

# Pickleball Fire



Official Pickleball  
Magazine of the IFP



Venise Chan

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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

It is hard to believe this is the sixth issue of Pickleball Fire Magazine, and I recently crossed the 100 episode mark of the Pickleball Fire Podcast. Both endeavors started during the COVID-19 pandemic because I was shut in during the long Connecticut winter. When I started podcasting and publishing the magazine, I had no idea how many people I would reach.

Last month, Pickleball Fire Magazine partnered with the International Federation of Pickleball (IFP) to become their official magazine. So now you are going to see more worldwide coverage on both the podcast and magazine. This issue includes two articles on players from overseas with England's Louis Laville and Hong Kong's Venise Chan. Plus, I interviewed the President of the IFP, Pat Murphy, to discuss the organization's progress in taking Pickleball to the Olympics.

Of course, I am still making sure we include lots of instructional articles in the magazine for readers to enjoy along with some great programs like hosted housing for Pickleball players.

I also want to shout out to the contributing writers: Tony Roig from WeArePickleball, Dr. M.L. Johnson, Randy Kadish, and Dan Beeman, who wrote an award-winning movie script on the game Pickleballs.

# Pickleball Fire

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# How to Hit An Effective Lob Shot With Wimbledon Doubles Champion JoAnne Russell

Few players in Pickleball use the lob shot, and even fewer can hit it successfully. But former professional tennis player and women's doubles champion at Wimbledon, JoAnne Russell, believes it is a shot everyone should learn how to hit well. She tells a great story about using the lob while playing mixed doubles in Pickleball. JoAnne said, "So I'm playing with this guy and I get obsessed with lobbing. I just love it because it's such a great shot. Well, I think I missed four and he looks at me and he goes, I'm giving you one more lob and I go, okay, that's fair. So we're playing these points and I only have one lob and I go and I lob it over somebody's head. Perfect. We win that point. He goes, all right, you earned another lob."

## Lob Shot Strategy

JoAnne said the lob shot needs to be very strategic. If someone knows you like to lob, they can prepare for that strategy by being ready to move back quickly to cover it. So the key is to get into a dinking rally. Then when you see your opponent leaning forward, it is the right time to hit a lob. When playing mixed doubles, JoAnne typically targets the women's side so that the female either has to cover the shot or the men's player chases the ball down and returns it. As long as the lob is hit deep in the court, this is a very effective shot. However, if you do not hit it deep enough or you are playing against a very tall player or one who can jump high, you may need to adjust your strategy. Still, it can be effective if you go to your opponent's backhand since it is harder to hit a good smash on that side.



The key to lobbing is not to be afraid to hit the shot. If you make a mistake and do not hit the ball deep enough in the court, be ready for your opponents' return. Your goal is to block the ball back in the court even if your opponent is smashing it at you. If your lob is short, but your opponent must hit a backhand, then they cannot be as offensive.

## How to Hit a Lob

When JoAnne teaches her students how to hit the lob, she does not care how deep the ball goes in the court. This first thing is to get used to the feel of popping up the ball. A good drill to do is one where you dink back and forth with your partner three times. Then the third shot should be a lob shot over your partner. She said, "When you're at the net, you pop it straight up. So you've got to get underneath the ball and you just hit straight up and that ball will go over somebody's head and land on the baseline. It's the most bizarre lob because it's so weird for me as a tennis player to hit the ball straight up. I mean in tennis it wouldn't even go over the net. It'd probably just come down and hit me on the head. But in Pickleball, if you get your paddle out there and you get under it and you hit it straight up the wind or whatever little breeze there is, it carries it over the person's head and it drops in."

Once you master the shot, you may even become obsessed with it like JoAnne is.

# Pickleballs Road to the Olympics

Plans are in the works for getting the sport of Pickleball to the Olympics. International Federation of Pickleball (IFP) president Pat Murphy says it is a process that takes a lot of foundation building. But the IFP is working toward that by bringing on member countries, planning the world championship in 2022, and learning from other sports federations about the process they went through in their Olympic bid.

The IFP launched in 2012 with four member countries: including the United States, Spain, India, and Canada. When Pat first became the IFP president in 2019, the organization had 13 member countries. Today it has 65 member nations. The next goal is to hit the 70 country mark to have a solid base. And then to reach 80 countries to show Pickleball is an international sport played on multiple continents. The IFP has formed five continental federations which follow the Olympic model: including Asia, Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Oceania.

Pat originally became involved with the IFP during the 2017 Bainbridge Cup tournament in Spain. Then in 2018, he was director of the tournament held in Italy. Plans are in the works to make the 2022 Bainbridge Cup the World Championship for Pickleball as this starts to move the sport towards the Olympics.

The other piece of the puzzle in getting Pickleball to the Olympics is learning from other sports federations. For example, racquetball never made it to the games. Pat said, "You can learn from other federations of what they did right. And what they wish they did to move their sport forward. So racquetball is something that we're watching very closely. The other one is badminton, which is not as big here in the states." But badminton is already an Olympic sport. And it is played on the same size of court as Pickleball.

Pat further commented about the Olympics, "We're laying a good foundation for that and it's still a couple of years away, Paris is in 2024. We will have a presence there. France is one of our member countries. And in 2028 it's coming to the United States. They started planning the Olympics 12 years ago for the states. So that was a little bit before my time with IFP, but we're making some plans to have a presence in Los Angeles."

The IFP is making a bid for the Olympics and is also promoting the sport internationally. The IFP recently partnered with Pickleball for the World, a non-profit organization. The plan is to focus on fundraising to support grants to different countries to help them promote Pickleball.

IFPickleball.org



# Meet the International Federation of Pickleball Team

This diligent volunteer team is working to develop and grow the sport of Pickleball around the World. The IFP has a five-member Board of Directors and fourteen Program Directors with over 175 years of management experience, and an unprecedented depth of knowledge and expertise in the sport.

Here are some IFP milestones to date:

- 65 IFP Member Countries across Five Continental Federations
- 235 IFP World Ambassadors
- With IFP headquarters based in Arizona, the first IFP Liaison Office was established in Shenzhen, China in 2020. Since then, liaison offices have opened in Anhui, Guizhou, Hunan, Hainan, Jiangsu and Henan provinces, to support the enormous potential of pickleball throughout China and greater Asia.
- Presented four Bainbridge Cup World Tournament Events (2017 Spain, 2018 Italy, 2019 Germany and 2021 USA).
- Announcement of the Bainbridge Cup Series (BCS) leading up to the Bainbridge World Cup (BWC) starting in 2022 (with livestream).
- IFP Grant program to develop pickleball around the world.
- IFP Rules committee to support the Official Rulebook.
- IFP Academy has certified over 400 instructors and teachers around the world.
- New mobile-friendly website at [www.ifpickleball.org](http://www.ifpickleball.org) has auto-update capabilities to keep content fresh.
- IFP has over 3,000 followers on Facebook, over 1,100 on Instagram and is now on Linked In.
- Developed IFP low-cost carbon/wood pickleball paddle and balls for underserved and remote regions
- Pickleball Fire named the official magazine of the IFP.
- Announcement of the future 60 court pickleball complex and IFP headquarters in the new Torquerville Athletic & Recreation Complex in Utah.

