

March 2022

PICKLEBALL FIRE

THE JOHNSONS: 3 PROS 1 FAMILY
IS VIDEO ANALYSIS WORTH IT?
WHY PICKLEBALL IS ITS OWN GAME

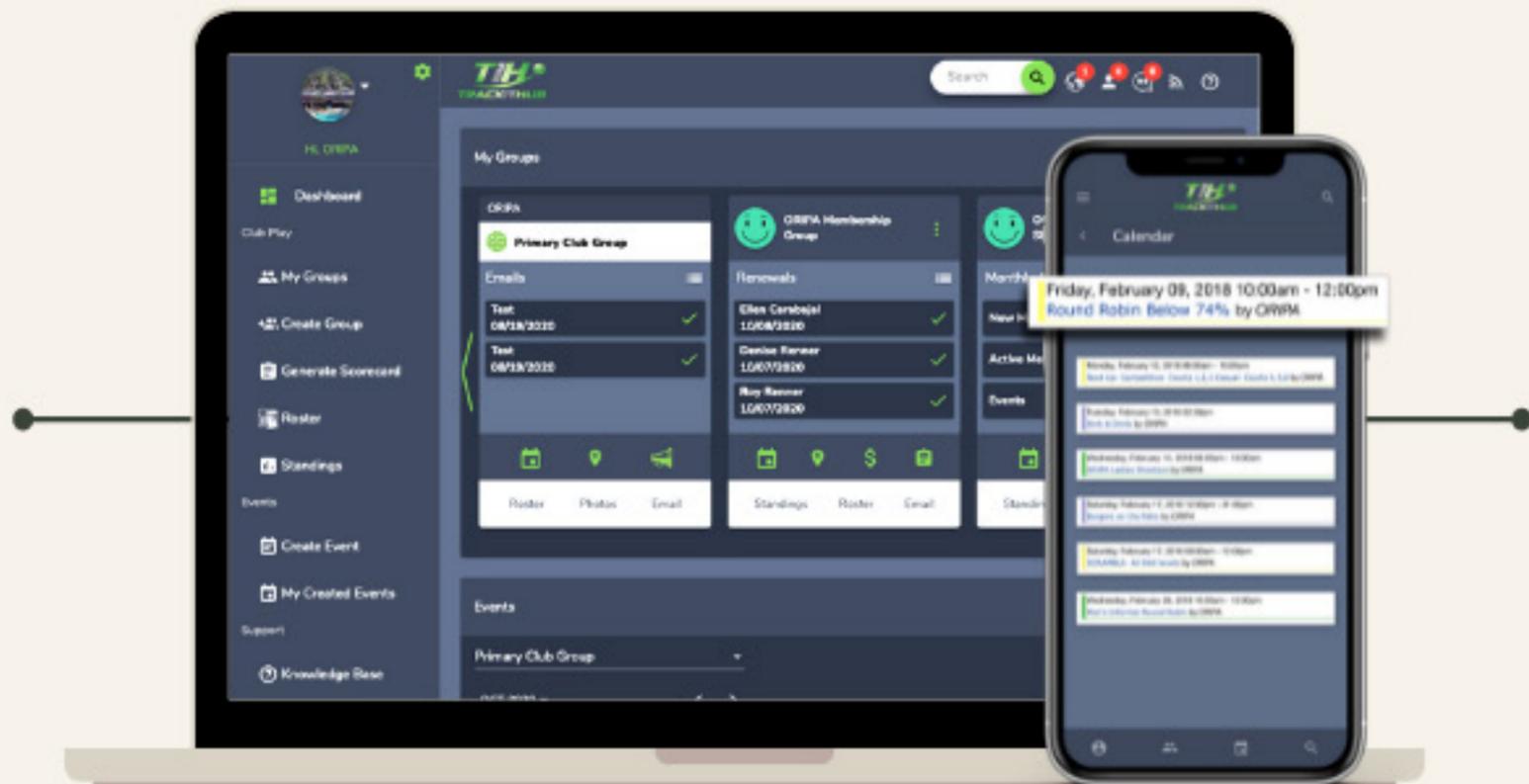
JW JOHNSON



Official Pickleball
Magazine of the IFP



TrackitHub is the World's #1 Pickleball Management Platform



NO MORE DINKING AROUND!

TrackitHub enables clubs and players to connect, track scores, schedule events, pay/collect dues, socialize with other pickleball players, and much more!



Scan the QR code and start
your FREE trial today!

CONTENTS

Message from the IFP President.....	4
Pickleball Will Soon Become Washington’s Official State Sport	5
How Senior Pro Anna Shirley is Following in Her 93-year-old Mother’s Foot Steps	6
Toquerville Athletic & Recreation Complex (ARC)	7
IOC: Road for Pickleball Gold.....	7
Review Your Game Through Video Analysis	8
Two Shots to Master: The ATP and the Joey.....	12
Flying Around the Court and Country	13
Jay Devilliers on Being a Professional Pickleball Player.....	14
How Drop In Play Led to 3 Professional Careers for the Johnson Family	18
Why Pickleball Is its Own Game	20
The Business of Pickleball	22
From Being Clinically Dead to Certified Pickleball Instructor	23
Good or Bad Advice?	24
The Influence of Racquetball and Squash on Senior Pro Kevin Booth.....	26
How Megha Kapoor is Influencing the Growth of Pickleball in India	27
Around the Globe with Daniel Moore	28
A Top Pro is Bringing Pickleball to Peru.....	29
Profile: Joe Valenti	30
Love, Murder, and Pickleball?	31
Largest Indoor Tournament	31

Pickleball Fire

Published by Pickleball Fire
www.pickleballfire.com

Owner

Lynn Cherry
lynn@pickleballfire.com

Pickleball Fire is distributed 6 times per year by Pickleball Fire. Material may not be reproduced without permission. Pickleball Fire accepts no liability for dissatisfaction arising from content in this publication. The opinions expressed, or advice given, are views of the individual writers or advertisers and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of Pickleball Fire.

MESSAGE FROM THE IFP PRESIDENT

HISTORY of the International Federation of Pickleball (IFP)

The IFP was formed in 2010 with the intention of developing an international body to grow the sport of pickleball around the world. In 2012, four countries issued their support of the IFP and became member countries. The first four countries were the USA, Canada, Spain and India. During the following 7 years, growth was negligible with expressed concerns about an “international” group that was totally managed by one country, the USA and controlled by the United States Pickleball Association, (USAPA). Only 9 countries joined the IFP during that 7 year span. No programs or benefits were developed to support the international growth of pickleball under that leadership.



In April 2019, new board members were elected adding diversity and representation from two countries outside of the USA. New goals and missions were developed along with a pathway that encouraged countries around the world to join the IFP. Program Directors were added to the IFP team expanding expertise in areas of grants, ambassador growth and youth education and development to name a few of the thirteen programs. Additionally, a rules committee comprised of various member country representatives was developed. Member countries have increased from 13 to 70 countries under the direction of this board.

The IFP has actively developed and accomplished many goals, however progress has been interrupted by a “group” that currently threatens the IFP organization. The “group” is closely tied with USA Pickleball. The “group” surfaced when, in December 2021, plans were announced to expand international representation within the IFP by inviting all member countries to submit applications for board elections. Additionally, to ensure equitable representation, a majority of the then board members, recommended developing a board advisory committee. The committee was to include representatives from all 5 continents. Another plan for expanding and restructuring the IFP included inviting member countries to submit applications for program director positions. The IFP supports and welcomes input from it’s international members.

The “group” objected to the vision of expansive inclusivity by our member countries, into these various positions. Furthermore, the “group” has attempted to seize control of the IFP and pave the way for singular control by USA program directors. The current board believes that a true international federation that represents the sport of pickleball should not be individually controlled and managed like it was from 2012 to 2018 (by the USAPA).

The IFP remains steadfast in it’s goal to develop the growth of pickleball globally. As the IFP expands, so should representation within it’s organization. In that regard, the IFP is opening, to all member countries, program director positions, through an application process. Look for this announcement and the process for submitting your (member countries) application for these important positions by the end of May 2022. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Cheers and looking forward to many more prosperous years.

Pat Murphy

President IFP



PICKLEBALL WILL SOON BECOME WASHINGTON'S OFFICIAL STATE SPORT

Can Pickleball become an official state sport? Yes, it can! The process is currently underway in Washington. And Pickleball player Kate Van Gent and senator John Lovick are at the forefront of the charge to make it happen.

It was not very long ago that Kate started playing the sport. She explained, "Covid shut down my pilates studio for three months. It was difficult to find any activity indoors, and Pickleball came as a great solution ." Kate wanted to pick up an outdoor activity. Along with her neighbors, she quickly formed a lady's group. She admits it was difficult in the beginning because no one knew how to play.

But Kate and her friends started to improve and she even participated in a clinic run by professionals Lindsey and Riley Newman. After a long day on the courts, she had a chance meeting with senator John Lovick as he was leaving her house when he was campaigning for another politician. John happened to be looking for someone knowledgeable about the game. It was because he had gotten the idea for making Pickleball Washington's state sport from his friend Chuck Wright. Chuck, a columnist for the Mill Creek Beacon, had written an article about Pickleball. He then proceeded to ask his friend, the senator, why Pickleball was not the official sport of the state of Washington.

