



Pickleball Press



According to the 2026 USA Pickleball Rulebook, several updates have been made that impact recreational play. These changes are designed to streamline match flow, support inclusivity, and create a higher standard of sportsmanship.

COURT COMMENTARY

Key Rule Highlights

Rally Scoring Standardization:

The “freeze” is gone. Either team can now score the game-winning point, preventing matches from stalling at the finish line.

Stricter Enforcement of

“Clearly” Legal Serves: While the basic serve mechanics remain the same, the rules emphasize that serves must be clearly legal. Borderline serves - especially those involving the upward arc, contact above the waist, and paddle head position - are now likely to be ruled faults.

Prompt “Out” Calls:

To reduce gamesmanship, “out” calls must be made immediately. If a player delays the call to see whether

their partner can return the ball, the ball will be ruled in.

No Spectator Assistance:

Players are strictly prohibited from consulting spectators for line calls. If you didn’t clearly see the ball out, it is considered in.

Equipment & Lifestyle Trends

Mini Singles Recognition:

“Mini singles” (half-court singles) is now a formally recognized format, making it an official option for recreational training and play.

Paddle Spin Regulation:

There is tighter enforcement regarding prohibited surface treatments that create excessive spin or visual distractions (such as reflective materials), helping

maintain competitive balance.

Visibility Faults: Carrying an extra ball in your pocket that is visible to your opponent during a rally is now officially a fault, to prevent unnecessary distraction.

Sportsmanship & Conduct

Timeout Etiquette: Players must now use a clear verbal or visual signal (such as the universal “T” hand sign) to call a timeout.

Overall, the 2026 updates emphasize clarity, fairness, and smoother gameplay.

Happy Pickling.

Christina Dupuch
President, AVLPA.org

PICKLERS CLUB

We would like to recognize our Picklers Club members for their elevated membership in the APA!

Dink Level - \$500 and above

Nancy Carr
Bonnie Knox
Jane Lawson

Mark Livingston
Esther Nevarez
Mimi Sexton

Paddle Level - \$250 to \$499

Anonymous
Christina Dupuch
Tom Hardecker
Dee Pierce
Kathy Scarborough

sexton
Howard Waxman
Alice Weldon *(in memory and honor of Stef Roemer)*

Pickle Level - \$100 to \$249

Tracy Absher
Anonymous (4)
Bob Bridges
Liz Button
Holly Fairbairn
Stephanie Fish
Michael Fortini

Annabel Haberkorn
Bill Lyng
Teri Lyng
Molly McMillan
Howard Philips
Lynn Roberts
Terry Roberts

If you'd like to learn more about the Picklers Club, [click here](#).



In every thriving community, there are people whose dedication quietly holds everything together. For our pickleball family, one of those people is Bonnie Knox.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

BONNIE KNOX

by Yia Pia Sanchez-Brugal

To know Bonnie is to witness a life shaped by excellence, curiosity and athleticism. Her professional journey spans the fast pace of the New York Stock Exchange to years as a high school English teacher - experiences that shaped her rare blend of organization, empathy, and leadership. A lifelong athlete, former competitive swimmer, and tennis player, Bonnie arrived in Asheville in 2020. By 2021, she picked up a pickleball paddle, and our community has never been the same. Bonnie's impact reaches far

beyond the baseline. She has been a cornerstone of APA from its earliest days - serving on the board, leading the membership committee, volunteering at free clinics, and helping organize fundraising events that strengthen both our courts and our community. Her steady commitment helps ensure pickleball remains welcoming and accessible. On the court, Bonnie brings the same focus and drive. Her competitive spirit has earned her medals at local and state tournaments,

but what stands out most is her sportsmanship and encouragement of others.

As Bonnie puts it, "Pickleball introduced me to an entirely new social group of fun, interesting people. It keeps me active, and if social connection adds years to life, pickleball will keep me going a long time."