## Board of Directors



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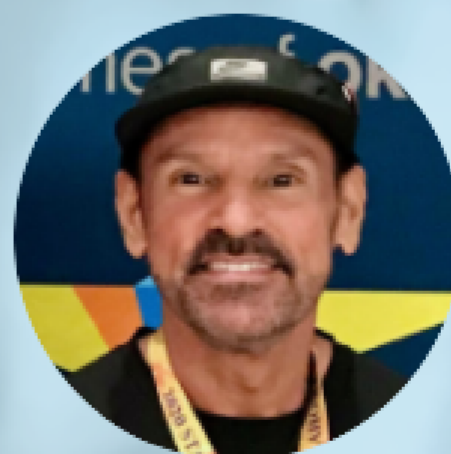
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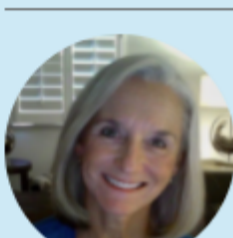

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# A Message from the IFP President

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new readers to the Pickleball Fire Magazine, the official magazine of the International Federation of Pickleball for the sport of pickleball around the world. The IFP has made great progress with many of its programs to develop and help support the growth of pickleball around the world. We introduced a World Ambassador program, the IFP Individual Membership program, the World Grant program, Instructor Certification, and the IFP rules committee to mention a few. Our efforts and the IFP programs are always directed to its mission of developing, promoting and supporting pickleball worldwide. The future is bright for the sport of pickleball and the IFP in 2022 which will bring many opportunities to grow our sport. The Bainbridge Cup World Championship Tournament will be taking place in 2022. With the team of Roger Workman, Director of Player Competition, and Mike Hoxie, Director of Tournament Operations, 2022 will be an exciting year for IFP tournaments. Our new IFP Grant program and the partnership with Pickleball for the World under the direction of Mike McCown our new IFP Director of Grants will provide many resources to support the growth of pickleball around the world. We continue to train, teach, and develop IFP Certified Instructors and World Ambassadors. One of the most exciting announcements is the new Torquerville Athletic & Recreation Complex in Utah which will have a 60 court pickleball facility and the new home and headquarters for the IFP. More information will be forthcoming in early 2022. We would welcome your support by joining the IFP individual membership program and thank the many pickleball players and enthusiasts who have already joined and supported the IFP.

Please visit our new Website at <https://www.ifpickleball.org>. Here you will find the latest information about the IFP.

Wishing everyone a healthy, safe, and prosperous new year. Cheers and see you on the courts. Pat Murphy, IFP President





If you like to travel to tournaments in different locations or travel in general, then you know paying for lodging takes a big bite out of your wallet. That is what Janice Munde thought when she traveled to the Western Regional in Fountain Valley, California. At that time, she had the idea to start a networking group connecting hosts and guests, so Pickleball players have a place to stay when they are out of town.

Today the Facebook group called Picklebilly, a combination of Pickleball and hillbilly's known for traveling, has over 2,000 members. Hosts are located in the United States, Canada, and even Australia and at the base of the Alps. The hosts offer a place to stay for free or at a negotiated rate. Many times you get more than just a place to stay. Janice said, "So you're saving money on lodging. So that's perfect. The other part is when they take you to their Pickleball courts and they introduce you to people. And you might take a lesson with them, or maybe they'll teach you something or you know it's focused on Pickleball, which is what your passion is and what you enjoy. So hopefully that connection will spring towards just enriching your life and enriching the person who's hosting."

To become a host or guest, you can go to [Picklebilly.com](http://Picklebilly.com). At the top of the website, there is a link to the Facebook group. Once you join the group, you can see the list of hosts and see if one is in the area you plan on visiting. From there, you can connect on Facebook and make arrangements for a stay. You can also sign up to be a host by answering a list of questions as to what you are offering guests.

Janice gave a recent instance of a time where a host and guest connected.

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"We have a host in Las Vegas. Her name is Darla, and so she's got two bedrooms available and she had somebody reach out to her and she was a little bit nervous and the person who reached out to her was a little bit nervous as well. But they emailed and chatted back and forth, and then they called each other and so it turns out that the person wanting to visit was a tournament guru. This woman ran leagues. She ran round robins. She was just amazing. And so Darla just said, I have just met the most amazing person. I can't wait for her to come and stay with me."

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Janice said it is up to the host and guest to set parameters for the stay. For example, guests may or may not have kitchen privileges. The host may also charge a small fee to cover expenses like electricity. The guest may even offer to give the host a two-hour Pickleball lesson if they are an instructor or professional. It is up to the host and guest to work out the arrangements for the stay. But many have already connected through the group, including professional players and referees looking for lodging near tournaments. So if you want to save some money and connect with another Pickleball player, check out [Picklebilly.com](http://Picklebilly.com).

## Picklebilly Facebook Group

# Scott Fliegelman: Ready for Anything and Everything at the U.S. Open

Senior professional Scott Fliegelman, like others, did not compete in the 2020 U.S. Open due to the cancellation of the event because of COVID-19. So he wanted to make the most of his experience at the U.S. Open in 2021. Scott planned to play men's singles and then work the Babolat booth since he is the Pickleball Coordinator for that company. Scott's time at the tournament, however, ended up quite different than he expected. He later called it his magical weekend despite not winning a medal.

## Prior to the Tournament

Scott arrived in Naples, Florida after training at his home in Boulder, Colorado. With his experience as an endurance athlete, he knew he needed to be physically prepared for the conditions in Florida. He made sure to hydrate the week before the event. Scott talked about the need for hydration, "It does start in the days leading up to a tournament, especially if it's going to be a warm tournament. I was fortunate to play my first U.S. Open this past April. I left my home of Boulder, Colorado, it was 28 degrees and snowing, and landed in Naples in the mid-eighties with a thousand percent

humidity. And that was a shock to the system. But I had begun probably a week out paying closer attention to my diet, increased sodium, and electrolytes through natural foods, as well as replenishing."

## Day 1

As you might expect, Scott found it difficult to adapt to the conditions in Florida within 24 hours and play singles. Still, he finished fifth and had a win against one of the top senior professionals, Paul Olin.

## Day 2

The next morning Scott was convalescing in bed from the previous day's event when his phone rang. It was one of the top professional players in the world, Jay Devilliers. Jay invited Scott to play in the men's split age group where one player is over 50 and the other is under that age. Because Jay's original partner had a conflict, Scott agreed to partner with Jay despite only having 90 minutes to get from being in bed to starting a match.

Scott and Jay dropped their first match. But then they went on a tear, winning four straight matches, including one against Dave Fleming and Adam Stone. It took one of the top teams of John Sperling and Tyson McGuffin to end Scott and Jay's run. At that point, Scott once again thought his tournament was over.

## Day 3

But senior professional Dave Fleming needed a partner at the last minute. Dave and Scott went on to win four matches. And Scott had his first experience on center court at the U.S. Open.

## Day 5

Amazingly enough, his play at the tournament was still not over. John Sperling connected Scott with Jane Paulson, who needed a partner at the last minute.

Scott ended up playing in four events even though his original plan was to play one. He said, "I don't know if the stars will align quite like that again, but I feel really grateful for the experience. Starting with that first wake-up call right from Jay. That was pretty good."

And in all honesty, it is a good thing Scott had worked on his hydration before the tournament because he ended up needing to be in top condition.





YeungPhotography

# Learn to Trust Your Game With Big Point Pickleballs

## Tim Hensley



Tim Hensley became a tennis professional at age 18 and played at that level until he was 26.

Tim said, "I was one of those frustrated players that never really could put it together. I practiced much better than I played in tournaments. I had some good wins and I had a lot of losses and it was really difficult between my ears. And the mental game was really difficult for me to overcome. And I never really learned how to win. I spent hours and hours and hours hitting millions of balls, practicing, drilling, hitting against the backboard."

Things started to change for Tim when he found Pickleball as he not only worked to understand the game but himself. He did some research on the sport, watching players of all levels on Youtube. As part of this process, he collected statistics and learned which strategies were the most effective for winning points.

### The System

But Tim also worked on himself as he admitted he was not fun to be around when he lost in tennis. Through Pickleball he learned to have a quiet and calm state of mind rather than reacting emotionally. What emerged from his transformation as an athlete was a systematic approach to the game of Pickleball called TRUST.