Kate said to the senator, "I apologize. I'm so exhausted. I just got back from five hours playing Pickleball. And he said Pickleball? And I said, yeah. And he said, well, we're actually looking for somebody to help us on our way to make Pickleball the official state sport. Who can help us understand more about the sport so we can develop this bill correctly. And so I, of course, I was in love with Pickleball by that time and said, I absolutely will help." After the chance meeting with John, Kate didn't waste any time. She quickly assembled a team that included Lindsey and Riley, among others, to help her get through the state's legislative process.

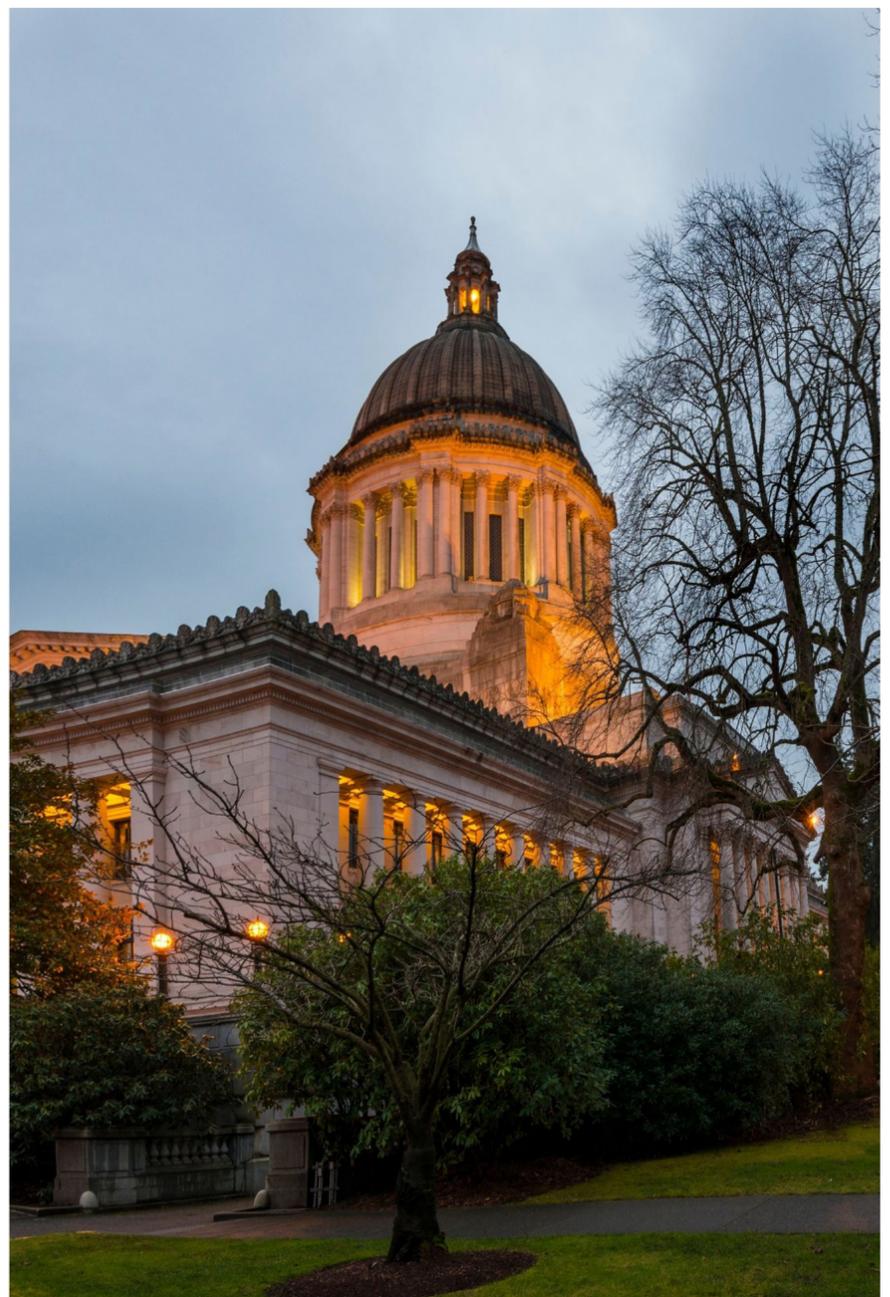
The connection between Pickleball and the state of Washington is as old as the sport itself. Pickleball was invented in Washington by three founding fathers, Joel Pritchard, Barney McCallum, and Bill Bell, in the summer of 1965. Kate said, "It's been around for 57 years. Joel Prichard was a Congressman, and he used Pickleball to develop the relationships that would help him get the bills passed." Kate recognized this movement as a great opportunity to honor the founding members. It's also a chance for Pickleball to "explode " in Washington. Naming it the state's official sport would guarantee a rise in popularity.

Pickleball and business is another great opportunity that the sport has provided. And Kate took matters into her own hands. She said, "I was looking for some investors to help us build a Pickleball facility. So, I invited them for a few games. We discussed business while playing. Pickleball also offers this possibility. It's not only reserved for the golf courses."

Meanwhile, the bill about making Pickleball the official State sport caught on with many people.

"The senator told me that people were literally calling him at 2 AM just to say how excited are they about the bill," Kate said. And the bill is on the way to be passed as it now sits on the governor's desk, awaiting his expected signature on March 28th.

Pickleball is rapidly growing in Washington. More and more people are getting involved, which means that demand for the courts and equipment is increasing. Pickleball and the state of Washington share a considerable history, growing present and a promising future.



HOW SENIOR PRO **ANNA SHIRLEY** IS FOLLOWING IN HER 93-YEAR-OLD MOTHER'S FOOT STEPS

A silly game with a silly name – that’s what senior professional Anna Shirley thought when she first saw the sport of Pickleball. But, when you have a mother who is a National Champion in Pickleball being 93 years old, well, it’s safe to say that Anna changed her mind.

“She was encouraging me to play, but I didn’t have lots of interest in it,” she explained. But Anna decided to give Pickleball a chance. Her friend Dave invited her to play in a Santa Monica Tournament. Anna agreed, not expecting much.

But then they started winning, and they couldn’t stop. In the end, Anna and her partner won the title! She later explained how she was playing Pickleball the wrong way but still won: “I didn’t dink at all. I was just banging the ball. After we won, I just fell in love with the sport.”

Anna started taking lessons from Jessie Irvine, who she had competed against in paddle tennis. Anna is no stranger to the sports like Pickleball as she has a good tennis background. She played in college and then jumped to paddle tennis, and now it is all about Pickleball. “This is definitely my favorite sport,” Anna pointed out.

Two years ago, Anna became determined to get better at Pickleball. She soaked in a lot of knowledge from Jessie. Now, she practices with other senior professionals like Nathalie Bagby and Beth Bellamy.

Talking about tactics and advice – everyone has their theory. Anna’s is simple: “Patience is the key! You got to learn when to hit the right shots.” She admitted that she used to bang the ball a lot. Now, Anna knows to be more patient. She developed her game to the level that she now recognizes when it’s the right time to speed the ball up.

Let’s get back to Anna’s mother, who is – let’s repeat it because it is really worth it – 93 years old and a National Pickleball Champion! It’s certainly not easy to find a partner of a similar age, and she eventually ended up playing with Scott Moore’s stepdad. Together, they broke the world record for being the oldest team to play in the Nationals. The lesson is clear: If you want to be a National Champion, play into your nineties!

Unfortunately, Anna’s Pickleball had a downside. “I slipped in the bathroom and broke my arm. The Humerus bone,



to be precise. At the time, I couldn’t see anything funny in it,” she said jokingly.

With the need for a lot of physical therapy, Anna became depressed, and couldn’t play Pickleball. One day at the practice (yes, she practiced even during her time off!), she met a friend who has an autistic disabled daughter. “I was complaining in front of her and suddenly realized that they are far more difficult things in life than my broken arm.”

“I slipped in the bathroom and broke my arm. The Humerus bone, to be precise. At the time, I couldn’t see anything funny in it,”

She felt much more grateful since that day. Being grateful helped her to cure the sadness. Anna started doing her therapy three times a day and a lot sooner than the doctor’s predicted – she was back!

Anna played her first comeback tournament in Casa Grande. In doubles with Beth, they ended up in second place. Later, she played at Nationals and won third place. “Not bad for not having a full range of motion in my arm,” Anna said.

Anna’s story is one of a kind. What else to wish her but to surpass her mother’s record. For sure, that’s easier said than done.



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PICKLEBALL



The World Governing Body for the Sport of Pickleball <http://www.ifpickleball.org>

TOQUERVILLE ATHLETIC & RECREATION COMPLEX (ARC)

[Toquerville Athletic & Recreation Complex \(ARC\) - Eastward Management Group](#)

The IFP with the approval of the board of directors has entered into an agreement with Eastward Management Group for the running of the 60-court pickleball complex that will be part of the ARC. Please go to the link above to view the project.

