

# Facility

December 2025 • Vol. 1 Issue 4

*The Voice for Pickleball and Padel Facilities*

## Special Issue: All About Sports Facility Technologies

### IAPPF Conference and Expo at RacquetX

#### Plus

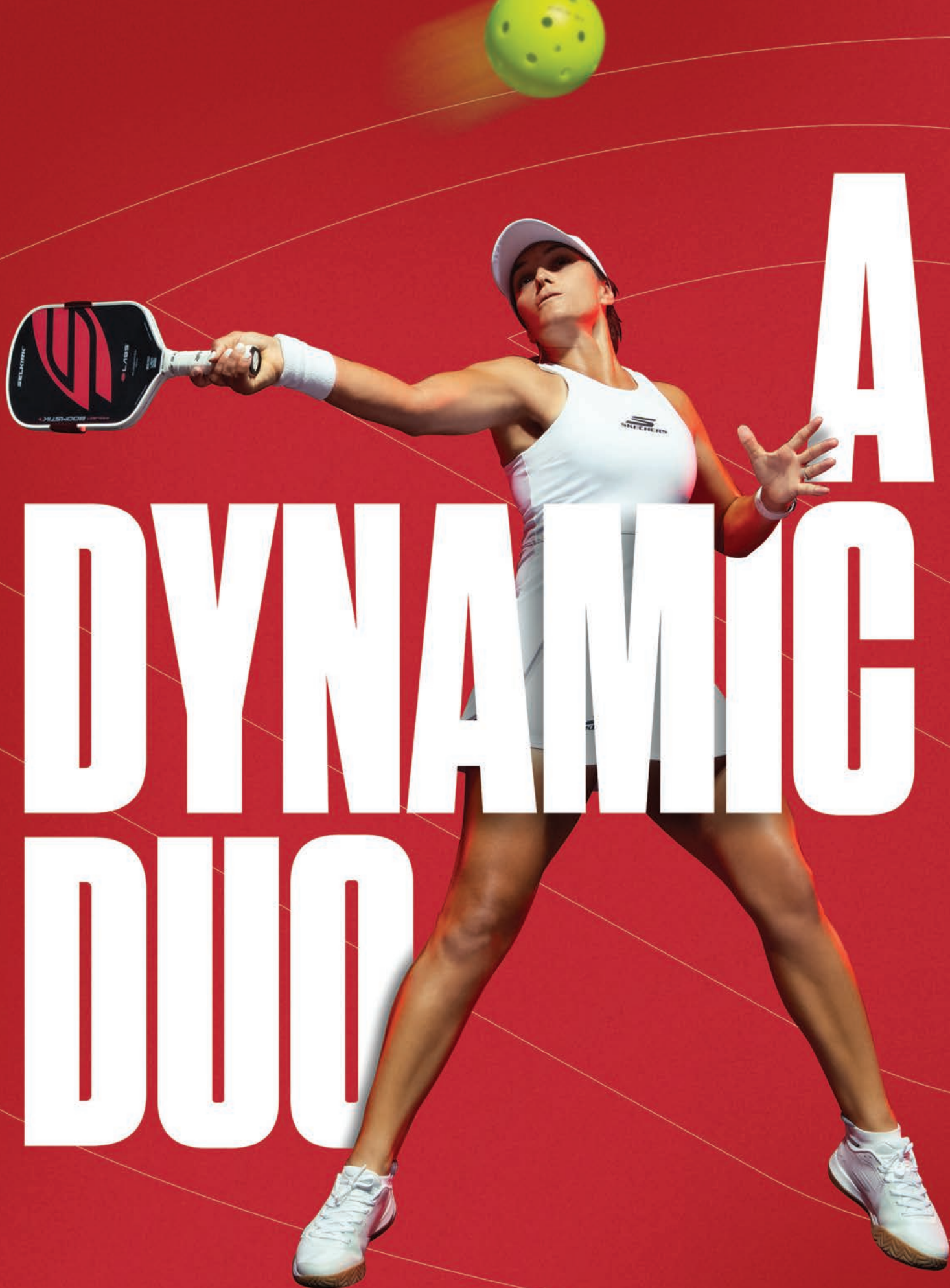
- Marketing: Building a Culture of Hospitality
- RPP: The Most Important Number Clubs Aren't Tracking
- Getting the Most from Court Management Systems



#### Barnes Tennis Center

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Learn more at [www.iappf.org](http://www.iappf.org)

**The only way to receive these benefits - and more - is by signing up for a free IAPPF membership. (limited offer, \$495 value).**



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We really need CourtReserve. Every other club around us is already on it.

Okay. Let's do it.



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## Technology and Hospitality: The Keys to Sports Facility Profitability

Technology providers for pickleball and padel facilities have been making news over the last couple of months with announcements of significant outside investments:

- Court Reserve raised \$54 million from Mainsail partners
- PodPlay raised \$8 million from Frontier Growth and others
- Playtomic recently raised \$70 million in equity and debt financing and topped it off with over \$5 million more from a crowdfunding raise

This indicates the investment community recognizes the growth of the pickleball and padel industries and is willing to be on substantial additional growth in the years to come. That should be reassuring to facilities worldwide that rely on technology such as court management software to run their business.

Other technologies – including video capture and analysis, ratings, and simulators are rapidly advancing their capabilities to provide value to facilities. AI will start playing a larger role all these technologies in future, sometimes in ways we might not envision today.

We will keep our eye on the technologies that will be impactful on facilities. Hopefully we will see steps to provide a more seamless integration of the leading technologies – having to download and use three or four different apps when visiting a facility can be cumbersome.

I hope 2025 was a great year for your facility. The IAPPF has had a great first year supporting facilities around the world. We have lots of additional benefits we will be introducing in 2026 to further support our member facilities. I encourage you to email me at [david@iappf.org](mailto:david@iappf.org) with suggestions on how the IAPPF can be more supportive to your facility and the hundreds of other member facilities.

Finally, a word of thanks to our sponsors that have enabled us to start the IAPPF and grow it throughout the year. Please be sure to support our sponsors.

I look forward to working with you in 2026 to make it a great year.



Cheers,  
David Johnson  
CEO, IAPPF





## Forbes 40 Under 40 Recognizes Padel Entrepreneur

**Abigail McCulloch**, owner of **Alma Padel**, located in Chicago, IL, was recognized by *Forbes* magazine as one of their top young entrepreneurs in 2025. McCulloch, who plans to open more clubs beginning in 2026, also owns **PadelAuPair**, which places international padel pros with clubs in the United States. The IAPPF was privileged to hold a social event at Alma Padel at the association's Regional Meetup in Chicago in 2025.

## Global Pickleball Federation and United World Pickleball Federation Merge

The **GPF** and **UWPF** have agreed to form a single international governing body for the sport. According to the GPF, "This move comes in response to the rapid, worldwide growth of pickleball and the clear need for a unified structure to guide its development. The entity will be established as a fully democratic and inclusive body, designed to be fully compliant with the standards of the International Olympic Committee. This strategic alignment is a critical step toward providing certainty for national and continental federations while also helping secure pickleball's place in major multi-sport competitions."

## Chicken N Pickle Closes New Indiana Build



Chicken N Pickle has decided not to move forward with their planned Fishers, Indiana facility. The venue was expected to

attract 700,000 visitors annually to the area and create 150 new jobs. The move is part of CNP's new strategy of moving into existing buildings, rather than dealing with the supply chain, construction costs and other issues associated with new builds.

## USA Pickleball Names DUPR New Official Rating System



USAP has chosen DUPR as its exclusive, official rating system for all USAP-owned events. The move replaced Universal Tennis Rating as USAP's official ratings provider.

"This is a pivotal moment for pickleball," said Mike Nealy, CEO of USA Pickleball. "Our goal is to deliver consistency, fairness and clarity for players at every level, from Golden Ticket qualifiers to

the USA Pickleball National Championships. Adopting DUPR gives us a reliable rating language across the board. It strengthens competitive integrity and reinforces the entire ecosystem of sanctioned play."

## FIP Release World Padel Report

The **International Padel Federation** (aka FIP) has released its 2025 report, with the following highlights.



Padel is played in 150 countries

- 87 countries have national padel federations affiliated with FIP
- 24,600 clubs and other facilities
- 77,300 courts
- 35 million amateur
- 11,125 pro players (8,045 males/3,080 females)
- 4,219 internationally ranked junior players (2,989 boys/1,230 girls)
- 850,000 federated players
- 53% of padel players are male/ 47% female
- 61.4% of padel is played in Europe, followed by South America (19%), Central and North America (7.7%), Asia (6.8%) and Africa (4.9%).

To read the entire report, [click here](#).

## VAIR Expanding Into Padel Ratings

VAIR will be offering padel ratings beginning in Q1 of 2026, according to the company.



Using the same AI used in its pickleball ratings, along with visual analysis and performance modeling, the company will provide padel ratings that evaluate movement, match IQ, shot tolerance,



court coverage and consistency with precision. These ratings will separate verified competitive play from casual rec play.

Padel clubs, coaches, tournament directors, and facility operators can use the new ratings system to improve level-based programs, such as ladders and tournaments. For more information, contact [info@vairified.com](mailto:info@vairified.com).

## USA Pickleball Studying Hydration

USAP will be monitoring the hydration of recreational pickleball players using electronic devices during competition. The association has partnered with Epicore Biosystems to learn more about the hydration needs of pickleball players.



Facilities will benefit by having information to educate their members, tournament participants, juniors at academies and league players. This will help reduce instances of cramping and other illness-related problems at all levels of play. Epicore has previously partnered with Gatorade on its Gx sweat patch, and several sports teams.

## Padel Pro Gains 1MM Instagram Followers

Highlighting padel's continued international growth and popularity, an indicator of padel's growing international popularity, a professional padel player has gained 1 million followers on Instagram. As of November, 2025, Agustin Tapia had reached 1 million followers, with other padel stars (Ale Galen – 700K, Arturo Coello – 655K, Paquito Navarro – 600K and Lebron Juan – 585K) also generating large followings.

## New Padel Model: Free Daytime Courts



Ireland's Padel100 will offer free padel during off-peak courts at all its locations. The group hopes to use the promotion as a loss-leader that builds its business through bringing new players into the sport, and encouraging more peak-time play among those who come for the off-peak hour.

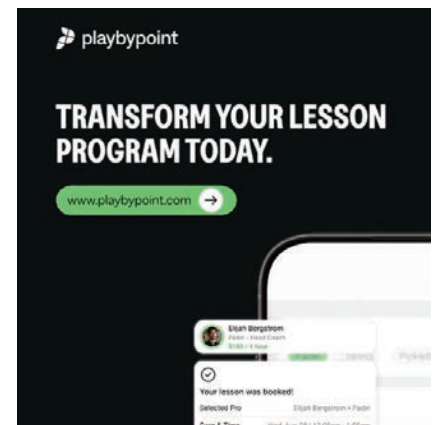
The free court time will not apply during school breaks, holidays, weekends, evenings and other times when court time is in greater demand. Padel100 hopes to recoup revenue from the free court time offering by selling sponsorships. Local businesses can generate goodwill by funding free padel for the community, and is

more attractive than a simple paid advertising sign or website banner.

## Playbypoint Launches Book a Pro

Playbypoint has created a new feature called Book a Pro, aimed at making lesson management easier and more efficient. Players can browse and book instructors online, instructors can manage their own schedules and facilities can handle payments and commissions automatically.

Bookings go directly to instructors, payments process automatically, and commissions apply without extra work. For more information, contact Playbypoint. ■



## Looking to buy or sell a pickleball or padel facility?



The market for the sale of facilities is heating up!

The IAPPF is developing a match-making service to put buyers and sellers of pickleball or padel facilities together to explore opportunities.

If you are a facility owner wanting to explore the sale of your facility send an email to [david@iappf.org](mailto:david@iappf.org).

If you have an interest in investing or buying facilities please send an email to [david@iappf.org](mailto:david@iappf.org) for further details.

The IAPPF is not a deal-maker and is not compensated for any connections made. All inquiries will be kept confidential.

Let us know if we can help.



# Facility Openings

## Pickleball Facilities

### Pickleball Kingdom Opening 14 Facilities

Pickleball Kingdom plans on completing nine new clubs by the end of this year, adding five more in Q1 2026. Locations include Tinton Falls, NJ, Lehigh Valley, PA, Pinellas Park, FL, Little Rock, AR, Manchester, CT, Holyoke, MA, Sun Prairie, WI, South Cobb, GA, Waukegan, IL, Watchung, NJ, Ocala, FL, College Station, TX, North Aurora, IL, Walker, LA.

### Adaptive Pickleball Courts Opening in New Jersey

A **Teaneck, NJ** couple is opening a 14-court, 40,000-sq. ft. facility with courts designed for players with disabilities. **Pickleball Kingdom Watchung** will feature two courts designed to accommodate wheelchair pickleball play, according co-owner (with husband, Tom), Chana Baron. The inspiration for the adaptive courts came from Mrs. Baron's sister, who was born with special needs.

### ACE Pickleball Expanding in NJ

[Ace Pickleball Club](#) is opening a 25,000-sq.ft. indoor facility in **Washington Township, NJ**. The location will take over part of a former Burlington Coat Factory.

### Private/Public Partnership Expands Community Pickleball

The Texarkana, TX City Council approved a resolution to provide matching funding for eight new pickleball courts, taking advantage of a \$135,000 donation from the Texarkana Pickleball Club. The total spend will be approximately \$255,000, with the city contributing \$120,000.

The money will be used to pay for expansion of the pickleball facilities at Southwest Center, from the current six courts to 14, and the facility is expected to open in April of 2026. The



### "Wimbledon of Pickleball" Coming to Utah

Scheduled to open in early 2026, this venue will host the Greater Zion Cup, a major event on the PPA Tour, enhancing Utah's status as a pickleball destination.

### Black Desert Resort, Ivins, Utah,

will build what it calls the "[Wimbledon of Pickleball](#)"—a facility featuring 21 professional-grade courts with a 1,000-seat stadium court. The club will host the Greater Zion Cup, one of five major stops on the PPA Tour. This design is based on major tennis facilities, but will be tailored to pickleball's needs.

city's decision took into consideration the fact that the expanded facility will be able to host tournaments, bringing visitors to the city, stimulating the economy and raising tax revenues.

The [PB Jar](#) will open as an eight-court facility in **Sioux Falls, SD**, moving into a converted former warehouse. The facility will have a dedicated demo court for testing paddles and other equipment, and each court will have Save My Play video systems. The club will feature a pro shop, lounge and limited food and beverage service for hungry players.



## Padel Facilities

### Padel39 Expanding in Austin

Padel39 (featured in the September issue of *Facility*) is opening its second location in Austin, TX. The facility will have 12 outdoor courts, a terrace bar, fitness facilities, a sauna, cold plunge, recovery lounge and golf simulators. Padel39 plans to continue expanding in Texas in 2026 and across the U.S. in the future.

**W7 Padel** has opened **Whitegates** in **Wicklow Town, Ireland**, which will serve as the home of Wicklow Rovers. The facility has three outdoor premium padel courts. The fan-friendly venue has instant replay video on the courts, outdoor viewing areas and a coffee stand.

[Austin Padel Center](#) is opening in North Austin, TX in 2026. The 22,000-sq. ft. facility will have six indoor and three outdoor courts, a pro shop, recovery lounge, sports bar, private meeting rooms and locker rooms.

*Continued on page 12*



# Opening or Planning a new facility?

## Get expert help first!



### Join the IAPPF NEW PICKLEBALL/PADEL FACILITY OPERATOR BOOT CAMP

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- Programming and pro shop
- Technology implementation
- Marketing
- Facility visits
- And MUCH MORE!



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space is limited  
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## Facility Openings

Continued from page 10

**Padel Master** will be **Doncaster, England's** newest indoor padel facility, opening in 2026. Plans are for the club include six championship double courts and two single courts, a pro shop, café, bar and social area.

### Pickleball and Padel Facilities

#### Novak Djokovic Eyeing Racquets Sport Facility

Tennis star Novak Djokovic is part of a group hoping to open the Tennis & Racket Sports Club in Elliniko, a suburb of Athens, Greece. The \$20 million facility would include 20 tennis courts, 10 padel courts and four pickleball courts. The facility would offer a restaurant and a cafe, a gym and swimming pool. ■



#### Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Adds Padel

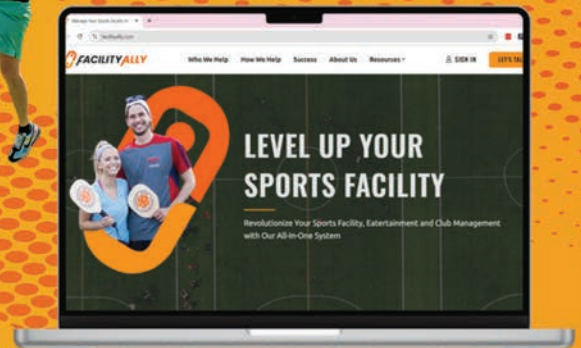
The resort, located in Charleston, SC, is one of the first locations in the state to add padel courts. Long considered one of the top tennis resorts in the world, the Roy Barth Tennis Center is undergoing a makeover, with padel one component to the upgrade. The two padel courts join the resort's existing tennis and pickleball courts.



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**Mehdi Rhazali**

Founder & CEO, Viva Padel & Pickleball

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# Job Openings

*The following job openings were taken from online sources, including employer websites and job boards. Complete job descriptions and application instructions are available by clicking on the links for each job title.*

## [Director of Racquet Sports](#)

Las Colinas Country Club, Irving, TX

Responsible for overseeing tennis, pickleball and squash for participants of all ages and skill levels. Develop and promote programs, organize and lead tennis clinics and private lessons. Promote racquet sports memberships to potential prospects, serving as the club's racquet ambassador. Supervise and mentor the racquet sports staff.

## [Racquet Sports Manager](#)

Midtown Athletic Club, Palatine, IL  
\$120K-\$130K

Midtown Athletic Club, located at Palatine is seeking a Racquet Sports Manager to captain club racquet sports, tennis and pickleball programs and activities, who is passionate about helping members and will foster their love of racquet sports.

## [General Manager](#)

Padel United Sports Club, Cresskill  
\$55,000 - \$72,000

Padel United Sports Club is an affluent sports, wellness, and social destination offering state-of-the-art padel courts, a boutique spa, fitness facilities, events, and an energetic community. We are seeking a hands-on, service-driven General Manager to lead our flagship club and deliver a world-class member experience.

The General Manager will oversee all day-to-day operations at PUSC, ensuring exceptional member and guest experiences, strong team culture, and smooth coordination across padel, spa, fitness, front desk, and events.

This role is perfect for someone who thrives in a hospitality-meets-sports environment and loves being on the floor engaging with members.

