



Tournament Director Guide

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This Tournament Director guide is intended as a tool to assist tournament directors in the planning of Pickleball Canada sanctioned tournaments; however, it can be used for the planning of an unsanctioned or a Pickleball Canada supported tournament as well. It provides an easy-to-follow step by step checklist and your experienced Pickleball Canada staff are available to answer any questions you may have along the way.

For any questions, please contact us at tournaments@pickleballcanada.org. Now, let's start planning!

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Appoint a Tournament Director and/or Co-Tournament Directors

1. Read the [Requirements for a Sanctioned Tournament](#)
2. Choose/Appoint the Tournament Director
3. Select a Tournament management system. For tournaments with more than 50 players the tournament director is highly encouraged to use Pickleball Canada approved tournament management systems: Currently, there is one approved Pickleball Tournament software system which is pickleball.com. This software system assists with the control and reporting of the tournament.
4. Select tournament dates and consider non-conflicting dates with other tournaments in your area.
5. Set opening/closing dates for registration. Allow sufficient time before the starting date to prepare brackets and seed the players.
6. Determine the registration fees and establish a fair refund policy which will depend upon your financial commitments.
7. If you choose to use a Tournament Management system, you must pick one that is compatible with the DUPR rating system. Keeping in mind that there are additional charges for this service. Select the Business Standard account during the creation process, which will allow you to conduct normal business and create invoices to send to your sponsors for their records. Be sure to complete the registration process fully and link the account to your organization's bank account. REMEMBER: your bank account can only be linked to a single payment account.

Choose a Venue

1. IMPORTANT: Number of courts and the number of days will be a deciding factor on how many players and/or events the tournament can accommodate.
2. Choose an approved format and events (WD, MXD, Singles, Age, Skill, etc.). DO NOT have conflicting events on the same day i.e. Men's Singles and Men's Doubles.
3. Decide on the number of participants in each event (set parameters) based upon the size of the venue, the number of hours you plan to play each day, and the type of matches. i.e. 2 out of 3 to 11 points win by 2, takes longer than other formats. Rule of Thumb for double elimination: number of matches in a bracket equals twice the number of teams minus 2 i.e. for a 16 team bracket $(2 \times 16) - 2 = 30$ matches. Only use Round Robin for 4 or 5 Teams. Teams of 3 or fewer should be combined with another group if possible.
4. Permanent nets are preferred, but most large or indoor tournaments use temporary courts/nets.
5. Check for Wi-Fi availability and electrical outlets

IMPORTANT: if you are planning to use a public wifi access point, be prepared for interruptions. Consider the use of a Wi-Fi Hotspot available on short-term rental to avoid interruptions.

6. PA/Sound system
7. Lights
8. Room for and availability of vendor/sponsor spaces/tables
9. Restrooms
10. Confirm with the venue regarding the need of approved food vendors if any.
11. Consider surface conditions and the ability to control players tracking debris onto the courts

Create a Budget

- Decide on compensation if any for referees and/or referee management team. Sanctioned tournaments will make every effort to have referees. Especially for medal matches!
- Factor cost related to the use of tournament management software. If you have created a money management account (ie PayPal or stripe), include the cost in your budget planning process.
- Court rental
- Medals and/or rewards
- Food, water
- Supplies (tape, scissors, paper, pencils, etc...)
- Goodie bags, T-shirts (if any)
- Wristbands for first servers
- Buy portable nets if needed
- Portable toilets
- Prize money (if any)

Sanction the Tournament

1. Submit Sanctioning Request Form at least 60 days prior to tournament date (if you have a minimum of 75 players and can meet all Sanctioning Requirements)
2. Request a letter of support from your Provincial/Territorial Sports Organization ** Nationals require a BidBook submission**
3. Add the tournament to the tournament management software.
4. Familiarize yourself with the Sanctioning requirements and [USAP International Rulebook](#).