Thus the IFP will be the managing partner for EMG to manage the 60-court complex at the ARC. The IFP will be the home for the IFP's international headquarters as well as its international training facility.

Construction is set to start in the Fall of 2022 with completion sometime mid-2024 and the IFP hopes to hold its first international tournament in late 2024. Stay tune to the Fire for updates.

Respectfully,

David Jordan

Treasurer IFP

IOC: ROAD FOR PICKLEBALL GOLD

The Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) is the umbrella organization for all international sports federations. Becoming a member of GAISF is a major undertaking, and only with the full support of the board on everything this project entails would it make sense to embark at this time. The GAISF Full Membership requirements are outlined on their website with an explanation of what they require from the IFP as part of the application process. The requirements are taken directly from the GAISF Full Membership Application form. These are the requirements that the board would need to vote on and approve. The GAISF Membership Department will not show any flexibility or leniency on their requirements; in other words, all of them need to be fulfilled. You can read more about GAISF and their role and relationship with the IOC at www.gaisf.sport

Also it is noted that the IFP with the approval of the board has contacted and received information from an IOC country consultant who has worked with several world governing bodies resulting in inclusion into the Olympic Games.

The IFP is committed to this goal but it will take the effort of all of our member countries to this process for it to become a reality.

We look forward to the journey and everyone's help along the way.

Sincerely,

David Jordan

Treasurer IFP

REVIEW YOUR GAME THROUGH VIDEO ANALYSIS

As a former women's volleyball coach at UCLA and professional beach volleyball player, Kim Jagd understands the importance of video analysis. However, she says Pickleball is behind the curve. "I think video analysis is such a huge component of almost every other sport. It hasn't really yet permeated into the Pickleball world, but I fully expect it to here in the next half-decade."

Kim used video analysis extensively in volleyball as every contact the players make can be recorded and its outcome written down in the form of statistics. The challenge with Pickleball is that the game is very fluid, meaning so many things can happen very fast. Taking the third shot alone can be a drop, drive, lob, or something in between. But knowing your percentage of successful third shot drops or unforced errors in a game can help identify what skills you need to improve.

As a senior professional, Kim uses video analysis of her game extensively in skill development and strategy. She used it to identify situations where she and her partner could find one or two more points per game to give them a winning edge. Kim said, "That was probably the difference in each match was a couple of points. And we would video analyze and take stats and decide if it was much better for me to be dropping from left to right or right to left. And so Scott could poach, or we were always trying to come up with scenarios that would make us one point better per game."

Let's break it down into several parts and look at each aspect of video analysis and how it can improve your game: learning a new skill, habits/tendencies, how-to video yourself, statistics, and fixing mistakes.



Photo credit: STEVE TAYLOR

Learning a New Skill

Learning new skills can be difficult, especially if you are trying to learn quickly. If you struggle to pick up a new skill, video analysis can help you figure out what you are doing right versus what you need to correct. While you may have excellent paddle readiness, you may not have your feet correctly positioned to perform a skill. Seeing it on video and making a slight foot placement adjustment could be the difference in executing a new skill flawlessly or not. In Kim's case, she used video analysis to help develop a two-handed backhand. She relied on a one-handed backhand because she equated Pickleball with ping pong, so keeping one hand on the paddle was more natural for her. The video analysis helped optimize her technique using the two-handed backhand from the baseline and kitchen.

Fixing Mistakes

Like trying to learn new skills, a video can also help you correct common mistakes in your game. You can even take the time between games to review videos during drop-in play when you are waiting in the queue for your next opponent. Kim noted a few things you and your partner can check. "If they're working with a partner, are they working together? Are they moving together? Did they make the right choices? Were they being more cautious when they were siding out, as opposed to when they were serving?"

Habits/Tendencies

Every player has habits and tendencies, whether a power or finesse spin player. Even at the amateur level, everyone knows their friends have that particular go to return because that is their style. Although you may know about your playing partner, they may not realize it themselves. Well, the same goes for you as you probably have tendencies you don't even realize. Taking a look at yourself on film may give you insight into your habits. Then the next



time you play, you make a tendency-breaking return, and it can catch whoever you are playing against off guard.

Kim even goes as far as to make notes on her phone of the tendencies of other senior professionals she competes against in tournaments. She makes notes after matches and also when watching a video of them that she finds on Youtube. All of this is critical as part of her preparation for a tournament. Kim said, "You're always trying to get in the head of the opponent to figure out why that's what their shot choice was. So some of it's a little bit of guesswork, and some of it's detective work too. If you watch enough of Ben John's play, if he gets a mid-range shot to his left hip, he's probably gonna flick that with his backhand down the line at the girl. I mean, you just kinda know that's gonna happen. You've seen it happen a lot on video. So it's really about kind of categorizing and then keeping those things in the forefront of your mind as you're about to go in and play that opponent."

How to Video Yourself

It is so easy to do video your game nowadays with smartphone technology. Just setting your phone up on a bench or table can do the trick in a pinch. However, getting a cheap tripod can help you get better quality video. One thing to think about is where you place the camera as watching yourself from different angles can help you better see certain things.

Video analysis is critical in any sport, and the best players and coaches like Kim are typically well known for all the time they spend watching video. Pickleball is no different. Players must get into video analysis to become better players. Whether you are an aspiring professional or an amateur having fun, video analysis can help you improve your game.

LADIES



Not just the most fun
pickleball clothing brand
in America...
but mostly that's it.

**Visit PickleballRocks.com
To Shop Today.**



PICKLEBALL ROCKS
PICKLEBALL ROCKS
PICKLEBALL ROCKS
MENS  SHOPPE

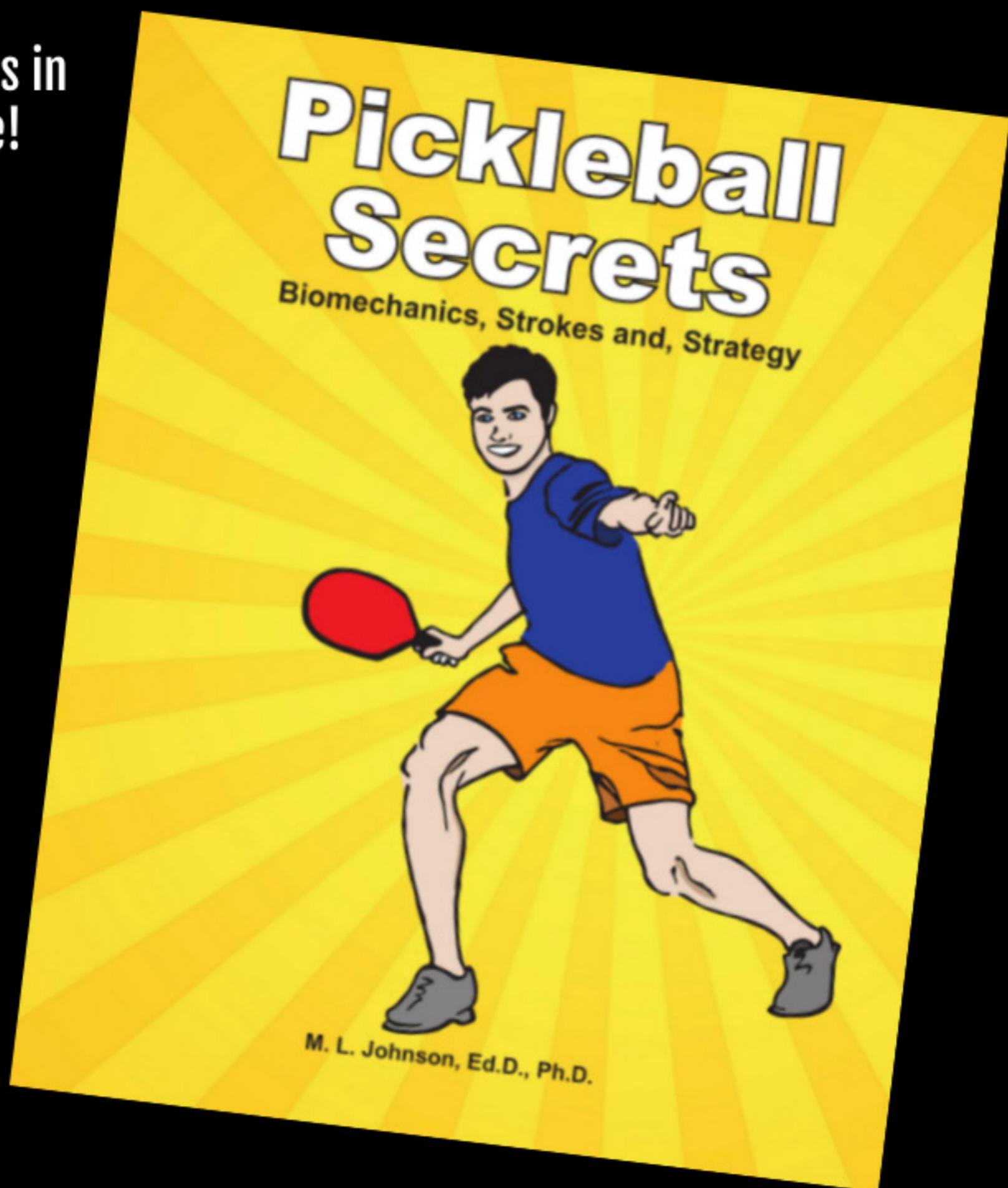


UNSTOPPABLE
— PICKLEBALL —

Click Here To
Shop Now

Up Your Game

The Secret is in
the Science!



