

PICKLEBALL CANADA CLUB ONBOARDING GUIDEBOOK



This Onboarding Club Guidebook was developed in collaboration with Pickleball Canada's Onboarding Procedure Task Team, comprised of administrative leaders from across the country who manage and operate registration systems within their areas of the country.

Thank you for making this happen!



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INTRODUCTION

This Onboarding Club Guidebook provides Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs) with a tool to support the onboarding of affiliated clubs into the Pickleball Canada National System (PCNS). It outlines key processes, system integration steps, and essential administrative considerations for establishing and operating a community club.

This document is designed to support both PTSOs and community based clubs specifically in the non-profit sector as they begin and navigate the onboarding process.



GENERAL DEFINITIONS



OVERVIEW OF THE SECTION

This section provides an overview of key definitions, clarifies the roles of each organization and registration entity, and explains how they are interconnected. It also outlines the primary responsibilities of each entity to support a clear understanding of how they work together.

General Definitions

National Sport Organization

A National Sport Organization (NSO) is the governing body responsible for developing, promoting, and managing a sport at the national level. Pickleball Canada is the recognized NSO for pickleball in Canada, as recognized by Sport Canada.

Provincial/Territorial Sport Organization

A Provincial/Territorial Sport Organization (PTSO) is responsible for developing, promoting, and managing the sport at the provincial or territorial level. This includes organizations such as Pickleball British Columbia, Pickleball Nova Scotia, and Pickleball New Brunswick.

Each affiliated club's primary point of contact for administrative support is its respective PTSO.

Affiliated Club

An Affiliated Club refers to the local community club that has gone through the affiliation process to be within the Pickleball Canada community. There are over 400+ affiliated clubs within Canada today.

[To find the full listing of Affiliated Clubs across Canada please click here.](#)



Registration Definitions

Pickleball Canada National System (PCNS)

The Pickleball Canada National System (PCNS) refers to the centralized national registration platform used by Pickleball Canada. This system serves as the primary hub where individuals join or renew their Pickleball Canada membership. Through the PCNS, member information is securely managed and connected across affiliated clubs, Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs), and the national body.

Pickleball Canada Membership Number

The Pickleball Canada Membership number refers to each member's unique identification number. This is assigned automatically once an individual first joins Pickleball Canada.

AFFILIATION PROCESS



AFFILIATION PROCESS BREAKDOWN

The affiliation process begins when an interested club connects with its PTSO to become an affiliated club with Pickleball Canada.

Once the required steps are completed with the PTSO, Pickleball Canada finalizes the club's affiliation.

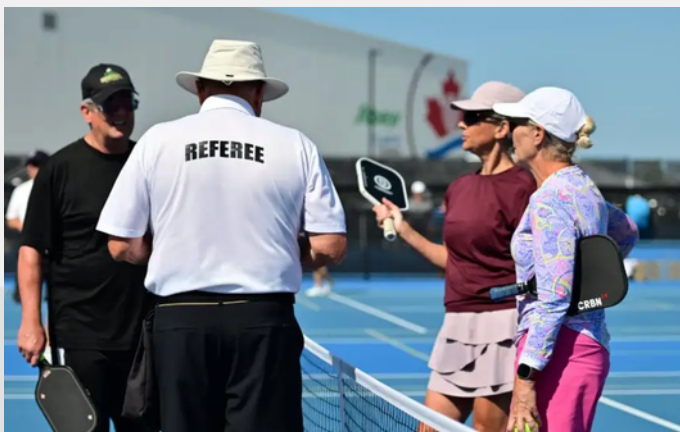
To view the full [Pickleball Canada Affiliation Process](#), please refer to the link.



Benefits of Affiliation

There are many benefits to affiliating with Pickleball Canada. Affiliation provides access to the PCNS, which offers a streamlined communication platform, membership data management, and financial management tools. Affiliated clubs also gain access to Pickleball Canada's Insurance Program, which includes General Liability Insurance coverage.

Outlined below is a summary of key benefits. Please note that these are limited to those provided at the Pickleball Canada level; additional benefits may be available through your PTSO, depending on the province or territory.



Benefits of Affiliation Chart:



Pathway & Program Support:

Becoming an affiliated club with Pickleball Canada connects your organization to the broader Pickleball Canada ecosystem. As part of this network, your club will have direct access to opportunities to participate in new pilot projects, programs, and initiatives introduced by both your PTSO and the national body.

To stay informed about upcoming opportunities and initiatives, be sure to connect with your PTSO for the latest information and updates.



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR AFFILIATION



Making the most of your Affiliation:

Developing a strong foundation is essential to the successful growth and long-term sustainability of your club.

Key areas to focus on when building your organization include understanding Pickleball Canada's Insurance Program, exploring available grant opportunities, becoming a registered non-profit organization and/or society, and establishing a sound financial structure. By putting these elements in place, your club will be better positioned for continued growth and development.



