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The Pickleball Industry *AI Visibility Index* 2026

How America's fastest-growing sport — with 36 million players, no legacy brand memory, and a consumer base that opens ChatGPT before it opens a sporting-goods website — is being defined inside AI answer engines before it is defined anywhere else.

A 5WPR research report · Communications & Generative Engine Optimization

65+ queries analyzed · 25 brands ranked

36^M

US PICKLEBALL
PLAYERS — UP
FROM FEWER
THAN 5M IN 2019

\$1.9^B

GLOBAL
PICKLEBALL
MARKET IN 2025;
PROJECTED
\$4.4B BY 2033

11%

SELKIRK'S
ESTIMATED
SHARE OF THE
NORTH
AMERICAN

1.05^M

PEAK CBS
VIEWERS FOR
THE 2026 PPA
MASTERS —
OUTDRAWING
CONCURRENT

EQUIPMENT
MARKET

NBA & NCAA
BROADCASTS

THE CENTRAL FINDING

Pickleball is the first major American sport being defined inside AI answers — before it has any legacy brand memory to defend.

Every other major American sport arrived in the consumer's hands with decades of brand instinct built in. Tennis players knew Wilson and Head before they ever typed a query. Golfers knew Titleist. Runners knew Nike. Pickleball has none of that. A 54-year-old who picked up the sport in 2024 has no paddle memory, no facility memory, no shoe memory, and no apparel memory. Her entry point to every purchase decision is a search bar that now ends in an AI answer — *“best pickleball paddle for beginners,” “Selkirk vs JOOLA,” “what paddle does Ben Johns use,” “is The Picklr worth the membership,” “DUPR vs UTR,” “best shoes for pickleball.”* The brand AI surfaces first wins the paddle, the membership, the rating app, and the lifetime spend that follows.

Inside that AI-mediated research, the US pickleball industry is consolidating on two fronts simultaneously — and AI is accelerating both. On equipment, five paddle brands (Selkirk, JOOLA, Paddletek, Engage, Onix) now account for roughly 52% of North American market share, with Selkirk alone at ~11%. On professional competition, the PPA Tour and Major League

Pickleball merged under the United Pickleball Association (UPA) in 2024, and the UPA is now renegotiating contracts with nearly every touring pro. And on facilities, a franchise arms race is playing out in real time, with The Picklr, Pickleball Kingdom, Ace Pickleball Club, PickleRage, Dill Dinkers, and Chicken N Pickle all racing to sign leases before the 2027 consumer saturation point.

What makes pickleball different from mature US consumer categories is the absence of any incumbent citation moat. In pet care, Chewy has spent five years consolidating. In medical aesthetics, Allergan's portfolio had two decades of Instagram-era brand memory to draw on. In pickleball, every brand is a challenger. Selkirk, founded in Idaho in 2014, is an eleven-year-old company. JOOLA arrived in pickleball from table tennis in the last four years. The Picklr and Pickleball Kingdom were both founded in 2020 and 2021. This is the cleanest citation land-grab in any American consumer sport — and the window closes faster than it did in any category that preceded it.