### The T

The first T in TRUST stands for tactics, and through his research, he identified five two-shot combinations. The serve plus one, return plus one, dink plus one, lob plus one, and return lob plus one. For each of the two-shot combinations, the idea is you and your partner set up a point much like the setter and hitter do in volleyball. And then you play the percentages by hitting too certain areas of the court, opening up a gap between your opponents. Tim calls this a better strategy than forehand down the middle or playing to the weaker player.

### The R

The R in TRUST stands for repetition. By practicing these shots over and over again, they will become automatic for you. One thing Tim does not do during the repetition phase is to focus on technique. He believes many techniques will work as the key is to place the ball in the right spot on the court.

### The U

The U in TRUST stands for under pressure, and this is something Tim simulates when working with his

it allows players to compete in tournaments and win the big points.

### The S

The S in TRUST stands for self. Through experiencing pressure on the court, you will work on your mental game. Tim said, "You're going to learn more and more about yourself. You're going to learn things such as the excuses and the lies that we, and I'm included, I'm no different, we tell ourselves. These lies in our minds and we say the weather is bad. Oh, it's too windy. Well, some days it is too windy the ball flies clear from one side to the other side of the court and it's bad. But we tell ourselves this and that gets into our heads."

### The Second T

The second T in TRUST stands for the team. The team includes your significant other at home, the people you play Pickleball with, and even a coach who you may learn the game from.

Tim said about TRUST, "It's a systematic approach of learning. So play the game and win more matches, having more joy, fun, and the W's will come."

[BigPointPickleball.com](http://BigPointPickleball.com)

# The Showman: Jonny Pickleball Andrews Coming to a Tournament Near Your

Jonny Pickleball Andrews was a showman on the court even the very first time he played. He yelled "Pickleball" each time he hit a return. That is because the eighty-year-old woman who taught him to play the sport did the same thing. Jonny said, "She was probably like 80 years old, four foot something. And she tells me where to stand. And then she yells at the top of her lungs, Pickleball as she charges on a return. And I didn't know, I thought it was a thing... And then the next few times I go out to play with these people, I'm yelling Pickleball on all the returns. I'm just at the top of my lungs, like Pickleball. Jonathan because that's what they call me Jonathan, before Jonny. That's not a thing, you know? So I had no idea that wasn't real. I thought that was part of it."

Jonny did not get to play a lot of Pickleball until he relocated to Naples in 2015, but he made the most of it then while playing with many of the future big names in the sport. It was at that time he also started the Jonny Pickleball Show where he would invite some of the top players to participate in a Friday night of fun with trick shots, trash talk, and whatever it took to entertain the crowd. Players like Kyle Yates, Ben Johns, Collin Johns, Leigh Waters, and Anna Leigh Waters participated. And the show became so popular it started attracting

standing-room-only crowds. At this point, Jonny took the show to the U.S. Open Championship stadium court and added many new features like a sound system and pre-match interviews.

While the fans were having a great time, so to were the players as they could get high-level competition in a tournament-like atmosphere. But then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, so Jonny decided to take the show on the road. It might sound like a strange time to do that, but Jonny had even bigger audiences away from Naples with local players since the events were live-streamed. Since people could not participate in tournaments, the Jonny Pickleball show allowed players to showcase their talent and entertain the fans.

Now that players are focused on tournaments again, Jonny does not do his show as often. However, he has started a new one called Around the Post with Eddy, Webby, and Kyle Yates. The format is quite different since they discuss controversial topics others tend to avoid. Examples of this are the spin serve rules change and COVID-19 vaccination requirement at the USA Pickleball National Championship tournament in Indian Wells, California. Still, Jonny is always the showman. Be sure to watch for him at a tournament near you.



# Dinking With Purpose

## How to be Strategic with the Soft Game

Tony Upkes was an open-level racquetball player who hit the ball very hard. So when he transitioned to Pickleball it took about a year and a half before he realized he needed a soft game. Now when he teaches, he has his students focus on placing the ball more strategically. Tony said, "I've been working with some ladies and we work really hard on dinking with a purpose. These are 3.5-4.0 ladies and we get them out on the court with men and they're supposedly much stronger and faster just because of the makeup. But if they get into a slow game with them, they can move around the court and create a hole and they don't have to hit it hard to put it through them."

When most Pickleball players warm-up, they dink straight ahead rather than cross court. However, the key is to hit cross-court during a rally as you have 20 feet of the court to use. If you dink straight ahead, Tony said you only have about seven feet of the court to use plus the net is two inches higher. That means you have to hit the ball higher over the net so the ball can go too deep and give your opponent an offensive opportunity.

Ideally, you want to hit your dink shots across the court and close to the net. They should land near the non-volley zone line near your opponent's feet. It forces your opponent to choose whether to let the ball bounce or take it in the air. That indecision often will force them to make a mistake. The advantage of dinking in this manner is your opponent, who is straight across from you, is not as likely to take the ball in the middle and be offensive with it.



The other key to dinking is to move your opponent around the court. Tony said, "It is a matter of learning how to hit a ball to the outside to his backhand and then coming back and going to his forehand, make him move around a little bit and switch from backhand to forehand. Pretty soon they cough one up. Going cross-court enough. And then every once in a while going the other way, pretty soon, one of them gets lazy and leaves a hole in the middle." The idea is to not hit the dink to the same side a bunch of times in a row. If your opponent successfully hits two backhand dinks then they have just practiced the same shot twice in a row so they are likely not going to miss a third backhand dink. So changing to a forehand dink is something different, and it may jam them up a bit.

You may be wondering if there is ever a time to hit a dink down the line rather than cross court. Tony suggests if you get pulled out wide and feel uncomfortable because you have to stretch to return the shot, then place the ball straight in front of you. It allows you to get out of trouble without hitting a pop up which your competition can exploit.

To be consistent with the dinks shots so you can place them where ever you like, Tony says to practice between 30 and 60 minutes. It may seem like a lot of time is devoted to the shot, but remember you only hit one or two balls per rally from the baseline. For the rest of the point, you are standing at the kitchen line. You can also do a drill where you have to hit three dinks in the kitchen and then play the rest of the point, hitting any shot you like.



# INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PICKLEBALL ACADEMY

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**Start here if you are looking for Professional Pickleball Training, Teaching, Rating and Instructor Certification**

The IFP is the only governing body in the sport of pickleball that manages and directs professional pickleball training, teaching, rating, and instructor certification. As the world governing body for the sport of pickleball, these standards are being established around the world. For more information about certification, please visit us at: [www.ifpikleballacademy.com](http://www.ifpikleballacademy.com)

Additional information is provided on the website under the following training headings:

- IFP Academy
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**IFP ACADEMY - BUILDING A GLOBAL STANDARD**

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Training sessions available (designed to improve your teaching skills and knowledge).

There are many benefits to obtaining an Instructor Certification from the IFP. First the curriculum is developed by the top players and instructors in the game. This standard (and more importantly framework) will be the same no matter where you train or teach across the globe.

**Benefits:**

- General and professional liability insurance (optional) travels with you abroad.
- Online access to continual education courses (add proficiency to your teaching ability).
- Monthly live webinars / FAQ video conferencing sessions with Tier 1 instructors from the IFP.
- Monthly newsletters with tips, drills, strategy ideas and more.
- Access to a instructor video archive to continue to develop your skills.
- Ability to teach with lead instructors during multi-day training events to further develop your teaching skills and experience.
- A percentage of every dollar we make goes to the Grant Program to send instructors internationally to grow the sport of pickleball, to enhance the lives of those in the country and to gain the country requirement for pickleball to become an Olympic sport.

