



HOME IS WHERE THE COURT IS

**HOW TO CREATE A PICKLEBALL
ACTIVATION AT YOUR NEXT MEETING**

VISIT
seattle





Visit Seattle Pickleball Court at PCMA Convening Leaders 2024

THE LOVE IS SPREADING... FAST

Pickleball, born in Seattle, is the fastest growing sport in the U.S. It's accessible. It's easy to pick up. It has a small footprint (relative to other sports). And, it offers a good workout at the same time.

It also makes for an engaging experience in the midst of a business-minded event.

WHY HAVE PICKLEBALL AT A MEETING?

According to recent Microsoft research, breaks between meetings are essential to lessen the stress that many attendees experience when transitioning between back-to-back sessions. The study found that even short breaks allow the brain to “reset” and improve the ability to focus and engage. These pauses in the schedule are more than just the “in between” time; they’re an essential part of the day’s rhythm.

Enter pickleball. It offers a break for attendees, an opportunity for connection, and physical activity. The combination lends itself not only to fun, but is also a beneficial experience for attendees. For Visit Seattle, bringing a pickleball court to PCMA Convening Leaders 2024 was also an intentional choice that brought part of our city’s story to life.

Quick Pickleball Facts



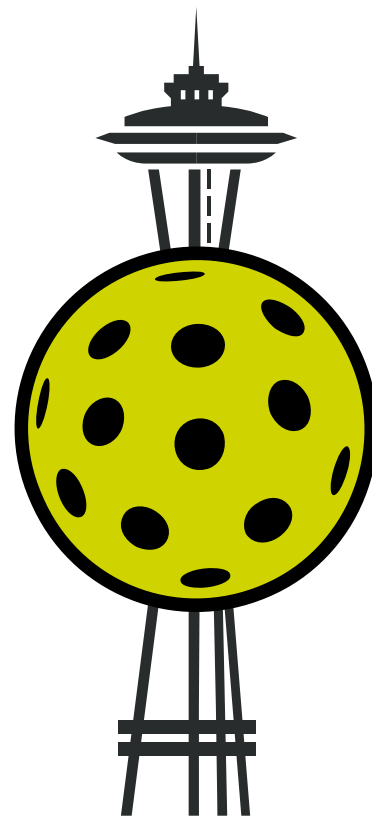
- **There are 36.5 million pickleball players in the United States.** That means more than 1 in 10 people play.
- **There are 10,320 pickleball courts in the United States and Seattle has the most courts per capita in the country.**
- **49% of players are aged 18-54.**
- **By participation, pickleball is third to only running & cycling.**
- **2025 marks the 60th anniversary of the sport.**

WHY IS VISIT SEATTLE ALL ABOUT PICKLEBALL?

Seattle is the birthplace of pickleball.

Originating on Bainbridge Island, a beautiful half-hour ferry ride from downtown, pickleball has been a Northwest favorite before it became “cool.” In fact, Seattle has the highest density of pickleball courts in the U.S. with 20.5 courts per 100,000 people.

So, as the sport’s popularity skyrockets, bringing pickleball to meetings is a great way to remind people to visit Seattle, the place the sport was born (and perhaps why you serve from the Northwest corner of the court).



Did You Know?



In the world of rowing (a big pastime in Seattle), a “pickle boat” is a crew thrown together at random from available rowers who were not selected for other boats. The origin of pickleball involved using leftover equipment from other sports, hence the name.

SERVING FROM THE NORTHWEST CORNER

The Visit Seattle Pickleball Experience at PCMA Convening Leaders: A Case Study

In discussions with PCMA about Convening Leaders 2024, the PCMA team mentioned they were interested in having a pickleball court at the event—and Visit Seattle jumped at the opportunity.



Photo by Whatever Media Group

We created a uniquely—and appropriately—Seattle-themed pickleball court in the middle of The District. The court was outlined by a list of Seattle attractions, while “the kitchen” celebrated the city’s full skyline. Chairs and custom lockers offered spaces for players to take a break and store their belongings during game play. Tall nets lined the perimeter of

the court to protect our neighbors from roaming balls. To ensure anyone could play no matter what their attire, we partnered with Seattle-based Brooks Running to offer shoes attendees could borrow for gameplay (which were donated to a local nonprofit after the show).

