

Pickleball

Organizing Pickleball in Your Town



An outline of how to establish and organize a Pickleball association in your town.

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ORGANIZING PICKLEBALL IN YOUR TOWN

This booklet is an outline of how to establish and organize a Pickleball association in your town. We might add these are just recommendations and you need to check with other organizations, legal counsel and your city officials to see if what we have done is o.k. in your town. We are providing this information to you because it worked in our city and many have requested we take the time to share with you.

HISTORY

Our history is short; only one year! On August first, 2010 four courts were donated to Ogden City on park land. At that time, there were only six people in Ogden, Utah who knew how to play the game. The Ogden and Salt Lake newspapers ran half page ads announcing the grand opening of the Pickleball courts. The grand opening was staged with free burgers and drinks for those who came out. Chris Thomas from the USAPA and Tim Finger, nationally-ranked singles players, put on an exhibition. Almost 200 people came with minimal newspaper advertising. The Mayor, City Manager and a few of the city council members also attended. Following the exhibition, all were invited to try the game. We brought in portable lights, sound system, bleachers, paddles and balls and people played until 10:30 pm. For the next two weeks we ran lessons and open play every day at 9 A.M and at 6P.M. Paddle and balls could be rented at a nearby city golf course. We then scheduled an organizational meeting - about 35 people showed up.

Officers were elected and by laws from another organization were adopted and later revised to better fit our needs. By the November we were up to 50 members. One of our members put an indoor court in his warehouse. Through the winter we picked up another 30 members. In June we held a season kickoff breakfast open play

and in July we hosted our first tournament. Boom! We were up to 150 members. 120 participated in our first tournament with players from St George to Logan, Utah.

With a donation from a local foundation, we put an intramural Pickleball program at Roy Junior High School. Our second Jr. High came on board in September 2011. Members of the Ogden Pickleball Association participated in instruction at the school and also joined in with some leaders from Brigham City where they now have a program with over 50 members / players. So what do we recommend? Here we go!

Physical Facilities & Equipment

Courts: If you cannot get the city to build Pickleball courts, convert Tennis Courts. You can put two or four Pickleball courts on one tennis court. You can put 4 courts in a full size school gym. Purchase nets from USAPA and either chalk or use economy grade gaffers tape for lines outdoors. We're still working on a solution for gym flooring. Painters tape is ok, but can't be left down long or it will ruin the floor finish. If there is someone who wants to fund new courts, donations' to cities or schools are tax deductible. To see layouts of courts, got to USAPA.org to download diagrams.

Equipment: A few Pickleballaholics need to have extra equipment on hand to lend newbies. Depending on how many courts, make sure you have paddles and balls for as many players as the courts can have play. Inexpensive wooden paddles are o.k. as long as some experienced players have better paddles to show differences before the new people buy their own. The Roy City Recreation Department willingly purchased some and striped a couple of their tennis courts for Pickleball use. Eventually, your club may want to purchase a portable sound system to use at your events. It's also good to consider shade for waiting players, if possible. We purchased some portable shade canopies.

Club Organization

Publicize the initial club meeting by putting signs or posters at the courts.

1st meeting agenda - Elect officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer. Ask for volunteers to be webmaster, social chair, tournament chair, photographer and club trainer. If, within your membership, you have someone who has accounting training, it is very helpful. Submit bylaws for approval vote.

Membership Fees: Determine initial fee to join. We chose to keep ours low. An initial fee of \$12 covers membership dues plus a magnetic name tag. Thereafter, the annual renewal fee is only \$5. This covers office expenses, purchases for the courts, and tax filings.

Have copies of membership application on hand. Be sure the application contains a release. (See appendix 2)

Meetings: Off-season meetings are held every other month. During active pickleball season, we meet monthly.

Records: Create a spreadsheet to track membership. Create a spreadsheet to track financial data. Create a spreadsheet for the treasurer to use to track income and expenses. Create a welcome letter to send to all members as they join.

Social Media: Web Page / Face Book / Email are the communication of the future and you need them all. Video on email to teach the game is recommended and there are many available. You can even link to USAPA.org. Face Book and email are the best way for members to communicate. The simplest thing to do for members is create a G Mail Account. It is free and all members can be put into contacts and you can all use calendars for events and open court activities. Need someone to play with? Send out an email blast to all members. Check out www.ogdenpickleball.com for ideas.

Create a gmail account for your organization. Create a password that you give to the members, one that is changed annually to reflect the changes in club membership. In the contacts section, add each person as they join. This is how members may contact

one another and how the club officers communicate to the group. Our group is entirely based on email. We send no letters via snail mail, thus saving postage. As your club grows, you may add other groups to the contact list such as youth, beginner, intermediate, advanced, etc.

Legal Organization: We used an LLC. It's inexpensive and you have the shelter to avoid liability with it. Remember income is taxable so make sure you use or accrue the money for expenses to avoid excessive taxation. A city license is required for each legal entity doing business in that city. Each legal entity should check with the State Sales tax Department for the sale tax taxability of membership dues and registration fees.

Social Committee

The social committee is absolutely critical. If you have great socials, the club will continue to grow strong. People enjoy being part of a well-planned activity. We have three official socials and one official tournament annually. Each activity costs enough to cover the expenses of the event plus give \$1 back to build the club funds. It is important to have the fee paid in advance of the activity so you'll know how much food and seating to have ready.