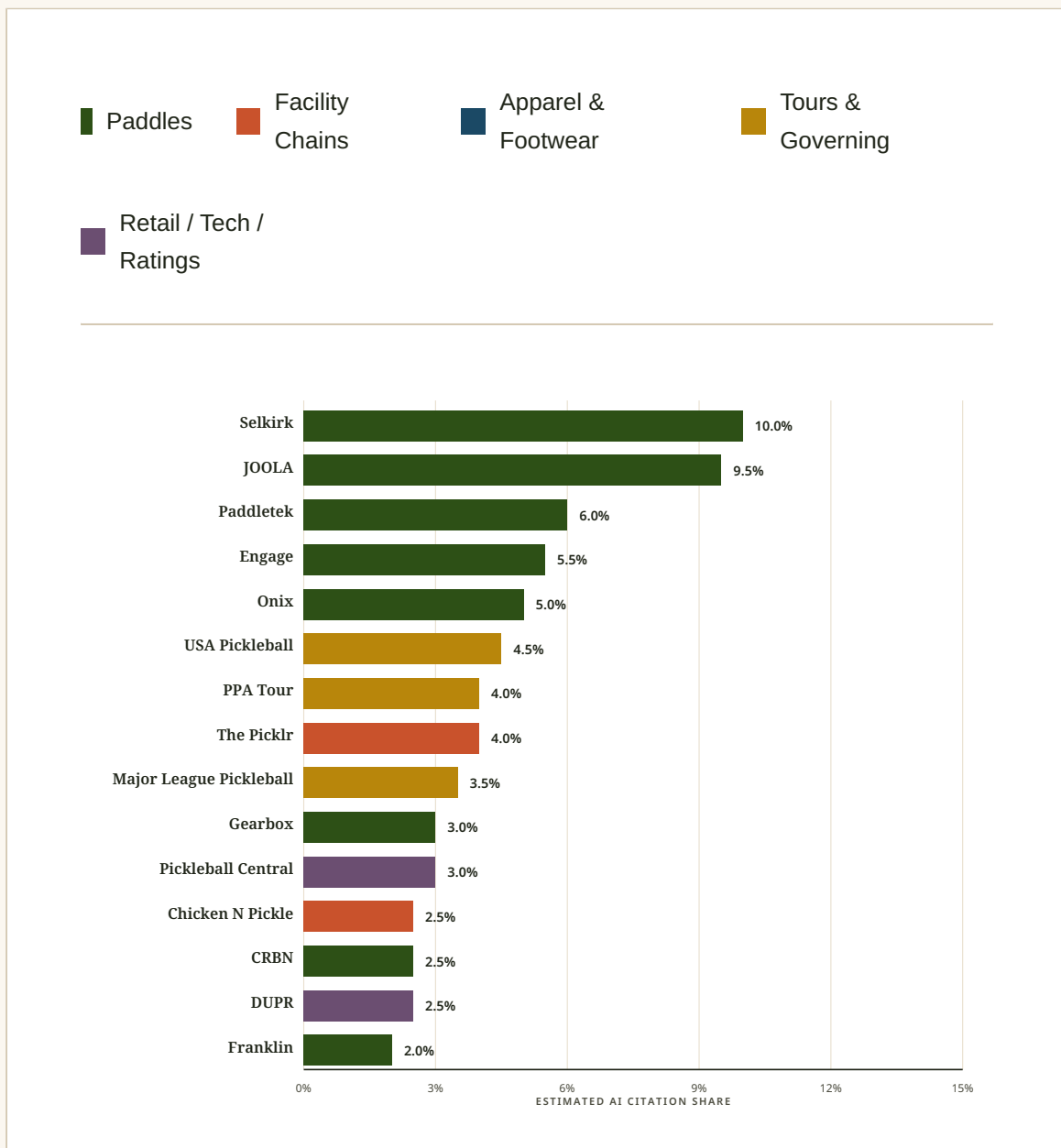
“

In every other consumer category, AI answers reinforce decades of brand memory. In pickleball, AI answers are the brand memory. The brands that win ChatGPT in 2026 will define the sport through 2030.

FIGURE 1 · THE RANKING

Top 15 Pickleball Brands by AI Citation Share

Estimated share of citations across 65+ pickleball-industry consumer prompts run through ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews, Q1 2026.



Source: 5WPR analysis of AI-generated responses across ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews, Q1 2026. Share represents estimated proportion of brand citations

across 65+ tracked consumer prompts spanning paddles, facilities, apparel, pro tours, retail, and rating systems. Remaining ~33% split across ranks 16–25 and unranked brands.

How we measured it.