Order now:

American Press

75 State Street, Suite 100

Boston, MA 02109

<https://americanpresspublishers.com/JohnsonMPickleball.html>



TWO SHOTS TO MASTER: THE ATP AND THE JOEY

You have likely heard of the around-the-post (ATP) shot in Pickleball. But have you heard about the Joey, named after Joe Valenti? Joe is one of the few people in Pickleball to have a shot named after him, and it is a strategic shot used as a counter to the ATP. Both the ATP and Joey are advanced shots you should master to take your game to the next level.

The ATP or around the post-shot is a staple at higher levels of Pickleball. Since Pickleball has no rule regarding how high a shot must go, players can hit a low shot around the post as long as it lands in the court on their opponent's side. Joe was involved in a singles match versus Mark Renneson at the Canadian Nationals, where the two were engaged in a very long rally. Mark smacked the first ATP, and then a couple of rallies later, Joe also did so there were two ATP's on one point.

While this technique can be used in singles or doubles, it commonly occurs when players are in a dinking rally. If you hit a dink out very wide in the court, it sets up an opportunity for your opponent to make the ATP shot. Joe said, "It means when they get into these dinking rallies, these really wide cross-court dinks, you can hear them actually on the match if it's being broadcast. Don't hit it too wide. Don't hit it too wide...You're going to have plenty of time to just get your body into position. Get low. Just time it right. Don't hit it too hard, and you can go around the post."

Joe believes intermediate players should start working

on the ATP shot so it is mastered by the time they are advanced competitors. Once you get to a point where you can dictate by pushing your opponent backward and hitting a dink to their feet, it is time to work on the ATP shot. Since a wide dink sets up the ATP shot, there is no need to put a spin on the ball to make it land in your opponent's court.

Joe explained, "You can just hit it nice and flat towards the back corner of the court. That's where you'll see the biggest, the most area to hit will be deeper, almost to the back corner of the court because everything else is cut off by the net. So you just nice and easy get it in play. If you're at that intermediate or intermediate plus level, your opponent might not even be ready for it. They just think they won the point because it's going so wide. But you've got to keep the point in play, just like every point in Pickleball, it's about having your opponent make a mistake. So, just keep that ball in play even if you have to go around the post. "

While the Joey is not as well known as the ATP shot, it provides the best defense to counter the ATP shot. The Joey is a simple yet clever solution to allow you to win the rally. When your opponent hits an ATP shot, they stand out of bounds. It means the smart play is to hit the ball right back at them.

Joe developed this counter to the ATP shot because so many players used this technique. He said, "Really, just a light bulb went off that if I just hit them, they're not even expecting the ball to come back. And it works every time, really. It's really ingrained in me as an instinct. Now someone hits an ATP, or an ATP is coming at me. I'm not even thinking about getting it over the net. I'm just going to hit it right back at them. And it's been really successful."

So take it from Joe that it is worthwhile to learn and practice both the ATP and shot named after him, the Joey.

FLYING AROUND THE COURT AND COUNTRY

Flying around the United States, looking for some Pickleball games... Today, he's in Florida, tomorrow in North Carolina. Or maybe in Alabama, who knows? That's the lifestyle of Mark Hilliard, pilot and Pickleball enthusiast. Having a passion for both flying and Pickleball, he managed to conjoin them, making a fascinating life story along the way.

- I've been a pilot since I was a kid - Mark begins.

- I thought flying would be my whole career. It was all going as planned, and my dreams were rapidly coming true. And then, ugh... - Mark's voice has trembled for a second.

- I had to give up, eventually.

Why? Was there a problem?

- Actually, yes. My eyesight quickly shifted, and it was not perfect anymore. That is the standard if you want to be a professional pilot. Your eyesight has got to be impeccable. Just imagine... I already had the license. I was ready to go. And then, suddenly, I felt like it was snatched away from me.

But, Mark didn't want to give up on his passion.

- I gave up flying, and it lasted until we came to Florida. Covid struck a few years ago, and borders were closed. And I said: "You know what? I'm going to buy a plane!". At that time, Mark and his wife were living in an RV.

You live in a van?

-Oh, yes. We are full-time. We both like to travel a lot, so that was the best option.

All of a sudden, Mark was back in his childhood. He got a plane. A special one...



- It's an amphibious plane. You can land on water, anywhere you want. That gave us such a tremendous feeling of freedom. Now, we can go anywhere, anytime. We are just goofing off and having fun.

But, let's get back to Pickleball. Mark quickly fell in love with one of the fastest-growing sports in the world.

How did that happen?

- My wife played a lot of racquetball. But, I mean, really a lot, ha-ha. She played for almost 30 years. But then she had an injury. Because of that, she discovered Pickleball and asked if I had ever tried it. I said no, which was weird because I thought there was no sport that I hadn't already tried.

The Hilliards quickly became addicted to Pickleball. And having an amphibious plane that allows you to jump from one place to another - is undoubtedly a big advantage.

- We often go for a trip. Combining flights with our RV, we feel the freedom. Oh, yes, my absolute favorite place to play Pickleball is Auburn, hands down!

As we mentioned, Mark and his wife are living in an RV full-time. It's a whole different lifestyle with many advantages, says Mark. Furthermore, you are free of any maintenance owning a house demands.

- We wanted to live with very little planning ahead. We want to see, do, and explore so many things. And play Pickleball along the way. We can't give that up easily. RV is, in my opinion, the best way to do it.

The Hilliards share a very lively life story, or in Mark's words, they never know where they will wake up the following day. The plane, RV, and Pickleball - those are three things they can't live without.



JAY DEVILLIERS ON BEING A PROFESSIONAL PICKLEBALL PLAYER

The Flying Frenchman - that's the nickname of Jay Devilliers, a professional Pickleball player. If you follow the professional Pickleball scene, then you know why. Jay is one of the best in the game, and his surname is undoubtedly French. His rise to the top happened rapidly. Jay started playing Pickleball back in 2019 because he wanted to compete.

His love for Pickleball came from tennis where he was a division one college player. "I started playing tennis when I was four years old. I even tried to compete on a pro tour, but then I injured my back badly," Jay explains.

The next step was clear for him since a professional tennis career was off the table. He attended college instead. Jay ended up in Wichita. How? He was looking for a college with division one tennis. That was his only condition. It's safe to say that moving to such a small town was a pretty big cultural shock for Jay. He remembers his first landing at the local airport: "I asked about the terminal number, and they just started to laugh because there is only one there." On the other hand, the perk of being in a small town is people. He says they are so kind to him. In Wichita, Jay quickly became well-known for his enthusiasm for Pickleball. He wanted to do it on a pro-

level, and - he did! Jay trains like a professional, although the sport is still behind tennis. He said, "No one had the opportunity to make money out of Pickleball. The sport was new. It's still growing. But I want to change that. My goal is to make it to the very top." And to achieve that, Jay is putting in significant effort. He practices at least three hours a day with three hours of fitness afterward. His goal is to stay in the best possible shape to prolong his career. In more developed sports like tennis, athletes have teams of 4-5 people taking care of them, physically and mentally. Pickleball is heading that way. But when will Pickleball

reach that level? It's hard to say. Jay predicted things could significantly get better in no more than two years.

"No one had the opportunity to make money out of Pickleball. The sport was new. It's still growing. But I want to change that. My goal is to make it to the very top."

The signature move of Jay's game is the "Erne" which is a shot he hits in the air. Jay explained, "You're not able to step

into the kitchen, and because of that, I'm trying to close the net when possible. That means I jump to the outside to get as close to the net as possible and do the volley." Although he's not a big fan of teaching that, Jay thinks that the Erne is more of a situational shot. He says that if you read the game well, it will come naturally. And because you need to fly through the air to hit the Erne, this is how he received his nickname as the Flying Frenchman.