# Know The Rules!

Making the jump from recreational play to tournament competition can be a challenge for many reasons. One of the biggest differences is you may have a referee for your match. So what is the referee responsible for calling, and what it means to you as a player? The head referee for the Professional Pickleball Association (PPA), Don Stanley, noted a few referee responsibilities.

## Serving

The referee is in charge of some calls related to the score and serving. First, they are responsible for calling the score before the point begins. So do not serve the ball before the referee calls the score. The referee is also looking to see if the server is foot-faulting. According to the USAPA rule book, the serving player's foot cannot touch the court, including the baseline.

## Non-Volley-Zone

The referee is also in charge of determining if the service is short, landing in or on the kitchen line. Don said, "Sometimes players will call that. And if it's not a short serve, let's say server serves and it lands in the NVZ close to the line. Let's say the referee determines that it was past the line, a good legal serve, but the receiving team says short. And they don't return it. Unless the ref says it was short, you've got to play on." The referee is also responsible for watching that players do not step into the non-volley-zone if they hit the ball in the air. So the top priorities of the referee are to call the score, watch for foot faults, and keep an eye on the non-volley-zone.

## Line Calls

You may be surprised that the task of making line calls falls on the players. The competitors must determine if the ball is in or out on their side of the net. Don said line calls are number eight on the priority list in the referee handbook. However, players can appeal if they disagree with a line call.

## Appeals

Still, players can appeal line calls or faults. But they must appeal rather than expect the referee to make a call without an invitation from a player. And to overrule a call, a referee must be 100% certain.

## Disputes

As the head referee for the PPA, Don is responsible for handling player disputes. He may be called to a match to handle these types of issues. Usually, disputes are not about the rules but are about judgment calls.

Don said the rule which is the most challenged in Pickleball is the service motion. Don expanded on this by saying, "I hear this all the time. Hey, that server has a sidearm serve well. The word sidearm is not even in the rule book. So technically a sidearm serve would not be labeled as illegal. We do have the three criteria: upward arc, contact not above the waist, and a paddle below the wrist joint. So as long as those three criteria are met it would be a legal serve."



# IFP Official Rulebook

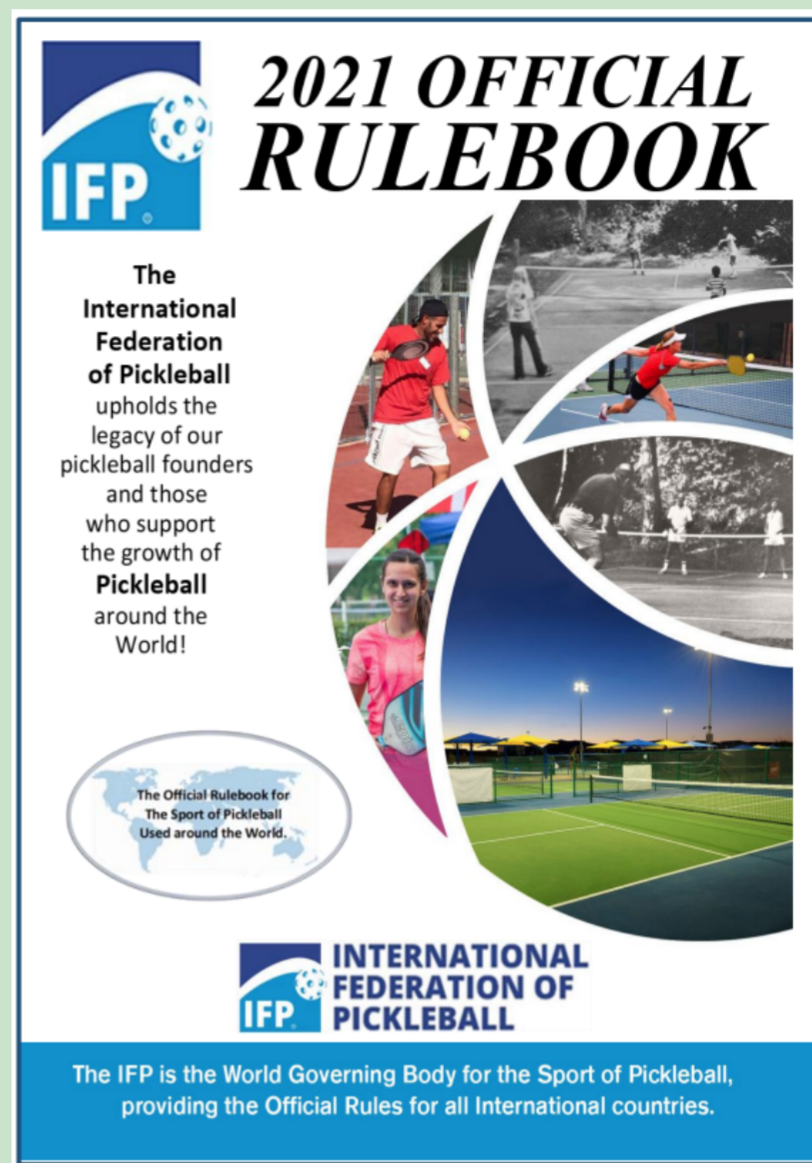
The new IFP Official Rulebook will be available on January 15, 2022.

The IFP Rules Committee has worked very diligently to view and recommend this year's revisions. We encourage feedback throughout the year. Everyone's involvement and support will help improve the rules for the sport of pickleball. Please visit [www.ifpickleball.org](http://www.ifpickleball.org) to download the new 2022 rulebook.

The IFP 2021 Official Rulebook is now available on the IFP Website

## Rules and Why They Are Important

No sport can be played without rules. Rules are the foundation for an organized sport to be played under the same standards for everyone around the world. IFP continues to maintain the integrity of the Official Rulebook through the International Rules Committee and its member countries.



Earlier this year the IFP sent the IFP 2021 Official Rulebook to all member countries. This rulebook is also available on the IFP website under "Rules." Please visit the IFP website and download to print your own copy. Each IFP Rulebook has the member countries logo on the front cover. The Rulebook is managed in a responsible manner with the cooperation of the USA Pickleball and the IFP working in harmony. The IFP Rules Committee has international players and individuals who provide input to the yearly review of the Rulebook--Mike Johnson, President of the Philippines Pickleball, and Jeff Van Der Hulst, an IFP World Ambassador and IFP Certified Instructor from England are co-chairs. If you are interested in joining the Rules Committee please contact:

Mike Johnson at [mike.johnson@pickleball.ph](mailto:mike.johnson@pickleball.ph)  
Jeff Van Der Hulst at [jeff@pickleballjeff.co.uk](mailto:jeff@pickleballjeff.co.uk)

In cooperation with the USA Pickleball and their refereeing team, the IFP will be launching an International **Referee Training Program**. International interest in referee training has grown over the past year and, in anticipation of more international tournaments and the need for trained referees, the IFP will be filling that need. The IFP has assembled a team of very qualified and experienced referees to launch this referee training program. The program is under the leadership of Ron Ponder, one of the most engaged qualified referees in the game today. Assisting Ron will be five Referee Directors overseeing the refereeing training for the five IFP continents: Byron Fresco, Director Europe; Karen Hill, Director Asia; Alan Thomas, Director Oceania; Bob Swisshelm, Director Africa; and Randi Leven, Director Americas. This group is some of the best referees from the USA and Canada, and we are honored to have this group training and developing referees around the world.