## [Director of Racquets](#)

Arrowhead Village, Vail, CO  
\$3,200-\$4,000/mo. + commission

The Director of Racquets is expected to be on site by Memorial Day and the position continues on property through September 25.

- Creation of a comprehensive racquets program.
- Organize, schedule and manage all racquets events.
- Supervise a staff of four.

## [Sports Facility Manager](#)

Deuces Padel Club, Laredo, TX  
From \$44K/yr.

The ideal candidate will possess a comprehensive understanding of facilities management, ensuring our facility runs smoothly and efficiently. This role requires a proactive approach to maintenance and project management, as well as the ability to supervise a team effectively.

Proven experience in facilities management or a similar role with a focus on sports or recreational facilities is preferred. Strong mechanical knowledge with experience in electrical systems, including high voltage and low voltage applications.

- Supervise and lead a team of maintenance staff, ensuring adherence to safety protocols and operational standards.
- Oversee the operation and maintenance of HVAC systems, programmable logic controllers (PLC), and other critical facility systems.
- Utilize Computerized Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS) for tracking maintenance activities and scheduling preventive maintenance.
- Conduct regular inspections of the facility to identify areas needing repair or improvement.

- Develop and implement maintenance management strategies to enhance operational efficiency.
- Collaborate with contractors for specialized maintenance tasks, ensuring compliance with safety regulations.
- Maintain accurate records of all maintenance activities, including electrical work (high voltage and low voltage), mechanical repairs, and industrial maintenance tasks.
- Provide leadership in project management for facility upgrades or renovations, ensuring projects are completed on time and within budget.

## [Racquets Professional](#)

Kalamazoo Country Club,  
Kalamazoo, MI

Full-time, on-court and member-facing position responsible for delivering exceptional instruction, creating memorable racquet-sport experiences, and supporting the overall growth of the racquets department. This individual will coach players of all ages and levels, assist with event operations and contribute to pro shop support.

## [Director of Racquet Sports](#)

Plantation Golf and Country Club,  
Venice, FL  
\$55K-\$60K

The Director of Tennis and Pickleball is responsible for directing and managing the Club's tennis and pickleball programs, maintaining tennis and pickleball facility operations, ensuring high quality of service to members and guests, meeting the standards and expectations of the Club with a strong focus on revenue generation.



# Building a Culture of Hospitality

Many sports facility operators make the mistake of focusing on marketing to get customers to come to their clubs, when the key to a profitable business is getting customers to come back. That requires a focus on building a hospitality model.

When players want to return to your facility, it's because they had a great experience. They then bring other friends, who pay to play and often join. People who return time and again to your facility also tend to "play and stay," spending money in your pro shop, at your vending machines or in your snack bar or restaurant.

While this issue of *Facility* focuses on technology, it's important to remember that while tech is an important tool for increasing revenue, people (both your staff and customers) are the key to generating profits.

Underneath everything in your facility, there should be a strong emphasis on hospitality. Many components go into creating a culture of hospitality in a pickleball or padel facility. Tech plays a role. Ownership drives much of the culture that can make or break hospitality. And, of course, people are the face of hospitality.

Here is a collection of staff-related tasks that can build a culture of hospitality within your facility, leading to happier members.

## Staff-Focused Tasks

Tasks staff can do – many of them when staff is not busy with other tasks:

- Staff should be encouraged to memorize member names and greet them by name
- All staff should wear a name tag.
- Bathrooms, locker rooms, and showers should be inspected/cleaned every hour or two.
- Trash cans should be emptied on a



regular schedule or when approaching full.

- The grounds outside your facility should be checked for general appearance on a regular schedule.
- Staff on duty should not be "surfing" on their phone.
- When appropriate, staff should do meet-and-greet strolls around the courts.
- All front desk staff should be trained in assisting browsers in the pro shop.
- Pro shop stocking, straightening should be handled by staff during slow periods.
- Consider having staff manage a "concierge" desk to answer questions from visitors or members.
- Thank-you notes should be provided for staff to write thank-you notes to members.
- Send thank-you gifts (guest passes, free ball machine usage, complimentary drink) to members from time to time.

- Birthdays, Renewals, Holidays

## Facility Tasks

- Create custom signage to welcome each event to your facility. You can easily create 8.5X11 signage on your printer.
- Use retention tools—like Patch Retention—to send thank-you notes and thank-you gifts to member's email.
- Bring in donuts or pastries occasionally for your regular "communities."
- Arrange for local beverage companies or bakeries to sample products with your members.
- Host member appreciation events with free food and drink.
- Arrange group pickleball travel tours for your members to build camaraderie.
- Do regular member satisfaction surveys to gauge where improvements can be made.
- Hire "mystery shoppers" to benchmark hospitality touchpoints. ■

# Sports Facility Lighting Purchasing Guidelines

**F**acility asked two expert companies that provide lighting to pickleball and padel facilities what owners should ask when shopping for this critical component of a venue. Below is the advice from **New Edison Lights** and **1<sup>st</sup> Source Lighting**, two companies with long-time experience installing hundreds of lighting systems.

## New Edison Lights

### The Dos and Don'ts of Indoor Sports Court Lighting

#### The Do's

##### Invest in quality court fixtures

- Quality fixtures will have accurate photometrics and third-party testing certifications. We've seen photometric data from some companies claiming their solution meets Professional Level Category 1 lighting requirements as set by USA Pickleball and the American Sports Builders Association, but real-world audits often show much lower light levels than advertised.

For example, we've visited a club that spent \$50K per court on lighting, believing it met Category 1 standards, but after measuring, actual average foot-candle levels were significantly below projections (e.g., projected 80+ foot candles vs. measured 50 average).

Always ensure the manufacturer can guarantee the light levels with in-person measurements.

- **Third-party testing** is essential to verify what manufacturers claim. This includes product safety testing and certification under NRTL (Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories), recognized by OSHA. Using fixtures without such certification exposes club owners to

code violations and insurance risks. Also, DLC (DesignLights Consortium) is important for LED fixtures for specification verification and potential utility rebates requirements.

##### Invest in lighting controls

- Clubs with 50% occupancy rates are doing well; however, that means court lights may be left on half the time when no one is playing. Modern lighting controls allow for step dimming or scheduling—unlike older technology, which was simply on/off. Dimming can drive significant energy savings.

Scheduling systems can even dim the lights automatically when play time ends. These savings become more important in light of projections that by 2030, energy costs for utility customers will increase 25% due to data center proliferation.

##### Consider Fixture locations

- Fixtures should be symmetrical over each court. Side-mounted fixtures (instead of overhead) help reduce glare and improve visibility. Uniform light distribution is key; aim for a minimum-to-maximum ratio of 1.7 or better. Mounting height should be 20–25 feet, or as high as feasible.

#### Do Not:

##### Do not try to use existing lighting

- Most existing lighting is not designed for court sports, nor is it laid out for pickleball. Many facilities repurposed from old tennis courts have outdated fixtures that won't meet the needs for proper pickleball lighting. Repurposed warehouses and retail spaces don't have correct lighting, either.

New Edison offers the GlareShield PRO, which has been engineered with Low Glare Optics. Optics are needed to deliver uniform light throughout the court. The delivered light levels for the GlareShield PRO reach Category 1 lighting requirements as set by USA Pickleball and the American Sports Builders Assn.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Source Lighting

***Will you provide a complimentary, facility-specific photometric analysis showing average horizontal & vertical foot-candles, max/min uniformity ratio, across all courts?***

We encourage customers to do their own research, but of course, we'll help. Requesting a lighting plan proves the system will actually deliver USA Pickleball-recommended levels (30–50 fc recreational, 50–75 fc club/competitive, 75–100+ fc tournament/broadcast) with uniformity  $\leq 2.0:1$  (ideally  $\leq 1.7:1$ ) and no blinding hot spots.

Our systems provide the most uniform light coverage in the industry, typically less than 1.3:1 Max/Min Ratio. If a lighting company won't do a free photo study, ask us.

***Do your fixtures use true indirect or direct/indirect technology specifically engineered to eliminate glare and the "cave effect," or are you proposing direct-only lighting?***

The lighting term for Unified Glare Rating is the measurement of light that is directly entering your eye from a specific angle. A low UGR rating does not mean the fixture does not have some level of uncomfortable light intensity; in fact quite the opposite is true when you are looking up at the fixture while in the fixtures zonal luminance region.



Direct downlights (even expensive ones) create harsh glare and dark upper airspace, making it impossible to track high lobes or read spin. USA Pickleball and top builders prefer indirect or direct/indirect systems that bounce light off the ceiling and use diffused lenses for soft, uniform, glare-free illumination from floor to ceiling.

***What is the CRI, color temperature, and is the system certified flicker-free at all dimming levels for slow-motion video?***

Our fixtures offer 80+ CRI high flux modules that give players higher color fidelity which makes the pickleball ball pop against court colors and helps players see spin. Our fixtures come standard with 5000K which is ideal for crisp visibility (4000K is acceptable but slightly warmer).

Our fixtures only use Flicker-free drivers—essential now that most clubs stream or record play. Cheap LEDs strobe horribly on camera and can cause irritation and headaches.

***Are the fixtures fully field-serviceable, impact-resistant, and backed by a 10-year warranty?***

Sometimes picklers hit fixtures with their serves. Look for fixtures that are impact-resistant and can handle this type of abuse. Our fixtures are completely field serviceable with simple component swap outs in the unlikely case of a warranty issue. Our top-tier systems are modeled around the “right to repair” philosophy and carry 10-year warranties.

***Can you provide recent references and photos/videos from other indoor pickleball facilities (preferably 6+ courts) using this exact fixture and layout?***

We have a track record across all types of industries over our 30+ years. Anyone can sell LEDs. Only a handful of companies have deep pickleball-specific experience and hundreds of installations. Ask to speak directly to owners or managers who have lived with the lighting for at least a year. ■

“**Requesting a lighting plan proves the system will actually deliver USA Pickleball-recommended levels.**”

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THE PICKLR



# The Most Important Number Clubs Aren't Tracking: Revenue Per Player

By CourtReserve

**W**alk into almost any racquet sports facility today and you'll hear the same questions: *Are our courts full? Are our memberships up? Did our clinics sell out this month?* These are good metrics, but they only tell part of the story. Your club can be busy, popular, and full of activity and still struggle to grow sustainably.

There's another number that cuts through the noise, one that separates healthy facilities from those simply treading water: **Revenue Per Player**, or **RPP**. It is a simple calculation, but its implications for long-term success are profound.

RPP looks beyond court utilization and beyond membership totals. Instead of asking how many players are coming through the doors, RPP asks how much value each player is actually creating—and whether that value is growing, stable, or slipping.

In other words, it reveals the true financial health of a club far more clearly than surface-level indicators like attendance or court occupancy.

To understand RPP, you calculate one straightforward equation: total revenue divided by the total number of active players in a given time period. "Active" is not limited to members; it includes anyone who participates in your programming, books a court, joins a league, attends a clinic, or engages with your facility in any meaningful way.

Many clubs track RPP quarterly or monthly, though even an annual snapshot can reveal important trends.

What RPP uncovers is the quality of engagement, not simply the quantity.

For example, two clubs may host the same number of players each month, but one generates significantly more revenue. Why?

Players there might participate in more programs, buy more add-ons, engage in a clear development pathway or remain active across multiple parts of the club. Busy courts alone don't create growth; engaged players do.

When operators look at RPP over time, patterns begin to emerge. They might notice that new players come in strong but drop off after their first program. They might see that intermediate players are consistently underserved. They might learn that a popular clinic sells out every week but contributes little to overall revenue because it's underpriced.

RPP exposes these gaps—not to encourage squeezing players for more cash, but to help clubs align their offerings with what players actually value.

RPP is also a far more effective retention signal than raw membership numbers. A club may celebrate a spike in new memberships, only to discover declining RPP because players aren't staying engaged.

High RPP facilities, on the other hand, tend to have stronger community cultures, better coach involvement, well-structured programming, and clearer communication. Players stay because the experience keeps pulling them forward.

Importantly, increasing RPP does not require adding courts, expanding facilities, or raising prices indiscriminately. In many cases, thoughtful programming, such as

short-format events, better pathways for beginners, clear next-step invitations and more dynamic scheduling, has a far greater effect than major operational changes.

Consistent engagement is the engine of RPP, and clubs have more control over that engine than they might think.

RPP is ultimately a lens into your business. Think of it as a way to see your club more honestly. It reveals what's working, where players are finding value, and where opportunities exist to deepen their connection to your facility. It's a simple number that helps clubs make smarter decisions with less guesswork, and it offers a more reliable, more strategic measure of success than court traffic alone.

CourtReserve calculates RPP by dividing a club's total revenue by the number of active players over a defined period, making it easy for operators to track and optimize. ■

*RPP guide:* [Click here for more about CourtReserve's RPP feature](#)

## Case Studies...

To see case studies of facilities calculating RPP, click on the links below:

[Club Pickleball USA Case Study](#)  
[Dill Dinkers Case Study](#)  
[Lifetime Activities Case Study](#)

More [CourtReserve Case Studies](#)



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# Getting the Most from Court Management Systems

*F*acility asked three of the top court-management system software companies to discuss what pickleball and padel facility owners need to ask potential providers before they purchase.

We also asked them to give advice regarding how to optimize your benefits from court management systems once you had chosen a provider.

**CourtReserve, Playbypoint and PodPlay** provide advice to new facilities.

## 5 Questions to Ask Before Purchasing a Court Management Program

### CourtReserve Advice

#### 1. Will this system help us create player value — not just court utilization?

After helping more than 2,000 racquet and pickleball facilities go live with CourtReserve, we've seen one clear truth: **the best clubs don't go shopping for software. They go shopping for a system that supports their strategy.** Busy courts don't guarantee a healthy business. The most successful clubs track value per player, not volume per court.

Look for a system that helps you understand revenue per player (RPP), player retention trends, program engagement, and segment behavior. If the platform only focuses on bookings, you'll miss the bigger picture of how players discover, stay engaged with, and grow inside your facility.

#### 2. How does this program support each phase of our growth?

Every thriving club operates in what

we call the **Racquet Club Growth Flywheel: Organize → Manage → Engage → Customize → Expand.**

Ask how the software helps you:

- **Organize:** streamline scheduling, payments, check-in, and communication
- **Manage:** centralize memberships, pricing, billing, and reporting
- **Engage:** create recurring programs, events, leagues, and community touchpoints
- **Customize:** reflect your brand, rules, pricing, and playing culture
- **Expand:** add coaches, courts, programs, or locations without re-platforming

A system that can't support the full lifecycle will create bottlenecks later.

#### 3. Does the software reduce friction for players and staff?

Your #1 competitor isn't another club — it's complexity. Choose a solution that makes it easy for players to browse courts, register, pay, and show up. For staff, the test is simple: **will this system remove admin work or just reorganize it?** Good software should eliminate whiteboards, spreadsheets, and manual communication.

#### 4. Can the platform adapt as pickleball and racquet sports evolve?

Trends in club operations shift fast: dynamic pricing, public access, hybrid facilities, coaching internships, university programs, and integration-heavy environments. Pick a platform with a proven roadmap, integrations, and the ability to evolve with your needs rather than force you to work around its limitations.

#### 5. What do the highest-performing clubs say about using it?

Look for testimonials from clubs that

resemble yours: public parks, private racquet clubs, indoor pickleball facilities, university rec centers, or multi-location operators. Their stories will tell you more than any feature list.

### Bottom line:

Don't buy software—buy a growth system. The right court management platform should simplify operations, elevate your player experience, and give you the data you need to make high-quality decisions from day one.

Most operators begin their software search with a spreadsheet. Rows of features and checkboxes feel thorough, but they only capture what you already know to evaluate. When you're deep in the day-to-day of launching or running a facility, it's easy to overlook the broader questions that determine whether the platform, and the team behind it, can support long-term growth.

Choosing your technology stack is one of the most important decisions you will make. The right system becomes the backbone of how you operate and evolve. Getting it right from the start also saves time, money and disruption because the cost of re-platforming is almost always higher than expected.

Your platform deserves the same rigor as choosing your lease, your buildout and your team.

### Playbypoint Advice

#### 1. Many operators still begin with the most basic question: "Can this help us build a clean schedule?"

That is table stakes. A modern platform should go far beyond slotting time on a calendar.

The real question is whether the



system can support everything surrounding the booking itself: memberships, programs, payments, retail or POS, reporting, communication tools and the automations that remove repetitive work from your team. If a platform only solves scheduling, you will outgrow it quickly.

A true operating system centralizes your operations, eliminates manual processes and gives you the foundation to scale. Automations like renewals, waitlists, reminders and billing should run quietly in the background.

Your technology should be a growth engine, not a utility.

### 2. Will our team and our players actually enjoy using it?

Adoption determines value. A platform that slows down staff or frustrates players will never deliver its full potential. Operators often focus on features but overlook something far more important: whether the system actually feels easy, intuitive and delight-ful for the people using it every day.

In practical terms, this means the experience should feel like the apps you already use and love. Your front desk should be able to complete daily tasks within seconds. Players should feel the same level of ease they do with familiar consumer apps, not dated enterprise software. Smooth onboarding, personalized discovery, fast mobile booking, clear navigation and built-in communication tools create a digital experience that supports engagement rather than competing with it.

### 3. How are you going to elevate and reinforce our brand?

For many players, the digital experience is the primary experience. The moment they download your app or book a court, they form an impression of your business.

Expectations are high, and players notice when something feels dated or generic.

Strong design isn't just aesthetic. It's commercial. Across the Playbypoint network, clubs using branded apps see 37% more bookings per active player and a 28% faster rebooking cycle. Look for a platform that can be fully white labelled and includes personalized recommendations, saved favorites, tailored programs, social features and effortless booking flows.

Your software should strengthen your brand, not dilute it.

