

# The Pickleball Game



A paddle sport created for all ages and skill levels. The rules are simple and the game is easy for beginners to learn, but can develop into a quick, fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players.

## **Pickleball: The Basics**

A fun sport that combines many elements of tennis, badminton and ping-pong.

Played both indoors or outdoors on a badminton-sized court and a slightly modified tennis net.

Played with a paddle and a plastic ball with holes.  
Played as doubles or singles.

## **Pickleball: A Game for Everyone**

According to USAPA.org, there are over 15,000 indoor and outdoor courts in the United States; and at least one location in all 50 states. Pickleball is being introduced to kids in teenagers in physical education classes in middle and high schools. And though the sport has become more competitive through the years, many players enjoy the social aspects of the game and the ability to stay active in their own towns and communities. As more retirement locations have adopted pickleball as an integrated sports activity for their population of residents, we have seen an explosion of new court construction throughout the United States – especially in the southern states. Tennis, racquetball and ping pong players love the competitive nature of the sport and regularly participate in local, regional, and national tournaments.

According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2016 Participant Report, there are more than 2.5 million pickleball participants in the United States. SFIA is the premier trade association for top brands, manufacturers, retailers and marketers in the American sporting goods and fitness industry and have been in existence since 1906.

## **Pickleball: Brief History**

Pickleball was invented in 1965 on Bainbridge Island, a short ferry ride from Seattle, Washington. Three dads – Joel Pritchard, Bill Bell, and Barney McCallum — whose kids were bored with their usual summertime activities — are credited for creating game. Pickleball has evolved from original handmade equipment and simple rules into a popular sport throughout the US and Canada. The game is growing internationally as well, with many European and Asian countries adding courts. [Click to read the complete history of pickleball.](#)

## Why Call it “Pickleball?”

Pickleball has a very interesting name, especially since no pickles are used. Accounts of how the name originated differ.

1. According to Joel Pritchard’s wife (Joan), she started calling the game pickleball because “the combination of different sports reminded me of the pickle boat in crew where oarsmen were chosen from the leftovers of other boats.”
2. According to Barney McCallum, the game was officially named after the Pritchards’ dog Pickles, who would chase the ball and run off with it. According to McCallum, “The Pritchards had a dog named Pickles, and you’re having fun at a party, right? So anyways, what the hell, let’s just call it pickleball.”

Others claim both accounts may actually be true. In the early years, no official name was assigned to the game. However, a year or two after the game was invented, the Pritchards purchased a cocker spaniel and named it Pickles. As the game progressed, an official name was needed and “pickleball” was it.

## A Word about “Pickleball”

Over the past five decades, as pickleball has grown, it has been shown in print with a variety of spellings. Pickleball is the general name of a sport, like tennis, basketball, hockey, etc. The name “pickleball” is one word and only capitalized at the beginning of a sentence, in a title, or as part of a proper name, such as that of a company that sells pickleball equipment.

## **Pickleball: The layout of the court**

A pickleball court is the same size as a doubles badminton court and measures 20×44 feet. In pickleball, the same court is used for both singles and doubles play. The net height is 36 inches at the sidelines and 34 inches in the middle. The court is striped similar to a tennis court with right and left service courts and a 7-foot non-volley zone in front of the net

(referred to as the “kitchen”). Courts can be constructed specifically for pickleball or they can be converted using existing tennis or badminton courts. – Read complete details on the court dimensions

## Court Dimensions



## Pickleball: Description of equipment



When playing pickleball, each player will need a pickleball paddle, which is smaller than a tennis racquet but larger than a ping-pong paddle. Originally, paddles were made only from wood, however, today's paddles have evolved dramatically and are primarily made of lightweight composite materials, including aluminum and graphite. Players will also need a net and a pickleball. The ball is unique, with holes through it like a whiffle ball. Different ball models are intended for indoor and outdoor play. Balls come in several colors, including white, yellow and green, but must be a single color to meet International Federation of Pickleball (IFP) specifications.

- IFP Paddle Specifications
- IFP Ball Specifications

## **Pickleball: What to wear when playing**



Players wear just about anything comfortable and appropriate for the climate: athletic shorts, sweatpants, wicking apparel, t-shirts, etc. Tennis-style dresses and skirts for females are common. Comfortable court shoes are a must; sneakers or running shoes do not supply the right kind of support for the side-to-side action inherent in pickleball. Eye protection is highly recommended. As for accessories, players may wear hats, visors, sweatbands and light jackets or sweatshirts for cold outdoor play. A brand new retail store offering a complete line of official USAPA logo apparel items for men, women and junior players is now available. [Click here for the USAPA Store.](#)