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DINK

AUTHORITY MAGAZINE

May 2025 Edition

#1 JUNIOR PLAYER

REX THAIS

ENTHUSIASTS

HOAMI VU

SMILEY RILEY

PLAYERS

MARIANA FORTES

DARIA WALCZAK'S

DOMENIKA TURKOVIC

LARA GILTINAN



MEGAN FUDGE

BROOKLYN PICKLEBALL TEAM

2025 WORLD PICKLEBALL CONVENTION + PICKLEBALL CONFERENCE
WHERE BUSINESS TAKES CENTRE COURT

MLP ORLANDO DOORDASH

COMEDY PICKLEBALL SHOWDOWN

Tips, players, cartoons, and much more from the world of pickleball

You’re about to dive into the best pickleball content! Get ready for a full dose of information, passion, and action.

Are you ready to play with us?

Let’s do this!

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May 2025
Edition

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AUTHORITY MAGAZINE

Editorial : World Pickleball Convention
My Guest : Megan Fudge
Profesional Player : Lara Giltinan
Pickleball Team
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Enthusiasts : Hoami Vu / Smiley Riley
Junior Player : Rex Thais
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Domenika Turkovic
Brooklyn Pickleball Team
The World of Pickleball By Zakour
Mejor League Pickleball Orlando Fl 2025

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Editorial

By Op

Pickleball in Expansion: The 2025 World Pickleball Conference and Carl Foster's Impact on the Sport"

In the heart of West Palm Beach, Florida, the sound of paddles and the energy of a rapidly growing community will converge on June 27-28, 2025, at the Palm Beach Convention Center. This will mark the gathering of the 2025 World Pickleball Conference, an unmissable event for players, business professionals, coaches, and enthusiasts of the sport that is rapidly conquering courts and hearts across the globe.

Carl Foster: The Architect Behind a Global Dream

At the helm of this monumental event is Carl Foster, one of the most influential figures in the global growth of pickleball. As the executive producer of Inside World Pickleball, Foster has not only created a platform for the sport on major networks like FOX Sports and Amazon Prime, but has built an ecosystem of events that promote the growth of pickleball as both a business and a global phenomenon.

The World Pickleball Conference is part of the World Pickleball Convention & Conference, an all-encompassing event that merges the best of competitive play with business insights, technological innovations, and the social experience of the sport.

What to Expect from the Event

For those attending, the experience promises to be immersive. In addition to clinics and tournaments taking place alongside the conference, more than 50 high-profile speakers will share their insights, research, experiences, and strategies on the present and future of pickleball.



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Editorial

Featured Speakers:
Steve Kuhn – Founder of Major League Pickleball (MLP) and the DUPR rating system.
Pranav Kohli – Founder of Pickleball United and the World Series of Pickleball.
Robert Quicksilver – President of USA Pickleball.
Javier Regalado – President of the Global Pickleball Federation.
Kaitlyn Kerr – Owner of the Las Vegas Nite Owls in MLP.
Andre Agassi – Yes, the legendary tennis player now launching his line of pickleball paddles.
And many more leaders representing the intersection of sport, business, technology, and community.
This is a lineup of heavyweights in the industry and the world of pickleball. From founders to presidents, these speakers are shaping the future of the sport, offering invaluable insights that any enthusiast or professional will want to hear.
More Than Just Talks



The convention isn't just for professionals—it's an open space for recreational players, fans, entrepreneurs, and emerging brands. Attendees will be able to interact with exhibitors, try out new products, watch live demonstrations, and perhaps even find themselves on the court alongside a pickleball legend.
With tickets available at a 50% early bird discount using the code Earlybird50, this event is shaping up to be a must-attend milestone for anyone passionate about pickleball.
A Step Forward in the Globalization of Pickleball
Ultimately, the 2025 World Pickleball Conference is not only a showcase of the present but also an ambitious vision for the future of the sport. And Carl Foster, with his tireless drive, seems determined to take it to new heights.
So, whether you're a beginner or an experienced player.

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We Spoke with Carl: Here's What He Shared

What has been the biggest challenge in organizing an event of this magnitude, and what did you learn from the experience?
WORKING WITH CITY TO RESURFACE COURTS, TAPE TENNIS COURTS TO PICKLEBALL AND THEN USE A PICKLEROLL SURFACE FOR STADIUM COURT WERE THE BIG CHALLENGES. MANY DETAILS AND NEED TO START AT LEAST SIX MONTHS OUT ORGANIZING SPONSORS AND TICKET SALES.

The World Pickleball Conference combines tournaments, business, innovation, and community. How did you manage to balance these elementsto create such a unique experience?
ALREADY WAS DOING TOURNAMENTS AND PARTNERED WITH MY LONG TIME FRIEND WHO HANDLES THE EXPO AND OPERATIONS OF THE CONVENTION FLOOR AND WITH MY CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE OF DOING YEARS OF THE WORLD LEADERS CONFERENCE AND LEADERCAST EVENTS THIS HELPED ME ORGANIZE GETTING TOP SPEAKERS, SETTING AGENDA AND PANEL SESSIONS AND TIE IN SPONSORS AND SOCIAL EVENTS. BIG UNDERTAKING AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH GEORGE DOMACETI MY PARTNER.

What impact do you hope this event will have on the path toward making pickleball an Olympic sport in 2028? WE ARE WORKING WITH THREE DIFFERENT INTERNATIONAL GROUPS DEVELOPING PICKLEBALL IN OVER 65 COUNTRIES AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE WORLD PICKLEBALL FEDERATION, THE INTERNATIONAL PICKLEBALL FEDERATION AND THE GLOBAL PICKLEBALL FEDERATION WILL BE ATTENDING ALONG WITH AN IOC EXECUTIVE TO OUTLINE GOALS AND NEEDS FOR THE PICKLEBALL INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP TO GET THE SPORT APPROVED FOR 2028 LOS ANGELES. WE ARE ACTING LIKE SWITZERLAND...NEUTRAL TO BRING THESE GROUPS TO ONE STRONG VOICE WHICH THE IOC REQUIRES.

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You've brought pickleball to major platforms like FOX Sports and Amazon Prime. What do you see as the next big step in the sport's media expansion?
WE ARE LOOKING FOR MORE NATIONAL MAINSTREAM LIVE BROADCASTS ON MAJOR NATIONAL NETWORKS LIKE ESPN, TNT, TBS, CBS SPORTS, NBC AND ABC AS WELL AS DIGITAL OUTLETS LIKE YOU TUBE TV, PEACOCK AND PARAMOUNT FOR LIVE STREAMING.

What advice would you give to entrepreneurs or brands entering the world of pickleball now that the sport is booming globally?
FIND YOUR UNIQUE SELLING POSITION AND HOW YOU WILL ATTRACT THE PICKLEBALL DEMOGRAPHICS. PICKLEBALL IS STILL THE FASTEST GROWING SPORT IN THE USA AND ABOUT 3-5 YEARS BEHIND AMERICA BUT SEVERAL COUNTRIES ON FAST TRACK AND THE OLYMPICS WILL TAKE SPORT TO NEXT LEVEL WHEN ACHIEVED. NEW PRODUCTS AND BRANDS NEED TO GET OUT TO THE RECREATIONAL PLAYERS AT TOURNAMENTS AND CONFERENCES TO SHOWCASE PRODUCTS AND LET PLAYERS TRY THEM.

we'll see you soon in Palm Beach at this mega event. See you soon!

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My Guest

By Oscar Pena



The Unstoppable Rhythm of Megan

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My Guest

By Oscar Pena

I met her during the hustle and bustle of a tournament in Naples, Florida. Between brand tents, the rhythmic sound of balls bouncing, and the vibrant energy of the crowd, Megan Fudge moved through the main walkway with the ease of someone who truly belongs there. She wasn't in her playing gear yet, but she already carried the silent presence of a true competitor—focused eyes, a warm smile for everyone she crossed paths with, and the confidence of someone who's traveled a long road to get here.

We sat down to chat at a folding table, right next to her RV. The same RV that serves as basecamp, refuge, and headquarters as she travels the country with her husband, Ryler DeHeart—former pro tennis player, now her coach and life partner—and their two young kids, Lily and Alex.

Megan told me that her pickleball journey began in their garage in Florida. During the pandemic, she and Ryler set up a portable net just to stay active. What started as a fun family activity quickly became a lifelong project. Today, that garage feels like sacred ground: the birthplace of a champion.

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My Guest

By Oscar Pena

And the numbers back it up. Since turning pro, Megan Fudge has racked up over 85 medals on the APP Tour, including gold titles in singles, women's doubles, and mixed doubles. She was ranked the APP's #1 female player in 2022, and is widely regarded as one of the tour's most complete and consistent athletes. Her standout performances at events like the APP Chicago Open, Mesa Open, and NYC Open have made her a fan favorite and a magnet for brands—not just for her wins, but for her relentless intensity.