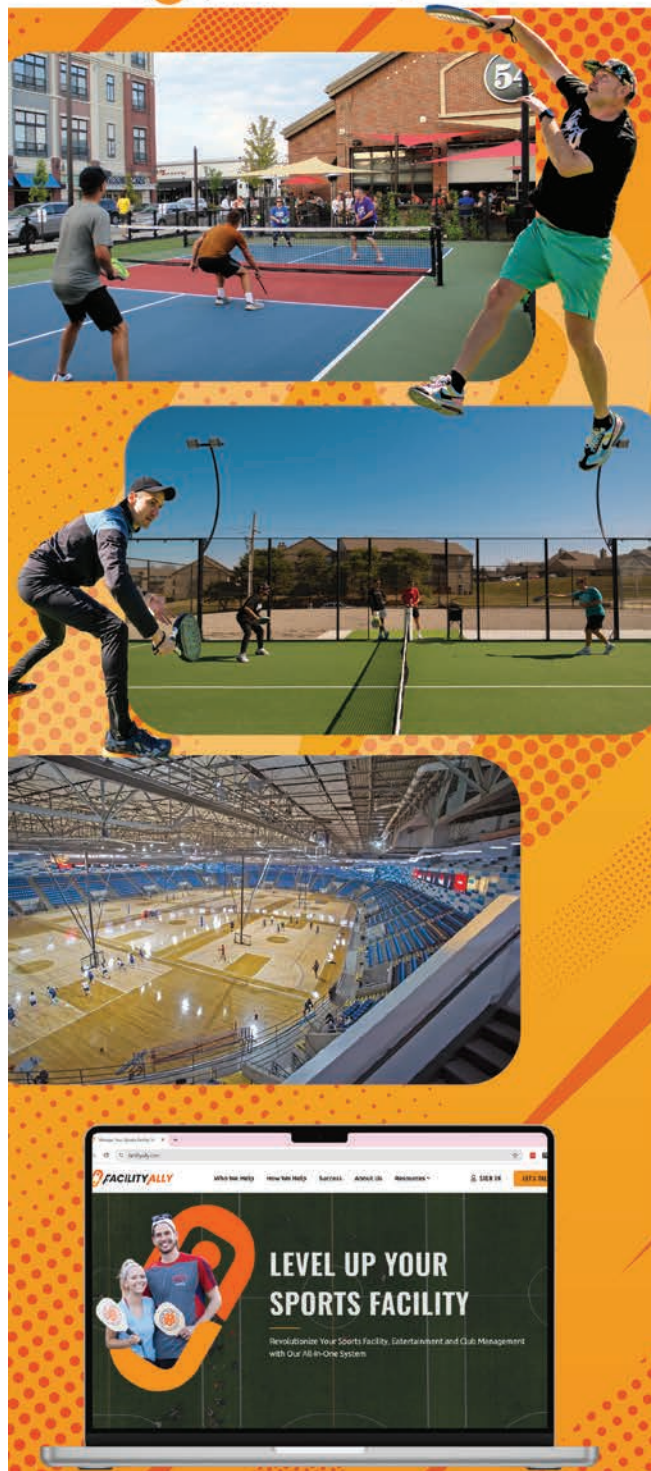
### 4. How will you support growth, if we scale?

Your facility will evolve. Programming shifts, pricing structures change, and many clubs rethink their model within the first year. Choosing a system that can scale with you from the start creates long-term efficiency and prevents painful re-platforming.

Look for multi-sport support, multi-location management, flexible pricing and rules, advanced permissions and the

## YOUR TURNKEY PARTNER FOR SUCCESS

**PROVEN PLAYBOOKS  
BRANDING  
WEBSITE AND SEO  
STRATEGIC GROWTH  
PAID ADS**



ability to activate new courts or sites without starting over.

### 5. Is your data going to help us understand what truly drives performance?

Occupancy alone does not determine profitability. The real drivers of performance live in your data: booking patterns, return frequency, program and membership conversion, and the value created across the schedule.

Choose a system that surfaces actionable trends, reveals underperforming time slots, highlights lifetime value patterns and powers reporting and automation based on real behavior. And most importantly, choose a platform that lets you own your data, keeping control in your hands. Strong data leads to better decisions, and better decisions lead to higher margins.

Choosing the right platform is choosing the trajectory of your business. When you ask the right questions and select a true partner, your technology becomes a competitive advantage. If you want a second set of eyes on your current setup or help evaluating your options, the Playbypoint team is here to support you. [www.playbypoint.com](http://www.playbypoint.com)

### PodPlay Advice

When a new facility evaluates court-management software, the conversation often jumps straight to feature checklists. That's backwards. The right frame is return on investment: how will this system increase revenue, reduce operating costs, and improve the experience for players and staff? With that in mind, here are five questions that reveal whether a platform will actually make your club stronger.

#### 1. Will this system measurably increase my court revenue per hour?

Court time is the [scarce resource](#) in participatory sports. Some platforms focus on revenue per player, which can

encourage pricing structures that rely on squeezing more dollars out of a small segment of high-spending members.

A healthier, more sustainable model broadens participation and optimizes court utilization. The right system helps you understand revenue per hour used across activities—open play, clinics, leagues, memberships—so you can align offerings with what your community values most.

#### 2. Does the product extend my revenue curve or simply manage reservations?

A modern platform should help you sell more than just time on the calendar. Algorithmic court assignment, dynamic application of membership rules, digital sponsorship opportunities, seamless coach booking and autonomous mode to extend hours are examples of features that [push the revenue frontier outward](#). If the software can't support experiences that are valuable to customers and the club without workarounds, you'll hit a ceiling early.

#### 3. How many separate systems will I have to manage?

Hidden operating costs and stacking subscription fees add up. Context-switching between multiple tools and dashboards—reservations, point-of-sale, door access control, coaching, video replay, marketing tools—slows down staff and fractures the customer journey. A system that integrates key functions natively eliminates separate logins and reduces operational drag. For example, combining court reservations with automated video capture means no QR codes, no separate logins, no juggling devices, and a smoother experience for everyone.

#### 4. How much will the system shape my brand experience?

[Your app](#) is the facility's front door. The design, responsiveness, and aesthetics of your reservation system signal just as much about your club as the courts themselves. Evaluate whether the platform allows you to present a modern, polished brand—clean layouts, intuitive flows, consistent color usage,

personalized messages. Good design isn't cosmetic; it influences conversion, loyalty, and word of mouth.

#### 5. Who built this software and have they actually run a facility?

Ask bluntly: *Do the people behind this platform have real domain experience, or are they generalist software developers trying to learn the industry on the fly?* Court management is not an abstract workflow problem.

It's the daily grind of scheduling chaos, last-minute cancellations, member friction, and juggling events. Teams who have actually [built and operated facilities](#) tend to encode the right instincts into the product: cleaner booking logic, saner membership models, smarter pricing tools, and workflows that match real-world operations rather than the imagined ideal of an engineer. This question cuts straight to the heart of product-market fit. You're buying institutional knowledge as much as you're buying software.

## How to Optimize the Benefits of a Court Management System

### CourtReserve Advice

Most clubs use less than 40% of the capabilities inside their court management system. After working with startup facilities, multi-location clubs, colleges, HOAs, and public parks, one truth stands out: the most successful operators use their system not as a booking tool, but as a strategic engine.

Here are the three best practices we've seen separate thriving facilities from those stuck in "busy but not growing."

#### 1. Use your system to understand your players — not just schedule them.

The clubs with the healthiest financials obsess over **player behavior**, not just court utilization. Your system should show you:



- Revenue per player (RPP)
- Attendance patterns by daypart
- Drop-off points in players' lifecycle
- Skill-level trends and program progression
- Which programs generate the highest engagement and retention

This isn't just interesting data — it tells you exactly where to invest time, coaches, and court inventory.

## 2. Integrate reservations with automated communication and marketing touchpoints.

Most struggling clubs over-communicate manually and under-communicate automatically.

Your court system should trigger:

- Waitlist alerts
- Program reminders
- Post-play follow-ups
- Upsell recommendations
- Lapsed player nudges
- Weather or facility updates
- Coach substitution notifications

These automated, contextual messages eliminate frustration and improve show rates, retention, and overall player satisfaction. The less you rely on manual outreach, the more consistent your experience becomes.

## 3. Use your data to price with precision, not guesswork.

Your program pricing, court pricing, memberships, and events should all be based on real usage patterns inside your system. Successful facilities use their software to:

- Identify underpriced peak times
- Build membership perks around proven behaviors
- Create new offerings (clinics, mixers, leagues) based on demand
- Bundle services for higher RPP
- Adjust court access rules for fairness and utilization

Data-driven tweaks to pricing often create the largest revenue jumps with the least operational strain.

## 4. Customize the system to reflect your club's culture.

White-labeled apps, branding, rules, skill ratings, and scheduling logic all send signals about the professionalism and personality of your club. The more your system reflects who you are, the more trust players build—especially important for premium pickleball clubs, university facilities, and public clubs managing friction around access.

### Bottom line:

The biggest gains rarely come from new features—they come from better use of the ones you already have. When your court management system becomes the central engine powering your operations, your player experience gets smoother, your revenue becomes more predictable, and your team gets more bandwidth to focus on growth instead of admin.

## Playbypoint Advice

The best performing clubs use their court management system to influence behavior. When your technology can guide, engage and reactivate players on its own, it becomes one of the most powerful drivers of retention and revenue you have.

After working with thousands of facilities across dozens of markets with Playbypoint, here are four principles that consistently unlock the full value of a modern platform.

### 1. Use automation that supports behavior, not just marketing

Automation is often treated as a marketing lever, but its real power comes from the product experience itself. When your platform can translate booking activity into timely and relevant touchpoints, players stay engaged without anyone on your team lifting a finger.

This includes onboarding sequences that help new players take their first steps, post-event prompts that

encourage repeat play, targeted messages that bring lapsed players back and recommendations that highlight the right programs or pros at the right moment. These product-led interactions build rhythm and routine, which naturally increases return visits and retention.

A strong platform makes these moments feel helpful and human, not promotional.

### 2. Use your data to design better member experiences

Most operators think about data in terms of reports and dashboards. The real opportunity is using that information to design how members experience your club. When you understand patterns like revenue per player, time-of-day demand, skill-level behavior and retention curves, you can create programming and schedules that feel relevant and intentional.

The right platform should show you not only what is happening on your courts but why it is happening. With that insight, you can shape offerings, pricing and communication around how your members actually behave, not how you assume they behave.

When your decisions reflect real user patterns, the result is a smoother journey. And smoother journeys build loyalty.

### 3. Prioritize a digital experience that feels intuitive, modern and unmistakably yours

This is where most systems fall short. A player's relationship with your club is shaped far more by what happens on their phone than what happens at the front desk. Your digital experience should feel fast, fluid and aligned with what people expect from the apps they use every day, and it should clearly reflect your brand.

A branded environment builds trust and strengthens recognition each

time a member opens the app. Combined with features like personalized recommendations, saved favorites, easy access to pros and programs, match discovery and clear next steps, it keeps players engaged without constant operator involvement.

When the experience feels good and like your club, players return naturally. The more often they engage with the app, the more often they book and play. Retention starts in the product long before it shows up in your marketing metrics.

#### **4. Choose a technology partner, not just a software vendor**

Most software vendors disappear the moment you go live. But the real test comes after launch, when your programs evolve, your member base grows and the demands on your system increase. You need more than a tool. You need a partner who understands racquet sports, builds quickly and supports the way players behave in the real world.

Your provider should offer guided onboarding, a dedicated customer success team and real support beyond help articles. They should share best practices, provide guidance on pricing and programming and give you access to early releases that strengthen your competitive edge.

As Mehdi Rhazali, co-founder of Viva Pickleball and Padel, puts it: “Most software vendors disappear after you sign. Playbypoint does the opposite. They stay involved, they listen and they build with us.” A platform that grows with you is far more valuable than a platform you outgrow.

Modern court management systems are far more than scheduling tools. When you use the parts of the platform designed to guide behavior, support discovery and deepen

engagement, your technology becomes one of the most reliable drivers of repeat play and long-term growth. If you want help assessing your current setup or exploring what a more consumer-led approach could unlock, the Playbypoint team is here to support you. [www.playbypoint.com](http://www.playbypoint.com)

### **PodPlay Advice**

A reservation platform doesn't create value on its own. Value comes from how fully a facility makes use of the system's capabilities. After working with operators across hundreds of venues, a few best practices consistently separate the top performers from the rest.

#### **Use data to tune your offerings to revenue per hour not revenue per player.**

The clubs that scale are the ones that view court time as the primary economic unit. Analyze how different activities perform on [revenue per hour used](#), not just total dollars collected. You may find that a large, engaged base of players paying modest monthly fees produces far greater long-term stability than a small segment paying premium rates. Let play patterns and community behavior determine your programming mix.

#### **Treat design and user experience as revenue drivers, not accessories.**

The look and flow of your booking app matter. A clean, branded, modern interface increases conversion, reduces support tickets, and subtly reinforces your club's identity. Think of it the same way you think about your lobby or locker rooms: it sets expectations. A polished [digital front door](#) makes players feel like they are part of a professional, well-run organization.

#### **Keep your membership and pricing structure simple.**

Complexity feels sophisticated, but it degrades quickly. Too many tiers or exotic rules overwhelm members, obscure the

real value proposition, and generate support tickets for staff. In our recent work on [membership models](#), the strongest frameworks tend to offer a limited number of clearly defined options that balance multiple objectives: recurring revenue, predictable utilization, and a sense of community belonging. When your software platform supports simplicity—clean rules, clear entitlements, and predictable pricing—your customers understand what they're buying, and your staff can communicate it without hesitation.

#### **Consolidate your tech stack whenever possible.**

Operators routinely underestimate the silent cost of fragmented systems. Jumping between four or five different tools introduces errors, slows response times, and creates friction for both staff and players. When reservations, video capture, payments, memberships, door access control, and analytics live inside one platform, the entire operation becomes easier to manage. Staff spend less time troubleshooting and more time creating great experiences.

#### **Automate the parts of the business that shouldn't require human intervention.**

Automated marketing messages tied to user behavior—first booking, first clinic, churn risk—drive conversions without adding staff hours. So does automatically generated video content, automated reminders, and seamless payment handling. The more tightly the system connects reservations, communication, and capture of on-court moments, the more leverage you gain. Every manual task you eliminate increases margins.

*For more about PodPlay, check out our podcast with PodPlay's Ben Borton. ■*



# Why Every Pickleball and Padel Club Needs SmartCourt Technology

By Matt Gibson, VP-North America, Playsight

Pickleball and padel clubs today operate in one of the most rapidly growing and competitive sports landscapes in the world. Membership expectations have evolved, players crave a more sophisticated experience, and clubs must differentiate themselves in ways that go beyond court availability and competitive pricing.

SmartCourt technology—powered by automated video, AI-driven insights, automated highlights and integrated booking experiences—has become the clearest and most impactful way for clubs to stand out, grow revenue, engage players and elevate their brand.

Below, we explore eight core reasons why SmartCourt technology is no longer a luxury, but a *must-have* for forward-thinking pickleball and padel clubs.

## 1. Differentiate Against Your Competition

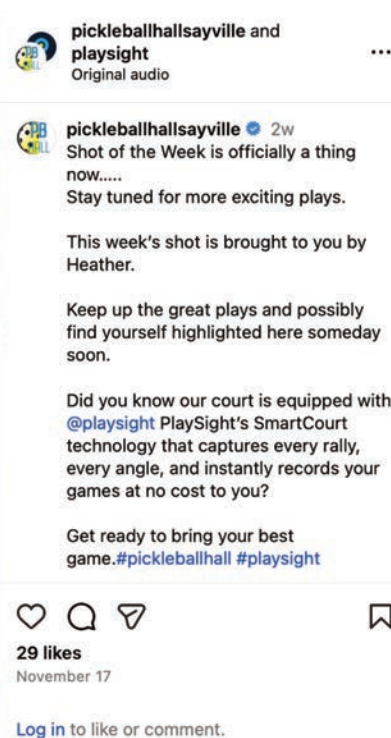
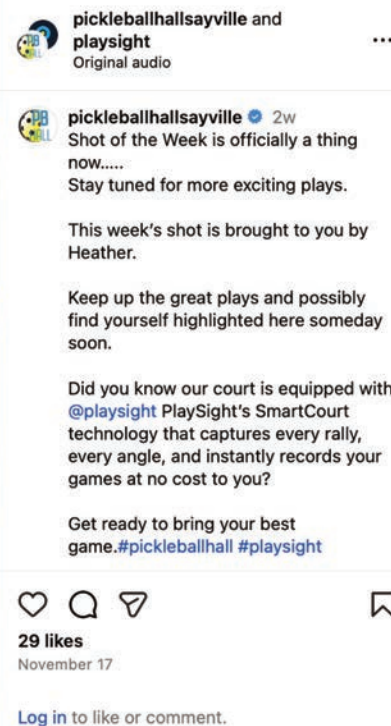
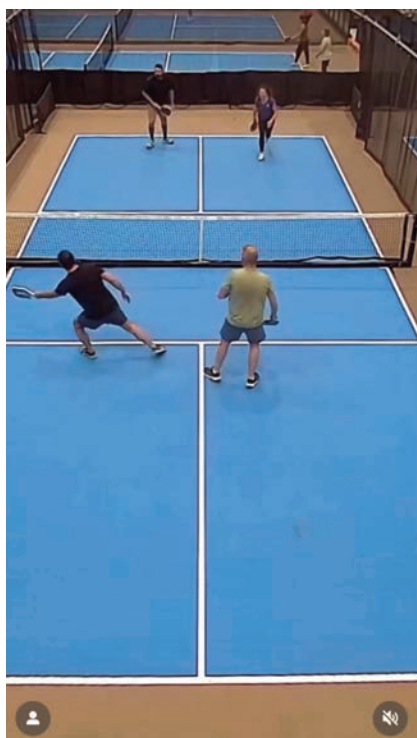
As the number of pickleball and padel clubs accelerates, differentiation becomes harder—and more essential. Players now compare facilities not just on amenities, but on technology, coaching capability and overall experience. SmartCourts give your club a tangible, visible advantage that competing clubs can't match.

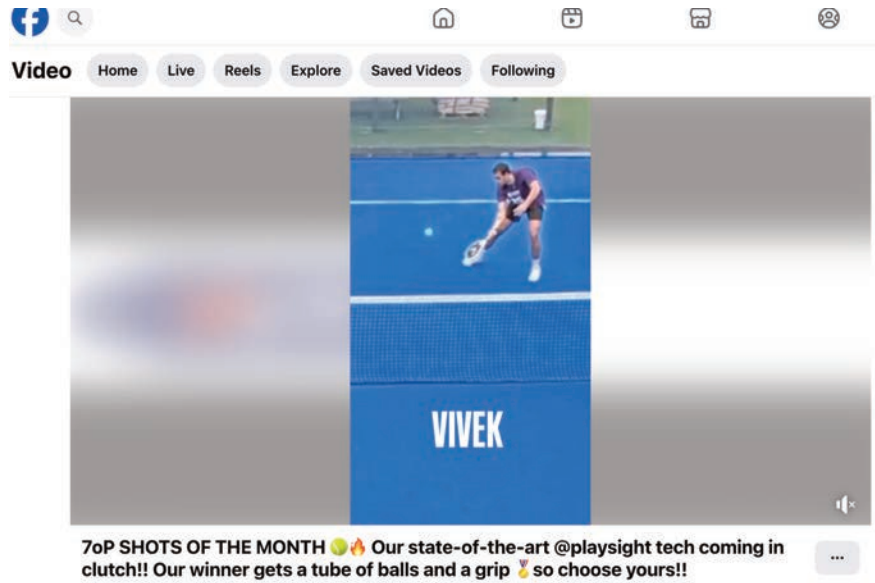
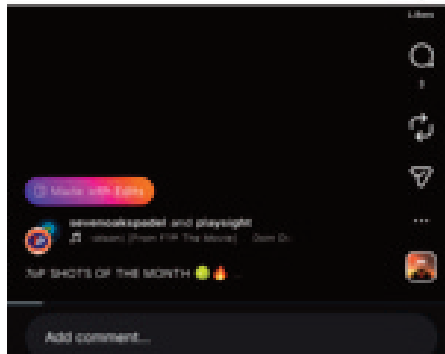
When players know that:

- every match is automatically recorded
- highlights are generated for them automatically
- they can review their play instantly
- they can improve faster using AI-driven insights

Clubs using SmartCourt technology report:

- Higher booking frequency
- More membership inquiries
- Faster word-of-mouth growth
- Better retention from tech-savvy and competitive players





Pickleball Hall in Sayville, NY and Seven Oaks Padel in the UK have embraced sharing AI automated highlights on social media, by creating their own “Shot of the week” and “Shot of the month” campaigns with their members

## 2. A Built-In Marketing Engine for Your Club

SmartCourts don’t only improve on-court experience—they automatically generate the content your marketing team wishes they had time to produce.

