



Message from the President Val Vollmin

2024 has been a year of steady growth and change in the world of pickleball. Pickleball Canada has seen tremendous growth in the last couple of years, going from 38,848 on December 3, 2022 to 82,682 today.

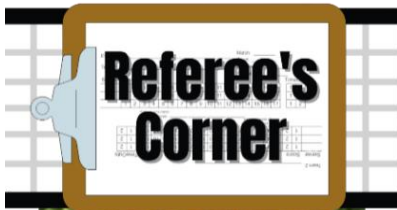
Since August the Finance & Risk Committee has been working diligently to make sure that the insurance coverages offered to PCO members and stakeholders is the best available in the marketplace, at a competitive price. After seeking and receiving input from the Provincial organizations, corresponding with seventeen different National Sport Organizations and engaging two independent consultants to review and comment on current coverages, PCO went out to the general market for updated quotes. We are in the final stages of negotiating with the insurers on our 2025 policies and we are pleased with the enhancements that will be introduced in the new year.

I was happy to be able to attend the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Phoenix last month for the Global Pickleball Federation (GPF) and I am excited to see the progress they continue to make. The GPF currently has 52 member countries and they have the goal of seeing pickleball at the Olympics in 2032. Pickleball truly is a global sport!

Wishing everyone a great 2025 filled with lots of laughter and good competition on the courts!

Val Vollmin





Officiating Maintenance Program: Continued Discussions

Alan Thomson

The PC Maintenance Program has been a topic mentioned in our last two Officiating Scoop articles. Open link if you would like to see the March edition... <https://pickleballcanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/March-Scoop-EN.pdf>

When this program was initially discussed at the Officiating Advisory Council (OAC) meetings, each of the Provincial Head Referees anticipated that several Referees would likely not continue in the program, as they had not been actively Refereeing nor keeping current with the updates to both the rules and best practices

What was not anticipated is the number of Referees who have been actively Refereeing and doing a great job on the court, to now not want to subject themselves to oral questioning and the vetting process now in place, which is intended to verify that Referees are able to perform at the standards of their currently held credentials. Achieving your credentials is not an easy process, so I can only assume that it has not been an easy decision to let them lapse, but one a concerning number of Referees are making. Why? And what can be done to change this?

I see only a couple of paths to resolution... 1) Curtail the program? 2) Convince those who are reluctant that the vetting process is not as difficult as being thought, and 3) Stay the course, as the maintenance program is required to ensure the validity of the Canadian Officiating Program.

Curtailing the program

Pickleball Canada and the members of the OAC do not see this as a viable solution to the problem. The maintenance program was instituted to circumvent a bigger concern... Canadian Referees being perceived to be less capable than their US counterparts.

Vetting not as difficult as being thought

The OAC would like to convince you that this is not a difficult process! If you are a Referee who is actively Refereeing several

times per year, and you are keeping current with changing rules and best practices and taking the online quizzes, you will **NOT** have a problem with the 5 questions being asked. The intent is not to outright fail someone, but rather point out areas of weaknesses so that those can be rectified. Those asking the questions will be working with you, not against you. There are a few people now in the process who have not responded to the questions as well as we would have hoped, but they are studying and will be given another opportunity to be successful.

Stay the course, as it is required to ensure the validity of the program

After working hard to achieve a reciprocal credentialing program with USA P we knew that meeting and maintaining the performance standard for each Referee was going to be a challenge, as we have less opportunities to get on the court and practice our trade. The OAC had an immediate concern... ensuring that our program was every bit as good as USA P and that anyone receiving credentials in Canada would be fully capable of Refereeing in the US to the expected standards. Our worst-case scenario has been, receiving a call from USA P saying that one of our Referees, is now in the US Refereeing and not performing to expectations! Unfortunately, I must report that only a few days ago, this scenario played out and those concerns were expressed by USA P. The good news is, there are a few mitigating circumstances, and we are working to resolve this issue and alleviate those overall concerns. USA P realizes that the standards vary across both countries in all Provinces and States, and that continual monitoring and discussions will be required. To that end, USA P is very interested in our program and considering instituting a similar one to help negate like problems across their 50 states.