Club Profile

Admin Tools

Communication

Send emails, chat with players, and post announcements

- Admins can email to selected members or the entire club
- Emails are displayed on the player's dashboard
- Chat one-on-one via TIH messaging
- Announcements display on the group's profile
- Post pictures and socialize with pickleball friends

Event Scheduling

- Simple two-step registration process
- Add guests to your registration
- Track attendees
- Associate venues with specific events
- Automated email reminders
- Event invitations
- Access events on your personal calendar
- Seamless payment process for fee-based events

Club Dues

Say goodbye to the countless hours of administrative work

- Collect dues directly into the club's PayPal account
- Transfer payments from PayPal to bank account with no fees
- Create individual, couple, and family plans
- Track payments
- New member notification
- Automated membership expiration emails
- Customized membership fields

Club Play

- Competitive or social
- Round-robins, flex ladders, & shootouts
- Unlimited court configuration flexibility
- Standings are perpetually tracked
- Substitutes are not needed
- Standings are updated in real-time
- Email court schedules
- Generate custom court layouts



David Pollack

TrackitHub Brand Ambassador

About me

College Gameday Analyst

Rating: 4.0

Location: Georgia

Joined: 2021

Player Profile

Contact

✉ info@trackithub.com

☎ 866.924.8006

📍 TrackitHub.com

Skills

Drop shot ●●●●

Serve ●●●●

Dinking ●●●●

Speed ●●●●

Backhand ●●●●

Forehand ●●●●

Clubs

• Phoenix Pros

Groups

- Mixed Round-Robin
- Men's Shootout

• Georgia Pickleball Club

Groups

- Friday Night Scramble
- Advanced Ladder

Standings

87% - Mixed Round-Robin

81% - Men's Shootout

76% - Friday Night Scramble

85% - Advanced Ladder

HOW DROP IN PLAY LED TO 3 PROFESSIONAL CAREERS FOR THE JOHNSON FAMILY



Julie Johnson had no idea what was in store for her family when she started going to drop-in Pickleball play at the Delray Beach Tennis Center. Julie and her family had recently moved from Kansas to Florida to support her teenage son in his tennis career. She would show up and play when she had time, as she did not need to worry about organizing a game.

As time went on, her kids JW and Jorga wanted to come along and play Pickleball. And when the pandemic hit, it did a number on tennis, with it being such an international game. It shut down many tournaments. With little to no tennis tournaments, her family entered some Pickleball tournaments.

Last June, Julie's son JW was still doing Pickleball and tennis at a competitive level. Then they went and did four

straight tournaments in California. After talking with his parents about the feasibility of doing both, JW decided to go full into Pickleball. Then as Julie's daughter, Jorga, was getting ready to go into high school, she decided to start taking Pickleball seriously, wanting to become a professional.

“Tennis didn't need JW while pickleball does.”

Both JW and Jorga have taken the pickleball scene by storm from that point forward. The Association of Pickleball Professionals

named them male and female rookies of the year. JW, at just 19, has gone from not playing Pickleball just a few years ago to winning his first gold in Indianapolis, which he won in mixed doubles. Fast forward to August, another doubles gold with a good friend of his, Jonny Goldberg, in New Jersey.

That June trip saw JW get better and better partner offers as he started to get noticed. Then it all took off when JW won a singles tournament at the Tournament of Champions in Utah, one of the premier events in all of Pickleball. On his way to the top of the podium, he upset the number one men's player Ben Johns.

Julie was once quoted saying that "tennis didn't need JW while pickleball does." JW taking the pickleball circuit by storm was significant for the sport. A young man who had professional potential in tennis but chose Pickleball, and it appears that JW made the right choice.

With Jorga being younger and playing in these high-level tournaments, it took longer for her to have that big moment. However, in December, Jorga got to the singles finals at Casa Grande in Indianapolis. While she did not win, she beat many good players to get to the final and earn a medal. Then one weekend later in Mesa, she medaled again, and so did JW. Then Julie experienced a little prodding from her kids as they told her "no pressure," as Julie had a medal match of her own. Julie won the singles title, which finished the triple crown of sorts with both kids and her winning the singles event in their respective divisions.

The Johnson family has taken the pickleball world by storm, and it is not just one of them. Julie, JW, and Jorga are regularly competing at very high levels, and any time a member of the Johnson family is in a tournament, they are a name to watch. While their schedules are a little



bit crazy and at times cannot always watch every single one of each other's matches because they might be playing themselves. They all support one another, and it is incredible to see this family help bring Pickleball to the national stage more and more. One thing is for sure, just as that special weekend mentioned where all of them won their respective division, don't be surprised as that success could be commonplace.



WHY PICKLEBALL IS ITS OWN GAME

Lee Whitwell was willing to play in a tennis tournament with her friend. But when she found the event was a Pickleball competition instead, she said “No.” Finally, her friend convinced her to try the game with the promise of a case of beer. It was a good thing her friend knew how to entice Lee as she became a professional player and became the most valuable player of Major League Pickleball. Lee said, “I like to tell everybody I played tennis in the late 1900s. I played professionally a little bit and then got into teaching tennis, directing clubs, being a director of tennis at clubs and running resorts, and whatnot. So the transition was at first easy. And then secondly, not so easy because you come to realize that for as many similarities there are between tennis and Pickleball, there are twice as many differences. And it’s embracing those differences and understanding that Pickleball is its own sport.”

Most players understand the soft game in Pickleball is what makes it unique when compared to tennis. However, Lee identified many other differences, including footwork, hands battles, winners, and point construction.

Footwork

The first aspect Lee mentioned as being different between tennis and Pickleball is footwork. In tennis, you often use crossover steps when you have a longer distance to get to the ball. However, the Pickleball court is smaller, so shuffle steps are more appropriate for players to use. You will see the shuffle step performed when players are at the kitchen line in a dinking rally. The shuffle step is also advantageous when the ball moves very fast, like when you are in a hands battle at the non-volley zone line. It is because it is faster to do the shuffle step than the crossover.

Soft Game

You might think of tennis as being almost exclusively a power game. However, skilled players use drop shots and angle volleys but not nearly as much as you see in Pickleball. While the strokes are similar in both sports, the big difference in tennis is that they will result in a winner. In Pickleball, the soft shots like a dink or third shot drop become your building blocks to set up the opportunity to attack.

“You come to realize that for as many similarities there are between tennis and Pickleball, there are twice as many differences. And it’s embracing those differences and understanding that Pickleball is its own sport.”

Lee said, “In tennis, I was always the closer on the doubles court. My partner knew their job was to make me look good. Whereas now, on the pickleball court, I’m using my soft game and being more of a builder and a re-setter. I’m like, hey, I’ve got your back. I’m on cleanup. You attack. You do your thing, and I’ll keep us in the point for however long we need to.” As Lee said, it can be

annoying to your opponent when you nonchalantly reset the ball back even if they have hit it hard.

Hands Battles

You do not see hands battles in tennis, even in doubles. It is because players can move as close to the net as they desire, so it is easier to hit a winner to finish the point. Because Pickleball competitors cannot enter the kitchen and volley the ball in the air, you will often see very fast passed rallies when all four players are just behind the non-volley-zone line.

Lee does not like to engage in hands battles when playing the younger professionals like Anna Leigh Waters or Lauren Stratman. Lee said, “I am a lot older than them. So, I just don’t want to engage in that hand battle. That just becomes survival model...I’m going to just reset the ball, and we’ll just keep going.” Still, hands battles occur frequently in Pickleball, a significant difference between the two sports.

Winners

Because of the smaller court, it can be challenging to hit a winner in Pickleball compared to tennis. Lee mentioned both the overhead and passing shots are much more challenging for the offensive player in Pickleball. If you can move back in the court when you see your opponent winding up for an overhead, there is a good chance you can get the ball back. Whereas in tennis, overheads almost always result in a winner. The same holds true for passing shots. When tennis players are at the net, they can often be passed because there is space to do so. Lee advises Pickleball players not to hit passing shots because the gap between a player and the sideline is not there due to the size of the court.

In other words, it is hard to hit a winner in Pickleball. Lee said, “You want to constantly try to set it up, so you get the put-away shot. But the put-away shot can come back, and you might hit four or five put away shots before you end up winning the point. Or you might hit four or five put-away shots, and then the other team resets and works themselves back in, and it’s like starting the point over again. One point can go from offense to defense to offense very quickly. You really have to work the point. And just because you think you hit a good shot, doesn’t necessarily mean that your opponent agrees with you and they’re going to get it back.”

Constructing Points

Most tennis players will build a

point based on their power game as they move their opponent from side to side in baseline rallies. But constructing a point in Pickleball means you need to have patience. One example of this is on the third shot. You don’t need to rush to the kitchen line right away. If you hit the third shot too deep or high, stay back in the court and hit another drop shot. Then gradually work your way up to the non-volley-zone line as you hit a fifth or even seventh drop shot. The goal is to get to the kitchen line to neutralize the point since your opponents have a tactical advantage, but don’t rush to the kitchen line.

Lee said the meat and potatoes of the game are building the point and trying to expose your opponent’s weaknesses. She said, “If I can have

one player going one way and the other player going the other and creating gaps on the court, then our lives become a lot easier. It’s having the patience to do that and the confidence to know that you can outlast and that you can wait until the right opportunity. And you don’t feel pressured into pulling the trigger too fast.”

Lee’s success as a professional has been all about embracing the differences between tennis and Pickleball. Her soft game and ability to construct points have been what has taken her to the top of the sport. Amateurs can learn much from Lee, too, as it is vital to understand that Pickleball is its own sport.