Every day, your courts become a content factory:

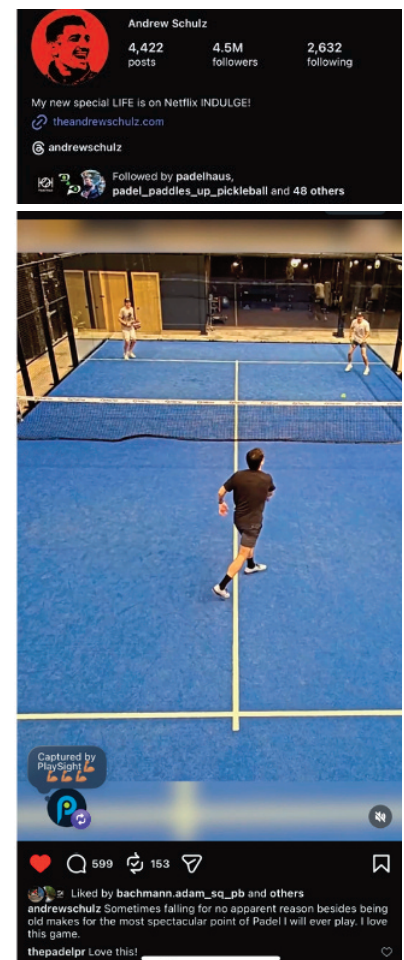
- Automated highlight reels
- Player-generated social posts
- Shareable “best rally,” “point of the day,” or “top angles” clips
- Live streams of matches and events
- Tournaments with real-time shareable moments

For social media, this means:

- Authentic organic content—daily
- Constant visibility on your members’ feeds
- A steady stream of brand exposure
- A massive boost in community engagement

Your players become your promoters. Their best shots, rallies and funny moments are shared automatically—each one stamped with your club’s branding. No camera setup, no editing, no staff required.

Many clubs spend thousands trying to create engaging content. With SmartCourts, your members create it for you—every single day.



This viral gender reveal at Santa Monica Pickleball Club netted 269K views on Instagram using SmartCourt technology, while comedian/podcaster Andrew Shultz shared his amazing rally from Padel Haus in Brooklyn to his 4.5M followers on Instagram



### 3. ROI Tailored to Your Business Model

SmartCourt technology is unique because it fits **multiple club business models**, each with a clear path to ROI.

#### Membership-Inclusive Models (e.g., Ace Pickleball Club)

- Ace Pickleball Club integrates the SmartCourt experience directly into membership. This creates:
- A premium “all-inclusive” offering
- Clear differentiation vs clubs with tiered memberships
- A compelling value proposition for long-term members

For clubs emphasizing **experience > hourly play**, SmartCourts become a signature benefit and a driver of higher membership conversion.

#### Open Play or Session-Based Models (e.g., Dill Dinkers)

Dill Dinkers incorporates SmartCourt revenue by offering:

- “**Championship SmartCourts**” at premium pricing
- Bookable video-enabled sessions
- Add-on fees for AI analysis and match highlights

This structure works especially well for:

- Tournament players
- Competitive groups
- Coaches teaching private lessons
- Leagues requiring high-quality footage

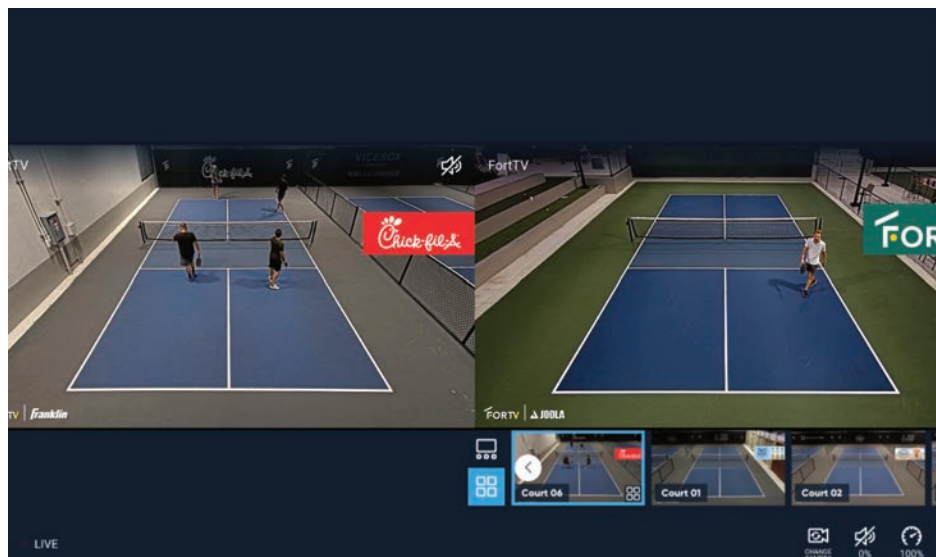
Whether you run a boutique padel facility, a community-based pickleball club or a high-volume national chain, SmartCourts can be monetized in ways that align naturally with your business model.

### 4. Sponsorship Revenue Streams

SmartCourts also introduce a powerful **new revenue opportunity**: sponsorship integration.

Every livestream, every highlight clip and every automatically generated reel can feature:

- Sponsor logos
- Brand overlays
- Calls-to-action
- Local business partners



The Fort in Fort Lauderdale, FL showcases their sponsors across all 43 courts on Fort TV

# “SmartCourts can be monetized in ways that align naturally with your business model.”

Sponsors love:

- Repeat exposure
- Local engagement
- Brand placement on highly shareable content
- Visibility across each highlight shared and each tournament streamed

For clubs, this means:

- A new revenue stream that can partially—or even fully—offset the cost of the SmartCourt system
- Stronger relationships with local or national partners
- More professional event presentation

SmartCourts turn your courts into a broadcast and content platform—one that sponsors are excited to support.

## 5. Player Development + Coaching Enhancement

SmartCourts give players and coaches tools previously available only to elite athletes.

### Real-Time AI Statistics

- Players can instantly see:
- Serve percentages
- Shot distribution
- Rally length
- Positional heat maps
- Consistency and accuracy trends

And because the AI tracks *their* play, the data is personalized, actionable and always accessible.

### Multi-Angle Instant Replay for Coaching

Coaches can:

- Break down serve technique in a single automated clip
- Show a player how they're moving near the kitchen

- Compare form side-by-side
- Analyze point construction and tactical decisions
- Provide remote or follow-up analysis

This transforms the coaching experience. Instead of saying, “Your paddle angle was too open,” a coach can **show** the player instantly. Improvement becomes faster, more measurable and more engaging.

Better coaching = more lessons sold = higher revenue for your club.

## 6. Integrated Experience With Your Booking Platform

A modern club needs a seamless digital experience. SmartCourts are able to integrate directly into your booking system so players can:

- Request video during their reservation
- Purchase AI-enhanced sessions
- Upgrade to a premium SmartCourt
- Receive their recordings automatically
- Connect their SmartCourt profile to their club account

This creates:

- Less friction
- Fewer support questions
- A smooth, premium feel to the entire booking experience

## 7. Build a Stronger, More Connected Community

SmartCourts bring members together in ways traditional courts never could.

Clubs can host:

- “Serve speed challenges”
- Monthly “Top Rally” competitions
- “Shot of the Week” highlights shared on social media

- Leaderboards (fastest serve, longest rally, most improved, etc.)
- Video-based club events and contests

Players love competing, comparing, improving and—above all—sharing. SmartCourt technology makes your club the hub of that excitement.

This culture boosts:

- Member retention
- Referrals
- Engagement
- Club pride
- Social growth

## 8. Play and Train Like the Pros

The final—and perhaps most compelling—reason clubs should adopt SmartCourt technology is that this is how the world's best athletes train.

Video, analytics and instant replay are foundational tools for high performance. Bringing that experience to everyday players is powerful. It elevates your club into a professional-caliber facility where amateurs and recreational players can feel like pros. ■

## Conclusion: SmartCourts Are Essential for the Modern Club

In today's landscape, SmartCourt technology is more than a feature—it's a competitive advantage, a revenue engine and a community builder.

SmartCourts help clubs:

- Stand out from competitors
- Multiply their marketing power
- Generate predictable ROI
- Unlock sponsorship dollars
- Enhance coaching and player development
- Provide a seamless digital experience
- Build a thriving, loyal community
- Deliver a pro-level experience for every player

For pickleball and padel clubs looking to grow, thrive and future-proof their business, SmartCourt technology is not just beneficial—it's essential.



# How AI Is Impacting the Sports Facility Industry

Artificial Intelligence has wide applications beyond simply creating articles and marketing materials. It can be used in manufacturing, software applications, research and countless other ways.

*Facility* asked three companies deeply involved in working with sports facilities how they are integrating AI into their business models and products. Here are the response from **Playbypoint** (court-management system), **Playsight** (on-court camera systems) and **Volley** (on-court trainers).

## Facility: How have you integrated AI into your current technology?

**Playbypoint:** We've focused first on the foundations that make reliable AI possible. We use ClickHouse as a real-time data warehouse, which gives both our internal teams and our customers fast, efficient access to the data that powers analytics and future AI models. On top of that layer, we've built a custom data agent that allows teams to query, interpret and validate large datasets with far greater accuracy and speed. This creates a strong base for everything that will follow.

On the product side, these capabilities support the next wave of features on our roadmap: intelligent scheduling recommendations, tools that analyze and predict court-usage patterns, more advanced reporting, and automated marketing workflows. AI will also play a growing role in personalizing the player journey by suggesting relevant programs, pros and play opportunities based on real behavior.

Internally, our engineering teams use AI coding tools to improve velocity and code quality. These enhancements may not be visible to operators today, but they help us ship more reliably and prepare the product for more advanced AI-driven experiences over the coming years.

**Playsight:** Playsight has integrated AI as the core engine of our SmartCourt technology. While we have long been pioneers in applying computer vision to track players and balls in basketball, ice hockey, and soccer, 2024 marked a major

milestone: we became the first company to simultaneously launch second-generation AI for tennis, pickleball, and padel.

Our system utilizes patented computer vision to track all four players and the ball in real-time. Unlike solutions that require uploading footage to third-party services, Playsight's AI is embedded directly into our system, delivering automated highlights and engaging statistics to players and coaches mere minutes after they step off the court.

**Volley:** Volley uses modern AI vision models, including Vision Transformers and advanced Convolutional Neural Networks, to perform real-time court, player, and ball perception on-device. This AI pipeline powers our automated player assessments, ball-machine adjustments, and the instant video-clip generation players see after each session. The system learns from every shot, enabling personalized training experiences without requiring a coach or external hardware.

## Facility: By the end of 2027, what role will AI be playing in your technology for pickleball/padel software in general?

**Playbypoint:** By 2027, AI is going to shift from a more novelty "bonus" feature to an expected part of the racquet-sport tech ecosystem. Predictive models will help operators make smarter decisions about staffing, pricing and inventory. Automated marketing tools will adapt in real time to player behavior and preferences.

On-court video intelligence is likely to provide instant feedback on technique and performance. League creation, matchmaking and several operational tasks will become increasingly autonomous, giving clubs more time to focus on community, coaching and member experience.

We don't believe AI is going to replace human decision-making, but it will create a layer of intelligence that helps facilities run more efficiently and deliver a more personalized experience to every player.

**Playsight:** If the last three years were defined by basic video recording and

streaming, the next three will be defined by intelligence. By 2027, AI will completely transform the pickleball and padel landscape, elevating the experience of playing, training, and watching.

We see a future where AI and Generative AI (Gen-AI) drive automated multi-camera broadcasts, instantly generating highlight reels and deep statistical analysis. Beyond that, Gen-AI will act as a virtual coach, offering personalized recommendations for improvement and even gear selection. Crucially, on-court AI will also provide accurate, automated player ratings—a key initiative we are already advancing in partnership with DUPR.

**Volley:** AI will interpret much more of the full on-court context, going beyond simple tracking to recognize structured events such as serves, volleys, faults, rallies, and player-specific tendencies. It will also play a larger role in helping players improve: drills, ball feeds, shot types, and court zones will automatically adjust based on each player's performance, patterns, and improvement goals.

The goal is to make practice feel more natural, more personalized, and far more effective without requiring additional complexity for the player or the club.

## Facility: Are you hiring now, or in the near future, employees with specific AI skills?

**Playbypoint:** Absolutely! As we expand the AI components of our product and marketing ecosystem, we expect to grow our team in machine learning engineering, data engineering and product/marketing roles focused on AI-powered workflows and user-facing features.

The future of racquet-sport technology will be shaped by operators who pair great on-court experiences with smart, data-driven digital ones. AI will play a defining role in that shift, helping clubs operate more efficiently, understand their players more deeply and deliver experiences that evolve in real time.

For facilities that embrace this thoughtfully - and choose tech partners who build responsibly - AI will become a strategic advantage rather than a trend to chase.

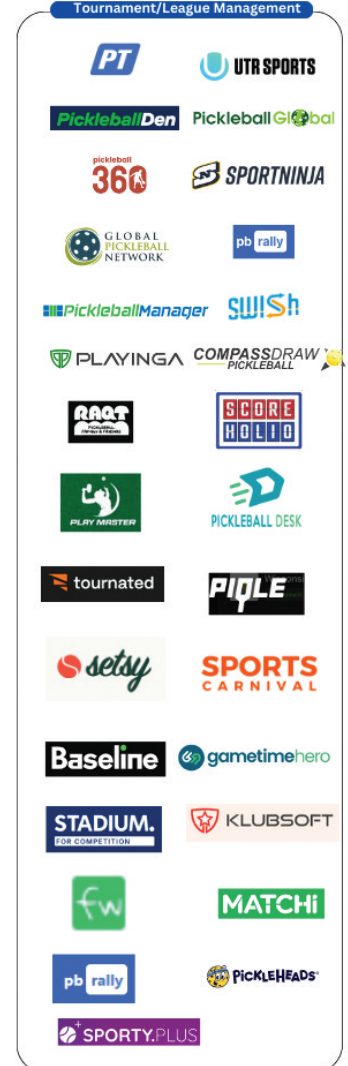
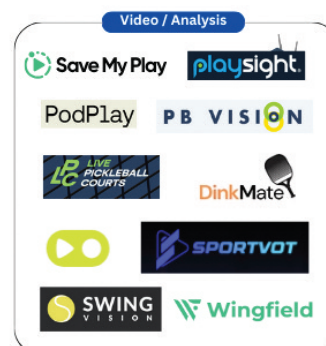
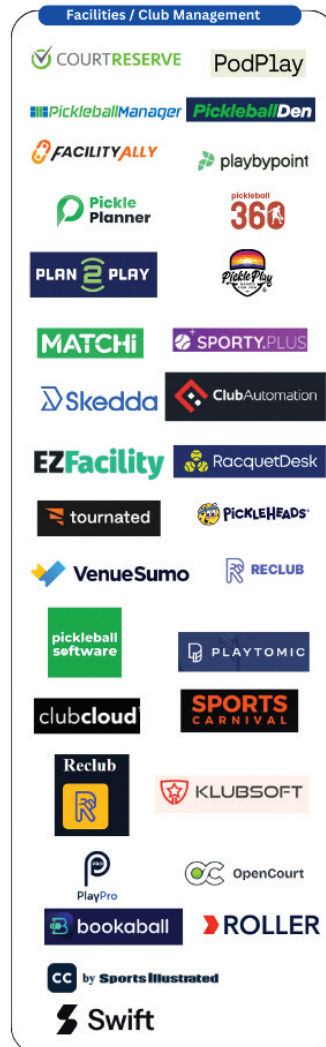
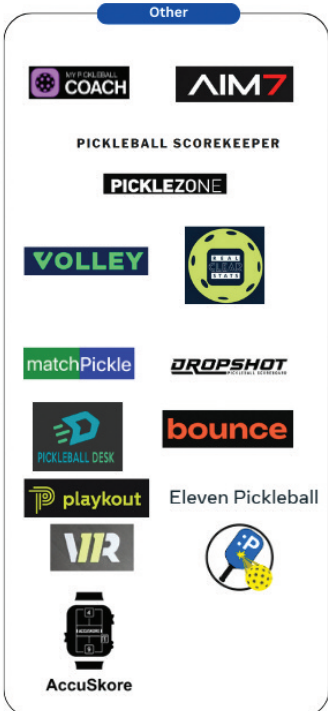
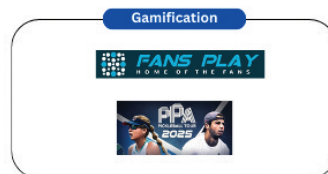
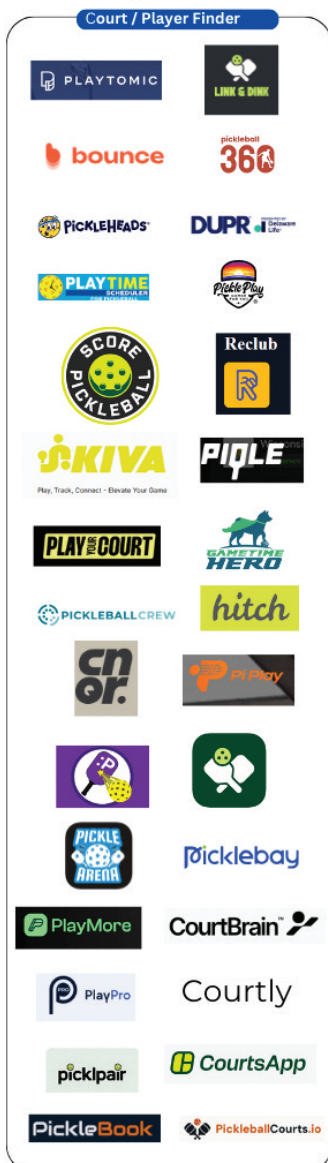
**PlaySight:** Absolutely. We are actively implementing AI across every department—from coding and R&D to support,

project management, marketing, and sales. We are already seeing significant gains in productivity and cost efficiency as a result. Moving forward, candidates who possess specific AI skills and understand how to leverage these tools effectively will have a distinct advantage in our hiring process.

