



NIAGARA INDOOR
PICKLEBALL
ASSOCIATION

NIAGARA INDOOR PICKLEBALL ASSOCIATION
FACILITY PROPOSAL

OUR MISSION

To build a centrally located, indoor pickleball facility to service the people of the Niagara Region year-round and provide a state-of-the-art venue that would draw recreational and competitive players and spectators from near and far for pickleball leagues, camps and tournaments at the local, provincial, national, and international levels.

THE OPPORTUNITY

There is an incredible opportunity here for the Niagara Region to become a national leader by building a world class venue for pickleball that would rival any existing facility in Canada. With the Niagara Region already having so much to offer in the tourism and sports tourism sectors, adding a brand new pickleball facility to the long list of reasons to come here would put us at the top of the list.

Other cities are already thinking about expanding their current facilities and a number of them currently offer annual pickleball tournaments - London, Waterloo, St. Thomas, and Kingston to name a few.

From what we have seen at these events, their setups are less than ideal. With most tournaments being run at multi-use venues, most of these have no or limited spectator seating, multiple court markings, use portable nets and improper court layouts that cause people to interrupt play with their comings and goings and are limited to times available in between all other sports.

In our estimation, the Niagara Region would have to move quickly to build a state-of-the-art facility and become ***the*** place to play pickleball in Ontario and Canada.



CURRENT STATUS OF INDOOR PICKLEBALL

While pickleball is played outside in Niagara over the spring/summer/fall, problems do arise. Rain, wind, insects, and the sun, not to mention the heat, make things less than ideal more often than not. Hence indoor pickleball is much more desirable and far less problematic for players looking for a year-round activity.



With that said, finding suitable indoor pickleball facilities has been difficult. The biggest issue is that almost all of the indoor venues in Niagara are shared facilities. We play in arenas, community centres, church halls and schools during the indoor season just to get by but there are not enough courts or time slots available for the ever-growing player base in Niagara.

Due to the fact that we have to share all of these facilities, it means that we are severely restricted to when, how and where we can play. Many other sports hold priority over these venues and that means that pickleball often gets pushed to the side and cancelled for other sports/events. We also must deal with multiple sport markings, different surfaces (hard wood, rubber flooring, tiled floors, concrete pads, etc.), venues that are too hot or too cold, low ceilings, crowded courts, and more.

Our most frequented indoor facilities in Niagara for pickleball are:

- ▶ a brand new community centre with an extremely glossy floor and windows on 3 sides that make it almost impossible to play due to the glare during the day, and courts that are far too close together.
- ▶ an arena built in the 70's that has a concrete pad which is very hard on players bones and joints, especially the older players; is really cold in the winter, really hot in the summer,
- ▶ and an older community centre with 2 badminton courts that are very close to each other and is constantly packed with players.

There is also the safety aspect with these facilities. With the possibility of stepping on a ball from another court causing you to fall because there is no barrier between the courts, slipping and falling because the cement floors get slick from leaking roofs, sweat, dust and have very little grip, and running into walls, chairs and/or spectators because there is not enough room, are all extremely hazardous for every player but even more so for the older and less agile players.

Not only does this mean that the local player base doesn't get to play the game as intended, and in far less than ideal and even sometimes unsafe conditions, but we also have no facilities that are suitable for larger, sanctioned tournaments.

ABOUT THE FACILITY

We have a dream of building a state-of-the-art facility in order to draw in the top pickleball players, trainers and spectators from around the region, province, country and globally.

We would like to see this venue featuring many, if not all of the following amenities:

- ▶ A large, climate-controlled facility with high ceilings with bright, energy efficient LED lighting.
- ▶ 20 to 24 professionally finished courts with a cushioned acrylic court system and permanent nets.
- ▶ 2 Championship Courts with spectator seating for 300 to 500 people.
- ▶ Proper fencing for self-contained courts to ensure no interference from other players, spectators or errant balls.
- ▶ Large, wheelchair accessible walkways and entrances to the courts.
- ▶ All courts would meet the Pickleball Ontario, Pickleball Canada and USAP requirements for sanctioned tournaments and events.
- ▶ Change rooms complete with sinks, toilets, showers, benches, and lockers.
- ▶ A proper PA/sound system and video screens for broadcasting important information on a regular basis and when hosting large events with large numbers of people.
- ▶ A high-performance training area with fitness facility, ball machine, dink area, drill wall, whiteboards, seating, and video review system.
- ▶ A video monitoring system of all courts for security, training, and competition purposes.
- ▶ A conference room that doubles as Competition HQ with access to video feeds of all courts, the PA system, high speed WIFI and large boards for posting information.
- ▶ Parking for up to 1000 people.
- ▶ Multiple water stations around the courts.
- ▶ An elevated seating area and viewing platform with an area for vendor booths.
- ▶ A pro shop with facility merchandise, pickleball gear and more.
- ▶ A snack bar/restaurant/pub for players and spectators.
- ▶ Multiple locations for advertising spaces spread throughout the facility - fences, walls, courts, video system, etc.