Brand Ambassadors kept the courts full throughout the day and offered tips on how to play and trivia about Seattle to those who stopped by. And a giant, branded, inflatable paddle became a beacon for attendees to find their way to the court.

To add some fun and competitive spirit into the court, we programmed a few key matches including Pickle Slam Diego—a match between Leonard Hoops, President & CEO of Visit Indy vs PCMA and CEMA CEO, Sherif Karamat to raise money for the PCMA Foundation.



Photos by Whatever Media Group

The Result?

One of the most talked about activations at a record-breaking Convening Leaders conference.



HERE'S A GUIDE TO BRING PICKLEBALL TO YOUR NEXT MEETING OR EVENT.



THE BASIC CHECKLIST



Overall Space Needs

Talk to the venue about space. The ideal total footprint is 40'W x 60'L. This accommodates the court, room for bystanders, nets, storage, and other items. Heritage was the show vendor at Convening Leaders and helped with the installation and set up of the court graphics. Freeman, GES, or another show provider may be able to help in much the same way.

The Court & Net

A regulation size pickleball court is 20'W x 44'L for both singles and doubles (though we shrunk our court to 20'W x 36'L to accommodate the space we had).

The net height is 36" at each end and hangs to 34" in the middle. A non-volley zone extends 7' back from the net on each side, commonly called "the kitchen." This will need to be marked with tape.

Court Surface

A quality concrete, asphalt, or rubber gym floor all work as court surfaces. Oftentimes you can leverage existing flooring in a venue or buy/rent temporary flooring. The floor decal should be made with an anti-skid material to guarantee durability.

Paddles & Balls

We recommend having about 8 paddles and 10 pickleballs in case you need backups. These are great branding opportunities, but can also be rented.

Perimeter Netting

Be nice to your neighbors. While pickleballs don't bounce as much as a tennis ball, they can still go rogue. We recommend netting that is 10' high around the outside perimeter of your entire space.

For indoor venues, you will need freestanding nets that don't require stakes. These are examples of what you might consider.

Storage & Other

You will need a space to store your paddles and balls if you are hosting a multi-day activation. Think about a locker or simple shelving where you could also offer small amenities like hair ties, tissues, hand sanitizer, water, or hydration packets.



ADD ONS TO CONSIDER



Brand Ambassadors

An empty court can be intimidating. Consider keeping yours lively with a few brand ambassadors who know how to play. Not only will they make it feel like your court is "always on," but they can help teach attendees and share information about your brand. Don't forget to give them branded gear to wear.

Seating/Standing Area

Consider chairs for players to rest or get ready. We developed custom covers for our chair backs to tie them into our experience. If space allows, consider adding a few high top tables or other gathering areas where bystanders can watch.

Shoes

Not everyone comes dressed ready to play at a business event. Consider having shoes for use (which then could be donated to a local organization). Don't forget to provide socks and disinfectant spray for shared shoes!

Signage

How will people find you? Look for opportunities to bring people to your space. We created a giant 14' inflatable that helped people locate our court. Other ideas may include floor stickers that lead people to the court or even simple pull up banners. Be sure to check for potential show height limitations.

Snacks

Pickleball is a workout. Offer beverages and snacks for additional fuel.

Giveaways

Pickleball lends itself to many different types of relevant giveaways. Think balls, paddles, paddle covers, or branded gear ranging from socks to sweatbands.

Other things to keep in mind

You'll need to consider liability requirements, such as insurance and waivers for those participating.



Download a sample liability waiver at visitseattle.com/pickleball-waiver

How You Can Do The Same

We love to bring others along for the ride. As pickleball spreads, so does Seattle's story. And we're all about finding ways for that to happen.

As you plan this experience, here's a quick budgeting checklist to consider.