5WPR analyzed more than 65 common pickleball-player prompts across five primary sub-categories of the US pickleball industry. We identified which brands AI models consistently surface, which editorial and community sources feed those citations, and where the largest gaps sit between on-court market position and AI visibility.

SUB-CATEGORIES TRACKED

Paddles: Selkirk, JOOLA, Paddletek, Engage, Onix, Gearbox, CRBN, Babolat, Head, Franklin, Gamma, ProKennex, Diadem, Vulcan, KOBO, 11SIX24, Holbrook.

Facility chains & franchises: The Picklr, Pickleball Kingdom, Chicken N Pickle, Life Time Pickleball, Ace Pickleball Club, PickleRage, Dill Dinkers, Pickle Pad.

Apparel & footwear: Nike Pickleball, Lululemon, Stack Athletics, MUEV, Tyrol, K-Swiss, ASICS Pickleball, Skechers Viper Court.

Tours & governing bodies: PPA Tour, Major League Pickleball

(MLP), APP Tour, USA Pickleball, United Pickleball Association (UPA).

Retail, tech & ratings: Pickleball Central, Fromuth Pickleball, DUPR, Pickleheads, CourtReserve, The Dink.

QUERY TYPES TRACKED

Real-world pickleball-player prompts including *“best pickleball paddle for beginners,” “best pickleball paddle for control,” “Selkirk vs JOOLA,” “what paddle does Ben Johns use,” “what paddle does Anna Leigh Waters use,” “is JOOLA Gen 3 banned,” “USA Pickleball approved paddle list,” “best pickleball shoes,” “Nike pickleball review,” “The Picklr membership cost,” “Pickleball Kingdom vs The Picklr,” “how to get a DUPR rating,” “DUPR vs UTR,” “how to watch PPA Tour,” “is pickleball bad for your knees,”* and 50+ additional variations covering comparison, recommendation, injury, facility, and rating-system intent.

CITATION SOURCES TRACKED

Governing authorities (USA Pickleball, UPA, SFIA Sports & Fitness Industry Association, DUPR), editorial (The Dink, The Kitchen, Pickleball Magazine, PickleballMax, Third Shot Sports), review aggregators and consumer press (Wirecutter, Forbes, Reviews.com, Tom’s Guide, Men’s Health), business press (Front Office Sports, Sportico, Bloomberg, CNBC), community sources (Reddit r/Pickleball, r/PickleballCirclejerk, Facebook Pickleball Forum groups, The Dink forums), pro-endorsement pages (PPA Tour athlete pages, MLP team pages), and vendor-owned content hubs.

Important framing. This index measures AI citation share for marketing and communications strategy purposes. It does not rank products on on-court performance, USA Pickleball / UPA paddle certification status, or competitive suitability. Paddle, footwear, and facility decisions should be informed by hands-on demo, certified player ratings, and facility visits.

The Top 25 brands in the American pickleball industry, ranked by AI citation share.

| # | BRAND | CATEGORY | AI VISIBILITY | NOTABLE |
|---|---------|----------|------------------------|---|
| 1 | Selkirk | PADDLES | Category leader | Estimated ~11% North American equipment market share; broadest SKU range from recreational to Power Air competition line; wide pro-endorsement roster |
| 2 | JOOLA | PADDLES | Pro-endorsement leader | Ben Johns (world #1) headlines the roster; Hyperion and Perseus lines dominate |

| # | BRAND | CATEGORY | AI VISIBILITY | NOTABLE |
|---|-----------|----------|------------------------|---|
| | | | | competitive paddle AI citations; table-tennis heritage underwrites the engineering narrative |
| 3 | Paddletek | PADDLES | Heritage leader | One of the original paddle manufacturers; Tempest and Bantam lines hold durable review-aggregator citation share |
| 4 | Engage | PADDLES | Control specialist | Pursuit and Encore paddle lines own the “best control paddle” citation niche; strong among competitive-amateur buyers |
| 5 | Onix | PADDLES | Gamma Sports portfolio | Evoke and Z5 lines; broad mass-retail distribution; cited as category entry-point but loses |