Born in Germany, with British roots and a fierce competitive spirit shaped by NCAA tennis, Megan played for the University of Illinois, where she was team captain and an All-American. She spent years as a coach and entrepreneur before pickleball pulled her back into competition. Since then, she hasn't looked back—tournaments, clinics, national circuits, and a rise that seems to have no ceiling.

Megan doesn't just love to compete—she wants to inspire. She spoke proudly about her role as a mother and athlete, about the challenge of maintaining balance, and about proving that women can pursue ambition, discipline, and family—without having to give up any part of who they are. "It's harder, yes," she told me while keeping one eye on Alex, who was swinging a paddle nearly as big as he was, "but it's also more rewarding."

I watched her play later that day. It felt like seeing a different version of her—explosive, strategic, unrelenting. Every point was a reminder of why she's one of the strongest forces in pro pickleball. But even between points, between the power and the precision, you could still glimpse the other Megan—the one who smiles at her kids from across the net, high-fives her opponents, and remembers that this sport is also about community.

Megan Fudge doesn't just play pickleball. She lives it. She elevates it.

And witnessing it in person is to understand that her story is still soaring.

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My Guest

By Oscar Pena

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“Pickleball is one of the best sports in the world for women and girls. Only sport we get 100% equal pay and opportunities at all tournaments. Go get involved and support the sport that embraces & supports us”

Interview

What first drew you to pickleball after tennis?
Something active & social to do together with my husband.

What has been your most memorable moment on the court so far?
Watching my daughter win her first APP gold medal

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My Guest

By Oscar Pena

How do you balance life as a pro athlete and being a mom?
It's definitely not always easy but normally try and just take one day at a time and one task at a time and remind myself what's most important

Do you have any pre-match rituals or mantras?
Not much of a pre match routine besides good warmup and checking the kids are all set and then it's go time

What quick advice would you give to a woman who wants to compete in pickleball ? Pickleball is one of the best sports in the world for women and girls. Only sport we get 100% equal pay and opportunities at all tournaments. Go get involved and support the sport that embraces & supports us

Is there a player who inspires you, and why?
Not really. Obviously Simone has done amazing things for the sport paving the way

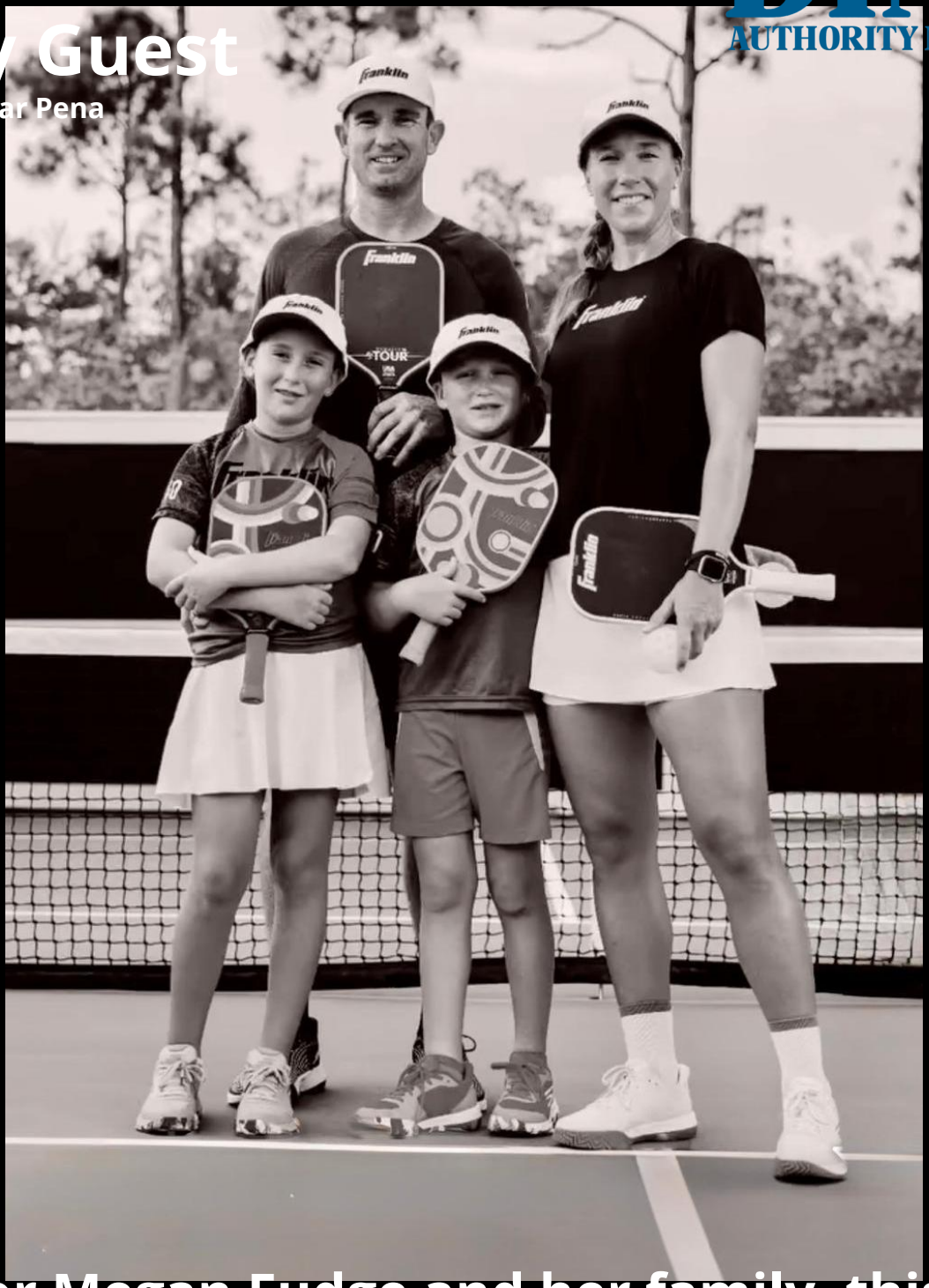
What are your goals for 2025?
Keep getting better at my own game and enjoy each tournament site abit more with tourist attractions

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My Guest

By Oscar Pena



"For Megan Fudge and her family, this is just the beginning of an extraordinary journey. Their dedication and love for the sport promise a legacy that will inspire future generations of pickleball players."

I'll see you in the next edition.....n

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THE WORLD OF PICKLEBALL BY ZAKOUR



Pickleball Also Knows How to Laugh

Pickleball — that sport spreading like wildfire around the globe — continues to evolve at a dizzying pace. And in this whirlwind of ideas born and lost every day, only a few manage to truly connect with people, stay, and contribute something of real value to the ecosystem. **Comedy Pickleball Showdown** is one of them. We discovered it the way today's true gems are often found: aimlessly wandering through the endless highways of the internet. Fresh, brilliant, bold, and deeply original.

A concept that made us stop and say: "This is different. This is great. The world needs to see this."

So we presented the project during one of our regular creative sessions — what we like to call our "Council of Sages." There was a brief silence, a few knowing glances, inevitable smiles.

No debate was needed:

"We need to feature this in the next issue of the magazine. Pickleball deserves to celebrate laughter, too." Our social media team jumped into action.

They reached out.

And on the other side, the creators welcomed them with the same generous and creative spirit that radiates from their show.

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Who is behind this great idea?



Evan G. Kay
Creator/Producer/Director



Kyle Romanek
Creator/Producer/Director



Bob Sumner
Producer



Barry Katz
Producer

That's how an honest conversation began — between people who love the sport and love creating. Here's what they shared with us:

Comedy Pickleball Showdown is the wild, brilliant brainchild of two restless visionaries: Evan G. Kay, a doctor turned film producer.

Kyle Romanek, an award-winning filmmaker obsessed with telling stories that inspire, challenge, and make people laugh — often all at once.

Together, they imagined a stage where the sharp wit of top comedians meets the unique energy of pickleball. But this isn't just about matches. It's about improvising, poking fun at ourselves, calling out sports clichés, deflating egos...and yes, dropping the occasional curse word — with elegance and sarcasm, like you would in a conversation with friends. This show doesn't try to be politically correct. It aims to be authentically human Irony, sarcasm, and hard truths disguised as jokes flow through every episode.

They're not trying to please everyone, but they do want to connect with those who understand that laughter can be a form of love, too.

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Get ready, folks Comedy Pickleball Showdown is coming in hot!

