

How Tennis Clubs are Redoubling their Revenue With Pickleball



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Pickleball: it's like table tennis without the table. Or, you could say it's like ping-pong on a tennis court.

However you put it, pickleball is one of the single fastest-growing sports in the world right now. And believe it or not, this is very, very good news for tennis clubs.

In cities across North America, where the demand for pickleball courts has outpaced the infrastructure, **tennis clubs are cashing in – just by adding pickleball lines to their existing tennis courts.**

Just ask your local court contractor. These days, there's a good chance they're spending more time painting pickleball lines than tennis lines!

[The market for pickleball just keeps growing.](#) More than 3.3 million Americans played pickleball last year, a 10% increase in three short years. The sport made headlines last summer when it became a [viral sensation in the Disney World NBA Bubble.](#)

There's even a group pushing for pickleball to become an Olympic sport, which could fuel an even greater explosion of interest.

Now, don't get us wrong: tennis is here to stay. Not even a gold medal could turn pickleball into a replacement for good, old-fashioned tennis.

But for tennis clubs looking to shore up membership revenue – especially in the wake of pandemic lockdowns – bringing in pickleball could be the answer. And you don’t have to sacrifice a single tennis court to make it happen!

Let’s take a closer look at the surprising courtship between tennis and pickleball.

1. Background: What is Pickleball?
2. Pickleball vs. Tennis: What are the Differences?
3. 3 Ways to Add Pickleball Lines to a Tennis Court

1. Background: What is Pickleball?

Pickleball is a court game that combines elements of tennis and table tennis/ping pong: players at opposite ends of a court, a plastic ball, paddles, and a net. It can be played in singles or doubles.

The popularity of pickleball is usually attributed to its beginner-friendliness. It’s a simple, low-impact sport that new players can pick up the game in an afternoon. Pickleball is especially popular with the “cocktail crowd”: active adults over 55, who have the free time to play in peak and off-peak hours.

But don’t be fooled by its simplicity. Pickleball veterans bat a serious game! Where beginners usually hit the ball back and forth 15 to 20 times on a point, the pros can go for 90 or more.



2. Pickleball vs. Tennis: What are the Differences?

While the two sports have plenty in common, the differences matter when it comes to planning a court.

A tennis court is 78 feet long and 36 feet wide. A pickleball court is much smaller at 44 feet long by 20 feet wide. In tennis, the net is set to a height of 43 inches at the ends and 36 inches at the centre; a pickleball net, on the other hand, should be 36 inches high at the ends and 34 inches in the centre.

Beyond the courts, the differences between tennis and pickleball are obvious. Pickleball is played with a plastic, perforated ball (called a pickleball) and paddle, rather than a tennis ball and racquet. The two sports also have different rulesets.

Now, the uninitiated might be tempted to view tennis and pickleball at odds, but that couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, some of pickleball's biggest advocates are current and former tennis players.

Pickleball is a popular "step-down" sport for tennis aficionados who need a change of pace. Many pickleball greats are former tennis players who transitioned to the lower-impact sport later in life.

Despite their differences, tennis and pickleball can easily coexist at the same club – sometimes even on the same courts. With a bit of good planning, tennis clubs can leverage this to redouble their membership revenue.

3. How to Add Pickleball Lines to a Tennis Court: 2 Ways

Here's the best part: you don't have to tear up your existing tennis courts to bring in pickleball.

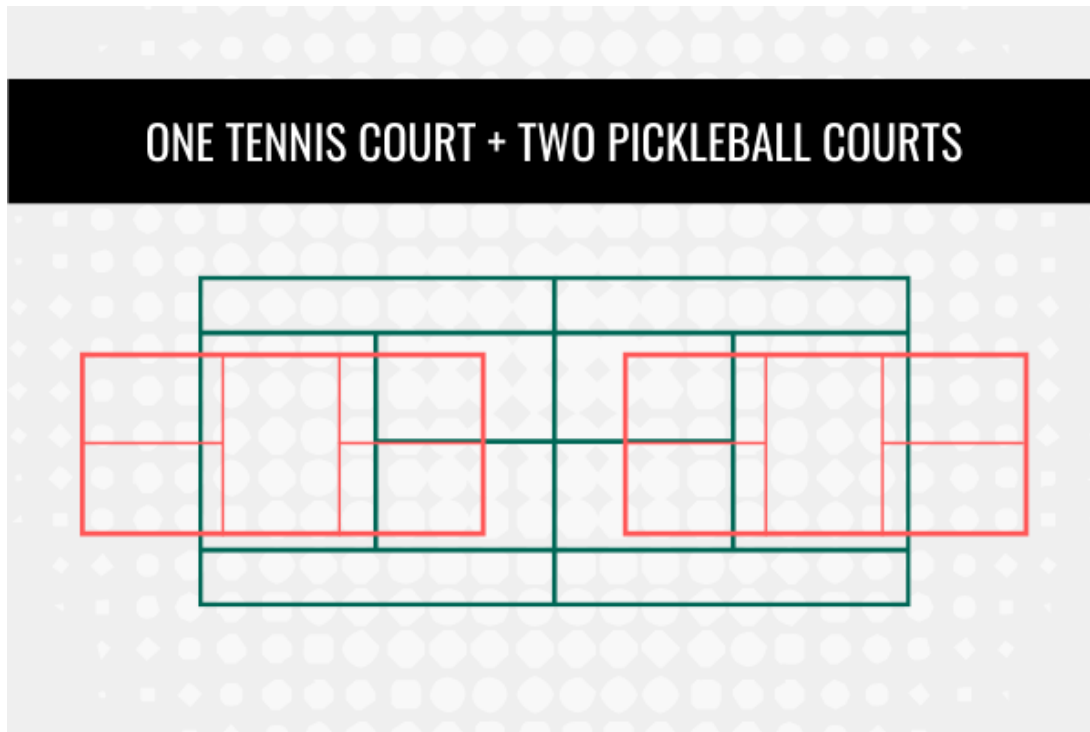
While replacement is always an option, adding pickleball lines to an existing tennis court lets the two sports coexist and gives club management an inexpensive way to gauge interest in pickleball.

