



Meeting of the NATIONAL PICKLEBALL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 6:00 PM, ET

Video Conference

Discussion Notes

Attendees:

Charity Christianson	Alberta	Marilyn Barrington	Saskatchewan
Lisa Hardy	Alberta	Glenn Stumborg	Saskatchewan
Ted Fardoe	MB	Sean Booth	Yukon
Don Johnston	NS	Ron Marion	President (Chair)
Jonathon Moody	Ontario	Alden Briggs	Pickleball Canada
Doris Dunphy	Prince Edward Island	Barry Petrachenko	Executive Director
Marcel Gagnon	Quebec	Terri Boizard	Support Staff
Michel Pingret	Quebec	Philippe Germain	Interpreter
Nadine Boutin	Quebec		

Regrets:

David Snell	BC	Nicole Carlson	NFLD
Marie-Camille Roussel	New Brunswick	Deanna Christie	Ontario

R. Marion called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm ET.

Chair's Opening Comments

R. Marion welcomed everyone.

Meeting Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and there were no comments or questions.

Discussion Notes – Previous Meeting

There were no comments or questions about the notes of the previous meeting.

Update from Board of Directors

R. Marion provided Board updates, including an overview of the upcoming Board elections. Luc Grenon has advised that he will not seek re-election. A total of five Director positions will be elected, with four positions serving three-year terms and one position serving a two-year term.

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An update was also provided regarding the Board's adoption of the Sport Integrity Policy Suite (SIPS), which is currently scheduled to take effect September 1. It was noted that the volume and complexity of issues that may arise could require reconsideration or a possible deferral of the effective date to allow additional preparation and alignment.

R. Marion further noted that the implications of Safe Sport requirements and policies will need to be addressed in the future, including collaboration and MOUs with Provincial/Territorial organizations. This initiative reflects broader changes being adopted across many sport organizations throughout the country.

The importance of maintaining a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment for all participants involved in sport activities was also reinforced.

R. Marion also provided a Sport Commission update, noting that the final report had been filed and did not differ significantly from previous versions. As a result, no major concerns or significant points were identified for further discussion.

It was noted that the government's response to the report appeared to suggest a shift away from an emphasis on elite athlete development and toward broader sport participation; however, it was acknowledged that the organization continues to support both participation and performance pathways.

No questions were raised following the update.

Operations

Operations updates were provided by B. Petrachenko, who shared an overview of current operational highlights. It was noted that a written report is expected to be distributed early tomorrow. B. Petrachenko advised that he is available to answer questions both prior to and following distribution of the report.

R. Marion noted the number of operational matters currently being worked on and inquired whether there was an expectation that reports would be provided on these items.

B. Petrachenko advised that the NPAC will be updated ahead of time in order to allow adequate preparation and background information to be provided before items are formally brought forward, and that a report on some of the current matters under discussion can be expected in the short term.

Council Business

Provincial Highlights and Updates

N. Boutin introduced Michel Pingret as the new President of Pickleball Quebec. R. Marion welcomed Michel and noted that the Council looks forward to working together on future initiatives.

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N. Boutin shared several updates from Quebec, including a recent press conference held in Montreal to announce the Provincial Championships. Ongoing discussions with private clubs across the province were also highlighted, along with efforts to work collaboratively with cities and municipalities to encourage club and player affiliation with the federation. It was noted that there is strong momentum within Quebec, with increased engagement from leagues and clubs, and growing interest from members wanting to be involved in the direction and growth of the sport within the province. High performance opportunities and league development were also identified as important drivers in strengthening affiliation conversations and demonstrating the value of working with the federation.

In response to a question from Jonathon regarding what is driving discussions with private clubs, N. Boutin explained that many clubs did not have a specific reason for not affiliating, which opened the door for productive conversations. High performance programming, player pathways, and federation-supported programs were noted as important tools in building relationships with private clubs. It was also emphasized that federation representatives have attended events hosted by private clubs in an effort to demonstrate collaboration and openness to partnership.

C. Christianson shared updates regarding their Provincial Championships in Alberta, noting strong success hosting the event in a private club facility. Participation has grown significantly, with expectations of more than 700 participants this year compared to approximately 420 the previous year. It was noted that embracing private club partnerships and indoor facilities has created a positive environment that encourages travel and participation. Continued efforts remain focused on increasing buy-in from private and for-profit clubs while balancing the evolving needs of participants.

Additional updates were shared regarding youth and school-based pickleball initiatives. C. Christianson advised that their province will host its first official high school sport tournament on May 23 as part of a pilot initiative, with the long-term goal of incorporating pickleball into high school and eventually middle school sport programming. It was noted that similar scholarship opportunities and school sport growth seen in the United States are encouraging for the future of the sport in Canada.