# How Pickleball Changed My Life On and Off the Court

Ben Paquette was looking to get back into moving his body after years of focusing on his career and not on his health. He believed tennis was the answer since he needed to sync his schedule with only one other person. So after playing tennis for the first time in 20 years, he went into the gymnasium to get a drink of water and saw some older gentleman playing Pickleball. As many stories go with this sport, the group asked him to join in the fun. Ben said,

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***"30 minutes later, they were just basically destroying me on the court. And I was like, this is crazy. How am I losing? This is crazy. And I came home after two hours of playing that with those guys when I was supposed to be home like two hours ago and my girlfriend was like, where have you been? I go, I just found a sport that's going to change my life."***

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Pickleball did just that for Ben. At the time he started playing the sport in 2017, he tipped the scale at 297 pounds. Four years later, he weighs 195 pounds and feels better than he did when he was 25 years old. Ben said the first two years of playing Pickleball, he lost 25 pounds and was able to win the 4.5 mixed doubles division at the 2019 nationals in Indian Wells, California. However, he did not fair so well playing in the 5.0 men's doubles event.

But Ben was brave enough to ask some of the better players what was wrong with his game. They said he had good hands and strategy, but he was not very fast. Ben said, "That was the brutal truth. And I needed to hear it. And I said, okay, well, I've got to do something about that. And then ironically, when COVID hit, everyone was I guess, gaining weight for some reason. I didn't. I lost weight. I think it was because I decided to change the way that I looked at food in order to feel better on the court."

For Ben, the diet, food, and Pickleball all needed to be better. So, they all worked together as each one was as important as the next one. Instead of buying junk food during the pandemic, he was eating chicken and fish. Ben also changed the way he looked at food. He stopped using it as a crutch when he was stressed or bored. Instead, Ben focused on Pickleball as it helped him measure his progress as he worked to improve his game. He said, "If you look at the time on the court is time not on the couch. It's a lot harder to eat a bag of chips while you're running around on a court, hitting a ball than it is sitting, watching a TV show. So that was one part of it, but then the need to feel better and move better and not be so sore."

As a result of his desire to improve his Pickleball game by eating better, he learned about protein, nutrients, and hydration. By eating the right foods and drinking the right amount of water, he was not hungry. Ben said, "It was a no-brainer. It just made so much sense. And it became so easy to just do the right stuff because there were so many benefits that just slapped me in the face."

Before finding Pickleball, his corporate job dominated his life, but now he only works in that capacity 20% of the time. The rest of his schedule involves teaching the game that changed his life in the Dallas, Texas area.



# Anged Ben Paquette's Off the Court



# Louis Laville: Having Success With What He Used to Call a "Ridiculous Game"

Louis Laville, a player from England, did not think much of Pickleball when his mom described it to him after learning about the sport while in America. Louis said, "It sounded absolutely ridiculous," but his mother encouraged him to at least try it once. He did try it found he loved the game so much that he went to the USA Pickleball National Championship in Indian Wells in 2018 to watch his brother play. Louis said, "I was amazed at how big it was as a sport out in America and kind of the players and all that. And then just from there, kind of really wanted to get as good as possible and kind of keep getting better and better and better."



## Winning Gold

And Louis did just that, winning gold in singles at the 2019 Texas Open. He went on to play in the first European prize money tournament in Spain. Louis won gold medals in the two men's events and also in mixed doubles. He said everyone in the tournament lost their sense of taste and smell so he believes they had COVID-19 before it became a pandemic.

## The Lock Down

Of course, Louis was limited in playing Pickleball during the 10-week lockdown in England, but he made do with what he had. Luckily Louis had ordered a Pickleball rebounder which he could use inside to keep up his skills. Plus he even turned the living room into a Pickleball court. He said, "I turned the whole living room into a Pickleball court with a full kitchen area, service line, and ended up smashing a couple of glasses. But that was something that was very interesting having to tell mom and dad that I smashed one of their precious glasses, but oh, well, we move on."

## Growth of the Sport in England

Before the pandemic, Pickleball in England was played indoors on a badminton court. But now players use tennis courts lined for Pickleball. And many tennis players are also taking up the sport including former professional competitors. Louis has a group of players he regularly trains with who are 4.5 or above.

## European Tournaments

Of course, he is looking forward to playing in more tournaments in Europe and the United States. He said there are events in Spain, France, Poland, Denmark, and the Netherlands. The Association of Pickleball Professionals tour is also coming to Europe as part of the Spanish Open, English Open, and French Open.

So it looks like Louis will now have plenty of opportunities to play this "ridiculous" sport especially as it continues to grow in England.

## APP European Tournaments

**June 30- July 3 - English Open**

**August 25-28 - French Open**

**September 1-4 - Spanish Open**



## Venise Chan: Doing Whatever It Takes to Play

Venise Chan, who lives in Hong Kong, is doing whatever it takes to play Pickleball at the highest level. As a former college and professional tennis competitor, she has the credentials to be a top Pickleball player. But it has been a challenge with the COVID-19 pandemic and lack of players and courts in Asia.

So Venise came to the United States to play in a few tournaments this summer. At first, she did not know which division to enter. But professional Pickleball player Irina Tereschenko, who Venise knew when she was at the University of Washington, suggested she play in the professional division to get the most out of the experience. Venise was paired with Sarah Ansbury in one tournament and Kyle Yates in another tournament plus she played singles. She had the most success in singles, winning two matches at each tournament.

Venise had planned to play more tournaments during the summer,

but a change in quarantine restrictions in Hong Kong caused her to cut the trip short. She said, "I'm in the hotel in Hong Kong and I have to quarantine for seven days and I'm in quarantine right now. So the last two weeks, I went to LA to play the Takeya showcase and then to Denver playing the Rocky Mountain tournament. I was supposed to also go to Utah this week, but there's some last-minute Hong Kong government regulation changes." If Venise stayed longer in the United States, she would have needed to quarantine for 21 days rather than seven days. Venise said that would have been too long for her as it would have felt like she was in jail. Still, she enjoyed playing on real Pickleball courts as they tape lines on the badminton or tennis courts in Hong Kong.

While Venise did not play as many tournaments as she wanted to in the United States, she did have a chance to play in her first

tournament in Thailand before coming to America. Irina suggested she play singles in the men's division. Venise said, "It was a very interesting experience. But that was my first tournament. So I think if I were to go back and do it again, I would have won some matches." Venise is also going to be running tournaments in Hong Kong. Before the pandemic, she planned a competition but was only able to get the men's singles draw complete. Her goal was to finish the tournament with doubles and mixed doubles in September.

The good news about Pickleball in Hong Kong is that the sport is growing. Venise is traveling around the country doing demonstrations, and some private clubs are starting to embrace the game. She is also recruiting high-level tennis, badminton, and ping pong players in the area. So it looks like Venise will eventually have the competition she needs in Hong Kong to bring her to the top of her Pickleball game.

# What Science Says About Exercise and Longevity

By M. L. Johnson, Ed.D., Ph.D.

The longer you play, the longer you can play. Decades ago, benefits from adult sport participation were relegated to a “break from the week’s employment” or “mere personal enjoyment.” But now exercise is understood to be critically important to health and longevity. Adherence to a rigorous exercise protocol is a requirement for space station astronauts.

For the first three-fourths of the twentieth century, research and practice documenting benefits from exercise were summarily dismissed by biologists and physicians. A faculty petition was even initiated at the University of Illinois to censure Dr. Thomas Cureton, a godfather of exercise science, for publicly jogging during his noon hour. And, during a curriculum committee at Colorado State University, a senior faculty member informed me that wellness is not a real word. But research is changing those attitudes – including studies conducted by leading medical schools.



Documented benefits of regular exercise now include various health and longevity effects. We now know that people who exercise regularly have a lower risk of developing long-term chronic conditions such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, stroke, and some cancers. Regular exercise of 150 minutes per week can boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and reduce depression, dementia, and Alzheimer’s disease risk.

