



Peter Milovanovic

This is my first opportunity to introduce myself to you. I've been playing pickleball for about six years. From the first day I started playing, I noticed that the people I met were extraordinarily friendly, helpful and encouraging. The community was super forgiving of my rushed and erratic shots and patiently taught me to play better. I felt the need to give back and, in that spirit, volunteered at the Ontario Provincial Tournament that was being held in my community. I felt I had more to contribute and when a notice came that Pickleball Ontario was looking for Directors, I put my name in. One thing led to another and here I am at Pickleball Canada. I've been fortunate to work with some amazing colleagues and while I've backed into this role as your President, I assure you that I will do everything I can to help guide and sustain our organization.

As I write this, it's late January and too late for new year wishes but I'm sure that like me you're looking forward to another great year of pickleball across the country.

We hit a significant milestone in 2022 when we ended the year with 46,000 members an increase of not quite double over 2021's 28,000. Membership numbers dropped on January 1, due to renewal time as happens each year, but are recovering quickly.

Since its inception in fall of 2021, the Pickleball Coach Education program has trained over 500 instructors. In addition, we have 22 Certified Referees, 101 Level 2 and 99 Level 1 officials and we have sanctioned 35 tournaments in 2022. Our sport is growing in communities across the country. New clubs and new facilities are coming online weekly. These are exciting times.

There are also challenges to rapid growth. One of the biggest is finding places to play. Local communities and in many cases individual champions have worked with other volunteers and municipalities to lobby, fundraise, apply for grants to repurpose old courts or have new courts constructed. Pickleball Canada recently convened a National Pickleball Advisory Council meeting to share promising practices in developing facilities. Representatives from Vernon BC, Edmonton AB, Kenora ON, Valleyfield QC and Fredericton NB shared strategies they used to lobby, work with municipal staff and/or fundraise. PCO is developing a web resource of best practices and will continue to curate and share resources as we learn about them.

Another challenge of growth is that others are seeking to monetize the new interest in pickleball as a source of

revenue. I particularly want to acknowledge and thank our provincial territorial partners and our members who stood firm in the face of Tennis Canada's plans to host an APP event in Montreal without including us as partners. As a follow up, members of our Sport Committee - Alan Thomson, Barry Montgomery and Carla Anderson - are holding meetings with each of the pro tours to see if we can work together to plan for and host an event next year in Canada.

There are many high-profile news stories about the abuse and maltreatment of athletes in sports. Most recently a CBC article highlighted the calls from sports academics and athletes for the creation of an inquiry to investigate "widespread reports of sexual, physical, and psychological abuse of athletes throughout the nation's sport system." While we are young as a sport, we are not immune to these issues. Your Board of Directors and Provincial/Territorial leaders are looking into adopting the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS) and revising our policies to reflect these standards across all our organizations. Sport Canada expects all funded sports to sign agreements with the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC). Pickleball Canada intends to sign such an agreement in the near future, even though we do not yet receive funding. We think it is the right thing to do to protect our members and our organizations.

Looking ahead into 2023:

Under the leadership of Dave Best, the Board's Governance Committee together with representatives from the provincial organizations are working together to align our bylaws with the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act and the Canadian Sport Governance Code. More information will be coming to members this spring.

We've recently refreshed the Pickleball Canada website to make it easier for visitors to find information and resources. A revised page layout and main menu allows for easier access to our most visited pages and important information for pickleball players in Canada. The addition of a rotating news carousel allows us to share eye-catching updates on national and provincial/territorial programs and events. All content on our website has been reviewed, with more updates and additional pages on the way.

We are also very excited to begin rolling out a Volunteer Recognition Program to highlight the incredible contributions of volunteers across the country. To start, a Volunteer Spotlight form will be available on the Volunteer page on our website, where you are encouraged to submit brief stories about the volunteers you think deserve to be recognized.

Maybe you want to thank the local hero who keeps your courts clean and organized, or maybe you want to recognize the efforts of the volunteers that work tirelessly to keep your club operating. We want to hear about them all and share their contributions on our website, social media, and newsletters. Stay tuned for an update when the form is available.