T. Fardoe advised that Manitoba will also host its second high school tournament, growing from 98 participants last year to 140 participants representing 17 schools this year. While the program is not yet formally integrated into school sport systems, it has received strong endorsement and enthusiasm from schools and students.

Challenges related to singles event participation at Provincial Team Championships were also discussed, with several members noting that singles divisions can be more difficult to fill and may require additional recruitment and promotion efforts.

Discussion also took place regarding youth outreach initiatives, including a planned summer “Pickleball Road Show” involving recreation directors across the province. T. Fardoe noted that 29 recreation directors responded with strong interest in participating in youth clinic programming planned for June, July, and August.

Members concluded the discussion by reinforcing the importance of youth engagement, collaboration with private clubs, and adapting to the evolving landscape of the sport across Canada.

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Strategic Plan 2024-2028 Annual Review for Input

B. Petrachenko presented the Strategic Plan 2024–2028 Annual Review and invited feedback and input from NPAC members. It was noted that feedback gathered through the discussion would help inform both Board discussions and the annual operational planning process. Members were encouraged to share any feedback previously discussed within their respective Boards, although participation in the discussion was not mandatory.

An overview of the current strategic plan progress was shared on screen, with several areas noted as being ahead of the original 2028 timeline. Updates included continued refinement of Safe Sport policies and initiatives, increased collaboration with PTSOs, and ongoing efforts to maximize the sport's popularity to attract partners and strengthen participation opportunities. It was also noted that participation-focused programs continue to remain stable or show growth across the country.

Additional updates included ongoing support for new and existing clubs, the work of the onboarding task team, development of a facilities guidebook, and continued efforts related to officiating, coaching, youth engagement, and pathways to National Championships. Provincial Championship registration numbers were noted as exceptionally strong in several provinces. Information management systems, club support tools, communications, risk management practices, and alignment with Sport Canada funding requirements were also highlighted as active areas of focus.

Partnership development was identified as another key area of growth, including relationships with international organizations, corporate partners, and broader efforts supporting the global development of pickleball. It was noted that the operational report and annual deliverables are directly aligned with the strategic plan objectives and serve as an ongoing reference point for organizational priorities and progress.

L. Hardy noted that youth development and high-performance pathways appear to be missing or understated within the current strategic plan, despite these areas becoming increasingly important across many PTSOs. It was suggested that youth programming should be more clearly identified within future strategic planning discussions. Additional feedback was also provided regarding the facilities toolkit, with a recommendation that future versions include more practical case studies, examples of barriers faced by clubs, and best practices for working with municipalities and facility stakeholders.

In response, B. Petrachenko noted that youth development initiatives are currently referenced within the operational plan under player development activities, but acknowledged that additional discussion is needed regarding organizational capacity for youth programming and youth club development. It was confirmed that youth programming should be considered more prominently in future strategic discussions and that feedback regarding facilities resources and supplementary materials would also be brought forward for future planning considerations.

R. Marion commented that youth development was not prominently reflected in the organization's mission discussions two years ago, but that there is now broad recognition that youth engagement needs to become more central moving forward.

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J. Moody further noted that the evolving role of private clubs within the sport mirrors many of the same changes occurring in youth development and pathways. It was acknowledged that the sport landscape is shifting quickly and that future planning will need to adapt to these changes rather than relying on previous approaches or assumptions.

N. Boutin asked where para programming fits within the current strategic plan. B. Petrachenko responded that para programming was intended to be incorporated broadly within player development and safe, inclusive participation initiatives, but acknowledged that more explicit language regarding para sport participation may be appropriate in future versions of the strategic plan.

Further discussion took place regarding current para programming efforts. B. Petrachenko advised that efforts over the past two years have included attempts to develop programming connected to National events and partnerships with organizations supporting para athletes. While participation numbers in para sport can be smaller and present unique challenges, it was noted that recent events involving integrated programming and partnerships, including work with Easter Seals and programming initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador, represent positive progress. It was also noted that current guidelines support integrated programming opportunities for both able-bodied and para participants.

N. Boutin expressed interest in receiving additional information and support related to para programming initiatives and opportunities moving forward.

Provide para-programming resources to N. Boutin for their use in Quebec

Suggestions of Topics for Next Meeting

Coach development and certification best practices across provinces, including how coaching clinics are delivered, tracked, and standardized, as well as challenges related to deploying coaches to regions with high demand.

Closing Comments

R. Marion thanked members for their participation. A reminder was provided that the AGM will be held on June 25, with strong applications received for the Board of Directors and an election to follow.

It was noted that the Strategic Plan continues to guide organizational initiatives, with further updates to follow. The Annual Report will be included in the AGM package.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 pm ET.

Next meeting: July 14 2026 6pm EST

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