For example, in a randomized controlled study, the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (Zhang, 2017) explored the relation of exercise to dementia, finding that a year-long brisk walking exercise protocol improved cardio fitness, memory, and cognitive function. The stretching and toning control group demonstrated no assessments improvement. The seventy participants were women and men with mild cognitive impairment (MCI), a condition that progresses to full-blown Alzheimer’s disease fifty percent of the time. The initial ages of study participants ranged from 55 to 80 years.

A similar study of 8,577 adults, with no prior heart disease, found differential effects associated with various exercise modalities, with racket sport participation having the highest longevity association (Schnohr, et. al., 2018). Further, there are activity/sport-specific longevity benefits. From monitoring the health and activity of 80,306 adults it was found that racket sport participation was the best predictor of longevity. Study participants were followed for 25 years and all-cause mortality was recorded. Compared to the baseline sedentary group, the years of additional life survival by activity/sport are as follows (Halvorson, 2017):

## Additional Years

Tennis - 9.7 years

Badminton – 6.2 years

Soccer – 4.7 years

Cycling - 3.7 years

Swimming - 3.4 years

Jogging – 3.2 years

Calisthenics – 3.1 years

Health club activities 1.5 years





Clinical research data, documenting a greater association between racket sport participation and longevity than all other included activities, is highly significant. With pickleball being an amalgam of tennis and badminton, it could be expected to fit at least between the two. Given the social context of playdays and tournaments, it could actually be predicted that pickleball has an even greater potential longevity contribution than tennis or badminton.

The data confound prima facie interpretations, like weight lifting and cardio health club machine use would increase fitness, both cycling and jogging would produce more mileage, and soccer is a team sport. And, relative risk factors were calculated in the Schnohr (2018) study, using the Cox Proportional Hazards Model with full adjustment for confounding variables.

Several explanations of why racket sport participation is associated with longevity have centered around the social context of racket sports - particularly social interaction and the expectation for showing up to play. For both mental and physical well-being and longevity, social connections may well be a critically important factor in living a long, healthy, happy, and productive life.

In a related study, Bruhn & Wolf (1979) examined possible health factors in a close-knit rural Roseto, PA enclave with exceptional longevity and compared its illness incidents to other comparably sized nearby communities. Almost no one under sixty-five in the Roseto community had a heart attack; there was no suicide, drug addiction, peptic ulcers, and little crime. Researchers then checked blood chemistry, exercise, and diet but found the death rate from all causes was 30-35 percent lower than expected - despite 41 percent of the typical diet coming from fat. The Roseto enclave cooks with lard instead of olive oil. But, after eliminating diet, exercise, and genetic factors, the medical research team concluded that social factors (frequent and positive social interactions) best explained the Roseto community health and longevity.

Considering that tennis' apparent longevity contribution is more than double that of soccer participation, the decision-making frequency, complexity, and inherent interactivity of racket sports may also contribute to the health and longevity differential. Thus, a second explanation would be that decision complexity and interactivity of racket sports stimulates neural network development and maintenance - certainly increasing beneficial blood flow within the brain. For fitness and decision-making comparisons between sports, the average number of thought-requiring hits per point is 3.5 for tennis, 4.74 for badminton, and 9.0 for pickleball. Though the typical distance traveled in a tennis match is 3.2 km and 6.4 km for badminton, tennis was associated with greater longevity.

Dementia is an umbrella term for several diseases affecting memory, cognitive ability, and associated behavior decrements. Incidents are projected to triple in the next 30 years. Though aging is the strongest known risk factor, dementia is not a normal part of aging. Healthy lifestyles, including regular physical activity and neural challenges (like word and math puzzles), have been linked to dementia risk reduction. Thus, with inherent physical activity and both frequency and complexity of neural demands and its inherently social environment, regular pickleball participation could well emerge as a dementia risk factor intervention.

Two decades of research have erased cynicism about the contribution of physical activity to a spectrum of health benefits. Long-held beliefs that deriving health benefits necessitate lifting heavier and running longer were invalidated. Perhaps surprising to the number of those not-yet participating, making friends and having fun on the pickleball court could well increase the prospect of your health and longevity.

M. L. Johnson, Ed.D., Ph.D. Emeritus Professor  
Colorado State University  
September 1, 2021



## Coach Andy G on Strategic Placement of Shots

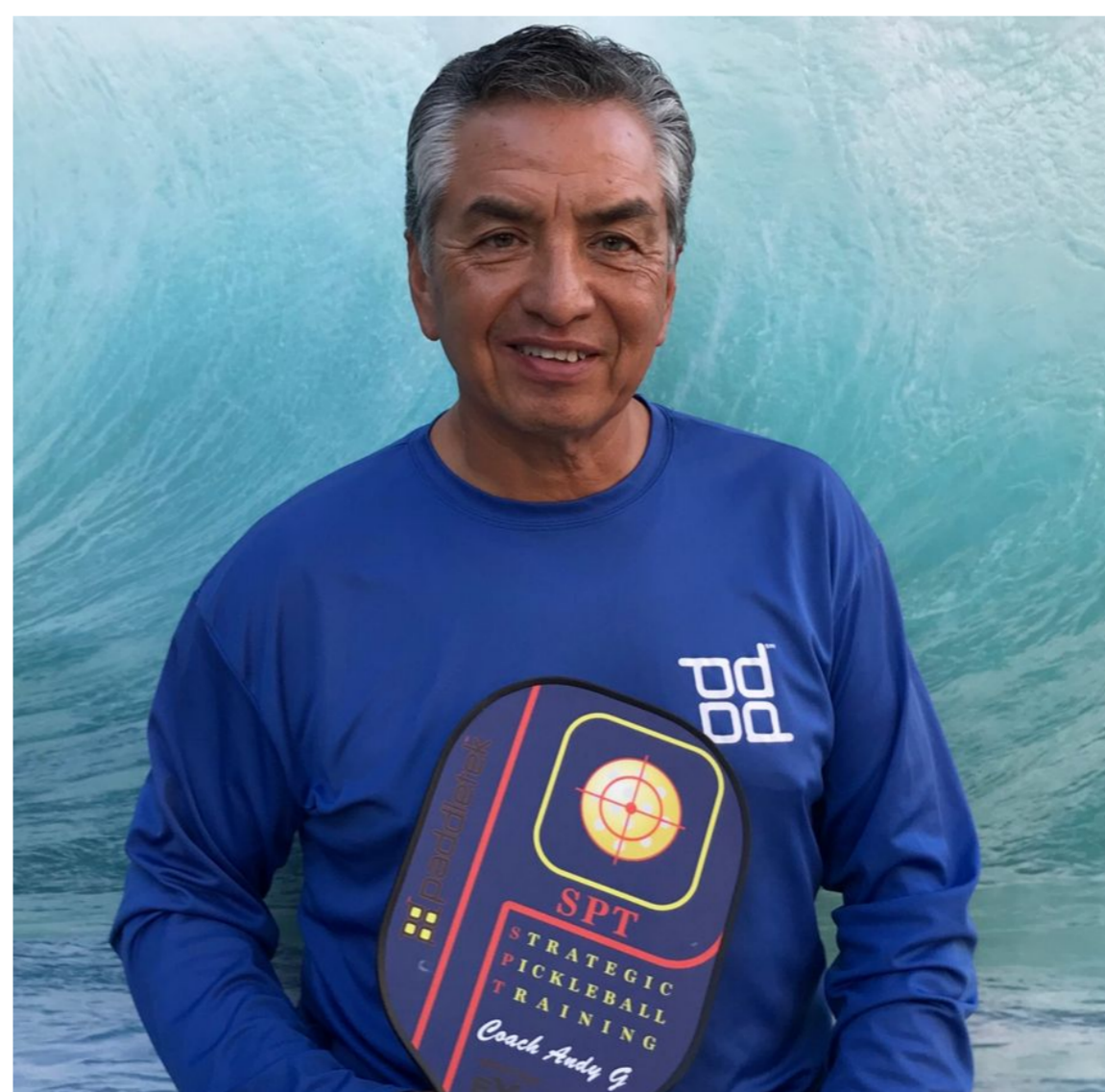
Coach Andy G. had quite a racket sports background before he came to Pickleball as he played racquetball and squash. But what he likes about Pickleball is the sport is more like chess than checkers as strategic placement matters. He says there is a lot of similarity between it and squash, "Racquetball was kind of easy to do because the ball would come to you, move your feet, set yourself up, and hit the ball. Well in squash, I would be going in for one shot, but in my mind, I learned how to hit five different shots from one shot, which is pretty complicated."

