

Handbook for Organizing a Pickleball Tournament

(Compiled by C & P Bothe, from personal experience and internet resources)

1. Appoint Tournament Director(s)

- Choose an approved format and events (Women's, Men's, Mixed, Singles, Age, Skill)
- Set a tournament date
- Decide on the number of participants in each event (set parameters)
- Set opening/closing due dates for registration
- Decide on registration fees and refund policy
- This position(s) requires computer skills for record keeping/formatting the schedule!
- Consult with knowledgeable players to determine appropriate team categories; has the authority to place teams in the correct skill category

2. Choose a Venue

- Number of courts available will be a deciding factor on how many players/events the tournament can accommodate.
- Permanent nets preferred but most larger or indoor tournaments use temporary courts/nets/dividers
- Check for Wi-Fi availability, electrical outlets, PA sound system, lights
- Room for and availability of vendor/sponsor spaces/tables
- Restrooms/ change rooms/ showers
- Check with the venue regarding available food vendor.
- If it is an outdoor tournament, have an indoor location available in case of bad weather.

3. Create a Budget

- Court/venue rental
- Medals/prizes/money prizes
- Food, water
- Supplies (tape, scissors, paper, pencils, enlargement of schedules etc)
- Goodie bags, T-shirts (if any)
- Order portable nets and balls if needed

4. Create a Flyer/Poster with Complete Tournament Info (Sample poster attached)

- Tournament title
- Registration and Entry fees
- Format
- Date(s) and times of tournament
- Where and how to register/pay

- Contact information for questions regarding registrations and tournament info
- Location of and directions to venue
- Rain day plan (if outdoor tournament)

5. Posting on Websites

- Registration and contact information
- Players needing partners (optional)
- Players list
- Events
- Directions
- Lodging/Accommodations information
- Cancellation policy
- Rules/format of play
- Any other info pertaining to your tournament
- Prepare Waiver (Sample waiver attached)

6. Solicit Volunteers

- Recruit volunteers from your local clubs. Tournaments require referees and lines persons for playoff matches. Ball chasers are an asset in large venues. Provide a laminated sign-up sheet at the scorekeepers table for last minute volunteers to sign up for specific duties.

Volunteers Needed:

- Check-in desk (at least 2)
- Scorekeeper/scheduler (2) (this position is crucial & needs very organized people)
- Announcer (1)
- Food/snack table (1)
- Set up/clean-up crew
- A referee coordinator (1) & several referees for playoffs
- Person to initially accept/record registrations (1)
- Schedulers (2) (preferably people who know a lot of players/different skill levels)

7. Supplies

- Referee Clipboards, score sheets, wristbands
- Stopwatches for referees
- Balls and nets; court dividers (see photos of homemade dividers built by the Beausejour Pickleball club)
- Medals (order in advance) for Doubles events, make sure to order 2/team
- Snacks for players
- Bottled water or water cooler
- Paper plates, napkins, forks, knives, plastic cups, utensils

- Pencils/pens/markers/tape/highlighters/whiteout/calculator/scissors/etc
- Signage (directions to change rooms, washrooms, check-in area, snacks, court #'s etc)
- Goodie bags/t-shirts (if supplying)
- Pickleball net measuring stick

8. Marketing

- Use your email contacts to distribute the flyer
- Distribute flyers in surrounding pickleball communities
- Use social media, such as Facebook
- Create sponsorship packages:
 1. Determine your overall needs
 2. Do you need sponsor revenue?
 3. Does the revenue fall to your club or will some/all offset event cost?
 4. Cash versus 'in-kind' donations. Sponsors are more open to donating product.
 5. Examples of goods & services donations: water, player shirts, pickleballs.
 6. Items for raffle or silent auction

Contact possible vendors/sponsors. Make sure to have acknowledgements, tables and chairs available.

9. Charging for Tournament Participation

There are costs in setting up a tournament even when run by volunteers. Be sure you are covered.

- The largest cost is for the facility. This cost can run into the hundreds of dollars and should be negotiated with the venue manager. A per person fee helps you determine costs better than a flat rate. About \$4 - \$5 dollars from each participant is a guideline.
- Don't forget the budget for food. A budget of \$3 - \$4 per participant is a guideline
- It is traditional to give prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place for each event. You can order medals which should be done about two months before the tournament. You may also award trophies, plaques, or creative awards such as seasonal food items or chocolates. The prizes could cost you about \$4-\$5 dollars per participant.(more if awarding cash)
- There are always administrative costs such as copying, paper, clips, enlarging schedules etc. This may add another \$1 per participant.