Pickleball is a sport that brings people together in community. We are blessed to have passionate and dedicated volunteers in communities across the country who do the ordinary and extraordinary things to make sure that courts are open, that play is organized, that lessons are taught, that newsletters are written, and on and on. You are one big reason our sport is growing so rapidly.

Sincerely,

Peter Milovanovic
President, Pickleball Canada



Steve Deakin

We are excited to see what you have planned. How have you and/ or do you plan out your year?

I have an extremely busy schedule this year. I lost a full year of competition late 2021 to late 2022 with injury. I have been fortunate to extend my contract with the PPA until the end of 2024 and to be drafted to an MLP team. I have 28 events planned for 2023. I planned to dive in hard this year to establish myself as a top 15 player. I am currently 26 after just returning to play in October 2022 so I feel strongly I can obtain this goal in the next 3 months. I want to end my career on a high so this played a huge part in how I planned this season of play.

How are you deciding which tournament you will play in?

I will play 20 PPA events, 6 MLP events, Picklefest (Canada's Premier Team Event) and Canadian Nationals.

The decision to play these events is mostly due to contractual obligations. It's a very busy schedule but I love it.

You are a high level player and coach, what are some common errors you see in rec play, and what New Year's resolutions should we be making to raise our games?

This is a question I am asked often. I find many players in Rec lose focus easily. This can lead to sloppy play as far as shot selection, court positioning, basic shot execution, etc. is concerned. Uncharacteristic errors creep into play for many. I have practiced with people that have the attitude of "it's only Rec and it doesn't matter". I completely understand wanting to go out with your friends and have some fun but don't be fooled that this does not mean it's time to get lazy. Possibly use this time to work on a specific part of your game that needs improvement. If you are the strongest player on the court, use the time to work on your soft game. If you find yourself behind a step or two from your opposition, use the time to figure out a different strategy that could turn everything around.

As far as what I would like to see for a New Year's resolution, here it is and it may not be popular with most, but it is the only way to raise your game to the next level (in my humble opinion of course haha). Drill more, play less. You could have the greatest sports mind on the planet and know what shot to hit but not be able to execute it under pressure. I drill 80% and play 20%. This ratio switches when I have an event that is one week out. Remember, you can make drilling fun and competitive. Get creative. Whether it's keeping score in a game play scenario drill, counting consecutive shots without an error, or hitting to a designated target zone, drill with purpose.

Do you have any goals or things you want to avoid this year?

My goal this year is very simple. Obtain a top 15 world ranking again by the end of April and then reevaluate.

I want to avoid any injury that can sideline me for extended periods of time.

We saw that you are a member of the Texas Ranchers in the MLP Challenger League. Can you please explain more about this league and your team.

I was super excited to be drafted to the Texas Ranchers with Pat Smith, Lee Whitwell, and Genie Erokhina. MLP is short for Major League Pickleball. This league is team-based play and consists of 2 male and 2 female pro players. There are

12 teams in the Challenger League. Our first event in Jan 26 in Mesa, AZ. Teams are split into 3 groups of 4 teams each. A round robin is played within each group. The top 2 teams from each group advance to the playoffs. The bottom 2 teams from each group are done until the next event in March. I absolutely love this team format that uses rally scoring and a variety of men's, women's, mixed doubles, and even some singles matches if necessary to break ties. It is a nice change of pace from the grind of tour play and a great way to see new partnerships that typically don't play together on tour stops.

And of course our young reader has a couple of questions. Question #1 - As a junior player, how should I approach the year, which is going to be full of both wins and losses?

That's a great question. I have found myself taking more losses than I would like during my injury comeback. I have always found that I learn more from a loss than I do from a win. Although wins can really help gain confidence and momentum in a long season filled with ups and downs. Celebrate your wins. Learn from the losses. Figure out what you did well and what could use a tad bit more work after every match you play. I guarantee you will be able to turn some of those past losses into future wins by working hard on your game!

Question #2 - How did you come up with the names of "Peter" & "Oliver"?

