

# The Perfect Pickleball Club?

While perfection is largely unattainable in just about anything, you can, at least, create a perfect model for what you want to accomplish. Each pickleball club's "perfect model" depends on the needs of its membership – a club without enough courts focuses there first, a larger, city-wide club uses different tools to communicate effectively with members than does a club in a physically smaller resort community.

While allowing for these differences in needs and priorities, nonetheless there are some particular characteristics of leading edge p-ball clubs that we've observed. Perhaps some of them will be useful in building your own club.

1. They have an active board of directors, whose roles are functionally described within the bylaws. The board is visible to members and reasons for major board actions are transparent. They try new things to improve their club and correct the inevitable mistakes quickly.
2. They communicate extensively with members, using processes that insure that communication regularly goes both up and down. Best-in-class clubs use a variety of digital tools to assist in this.
3. They have a clear, stated mission...and each club's mission will vary as mentioned above. They evaluate all possible major actions against their mission.
4. They insure they create enough revenue through tournaments, other activities, fundraisers, dues, etc. to fund their mission. They have a budgeting process which tracks expenses and forecasts upcoming needs.
5. They have clearly-defined and well-run court utilization processes. These insure the best use of the courts based on fairness to ALL levels – and (heretically) this includes prime court time for upper skill levels (4.0+) as well as beginner (2.0 and 2.5) thru intermediate (3.0 and 3.5). The club's needs are continuously revisited.
6. All major club processes are documented so (for instance) when volunteer or board turnover occurs they don't have to re-invent each spoke in the wheel.
7. They have a continual welcoming attitude towards their volunteers and regularly and actively solicit new volunteers. Members are expected to volunteer and are recognized for their efforts.
8. They are involved deeply in the management of their own facilities...even when owned by some city agency or private enterprise, as is usually the case.
9. They work hard at creating a supportive mentoring environment. Best-in-class clubs might have a well-defined training, coaching and mentoring program.
10. They support pickleball growth through outreach in whatever community they exist. This can mean partnering closely with the local USAPA Ambassadors, among other things.

This list of characteristics may not be complete or perfect, but it does provide a solid basis for a fully functional, working club. Now it's time to add whatever unique characteristics that fit your own situation. As always, it's just our three cents anyway; your mileage will vary.

# Club

Whether you actually call your ongoing pickleball group a club or something else (we've heard "pickleball posse" but somehow that doesn't exactly get it) is up to you.

Whatever you call it, your group has certain needs. Organizational and administrative needs; who gets to play on the courts when? Who controls play? Is play free? How are people rated? Do we have special events...Meet and Greets, Potlucks, Mentor Days, Pizza Parties, and who organizes them and where are they held? Just the subject of whether or not alcohol is allowed at these functions will keep some of you up at night.

Or, how about logistical things; where is stuff kept, how is stuff paid for, who cleans and maintains your playing facilities and more? You get the picture...there's a lot.

And if you DO decide to form a club, while it answers some questions it raises others, and club structures differ wildly. And within the structure....given any thought to bylaws? Election of officers? Assignment of responsibilities? We have. The list is very large and we provide our take on a lot of it throughout this section.