When all is totaled the cost per participant is about \$12 to \$15. To cover these costs and other unexpected costs we suggest charging at least \$20 per participant. You can charge \$15 for the first event and \$5 for each additional event i.e. men's or women's doubles, mixed doubles. If costs are higher, charge \$20 for the first event + extra for the second event.

10. Registrations

- Determine how/when players will make their payment
- Ensure teams are entered in their correct skill category; consult with knowledgeable players representing all skill levels & adjust category entries, if necessary.
- Email addresses are essential; after players register, send each player confirmations
- Facilitate partner search for single entries (optional)
- Keep emails short and to the point
- Estimate how long and how many matches will be played and how long each schedule will take to play. Management of schedules is important during the registrations process to avoid too many/too few players in a bracket, long waits or long days with no referees/line judges left to cover matches. If there are not enough players you may want to consider Round Robin formats for smaller brackets.
- **Communication is critical.** Keep players informed along the way.

11. Making up the Schedule

- This must be done AFTER the due date for registrations
- Can be done by an individual or a small group of knowledgeable players representing all skill levels
- Choose the format that best suits your registrations. Consult the internet to find suitable formats (round robin, modified round robin, 3 match guarantee, etc).
<http://www.printyourbrackets.com/pickleball-tournament-brackets.html>
- Each match may be played with a best of 3 game format with each game to 11 (no 2 point margin). Each match will take an average of between 40 to 60 minutes. The first matches may be shorter, but as the tournament progresses, the matches are expected to run longer. A 50-minute average time for matches played with best 2 of 3 games to 11 points (no 2 pt margin) is usually enough.
- You may want to consider Round Robin matches-- 1 game to 11 points (no 2 pt margin) usually takes 20-30 minutes/game. Your playoff games could be 1 game played to 15 points (no 2 pt margin). This takes 25 minutes average. If you have more time available, you can vary the playoff format (2 out of 3 games etc)
- In setting up the schedule, one method is to match the best players against the weakest players to avoid having strong players eliminated in the first round. If you know the players, this is possible. This is a seeded tournament. Otherwise, drawing them out of a hat can be used to set up the schedule.
- Schedule Women's/Men's on Day 1 or Day 3, & Mixed on Day 2
- Once the schedules are drawn up, have them enlarged (Staples--one 24" x 36" sheet costs ~ \$3). These will be placed on the wall at the tournament so all can follow the progress of the tournament. Also make enlargements of a "volunteer sign-up sheet" and specific Tournament Rules for your event (also posted near the scorekeeper).

12. Food for the Tournament

It is beneficial to have some food for participants. A food table will keep the participants near the venue making it easier to locate those who are up for the next game. Select volunteers to prepare and maintain a food table. Suggestions for the type of food:

- Can be as simple as fruit (sliced oranges, bananas, apples)
- Sandwich makings: sliced meat, selections of bread, lettuce, tomatoes, and all the spreads
- Hot dogs and trimmings
- Vegetable platter
- Chips, cookies
- Bottled water and/or large containers for juice (5 gallon containers with a spout)
- Plenty of napkins, paper plates, plastic utensils, etc.
- Be sure to post a large sign over the food table: FOOD FOR PICKLEBALL PARTICIPANTS ONLY.
- Protect the floor with tarps or other appropriate means; have cleaning supplies nearby.
- A budget of \$3 to \$4 /participant is suggested.

13. Day Before the Tournament

- Tape Courts if needed, set up nets, tables for registration, vendors, food, etc.
- Put up any promotional/sponsor banners if any
- Post the enlarged Schedules, Rules and Volunteer sign-up sheets near the scorekeeper's table so participants and spectators can keep track as the tournament progresses
- Put up signage for check in, numbers of courts, restrooms, snack table, etc.
- Post the schedule for upcoming events/days
- Set out chairs for players & spectators; set up nets and court dividers
- Make sure the PA system is in place and working (have fresh batteries on hand)

