

PPA ASIA 1000

WORLD PICKLEBALL MAGAZINE

MB
HANOI
CUP
2026

THE GAME HAS CHANGED
PICKLEBALL'S POWER SHIFT IS HERE

HANOI CHANGED THE TERMS
THE PPA HAS TAKEN **CONTROL**
STREAMING HAS ALREADY WON
ASIA PUSHES BACK
MEGAN FUDGE

THE CONSTANT IN A SPORT THAT WON'T STAND STILL

#15 APRIL 2026

WHAT COMES AFTER

The success of the championship will not be measured by what happens during it. It will be measured by what follows.

The intention is continuity: regular training sessions, local club development, education and certification of veteran coaches and pathways into international competition

The event is the start of something that needs to last.

A SIGNAL BEYOND UKRAINE

As pickleball continues to expand globally, the conversation is beginning to shift. Not just how fast it grows. But what it is used for.

Ukraine offers a clear example of that shift.

Here, the sport is not simply being adopted. It is being applied.

With purpose. With context. With intent. And that may prove to be more important than scale.

Because if the first phase of pickleball's growth was defined by accessibility, the next phase will be defined by what it enables.

And in that sense, this is not just a national championship.

It is a direction of travel.



SOUTH AMERICA IS TURNING PICKLEBALL INTO A SYSTEM

BY MARCELO ABELHEIRA, SOUTH AMERICA CORRESPONDENT

South America is no longer just playing pickleball. It is starting to organise it. In early March, Uruguay hosted the first official training programme for coaches and referees under the South American Pickleball Federation. It ran across Montevideo and Carmelo over two days. On paper, it was a course.

In reality, it was a shift.

FROM GROWTH TO STRUCTURE

Pickleball has spread quickly across South America. Courts are appearing. Communities are forming. Tournaments are being played. But growth on its own does not sustain a sport. Without qualified coaches, there is no development pathway. Without trained referees, there is no consistency. Without shared standards, there is no structure. This was a first attempt to address that gap.

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS

The programme focused on two areas that rarely get attention but determine everything that follows. Coach education was led by Marcus Paulo, Technical Director of the Brazilian Pickleball Confederation. The sessions covered teaching methodology, player development, and the technical and tactical fundamentals of the game.

Referee training was delivered by Roger Valmorbida, Director of Refereeing at the CBP, alongside Michel Viott, Secretary-General of the Refereeing Directorate. Their work centred on rule interpretation, on-court conduct, and the standardisation of officiating. These are not the visible parts of the sport. They are the ones that decide whether it holds together.

A CONTINENTAL EFFORT

More than 70 participants took part. They came from Uruguay and Brazil, but also from Argentina, Venezuela, and Peru. That matters. Because what is being built here is not a national system. It is a regional one. The exchange of ideas between countries was one of the defining features of the programme, creating a shared understanding of how the sport should be taught, played, and officiated.

That kind of alignment is rare at this stage.

A REGION TAKING IT SERIOUSLY

The significance of Uruguay goes beyond the event itself.

It shows a region beginning to take control of how the sport develops, rather than waiting for it to be shaped elsewhere. And if that continues, South America will not simply follow the global rise of pickleball.

It will help define it.

OPINION



THE THIRD SPACE EFFECT: WHY WE'RE ADDICTED TO PICKLEBALL... AND WHY MOST CLUBS GET IT WRONG

BY LEE WHITWELL

When we were kids, play was our default setting.

We ran, climbed, chased, laughed until we couldn't breathe. We begged for five more minutes before the streetlights came on. Then life happened. We grew up. Got degrees. Got jobs. Got mortgages. Got responsible. Somewhere along the way... play quietly packed up and left. And the strangest part?

None of us noticed when it did. Then came pickleball. And suddenly... we're playing again.

At its core, pickleball presses every button we didn't realise we'd been missing. Movement. Connection. Challenge. All wrapped in laughter and plastic wiffle-ball chaos. You get a dopamine hit when you win a point. A serotonin lift when you laugh with your partner. And something deeper than both.

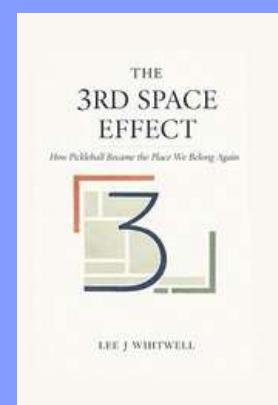
Belonging.

Maslow had it right. Once survival is covered, what we really want is connection. To feel seen. To feel part of something.

Pickleball delivers that without trying too hard. It's not just a sport. It's a social ecosystem. Strangers become partners. Partners become friends. Friends become the people you text first when you want a game.

It's our adult version of recess. Just with better outfits... and usually a drink afterwards.

"Pickleball didn't just give us a sport. It gave us permission to play again."



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