Kick-off Breakfast: We met at the courts on a Saturday morning in June for a dutch oven breakfast. We had 70 people in attendance. We used all four pickleball courts plus taped off six more courts on the adjacent tennis courts. We paid rental on the tennis courts and for a porta potty. People ate and played pickleball until noon.

Next year we plan to do a continental kick-off featuring muffins, bagels, donuts, yogurt and fruit.

Cookout at the Courts: We held a hamburger cookout in August. We had 4 grills, salads and all the trimmings. Again, we taped off the adjacent tennis courts adding 6 more pickleball courts. We ate and played until dark. We had nearly 70 people in attendance.

July Tournament: Our tournament committee and social

committees did a great job. We opened the tournament to people who are not members of the club; however, members get a \$5 discount on the entry fee. We chose to start small – just doubles skill level brackets. We trained a few people to serve as referees for the gold medal games.

It is important to build refreshments into the cost of the tournament. Have plenty of ice water, sliced oranges, nuts in small bags. Encourage people to bring their own water bottles and just refill them from the coolers instead of furnishing paper cups or bottled water (unless you can get them donated by sponsors).

Tournaments and Fund Raising.

This is the best way to raise funds for the club. People donate money for three reasons. **First**, because they are good community supporters and they will give a little. **Second**, they have a passion for what you are raising money for (here it means Pickleball) this of course in the beginning is also minimal. **Third, MARKETING!!!!** You have to show a business how it will benefit their business. Donation is a misused word. No one donates; they give because they think it will get them something back. To that end these are some examples to put in your Fund Raising / Marketing Packages.

- Signage at your event.
- Logo's on backs of T shirts of Members or Tournament Participants.
- Their bounce back coupon or brochure in registration packages.
- Listing Business on Web Site and in advertising with links to their web site on yours.
- Complimentary tickets to socials and events for donors
- Special seating for medal rounds for sponsors.
- Medal winner picture with sponsors framed and presented to them.
- Title sponsor for event and matches (singles, mixed, men's, women's)
- Business Logo of sponsor on all printed material
- Most important thank you letter given with personal visit,

not in the mail. You may even include a Gold Medal from the event as a gift.

Awards Banquet

At the end of the season, we have an awards banquet. It is either at a nice restaurant with room for the group and with facilities for projecting powerpoint presentations or is catered. This event does cost more than our other activities. At the banquet, we issue awards both serious and fun including best serve, best lob, best cheerleader, ironman (who played the most games at the tournament), best dressed on the court, most improved player, and any other awards. We have funny prizes and serious prizes. Many businesses gave us gift cards to use as prizes. If it is time for the next year's elections of officers, the awards banquet is a good time to make that transition.

Miscellaneous Socials

The ladies like to go out to eat once a month. We rotate lunch one month, dinner the next so as not exclude working women. The same can work for men, but our guys chose not to have it.

Beauty and the Beast Tournament

This is a fun mixer with no prizes awarded. Partners are drawn on the day of the tournament. The men run the women's tournament, and the women run the men's tournament.

Sack Lunch at the Courts

Everyone brings their own sack lunch to eat. Club can furnish the drinks.

Growing the Game

Open Play: This is the best way to grow the game. The social aspect is what has made us grow so fast. We do open play 9 am till noon, Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. 6 pm to dark Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights. With four courts we average 30 to 40 players at each session. We made paddle racks in which to put the paddles of players waiting to play, and there is room for 20 paddles.



4 out - 4 in rotation. When one game finishes, the next four paddles in line get to use the court. You can put your paddles together with a friend

or place them together in later positions to allow the 4 players to change groups. If you have 4.0 players or better encourage them to play with everyone to help us all learn. They can schedule time other than open to play players of their own caliber.

Demonstrations: Work with local cities to schedule pickleball demonstrations in conjunction with local festivals and fairs. Use portable nets and set up right in the street. Be sure to have your signage hanging and plenty of membership applications on hand.

Clinics: Have the club trainer schedule some clinics to help improve the skills of members. We charged \$1 per person and purchased several dozen balls. We had clinics on various strokes, including dinking. Everyone felt they were worthwhile.

SAMPLE FORMS

Player Signup Form

Yes, I want to become a member of the Ogden Pickleball Association and play one of America's fastest growing sports enjoyed by all ages!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ email _____

Initial fee of \$12 then annual dues of \$5 every January 1. Mail check for \$12 payable to Ogden Pickleball Association and completed form to: _____. Call _____ for more information.

I hereby release and discharge the Ogden Pickleball Association and their officers from any and all actions, causes of action, claims & demands for, upon, or by reason of any damage, loss, personal injury or death which may result from or in connection with my participation of any nature in any of the Ogden Pickleball Association activities. I understand that this release is binding upon myself, my assigns, my personal representatives & heirs.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If under age 18, Guardian

Signature: _____

Sample of Release All members sign

I hereby release and discharge the _____ Pickleball Association and their officers from any and all actions, cause of action, claims and demands, for, upon, or by reason of any damage, loss, personal injury or death which may be a result from or in connection with any participation of any nature in any of the _____ Pickleball Association activities. I understand that this release is binding upon me, my assigns, my personal representatives and heirs.

Signature _____ Date _____



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