THE BUSINESS OF PICKLEBALL

Pickleball is now officially the fastest growing sport in the USA, according to the 2022 survey by the Sports and Fitness Industry Association. And as the sport grows, it is attracting new players and providing opportunities for entrepreneurs. According to accomplished businessman John Lee Dumas (JLD) from Entrepreneur on Fire, now is a great time to start a business related to Pickleball. John said, “It’s just really cool to see that there’s an opportunity for people to come in and say, you know what? What’s a problem in the Pickleball space that’s not being addressed. Don’t try to become the next Pickleball Fire. That’s not gonna work for you...They need an amazing, genuine, authentic version of yourself.”

JLD is a successful entrepreneur, earning over \$2.5 million in 2021 alone. He has some excellent advice for anyone looking to break into Pickleball on the business side of things. JLD shared that first, for any business, you need two main ingredients, one being passion, excitement, and enthusiasm. The second ingredient you need is value. Then when you can overlap those two things, you have what you need to succeed.

The goal is to find where your business can succeed and provide customers with solutions to their problems. JLD is also a Pickleball player, and he shared that playing so much gave him an elbow issue, and he needed a solution to his pain. JLD did not want the second-best solution to fix the

problem. JLD wanted the best solution. Not only that, for a perfect solution, he would have been willing to pay \$100’s, if not \$1,000’s, to fix it. If you can find a common issue and be the number one best solution to that problem, you can build an entire business from that one single thing.

If you are interested in how JLD solved his Pickleball elbow, it has two ingredients. First, an ice sleeve that he could put in the freezer and slip onto his elbow, making it very easy. The second thing was a massage gun with a hard rubber tip to penetrate the painful tendon in his elbow. Doing it was a bit of torture, but that was needed to help his elbow recover.

Finding the best solution to his tennis elbow allowed JLD to get back to playing Pickleball. While he learned the game in Long Beach, California, he mostly plays in Puerto Rico, where he lives. JLD and his friends became so excited about the game they encouraged their local tennis club, Palmas Del Mar, to turn three of their tennis courts into six Pickleball courts with lights.

JLD, like most Pickleball players, clearly has a passion for the game. While it is unlikely JLD is looking for business opportunities in the Pickleball space, he does provide excellent guidance for other entrepreneurs. He said, “Play the game, have fun. Look for what’s missing. And then you go and fill that void in a meaningful way.”

FROM BEING CLINICALLY DEAD TO CERTIFIED PICKLEBALL INSTRUCTOR

Just imagine, one day you're waking up not aware of the fact that you are going to "die." You go for a casual bike ride thinking about Pickleball along the way as a proper enthusiast you are, of course. How do you go from being clinically dead to becoming a certified Pickleball instructor - that's the question Ian Hutchinson didn't have time to ask himself as the sudden cardiac arrest happened. But, three years after that - he had all the answers!

That was just an introduction to the fantastic, Hollywood-movie-worthy story of "Hutch", an Australian who's been through a lot.

- Oh, yes. It's been a rollercoaster. I was dead for 18 minutes. But, in the end, the doctors diagnosed me with 'OPD.'

'OPD'? That sounds very serious...

- Indeed, it is! That stands for Obsessive Pickleball Disorder, ha-ha - Ian was jokingly starting his story.

His love for the sport of Pickleball started with him watching some weird people playing some sport, as he says. The next thing he knew, he was back at home searching the internet, trying to find everything he could about Pickleball, getting familiar with the rules. He quickly got in touch with coach Morgan Evans and Steve Kennedy, both in the Pickleball world for a long time. The gentlemen were not youngsters, but it doesn't matter in Pickleball.

Ian set a clear goal - from never playing Pickleball to competing in the Australian Championship in 150 days.

- When I decide to do something, I certainly like to throw myself into it.

But, COVID-19 decided to step in and make things harder for Ian. Australia had a very rough lockdown. Like most other people, athletes were forced to stay home. In that time, Ian developed an interest in coaching.

- I wanted to help other people learn and to grow the sport. Also, I noticed there are not many coaches in Australia. We are at least ten years behind the USA when it comes to Pickleball. We lack courts, mostly. Furthermore, there are only 300-400 players at this time. But, hey, you've got to start somewhere.

Pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports in the world. The President of the International Federation of Pickleball, Pat Murphy, announced there are 70 countries with their own federations including Australia.

Ian fulfilled his goal of becoming a certified Pickleball instructor. He uses different methods in his coaching style, but he underlines the "SWOT" analysis. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

- I prefer to spend 80% of the time drilling and 20% playing the game.

It's been three years since the almost-fatal event happened. Having a lot of experience with it, Ian started a website for educating people on CPR training, cprfriendly.org. He also thinks that it's of great importance that Pickleball clubs have defibrillators.

- Being in cardiac arrest, we're talking about minutes! Every wasted minute means 10% less chance of surviving. I'm just very grateful. Walking down the street, I feel much happier. That gave me an attitude of being appreciative of every day - he concluded.
we get it finalized."

While Scott considers his love of starting businesses to be a "sickness," the result of the illness is going to be a world-class resort where you can eat, sleep and play Pickleball all in one place.





GOOD OR BAD ADVICE?

Professional Nicole Havlicek from Primetime Pickleball had a strong racket sports background from playing tennis at UC Berkeley. But she found herself struggling with Pickleball despite understanding the importance of the soft game. Nicole said, “I was taking all the advice I could get from people that I could see were good. And a lot of it was helpful to a point. And then I would just do it like it was a rule. And there were areas where maybe I should’ve been doing something differently.”

As a Pickleball competitor, you may find yourself in the same position as Nicole, listening to advice from other players. While the direction is not necessarily wrong, you need to be discerning when you apply it. As Nicole explains, Pickleball is not black and white. So here are three situations where you should consider your options.

When Your Opponent Attacks

Pickleball is a game with fast and slow action. And when the ball speeds up, and your opponent is attacking, you have a couple of options. You can choose to reset the

ball or rip it back. When Nicole first started playing, she reset the ball every time her opponent sped it up. The opposition attacked her relentlessly as they were skilled enough to take the ball from above or below the net and go for an offensive opportunity. So Nicole’s game improved overnight when she started ripping balls above the net or just a bit below it. Nowadays, Nicole can reset or attack comfortably. Her strategy depends on who she plays and what works the best against them.

The Third Shot

Even a few years ago, most top-level players hit a third-shot drop. And if your opponent is just trying to get the return of serve in, the drop may still be prudent. However, there are two instances where a third shot drive is more appropriate. The first case is if your opponent hits the ball short in the court or without a lot of pace. Go ahead and drive the ball, so you are the first to be on the offensive. The second instance is when your opponent puts pressure on you, such as hitting deep and hard in the court. If you are falling back or out of position when they hit a sharp angle, be sure to drive the ball.

Nicole said about the third shot drop, "It's best if you're stepping into it. If you're falling back in any kind of way or moving to the side as you're hitting, it's going to be tough to execute a really good unattackable drop. So you might have to rip that one low and do a third shot drive. And then possibly drop the next one."

You can hit topspin, flat, or underspin when you execute the third shot drive. The spin does not make a difference, but the height of the ball going over the net does. Make sure it goes low over the net to get yourself a dropable opportunity on your next shot.

When You Hit a Floater

Imagine when all four players are in a rally at the kitchen line. Then you make a mistake and hit a high ball or floater. Should you stay at the non-volley zone line or move a couple of steps back in the court? Nicole explained that she was told to keep her toes to the line and not move

back when she first started playing. Regardless of how terrible her shot was, do your best to dig out the ball but do not move back.

She said, "I totally disagree with that at this point. I tried it at first, and I'm like, this just doesn't seem right. And I would never do this in tennis either. I would take a couple steps back. I wouldn't retreat dramatically." Taking a couple of steps back gives you more time to react to the ball. Nicole recommends moving two giant steps back and then using a split step. Your weight should be leaning slightly forward, so you have a chance to dig out the hardball coming your way. Of course, you do not want to take a couple of steps back if you are unsteady on your feet.

As you learn things about Pickleball from your friends and others, know that you have options. What works for one person may not suit you, and what works against one opponent may not work against everyone.



THE INFLUENCE OF RACQUETBALL AND SQUASH ON SENIOR PRO KEVIN BOOTH

Kevin Booth is one of the top senior professional Pickleball players in the world, and like many others, he came to the game bringing a wealth of racket sports experience with him. For many years, Kevin, a high-level racquetball player, transitioned into squash and loved the game until it started causing hip issues because it was “just too much darn running.”

A failed attempt to get back into racquetball and a conversation with a good friend later – one in which he admits Kevin thought the game sounded “totally lame” – and suddenly Kevin found himself waxing weekenders with a wooden paddle at his local club. After finding out where the good players competed, Kevin went to the place where he found “Pickleball Nirvana,” getting hooked quickly and never looking back to the sports that led him to this part of his journey.

Kevin, who had a very successful Nationals in 2021, believes that his competitive nature and background in professional racquetball is what has allowed him to be so successful so quickly on the Pickleball court. He said, “I don’t want to feel I’m behind in a rally. I want to feel like I’m making my opponent feel a little uncomfortable.”