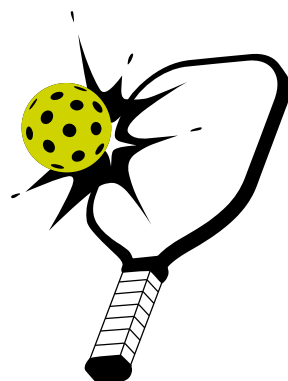
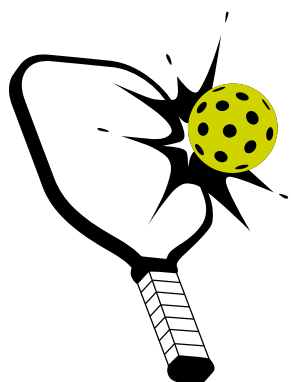
- ☐ Venue space
- ☐ Court decals and install
- ☐ Paddles, netting, and balls
- ☐ Brand ambassadors x # days of the event
- ☐ Branded attire x # of brand ambassadors
- ☐ Storage shelves or lockers
- ☐ Chair and table rental should you want those at the court
- ☐ Signage
- ☐ Giveaways x # of attendees
- ☐ Material handling and labor
- ☐ Shipping to and from event location
- ☐ Cleaning booth space
- ☐ Shoes or other amenities you are providing
- ☐ Liability insurance

We're Here to Help

If you choose to activate pickleball at your meeting or experience, we'd love to help it shine. We have downloadable court graphics you can use, and other materials to help tie your activation to Seattle, the home of pickleball.

Whether it's pickleball or something else, we love helping groups incorporate meaningful interactive moments into their meetings to enhance attendee experience and give events a distinct sense of place. Talk to us about how Seattle can help you create a memorable meeting experience.

Contact our team at visitseattle.com/meetings.



"PICKLEBALL, Y'ALL!"

WHETHER YOU'VE PLAYED OR NOT, HERE'S SOME LINGO THAT WILL MAKE YOU SEEM LIKE AN ACE.

The Kitchen

a.k.a. the Non-Volley Zone

These are the two rectangular boxes that extend 7' from both sides of the net. Players are not allowed to step into the kitchen unless the ball bounces in it first.

Dink

to softly hit a ball from near the kitchen into your opponent's kitchen, attempting to hit an unattackable, short drop.

Body bag

a shot which successfully targets your opponent's body; a body shot.

Nutmeg or 5-hole

hitting a ball that goes through your opponent's legs.

Getting pickled

losing with zero points.

Tweener

hitting a ball through your own legs, particularly when you don't have time to step back for a proper shot.

Nasty Nelson

when the server intentionally hits the non-receiving opposite player with the ball instead of serving to the intended target. Striking that player earns the serving team a point.

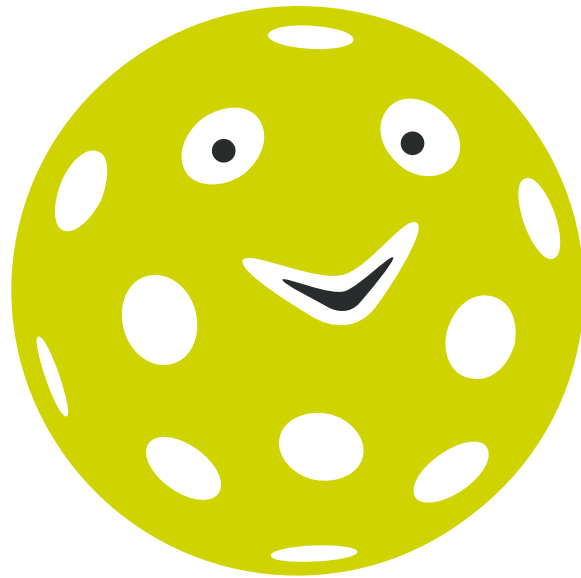
Fly Swatter

hitting a ball down into the net when trying to slam a high ball.

Let Ace, or Lettuced

when your serve hits the top of the net, still lands in, and the returner doesn't get their paddle on the ball, that's a let ace; they've been "lettuced."

**WHO KNEW
A SILLY LITTLE BALL
COULD BRING
SO MUCH JOY?**



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