To bring the idea to life, they teamed up with two legendary forces in comedy:
Barry Katz, the producer behind icons like Dave Chappelle and Bill Burr.
Bob Sumner, the creative mind behind Def Comedy Jam.
The result: a fresh, unfiltered, irreverent format.
A show that understands comedy is not just an escape — it's a lens to see the world differently.
And when that combines with a love for pickleball... the magic happens.
Their official trailer drops May 5th, and the series will be released across multiple platforms like YouTube, bringing their vision directly to the fans.
Every sketch, every behind-the-scenes clip, every exaggerated moment of ridiculousness reminds us of one simple truth:
Pickleball is also about community, joy... and laughing out loud, even when you lose the point.
You can follow and support their journey here:

Instagram: @comedypickleballshowdown
Facebook: Comedy Pickleball Showdown
YouTube: Comedy Pickleball Showdown Channel
Official Website: comedypickleballshowdown.com

At Dink Authority Magazine, we're honored to be both witnesses and companions to this new chapter.
A story that's just beginning...
and has already made us laugh out loud.









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RISING STAR

By Oops Creative Group



MARIANA FORTES

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RISING STAR

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We met the way many do nowadays—through social media. Mariana Fortes doesn't need much to stand out. Just watch her play a couple of points and you'll notice that spark athletes are born with—it can't be taught.

Mariana is the kind of person who stands out for her discipline, her calm attitude, and her quiet—but powerful—way of competing. Those who know her describe her as kind, direct, and deeply committed to everything she does, with a positive obsession for getting better. And that's exactly how she's carving her way into the top ranks of international pickleball.





COMPETITIVE FIRE, GROUNDED ROOTS

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RISING STAR

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Before falling in love with pickleball, Mariana was a tennis player. She started playing at age seven and quickly began competing in regional tournaments. At the same time, she practiced karate-do, where she became a multi-medalist in national, Central American, and Pan-American championships. Her tennis background gave her the technical foundation that now makes her a well-rounded pickleball player, and karate shaped a mindset of steel. But it was in pickleball where she found her true passion—a sport that lets her unleash her aggressive style, speed at the net, and intelligent court awareness.

Besides sports, Mariana is a licensed physical therapist, a career she practices with the same passion she brings to the court. For her, physical therapy and pickleball don't just coexist—they fuel each other. She understands the body like few others do, and that gives her an edge both on and off the court. These are her two great passions, and she lives them with total dedication.

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RISING STAR

By Oops Creative Group



"I'm someone who enjoys competing. I like challenging myself, growing from every experience, and always keeping my feet on the ground—with the best attitude and full commitment in everything I do," she tells us.

Her journey into pickleball began eight years ago when her mom, a fan of the sport, introduced her to it through a group of friends. At first, she thought it would just be a casual hobby... but that "hobby" quickly turned into a serious pursuit. And she took it on her own terms—with consistency, humility, and that inner fire that doesn't settle.

"I don't believe in limits. I believe in hard work, passion, and the power of surrounding yourself with people who share the same competitive spirit. I'm Mariana Fortes, proudly from San Carlos, Sonora, Mexico, and a professional pickleball athlete."

These days, her training routine includes hitting the gym three times a week, on-court drills at least three times, and a sports psychology session once a month. Mariana leaves no loose ends. She's methodical, realistic, and works with long-term vision.

She proudly represents the San Carlos Pickleball Club, where she trains and plays alongside people who inspire her to give her best every day. Backed by her family, brands like Gearbox, the unconditional support of Seaside Realty, and a mindset focused on constant evolution, she keeps writing her story tournament by tournament—unafraid of challenges and always eager for what's next.

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RISING STAR

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“Pickleball is teaching me that true victory lies in not giving up, even when the road gets tough. That strength is with me in every point I play.”

“Pickleball is teaching me that true victory lies in not giving up, even when the road gets tough. That strength is with me in every point I play.”

Her goals for 2025 are crystal clear: to compete more internationally, face higher-level opponents, gain experience, and earn her place in the global circuits. And she’s well on her way—her game is getting noticed, her discipline is admired, and her name is becoming a reference.

When we ask her about the state of pickleball in Mexico, she answers with both hope and a critical eye:

“There’s so much talent and potential in Mexican pickleball. Even though we still don’t have a consolidated national federation, I believe that with more structure and support, the sport can grow quickly and go far—just like it already is in other countries.”

“My mission goes beyond competing. I want to inspire others, open the path for more Mexican athletes, and prove that with focus and determination, no goal is unreachable.”

Mariana Fortes is the featured player in this May edition of Dink Authority Magazine. Because we believe in her story. Because she represents the wave of passion pickleball is awakening across Latin America. Because she blends the drive of an elite athlete with the heart of someone who’s still moved by every new step she takes.

And most of all—because we know this is just the beginning.

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THE WORLD OF PICKLEBALL BY ZAKOUR



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Enthusiasts

By Oops Creative Group

Meet Hoami Vu
Energy, Community, and Passion for Pickleball

In the world of pickleball, there are people who don't just play — they transform the sport into a platform for connection, learning, and empowerment. Hoami Vu is one of them.

Of Cuban and Vietnamese descent, Hoami is a certified coach with RPPK and DUPR, a tournament organizer focused on women's events in South Florida, and the founder of the Picklevengers community. She has become a key figure for many players looking to grow both on and off the court.

We first connected through social media a few months ago and quickly bonded over our shared ideas about developing pickleball communities. Through ongoing conversations and a shared vision, this fantastic collaboration began, with Hoami now officially joining us to lead a special section dedicated to tips, routines, and strategies to improve your game.



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Enthusiasts

By Oops Creative Group



In addition to her role as a coach and active player, Hoami is a successful real estate agent and investor. She specializes in fix-and-flip projects and brings that same spirit to her pickleball community: building, improving, and leaving things better than she found them. Her multifaceted background gives her a broad, realistic perspective on the growth of the sport.



Welcome aboard, Hoami!

Starting with this edition, Hoami will lead a new monthly editorial section in Dink Authority Magazine, and each week we'll share practical tip videos on our social media platforms so you can put them into action — no matter your skill level.

With Hoami Vu, you'll not only learn to play better, but you'll also discover why this sport connects and transforms us. Welcome aboard, Hoami!



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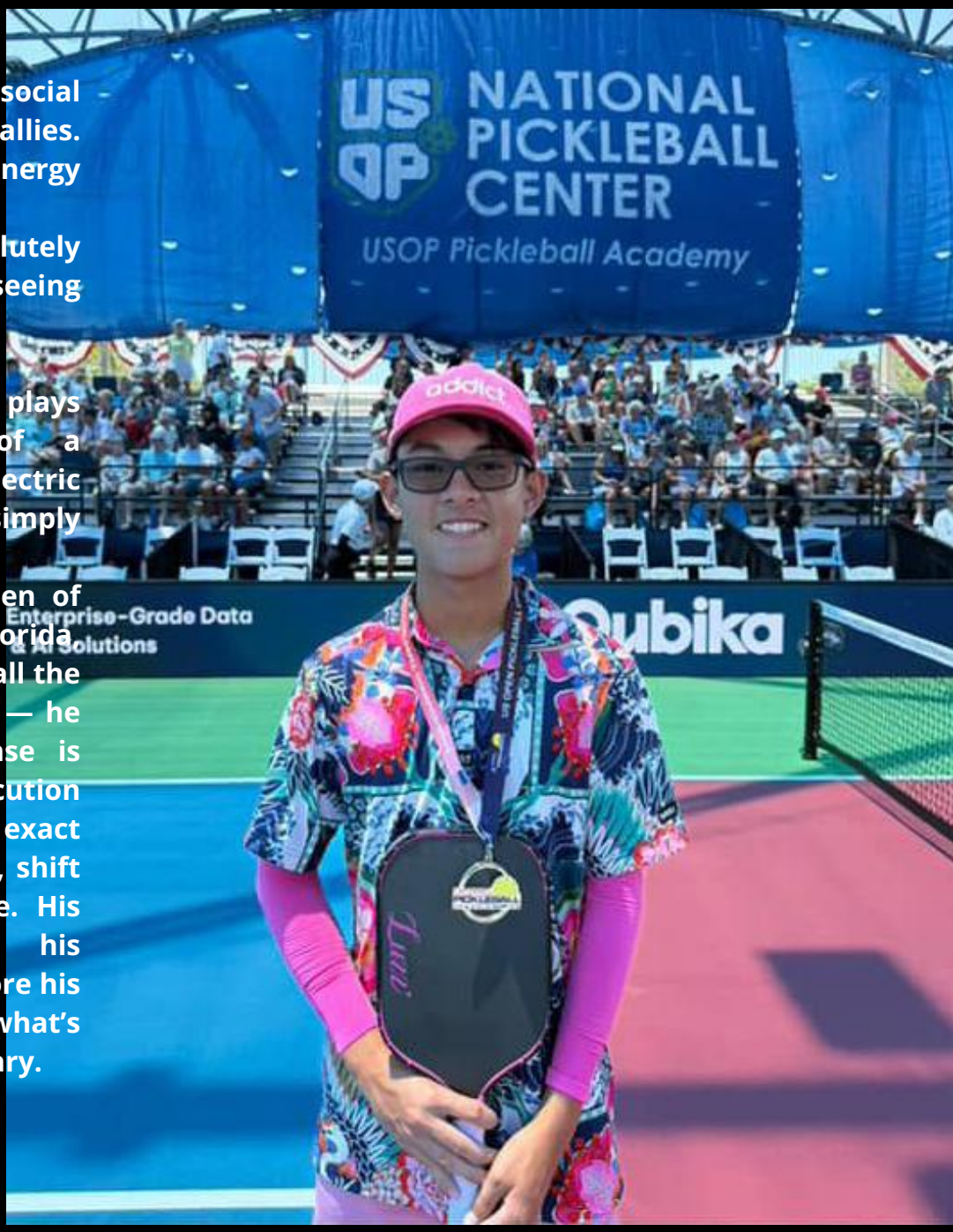
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Junior Player

By Oops Creative Group

Rex Thais

The Rise of a Junior Legend at the 2025 US Open



I had seen him before. On social media. Viral clips. Intense rallies. A huge smile and an energy that's impossible to ignore.