**Volley:** We are always open to adding exceptional talent, especially individuals with experience in computer vision, real-time inference, reinforcement learning, and human-performance analytics, ideally combined with a passion for racquet sports. ■

## PickleTech Companies

More than 100 companies provide technology for the pickleball industry, and most of them could be useful for pickleball facilities. Below are the companies we have identified.



Graphics courtesy of *The Business of Pickleball* newsletter.



# Pickleball Simulators: Elevating the Customer Experience at Your Facility

Pickleball facilities are flourishing, courts are full, waitlists are long and players crave new ways to train, compete and have fun. The facilities winning today aren't just managing demand, they're creating experiences.

**Playkout** is the first pickleball simulator built to help facilities stand out, attract new members, and generate reliable year-round revenue.

It blends real paddles, real balls and real mechanics with cutting-edge sensor vision to create an experience that has a real-sport feel.

In a world where every club is fighting for differentiation, Playkout delivers something unforgettable.

## How Playkout Simulators Work

At its core, Playkout is a *hardware-plus-software* system that replicates real pickleball rallies using multi-angle sensors and a digitally projected "court" with games. Players hit a real pickleball with a real paddle into a Playkout impact screen. Every shot is read instantly, and the system generates an immediate response on the screen.

The simulator runs competitive games and some players use it for coaching sessions without needing a physical court, opponent, or perfect weather conditions.

## Why Facilities Love Playkout: A Revenue Driver

### 1. Private Member Rentals

One of the strongest benefits of the simulator is that it monetizes "dead space" and off-peak hours. A Playkout bay can be run like a golf simulator:

- Bookable by the hour, half-hour or even just 15 minutes.
- Used by individuals or groups



- Personalized for warm-ups, training, skills work or entertainment

### Members get:

- A climate-controlled, all-weather practice environment
- A structured format that feels more productive than drilling alone
- A fun, gamified experience that brings people back

### Facilities get:

- Revenue from a resource that is not tied to court availability
- Predictable usage that smooths out peak-hour congestion
- A membership perk that differentiates them in the market

Playkout pays rent consistently because they offer value: players actually improve when they use them and the experience is fun enough to repeat weekly.

### 2. Stronger Clinics, Camps, and Group Programming

Traditional clinics often suffer from unequal reps and inconsistent training conditions. With Playkout, coaches can script training modules that deliver controlled repetition and measurable results.

### Examples:

- Transition zone resets with adjustable difficulty
- Kitchen-line pressure drills
- Dink battle scenarios

Players get more touches per hour than on a live court, and coaches get:

- A reliable training environment
- A structured curriculum
- Player data to track progress
- A way to group players by skill development needs, not just availability

This drives higher-quality clinics—and higher revenue per clinic—because the product is measurably better.

### 3. Improved Private Lessons

Many facilities have waitlists for private coaching, but coaches can only teach one session at a time, on one court, often outdoors. Playkout changes the instructor workflow:

- A coach can deliver ball-fed precision lessons without needing another player on court.
- Focus areas can be repeated 30–100 times in a controlled format.
- Advise players to continue practicing what they have learned each lesson with goals based on game accuracy and score levels.

This allows instructors to:

- Teach more effectively
- Increase hourly rates
- Fill schedules during off-court hours
- Offer video-enhanced feedback automatically (in the near future)

Private lessons become more consistent, more fun and deliver better results—making them easier to sell and easier to scale.

## 4. Event Use: Tournaments, Social Nights, Corporate Rentals

Pickleball events thrive on energy and engagement. Playkout adds a high-tech attraction that draws crowds and creates memorable experiences.

Facilities can run:

- Accuracy contests
- Skill-based mini-games
- Team-based simulator competitions
- Children's parties
- Corporate/Charity events
- E-Tournaments

Creates a fun alternative or addition to multiple events by:

- Allowing for larger capacity events beyond usual court availability limitations.
- Customized menu screen and games, creating event “add-on” opportunities to increase revenue. Add personalized welcome messages and party themes or brand specific imagery.
- A traditional pickleball tournament or league night does not have to end between matches or when players are eliminated. Add a Playkout e-tournament during these events to keep players on-site longer and engaged through simulator play.

Because the simulator gamifies pickleball, it appeals to beginners and advanced players alike. Many facilities place simulators near bars or lounges to increase dwell time and secondary spending.

## Benefits for Players and Members

Players consistently experience:

- Faster improvement (because reps are higher and more consistent)
- More fun practice sessions
- A low-pressure environment to try new skills

- Confidence before league play or tournaments

This increases member satisfaction—one of the biggest drivers of long-term retention.

## What Coaches Need to Know

### 1. The Simulator Is a Coach Enhancement Tool—not a replacement

Playkout does not teach strategy or footwork by itself. Coaches remain essential for:

- Correcting mechanics
- Teaching shot selection
- Building tactical understanding
- Creating training plans

The simulator simply gives players more reps and clearer feedback.

### 2. Coaches Can Build Custom Drills

Coaches can design:

- Player-specific modules
- Competitive challenges
- Warm-up and cool-down flows

It becomes a customizable extension of the coach's teaching philosophy.

### 3. It Takes Pressure Off Court Space

Coaches can deliver high-quality lessons without fighting for court time. This is especially useful during:

- Peak hours
- Rainy days
- Winter months
- Weekend congestion

More lesson slots → more revenue → more satisfied members.

## Putting it all Together

Playkout simulators are more than high-tech entertainment—they are a training, coaching, and revenue-generation platform engineered to meet the needs of modern pickleball facilities.

By combining real-paddle mechanics and structured training modules, Playkout enables clubs to deliver better clinics, better lessons, new rental revenue, and engaging event experiences. ■

## Case Studies

### Paddle Up Pickleball Club

For facilities looking to differentiate themselves, maximize court availability, and improve member outcomes, Playkout represents a future-ready solution that brings technology, coaching, and player development together in one powerful system.

The Playkout Simulators at our new pickleball facility have been great! The Playkout team has been very responsive whenever issues have arisen with the technology, and they've been a pleasure to work with.

We've found the simulators to be particularly popular with social groups, and they've been a help in creating a friendly environment for birthday parties, corporate events, and other social gatherings of individuals at our Pickleball Club.

### Dill Dinkers

We've been working with Jorge and the Playkout team for about five months. We currently have one simulator in our corporate office for evaluation and testing and another unit in one of our franchise clubs for use by our members and guests.

The Playkout team has been super responsive in adjusting the simulator to meet our needs. From interface and game development to addressing functional and usability concerns, the platform has seen tremendous improvement and enhancement in just the last few months. We anticipate that further development as a training platform will be an even bigger draw for our intermediate players.

With 23 Dill Dinkers franchise clubs open and 400+ under development, our relationship with Playkout helps us enhance our value proposition to our franchisees by opening a new stream of revenue, turning unused floor space into revenue generating space, and providing a whole new line of attraction to people who have not yet joined the pickleball community.



# PodPlay's Bet on the Future of Racquet Sports Clubs: One App, One Experience

By Josh Kerns, Chief Marketing and Member Officer, IAPPF

When it comes to club management software, it seems there are two approaches: one favors a central app with a number of integrations or add-ons with other third-party services. That can include everything from video replay solutions to door-access automation. The other is akin to Apple, which keeps its platform singularly built in.

PodPlay founder Borton says his company is firmly in the Apple-model camp, designing its solution as a full-stack approach with a similar elegance and simplicity as an iPhone. With more than 300 clubs and growing now using PodPlay, it's clear many operators are enthusiastically embracing that approach.

## How Ping Pong Paved the Way for PodPlay

PodPlay's early development took shape at PingPod, an autonomous table tennis concept in New York City. The first location opened in February 2020, shut down at the start of the pandemic, then re-opening in May as one of the first non-essential businesses back online because their model was already contactless. "We had contactless entry, no employees on site... and we could track everybody who came through the door," Borton says.

That operating DNA shows up in PodPlay's core mindset: solve the pain you've lived, then productize it for others. "We learned what to build by running facilities... that operator perspective has been crucial to our vision and success."

## The "three layers" that define PodPlay

Borton describes PodPlay as three connected layers:

### Layer 1: Club management software.

Reservations, events, memberships, coaching workflows and payments are table



stakes—but PodPlay's north star is reducing friction for the player and staff. Borton puts it plainly: "We're very adamant about aesthetics, design, limiting friction."

### Layer 2: On-court hardware that's not a gimmick.

Digital scoreboards and replay become sticky when they're not bolted on. Borton's critique of point solutions is blunt: "You have to scan a QR code...have a separate login...and we think that kills usage."

### Layer 3: Autonomous mode that's meant to feel premium, not cheap.

In a world where labor is one of the biggest cost centers and hours-of-operation are constrained by staffing, autonomous can be a key to boosting the bottom line.

### St. Pete Athletic: software as a "day one" facility decision

At the newly-opened St. Pete Athletic in Florida, the software solution was one of the first decisions founder Reuben Pressman made or the expansive new "racquet and social club" that features 14 indoor pickleball and two padel courts, multiple table tennis tables, a full restaurant, cocktail bar and many other amenities.

"The software platform that our members and guests experience is no different than the floors they end up standing on... this is something that needs to get figured out early."

Pressman is positioning St. Pete Athletic as an "urban country club," and he connects that hospitality ambition directly back to technology: "The level of hospitality we're striving for meant our software had to back that up."

That decision even influenced the physical build-out. Pressman says PodPlay affected architectural planning because they "knew we wanted the cameras and the TVs and the iPads...it played into how we designed the space around those from day one."

### Real traction: pre-sales, migrations, and the "switching cost" test

One of the strongest signals that a platform is delivering real value is when operators go through the pain of switching. Borton says that 40% of the locations on PodPlay came via migrations from other systems—"Nobody signs up for a migration unless they think they're getting something substantially better."

## Autonomous mode: the “press to unlock” future

Autonomous clubs used to sound like a niche experiment. Now they’re a legitimate format—especially for micro-facilities, off-hour access, and markets where staffing is brutal.

At club’s like the popular Gotham Pickleball in Long Island City, NY, managing entry is simple. With integrated door access, a player pulls up their reservation, presses a button that says “unlock door,” and they can enter. The app limits access to ten minutes prior to a reservation or open play session.

At the end of a session, monitors tell players their session has ended. If the court isn’t booked, they can extend their time. If they try and stay longer, a remote team monitoring the club (a feature for all PodPlay automated facilities) can trigger a text or audio message reminding them their time is up.

And autonomous operations are no longer exclusively for indoor operations. The company announced earlier this month a new partnership with PICKLETILE to offer a completely autonomous outdoor solutions featuring PICKLEGLASS enclosed courts with integrated smart door access control; customer-designed PodPlay kiosks housing iPads and monitors, built to withstand heat, rain and cold.

Borton says the point isn’t to remove service—it’s to redeploy resources into a cleaner, more predictable experience. He argues autonomous shouldn’t be labeled “budget,” because the tech layer can actually elevate the visit: monitors direct players to courts, enable scoreboards and replay, and support remote oversight.

## The broader market signal: enterprise adoption is accelerating

PodPlay’s biggest get to date is landing the Pickleball Kingdom franchise chain, signing an exclusive relationship with PodPlay. The company touts an end-to-

end experience that includes reservations, video replays, scoreboards, DUPR integration, programming, coaching, membership, payments, and analytics.

## Lesson for operators should take from this

PodPlay of course isn’t the only option in club management software—and it shouldn’t be. But Borton says the PodPlay approach highlights their core philosophy: the platforms that win long-term will be the ones designed around the real customer journey, not the owner’s spreadsheet.

Pressman’s advice to operators is worth repeating: Treat software like a foundational build decision, not a box to check, because “Every little element...everything is built around that.”

And if your facility model depends on brand polish, seamless play, strong content/social loops or even autonomous access, the “all-in-one, truly integrated” route starts to look less like a luxury and more like a competitive baseline. ■



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# How Player Ratings Can Help Build Stronger Memberships and Events

**F**acility asked [DUPR](#) and [VAIR](#), two pickleball player ratings systems, to discuss how pickleball and padel facility owners can use ratings to improve their programming and overall member experience. Below are their suggestions.

## DUPR Suggestions

By now, most facility leaders accept the value of player skill ratings. What's less understood is how to translate that language into fuller courts, happier members and new revenue streams.

### Getting and updating a rating without tournaments

One of the biggest myths is that DUPR is “just for tournaments.” In reality, any player can:

- Download the free DUPR app or sign up on [dupr.com](#)
- Join DUPR-rated ladders, leagues or open-play sessions at a DUPR Club
- Log recreational matches in the app and have opponents verify scores

One verified match is enough to generate a rating, and 10–20 matches usually make it quite accurate. Players see their current number, a reliability indicator (how much data DUPR has on them), and their match history in the app—all without ever entering a sanctioned tournament.

For those who want a starting point before they've logged any matches, the free MyDUPR Coach app lets players submit video or book an in-person session to receive a coach-assigned provisional DUPR rating.

For facility operators, that's gold.

“We have a lot of members who may never play a tournament, but DUPR gives them a meaningful number to chase and a community to belong to,” says Susan

Moeckli, a member and head of DUPR programming at the Hub Pickleball Center in San Jose, CA. “They're striving to increase that DUPR rating, and that keeps them engaged in our programs.”

### What clubs can do with DUPR outside tournaments

- For operators, DUPR is also a free digital club platform. Once a facility becomes a DUPR Club, staff can:
- Build DUPR ladders, leagues, round robins and rating sessions
- Restrict events or open play to specific rating bands
- Enter scores match-by-match in a club portal or import results from supported software

DUPR's club tools are free, come with a dedicated account manager and are designed to help facilities fill courts and engage members with level-based play. Official club and tournament results are weighted more heavily than self-reported rec games, which rewards disciplined scorekeeping at the facility level and leads to more trusted ratings.

At The HUB's Silicon Valley location, Moeckli started with a ten-court ladder, then layered in tight-band (closely rated) the round robins, “Crazy 8s” events

pairing higher and lower-rated players, seasonal DUPR series and moneyball nights for 4.0+ and 5.0+ players. “The result,” she says, “is more organized play, more options for member and way more community.”

More than half of DUPR's match data now comes directly from clubs, not big tournaments—a sign that everyday programming is the heart of the ecosystem.

### Managing scores, expectations and egos

For players, the DUPR app is home base: they join events, log or confirm results and watch their rating trend over time.

For clubs, the key is designing programs and messaging that fit the algorithm:

- Keep rating bands tight (roughly 0.25–0.5 spreads) so matches feel fair and swings stay modest
- Use DUPR to support “move up / move down” conversations rather than relying on staff opinion alone
- Explain that small rating drops after close wins are normal if the win was below expectation

Machado argues that the culture has to change: DUPR is a rating, not a badge of honor. “DUPR isn't something to protect, it's something to feed,” says Tito Machado, CEO of DUPR. “The more

“Facilities can integrate ratings directly into their customer management systems.

When players understand their level, they are more likely to engage, improve and return.”

games in the system, the more accurate it becomes—and the better the experience for everyone.”

## Key takeaways for facility leaders

- **DUPR is more than a number** – It’s a shared language that makes programming clearer and fairer for everyone.
- **You don’t need tournaments** – Players can get and maintain accurate ratings entirely through club ladders, leagues and DUPR-rated open play.
- **Clubs can DUPR-rate everyday activity** – Free DUPR Club tools turn regular sessions into data that improves scheduling, court utilization and member retention.
- **Education reduces pushback** – Clear explanations of the algorithm help turn skeptics into advocates and protect your level-based programming.
- **DUPR+ and MyDUPR Coach add up-sell paths** – Premium memberships and coach-driven programs give

facilities new levers for engagement, coaching revenue and member perks, all anchored in the same rating framework.

Used well, DUPR doesn’t just describe your members’ level. It becomes one of the engines that keeps them playing, improving — and coming back to your courts.

## VAIR Suggestions

Player ratings have become one of the most valuable tools for pickleball facilities that want to grow participation, improve customer satisfaction and create more balanced programs. A reliable rating system gives players a clear sense of where they stand, while giving clubs the structure they need to build fair, competitive and repeatable experiences.

When players understand their level, they are more likely to engage, improve and return.

One major benefit of using a player rating system is that it removes guesswork. Instead of players bouncing between sessions that feel too easy or too advanced, facilities can group customers by accurate skill levels. This creates better experiences in leagues, clinics, open play sessions and tournaments.

When sessions feel fair and balanced, players talk about it and bring friends. Ratings also help eliminate common friction points such as mismatches, complaints about imbalance or customers insisting they belong in a higher division.

A common pitfall is players feeling upset when their rating does not match their expectations. This is normal and usually comes from misunderstanding how ratings are calculated. The best way for facilities to handle this is with education and transparency. Explain how ratings reflect actual skill execution, not popularity or match volume. Encourage players to treat



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## Your Courts. Your Kitchen. Your Competitive Edge.

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ratings as information, not identity. Clear communication goes a long way.

Facilities can integrate ratings directly into their customer management systems. Once ratings are added to each customer profile, clubs can set up automations that trigger targeted messages. For example, a 3.0 player who reaches a 3.25 threshold could automatically receive invitations to 3.5 transition clinics.

A player whose movement, consistency or match IQ scores reveal specific weaknesses could be sent personalized class recommendations. This type of segmentation increases program engagement because customers receive offers that feel relevant and timely.

Coaches also benefit greatly from having accurate ratings available. When coaches understand a player's strengths and weaknesses across categories like consistency, shot tolerance, movement and decision making, they can tailor lesson plans, identify skill gaps and recommend appropriate clinics.

Ratings help coaches avoid the common challenge of trying to teach a class that has an inconsistent spread of abilities. With precise level grouping, group lessons run smoother, players progress faster and retention improves.

Ratings are also a powerful tool for tournament growth. Facilities can create divisions that are more competitive and more predictable, which leads to better player experiences. When tournaments run smoothly and players feel matched correctly, word spreads and attendance grows over time.

In the end, a strong rating system gives facilities a framework to run better programs, coaches a clearer understanding of their students and players a path to improvement. When ratings are used correctly, participation rises, customer satisfaction improves and the entire community becomes healthier and more engaged. ■

## Case Study: How The Courts Cape Coral Used VAIR Courts to Create Exact-Level Open Play

At The Courts Cape Coral, open play has always been a central part of the daily experience. Traditional open play sessions worked well for players who simply wanted to show up, mix in and enjoy games with a wide range of partners. But as the community grew, another group of players began asking for something more precise. They wanted consistency, competitive balance and a way to know that every game would match their true ability level.