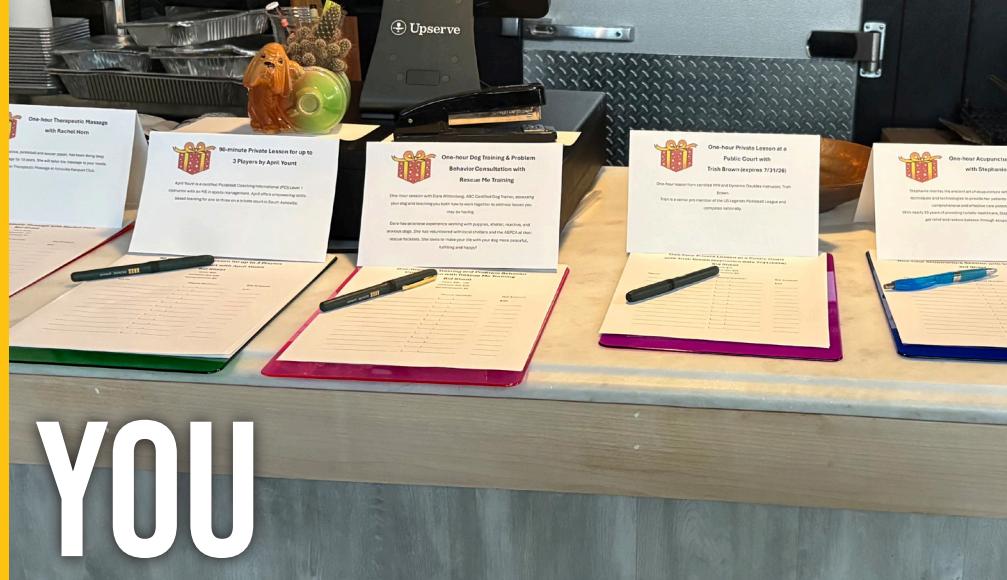
Bonnie, we thank you for your spirit, your service and for making our courts a place where people don't just play - they connect, grow, and thrive.

“The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves.”

– Helen Keller

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

by Nancy Carr



Thanks to everyone who attended our holiday party on December 17 and who donated to the YMCA Mobile Food Market. A total of \$1,237 was raised through the silent auction and donations. According to Ashley Tee, YMCA Executive Director of Community Health (pictured with APA President, Christina Dupuch), this will cover the cost of feeding about 300 people!

We would be remiss if we didn't recognize our party planners:

Jill Fletcher
Molly McMillan
Dee Pierce
Yira Pia Sanchez-Brugal

Equally important are those donating packages to the silent auction:

Trish Brown
Stephanie Fish
Rachel Horn
Dara Wittenberg
April Yount

If you would like to assist with future events, please [email us](#) and indicate your interest.

JOIN US!

by Tom Hardecker

February is a great time to pause, reflect, and build momentum - and that's exactly what the APA Membership Committee is focused on now. Our goal for 2026 is clear and ambitious: to grow APA to at least 500 members by year end.



Membership Committee members pictured from left to right: Tom Hardecker, Gina Snyder, Mark Lenzen, Katie Woods, Jayne McDonald, and Steve Heiselman.

Why does membership growth matter? Because numbers translate directly into impact.

A larger membership strengthens APA's voice with the City of Asheville and Parks & Recreation. When advocating for court access, maintenance, and future facilities, membership numbers matter. A broad and active base shows decision makers that pickleball is not a niche pastime - it's a vital and growing part of Asheville's recreation community.

Membership growth also expands APA's ability to fund and support amenities many players enjoy, including nets, equipment, porta-potties, and events. It increases eligibility for grants and sponsorships, providing reinvestment directly into courts, programs, and improvements that benefit everyone.

Beyond advocacy and funding, membership builds community. APA brings together players of all ages, skill levels, and backgrounds, fostering an inclusive and welcoming pickleball culture. More members means more volunteers, future leaders, and fresh ideas - ensuring APA remains sustainable and responsive as the sport grows.