But nothing — absolutely nothing — compares to seeing him in person.

Rex Thais.

Just 14 years old. But he plays with the composure of a seasoned pro and the electric spark of someone who simply loves the game.

It was at the 2025 US Open of Pickleball in Naples, Florida, where I finally understood all the hype. Rex doesn't just win — he dominates. His court sense is instinctive, his execution surgical. He knows the exact moment to charge the net, shift the tempo, apply pressure. His composure, his control, his ability to win the point before his opponent even realizes what's happening... it's extraordinary.

#1 player on the PPA Junior Tour

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Junior Player

By Oops Creative Group



"HE'S NOT JUST GOOD... HE'S DIFFERENT."

From the first point to the last, he moved like lightning, with a natural fluidity that doesn't just impress — it stirs emotion. Rex doesn't play pickleball. Rex becomes pickleball. Every step is rhythm, like the sport flows through him. His aggression is smart, calculated, lethal. Yet always rooted in respect, passion, and purpose.

And the results speak for themselves: two gold medals (in boys' singles and boys' doubles) and a bronze in mixed doubles. With this, Rex became the first U16 male player to achieve the junior triple crown at a PPA tournament — champion in singles, doubles, and mixed in the same event. A milestone. A promise fulfilled.

I spoke with several coaches and players after his matches. They all agreed on one thing:

"He's not just good... he's different."

And that "different" comes from within — but also from home. Rex isn't alone on this journey. He has a family that supports him with love and commitment. His parents, Ricky and Tina Thais, have been there since the very first serve in their backyard in Jacksonville, Florida. They don't pressure. They don't push. They walk with him. And it shows — in the calmness with which Rex plays, in the smile between points, in the balance he brings both on and off the court.

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Rex Thais isn't just the future of pickleball



And off the court, Rex shines just as brightly. He's a member of the National Junior Honor Society, has taken courses at the University of Florida and Florida State College at Jacksonville. At his age, he already shows interest in entrepreneurship and personal brand building. His work ethic, discipline, and pursuit of excellence are just as impressive as his backhand.

But perhaps the most telling sign of who Rex is lies in his philanthropic spirit. On a trip to Vietnam, he shared his passion for pickleball with young people in emerging communities. He taught, he played, he planted inspiration. On social media, he doesn't just celebrate wins — he gives thanks, raises awareness, and uplifts others.

Watching Rex compete doesn't feel like watching a kid play a game.

It feels like witnessing the birth of a legend. His presence on court is magnetic. His impact goes far beyond stats (even though he's currently ranked #1 in the PPA Junior Tour U16 in singles, doubles, and mixed).

Rex has something you can't teach. Something you can't train. He has soul.

And that soul — fast, vibrant, brilliant — reminds all of us why we love this sport.

The future is already here. And his name is Rex Thais.

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Profesional Player

By Oops Creative Group

Daria Walczak's

Her Journey to the Top of Professional Pickleball

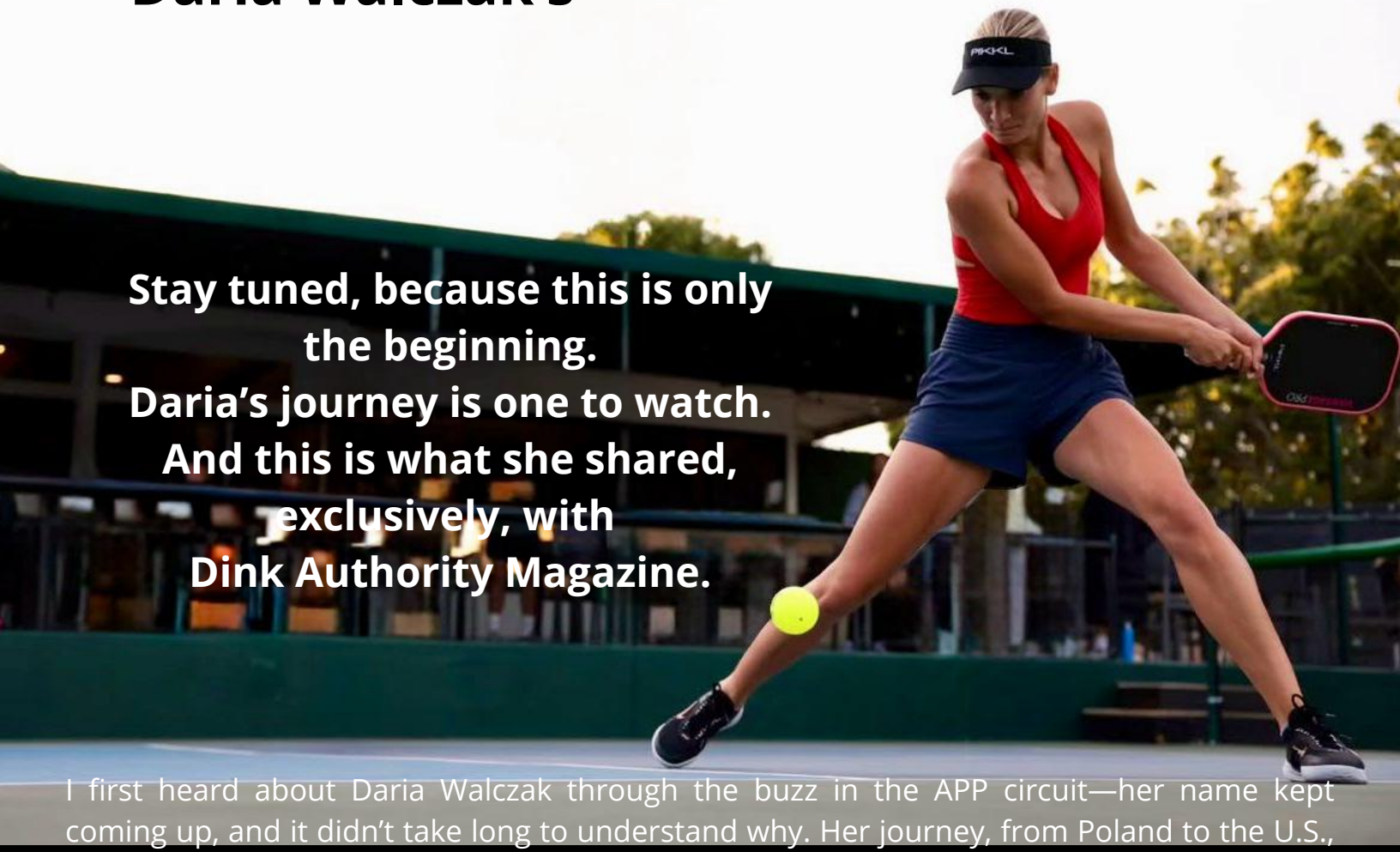


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Profesional Player

By Oops Creative Group

Daria Walczak's



Stay tuned, because this is only the beginning.
Daria's journey is one to watch.
And this is what she shared, exclusively, with
Dink Authority Magazine.

I first heard about Daria Walczak through the buzz in the APP circuit—her name kept coming up, and it didn't take long to understand why. Her journey, from Poland to the U.S., from tennis courts to pickleball podiums, is as inspiring as it is impressive. What stood out most was her grit, her growth, and the way she's carved out her own path in a sport she only recently started playing at the professional level. She's humble, focused, and absolutely driven. In her own words, Daria shared her story exclusively with Dink Authority Magazine.

Hi! My name is Daria Walczak, and I've been playing pro pickleball for about a year and a half.

I was introduced to the sport nearly four years ago, between my junior and senior years in college, but I didn't have the opportunity to truly start playing until the summer of 2022 after I graduated.

I came to the U.S. to play tennis at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa—that's where my pickleball journey began. I met some local 5.0 players who taught me the ropes. After about a year of learning and improving, they convinced me to travel for my first out-of-state PPA amateur tournament. I had no expectations—I didn't even meet my partner until the day we competed—but somehow, we won 5.0 gold in women's doubles. It was a fun experience, but at the time, I wasn't close to winning a pro match yet.