To meet this need, The Courts introduced VAIR Courts, a new rating-based layer added on top of the existing open play structure. Traditional open play continued unchanged, but VAIR Courts became the option for players who wanted exact matchups based on verified skill levels.

Players who chose to be VAIRified received an accurate rating that reflected real play, not guesswork. Those ratings were then used to place players into appropriate VAIR Courts, such as 3.0, 3.5, 4.0– and 4.0+. This gave players the confidence that when they walked onto a VAIR Court, they would be competing with others at their same level.

The introduction of 4.0– and 4.0+ VAIR Courts made one of the biggest impacts. These courts separated strong advanced players from the elite 4.0+ crowd, creating two highly balanced divisions with the exact pace, consistency and intensity each group wanted. Lower levels saw the same benefits. The 3.0 courts offered developing players a safe environment to grow, while the 3.5 courts delivered perfect mid-level competition without the mismatch frustrations that often happened in traditional open play.

The layered system created a win for every type of player. Social players continued to enjoy traditional open play. Players who wanted competitive accuracy could choose VAIR Courts. And because the VAIR Courts attracted players committed to leveling up, the overall quality of those games rose quickly.

The Courts also benefited operationally. By tagging players with verified ratings, staff could easily direct them to the correct VAIR Court and maintain fairness without confrontation or guesswork. Players who felt they were ready to move up received clear guidance on what skills they needed to develop, which helped reduce arguments and confusion.

Jason Smith, Director of Operations, says adding VAIR Courts was one of the most successful additions the club has ever made. "Introducing VAIR Courts gave our players a completely new level of confidence. They know that when they step onto a VAIR Court, the matchup will be spot on. Traditional open play still thrives, but the players who want exact levels now have a home. It has made our open play experience more balanced, more fair and honestly more enjoyable for everyone."

The Courts Cape Coral continues to run both formats side by side, giving players the flexibility of traditional open play and the precision of VAIR-rated competition. The result is a healthier, more organized and more player-friendly open play environment.

# Reducing Pickleball Noise With Smart Design & Transparent Barriers

By [Hushtec](#)

Pickleball has surged across parks, clubs and community spaces, accompanied by its unmistakable soundtrack: the crisp pop of paddle striking ball. For neighbors living just 60 to 200 feet (20–60 meters) away, it's clearly unwelcome. As the sport's popularity accelerates, so too does the need to address its acoustic footprint with smarter, more holistic solutions.

This article examines best-practice strategies for reducing pickleball noise and spotlights how transparent acoustic innovations are helping facilities keep the game vibrant, inclusive and neighbor-friendly. Modern, independently tested noise-control technologies are reshaping the conversation around coexistence between recreation and residential life.

## Understanding the Nature of Pickleball Noise

Tennis generates soft, less-frequent impact sounds, while pickleball's lightweight paddles and hard, perforated balls create a sharp, high-frequency "crack" that carries remarkably well. Combined with open-air courts and hard playing surfaces, this acoustic profile can easily extend into nearby homes.

Importantly, most concerns aren't triggered by a single loud strike. Instead, it's the repetitive, rhythmic cadence of paddle-to-ball impacts sustained over long sessions that becomes disruptive. Meaningful noise reduction must therefore focus on managing this persistent pattern, rather than treating isolated peaks in sound levels.

## Best-Practice Approaches to Reducing Noise

Venues that thrive over the long term tend to adopt a layered approach.

The aim is simple: create a welcoming environment for play while preserving peace beyond the fence line.

### 1. Smart Court Placement

Thoughtful design choices at the planning stage can make a significant difference:

- Position the noisiest sides of courts toward commercial zones or roadways
- Introduce distance or landscaped buffers between courts and nearby residences
- Avoid clustering courts directly against property boundaries

Even modest adjustments—such as a few extra feet of space or a row of vegetation—can noticeably reduce perceived noise for neighbors.

### 2. Operational Planning & Communication

Policies and practices outside of infrastructure remain essential:

- Establish reasonable playing hours
- Communicate openly with surrounding residents
- Encourage the use of quieter paddles or balls where appropriate

### 3. Purpose-Designed Acoustic Barriers

For many facilities, acoustic barriers deliver the most measurable improvement. By breaking the line-of-sight between sound sources and nearby homes, barriers reduce the transmission of impact noise. To be effective, they must be:

- Tall enough to intercept the noise path
- Dense and sealed to block—not merely deflect—sound
- Strategically positioned relative to neighboring properties

Traditional materials such as timber, masonry or composite panels can work, but often introduce visual bulk, limit supervision or feel out of place in open recreational settings.

## The Evolution of Transparent Noise Barriers

To address these challenges, a new generation of transparent acoustic barriers has emerged. These solutions combine the functional benefits of traditional walls with the openness and aesthetics that community spaces demand.

One example is Hushtec's Clearplay 360 system, now in use on pickleball courts across United States and New Zealand. The system employs engineered clear acoustic screens suspended from existing fencing. From a distance, the courts retain a modern, open look—yet the sharpness of paddle impacts is significantly reduced.

This version balances technical detail with readability, emphasizes the layered strategy and frames Clearplay 360 as part of a broader evolution rather than a product pitch.



One of the key advantages of hanging transparent screens over solid structures is their flexibility. They can be retrofitted to existing courts, removed temporarily to accommodate events or expanded seamlessly as new courts are added.



## Visibility, Safety & Spectator Experience

Transparent barriers stand out because they balance three essential needs: acoustic control, player comfort and spectator engagement.

### Clear Visibility for Spectators

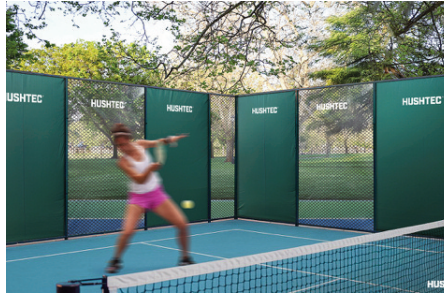
Parents, friends and fans can enjoy an unobstructed view of the action from outside the court. Unlike opaque walls, transparent barriers preserve gameplay angles and the full sense of activity.

### Effective Operational Oversight

Coaches and officials benefit from uninterrupted sightlines, enabling them to supervise multiple courts simultaneously. Acoustic screens reduce noise without compromising visibility or safety.

### The Importance of Verified Acoustic Performance

When noise concerns reach local councils, assumptions and rough

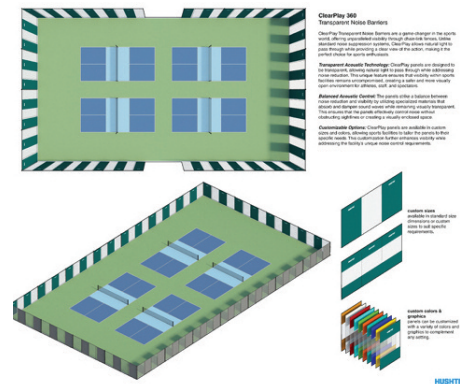


estimates are no longer sufficient. Facilities must rely on solutions backed by independent laboratory testing—not generic screens or improvised barriers.

An effective acoustic product should deliver:

- Verified sound transmission loss (STL) data
- Performance testing across the specific frequencies generated by pickleball impacts
- Comprehensive documentation suitable for planners, acoustic engineers and council approvals

Hushtec's Clearplay 360 exemplifies this level of rigor. Its acoustic performance has been validated in certified laboratories, giving facility owners the confidence to present real, quantifiable data. Beyond its tested results, Clearplay 360 offers full customization in color, shape and size—ensuring both technical credibility and design flexibility. ■



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# Barnes Tennis Center: A Multi-Sport Model for the Future

*How San Diego's Premier Racket Sports Facility is Leading the Way in Tennis, Pickleball, and Padel Integration*

By Josh Kerns, IAPPF Chief Marketing and Member Officer



In November 2025, Barnes Tennis Center in San Diego made history once again by hosting the USA Pickleball National Championships, welcoming players and spectators from around the world to its 17-acre facility in Point Loma.

But this was more than just another tournament for Executive Director Ryan Redondo—it was validation of a bold vision that began five years ago to transform what was once a traditional tennis center into one of America's most dynamic multi-sport racket facilities.

The numbers tell part of the story: 25 tennis courts, 19 pickleball courts, and 7 padel courts operating simultaneously.

Behind those statistics lies a remarkable journey of innovation, community building, and nonprofit mission-driven growth that offers lessons for facility operators across the country.

We sat down with Redondo to discuss how Barnes Tennis Center has become a national model for multi-sport integration, the challenges of serving everyone from wheelchair athletes to ATP professionals, and why he believes youth programming is the future of all racket sports.

**>Josh Kerns:** Ryan, tell me about Barnes.

**>Ryan Redondo:** Youth Tennis San Diego—YTSD—is a nonprofit that was

started in 1952 as the San Diego Tennis Patrons. In the late 80s, the organization and kids programming really got stronger, which was currently held out of Balboa Tennis Club. More kids were playing and they needed some separation. So there were some stakeholders in San Diego that said we need a site just for kids.

During the late 80s, they found this property that we're on here—17 acres along the San Diego River. This was undeveloped land. They created the Barnes Tennis Center, which opened in 1995. It's 25 courts, and they added the building and clay courts and stuff over time. They did all sorts of different tournaments, programming, etc., and they hired me in 2020.





I kind of turned that upside down and created a new business model. We started with three pickleball courts alongside the 25 tennis courts. I was just trying to get my understanding of that facility. It was during Covid, so nobody was here, and the organization did not have the financial means to do anything at that point.

So we needed to come up with something new and elevate tennis in San Diego. That's what I did. I brought in every tournament you can think of—ATP, ITF, stuff that had never been here before. But I started to look at the facility and say, okay, how do we create something for this community that will elevate our mission? And our mission is to provide the opportunity for kids without the means to learn to play the game of tennis. That's what it's been since the 50s—breaking barriers down, giving kids scholarships.

**>JK:** So the facility serves as a financial vehicle for the nonprofit's mission?

**>RR:** Exactly. What we do is we go out and we hire coaches, buy the equipment, and we have sites all over the city of

San Diego—parks, rec departments, and school districts. We go out and we teach kids tennis for free. Really the ultimate goal was, okay, let's use Barnes as a financial vehicle to get as many people here and bring the operations to a point where we can self-sustain all of our programming, because we have to fundraise quite a bit.

I went around the facility and said, okay, three pickleball courts will fit there. Three padel courts will fit here because we can't put tennis courts. I got approval from the board and we started. We had three pickleball courts and 200 people wanting to play. We had three padel courts and 200 people wanting to play, where I couldn't even get on a court. I would have to come before we opened up to be able to play.

So we started to strategically think, okay, where do we have land that we can develop? We heard and listened to the community, what they wanted. Obviously, pickleball being what it is, we said, okay, we want to be a provider of that. We think it could coexist together.

**>JK:** You were really pioneers in that multi-sport model, weren't you?

**>RR:** I don't know if you saw in the New York Times about 3 or 4 years ago—Chris Cleary did an article on us. Because we were really the first facility that was operating and really programming these things with a huge community, offering tennis, pickleball, and padel all together. And that was really an impetus for others to see: let's stop fighting, let's stop all of this noise. You can have all these sports together. People love it, right?

We've been very successful. We run tons of pickleball tournaments, tons of padel tournaments—grassroots to professional. We want to expose all of the sports to everybody, no matter what your background is, no matter what your ability is. Right now, we're hosting events with 12 courts of wheelchair tennis going on. We have USA Pickleball wheelchair draws.

We are going into a phase where we're going to start a youth pickleball program. We're going to start going out to the city where we are hosting events just for youth and really replicating what we know works with tennis. We have a template that exposes a lot of people to the sport, and we're going to start to do that with pickleball and padel.

**>JK:** Speaking of major events, you just hosted the USA Pickleball Nationals in November. Can you talk about the scale and importance of that tournament?

**>RR:** The USA Pickleball Nationals is the premier tournament in the sport—the longest-standing and only National Championships. This year's event, which ran November 15-23, brought together over 2,600 athletes from 47 states and 13 countries, with more than 10,000 spectators.

We transformed the facility with a Championship Court presented by QVC, and had 50-plus designated pickleball courts for the event.

It was a nine-day showcase featuring everything from juniors to masters, singles to doubles, and adaptive sports divisions. We even had shuttle services running every 15 minutes from off-site parking because the event was so large. The economic impact for a host city can be significant—last year's event in Mesa, Arizona generated an estimated \$3.6 million.

What made it special for us was that we didn't pause our other operations. We've learned how to coordinate these massive events while still serving our community across all three sports.

**>JK:** How do you manage your programming when you have the highest level events going on? When I was there, you had international and collegiate tennis nationals, USA Pickleball Nationals, but then conversely, you have youth programming and beginners and seniors.

**>RR:** That really comes down to our team. Our team is the best thing that we have, and why we're able to do what we do is we have a great team that can manage all these things and work together.

There are certain times when we run events like USA Pickleball Nationals where they had 50 or more designated pickleball courts. So we actually resurface our tennis courts temporarily for pickleball, and then we resurface them back. We have all these tennis programs going on right now. So it's really coordinating, scheduling, and knowing within our calendar the ebbs and flows of what the sports need. Ultimately they all run together.

We've done a really good job of being able to operate the facility—it's almost like three facilities in one. There are certain times where, for girls nationals, we've actually had to pause pickleball operations during the day. There have been times when we ran the Pro Padel League here and they took center court. So it's really just understanding the calendar, the schedule, and then working together.

**>JK:** How do you communicate to the community that they are welcome there regardless of who they are or where they are at in terms of what they want out of their sport?

**>RR:** Last year we ran an ATP 100 event and we did not pause anything. We had pickleball courts all going on all around it. There were no complaints. We had a ton of pickleball players who got to come out and watch.

We just market it constantly—we're exposing everybody to what's happening. "Hey, we have this event coming on. We would love for you to come out. Everybody's welcome." It's very rare that we're charging for parking or anything like that. What we have become is really a community resource center.

You can come here and get a massage, do physical therapy with our partners at Catalyst. We have so many great things going on that that's how we expose everybody and bring awareness.

**>JK:** A lot of clubs struggle with this—would you say that's good advice for any facility, small or large? Don't try and do it all yourself, but bring partners in?

**>RR:** Yeah, absolutely. I think the trend that we see in the industry now in racket sports is people want to go to a place where they can do more than one thing. You still have your traditional tennis clubs or single-sport clubs where that's all you do, and that's great. But if you have the ability to bring in partners, partnerships always just make you stronger, right? It expands your network.

What we try to do as often as we can is bring in great partners where we can ensure there's a win-win for both. And ultimately what happens is the community benefits. You can look at the economic benefits for every city. My suggestion is whether you're a small club or a large club, unless you're an HOA that doesn't want anybody in your gates—expose yourself to your community because ultimately you're just going to help somebody.

**>JK:** What do you find with people who maybe have never seen padel before, never even heard of it, when they get a chance to be exposed to it? Are people open to it? Do you find that you get a lot of that cross-pollination once people get a chance to give it a try?

**>RR:** What we found is that tennis players are very open to trying padel. We see people coming from pickleball as well. What I love about what I see at the facility is we have thousands of people—we

“Let's stop fighting, let's stop all of this noise. You can have all these sports together.”



have 6,000 to 8,000 people come each week where a lot of them are pickleball players. I tell people who give me a hard time—the tennis purists—I say none of these people, a lot of them, would have come here to play tennis.

Now they're getting to see tennis because they're playing pickleball and they love pickleball and it makes them happy. It makes them healthy. They have friendships. We see all these social networks that are happening—that's helping society, right? By diversifying, if you're in the business of wellness and sport, that's really your requirement as a provider.

**>JK:** I love that perspective. I haven't played tennis for 30 years or something. I started playing pickleball five years ago, then I started playing tennis again. It's not a matter of either-or.

**>RR:** Exactly. In the summertime, we do our racket sports summer camp for kids. They play tennis, pickleball, and padel, and they love it. Kids absolutely love it. I'll sit at the door as kids leave and get picked up, and I'll ask, "What was your favorite sport today?" And they all have different answers.

**>JK:** You're a pioneer in junior programming. How important is junior programming—not just sort of a camp over the break, but really leaning into junior programs for the long-term success and health of the facility?

**>RR:** Juniors is everything. I say that constantly. I'm on a soapbox with padel specifically. Right now when you look at padel in the US, it's very expensive to play because people are investing in it and they need a bigger return. So what you have are these really high rates. We are the cheapest in the country because we're trying to expose it to a lot of people, and our business model shows that works.

I'm on a soapbox—and this is for all three racket sports—if you don't have kids playing or grassroots, a sport will not last. With padel, it might be great for ten years because you have these luxury clubs and adults playing. But when they're done playing, who's behind them?



That's why pickleball has become very successful, and you're seeing a younger demographic now. The old stereotype that it's for old people—I look at them and say you're crazy. Right now we have 2,000 20-to-30-year-olds playing and laughing their butts off. That is going to sustain the sport. But you need the juniors.

That's what tennis has done so well—it has a pipeline to the program. The USTA has the whole pathway. That's why I'm on my soapbox now about college tennis—you've got to keep it because that's going to keep junior tennis going. Everything starts with kids, right?

**>JK:** Is it worth maybe discounting or offering free kids clinics—not looking at having to generate your X amount per

hour per court, but looking at the long term and being willing to make some investments early on where you're giving up some short-term returns for the long-term gain?

**>RR:** 100%. That's our mission, that's our motto. We do that and it's just what we do. We have lots of scholarships, lots of programming, and lots of free programming. Absolutely.

**>JK:** I have to say, when I visited, I loved that Barnes didn't feel bougie at all. You had the highest level events, the stadium court, everything very welcoming. When I went down to padel, it didn't feel like "this is the padel area, you're not welcome here, pickleball guy." It felt integrated.



**>RR:** Thank you for saying that. That's one thing we want to continue improving—we want the flow to be seamless. If you look at what we've done at pickleball, we want that to blend into tennis and padel. We still have some years of work to do.

Someone came to the facility when we were under review for a California state grant to rebuild the lobby and put new locker rooms in, and their comment was, "That's not a nonprofit, that looks like a country club."

At one level, it's great—people are recognizing it looks nice. But on the back end,

it's a nonprofit. We're still fixing bathrooms and dealing with all the same facility issues. But that's what we're working toward.

**>JK:** Any advice for clubs that maybe want to look at ways to diversify? If you are a pickleball club, for example, that has maybe some extra space, or you're a tennis or country club and you have underutilized tennis courts—do you start with just a couple of courts? Do you dive all in? What would you recommend?

**>RR:** Looking into padel, or even pickleball—don't just do one court. I made that mistake because somebody says, "Hey, I

only have space for one court." If that's all you can do, we'll take it because we want to help expose the sport. We've done that a lot where we've just put one court in or a pop-up to gauge interest. So go ahead and do that.

