle. A non-volley zone extends 7' back from the net on each side, commonly called "the kitchen".

The Equipment

Competitive paddles used in pickleball are constructed from a high-tech composite, ranging in cost from \$50-\$99 each. The combined length and width of the paddle may not exceed 24 inches. There are no restrictions on paddle thickness or weight. An official pickleball is made of plastic and is between 2 7/8 inches to 3 inches in diameter and weighs between .08 and 1.02 ounces. There are no color restrictions. The USAPA has tested and approved a number of outdoor and indoor balls for official tournament play. A complete list can be viewed here: <http://ipickleball.org/list-of-usapaifp-approved-tournament-balls/>

Places to Play

Virtually every state and Canadian province has pickleball venues. Senior residence communities, YMCAs, local community recreation centers, schools and parks are just some of the places likely to have pickleball courts. The USAPA compiles the most up-to-date and comprehensive listing of places to play at <http://usapa.org/ptp/index.php>.

Currently, the USAPA is conservatively tracking over 200,000 pickleball players and 9,863 pickleball courts in North America, with an average of 62 *new* places to play pickleball debuting across the U.S. and Canada each month!

Tournaments

The USAPA supports and sanctions tournaments throughout the United States. See <http://usapa.org/schedule/index.php> for a current list of upcoming pickleball tournaments. In 2009, the USAPA held the first Nationals Pickleball Tournament in Buckeye, Arizona. Over 400 players participated in divisions for all ages. In 2015, the Nationals VII Tournament is anticipated to be the largest tournament in the world, with more than 700 participants competing in Casa Grande, Arizona. See <http://usapa.org/nationals/> for detailed information.

The USA Pickleball Association

The USAPA was formed in 2005 to promote the sport. It maintains the official rules, sanctions tournaments, provides player rankings and produces the annual National Pickleball Tournament. It is run by an Executive Director and a volunteer board of directors supported by thousands of dues-paying members.

The USAPA provides assistance through programs such as:

- Ambassadors – nearly 1,000 local and over 60 district ambassadors promote the sport at a local level, providing information and training.

- Training Grants – The USAPA Grant program provides funds to subsidize training programs for school students, local residents, organizations or individuals who are pickleball novices and do not belong to a pickleball club or other organized group.

Useful USAPA Links

To learn more, visit www.usapa.org or [Facebook.com/USA Pickleball Association](https://www.facebook.com/USAPickleballAssociation).

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