

#12 JANUARY 2026

WORLD PICKLEBALL MAGAZINE

WHY PICKLEBALL IN TURKIYE IS DIFFERENT: BEHIND THE SCENES
AT HOW TURKIYE GREW THE SPORT IN 2025

PLUS

THE POLISH PICKLEBALL BOOM: POLAND ENDS 2025 ON
A HIGH NOTE

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE: HOW 2025 MARKED A NEW
ERA FOR PICKLEBALL IN ITALY

ASIA'S RISING STAR: TEEN PRO LUCAS PASCOE JOINS
THE PPA TOUR

THE CUBAN CONNECTION: A CONVERSATION WITH
PIONEER CARLOS LÓPEZ

PAKISTAN: THE ERUPTION OF THE GREEN SHIRTS

AND YOUR USUAL FAVOURITES

DRILL BITS

REFEREE'S ROOM

IN PICTURES

GEAR GURU



WILL THE BEACH TENNIS BOOM IN BRAZIL BE REPEATED IN PICKLEBALL? WE BELIEVE SO!

BY MARCELO ABELHEIRA,
SOUTH AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT

In this first magazine of 2026, we will address a super impressive topic in Brazil: The Beach Tennis PHENOMENON.

In addition to having a gigantic coastline, with more than 10,000 km of beaches from north to south of the country, beach tennis (BT), which started on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro around 2010, is now spread everywhere. Even in the most central part of the country, more than 1,500 km from the beach, the sport of rackets and balls on the sand is gaining followers of all ages and skill levels. In other words, BT is a huge success throughout Brazil. And it continues to grow.

Okay, but we are in World Pickleball Magazine, so what does that have to do with us? Quite a lot! We realised that there are a large number of people who did not practice sports because they had not found something they felt comfortable with or that encouraged them to leave home to play. A sport that allows different ages, skill levels, and genders to practice has brought many followers. This is a characteristic of Beach Tennis and is even more so in Pickleball. If beach tennis is already inclusive and democratic, pickleball is much more so. And with more possibilities for the implementation and development of the sport in various aspects.

We invited an important name who has experienced both sides. An Italian who was one of the pioneers in beach tennis and is now a renowned pickleball coach at the national level. Giovanni Perrotta, our dear Gianni (Instagram @giannipkb), will tell a little about his story. The balls and rackets are with you, make yourself at home...

I discovered beach tennis in 2009, in Rio de Janeiro, when it was still an unknown sport here. I liked it right away and started playing with friends who later became great players and coaches. Shortly after, I travelled with the then-president of the Rio de Janeiro Tennis Federation to Ravenna, the birthplace of beach tennis. I was impressed by the quality of the games and watched the World Championship, obviously dominated by the Italians.

I returned to Rio even more passionate about the sport. For personal reasons, I ended up distancing myself from beach tennis, but I continued to follow it from afar. Over time, I saw Brazil become a powerhouse, even capable of beating the Italians. I noticed that the Brazilian style was different from the one I had seen in Ravenna — in part, due to the influence of frescobol, a sport so popular in Rio and which brought many athletes to beach tennis.

I say all this because I feel like I'm reliving this story. I discovered pickleball a few years ago, when almost no one knew how to pronounce the name, and I fell in love with a racket sport again. I went to the United States, the birthplace of pickleball, and was enchanted by the beauty and fluidity of the game: it alternates between moments of slow and strategic exchanges in the kitchen with fast and powerful sequences at the net.

In Brazil, pickleball is still in its early stages, but I have no doubt that in a few years—perhaps three or four—we will have more people playing pickleball than beach tennis. And I venture another prediction: just as happened with beach tennis, Brazilians will compete on equal footing with the creators of the sport, in this case, the Americans. I believe this because, just as frescobol influenced beach tennis, beach tennis will influence pickleball. Since I became an instructor, I've noticed that most of my students come from beach tennis—which facilitates the beginning of learning, since these students know how to handle the racket well, master the volley, and have a good smash... and that's it. The rest is completely different.



That's where my work begins—and my biggest challenge: making the player understand that knowing how to play beach tennis only helps in the first lesson, but that, from then on, it's necessary to "switch sim card" and understand that, to be good at pickleball, you need to learn how to play pickleball. I won't go into detail about the difficulties in understanding the rules, although some are indeed very different.

For example: in beach tennis, you serve and immediately approach the net; in pickleball, due to the second-bounce rule, you must remain behind until the right moment. But the most challenging point lies in the tactical concepts that interfere with this transition. I always cite the example of the block volley. In beach tennis, it's very effective to hit a drop shot, since often the opponent is far from the net and, even when they get there, they usually return it safely. In pickleball, the opposite occurs: the ideal is to keep the opponent away from the net for as long as possible. In addition, the surface isn't sand—so an agile player can easily reach that drop shot. What I see most in classes are former beach tennis players attempting that "drop shot," and, most of the time, the result is disastrous.

This is just one of many examples of the differences in strokes and tactics between the two sports. So much so that my beach tennis adaptation clinic for pickleball dedicates about 80% of its time to demonstrating these differences.

I conclude by saying that beach tennis will be our trump card — I speak for Brazilian pickleball — as long as we know how to bring what it has best and apply it correctly to pickleball.

Great!!! Thank you, Gianni. Excellent contribution. There are really many pickleball players coming from Beach Tennis, including at the high level in both the men's and women's categories.

I could cite dozens of examples, but let's stick to two of them: Hugo Dojas and Joana Cortez.

Hugo is a world-class professional Beach Tennis player and is currently a great pickleball champion, both in singles and doubles.



Joana is a phenomenon with rackets. She was once number 1 in the world in beach tennis (after winning a gold medal in tennis at the Pan American Games) and is now showcasing her technique in pickleball, including participating in events and spreading pickleball in various ways.

In addition, several BT entrepreneurs are already eyeing the potential of pickleball; one of them, from the interior of Brazil, has already set up a benchmark arena. Adalberto Bião already owned a network of BT arenas in Rondonópolis and is now responsible for the ADEMICON ARENA, focusing on pickleball.

It is fundamental to emphasise that it is entirely feasible for BT and PKB to be in the same venture in a harmonious and complementary way. CT Lucas Souza and Arena Decathlon in Campinas are just a few examples of benchmarks where players like Antomi Ramos (BT world champion) and Clã dos Russos have already played pickleball.

Furthermore, the multi-champion and leading name in Brazilian women's pickleball, Marcela Donatoni, has already played some games with Vini Font (who is also a former world champion in beach tennis).

In other words, beach tennis players can have fun or even play high-level games in pickleball as well.

In short, we believe that pickleball has every chance not only to repeat the boom of beach tennis, but also to surpass its success. This will happen regardless of the migration of players from one sport to another (we also have many tennis, padel, squash and other players coming to our sport).

We know that the largest audience that will come to pickleball will be people who are currently sedentary and have not yet discovered something fun and healthy, without the need for great technical skills or physical abilities, that will give them satisfaction and also allow for a lot of interaction and entertainment with family, friends, work colleagues and so many other new friendships that will arise. Pickleball is the most INCLUSIVE sport that exists and will soon be everywhere in Brazil.