But to really program pickleball or padel, I think you need a minimum of three to really get community moving around and have a coach there that can do a lesson while people are reserving the courts. My recommendation to diversify is definitely do it.

What I love is we have thousands of people come here for events, and a lot of them would not have come here to play tennis. Now they're getting to see tennis because they're playing pickleball, and it makes them happy, makes them healthy. They have friendships and social networks that are helping society. If you're in the business of wellness and sport, that's your requirement as a provider. ■

### About Barnes Tennis Center:

Barnes Tennis Center is a 17-acre premier multi-sport facility in San Diego's Point Loma neighborhood featuring 25 tennis courts, 19 pickleball courts, and 7 padel courts. Owned and operated by Youth Tennis San Diego (YTSD), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1952, the facility serves as both a world-class tournament venue and a community resource center. Barnes Tennis Center provides free tennis programming to underserved youth throughout San Diego County while hosting professional and amateur events across all three racket sports.

*For more information, visit  
[www.barnestenniscenter.com](http://www.barnestenniscenter.com)*

*Josh Kerns is Chief Marketing and Member Officer of the International Association of Pickleball Professionals and Facilities (IAPPF).*







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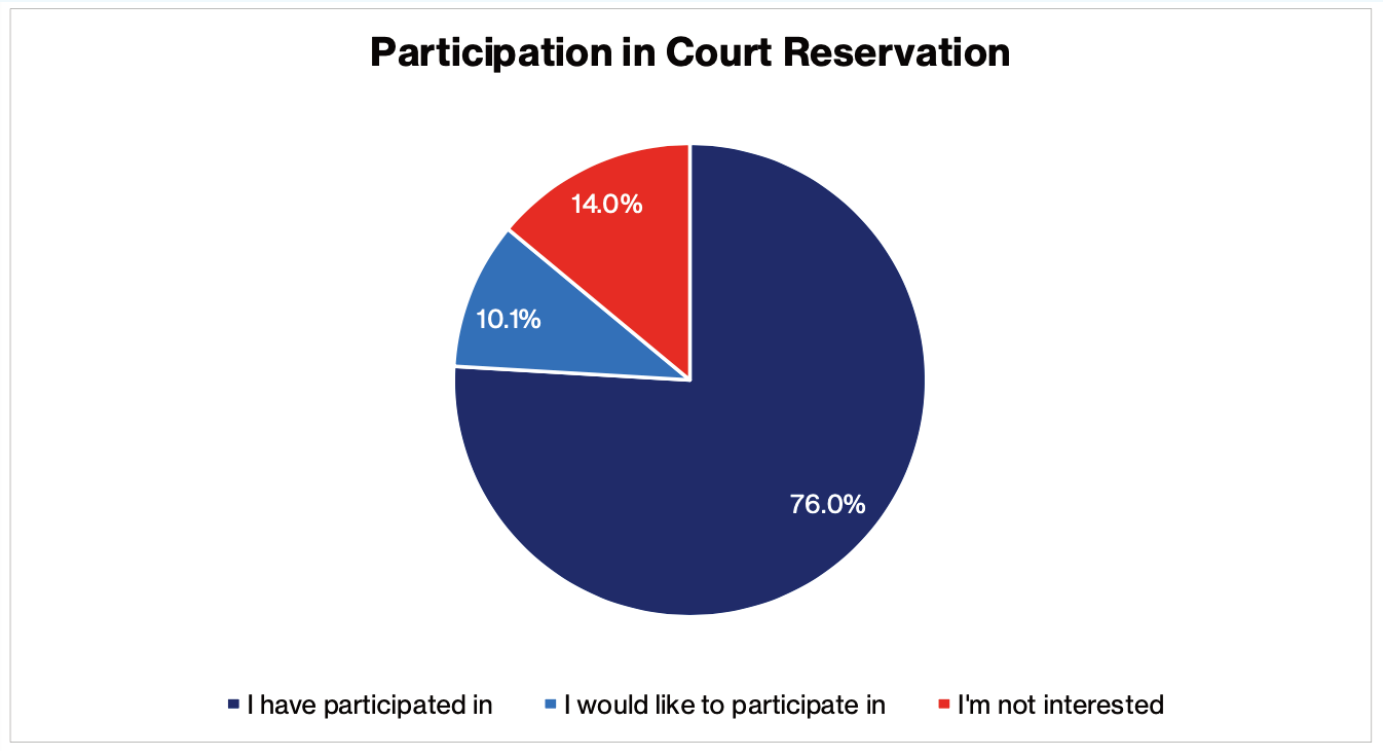
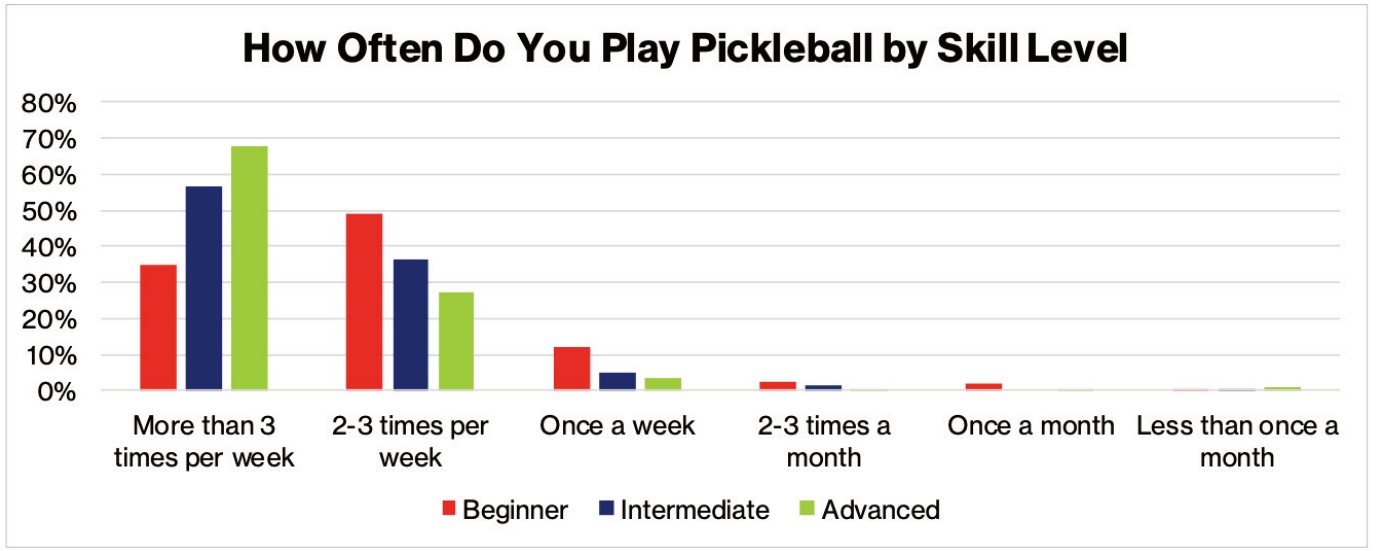
### LET'S TALK PREP

# SFIA Study Highlights

## Pickleball Trends

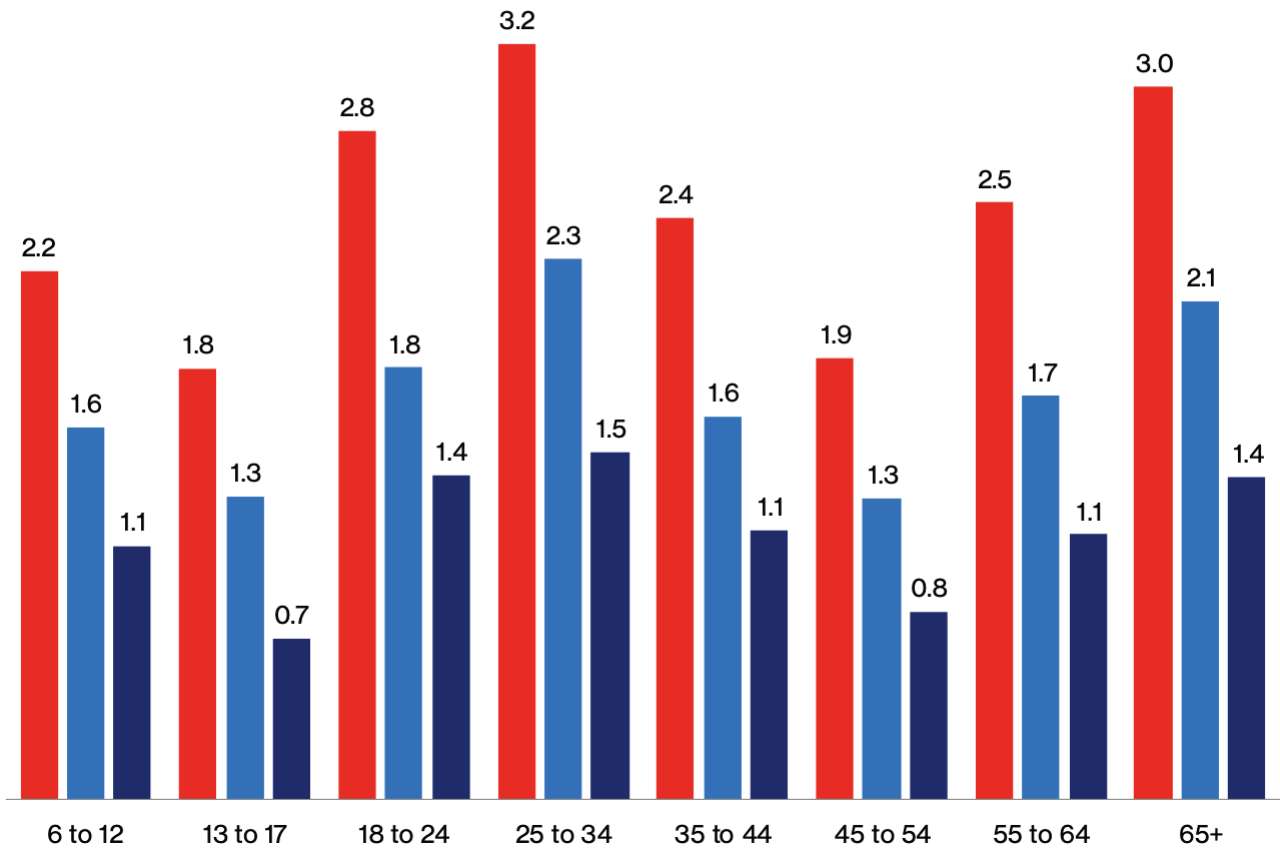
The Sports & Fitness Industry Association recently released Pickleball Market Playbook: Consumer Spending, Gear Preferences and Play Habits. The study was conducted in conjunction with DUPR and can purchased or accessed by SFIA members at this [clickable link](#).

Below are some details of the study. *Graphs used with permission courtesy of SFIA.*

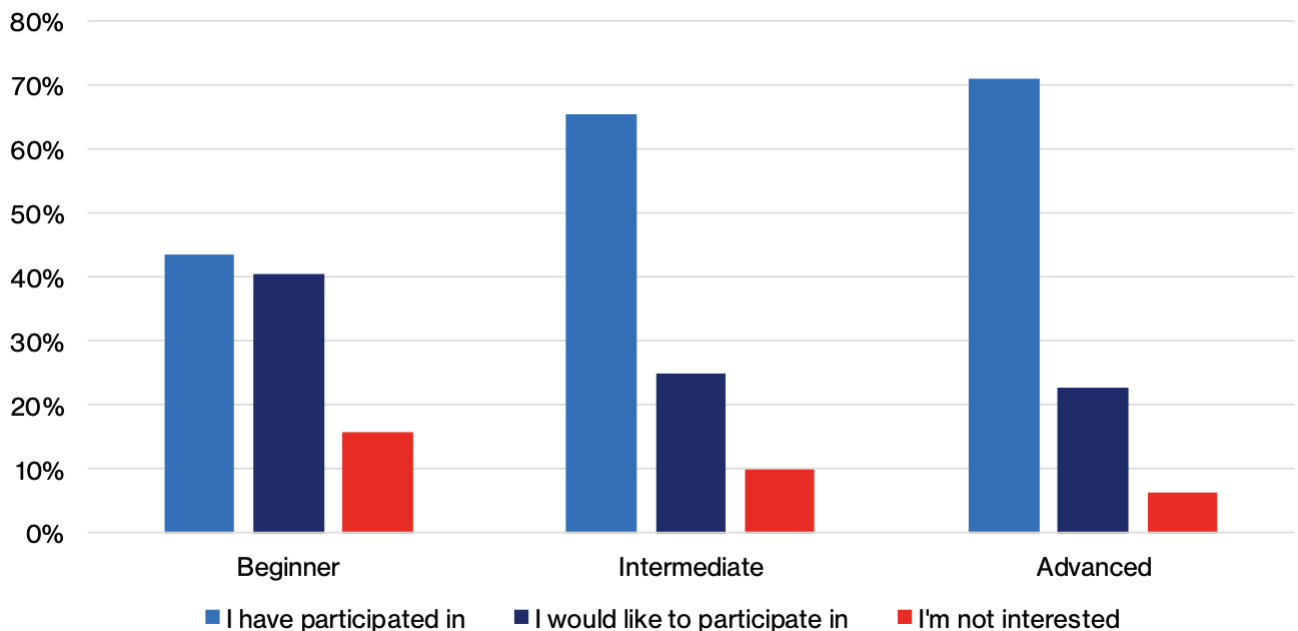




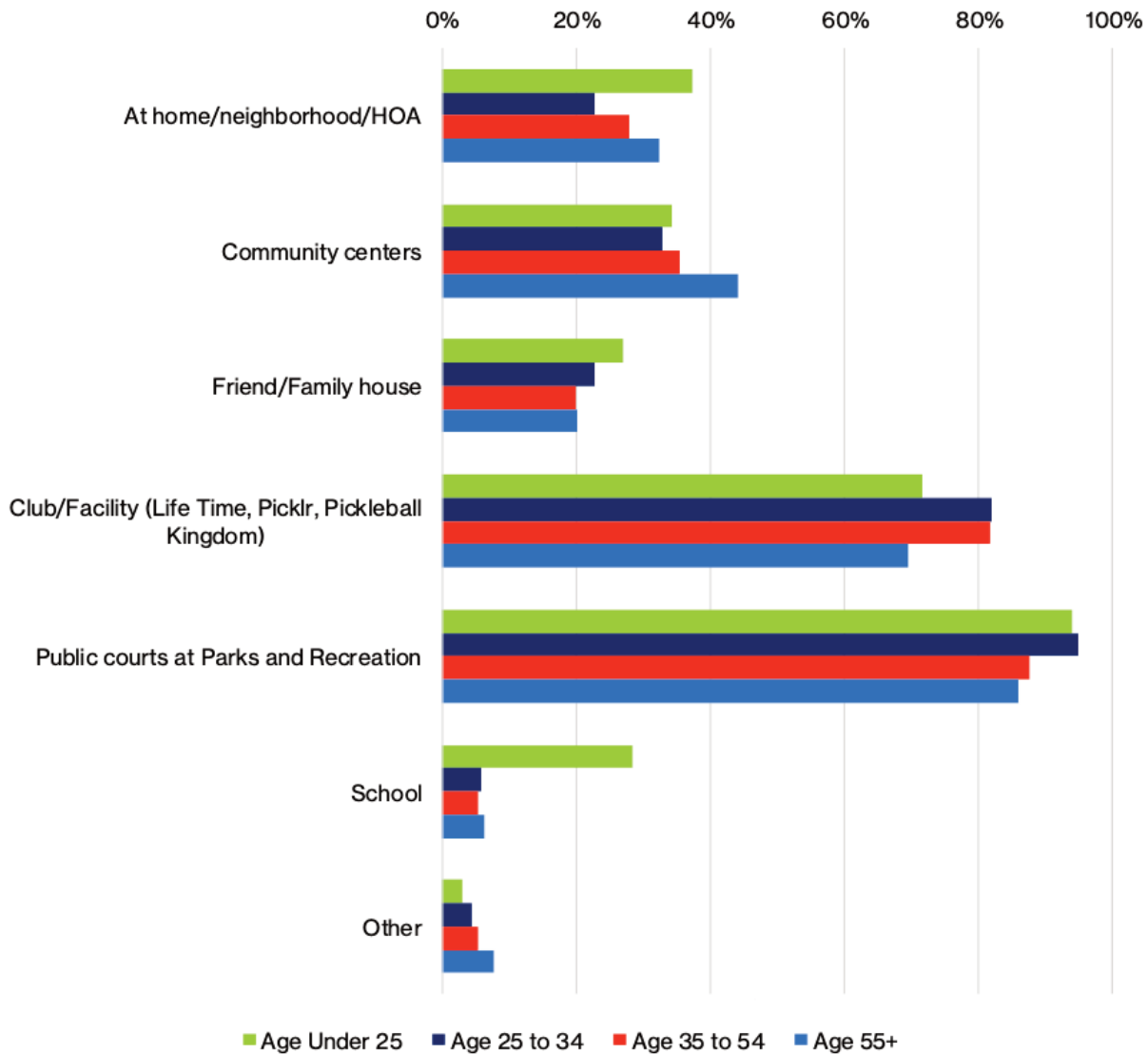
**Participants by Age Group (in millions)**



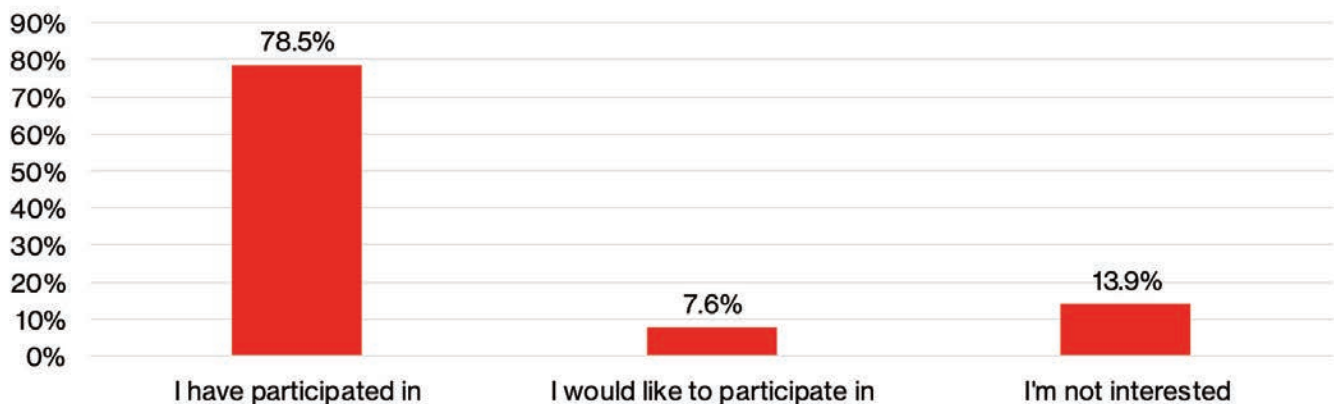
**Participation in League by Skill Level**



### Venue of Play by Age Group



### Participation in Rec/Open Play (Paid)





# A Game Changer for Facility Owners

*Exclusive member benefit brings enterprise-level benefits and HR support to independent facility operators*

By Facility Magazine Staff

Running a pickleball or padel facility is challenging enough without navigating the complex world of employee benefits, payroll compliance and human resources regulations. That's why the International Association of Pickleball and Paddle Facilities has partnered with [G&A Partners](#) to bring members access to enterprise-level benefits and HR services—resources typically reserved for companies 10 times their size.