Create Tournament Details in Tournament Management Software:

Tournament Management Software must be compatible with the DUPR Rating System. The following is a list of items you may want to include in the details:

- Tournament title
- Registration and entry event fees

- Tournament format of Pickleball Canada approved events
- Date(s) and times of tournament
- Where and how to register
- Approved tournament ball used. See the [USAP approved ball list](#).
- Contact information for questions regarding registrations and tournament info
- Location and directions to venue
- Sanctioning Logo/Tier Level (will be added to pickleball brackets by PCO once sanctioning approval and fee have been paid)
- Rain Day plan

Posting on Websites

After sanctioning has been approved, Pickleball Canada will advertise and list tournament info on the Pickleball Canada Tournament Calendar.

Solicit Volunteers

Recruit volunteers from your local Pickleball clubs. Your needs will depend upon the number of players, referees, the venue and the length of your playing day. Referees have a significant impact on any tournament, especially since Pickleball Canada sanctioned tournaments require referees for every medal match and expect referees for every match at the National/Regional Tournaments. Be sure to conduct a Referee training program leading up to your tournament. Volunteer management can be done through a Tournament Management Software. Volunteers Needed:

- Front desk/check-in desk/event desk (at least 2) for small tournaments
- Referee Coordinator(s)
- Score poster (1)
- Announcer (1)
- Safety/medical (2)
- Food/snack table (1)
- Vendor/sponsor coordinator (if applicable)
- Set up/clean-up crew (2)
- Choose a referee management process/Referee coordinator (pickleball desk is recommended)
- Registrations (someone familiar with the software if using Tournament Management Software)
- Bracket committee (preferably people who know a lot of players/different skill levels)
- Somebody to sing the National Anthem
- Volunteer for the Pickleball Canada registrations desk - For Nationals and Provincials

Supplies

- Printer to print score sheets and results
- Uninterruptible Power Source for the printer if you are concerned about power interruption.
- Referee Clipboards/One for every court
- Stopwatches for referees. IMPORTANT to control play
- Balls (Cost saving Tip: ask manufacturers for donation)
- Wristbands (Cost saving Tip: only give to first server during check in)
- Medals (order 2 to 3 months in advance) For Doubles events, make sure to order 2/team
- Snacks for players
- Bottled water
- Paper plates, napkins, forks, knives, plastic cups, utensils
- Pencils/markers/tape
- American/Canadian Flag
- Board to post paper brackets
- Legal size paper to print brackets
- Ream of paper cut 1/2 to print match score sheets.
- TIP: get the paper cut at the store where you buy it for a few dollars. You will need a full sheet cut in half for each match in the tournament
- Referee board/magnetic name tags to control referees.
- Medal stand/PODIUM to take medals photos
- Pickleball Canada or club banner

First Aid Recommendations

Find and schedule volunteers to work at the first aid station (first aid/CPR training preferred). You may want to consider contracting with St Johns Ambulance or similar organizations at a cost.

- If outdoors, establish a covered medical space (tent) and clearly mark it
- In indoors, establish a medical space near the courts and clearly mark it
- Have a basic first aid kit (bandages, gauze, medical tape, etc)
- Determine if an AED unit is on property. If so, make sure the 1st aid team knows where it's located
- Paramedic or EMT shears (scissors)
- Splinter forceps (tweezers)
- Standard oral thermometer: digital, mercury, or alcohol
- Wooden tongue depressors ("tongue blades")
- Small flashlight (and spare batteries)
- CPR mouth barrier or pocket mask (such as a Microshield X-L Mouth Barrier) \
- (hypoallergenic or latex) surgical gloves (at 2 pair); if you are allergic to latex, bring non latex, synthetic, nonpermeable gloves
- Rescue blanket
- Cell Phone
- Incident Report forms and a pen (Pickleball Canada sends a copy to all tournament directors)

- Ziploc bags (to hold ice for ice packs)
- WATER and sports drinks with electrolytes are even better
- EMERGENCY PHONE to call 9-1-1
- WEATHER: Playing in hot conditions, watch for signs of Heat Stroke and remind to hydrate frequently and review Canadian Occupational Health Guidelines
http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/phys_agents/humidex.html
- Ensure player bags are off the ground to minimize trip hazards
- **DO NOT ADMINISTER MEDICATION TO PLAYERS**