At just \$20 per year, membership is an easy way to support the courts you play on and the advocacy happening behind the scenes. If you're already a member, thank you. If not, February is the perfect time to join and help us reach 500 strong - together.

Click below to join:

- [Standard](#)
- [Picklers Club](#)



STEPS *to* SUCCESS

by DAVID KELLY



“ For the future, the best preparation is an unafraid today.”

– Dr. Frank Crane

Pickleball Lessons from the Symphony

Yesterday, I attended a full orchestra symphony, and I left thinking: What's the pickleball relevance?

Actually, quite a bit.

A great performance requires both spontaneity and discipline - musicians responding in real time, while still honoring the structure on the page. It requires teamwork, where no single part carries the

whole piece, and sequence, where timing matters as much as talent.

And then there's the conductor.

In pickleball, the conductor is the wiffle ball.

Think about all the information it transmits: direction and height, speed, and spin. The ball is constantly “telling” us what to do next - where to be, how to set our feet, what

kind of swing is possible, and what kind of shot is wise.

If we want to make ideal contact, we have to stop fighting the moment and start listening to it. In other words: submit to what the ball wants you to do.

That's not passive. That's discipline - and it's how good players become consistent players.

A SIMPLE SHOULDER PRIMER EVERY PICKLEBALL PLAYER SHOULD USE

by Dr. Asa Walker, PT,
DPT, LAT, ATC, OCS, CSCS
Owner of [Built For Pickleball](#)

Learn more at
builtforpickleball.com
Email: asawalker0910@gmail.com



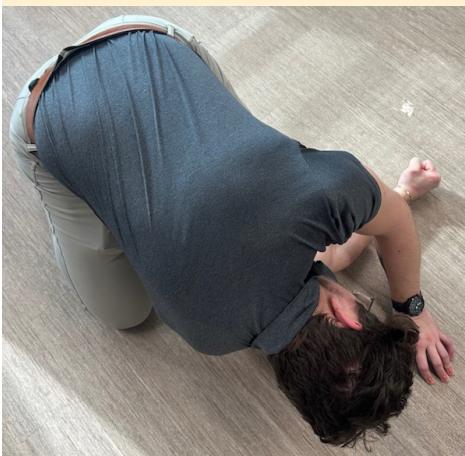
Pickleball places heavy rotational and cross-body demands on the shoulder with nearly every drive and serve. This movement is known as shoulder internal rotation. Because of this, pickleball players naturally develop strong internal rotators over time. However, it raises the importance of keeping the opposing muscle group, the shoulder external rotators, strong and ready so the shoulder stays healthy and resilient.

One simple way to prepare these muscles before play is with an isometric external rotation. An isometric contraction is when you push into something that doesn't move, or resist something trying to move you. These contractions produce high muscle activation without equipment, and they're especially useful right before activity thanks to a phenomenon called potentiation - a temporary boost in muscle and nervous system readiness.

To perform this exercise, start on your hands and knees. Make a fist and slide

it along the ground until you reach the maximum rotation your trunk naturally allows. Drive your fist into the floor as if you were trying to sweep your arm away from your body. The effort should feel moderate to near-maximal. Hold each contraction about 5 seconds, then relax. Aim for 1–2 sets of 10 reps. As you push, avoid letting your core or obliques take over - the goal is to generate the effort primarily from the shoulder, not by twisting harder through the trunk.

This drill activates the rotator cuff and shoulder external rotators, priming them to help keep the ball of the shoulder centered and supported during fast rotational and overhead movements. For longer-term strength progression, exercises like the face pull (covered in a previous article) are better suited. But as a pre-play strategy, this simple isometric can go a long way. Do it before matches or practice days - even one set is often enough to make a noticeable difference.



“Healthy pickleball players aren’t just the ones who play often - they’re the ones who consistently prepare their bodies to keep playing.”

HAPPENINGS

FEB



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