## Understanding the PEO Model: What G&A Partners Brings to the Table

G&A Partners operates on a Professional Employer Organization (PEO) model, which may be unfamiliar to many facility owners, but is widely used by startups and growing businesses with up to 200-300 employees.

"We partner with companies, not individuals, and we bring these partner companies into our fold and put them on our master health plan," explains Chris Sorrenti, G&A Partners executive (and pickleball coach/fanatic).

The core concept is simple, yet powerful: by pooling together more than 100,000 people, G&A Partners can offer small facility owners the same large group benefits and rates that *Fortune* 500 companies receive.

## The Challenge for Small Facility Owners

Many IAPPF members fall into a benefits gap that G&A Partners is designed to fill:

- **First-time business owners**
- **Solo operators** or small teams just beginning to hire employees

- **Growing facilities** that want to retain quality staff but can't compete with large employers on benefits
- **Entrepreneurs** focused on operations who lack HR expertise

"We have people who, sometimes this is their first business," Sorrenti notes.

"Maybe they're not working for other companies anymore and they're like, 'Well, where are the benefits?'"

## Breaking Down the Benefits: Healthcare That Makes Sense

### Large Group Rates for Small Businesses

One of the most significant advantages is access to large-group health insurance plans. In the traditional insurance market, companies with fewer than 50 employees are considered "small-group," which comes with several disadvantages:

### Traditional Small-Group Challenges:

- Many carriers decline to provide quotes
- Age-banded pricing means wildly different rates for different employees
- Limited plan options (often just one or two inferior plans)
- Higher overall costs
- Annual rate volatility

### G&A Partners Solution:

- Community-rated pricing (same rate regardless of age)
- 15-17 different plan options depending on your state or market
- Access to a master plan with over 100,000 participants
- Predictable, competitive pricing
- Nationwide coverage in all 50 states

## Real-World Savings: A Case Study

Sorrenti shared a recent example of an IAPPF member who saw dramatic improvements:

### Before G&A Partners:

- PPO plan with \$500 deductible
- \$8,000+ out-of-pocket maximum
- Premium: \$1,600/month for single coverage
- Age-banded rates causing different employees to pay vastly different amounts

### After G&A Partners:

- PPO plan with \$500 deductible
- \$2,000 out-of-pocket maximum (reducing annual exposure by over \$6,000)
- Premium: \$725/month for single coverage
- Community rates for all employees

"A small group of five employees come in the door saving maybe sometimes \$10,000 to \$25,000 depending on how much interest there is in the health benefits," Sorrenti explains.

## Regional Customization

G&A Partners doesn't take a one-size-fits-all approach. They tailor their offerings to regional preferences and needs:

- **California:** Master plan plus Kaiser options for those who prefer Kaiser
- **All Markets:** Carrier master plans that cover approximately 98% of local hospitals and doctors
- **Doctor Continuity:** G&A Partners will verify that your current doctors are in-network before you make the switch

"In any market, whether you're middle America, North, South, Southeast South-west, we have a carrier master plan that fits your region and your area that has the most coverage of your hospitals and doctors," says Sorrenti.

### **Beyond Healthcare: Comprehensive HR Outsourcing**

While healthcare benefits are often the headline attraction, the HR support services may be even more valuable for facility owners who are learning to manage employees for the first time.

"There is a second side to this," Sorrenti explains. "Now, I have employees and I'm going to offer them benefits, but what else do I have to do? How do I pay my employees? What should I pay them? What rules are there around employees and HR and all of that?"

Common pitfalls G&A Partners helps you avoid:

- Forgetting to pay payroll taxes or paying incorrect amounts
- Receiving penalty notices months after the error
- Improper hiring and firing procedures leading to wrongful termination lawsuits
- Missing critical compliance requirements
- Workers' compensation claim complications
- Age, sex, or racial discrimination issues

"Everybody's more aware of what they should be fighting for," notes Sorrenti. "So there's a layer of protection that comes with somebody watching your back when it comes to HR."

### **Full-Service Suite: Hire to Retire**

G&A Partners provides comprehensive support throughout the entire employee lifecycle:

#### **Talent Acquisition**

- Candidate sourcing
- Job description support, review and classification

**“While healthcare benefits are often the headline attraction, the HR support services may be even more valuable for facility owners who are learning to manage employees for the first time.”**

- Resume screening and initial phone interviews
- Access to pre-hire assessments, drug testing, background checks
- Applicant tracking system (ATS)

#### **Payroll Administration**

- Direct deposit and pay card options
- Withholding and remitting payroll taxes
- Deducting health premiums and 401(k) contributions
- Garnishment setup and processing
- New-hire reporting
- Quarterly and year-end tax return preparation
- W-2 issuance
- Robust reporting library
- Time and labor management system

#### **Employee Benefits**

- Group medical, dental, vision, life and disability insurance
- Voluntary benefits programs
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- 401(k) and FSA administration
- Benefits enrollment system
- Wellness program (Evolve by G&A Partners)

#### **Training & Development**

- HR bulletins and updates
- Annual supervisory training on harassment and discrimination prevention
- Online employee and supervisory HR training
- Learning management system (LMS)

#### **Employee Relations**

- HR hotline for immediate support
- E-Verify employment eligibility verification
- Compliant employee handbooks
- Employee disciplinary support
- Employment verification services
- FMLA administration
- Employee onboarding and performance management systems
- Salary surveys

#### **Regulatory Compliance**

- Ongoing consultative advice on employment and regulatory best practices
- Employment Practices Liability Insurance (EPLI)
- Annual HR assessments
- HR investigations
- EEO-1 reports and I-9 audits
- Worksite posters
- Affordable Care Act compliance support

#### **Risk Management & Safety**

- Workers' compensation coverage and claims administration
- Written accident prevention plans
- Safety training and onsite inspections
- Post-accident investigations
- OSHA guidance

#### **Separation Management**

- Employee termination support
- Unemployment insurance claims administration
- COBRA administration



## Why This Matters: The Business Case for Better Benefits

### Employee Retention

In an industry where quality coaching and customer service can make or break a facility's reputation, reducing turnover is critical.

What if you don't want another facility poaching your head pro? "As a W-2 employee, with benefits, he's going to stay. He's not going to leave you to go get three dollars an hour more down the street," says Sorrenti.

### Risk Mitigation

Without proper HR guidance, facility owners expose themselves to significant legal and financial risks:

- **Discrimination lawsuits** from improper termination or hiring practices
- **Workers' compensation issues** when employees are injured performing duties outside their job description
- **Compliance penalties** for missing regulatory requirements
- **Unemployment claim complications** from improper terminations

"We hear things like, 'I didn't know I had to let people know ahead of time in their handbook,'" Sorrenti says, describing common scenarios that lead to wrongful termination lawsuits.

### Focus on Growth

Perhaps most important, outsourcing HR allows facility owners to focus on what they do best: growing their business.

"The smaller you are, the more valuable these types of services are because your time is valuable," Sorrenti emphasizes. "You don't have Joe or Betha who's is just handling payroll. You're doing most of it. You, one, two, three or four people are handling the whole business."

## Flexible Models for Different Needs

G&A Partners offers three different engagement models to accommodate various business situations:

### Full PEO

This is the complete package that includes benefits, payroll, HR support, compliance and risk management—the comprehensive solution most facility owners choose.

### ASO (Administrative Services Only)

For businesses that don't fit the benefits model or already have coverage they're satisfied with, G&A Partners can provide the HR support platform, payroll, compliance and employee handbooks without the benefits component.

### HCM (Human Capital Management)

A streamlined option focusing on essential HR technology and payroll services. "If we can't do the benefits piece, we can offer you the same platform, HR support, payroll, compliance, employee handbooks—all of that, just without the benefits," explains Sorrenti. "The idea is to get you over the hump and the learning curve of how it is to have employees."

## The G&A Partners Difference: Service and Longevity

### Three Decades of Stability

In an era of constant corporate consolidation and private equity buyouts, G&A Partners stands out:

- **30 years in business** under continuous private ownership
- **Nearly 700 employees** supporting clients nationwide
- **1,000+ clients** across all 50 states
- **Family business atmosphere** where clients can speak directly with ownership

"If you want to call the owner, you can call him. He will talk to you," Sorrenti notes. "He'll review things with you."

### Industry-Leading Client Satisfaction

G&A Partners' Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 86 dramatically exceeds industry standards. For context, the NPS scale runs from -100 to +100, and many payroll and PEO companies register negative scores.

"Nobody's even close to GNA," says Sorrenti. "We bring clients in, we do what we say, we help them along, we stay with them and we hold their hand as long as they need it held. We're not just selling them something."

### A Partner Who Speaks Your Language

Chris Sorrenti and the G&A team assigned to IAPPF members aren't just benefits administrators—they're pickleball enthusiasts who understand the industry:

- Sorrenti plays 30-40 hours per week
- Runs his own youth league with 48 players
- PPR certified coach and Duper coach
- WPT medalist in men's doubles
- His colleague Jeff Krumholz and Jeff's wife are also tournament players

"I'm in the cult," Sorrenti laughs. "When I hear from your members, I don't feel like I'm selling them anything. I'm like, this is social. You help everyone. You help them learn. You help them grow."

## No-Obligation Consultation

Even if G&A Partners isn't the right fit for your specific situation, they'll point you in the right direction.

"There are times where we're going to be able to directly help. There are times where we might suggest a different model. There are times where sometimes it just doesn't fit," Sorrenti explains. "We won't waste your time and we'll let you know, but we'll also give you a direction to go from here."

### Contact Information

#### Chris Sorrenti

Phone: 561-644-5608 (call or text)  
csorrenti@gnapartners.com

"I'm available most of the time," says Sorrenti. "You can text me, 'Hey, this is Bob out of Texas. I have two facilities, give me a call.' I'll give you a call."

*Continued on page 52*



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### 3 Common Misconceptions About Offering Benefits

#### "I Can't Afford to Offer Benefits"

Many facility owners assume offering benefits means paying for all employee coverage, but that's not the case.

"Some employers think, oh, I have to pay for benefits for everybody," Sorrenti clarifies. "No, you could offer benefits. You could offer to pay a portion."

Simply making quality benefits available can be enough to retain valuable employees, even if employees pay most or all of the premium themselves. The access to group rates and quality plans is the key differentiator.

#### "It's Too Complicated"

This is precisely why the PEO model exists—to eliminate complexity, not add to it.

"Don't make your salesperson do HR," Sorrenti advises. "You outsource that portion to us. We handle the HR, we handle your compliance, we give you a tech platform that puts it all together."

#### "We're Too Small"

G&A Partners works with businesses of all sizes, even sole proprietors looking to provide benefits for themselves. "Sometimes it's just them," Sorrenti says

of IAPPF members. "Maybe it's them and a couple of employees or it's the first time they had employees."

### How to Get Started

#### Eligibility and Next Steps

G&A Partners has certain minimum requirements, but most IAPPF member facilities qualify. The first step is a consultation to:

1. Assess your current situation and needs
2. Determine which model (Full PEO, ASO, or HCM) fits best
3. Review available health plans in your region
4. Calculate potential savings
5. Understand the implementation process

#### The Bottom Line: Invest in Your Business's Foundation

As the pickleball and padel industries mature, facility operations are professionalizing rapidly. Owners who fail to address HR and benefits properly expose themselves to unnecessary risks and costs.

The cost of delaying these decisions can be substantial:

- **Lost employees** who leave for better benefits elsewhere
- **Inability to attract quality talent** in competitive markets

- **Legal penalties** from compliance violations
- **Lawsuit exposure** from improper HR practices
- **Higher insurance costs** from age-banded small group plans

### A Partnership Built on Trust

The IAPPF-G&A Partners partnership represents months of due diligence by IAPPF founder David Johnson, who extensively vetted multiple providers before selecting G&A Partners.

For facility owners navigating the complexities of employment law, benefits administration, and HR compliance, this partnership offers a clear path forward: professional support from a trusted partner who understands both the business challenges and the sport itself. As Sorrenti puts it: "We're in the employee business. We're in the people business. And so is pickleball." ■

For more information about G&A Partners and to explore how these benefits can support your facility, visit the IAPPF member center at [iappf.org](http://iappf.org) or contact Chris Sorrenti directly at 561-644-5608. G&A Partners will also be presenting at the **IAPPF convention at RacquetX**, March 12-15 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

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# One Community, One Stage: IAPPF and RacquetX Unite for Industry's Largest Gathering

*Fort Lauderdale to host combined conference bringing together global pickleball, padel and racquet sports communities **March 13-15, 2026***

In what promises to be the most significant event in racquet sports facility management, the International Association of Pickleball and Padel Facilities and RacquetX have announced an official partnership to co-host their conferences at the Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, March 13-15, 2026.

The collaboration unites two complementary forces in the racquet sports industry: **IAPPF**, the first and only trade association dedicated to pickleball and padel facility success, and **RacquetX**, the world-class festival celebrating all racquet sports. Together, they're creating an unprecedented platform for facility operators, suppliers, investors and industry professionals.

"We share a vision for growing the racquet sports industry," says Robyn Duda, CEO of RacquetX. "Together, we can unite our communities, elevate education and drive real opportunities for everyone in the space."

The partnership represents a strategic alignment that amplifies value for both organizations' constituencies. While RacquetX has established itself as the premier consumer and business festival across all racquet sports—including tennis, pickleball, padel, squash and more, the IAPPF brings deep expertise and a dedicated community of pickleball and padel facility operators worldwide.



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[CONSULTING@IAPPF.ORG](mailto:CONSULTING@IAPPF.ORG)



## Expanded Programming, Enhanced Value

For the first time, attendees will experience the IAPPF Conference embedded within the larger RacquetX festival, creating what organizers are calling “the largest racquet gathering in the country.” The combined event will feature the **expanded Club Summit, IAPPF Conference programming, an extensive show floor**, center court activations and interactive experiences across multiple racquet sports.

“This partnership aligns perfectly with our mission to maximize the success of facilities worldwide,” says David Johnson, CEO and founder of IAPPF. “By bringing our communities together at RacquetX, we’re creating unparalleled opportunities for learning, networking and business development.”

The **IAPPF Conference at RacquetX** will maintain the organization’s hallmark focus on practical, actionable content specifically designed for facility operators. Programming will include expert panels on operational metrics, facility programming, technology solutions, food and beverage strategies and staffing best practices. Attendees will also gain access to exclusive data, case studies and networking opportunities with fellow operators who understand the unique challenges of running pickleball and padel facilities.

## Direct Access to Decision-Makers

For suppliers and vendors, the partnership creates compelling new opportunities. “With IAPPF, we’re combining networks and creating even more value for both sides,” Duda explains. The combined event will provide direct access to more than 1,000 facility owners, operators and key decision-makers, along with 5,000+ total attendees across the racquet sports spectrum.

RacquetX’s track record speaks to the event’s reach and impact. The festival brings together influential businesses from global brands to ambitious startups, facilitating collaboration and showcasing innovations in the rapidly evolving rac-

quet sports space. The show floor features 125+ companies demonstrating the latest products, technology and services designed to help facilities thrive.

“You’ll meet the right people, see what’s next and leave with actionable ideas,” says Duda. “Whether you want to grow your club, discover new tech, or find partners, this is where it happens. It’s all about learning, connections and having some fun along the way.”

## Beyond the Convention Center

The IAPPF Conference at RacquetX will extend beyond the convention center walls with curated facility visits throughout the Fort Lauderdale area. Attendees will have the opportunity to tour world-class venues, including The Fort, one of the preeminent pickleball and padel facilities globally.

These facility tours provide invaluable real-world learning opportunities, allowing operators to see successful business models in action, evaluate facility designs and amenities and ask questions directly of experienced owners and managers.

## What Makes 2026 Different

For returning RacquetX attendees, the 2026 event promises significant



improvements. The expanded Club Summit with the integrated IAPPF Conference creates deeper, more specialized content for facility professionals. The show floor will feature more discovery opportunities, while center court activations and interactive experiences will be more extensive than ever before.

New speakers, surprise guests and fresh content will be announced in the coming months, along with additional networking formats designed to facilitate meaningful business connections. On-court demonstrations, professional exhibitions and opportunities to experience multiple racquet sports firsthand remain core elements of the RacquetX experience.

## Free IAPPF Membership for Early Adopters

Pickleball and padel facility operators who haven’t yet joined the IAPPF are encouraged to act now for free founding membership at [www.iappf.org](http://www.iappf.org). As the only professional trade association dedicated to providing industry-leading knowledge, expertise and community to overcome obstacles and maximize success, the IAPPF offers exclusive access to case studies, industry research, videos, podcasts, supplier directories and a growing network of operators willing to share their experiences.

“The IAPPF aims to harness the community spirit inherent in pickleball and padel to bring operators, employees, vendors, investors and other stakeholders together,” Johnson explains. “We’re cultivating a community and ecosystem of like-minded facility operators to help each other meet challenges and maximize success.”

With registration now open for RacquetX 2026, facility operators and industry professionals are encouraged to secure their spots early. More details on specific programming, speakers and registration packages will be released in the coming weeks.

For more information and to register, visit [www.iappf.org](http://www.iappf.org) and [theracquetx.com](http://theracquetx.com).

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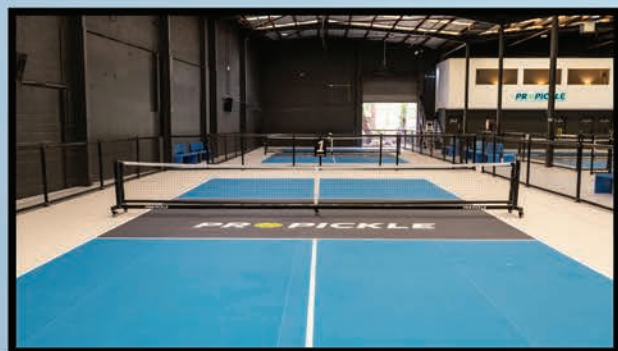
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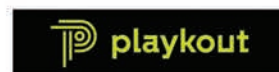
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