Marketing

- Determine your needs & goals
- Create tournament flyers
- Distribute within your local community
- Send flyer to other Pickleball Communities
- Use Social Media such as Facebook and Twitter to get the word out
- Post your Tournament and flyer on the [Pickleball Canada Calendar](#)
- Do you need sponsor revenue?
- Does the revenue fall to your club or will some/all offset event cost?
- Types of Sponsor Revenue:
 - Cash versus In-Kind donations. Sponsors are more open to donating products.
 - Examples of goods & services donations: water, player shirts, pickleballs, etc...
 - Items for raffle or silent auction - license needed
- Create a Sponsorship Package to present to potential Sponsors
 - Create a vendor agreement that both parties sign
 - Contact possible vendors/sponsors
 - Make sure to have tables and chairs available

Player Registration

Registering players can be time-consuming and tedious for tournament volunteers because you must maintain a register, accept payment, and acquire a liability waiver. Then should a player withdraw, you may need to provide a refund. For these reasons Pickleball Canada recommends that Tournaments use Tournament Management Software. For a minor cost the players can:

- Register On-line
- Sign a Waiver
- Make their payment thru a payment system
- Find a Partner
- The Tournament Management Software provides the Tournament Director and Registrar with a wide range of capabilities which include:
 - Advertising
 - Managing Registrations and the ability to restrict players based upon membership, age, skill, other events entered
 - Managing Waivers
 - Receiving Payments
 - Communicating with players individually and in bulk

- Ratings searches against DUPR
- Membership confirmation
- Capability to Plan and Manage the Tournament Day
- Rating recommendation reports
- Financial Reports
- Players Results Reports

Bracket Committee/Seeding of Brackets

This should be a team of relatively experienced players with a broad knowledge of the game drawn from all skill levels.

Meet after registrations have closed and several days before the tournament dates

- Agree on a process
- Considering bracket size make a recommendation for how it should be played
- Identify the top 10-25 percent of the bracket and seed
- Seed the remainder of the bracket
- Move to the next bracket
- REMINDER – Seeding is NOT a perfect science and should NOT be shared with the players for a variety of reasons. Tournament Software should seed for you.

The Tournament Management Software should have the capability to check that players from the same club do not play each other in the first round. It is very disappointing for players to travel to a tournament only to face a player from their own club in the first round.

Day Before the Tournament

1. Confirm the Operation Desk processes with the Operations Coordinator
2. Check the functionality of your computers, printers and communications equipment at the site. IMPORTANT: do not use public Wi-Fi to support your tournament
3. Confirm Referee Desk operation with the Ref Desk Coordinator
4. Tape Courts if needed (Official Measurements), set up nets, tables for registration, vendors, food, etc.
5. Put up any promotional/sponsor banners if any
6. Post the brackets on the board so participants and spectators can keep track as the tournament progresses
7. Put up signage for check-in, numbers of courts, restrooms, snack tables, etc.
8. Post the schedule for upcoming events/days

Daily Operations

- Have players check in at least 30 minutes before the start of the brackets
- Have hard copies of blank waiver forms available at check-in
- Registration fees MUST be paid before participants can play
- Participants MUST sign the liability waiver before they are allowed to play
- All players have to be Pickleball Canada members (Sanctioning requirements)
- Inform players that the USAP International Rulebook rules apply
- Inform referees to check equipment for compliance (USAP List of Approved Paddles)
- Welcome players to the tournament
- Thank all the volunteers/Wish good luck to all participants
- Start the tournament on time
- Start all available courts with games and keep them occupied throughout the tournament. Every minute a court is unoccupied is an additional minute in your day.
- Have warm up courts available if possible
- Limit warm up time 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 match is called
- Award medals to the winners of each event