ADVANTAGES OF AN INDOOR PICKLEBALL FACILITY

- ▶ **Guaranteed play. Not affected by sun, wind, snow, heat, cold, rain or insects.**
- ▶ **An indoor facility to meet, socialize and have fun.**
- ▶ **Courts that are long lasting and free from cracks, debris and vandalism.**
- ▶ **Ability to offer other sports like ping pong and exercise programs in off areas.**

FACILITY PROGRAMMING

First and foremost, the indoor facility would be used primarily by the residents of the Niagara Region for their recreational enjoyment, competitive improvement and social get togethers.

We would also offer the locals learn-to-play programs, instructional clinics, and training, after school programs for students of all ages, club leagues, tournaments and special events.

We also plan on hosting inter-club league competitions that will bring in players from nearby towns and cities, sanctioned and non-sanctioned tournaments and events that will draw in players from across Canada and the US and high quality pickleball camps with the Pro players.

REVENUE STREAMS

The revenue streams at a facility like this would be plentiful due to the local pickleball players and include an influx of cash for the tourism sector with out-of-town players and spectators as well. The main sources of revenue would be:

- ▶ **Memberships** - Players would be willing to pay for a good, safe, year-round, indoor facility.
- ▶ **Planned Programming** - Skill based sessions and local events such as leagues, ladders and tournaments.
- ▶ **Instructional Programming** - Clinics, youth camps, 1 on 1 and group lessons.
- ▶ **Pickleball Camps** - 3 day and week-long camps from the Pros for a large variety of skill levels.
- ▶ **Tournaments** - Local, provincial (PAO), national (PCO, Canadian Pickleball Series) and international events (APP, PPA, MLP) will attract players/spectators from all over.
- ▶ **Ticket Sales and Vendor Fees** - For large events.
- ▶ **Snack bar/restaurant/pub** - Either from a lease or from direct sales.
- ▶ **Pro shop and Merchandise** - Either from a lease or from direct sales.
- ▶ **Advertising and Sponsorships** - Naming rights, signage, promotional sales and more.
- ▶ **Television Rights** - To televise and film the events.

EMPLOYMENT

A central, dedicated pickleball facility would create multiple jobs and employment opportunities. We would need a team that includes a facility manager, programming coordinator, competition and tournament director, marketing and sponsorship coordinator, pro shop staff, front desk hosts, snack bar/restaurant/pub staff and more. To start, we see many of these positions being filled by volunteers and as we grow, becoming paid positions. We would also need clinic, 1 on 1, group and camp instructors. The fees charged would more than cover the cost of these professionals. In addition, the facility would greatly benefit the surrounding tourism sector and help businesses such as hotels, restaurants, wineries, and attractions in Niagara year-round.

WHY PICKLEBALL?

Simply put, pickleball is the fastest growing sport in North America. It is in the news everywhere and suddenly we are seeing it on TV, in shows & movies, Sports Illustrated articles, YouTube videos, Facebook streams, Twitter feeds and even right in our own neighbourhood. Even several cruise ship lines have created pickleball courts onboard due to the high demand for this sport.

We have seen local clubs grow from 30 to 80 people, another from 50 to 300 members and recreational sessions go from 4 to 48 players in a year. The number of courts in the region went from 6 to 36 in 3 years and is still climbing steadily.

Pickleball Canada is looking into getting the sport of pickleball officially included as an event into the next Canada Games and the Niagara Games competitions.

Why is pickleball growing so fast? Because it is easier to play for all ages, requires far less equipment to start playing and is far more enjoyable on smaller courts than tennis for a larger age and skill range. Above all else, it is an amazingly social game that is fun and exciting while at the same time being challenging. Not to mention that pickleball is a great way to exercise and adds to the social well-being of the community.

STATS FROM PICKLEBALL CANADA'S 2022 SURVEY

“The survey results showed that **8% of Canadian households** report at least one household member plays pickleball once per month. By extrapolating the data, this indicates that there are now **one million individual Canadians playing pickleball** at least once a month, with 45% playing four or more times/month. When analyzing the results from a similar survey conducted in January 2020, Pickleball Canada estimated there were 350,000 pickleball players in Canada. The 2022 survey **indicates a near tripling of the number of pickleball players in Canada in two years.**”

While the game of pickleball has typically been more popular with older people and retirees, the last 5 years have seen the sport changing demographics as younger people make up the largest growing portion of the sport and the demand for more courts is unprecedented. To put that in perspective, here is a list of local communities who have already jumped on the pickleball bandwagon with outdoor courts in recent years:

- ▶ Hamilton - 12 dedicated courts
- ▶ Stoney Creek - 12 dedicated courts
- ▶ Virgil - 6 dedicated courts
- ▶ Welland - 12 pickleball courts, 6 of which are dedicated (Opening Summer 2022)
- ▶ Pelham - 6 dedicated pickleball courts (coming soon)

There are a number of other cities and towns in the Niagara Region that have shared tennis/pickleball courts or are planning on putting in outdoor pickleball courts as well.