When we got Peter as a puppy, he was so friendly to everyone. So we came up with the name "Peter the Greeter". I also thought it was funny to name Peter with a common human name. So many people laugh when they ask his name. When we got Oliver as a puppy, he ate everything in site. So, we came up with the name "Ollie (Oliver when he is being bad) the Eater".



The Technical/Tactical Connection

Mark Renneson

One of the misunderstandings that many people have has to do with the relationship between tactics (sometimes thought of as strategy) and technique. In most cases, people think that when they are in a pickleball lesson they are either working on one or the other. In fact, you will often see lessons given a theme like Pickleball Strategy or Third Shot Drop Technique. This framing clearly suggests that each is independent of the other.

One of the things that distinguishes Canada's national pickleball coach education program is the unique way that it pushes back against this conception of technique and tactics as being mutually exclusive. Instead, we see them as irreconcilably connected. Let me explain.

Technique is not good for its own sake. Unlike a sport like diving, gymnastics or synchronized swimming, you don't win a pickleball point because your form is good or measures up against some idealized version of what should be. You win a point because you put the ball and play once more than your opponents. The way we see technique is that it is a tool that allows us (or doesn't) to apply specific tactics when we play pickleball. For example, the grip we use when holding the paddle is good only if it allows us to do what we want with the ball. This is the same for other technical fundamentals like the set up, impact point and the recovery. Technique is a tool that, we hope, allows us to implement specific tactics. Its value is instrumental in nature and is derived only from its utility.

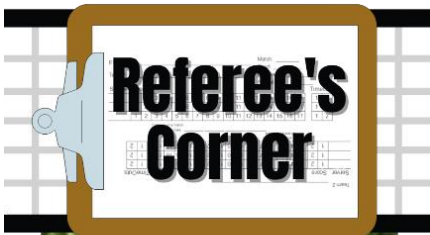
So, technique and tactics or strategy exist in a constant dialogue with one another. We can't answer the question: What technique should I use? until we first answer the question: What am I trying to do with the ball? How we should use our body and paddle is a function of the outcome we are looking for. And since technique and tactics are so connected, we can't really work on developing one without at least some consideration of the other.

As pickleball advances and tactics change, technical skills change as well. To me, that is one of the exciting things about coaching – that the evolution of the sports forces us to rethink how and what we teach.

So when someone asks if their lesson is about technique or tactics, we think the answer should be – Yes!

Mark Renneson is Tennis Canada's Head of Pickleball Coach Education. He oversees Canada's National Pickleball

Instructor Certification Program which is a joint project between Tennis Canada and Pickleball Canada. He can be reached at mrenneson@tenniscanada.com



Referee Investments

Alan Thompson

Pickleball Canada is investing in the Referee Program across Canada. They have approved an Officiating Budget in excess of \$32K for 2023. The big news for Credentialed Referees is that PC will pay a \$200.00 per diem if you meet the following criteria when refereeing at one of their major events, Eastern, Central, or Western Regional Tournaments, and of course the National Championship. Those four events only!

- Must live and travel more than 150 km from the event location and not be competing as a player.
- Must officiate 8 matches per day averaged over the tournament, double elimination format only
- Per diem is intended to compensate referees traveling and working every day of the tournament.

In concert with the per diem for Referees attending those PC major events, they have approved a budget to pay for travel and living expenses to have their National Leader of Officiating (or a designee) attend each of these major tournaments.

NOTE: 2023 Pickleball Canada Major Events

- Nationals – Regina SK – August 23 – 27
- Western Regionals – Medicine Hat AB – July 6 – 9
- Central Regionals – TBA
- Atlantic Regionals – TBA

The approved budget also covers a few other items:

- Pickleball Canada Certified Referee Shirts – 1 each on becoming Certified
- New ID Cards with magnets for all Credentialed Referees
- Class Marker and Zoom licence all to support the Officiating Program

This will also hopefully provide the incentive for more people to consider taking up Refereeing, and ultimately becoming a credentialed Referee, which is recognized across North America.

Provincial Head Referees and representatives on the PCO Officiating Advisory committee have been requested to submit similar budget requests to their respective Provincial

& Territorial organizations to assist Referees travelling & Refereeing at Provincial/Territorial Championships. I am happy to report that British Columbia has approved that in their 2023 budget.