14. Day of the Tournament

- Have a registration table set up where all participants check in. This table should have a volunteer throughout the day
- Have players check in at least 30 minutes before the start of the tournament
- Keep hard copies of blank waiver forms available at check in (see sample)
- All registration fees need to be paid before participants can play
- All participants must have signed the waiver before they are allowed to play
- Inform players that USAPA rules apply and inform them of local tournament rules

- Inform the players that referees will be available for playoff games.
- Thank all the volunteers & wish good luck to all participants
- Inform players where defibrillator & First Aide is located
- **Both teams must to report their results to the scorekeeper at the end of each game**
- Start the tournament on time
- Set up a Suggestion Box to allow players input on future tournaments
- Have warm-up courts available if possible
- Limit pre-game warm ups to 2 to 3 minutes
- Let participants who are “on deck” know, so they can start their warm up and be ready to play when game is called
- Award medals to the winners of each event
- Make sure that the food table is kept maintained and clean
- Inform referees to check equipment for compliance throughout the day

15. During Tournament

- Have referees available for playoff games
- Have the referee coordinator available in case of disagreements all day
- Make necessary adjustments to events if there is a time constraint (cancel lunch break)
- Keep announcements to a minimum
- Run the tournament and address any and all questions that come up during the event.
- Check in with your vendors/sponsors/players for feedback (suggestion box)
- Have an updated official rules [IFP Rules Handbook](#) available
- Consider holding some type of Skills Competition if there is time available (serving skills, drop shot, etc)

16. After Tournament

- Submit results/photos to all participants within 2 days.
- Keep all documentation/paper schedules.
- Thank all volunteers, players, vendors and sponsors
- Clean up the facility.
- Pay all invoices for the facility, food, etc.

(Sample Waiver)

‘Waiver Form for the 2016 -----Pickleball Tournament’

I, the undersigned, hereby state and agree to the following terms:

Participant Hold Harmless Clause:

I agree, acknowledge and understand the nature of the 2016 ----- Pickleball Tournament and I am of good health and physical condition to participate in such activities.

As a condition of entry into the 2016 ----- Pickleball Tournament, I understand that the participants enter entirely at their own risk and I will not hold the 2016 ----- Pickleball Tournament Committee, the sponsors, agents, and volunteer workers responsible for injury, loss or damage occurring during the 2016 -----Pickleball Tournament

I agree to release, discharge and undertake not to commence any action against the 2016 ---- Pickleball Tournament Committee, the sponsor, agents, and volunteer workers from any and all claims and causes of action, or liability of any kind whatsoever for injuries, property damage, or death, which in any way results from participating in the 2016 ----- Pickleball Tournament.

I understand that the 2016 ----- Pickleball Tournament Committee, the sponsors, agents, and volunteer workers do not assume responsibility for loss of wages, medical, dental or hospital care for athletes, officials, or volunteers during the 2016 ----- Pickleball Tournament.

I have read, understood, and agree to all of the above.

Signed _____ Date: _____

(Print Name Clearly) _____

(Sample Poster)

BEAUSEJOUR 50 + PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

Sungro Centre--360 Veteran's Lane, Beausejour, MB

Women's Doubles—Tuesday, May 10 @ 9:00am

Men's Doubles—Wednesday, May 11 @ 9:00am

Mixed Doubles- Thursday, May 12 @ 9:00 am

Levels: 3.0, 3.5, Over 3.5



Fees: \$20/person—1 event; \$25/person –2 events, Payable at the venue.

To register, call Pat/Chris Bothe at 204-866-4110 or email: pcbothe@gmail.com Provide team members' names, contact info & skill level. **Check-in & payment** runs from 8:00- 8:45 am each day. Games begin at 9:00am.

Registration deadline Tues May 3th at 4 pm. There will be a **minimum and maximum** # of entries per category. Entries accepted on a first come basis. *Volunteers are needed--(referees, line judges, ball chaser, gophers, score keepers, etc).*

Format: “3 Match Guarantee”. Each team is guaranteed 3 full matches. A match winner is determined by winning 2 out of 3 games. All games are played to 11 pts. No 2-point margin.

USAPA rules apply. Players must sign a liability waiver. If available, referees will officiate. Otherwise, the honour system will apply



Lightweight court dividers –made of $\frac{3}{4}$ " PVC electrical conduit, tees, elbows and tarp. Cost was ~ \$20 per panel.

Panels are 3 ft high x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft long