



## **The global rise of pickleball: Why it's the fastest-growing sport in the world**

Pickleball, once a niche sport, has taken the world by storm with an exponential growth trajectory that's hard to match.

Today, pickleball is more than just a sport — it's an industry on the rise, with lucrative potential for investors and brands looking to align with one of the fastest-growing games worldwide.

Pickleball's appeal is universal. This community-driven sport has captivated players by combining elements of tennis, badminton and ping pong, creating a dynamic, accessible game for all ages and skill levels. As the sport soars in popularity, it's generating a thriving industry with massive growth potential.

### **Fastest-growing sport in America and beyond**

Pickleball's growth numbers are staggering. In the U.S., more than 48.3 million people — or nearly 19% of the adult population — played pickleball at least once in the last year, according to the Association of Pickleball Professionals (APP).

The game has topped the list as America's fastest-growing sport for three years running, outpacing 124 other sports tracked by the SFIA. With more than 10,700 locations to play across the country and avid players averaging 35 years of age, pickleball is attracting a diverse, engaged audience.

### **Global reach and economic impact**

The pickleball boom has moved beyond North America, sparking increased participation across Europe, Asia and Australia, with major tournaments cropping up around the globe.

The industry has evolved into a booming marketplace, projected to generate nearly \$2 billion annually by 2028 as it expands beyond just sports equipment to encompass accessories, apparel, footwear, and even digital media channels. Pickleball is even expected to be recognized as an Olympic sport by 2036.

### **Investment and business potential**

With its growing player base and high levels of engagement, pickleball presents an attractive opportunity for businesses and investors. From facility development to merchandising, pickleball's infrastructure is expanding.

Corporate and media interest in pickleball has surged, with global brands including Adidas, Michelob Ultra and Hyundai investing in sponsorships and promotional partnerships.

For brands looking to make a strategic move, pickleball offers a direct line to millions of active, engaged consumers. The sport's appeal across generations — especially among younger players and active retirees — makes it a unique market for businesses looking to tap into the health, wellness and lifestyle industries.

Television networks like ESPN, FOX, CBS and The Tennis Channel are airing professional tournaments, and players are now receiving lucrative multi-year contracts, allowing many to play full-time.

Prize money has also reached record highs, with professional tournaments offering prize pools upwards of \$5 million, further solidifying pickleball's professional viability.

### **Celebrity influence and cultural momentum**

Pickleball has even captured the attention of Hollywood. From Leonardo DiCaprio to Drew Brees, celebrities are flocking to the game, sparking a cultural trend that only amplifies its reach.

With more than 570 registered clubs in the U.S. and countless public courts, pickleball is becoming a mainstream part of daily life, offering substantial opportunities for brands to engage.

### **Visit Selkirk Sport at ISPO**

To learn more about how pickleball is redefining recreational sports, and how Selkirk Sport is leading its growth, stop by the ISPO booth B3/237.