Just keep in mind that for sanctioned tennis play, the rules only allow for tennis lines to appear on courts. So, unless you're prepared to go all-in on pickleball, you'll want to save your prime courts for tennis tournaments!

There are two ways to add pickleball lines to an existing tennis court:

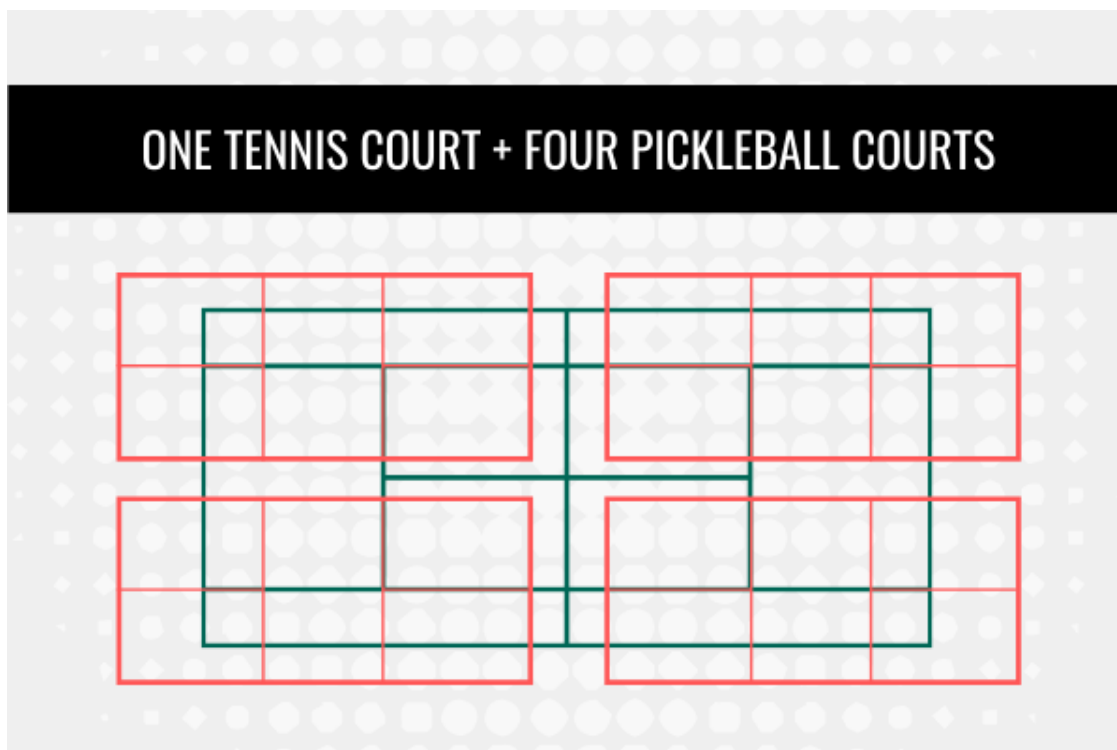
- a. One pickleball court per tennis court
- b. Two pickleball courts per tennis court

a. One Pickleball Court per Tennis Court



This arrangement utilizes the existing tennis net. Since a tennis net is two inches higher in the centre than a pickleball net, you will have to install tie-downs to lower the net to the correct height. There is a product called the Convert-a-Net designed for this purpose.

b. Two Pickleball Courts Per Tennis Court



This arrangement allows for two pickleball matches to take place on one tennis court at once. However, it requires that you bring in portable pickleball nets.

Be mindful of the fact that pickleballs are lighter than tennis balls and thus more susceptible to the wind. Having pickleball courts this close together outdoors can lead to balls ending up in someone else's court!

Truthfully, playing pickleball outdoors has *all* the challenges as outdoor tennis...especially in the colder months. But with the help of a dome, pickleball can become an all-season sport just as easily! Learn more about the [benefits of a tennis dome](#).

Tennis to Pickleball: Other Considerations

Have the lines installed by an experienced contractor! Tape won't do the trick. In addition to being unattractive, and almost always crooked, tape can bond with the playing surface over time, becoming impossible to remove without damaging the court.

To make it easier to tell the lines apart, pickleball lines on a tennis court should not be painted white. Pickleball lines should be painted narrower than tennis lines for the same reason.

Since a tennis court is longer than a pickleball court, you might want to install a temporary barrier so that pickleballs don't have to be chased the full length of the court.

Throughout the process, The Farley Group is here to help along the way. You can research at your own pace in our [digital resource library](#), and when you're ready, reach out to us to discuss how to make your unique dome vision a reality.