Insurance through Pickleball Canada:

Affiliated clubs benefit from insurance coverage provided through Pickleball Canada as part of the national membership structure.

This coverage is designed to help protect:

- Clubs and their boards
- Volunteers and organizers
- Members and participants
- Club events and activities

Coverage includes:

- General liability protection
- Errors and Omissions Directors & Officers (D&O) liability
- Sport Accident Coverage
- Coverage for club pickleball specific events

Insurance Best Practices:

- Ensure activities are properly registered or recognized as official club activities where required
- Understand the scope of coverage provided
- Follow [incident reporting](#) requirements if needed
- Keep a basic record of sanctioned events and activities such as leagues, lessons, tournaments, and organized play sessions
- Ensure volunteers understand basic safety practices such as checking court conditions and knowing emergency procedures



Example:

If your club hosts a weekly league at a recreation centre, ensure the activity is listed as an official club program or event. If an injury occurs, document the incident and submit a report according to the insurance program guidelines.

For more details on insurance visit the [Insurance Program](#) page on the Pickleball Canada website.



Thinking about being a Registered Non-Profit or Society?

Many pickleball clubs choose to formally register as a non-profit organization (often called a “society” in some provinces). While requirements vary across Canada, incorporation can help provide structure, credibility, funding opportunities, and protection for your club and its volunteers.

Clubs should refer directly to their provincial or territorial government registry for official incorporation requirements and processes.

For more information please refer to your PTSO.



Why Register as a Society or Non-Profit?

Formal registration can provide several benefits that support long-term sustainability and growth:

Credibility and Trust:

Being a registered non-profit demonstrates that your club operates with a clear purpose and transparent governance structure. This can build confidence with members, volunteers, facility partners, municipalities, and community organizations.



Limited Liability Protection:

Incorporation as a society or non-profit generally helps limit personal liability for board members and volunteers acting in good faith on behalf of the organization.

Eligibility for Funding Opportunities:

Many grants, sponsorship programs, and community funding opportunities are only available to formally registered non-profit organizations.

Financial Structure and Accountability:

Operating as a society can make it easier to:

- Open a bank account in the organization's name
- Establish clear financial controls
- Create signing authority processes
- Demonstrate accountability and transparency

Continuity and Sustainability:

A registered organization continues beyond the involvement of any one individual, helping ensure stability as volunteers change over time.

General Steps to Register:

While each province and territory has its own process, most follow a similar pathway:

1. Choose a club name
2. Define your purpose and objectives
3. Develop bylaws or a constitution
4. Identify initial directors (board members)
5. Submit an application to the provincial registry
6. Maintain annual filings and reporting requirements

Clubs should refer directly to their provincial or territorial government registry for official requirements and processes.

Pickleball Canada provides supporting governance resources, templates, and best practices to assist clubs as needed.

Municipal Registration and Local Requirements

Some clubs may also engage with their local municipality or regional government, particularly if they:

- use public recreation facilities
- apply for community grants
- host events or programs
- seek recognition as a community organization

Municipal recognition can provide access to:

- facility booking opportunities
- community grant programs
- promotional opportunities
- partnerships with recreation departments

Requirements vary by community, so clubs should confirm directly with their local municipality where relevant.

Check with Available Governance Resources for Guidance

Because incorporation requirements differ across provinces and territories, clubs should refer to their provincial or territorial government registry for official requirements and processes.

Additional support may include:

- provincial registry information
- governance templates and examples
- policy development resources
- funding and organizational guidance

For more information surrounding resources and guidelines please reach out directly to your PTSO.



Registration System Overview

It is important that clubs are set up correctly from the beginning to ensure a smooth onboarding process and effective use of the system.

The PCNS is the primary administrative tool within the Pickleball Canada ecosystem. This registration platform offers a range of tools and features to support clubs in managing and developing their operations.

To get started on how to initially set up your club please refer to [Pickleball Canada's Initial Step up Guidelines](#).



Additional Support

The PCNS is continuously evolving and being enhanced to provide a fully supportive administrative tool for all users on the platform.

The PCNS Knowledge Base offers guidance on:

- Creating events
- Managing communications
- Handling registrations and waivers
- Overseeing overall club management
- Much More

To access the [Knowledge Base](#), please refer to the link provided.



A Strong Foundation Supports Growth

Taking the step to formalize your club helps create stability, improve access to resources, and support long-term development opportunities.

Good governance helps clubs:

- grow participation
- build partnerships
- support volunteers
- access funding opportunities



ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES & ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS



BUILDING A STRONG, SAFE, AND SUSTAINABLE CLUB

Joining Pickleball Canada through your PTSO connects your club to a national sport system supported by Pickleball Canada. Along with programs and opportunities comes a shared commitment to governance practices that help protect your members, volunteers, and the long-term success of your club.