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Profesional Player

By Oops Creative Group

Daria Walczak's



I ended up winning seven!

Over the next few months, I played local 5.0 events, but they were becoming less and less challenging. Later that year (2023), I signed up for my first pro tournament—APP St. Louis. It went better than expected. I walked away with more wins than losses, even though my goal was just to win one match—I ended up winning seven!

Not long after, my husband and I moved to Arizona, and that's when my game really began to improve. I decided to go all in and try my hand at professional pickleball. At the beginning of 2024, I registered for several APP events. At my third ever (APP Sacramento), my partner Patrick Kawka and I reached the pro mixed doubles final, coming all the way from qualifiers. We managed to beat some top players—Simone Jardim, Megan Fudge, Jill Braverman, Gabe Tardio, Andrei Daescu—to get to Championship Sunday, where we ultimately lost to the Johnson siblings. That was the moment I realized: I can compete at this level.

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Profesional Player

By Oops Creative Group

Daria Walczak's



Since then, I've played almost every APP event and have earned a total of 8 medals:

3 silver in mixed doubles

2 silver in women's doubles

1 silver in singles

2 bronze in women's doubles

I'm thrilled about what's coming in 2025—new partnerships, new opportunities. Up next: the US Open and APP Cincinnati in May.

When I'm not on the court, I'm working full-time as an actuary in a remote position that gives me the flexibility to travel for tournaments. I'm grateful for that balance—it lets me pursue both my professional and athletic goals at the same time.

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Profesional Player
By Oops Creative Group
Daria Walczak's

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Up next: the US Open and APP Cincinnati in May.

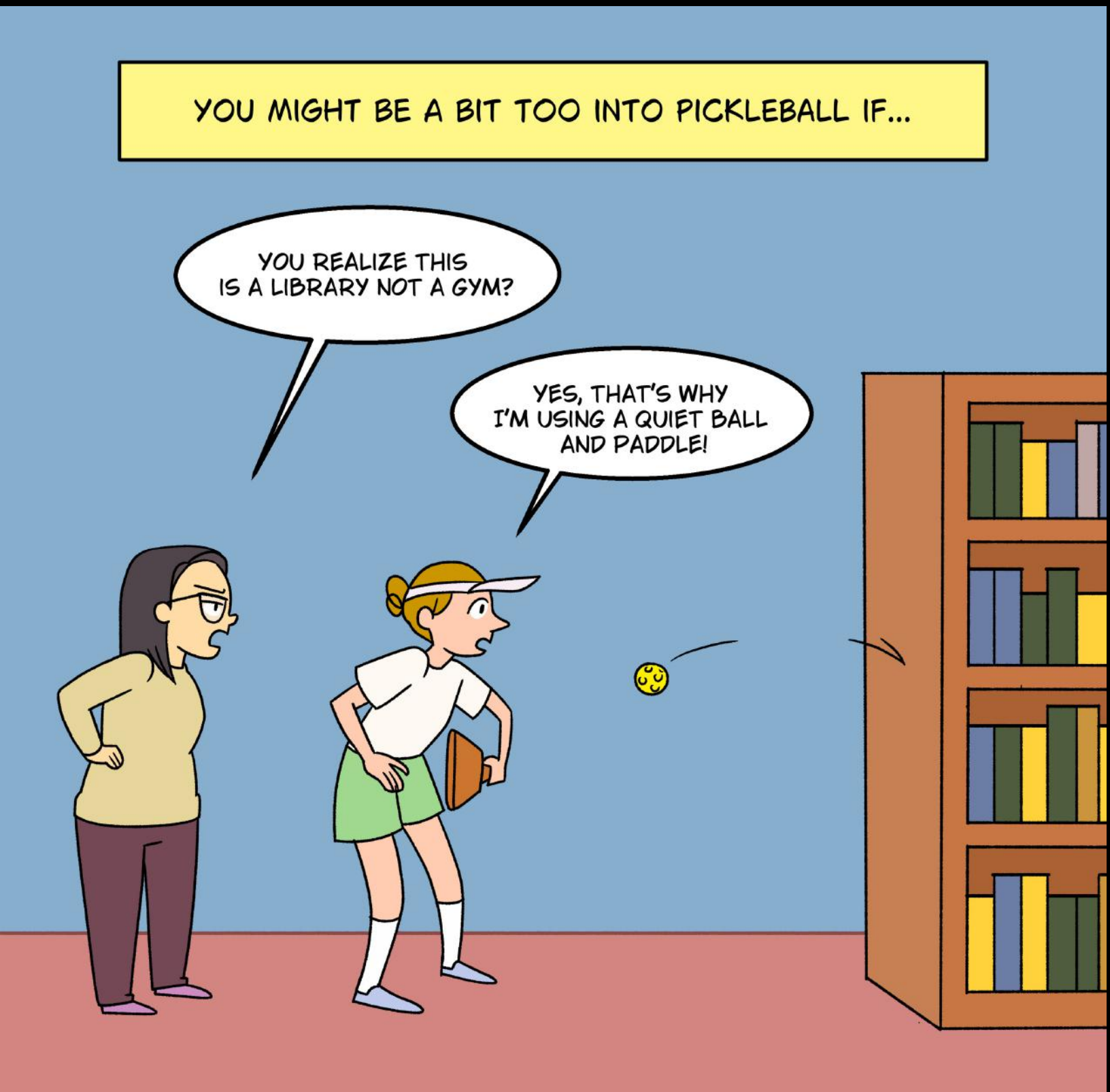






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THE WORLD OF PICKLEBALL BY ZAKOUR

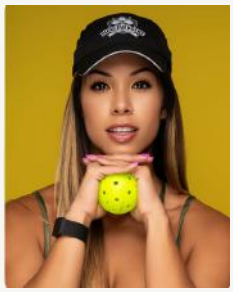


Exercises to Improve Reflexes and Reaction Time in Pickleball
Especially Useful for Older Players or Those Looking to Gain Speed on the Court

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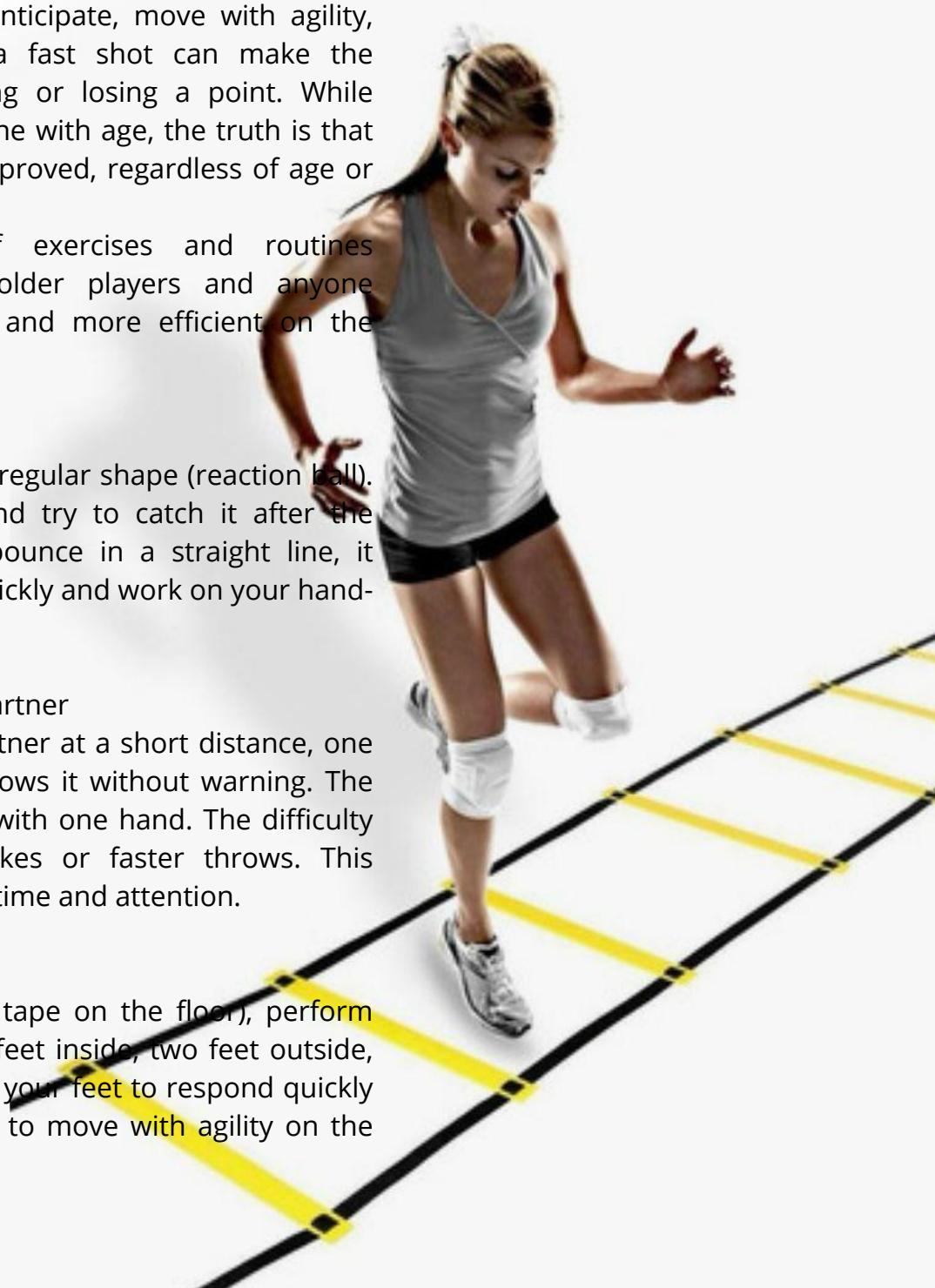
TIPS

BY Hoami Vu



In pickleball, reaction speed can be just as important as technique. The ability to anticipate, move with agility, and respond quickly to a fast shot can make the difference between winning or losing a point. While many believe reflexes decline with age, the truth is that they can be trained and improved, regardless of age or skill level.