Not everyone plays chess on the Pickleball court. If you are hitting the ball to get it over the net without worrying about placement, then the game is more like checkers. However, if you want to improve, you need to learn to make it difficult on your opponent by playing chess on the Pickleball court. It involves hitting too strategic spots during the game, whether you are dinking, serving, or returning the ball.

If you are trying to place the dink or third shot somewhere around the kitchen line, you are not thinking strategically enough. Coach Andy draws a two-foot-line in front of the no-volley-zone line. It gives his student a visual reference where they should be hitting a dink or third shot drop. He said, "So the height doesn't matter as it's crossing the net versus how it's going to land. It does matter that the two-foot line in front of the no-volley zone is also the average distance a person can reach into the kitchen. Everyone can reach two feet in. So if you can reach two feet in a six-foot-four player can reach three and a half feet with his long arm and paddle."

Coach Andy's strategic placement approach also considers how much of the court two people can cover in doubles. His theory is that the average person playing Pickleball stands from five feet to six foot four. So each team covers roughly 14 feet of the 20-foot width of the court. That leaves open three feet on each side of the court. Coach Andy makes sure to give his students a visual aid by lining the court to see where the openings are. When players hit toward the sides of the court, that makes your opponents move. You can finish off the point by hitting too the open space.

If you want to improve your Pickleball game, try playing chess on the court so you are strategically placing your shots.





# Are Your Expectations Robbing You of Fun?

## By Tony Roig From from WeArePickleball

Sometimes after a few years playing pickleball, the game can lose some of the luster it previously had for players. Several potential culprits might be at play here. In this article, we look at an internal obstacle to enjoying the game that might surprise you: expectations.

Think of it like this. The first day you stepped onto a pickleball court, you could hardly keep track of the score and had no idea what to do out there. You did not expect to win. And, I would suggest, you did not think anyone else on the courts expected you to win.

You were able to play without expectations ... for a while. Just going out there and enjoying the game, moment by moment. "Wow, what a shot?" "Oops, I missed that one." Just a kid on a court having fun.

Then one day it happened: you won a bunch of games. Your friends started telling you how good of a player you have become. You started getting invited to the "advanced" groups or courts.

All of a sudden, expectations became part of the package. You were no longer a kid on a court having fun. You were now "a good player" expected to win games. Or at least expected not to lose against the "lesser" players.

With expectations comes pressure and the eventual disappointment of losing a game you "should not have" lost. It can become a spiral. The more pressure you put on yourself, the more anxious and uncomfortable you will feel on the court. Your play will suffer as a result, and you will lose even more games.

Self-doubt creeps in, and you wake up one day wondering why you are playing this game? Why go to the courts if you are not having fun?

The solution might be to reframe your relationship with pickleball and, in the process, lower or remove the expectations or at least reframe them. Other than giving you a different perspective below, this article is not long enough to cover all the topics that might help you improve your relationship with pickleball. For that, we recommend the following resources: 1- Mental and Emotional Training for Tennis | Compete – Learn – Honor by Peter Scales and 2- The Inner Game of Tennis by Tim Gallwey.

Read these books and put in some work on the mental and emotional parts of the game. In the long run, they are more important than any shot you might work on to improve your game. The best third shot in the world is of no use when you are fighting yourself on the court. It is part of what we call the Athletic Pillar: you need the whole you if you are going to play your best and fully enjoy the game.

If you are no longer having as much fun when playing pickleball as you once did, ask yourself whether perhaps you would benefit from reframing your expectations out on the court. Move from "Did I win all, or even most, of my games?" to "Did I honor myself, my partner, and my opponents today?" or "Did I compete out there – give it what I had to give today?"

Note that the question is not "Did I play the best pickleball I could possibly play under any circumstances?" because that sort of question is already loaded against you. Each day will find us in a different place and we go to the court in the place we are. As long as we gave the game what we could on that particular day, then we have done what we could and should not drop our heads just because we lost one, some, or even all of our games that day.

Pickleball is an activity that has so much to offer us: exercise, activity, seeing existing friends and meeting new ones, interesting puzzles for our mind to solve, an opportunity to keep growing as a person, and others. What pickleball offers us is not limited to a simple Win/Lose proposition. If you play the best pickleball of your life and give it your all, but your opponent is the local pro, will you have a W or an L after the match? And is it the L that defines your experience that day?

Setting expectations that are not in line with what pickleball offers you is a recipe for unmet expectations that will leave you feeling frustrated and, perhaps even, not wanting to head out to the courts the next time there is play.

Consider reframing the expectations that you set for yourself the next time you play. Ask yourself what matters from your relationship with pickleball and then ask yourself at the end of the day whether those expectations (the real ones that matter) were met. I am confident that if you set more constructive expectations in line with what pickleball means to you, you will enjoy your day on the courts a whole lot more. See you on the courts.



# My Pickleball Guideposts by Randy Kadish

Many of us want desperately to become better pickleball players, so when we hit bad shots and lose points, we often blame ourselves. This cycle of blame is a straight road with one destination: a poor self-image. Today, there is a large body of literature about the psychology of self-image. In short, a poor self-image usually leads to failure, a positive self-image to success. Consequently, I prefer to take a large chapter out of one of the greatest self-help books of all time, M. Scott Peck's *The Road Less Traveled*, and look at my pickleball defects in a positive light, as guideposts for improvement.

Here are some of mine.

## Serve

Improve serving accuracy with my non-dominant arm. The toss is crucial to tennis serving accuracy. A bad toss results in a bad serve. In pickleball, even though we drop instead of toss, if I inadvertently add forward movement to my non-dominant arm and hand before the drop, I will make contact too far in front of my body, and my serve might go long and out. If I move my non-dominant arm and hand closer or farther from my body, my serve might go wide and out. When I am serving, my non-dominant arm and hand move forward but only because of my body rotation. To adjust the depth or angle of my serve simply change where I hold the ball. To hit a deeper serve, hold the ball slightly in front of my front knee.

## Volley

Use punch volleys. Accept the fact that I am 69 and will lose most shootouts against younger, advanced players. Use punch volleys to hit at my opponents' feet and to slow things down. Practice the shot by hitting against my practice board.



## Relax

Breathe deeply between points. Inhaling through my nose, holding my breath for a second, and then exhaling through my mouth is a quick way to relax. Play in the joy.

## Practice

Practice deliberately. Find new drills and eye exercises that are difficult. The only way to get better is to spend more time practicing, often alone, than playing.

## Non-volley-zone

Get low at the non-volley-zone line. Swinging downward usually results in a ball into the net, especially because I am seeing the top, not the middle, of the ball. A partial cure: get low and focus on the middle of the ball.

## Targets

Aim small. Just getting the ball over the net and deep is not good enough against advanced players. Aim for small targets: my opponent's non-dominant foot, or dominant hip or shoulder.

Visualize a target in the sky. When hitting a drop shot, keep my head down so I don't raise my shoulders. I am 5'9" ½, so when near the baseline, visualize hitting a drop shot that crosses the near non-volley-zone line at my height.