Reach out to your Provincial representatives and ask about how to get started in the program or better still, go to the PCO website which has a wealth of information waiting for you...

<https://pickleballcanada.org/officiating/officiating-program/>

A notice was recently sent to all Level 2 & Certified Referees in Canada requesting applicant to fill the Referee Training Coordinator & Certified Referee Coordinator (RTC & CRC) positions in each of the three regions. I'm very happy to announce that all positions have been filled.

- **Eastern** - QC, NL, NB, PE, NS.
 - RTC - Reg van Drecht (CR)
 - CRC - Isabelle Gauthier (CR)
- **Central** - ON, MB, SK, NU.
 - RTC - Paul Aquin (Lev 2)
 - CRC - Karen Hill (CR)
- **Western** - AB, BC, YK, NT
 - RTC - Sharon MacDonald (Lev 2)
 - CRC - Roger Carrier (Lev 2)

These people will play a key role in moving us closer to a fully functioning Referee Program in Canada. Particularly the next and final step, establishing an Evaluation Program to Certify Referees to the highest standards. I don't want to give the impression that we will be issuing credentials to Certified Referees in the next few months. This process has several challenges that must be overcome, not the least of which is identifying, and training evaluators who must complete a demanding training program, be willing to travel, conduct evaluations and when required, give the candidates the bad news that they have not made the grade. These positions are generally filled by the best and most experienced Referees, and with only 22 CR's across Canada you can begin to understand some of the challenges in standing up a fully reciprocal program with USA Pickleball.

Hope to see you on the courts in 2023!

Significant Rule Changes for 2023
Alan Thompson

These rule changes were effective on the 1st of January 2023 and have been a topic in most Pickleball magazines and articles, but here it is again for all you PC SCOOP readers! The Rule changes for 2023 are the fewest and least impactful that we have seen in a few years. This may be a sign that we are more comfortable with how people are playing the game, and how the rules are being applied in both Officiated, and non-Officiated matches.

- Apparel (2.G.1/2.G.4)
 - Inappropriate apparel may now include apparel that approximates the colour of the tournament ball. Section 1 encourages players to avoid wearing apparel that approximates the colour of the ball. The Tournament Director retains the right to require an apparel change during a non-chargeable time-out.
- Spin Serve (4.A.5.e/4.A.7.c)
 - Spin serves of any type are NOT allowed. Some natural rotation of the ball when it is released is allowable, but the server must NOT impart manipulation or spin prior to striking the ball to serve. This applies to the volley serve and the drop serve.
- Replay or Fault on the Serve (4.A.6/4.A.8)
 - The Referee has the authority to immediately stop play and order a replay if the Referee is not certain that one more required elements of a serve have been met. The Referee will call an immediate fault if a serve clearly violates one or more of the requirements. The intent is to induce players to adjust their serve so that it clearly and obviously meets all requirements.
- Player Questions about Correct Server, Receiver or Position (4.B.8)
 - Player questions about correct server, receiver or position remain allowed before the serve is hit. A generic question by the server such as “Am I good?” is considered to encapsulate both the correct server question and the correct position question, and the Referee will answer both questions. In non-officiated play, a player may ask the opponents the same questions and the opponents must respond with the appropriate information.
- Wrong Score Called (4.K)
 - If the wrong score is called, the Referee or any player may stop play before the return of serve to correct the score. It is a fault to stop play after the return of serve to identify or ask for a score correction. It is a fault to stop play to

identify or ask for a score correction when the score was correctly called.

- Equipment Time-Out (10.D)
 - Players are not required to use a regular time-out for equipment adjustments or changes necessary for fair and safe continuation of the match. The Referee will call an equipment time-out of a reasonable duration.

I think you will agree that whether you are a player or a Referee these are the least significant rule changes that we have seen in the past few years. A positive step forward for Pickleball.

Remember! The rules are effective as of the 1st of January 2023!