Below are a series of exercises and routines recommended for both older players and anyone looking to become faster and more efficient on the court.



1. Reaction Ball Bounces

Use a rubber ball with an irregular shape (reaction ball). Throw it against a wall and try to catch it after the bounce. Since it doesn't bounce in a straight line, it forces you to react more quickly and work on your hand-eye coordination.

2. Surprise Throws with a Partner

Standing across from a partner at a short distance, one player holds a ball and throws it without warning. The other player must catch it with one hand. The difficulty can be increased with fakes or faster throws. This exercise improves reaction time and attention.

3. Agility Ladder Drills

Using an agility ladder (or tape on the floor), perform quick foot sequences: two feet inside, two feet outside, lateral or zigzag. This trains your feet to respond quickly and gives you a solid base to move with agility on the court

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TIPS

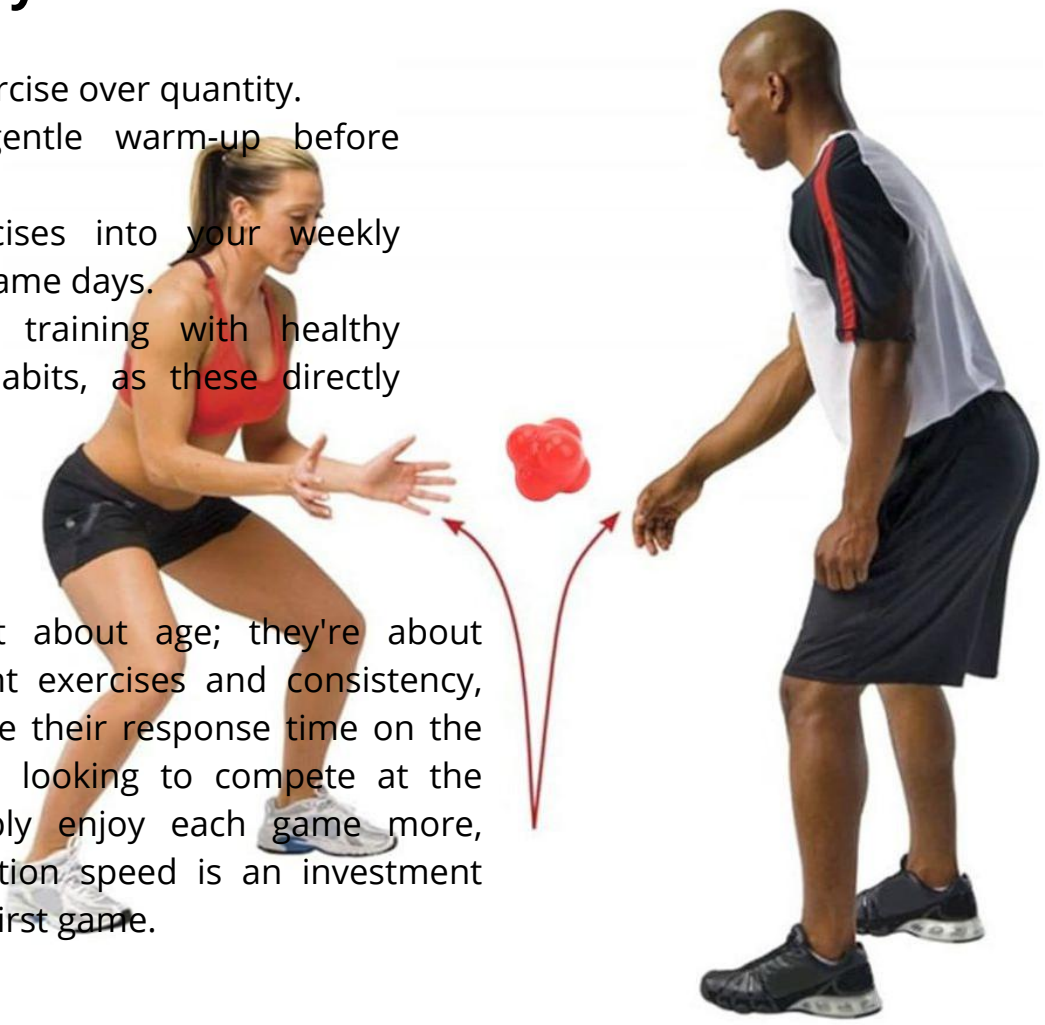
BY Hoami Vu

4. Digital Reflex Training
There are apps and programs that simulate visual or auditory stimuli to which you must react quickly. Recommended ones include Reflex Training or coordination games. These are useful for keeping the nervous system alert and working on mental reflexes, even during rest periods.

5. Advanced Visual Stimulation (Using Stroboscopic Glasses)
Professional players sometimes train with stroboscopic glasses, which intermittently block their vision and force the brain to react with less information. While not a common tool, it can be useful for those looking to take their reflexes to the next level.

Key Tips for Players Over 50

Focus on quality of exercise over quantity.
Always perform a gentle warm-up before training reflexes.
Integrate these exercises into your weekly routine, even on non-game days.
Complement physical training with healthy sleep and nutrition habits, as these directly affect reaction speed.



Conclusion

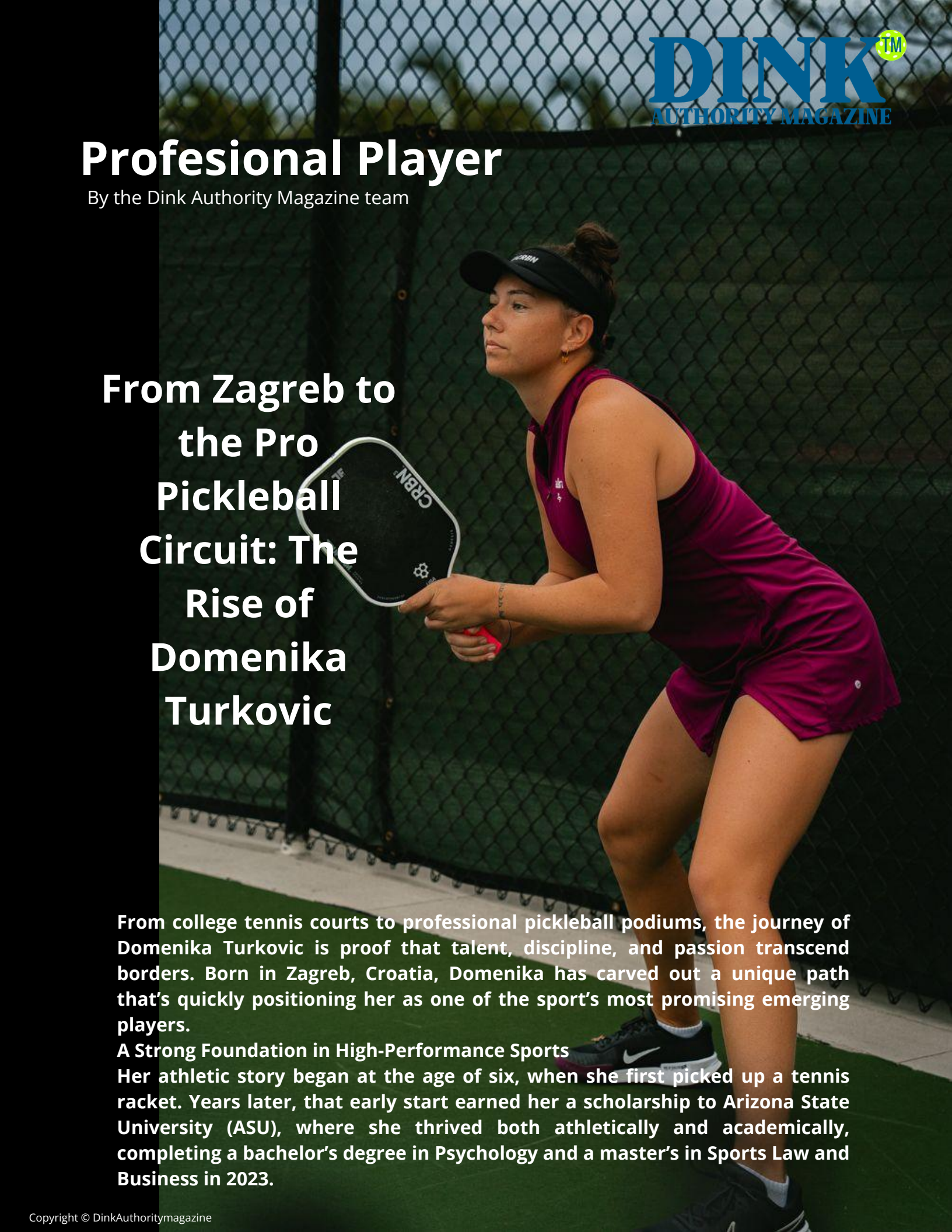
Reflexes are not just about age; they're about training. With the right exercises and consistency, any player can improve their response time on the court. Whether you're looking to compete at the highest level or simply enjoy each game more, working on your reaction speed is an investment that pays off from the first game.