Turn hips and shoulders toward the target, if I have time. When my shoulders and hips are parallel to the net my natural, right-hand swing path is right to left, towards the sideline. Turn my hips and shoulders toward my target and my natural swing path is directly at the target.

## Defense

Don't defend the entire court. Unless my partner and I are at the baseline, we cannot defend the entire court. Use Pat Carroll's strategy and imagine two lines starting at the opponent who is hitting and ending at the opposite corners on my side of the court.

Defend the area within the triangle. As Tony Roig teaches if my

opponents can thread the needle and hit winners outside the triangle, more power to them.

Play defense in the transition zone. Pickleball is not tennis. Unless I am seeing an opening and hitting a high ball, it is hard to score points from the transition zone. So, get in a low, infielder's position. To better see low balls at my feet, lower my backside instead of bending over at the waist. Because I am about 7 feet from the non-volley-zone line, I can hit a low drop shot and still get to the line.

## Anticipation

Anticipate. In pickleball, I don't often have time to react. So, semi-wide focus and watch opponents' hips, shoulders, and paddle angle. Anticipate the direction they are hitting. Remember, a high paddle position usually results in a fastball.

Speed up my release. Give my opponents less time to anticipate. To generate power with a short backswing: 1. Hit a forehand and shift weight from dominant to non-dominant foot. Hit a backhand and shift weight the opposite way. 2. Use a squash technique and, with a stiff wrist, hit a forehand, rotating my forearm and finishing with my palm facing the ground. Hit a backhand, finishing with my palm facing the sky.

## Footwork

Split step, even when returning fast serves. All professional tennis players split step when returning serves. Split stepping puts me in a position to move quickly in any direction. Learn from Novak Djokovic: When a serve is hit to my right, split step and come down with more weight on the foot I am going to push off of, my left. When returning fast serves, stand about 5 feet behind the baseline and split step when the ball crosses the net.

## Vision

Settle my eyes. To see the target well, skeet and trap shooters need time for their eyes to settle before they pull the trigger. The older we get the more time we need. I need about a full second. (Ben Johns probably needs about a ¼ second.)

A full second when playing pickleball is not usually possible. Still, to give my eyes time, return serves deep and high. (High-bounced balls are hard to attack from the baseline.) Sprint to the transition zone, then take Sarah Ansbury's advice and fast walk to the non-volley-zone line with the paddle in front and in view.

See, don't think. Once I start thinking I stop seeing. The human mind is capable of only one conscious thought at a time. The unconscious mind, however, can make split-second decisions. Download my strategy to my unconscious before playing. Think and modify strategy between points. During play, focus only on reading my opponents, then on tracking the ball. Play in the now, as Harry W. Carpenter recommends.

Exercise my eyes. The great baseball hitters exercise their eyes so they can see the stitches on a breaking ball. Keep using my Box-A-Ball, Brockstring, and Joe Frasca's near/far charts. New drill: stand about 4 or 5 feet in front of my practice board and throw a soft foam ball to different spots. React and catch with one hand.

## Serve Return

Don't attack the serve against advanced players. Unless I catch my opponents off-guard, attacking their serves will result in low balls at my feet or drives at my chest. I will then have two bad choices: 1. Returning a ball when moving. 2. Stopping in the transition zone and not getting to the non-volley-zone line.

Be active when my partner returns the serve. Start in the low, ready position at the non-volley-zone line, in the middle of my side of the court. If the serve is in, turn my head toward the net and use my peripheral vision to read the return. (The less head and eye movement the better.) If the return is: 1. Deep and diagonally across, take one sidestep toward the middle of the court. 2. Deep and straight across, take one sidestep toward the sideline. 3. Short and diagonally across, sidestep, and, as Helle Sparre recommends, cover the middle. 4. Short and straight across, cover the sideline and let my partner cover the middle.



## IFP Member Countries

The IFP has grown from those first four member countries in 2012 to now 65 member countries. Our growth in the last two years has been phenomenal and supports that the IFP is the World Governing Body for the sport of Pickleball. We would like to thank Steve Sidwell, our Director of Country Membership, for his outstanding work in this area. Remember, all our directors are volunteers who have given countless hours in support of the IFP and growing pickleball around the world.

Steadily Expanding



Member Countries

and



### The Development and Organization of Five IFP Continents is Underway

The development and organization of five IFP Continents are underway.

There are five Olympic recognized continents and colored rings. Keeping that in mind, the same colors represent the IFP continents and our goal to move the sport of pickleball to become an Olympic sport.



## IFP Grant Program

The IFP and Pickleball for the World have joined forces to provide Grants to help grow pickleball around the world. Mike McCown is the new IFP Director of Grants and is President and Founder of Pickleball for the World a new organization, dedicated to supporting pickleball around the world through a grant program. The IFP and Pickleball for the World has entered into a partnership agreement to combine their efforts to grow the sport of pickleball around the world. Both organizations are committed to raising funds to be distributed through a world Grant Program. This would provide equipment and funds to countries around the world to grow and develop the sport of pickleball. The partnership between the IFP and Pickleball for the World Grant Program is unique and the first ever to provide grants to the entire world. Together we are setting the standards for the sport of pickleball!!

Please visit both of these websites:

IFP website

<https://www.ifpickleball.org>

Pickleball for the World website

<https://www.pickleballfortheworld.com>

Both of these websites will provide more information about how to help and support.

# How Pickleball Helped Diane and Jim Fisher Beat Covid-19

Just before 9 a.m. in late May on a clear, crisp Lake Tahoe morning, a tall, slender 85-year-old man dressed in full leggings, a long-sleeve shirt, and a French foreign legion-style sun protection hat, with zinc oxide glistening from his prominent proboscis; Jim strides confidently onto the pickleball courts. He greets a few people already warming up and begins what will be three hours or so of exercise, laughter, and fun.

Shortly after, his other (some say better) half, Diane, enters the courts for her several hours of pickleball. They do this daily, on practically the same schedule every day. Temperature be damned.

They take on all comers, no matter the age or skill level.

The last game I saw Jim playing, he was partnered with the 10-year-old daughter of golf legend, Annika Sorenstam. They were battling some other players as her mom played on the next court. Laughter, encouragement, and hustle were displayed by the teammates despite 75 years in age difference.

In 2020, both Jim and Diane were hospitalized with COVID-19. Now, they are back in action and attribute their health to a lifetime of exercise, including their newest favorite sport, pickleball.

Incline Village Pickleball ambassador Paul Steinberg says, "They set the tone here. They are competitive, friendly, and helpful to players of all ages and abilities. They inspire me to stay active and are a great testimonial of living life to the fullest." In August 2019, USA Pickleball hosted an ambassador retreat at Granlibakken Resort with hundreds of ambassadors sharing best practices and learning new ways to promote the sport.

At the Incline Village Tennis Center, most people purchase a membership (\$110 per year) and play doubles. Nobody reserves courts. They show up, warm up, and find people of the same ability and play. The casual social nature of the sport is conducive for drop-in play for people of all ages and abilities.

This is opposed to tennis, a sport in which it is customary for people to make reservations to play with the same people for an hour. In one hour of pickleball, you can play four to five games to 11 points and frequently play with new partners by simply asking to play with you and challenging two other players.

So, whether you are 10 or 85, a daughter of a golf champion, or a retired COVID-19 survivor, if you want to stay healthy play pickleball. But watch out for Jim and Diane; they may be friendly, but they will beat you just like they beat COVID-19!

~ Dan Beeman is a writer, entrepreneur, and pickleball fanatic. He embraces travel, adventure, and fun. He is single. You can learn more about him at [danbman.com](http://danbman.com) and be sure to check out his award-winning movie script called Pickleballs.



# PICKLEBALL FIRE PODCAST

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# Pickleball Fire

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