Good governance does not need to be complicated. It means having clear structures, safe sport practices, and transparent processes in place so everyone can focus on enjoying the game through requirements and responsibilities.



Club Bylaws and Governance Structure:

Clear bylaws and policies help clubs operate effectively and transparently.

Common elements include:

- Club purpose and objectives
- Membership categories and eligibility
- Board roles and responsibilities
- Election and voting procedures
- Meeting structure and quorum
- Financial oversight and signing authorities
- Conflict of interest guidelines
- Code of Conduct expectations
- Complaint and discipline processes



Waivers and Participant Agreements:

Participant waivers help ensure members understand the nature of the activity and acknowledge the inherent risks associated with sport participation.

Clubs should ensure:

- Participants complete a waiver prior to participation (A National & PTSO wavier are already built into current registration system)
- Event-specific waivers are used when appropriate and are reviewed periodically and kept current and stored safely.



Practical considerations:

- Include waiver acceptance as part of online registration for any special events where possible
- Store digital records securely with limited access
- Ensure drop-in participants complete a waiver before playing

Example:

The PCNS online registration platform includes a waiver that participants accept during account setup, meaning it only needs to be completed once per season. If your club hosts special events involving youth or non-members, it is recommended to have an additional event-specific waiver to ensure appropriate coverage. For assistance on any additional waivers and/or templates please contact info@pickleballcanada.org

Examples of practical governance approaches:

- Require two board members as signing authorities for payments
- Hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year to elect directors and present financial information
- Record meeting minutes and store them in a shared folder accessible to the board
- Become familiar with the Code of Conduct
- Maintain basic financial records including budget, income, and expenses

Example:

A small club may have a five-person board consisting of a President, Treasurer, Secretary, and two Directors-at-Large who meet periodically to review membership, finances, and programming plans.

For any Bylaw Templates please refer to your PTSO.

Criminal Record Checks (CRCs):

Criminal Record Checks help support a safe and welcoming environment for all participants.

Your PTSO may have specific requirements outlining which roles must complete a CRC, so it is recommended to confirm any provincial or territorial expectations.

Clubs are encouraged to require CRCs for individuals in positions of trust or authority, such as:

- President / Chair
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Board Members / Directors
- Coaches or instructors
- Individuals working with youth or vulnerable participants
- Anyone responsible for finances or decision-making

Suggested good practices unless otherwise stated by your PTSO:

- Renew CRCs every three years
- Keep confirmation that a CRC was completed on file (it is not necessary to keep a copy of the actual record)
- Consider using an online screening provider where available
- Ask volunteers to self-disclose any relevant changes between screening periods

Example:

If your club offers youth programming or beginner lessons, instructors and program coordinators should complete a CRC before the program begins.



Working with Your PTSO

Each PTSO operates within its own provincial context and may provide varying levels of guidance, resources, and support depending on structure and capacity. Clubs are encouraged to develop positive working relationships with their PTSO as part of their broader support network.

PTSOs may provide sport-specific context or provincial alignment in areas such as:

- Governance expectations
- Screening and safe sport requirements
- Policy alignment
- Sanctioning or event approval processes
- Reporting or compliance procedures



Clubs may connect with their PTSO for support or clarification in areas such as:

- Seeking approval or guidance for sanctioned tournaments
- Clarifying insurance or risk management questions
- Understanding applicable provincial or territorial policies
- Aligning club policies with broader safe sport or organizational requirements
- Accessing tools or resources that may be available (e.g., templates or examples, where provided)
- Exploring potential funding or grant-related opportunities, where applicable



Strong Governance = Strong Clubs

With good governance foundations in place, clubs can focus on what matters most:

- Growing the game
- Building community
- Supporting volunteers
- Creating positive experiences for participants

Clear and practical governance including following annual requirements helps clubs operate confidently, reduce risk, and create welcoming environments where members feel safe and supported.



SUPPORT & RESOURCES FOR YOUR CLUB



Resources & Support

Pickleball Canada and each PTSO are here to support your club at every stage, whether you're just getting started or looking to grow and expand your programs.

Your primary point of contact will be your PTSO. For additional information about the PCNS, please visit the [Knowledge Base](#), which is updated regularly with new resources and information.

If you require further assistance, please contact us at info@pickleballcanada.org. We're always happy to help.



Additional Information

Pickleball Canada hopes this document provides helpful guidance and support as your club begins its journey as part of the Pickleball Canada community. Our goal is to make the onboarding process clear, accessible, and supportive for clubs at every stage of development.

If you require additional assistance, please reach out to your PTSO, which can provide region-specific guidance and support. You may also contact Pickleball Canada directly at info@pickleballcanada.org for national-level support or general inquiries.