I see one other question being asked, "Why don't we just have a Canadian Program?"

As you all know, Pickleball is arguably the fastest growing sport and continues to adjust annually. The Pickleball Federation of the America's (PFA) stood up a number of months ago, and the Global Pickleball Federation (GPF) continues to make inroads to having one Global organization. As Pickleball Canada's Head Official I am working on a committee to standup the GPF's Officiating Program, with the eventual goal of having each country train, assess, and certify their Referees to one standard.

I'm sure that the difficulties we are experiencing now will pale to those the GPF will have to navigate.

One last comment for those that believe we may have gone too far in our expectations of what a Pickleball Referee should know and be able to do during a match. Players are paying a considerable amount of money, with some tournaments even offering cash prizes. We believe that expectations have been set and that the players now demand only the best from the Refereeing group. The Myoflex® Canadian Pickleball Championships held in Halifax this past summer was a very successful event with nearly 900 players and a Referee crew of 20 Certified & 25 Level 2 Credentialed Referees working 2800 matches over the 5 days. The Professionalism of this group was evident throughout the tournament and many players expressed their appreciation for their attendance, long hours, and attention to detail, in some cases after 10 or 12 hours of work.

Whether you are an Official in the Program, or a player with a strong opinion one way or the other, we would appreciate hearing from you... officiating@pickleballcanada.org



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Pickleball Canada Celebrates 80,000 Members

In mid November, Pickleball Canada reached 80,000 members.

This achievement would not have been possible without the tireless support from Pickleball Canada's incredible group of dedicated volunteers, sponsors, officials, board members, and members who have all played key roles in developing the sport in Canada.

Val Vollmin, President of Pickleball Canada said. "Reaching this milestone in membership is a reflection of the passion, dedication, and teamwork that drives our community. Every new member strengthens our foundation, and together we grow the sport of pickleball".

Pickleball Canada would like to thank their phenomenal members who continue to support each of Pickleball Canada's initiatives to help grow the sport!

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Time to Renew your membership

Don't forget! It's time to renew your Pickleball Canada membership for the 2025 year!

Need a reminder of all the benefits for your membership [click here](#) to check them out!



Are you following Pickleball Canada's social media?

Stay up to date with all of Pickleball Canada's news and updates by following Pickleball Canada's social media platforms.



Pickleball Canada



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Looking for some pickleball gifts this Holiday Season?

Head to the official Pickleball Canada storefront to check out our [new releases](#).



Creating the River John Pickleball Park: It Took a Village

Contributed by River John Pickleball Club

Home to 135 members, the new pickleball park in River John, NS is an example of how a project takes a village to make it a reality.

It started in January 2022 with a question posed on a community Facebook page to gauge interest in a pickleball

facility. The post received uptake and 10 exuberant volunteers soon:

- Created a Board of Directors and registered River John Pickleball Club as a not-for-profit,
- Partnered with the Royal Canadian Legion River John Branch 108 to build the courts on their picturesque property, and
- Strategically considered how to finance the endeavour and conducted outreach, eventually receiving financial support from all levels of government, businesses, community groups and individuals.

The result: a three-court outdoor facility that's equipped for Para Pickleball – 48" gates, 6' walkways and extra space around the courts; a renovated, accessible washroom facility; a shade shelter; ample seating; an AED; and electricity for the washrooms and future lighting.



The Club fosters a welcoming environment and sense of belonging, and the facility serves as a gathering place for exercise and socialization – good for body, mind and spirit.

A huge debt of gratitude is owed to our 'village' – members, sponsors, donors, supporters, partners and volunteers – for giving time, money and/or expertise to bring the River John Pickleball Park to fruition in May 2024





Contributors

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Alan Thomson
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Elizabeth Werner
River John Pickleball Club



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 Elizabeth Werner at scoop@pickleballcanada.org

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