Risk vs. Reward Opinion by Wayne Kerr

Pickleball is filled with many risks and we should be trying to minimize them most of the time. Just hitting the ball a little too high can send it long or provide an easy putaway. Don't get me wrong, without taking some risks there will be very few rewards. However, I believe most of us can manage our risks better. As you will discover later in the article, a player's skill level may also factor into the level of risk they can or should take. Hitting winners is exhilarating, but most matches at every level are won or lost by the number of errors made. When someone describes their come from behind victory do they usually say 'we pounded our way to victory' or 'we stopped making errors'? It is almost always the latter in my experience.

You can increase your chances of winning a point or game by playing higher percentage shots. As a former tournament tennis player, I tended to think in terms of 'margin of error' during matches. In pickleball I find 'risk vs reward' to be more appropriate. In either case I've muttered or thought to myself, "That was a dumb shot." far too often to count.



Let's use a third shot drop as an example. Imagine for a minute that you are a 5.0 level player who can execute high quality third shot drops nine times out of ten (ten out of ten on a good day, since we're dreaming). You are comfortable targeting your opponent's weaker backhand with a third shot drop. The target for this drop shot is

smaller and over the higher part of the net, despite that you will make a quality shot at least eight times out of ten. This causes trouble for your opponent who, in this situation, pops up an attackable ball or makes an outright error half the time. In my opinion the extra risk is worth the reward, especially since in those rare instances when your dropshot is not successful you don't concede a point, just a loss of serve. Remember, the score, the quality of your opponent's return, the wind conditions, etc. can and will influence even a top level player's decision to attempt this shot.

Now, let's say you are a good 3.5 or average 4.0 level player. Realistically, you can execute a good quality third shot drop seven times out of ten (more on a good day, I'm sure). Shrinking your target and going over the higher part of the net drops the odds of success even lower. Your opponent still has a weak backhand you could exploit. However, the risk of failure may have become greater than the reward. In this situation, executing a safer drop shot may be the prudent choice. Does that mean you should never try the riskier shot? Of course not. There are many reasons to go for it. You might have an easy return to work with, your confidence is high, the score is one-sided, it's a rec game and practice is more important than winning and you're challenging yourself to improve, etc.

It is important to keep in mind that the smaller the target, the higher the risk. Smashing the ball toward the center of the court involves less risk than aiming at the sidelines since you can miss your intended target by quite a lot and still have it land inbounds. Same reward, less risk. Dinking a ball that lands well inside the sideline will usually produce the same result as one that lands on or near the line and you have a much lower margin of error (old habits).

Serving the ball hard and deep into the backhand corner of your opponent may produce an error or weak return, but conversely, he or she may still hit a quality return while you have increased the chances of missing your serve wide or long. Should you risk doing it? This is up to you. There are many considerations that could factor into your decision. How important is this point? Are you winning or losing? Are you the first or second server? Is it early or late in the game? Does your team have momentum or are you trying to gain back momentum? Ultimately, is the risk worth the reward? If you deem that it is, go for it. I wish you the best of luck.

In my opinion, taking risks are among the most enjoyable aspects of pickleball. Hitting a hard overhead smash comes with the risk of error but is very satisfying when successful. Conversely, committing fewer errors can also be quite gratifying and often rewarding. Next time you make an error consider the 'risk vs reward' aspect of the shot you just played. You can decide whether a larger or easier target may have been a better choice. Remember, we learn from our mistakes. Pickleball is the most fun you can have on any court.

Party on, my pickleball friends!



Concussion Awareness

Pickleball Hamilton

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. How you move on the court, how you retrieve a lob, and your pickleball footwear are all factors that, when not given appropriate attention, can lead to serious accidents.

Pickleball Hamilton has created a series of short videos that outline concussion risks and prevention in pickleball. Head to their website by clicking the logo to the right to watch the videos and learn more about this important topic.





Contributors:

Peter Milovanovic
Steve Deakin
Mark Renneson
Alan Thompson

Wayne Kerr
Pickleball Hamilton
Carla Anderson
Kaitlyn Green



On the lookout for Contributors

We would love to share your stories, club events, photos, news, etc. Let us know if you have any ideas for content that would serve our membership.

We invite you to contact Kaitlyn Green
at scoop@pickleballcanada.org

We know you are out there, and we are looking forward to hearing from you!