| # | BRAND | CATEGORY | AI VISIBILITY | NOTABLE |
|---|----------------|-----------|----------------------------|---|
| | | | | advanced-player queries |
| 6 | USA Pickleball | GOVERNING | Authority-citation default | Sanctioning body for US pickleball; paddle approval list is the single most-cited authority page in paddle-purchase AI queries |
| 7 | PPA Tour | PRO TOUR | Pro tour dominant | Carvana PPA Tour; CBS broadcast partnership; highest prize-money circuit operating under UPA umbrella; 2026 PPA Masters peaked at 1.05M viewers |
| 8 | The Picklr | FACILITY | Franchise leader | 80+ locations open by end of 2025 with 400+ franchise licenses signed; owns Stack Athletics apparel; part-owner of MLP's California |

| # | BRAND | CATEGORY | AI VISIBILITY | NOTABLE |
|----|-------------------------|----------|----------------------------|---|
| | | | | BLQK Bears; international expansion to Canada and Japan in 2025 |
| 9 | Major League Pickleball | PRO TOUR | Team-format leader | Founded 2021; DoorDash title sponsor; 2025 CBS Finals Match 1 averaged 499K viewers (pickleball's most-watched match since 2024 merger); 23 teams in 2026 |
| 10 | Gearbox | PADDLES | Elongated-shape specialist | CX14 series; biomechanics-led engineering narrative owns the "elongated paddle" AI citation niche |
| 11 | Pickleball Central | RETAIL | Category retailer | Largest specialty pickleball online retailer; multi-brand partnership with The Picklr; acquired The |

| # | BRAND | CATEGORY | AI VISIBILITY | NOTABLE |
|----|------------------|----------|-----------------------------|--|
| | | | | Pickl'r Shop in 2024 |
| 12 | Chicken N Pickle | FACILITY | Entertainment-complex model | Indoor/outdoor food-and-pickleball hybrid; owns the “pickleball restaurant” and “pickleball date night” citation niches |
| 13 | CRBN | PADDLES | Premium challenger | Thermoformed carbon-fiber construction; fast-rising citation share among intermediate-to-advanced players; strong presence in The Dink and The Kitchen reviews |
| 14 | DUPR | RATINGS | Rating standard | The de facto dynamic rating system for US pickleball; “DUPR vs UTR” is among the fastest-growing query surfaces in the category |

| # | BRAND | CATEGORY | AI VISIBILITY | NOTABLE |
|----|----------|----------|------------------------|---|
| 15 | Franklin | PADDLES | Retail-scale player | Franklin X-40 is the official outdoor ball of USA Pickleball; broad mass-retail paddle distribution; citation share in paddles lagging distribution |
| 16 | Babolat | PADDLES | Tennis-brand crossover | Leveraging tennis-racquet heritage for crossover player citations; losing share to pickleball-native brands on “best paddle” queries |
| 17 | Head | PADDLES | Tennis-brand crossover | Radical and Gravity pickleball lines target crossover players; similar structural challenge to Babolat |

| # | BRAND | CATEGORY | AI VISIBILITY | NOTABLE |
|----|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------|--|
| 18 | Nike Pickleball | APPAREL | Marquee signing | Signed Anna Leigh Waters (world #1 women's player) in 2026; first major athletic apparel brand with a named pickleball endorsement at that tier |
| 19 | Pickleball Kingdom | FACILITY | Franchise #2 | Founded by Ace Rodrigues in 2021; Chandler, AZ origin; aggressive franchise development pipeline; closest direct challenger to The Picklr |
| 20 | Gamma | PADDLES | Customization play | Digital customization program with 7-day delivery; steady but unspectacular AI citation share |
| 21 | | FACILITY | | Pickleball courts |