While Kevin did play indoors, his specialty was outdoor or three-wall racquetball. That version of the game rewards creativity and is something Kevin also focuses on during his Pickleball matches. “I would say that’s one of the things that really appealed to me when it came to Pickleball is that you can hit so many different shots at any given time,” Kevin said. His shot creativity learned on the other courts means that Kevin often sees 10 or 15 options at any

given time. It allows him to keep his opponent off guard by mixing up his shot choice to form a fluid and ever-changing strategy.

Part of Kevin’s success has been because of that unpredictability. While he is perfectly comfortable engaging in a slow-dink war with everybody at the net, Kevin feels that his opponents are always wary in those situations of him pulling off an unexpected shot type. It includes the kind of miraculous attacking shots off the ground that you only see in Pickleball at the highest levels. But Kevin learned from squash, where the deadness of the bounce of the ball means attacking from the floor is a massive part of the game’s strategy.

Outdoor racquetball also focuses on “agility, movement, and mobility,” which translates well to Pickleball. So Kevin does footwork and balance drills to get better. Muscle memory is hugely important. You want your body to react before you have to think, and the training that Kevin uses is Pickleball specific for him to be in the proper position before he hits the ball every single time.

Kevin is also a big believer in cross-training to develop strength and agility. He has impressive leg strength and a rock-solid core from a combination of racquetball – you play so low to the ground – and from the gym. As the sport of Pickleball continues to develop, more and more crossover athletes will make their mark on the game. It will be imperative for players to train in different ways outside the court to increase their core strength and reduce the chance of injuries.



HOW MEGHA KAPOOR IS INFLUENCING THE GROWTH OF PICKLEBALL IN INDIA

Pickleball's popularity is worldwide! And that's a fact. The sport has rapidly spread from the USA. It's being played everywhere: South America, Europe, and India! In the leading role of making Pickleball popular in India is Megha Kapoor.

She lives in India and was introduced to Pickleball five years ago. Her friend was looking for a partner in mixed doubles. "Why not? I'll give it a shot!" Megha thought as she took the paddle in her hand for the first time.

Pickleball is just irresistible, as this was confirmed many times. It happened again. Megha fell in love with the sport, and she started practicing a lot. But we really mean a lot. "I just completed my post-graduation at that time, and I had a lot of free time. I remember playing from 6 AM to 11 AM, and then again from 5 PM to 9 PM. That's how my Pickleball journey started," she explained.

Megha is a huge sports fan. She used to play volleyball in college, but she also played some tennis for fun. She admits that it was easy for her to pick up the game of Pickleball. As we mentioned, Megha used to play 8-9 hours a day. Today, her schedule has changed a little bit. She started working as a software engineer and doesn't have that much spare time.

But, she still finds a few hours every day. "In the morning, I play before work from 6.30 to 8 AM, and then again after work from 7 to 8 PM." Megha's goal is to play as many tournaments as possible. She already played in Germany, Spain, Singapore, and Thailand. The next destination is the States at the U.S. Open. "I wanted to come last year, but in the end, Covid restrictions stopped me from traveling," she explained.

Let's get back to Pickleball in India. The popularity is quickly growing. Megha started to play in her hometown, and in the beginning, there were only 10-20 people. Today, there are over 500 players. The infrastructure is developing as they started on the tennis courts, but now there are more and more dedicated Pickleball courts. "The age of people playing is really diverse. We have players under 19 and also above 50 years old. We even have a few of them above 70," Megha added.

While Pickleball is growing in India, it still needs a lot more popularity to reach the level of the USA. So big plans are in motion for India's Pickleball scene. This year, two major tournaments are scheduled in November and December with a format similar to Major League Pickleball.

The International Federation of Pickleball recognized Megha's efforts in India and made her an ambassador and



influencer for Asia. She's not only influencing as Megha was crowned the most valuable player (MVP) of the first ranked tournament in India held back in 2019. "The concept of the MVP award was to have at least two gold and one silver medal. I was lucky that I won all three golds. It was an amazing tournament for me."



AROUND THE GLOBE WITH DANIEL MOORE

Daniel Moore started playing Pickleball thanks to his father, Scott Moore, who got him into the game. His father started out playing recreationally in Colorado Springs. After Daniel returned from living in Africa, his dad set a goal for them to become national champions. Daniel thought his father may have been a touch crazy but dove in headfirst and started training together with his dad every day. Then they climbed the mountain top when both won singles national championships back in 2014.

Daniel still plays regularly but is no longer on the professional tournament circuit and living in Japan. Then add in the global pandemic, making playing professionally a little challenging to manage. Daniel also credited the sport of Pickleball and its growth, saying the level of professional Pickleball is so much higher that it requires constant practice and play to stay at the top.

Although Daniel does not compete as often, he has been one of the biggest advocates in the sport for its international growth. Daniel introduced Pickleball in Japan and

China. It began with him being hired to go to their regions for two weeks to train coaches who would, in turn, go out to universities, schools, and other places to teach people to play.

With his move to Japan in late 2014, he and some friends started playing the game locally, and it slowly has grown with about 20 or so clubs around Japan accounting for about 1,500 players. While that may seem low compared to the United States, Daniel said the growth has been significant, but it is still in its early stages. He is starting to see a snowball effect and expects it to grow in Japan and all of Asia.

Daniel has traveled to and taught or trained people in Pickleball not just in Japan and China but also in Taiwan, India, Thailand, Singapore, and other Asian countries. One thing to note is Pickleball has typically seen its popularity start to grow with older generations in the United States and Canada. In many Asian countries, though, they have seen substantial participation by the younger generations. Daniel spoke about how this will only lead to quicker growth and excitement surrounding Pickleball.

Another thing that helped the popularity of Pickleball in Japan was the Pickleball tours Daniel started in 2018. Doing just a few a year but bringing over other players and allowing people to watch high-level Pickleballers play helped the sport's growth. Those tours also included Spain, Italy, Mexico, and some Central American countries.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, those tours became difficult or impossible in many foreign countries. That did not stop Daniel, though, as recently he has been doing domestic tours in America in places where Pickleball has not taken off yet, like Tennessee, Montana, and more.

Daniel also has a great new indoor Pickleball facility developed by Espire Sports, which he and his dad helped to found. It is located in Prescott, Arizona and the facility is about 5,000 square feet, with plans to add a hotel to it in the future. It should be one of the best Pickleball destinations in the entire world. Domestically and especially internationally, Daniel Moore has been crucial to the growth of Pickleball, and all his ongoing Pickleball ventures will be continually good for the game.

A TOP PRO IS BRINGING PICKLEBALL TO PERU

Pickleball is growing. It's spreading across the globe. The sport rapidly expanded from the United States. Currently, the huge swing is towards South America. Peru, to be precise. And it's all thanks to one man, Hercilio Cabieses.

"I was in Peru for three weeks. Together with my team, we started a few clinics did a lot of practice and demonstration. People in Peru are beginning to like Pickleball. At first, there were just a few of them interested, and now there are about 80 people playing." While the age of Pickleball players in the United States trends older, it is a diverse group of players learning the game in Peru, including kids, young adults, and seniors.

One of the challenges in Peru is finding a place to play. Many countries will play the game on tennis courts. But in Peru, almost every tennis court is red clay, so Pickleball is played on futsal courts and basketball courts.

As Pickleball grows in Peru, Hercilio is leading the charge as the president of Peru's Pickleball association. He is organizing the first professional tournament in Peru, which will be held in 2023. Hercilio is also making an effort to start a Pickleball Academy in one of the complexes where the Pan America games were held in 2018. The instructor will teach people to play Pickleball. What about the times he's not in the country? Well, there is another certified Pickleball instructor - Hercilio's sister.

While Hercilio is just 23 years old, he has already accomplished so much both in Peru and in professional Pickleball as one of the best pros in the world. Still, he is at an age where he can play on the Association of Pickleball Professionals Next Gen Tour. It is a program to develop younger players and even has senior professionals and others mentoring them. Hercilio said, "We played Pickleball during the day and then had lunch together. After that, we had seminars about nutrition and how to behave on the court. It was

really helpful." Hercilio learned a lot about nutrition and how it can help him achieve better results. Currently, he's on a keto diet. So, that means - no chocolate for him. While Hercilio was keen to be a part of the Next Gen Tour, he's at the top end of the age bracket. When he turns 24 in October, he will need to move on from the circuit.

It is impressive to see all of Hercilio's accomplishments, although his Pickleball journey started only two years ago in Indiana. "I noticed nobody was playing tennis there anymore. Everyone was playing some funny new sport called Pickleball," he recalls. Hercilio had a chance to play Pickleball, so being a sports lover, he could not resist trying. And it went way better than expected. "I was swinging really hard. They thought I was a pro. They asked for my number and kept inviting me every day. I quickly got hooked. I'm really in love with the sport right now."



