

COVID 19 - TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLUB ADMINISTRATORS, COACHES AND ANYONE ORGANIZING PICKLEBALL ACTIVITIES



In light of a gradual return to playing pickleball across the country, Pickleball Canada is issuing its tips and recommendations for club administrators, coaches and anyone organizing pickleball-related activities. With a situation that evolves each day and differs in different provinces, regions and municipalities, Pickleball Canada believes that it is the responsibility of the people organizing pickleball-related activities to evaluate the possibility of providing a safe environment for players. Here are a few measures and precautions to take before organizing a pickleball activity. This list is not exhaustive and additional or different measures may be needed for your particular circumstances.

ORGANIZING A PICKLEBALL ACTIVITY IN OR AT A FACILITY

- The activity must always comply with the physical distancing measures and recommendations issued by federal and provincial government authorities, including the arrival and departure of players.
- Limit activities to court usage by small groups in accordance with total group maximums mandated by the authorities.
- Make sure to stagger booking times between scheduled activities to create a buffer between sessions and avoid an overlap of players at or on the court.
- When possible, online sign-up or reservations and payments are recommended. Otherwise, payments using a punch card or credit card if applicable are strongly recommended.
- Limit all occasions for gatherings by making all communal or public areas in or at the facility inaccessible.
- Limit yourself to the minimum number of non-players required to operate.
- Communicate all hygiene measures in advance to all players and volunteers.
- If applicable, provide employees with masks, gloves and all other protective items and ensure that each staff member washes their hands regularly.
- Keep a record of all players and any others who come in, so that you can contact them if needed, for example, if an infected person should use the facility.
- Ask players under the age of 18 for a written consent from a parent/guardian authorizing them to participate in their pickleball session.

PROVIDE A CLEAN AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Clubs and sporting facilities must have operational security procedures in place during the crisis related to COVID-19. These procedures must also be well displayed and communicated to all users.

- Prominently sign and delimit closed areas, and the areas where maintaining a maximum number of people is required.
- Use markings on the ground to indicate proper distancing from employees, for example at check-in.
- Frequently clean all surfaces, including counters, door handles, benches, toilets, etc. as well as portable net surfaces.
- All chairs and tables in communal areas must be inaccessible or removed to avoid all gatherings.
- All doors accessible to the public must remain open to avoid contact with door handles. For safety purposes, doors or gates to courts should be secured during play.
- Soap or hand sanitizer must be made available to all players and others in various locations throughout the facility.
- Regularly remind and encourage everyone to wash their hands and adopt proper hygiene practices.
- Limit access to the locker rooms as much as possible.
- Only accept payments by card. Minimize the use of cash.
- Close all water fountains and ask that all players bring their own refreshments.

ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Encourage all to respect physical distancing of 2 metres, or as recommended by government authorities.
- Have several copies of court schedules, etc. posted and available for easy access.
- If possible, use only every second court.
- Ask players to remain on the same side of the court and avoid changing ends.
- Put in place measures to limit contact between players and employees.
- Recommend that only one parent/guardian accompany a junior player.

COACHING/INSTRUCTING

- Group lessons should not be permitted to ensure required physical distancing is maintained, with the exception of lessons for family members or persons residing in the same household.
- As much as possible, coaches must try to remain on the same court and adjust their schedules in order to stay on-site for the minimum amount of time required.

- Position players in designated and well spaced-out stations.
- Exercises that require continuous play are recommended, as opposed to ones that require the use of an entire bin of balls (for example, on practice machines).
- Limit the use of equipment such as cones and targets.
- Do not let players manipulate the practice equipment. Coaches should take charge of picking up the balls.
- Encourage players to use their paddle or their foot to push balls back.

PICKLEBALL BALLS

- Exercise caution with pickleball balls and avoid touching them as much as possible. Contamination through respiratory droplets from one infected person to another can potentially survive on surfaces such as ball surfaces for up to three days.
- Restrict balls to one particular group or court.
- Immediately remove all balls for disinfection if a player is suspected to have been infected by COVID-19.
- Disinfect balls using this procedure before and after each game:
 - The surest way of disinfecting, approved by the WHO, is to use diluted bleach. Cleans the inside and outside of balls. Dunk balls into solution for 5 minutes and scoop out and allow to dry or buff with a clean cloth.
 - Easiest way for doing lots of balls is to dilute bleach. Please note, bleach has expiry dates - it is 1 year from date of manufacture. Not all bleaches are equal in sodium hypochlorite (NaClO) concentration. Bleach can be 1% - 6% and it is recommended that a 6% NaClO bleach, such as Clorox, be used. Put 1/3 cup of 6 % bleach into 4 litres of water.
 - Informative site on bleach, how to figure out the expiry date and how to dilute: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/covid-19-disinfecting-with-bleach>