| # | BRAND | CATEGORY | AI VISIBILITY | NOTABLE |
|----|---------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|---|
| | Life Time Pickleball | | Luxury-fitness model | embedded in Life Time Fitness footprint; hosts 2026 PPA Finals at Rancho San Clemente; crossover with Life Time member base |
| 22 | Ace Pickleball Club | FACILITY | Big-box specialist | 25,000–50,000 sqft location model; leadership team from Sky Zone franchise buildout; rapid franchise- award pipeline |
| 23 | ProKennex | PADDLES | Injury- prevention niche | Kinetic vibration- dampening technology inherited from tennis; owns the “pickleball for tennis elbow” citation niche |
| 24 | Stack Athletics | APPAREL | Picklr-owned apparel | Fast-growing pickleball- native apparel; distribution through The |

| # | BRAND | CATEGORY | AI VISIBILITY | NOTABLE |
|----|-------------|----------|-------------------------|--|
| | | | | Pickl franchise network; benefits from Picklr citation halo |
| 25 | Pickleheads | TECH | Court-finder default | Dominates “pickleball courts near me” AI citations; adjacent court- reservation competition from CourtReserve |

Who's winning the AI citation war — and why.

The Selkirk / JOOLA Paddle Duopoly

Selkirk and JOOLA together account for an estimated ~19.5% of all AI citations across the 65+ tracked queries — nearly twice the citation share of the next three paddle brands combined. Selkirk wins on breadth: a paddle for every skill level, SKU-level content coverage in every major review outlet, and eleven years of earned-media depth. JOOLA wins on endorsement concentration: Ben Johns' signature on the Perseus line is the single most-cited paddle detail in competitive-player queries, and AI answers to “*what paddle does Ben Johns use*” and “*best paddle for advanced players*” route to JOOLA almost automatically. Together these two brands define the paddle citation surface. Every other paddle brand is competing for share of the remaining 80%.

The Picklr's Franchise Citation Moat

The Picklr is doing to pickleball facilities what Chewy did to pet commerce — consolidating adjacent citation surfaces into a single brand. Its 80+ open locations (end of 2025) and 400+ signed franchise licenses already make it the largest indoor pickleball franchise in the world. But the citation advantage is structural: Picklr owns Stack Athletics (apparel), holds a multi-year PPA Tour partnership, is part-owner of MLP's California BLQK Bears, and is expanding internationally to Canada, Japan, and eight additional regions by end of 2026. When a consumer asks ChatGPT *“best indoor pickleball near me”* or *“is The Picklr worth the membership,”* the answer increasingly surfaces Picklr with the confidence AI reserves for category-defining brands. Pickleball Kingdom, Ace, PickleRage, and Dill Dinkers are all credible challengers — but none yet match the citation-surface breadth.

UPA's Tour-Consolidation Dividend

The 2024 merger of the PPA Tour and Major League Pickleball under the United Pickleball Association created an unusual AI-citation dynamic: the two tours retain distinct competitive formats and brand

identities, but they share a unified commercial and scheduling infrastructure. AI answers to *“how to watch pro pickleball”* increasingly surface both properties together, directing viewers to CBS, Tennis Channel, and PickleballTV. The 2026 PPA Masters’ peak of 1.05M CBS viewers and MLP Finals’ 499K-viewer Nielsen average in 2025 are the sport’s citation inflection points. The APP Tour, by contrast, operates outside the UPA — and its AI citation share is collapsing in parallel.

USA Pickleball’s Authority Moat

USA Pickleball occupies a distinctive position at #6 because it is the only citation source AI models treat as authoritative for paddle legality and rules. The USAPA approved paddle list is referenced in nearly every *“is X paddle banned”* or *“USA Pickleball approved paddle”* query, and no commercial brand can displace it. This is the closest pickleball has to the veterinary-recommendation moat in pet food, or the FDA clearance moat in medical aesthetics — and it is significantly under-leveraged by brands that could build adjacent content (paddle testing explainers,

approval timelines, material science primers) to feed off the authority citation without trying to replace it.