During the Tournament

- Currently, Pickleball Canada sanctioned tournament requires a referee for every Medal match. However, it is expected for the Canadian Nationals & Regional Tournaments to have a referee for all matches.
- Ensure brackets run on time, no empty courts This is achieved by Referees/Players promptly returning the score to the Desk and the desk staff promptly posting it. IMPORTANT: every minute delayed handling is a minute added to your day!!
- Make necessary adjustments to events if there is time constraint/rain
- 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
- Have incident reports available in case of serious injuries. If an injury occurs during play, fill out an incident report and pass on to Pickleball Canada. Ensure the Concussion policy and protocol is followed.
- Have an updated official USAP International Rulebook on site

After the Tournament

- Pay your bills promptly
- Submit results within 5 days so the results can be uploaded. The reporting can be easily completed automatically through the reporting capabilities of the Tournament Management Software.
- Conduct an After-Activity meeting of your tournament committee to identify the successes, failures and recommended changes.
- Your committee may want to conduct a survey players and volunteers and seek their input for improvements
- Keep All documentation/paper on brackets and results until all result posting completed by the Pickleball Canada Tournament Chair

Weather - Safety

The Tournament Director will ensure the following safety conditions are maintained:

Weather Conditions

Extreme weather conditions (lightning, wind, rain, weather warnings) may be declared before the start of matches or may be put into effect at any time on all courts. Once notified that extreme weather conditions have been declared, officials will inform players immediately and play shall be suspended.

- When the weather is no longer considered extreme, matches can continue.
- Generally, heat conditions are considered to be extreme when the Heat Index (a combination of air temperature and relative humidity) meets or exceeds 34.0°C (93.2°F), as indicated by the chart below.
- When the Heat Index meets or exceeds 40.1°C (104.2°F), all play shall be suspended.
- However, the tournament director may use his/her judgment and declare that extreme weather conditions are in effect at a lower Heat Index if he/she feels that the safety of the players justifies doing so.

Air Quality Safety Guidelines

Player health and safety is a high priority, thus it is recommended to err on the side of caution if ever in doubt in any situation regarding the health and safety of players, volunteers, spectators and officials.

These guidelines:

1. Serve as guidance for member organizations and participants
2. Suggests what participants and organizers should consider in assessing air quality at Pickleball Canada events and awareness of potential health impacts, and
3. Provide additional information about the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) and where the AQHI can be found online.

Guidelines

Step 1 - Go to https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/index_e.html

Note: use the appropriate provincial website and links to cities.

Step 2 - Find the location; note the station, time, and date, and index calculation. Note: index is normally updated hourly (at the top of the hour) and suggested to use the index calculation that is within one hour of scheduled match time.

Step 3 - Games and Tournaments: If the AQHI is “7” or higher recommended to postpone/reschedule or if necessary, cancel matches or tournament. If the AQHI is still above “7” at the rescheduled start time, the tournament director should consider delaying or canceling the match(es).

Important note: the Tournament Director reserves the final right to cancel the match if the conditions are considered dangerous, in their opinion. If air quality changes dramatically during a match (e.g. sudden smoke event caused by wind direction and Tournament Directors are advised to use their discretion.

Be aware of weather and other conditions:

- a. Current forest fires and their locations in the province.
- b. Local burning of stubble on fields or agricultural fields – these can increase particulate matter in the air without impacting the AQHI for a city.
- c. Sudden and dramatic changes in wind strength and direction.

Court Conditions

Pickleball Canada recommends building structure and surface conditions be considered during all events. Tournament Directors may deem conditions unsafe and cancel play based on slippery surfaces, or unsafe play surfaces and structures surrounding the event.

Rest Periods

The following guidelines should be observed in order to ensure proper pace of play and rest between matches:

- Between matches, players shall be entitled to a reasonable rest period.
- Between the Gold Medal match and Tie-breaker match, 10 minutes rest will be given.

The Tournament Director has the authority to modify the above guidelines in view of special circumstances (time constraints, weather, other factors), respecting players' safety.