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Profesional Player

By the Dink Authority Magazine team

From Zagreb to the Pro Pickleball Circuit: The Rise of Domenika Turkovic



From college tennis courts to professional pickleball podiums, the journey of Domenika Turkovic is proof that talent, discipline, and passion transcend borders. Born in Zagreb, Croatia, Domenika has carved out a unique path that's quickly positioning her as one of the sport's most promising emerging players.

A Strong Foundation in High-Performance Sports

Her athletic story began at the age of six, when she first picked up a tennis racket. Years later, that early start earned her a scholarship to Arizona State University (ASU), where she thrived both athletically and academically, completing a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a master's in Sports Law and Business in 2023.

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Alongside her doubles partner Patricija Spaka, Turkovic reached as high as No. 7 in the NCAA national doubles rankings, and she also broke into the top 70 in singles. She was a three-time NCAA doubles tournament participant and was honored as the Most Improved Senior Player in the Southwest Region by the ITA.



From Tennis to Pickleball: A Natural Transition

After graduating, Domenika set her sights on pickleball. Already serving as head pickleball pro at Mission Hills Country Club, she discovered that her tennis background gave her a strong tactical and technical foundation in her new sport.

She played her first tournament in January 2024, and it didn't take long for her to fall in love with competing again. In just over a year, she has competed in over 90 professional matches, across singles, women's doubles, and mixed doubles. Her current record (44-46) includes two professional singles medals, with her breakout performance coming at the APP Women's Open in Columbus, where she took home silver.

More Than an Athlete

Her decision to play tournaments wasn't only athletic—it was also part of her goal to earn the highest-level pickleball coaching certification, which requires firsthand experience on the pro tour. What began as a requirement quickly reignited her competitive spark.

"Feeling that adrenaline again, that connection with the court—it made me fall in love with the sport all over again," she shared in a recent interview. That commitment also helped her secure a professional athlete visa in the United States, an important milestone for her growth on tour.

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An International Ambassador for the Sport

While her family remains in Croatia, Domenika stays closely connected to her roots. Her story is already inspiring young athletes in her home country and beyond—especially women looking to build a future in a fast-growing sport like pickleball.

Now 24 years old, Domenika is focused on her next goals: improving her results in doubles, becoming a regular contender on the APP and PPA tours, and continuing to build community on and off the court.

Follow Her Journey

To follow her career and training updates, find her on Instagram at @domenika.turkovic, where she shares tournament moments, practice insights, and behind-the-scenes glimpses of life as a rising pro.

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Brooklyn Pickleball Team Talent and Style at the Highest Level of MLP

In recent years, pickleball has evolved from a casual pastime into a global sporting phenomenon. At the heart of this growth is Major League Pickleball (MLP)—the professional league that has revolutionized the way this sport is experienced. With a unique team-based competition format that includes men's doubles, women's doubles, mixed doubles, and a thrilling "dreambreaker" tiebreaker, the MLP delivers a fast-paced, strategic, and emotionally charged spectacle where every point counts and teamwork is everything.

Within this vibrant landscape, one of the most exciting and media-savvy teams of the 2025 season has emerged: the Brooklyn Pickleball Team

Originally founded in 2022 as the D.C. Pickleball Team, this squad took a strategic leap by relocating and rebranding in Brooklyn, New York—aligning themselves with one of the world's cultural capitals. The name change came with renewed energy and an ambitious vision for leadership and sporting excellence.

The team's ownership group is as impressive as its on-court performance, boasting high-profile names like Eva Longoria, Justin Verlander, Kate Upton, Rip Hamilton, Shawn Marion, Odell Beckham Jr., and Mesut Özil, among others. This blend of sports, entertainment, and business acumen has made the Brooklyn Pickleball Team one of the most followed and talked-about franchises in the league.

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Pickleball Teams

By Oops Creative Group

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@BROOKLYNPICKLEBALLTEAM

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On the court, the team has proven themselves as true contenders. Back in 2023, still competing as the D.C. Pickleball Team, they secured an MLP championship title—showcasing strong chemistry and an ability to thrive in high-pressure environments.

2025 Roster – Pure Talent in Action

In the 2025 season, Brooklyn competes in the Premier Level of MLP with a top-tier lineup:

Dekel Bar: One of the most dominant net players in the game, his power, aggression, and court awareness make him a lethal weapon in both men's and mixed doubles.

Rachel Rohrabacher: A rising star known for her agility, precision, and competitive mindset. She's become a key player in the team's strategic setup.

Riley Newman: Charismatic and explosively talented, Riley brings speed, control, and undeniable chemistry with teammates. He's a fan favorite and a game-changer.

Jackie Kawamoto: Technical, elegant, and smart on court, Jackie is a doubles specialist who shines in clutch moments and brings confidence to every match.

Hannah Blatt and Pat Smith round out a balanced roster, providing experience, depth, and versatility in every format.

Under the leadership of head coach Kyle McKenzie and general manager Josh Gartman, the Brooklyn Pickleball Team is not just here to compete—they're here to build a dynasty.

As the universe of pickleball continues to expand, Brooklyn stands as the perfect fusion of high-performance, entertainment, and cultural relevance. They are, without question, one of the top teams to watch this season.

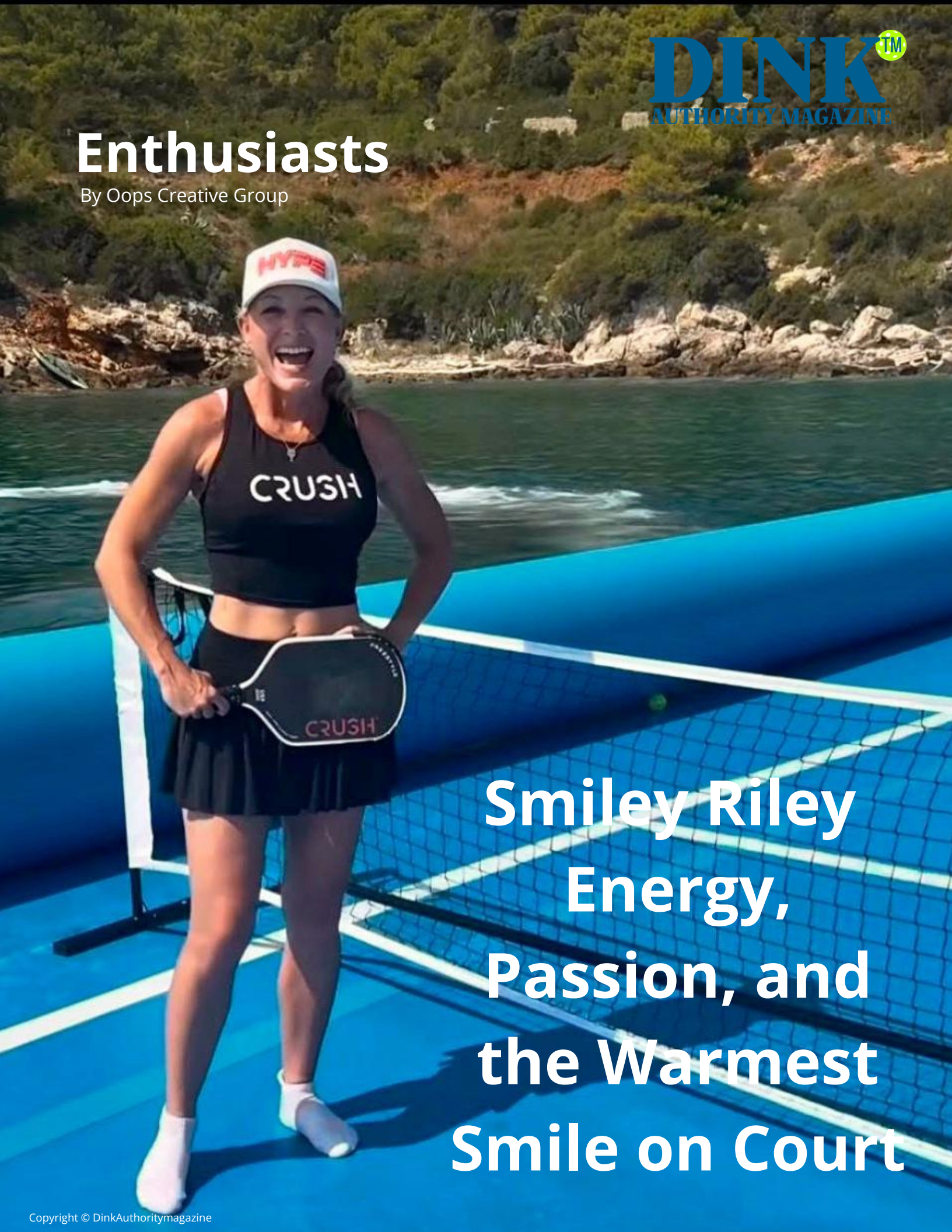
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MLP MAJOR LEAGUE PICKLEBALL

