



# PICKLEBALL AND TENNIS



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## CREATING AND MANAGING DUAL PURPOSE COURTS

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The Joint Publication, "Pickleball and Tennis: A Solution that Meets the Needs of Both Sports" strongly recommends dedicated pickleball courts to meet the needs of both sports. However, not all communities will be able to provide dedicated pickleball courts initially. An interim solution is to create dual purpose courts in underutilized venues – tennis courts, sport boxes, and other existing facilities.

***This document provides Pickleball BC's recommendations for creating and managing dual purpose courts.***

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### LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

Before determining how many and which tennis courts to dual line, municipalities should consult with community tennis and pickleball representatives. Positive examples of consultation and collaboration have demonstrated that better outcomes are achieved when everyone works together. When looking at dual purposing, municipalities should consider the current court usage, orientation, proximity to residences, parking and other amenities.

Pickleball play usually involves *groups* of players requiring several courts simultaneously - essentially a HUB. A hub is usually considered as 4 (or more) pickleball courts together occupying the space equivalent to 1 tennis court. Pickleball hubs are needed in each community in addition to some 2 pickleball court venues.

### PICKLEBALL COURT LAYOUT

#### ***The Case Against One Pickleball Court per Tennis Court***

- (i) This layout scheme requires pickleball players to use the tennis net. Because a tennis net is higher than a pickleball net, pickleball players will often lower the tennis net by various means. This frequent 'adjustment' could lead to damage and subsequent costs.
- (ii) A tennis net is also wider than a pickleball net. Having to play pickleball using nets that are too high and too wide downgrades the quality of the game and the experience.
- (iii) This layout scheme requires pickleball players to go excessive distances to retrieve errant balls.

The best configuration and orientation for pickleball courts should optimize the number of courts to be realized in a given space.

### ***The Case for Optimizing the Number of Pickleball Courts per Tennis Court***

- (i) Pickleball is played in hubs of four to eight courts and the greater the number of hubs, the greater likelihood that some tennis courts will not have any pickleball court lines on them.
- (ii) Optimizing the number of pickleball courts reduces the frequency of “bumping” players off the courts every 30 minutes. If optimization is not considered, pickleball hubs could “creep” onto the adjacent tennis courts potentially creating unnecessary conflict.
- (iii) Optimizing the number of courts will best meet the needs of both tennis and pickleball players.

### ***Considerations for Optimizing Court Layout***

- (i) The existing tennis net can serve as a barrier between pickleball courts.
- (ii) Pickleball courts are ideally aligned with the tennis court.
- (iii) As much separation of lines as possible is recommended as multiple lines in one area are distracting.
- (iv) Leave gaps where lines intersect.
- (v) The need to provide portable pickleball nets and on site storage.

### **PICKLEBALL LINE COLOUR**

Dedicated courts, whether pickleball or tennis, usually have the playing surface painted a different colour than the surrounding surfaces. The superimposition of a pickleball court onto an existing tennis court/facility usually is accomplished by painting pickleball court *lines* only. It is therefore critically important that the pickleball lines are easily discerned.

Tennis lines are traditionally white so pickleball lines should not be white but a colour offering good differentiation between tennis and pickleball lines. A good choice for the pickleball lines would be a contrasting colour that stands out to the eye when play is in progress.

### **MANAGING DUAL-PURPOSE COURTS**

In Canada, the vast majority of tennis and pickleball are played on public courts. The demand from both sports for public courts has led to pressure for dual purpose courts. Pickleball typically uses dual purpose courts during tennis down times (Monday – Friday between 8 am and 3 pm). Municipalities are happy to see underutilized courts being used on a more consistent basis but the potential for conflict does increase outside of these hours and on weekends. Hours during the weekdays do not meet the needs of those pickleball players who are not able to play during these times nor does it meet the needs of tennis who are looking to play after 3 pm and on the weekends.

Booking systems and priority times help avoid conflict between tennis and pickleball players competing for court time. Booking systems increase court usage and reduce

conflicts but players still drop by the courts to play without booking.

Tennis and pickleball have quite different forms of court usage that are incompatible. Based on a single tennis court, tennis players arrange a match for two or four players. They play for 30 minutes and then relinquish their court to waiting players. Pickleball players typically schedule play for a larger group of players. These pickleball players continuously rotate on and off the pickleball court(s) for two or more hours. Twelve or more pickleball players are not going to come off the pickleball courts after 30 minutes of play and wait 30 minutes while two tennis players play a set of singles. Likewise, 4 tennis players are not going to come off the court after 30 minutes of play, knowing that they'll have to wait 2 hours to play another set of doubles. Further complexities arise if several unrelated pickleball groups occupy the pickleball courts on the tennis court. The individual groups may have players rotating on and off the courts even without factoring tennis into the situation.

To avoid conflict, and frustration, players need to know which days and times the courts will be available for their sport. Court signage must clearly indicate which sport has priority on any given day and time. If applicable, the sign(s) should include directions to courts that have the opposite priority times.

Court usage needs to be evaluated on a regular basis.

## SUMMARY

Before adding pickleball lines to tennis courts, municipalities should:

- (i) First exhaust all efforts to build dedicated pickleball courts.
- (ii) Consult with community tennis and pickleball representatives, particularly in deciding which courts will be single purpose and dual line underutilized tennis courts until such time dedicated PB courts can be built.
- (iii) Consider current court usage, orientation, proximity to residences, parking and amenities.
- (iv) Run acoustical tests before locating pickleball courts in residential areas.
- (v) Consider both pickleball hubs and two court configurations in communities.
- (vi) When adding pickleball lines to tennis courts, ensure:
  - The best configuration to optimize the number of pickleball courts.
  - Pickleball courts are on both sides of the tennis net.
  - Pickleball courts are aligned in the same direction as the tennis court.
  - Pickleball lines are a highly visible contrasting colour to the court surface but should not be white.
- (vii) Use booking systems and/or priority times to help avoid conflict between tennis and pickleball players. Signs must clearly indicate which sport has priority on any given day and time.
- (viii) Consider evaluating court usage on a regular basis.