

# Pickleball Ireland

Newsletter - May, 2024



## **Kukri Irish National Championships**

The National Championships took place on 6 - 7 April, 2024 in Lisburn, hosted on our behalf by Lisburn Pickleball Club. The championships were extremely successful with more than 200 members competing for national titles. A very warm congratulations to all our new champions; Please visit [our website](#) for a list of medallists.

Thanks to all who competed, our sponsors, our supporters and everyone from Lisburn Pickleball Club whose hard work and dedication made the tournament possible.

## **National Coach Register**

We are in the process of creating a national registry of internationally - qualified pickleball coaches in Ireland who are members of Pickleball Ireland and will detail background information and contact details for each.

The aim of the registry is to ensure that all coaches maintain their knowledge and skills while at the same time providing clubs across the country with contact details for coaches they can reach out to if they so wish.

We will be supporting coaches in Ireland on our registry by providing regular workshops so they can continue to remain up to date with best practices in pickleball instruction.

## **Referee Register**

We are currently finalising our referee registry, a listing of all qualified pickleball referees in Ireland. We currently have 5 - Level 1 Referees in Ireland approved by USA Pickleball - the first country outside of North America to achieve this and we are working to increase this pool of qualified referees by running more courses later in the year.

Having more referees will enhance the quality of play in clubs especially as more new players take up pickleball.

Our aim is to utilise our referees to keep Pickleball Ireland members up-to-date with rule changes and interpretations, and support them by providing more courses to advance their knowledge.

## **Club Membership**

We want to hear from you! You may have seen our recent posts on Facebook, seeking feedback from plays in clubs around the country about becoming members of Pickleball Ireland.

We believe it makes a lot of sense especially from a governance perspective, for clubs around the country to have a strong voice in how Pickleball Ireland is working to develop and promote the sport in Ireland. It is important to make the point that, as the national governing body in Ireland, Pickleball Ireland's Board and Advisory Committee are working on behalf of everyone, in a voluntary capacity, to put together a robust infrastructure around development and growth of the sport.

We are aware that many pickleball groups are not formal clubs so we have put together some helpful papers to provide guidance in forming a club as well as a number of constitutional documents. Visit [our website](#) to download these papers and utilise them to help set up your own club, and feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

## **Coaching Qualification**

Later this year we will be launching an internationally recognised coaching certified course aimed at increasing qualified coaches in the country with quality of content and assessment at the very core.

Earlier this year, a course was organised and held at various locations around Ireland by Sam Basford, an International Pickleball Teaching Professional Association (IPTPA) coach. Many of our members took advantage of this opportunity which provided the opportunity to progress to attaining a Level 1 coaching certification.

While we in Pickleball Ireland were very happy to publicise that course it is our goal to organise our own pickleball coaching certification program in the future – an approach very similar to that taking place within many other pickleball federations in Europe.

## Sanctioned Tournaments

We have now started to look at all the other tournaments we plan to hold as part of the BluePrint Strategy published earlier this year. This will require significant organising from now until June 2025 when we hope to hold the Irish Open once more.

It is worth stating again that the eight tournaments which we plan to run on an regular basis are

- Irish Open
- Irish Masters
- Irish Seniors
- Connacht Open
- Leinster Open
- Munster Open
- Ulster Open
- Irish Nationals

As mentioned, all our sanctioned tournaments will run on an annual basis apart from the Irish Open which will be every second year.

## European Championships

We recently shared information on our Facebook page regarding the European Championships and Ireland will be submitting teams in both categories, 19+ and 50+.

We are asking for all suitably experienced players to express an interest in being considered for selection to the final panel.

More information can be found on the link:

[https://www.europepickleball.org/EPC2024/epc2024\\_index.php](https://www.europepickleball.org/EPC2024/epc2024_index.php)

We would like to invite all eligible 4.0 and above level players to submit their interest for representing Ireland at this event. Please note the information that requires consideration before submitting your name for assessment:

- Players being a member of Pickleball Ireland and a consistent presence in Pickleball on the island of Ireland
- Willing to participate using their own budget, circa €700-1000.
- Confirmation of availability for the above dates and a commitment to meet on 3-4 occasions to train in the Dublin area.

Within your email, please state any players you have experience playing with, this is a doubles event so partner experience is welcomed. Also note your achievements/participation in domestic and international Pickleball competitions.

The performance of pairings and players at the recent KUKRI Irish Nationals will be taken into consideration, however it is the intention of Pickleball Ireland to hold a Selection Day, which will act as an opportunity for players who could not make the Nationals to show their skill level.

All expressions of interest should be sent to [info@pickleballireland.org](mailto:info@pickleballireland.org) with the subject "European Pickleball Team Selection". The deadline for submissions is 23:00 on Sunday 12th May 2024.

## **National League**

We will soon be making an announcement regarding the national league we sought feedback on recently. Our aim is to create a league with different divisions that will allow many the opportunity to participate regularly in competitive play.

This is a very exciting time for pickleball here in Ireland with all our plans for growth and expansion and especially now with international representative play becoming a reality. Our horizons are expanding and all of us at Pickleball Ireland, want everyone to be part of this journey of discovery, enjoyment, and growth.

Please join us as we work to grow and support the sport, we all love to play.

John Fitzpatrick

On behalf of all at Pickleball Ireland