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Enthusiasts

By Oops Creative Group



Smiley Riley Energy, Passion, and the Warmest Smile on Court

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Enthusiasts

By Oops Creative Group



We instantly connected with her story, her passion, and her entrepreneurial spirit. Riley Palmer doesn't just teach pickleball—she lives it with her whole heart and shares it with unstoppable enthusiasm. She's a true human battery, one that never seems to run out. A certified coach (and oh, what a calling that is!), a mother of three girls, a dedicated homemaker, a lifelong volunteer… and, on top of it all, the founder and soul behind Smiley Riley Pickleball.

Based at the iconic JW Marriott Desert Ridge—one of the hotspots for pickleball in the U.S.—Riley juggles calls, emails, texts, WhatsApp messages, and social media like a pro. Yes, she definitely has energy! And she always does it with the warmest, most contagious smile on any court.

In this edition, we're excited to introduce you to this amazing woman, who shines not only for her experience and skills, but for the genuine love she pours into everything she does. Riley is living proof that when you combine passion, purpose, and great vibes, there's no net that can stop you.

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Enthusiasts

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This is Smiley Riley in her own words

I'm Riley Palmer, a.k.a. Smiley Riley. I'm deeply passionate about pickleball. With over four years of coaching experience, I oversee kids' summer camps and serve as head pro coach at the renowned JW Marriott Desert Ridge, a hub for pickleball enthusiasts. My coaching journey spans large and small clinics across the United States, Mexico, and Croatia.

Beyond pickleball, I'm a proud parent to three daughters actively engaged in pickleball, soccer, and volleyball—sports I've supported them in for years. For over 15 years, I've volunteered as a Girl Scout leader and Sunday school teacher, cherishing every moment.

My commitment to pickleball extends beyond coaching—I've competed in more than 15 national tournaments across singles, gender doubles, and mixed doubles events. My enthusiasm lies in nurturing youth programs and fostering a love for pickleball in the next generation.

At Smiley Riley Pickleball, I offer a personalized coaching experience that's as much about having fun as it is about improving your game. With years of experience and a passion for the sport, I bring a positive, energetic, and sunshine-filled approach to everything I do. Whether you're looking for individual lessons, group sessions, corporate events, or a pickleball vacation, I'm here to make sure your experience is memorable, exciting, and full of positive energy.

I'm known for having a smile that can light up any court, and it's that energy I infuse into every coaching session. I believe in making learning fun, leaving each client with a huge smile and a feeling of accomplishment. Whether you're a competitive player or just starting out, I focus on building your confidence, improving your skills, and making sure you have a blast along the way.

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Profesional Player

By Oops Creative Group

Lara Giltinan

From Professional Tennis to the Top Level of Pickleball



Lara Giltinan's story is one of reinvention through passion. Born and raised in Sydney, Australia, Lara was a standout tennis player, reaching #42 in the ITF Junior rankings and climbing to #540 in the WTA rankings. However, at just 18 years old, an injury forced her to retire from professional tennis.

She didn't stray far from the sport. From 2010 to 2013, she worked as the Tournaments and Operations Manager for Tennis NSW (Tennis Australia), overseeing more than 35 tournaments annually—from junior events to ITF Juniors and WTA/ATP competitions.

In January 2013, Lara moved to the United States and entered a new chapter in the entertainment industry. For the past 12 years, she has worked in Las Vegas nightlife and daylife, managing some of the city's most iconic venues, including pool parties, nightclubs, and shows. She is currently the Beverage Manager at Magic Mike Live, the show inspired by the hit movie.

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But her connection to sports wasn't over. In 2024, almost by accident, Lara picked up a pickleball paddle for fun. What began as a casual game quickly turned serious: several local Vegas pros saw her natural talent and encouraged her to go pro. So she did.

Lara began competing in October 2024 and, after just six months, made a huge impression—she has officially signed with the PPA Tour.

Current Rankings:

PPA Tour Pro Singles Ranking: #38

PPA Tour 2025 Race Ranking: #25

Recent PPA Tour Results:

PPA 1000 Melbourne (Jan 2025): Quarterfinals in Singles and Doubles

PPA 1000 McKinney & Cape Coral (Mar 2025): Qualified into Main Draw, reached Round of 32

PPA 1000 St. George (Apr 2025): Reached Round of 16

PPA 1000 Milwaukee (Nov 2024): Qualified into Main Draw, reached Round of 32

PPA World Championships, Dallas (Nov 2024): Qualified into Main Draw, reached Round of 64

Current Sponsor:

The Picklr Henderson

Lara Giltinan is quickly becoming a name to watch in the world of pickleball. Her competitive mindset, technical foundation, and inspiring journey position her as an athlete to follow closely in 2025. From Las Vegas to the world, her story is just getting started.

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Tournament
By Oops Creative Group

This Is How the 2025 MLP Season Kicked Off in Orlando



After weeks of emails, interviews, and forms, we finally secured official accreditation with Major League Pickleball (MLP) to cover the entire 2025 season. And with it came the long-awaited weekend of April 24–27: the start of the action at the USTA National Campus in Orlando, Florida. A team from Dink Authority Magazine was there to bring you the full story from the inside.

The setting couldn't have been more perfect: a pristine sports campus with world-class facilities, dedicated areas for both pro and amateur players, spacious stands, food courts, massive screens, brand activations, and seamless logistics. The MLP organization, in partnership with the PPA Tour, made it clear that pickleball is no longer just an emerging sport—it's a full-scale professional spectacle growing with every event.

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The 16 Premier-level teams battled through the season opener with high intensity from the very first point. Each matchup featured men's doubles, women's doubles, and two mixed doubles matches. If tied 2-2, it all came down to the now-iconic Dreambreaker—a collective tie-break that's become the most electrifying moment of the format.

The stands were packed at all times. Families, local fans, and out-of-state pickleball enthusiasts created a vibrant atmosphere full of energy, emotions, and jaw-dropping plays. Cheers, applause, and courtside celebrations turned the event into a true sports festival.

Among the standout players, Jorja Johnson shined brighter than anyone, closing the tournament with an incredible 8-0 record and asserting her dominance throughout. Her game combined power, precision, and tactical intelligence, allowing her to read every point with clarity. Her ability to anticipate, her net strength, and her charisma both on and off the court cemented her as one of the tournament's biggest stars.



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Not everything was joyful. One of the most talked-about moments came when a male player was caught on camera verbally disrespecting a female opponent. The incident sparked a wave of reactions across social media and stirred up strong commentary within the pickleball community. MLP released a statement confirming the matter is being reviewed in accordance with its code of conduct, and all signs point to exemplary disciplinary action.

Despite that, the tournament left behind an overwhelmingly positive impression. MLP Orlando 2025 solidified the league's reputation as the elite pickleball circuit in the world and set the bar high for what's to come.

To check all match results, updated rankings, and full replays, visit the official site: www.majorleaguepickleball.net.

The next stop on the MLP 2025 calendar? San Clemente, California, from May 29 to June 1.

San Clemente, here we come!!!





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As a real estate agent, I pride myself on listening to my clients' needs and wants and will do my best to make them all come true. My business model is based on: dedication, communication, determination and trust. She is distinguished by providing exceptional real estate services in the South Florida market to sellers, buyers and investors. This encompasses local, national and foreign customers. I continually stay at the forefront of trends in the real estate industry as it evolves to become more innovative and efficient.

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PICKLEBALLS AFTER A DAY'S WORK.