PROFILE: JOE VALENTI

Ten years ago, Joe Valenti and his family knew nothing about Pickleball. Then when introduced to the game, it quickly went from this incredible new sport to being responsible for over 50% of his store's merchandise. Eventually, Valenti Sports in Rochester, New York, grew to be one of the largest Pickleball retailers in the Northeast.

Joe's dad, brothers, and he used to play tennis about three days a week and quickly transitioned from tennis to Pickleball. Soon, multiple family members had their own courts, and the store itself had two courts built behind it. Not only that but the Valenti family as a whole became some of the country's biggest Pickleball promoters. They encouraged building many courts in the area and helped develop a curriculum for Pickleball in local school physical education classes. Pickleball is now taught in almost every middle and elementary school physical education class in Monroe county New York.

Joe has enough Pickleball stories for this short profile to be a book. To share, one of the best was his time getting to play Pickleball on what is thought to be the first Pickleball court ever. Joe and Jennifer Lucore, who at the time was the world's #1 women's player, played a singles match together on Bainbridge Island. There are three courts there that are essentially beachfront. With Jennifer being Pickleball famous and having many connections, she was given the address. That was enough for her and Joe to hatch a plan to sneak away during a Seattle tournament.

They traveled about 45 minutes, hopped on a ferry, and got to play a quick match on the very first Pickleball court.

Joe also has a Pickleball shot named after him called the "Joey." When your opponent hits an around-the-post shot, most players will return the ball over the net. However, the Joey is a different strategy. It involves hitting the ball back at your opponent, who has just made an around-the-post shot. You surprise your opponent and win the rally by hitting back at the player who is standing out of bounds. Joe said he typically does it if someone hits an around the post-shot at him first. The Joey almost always works because it catches the opposing player off guard.

The Valenti family has now leased out its sports store, so the brothers run several top-rated Pickleball clinics. Many of the clinics he puts on sell out very quickly, and it is not hard to figure out why. Their clinics are known for high energy; those that come are very excited to be there and leave, having learned a lot and fallen in love with Pickleball a little bit more.

Anyone that sits down with Joe will come away knowing that his love and passion for Pickleball is evident. Not only that, but he is also willing to do anything within his power to help promote and grow the game. Joe and his family are synonymous with Pickleball, and their impact on the game will likely never be forgotten. Of course neither will the Joey shot.

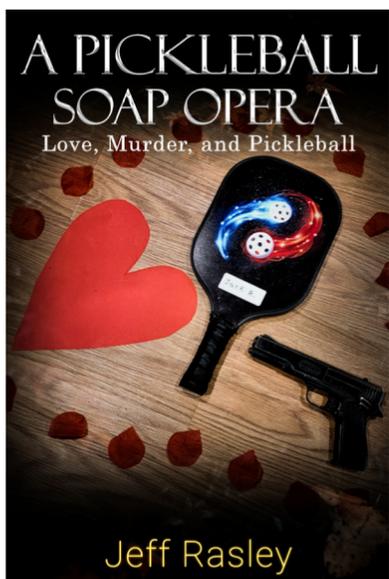


LOVE, MURDER, AND PICKLEBALL?

Author Jeff Rasley said you are supposed to write about what you know. And he did in *A Pickleball Soap Opera: Love, Murder, and Pickleball*. You can undoubtedly see Jeff knows about Pickleball and love, but what about murder?

As it turns out, Jeff has been working as a lawyer for a long time. Early in his career, he had some experience with murder trials so that he could bring together all three elements in the book. While Jeff is happily retired from practicing law, he felt something was missing. And Jeff discovered that “something” was writing. He comes from a family of storytellers. So, Jeff decided to write a book. Romance, thriller, and mystery. His book can come under all three genres. And above all, the whole plot is intertwined with Pickleball.

The main character is Jack, who is also an attorney as the author himself. His wife suddenly dies, and Jack is left devastated. Jack’s friend brings him to the Pickleball club, where he meets a woman. They quickly fell in love and also became Pickleball partners.



“Where’s the murder? “you may ask. Well, that’s where CIA and Al-Qaeda step in. The man from Jack’s past appears, and he wants to take revenge. This Pickleball soap opera becomes a story of a crazy murderer hunting Jack’s group.

“My only concern was where to draw the line of “too much Pickleball. “I didn’t want to bore someone who has never played it before. On the other hand, I wanted to motivate

people for playing Pickleball.” Jeff incorporated the Pickleball basics, as well as some advanced things. Tips and tricks, you might say. As Jack advances his career, he gets advice from more experienced players. “Some people who read it told me that they want to give Pickleball a shot,” said Jeff happily.

Jeff gave Pickleball a chance over three years ago. He said, “My friend invited me to play at a local club in Indianapolis. “ Jeff admitted that he’s always been a huge sports fan so that he couldn’t refuse the invitation. Jeff accepted and didn’t regret it. “At first, I thought that it’s a ridiculous name for a sport. But then I realized that it’s actually fun. I really enjoyed it.”

He used to play tennis, not just for recreation, but very competitively. At the relatively high amateur level, as he would describe it. Unfortunately, injuries caught up with him. Tennis elbow and a shoulder issue forced him to give up tennis, and Pickleball came as salvation. A smaller paddle hasn’t caused any more trouble.

But, another problem occurred. Jeff didn’t know a lot of Pickleball players. He also wondered where he could play? The solution was his local YMCA. “I asked them to paint the Pickleball lines on the basketball courts. I spoke to the director, and he listened to me because I am a long-time member. We managed to raise \$2,500 from donors, and in five months, everything was finished.”

Needless to say, Jeff is a real go-getter when it comes to Pickleball. So it is not surprising that he managed to connect three seemingly unrelated things, including love, murder, and Pickleball, in one book.



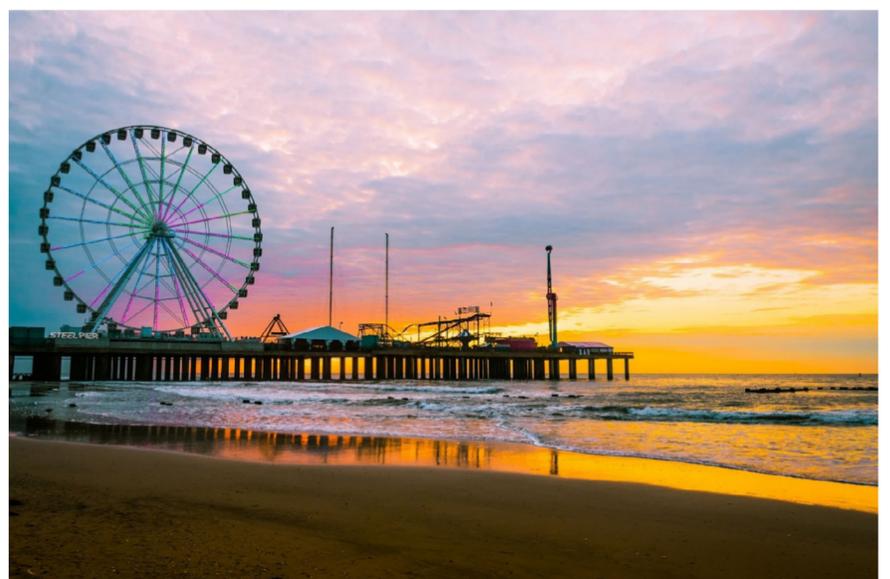
LARGEST INDOOR TOURNAMENT

AThe world’s largest indoor Pickleball tournament will be held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 19-24 of 2022. Professional player Kyle Yates is the event host, while Jim Ludwig is the tournament director. Kyle and Jim have worked alongside Randy Sussman to bring the event to the Atlantic City Convention center.

As you might expect, it is a massive undertaking, as there will be 46 courts and a stadium court that can hold 1,000 spectators. They expect 1500-2000 players, including professionals vying for a piece of the \$50,000 purse.

While the tournament is indoors, the courts will have a concrete surface similar to other indoor courts in the Northeast. Kyle spent some time evaluating surfaces and equipment so that an orange Franklin ball will be used for the tournament. Randy noted that there will be plenty for

people to do besides playing Pickleball in Atlantic City. Nearby attractions include the Atlantic City boardwalk, outlet mall, casinos, and world-class restaurants.



TrackitHub is the World's #1 Pickleball Management Platform



Outdoor Resort Indio Pickleball Association
Indio California



JW Marriott - Desert Ridge
Phoenix Arizona



Pueblo El Mirage
El Mirage Arizona



Southern Tier Pickleball Club
Vestal New York



Good Life Pickleball Association
Mesa Arizona



Chip Hullender - Admin
Cherokee County Pickleball Club
Canton, Georgia

"Our group used TrackitHub to create the first county-wide pickleball league in the state. All members consistently use TrackitHub to stay informed with league play, standings, individual winning percentages, and league announcements. The league fee payment process was seamless and very user-friendly."



SCAN ME



Ray Gagnon - Admin
Kelowna Pickleball Club
Kelowna, BC

"I have had great and immediate support initiating the start up and find the program to be very easy to implement. After only two shootouts our playing members are begging me to use TrackitHub for all upcoming events."