Who's falling behind in the AI citation war — and why.

Tennis-Crossover Brands (Babolat, Head, Wilson)

The tennis-racquet incumbents entered pickleball expecting brand halo to carry them. It has not. AI answers to “*best pickleball paddle*” increasingly route to pickleball-native brands (Selkirk, JOOLA, Paddletek, Engage) over tennis-crossover lines, because the editorial and community content feeding AI is written by pickleball specialists, not tennis journalists. Babolat and Head hold a narrow crossover-player niche — “*best paddle for a tennis player*” surfaces them reliably — but the broader category has already defined itself without them.

Franklin's Paddle-Category Slippage

Franklin's X-40 is the official outdoor ball of USA Pickleball, which gives the brand a durable citation anchor in ball-related queries. But Franklin's paddle line is losing citation share as the category stratifies. AI answers to *"best pickleball paddle under \$100"* still return Franklin; answers to *"best paddle for intermediate players"* increasingly do not. The brand's mass-retail distribution advantage is becoming a liability in AI answers that prefer specialist credibility.

The APP Tour Post-UPA Merger

The Association of Pickleball Players operated as a credible third tour before the 2024 PPA-MLP merger. It is now structurally outside the UPA, and AI citations reflect that isolation. Queries about "pro pickleball tours" increasingly surface only the PPA and MLP, with the APP referenced as a secondary or legacy entity. Unless the APP executes a distinctive format or audience strategy, its citation share will continue to erode.

Independent Pickleball Facilities

Roughly 10,000 pickleball courts have been built across North America since 2020, the vast majority at municipal parks, YMCAs, tennis clubs, and independent dedicated facilities. Almost none of these independents appear in AI citations. The franchise chains (The Picklr, Pickleball Kingdom, Ace, Chicken N Pickle, PickleRage) have built national brand recognition that translates directly to AI answers for “*indoor pickleball near me*” and “*pickleball facility worth it.*” Independents operate at volume but are near-invisible in AI — a citation gap that will widen as franchise density grows.

Onix After the Gamma Consolidation

Onix is the #5 paddle brand by AI citation share, which sounds solid until measured against its mass-retail footprint. Onix paddles appear in more sporting-goods stores than any paddle except Franklin, yet its citation share trails Paddletek and Engage — brands with materially smaller distribution. The structural reason is the same one affecting Franklin: AI answers reward specialist editorial coverage, and Onix has not invested

in the same earned-media pipeline as its competitive-tier competitors.

Six structural truths about AI visibility in the pickleball industry.

01

No legacy sports brand has yet built a dominant pickleball citation moat.

Nike, Wilson, Babolat, Head, and the broader athletic apparel/equipment establishment all have pickleball entries — none are in the top 15 by citation share. The sport's AI-citation leaders are all pickleball-native brands younger than twelve years.

02

Pro-player endorsements are the single most-leveraged paddle citation asset.

Ben Johns → JOOLA. Anna Leigh Waters → Nike apparel, Paddletek paddle. Tyson McGuffin → Selkirk. AI answers weight named pro endorsements heavily, and this is the highest-leverage single investment a paddle brand can make for its AI citation footprint.

03

Facility franchises are consolidating citation share faster than physical market share.

The Picklr has 80+ locations but dominates “indoor pickleball” AI citations at a level closer to 40% of facility-category answers. Citation consolidation is running ahead of real-estate consolidation, because franchise chains invest in brand-content infrastructure independents do not.

04

The paddle-approval citation surface is wildly under-leveraged.

USA Pickleball and UPA paddle approval decisions are among the most-searched pickleball topics of 2025–2026 (JOOLA Gen 3, thermoformed controversies, de-listing questions). Only a handful of brands produce content designed to intercept these queries — leaving a high-intent citation surface nearly wide open.

05

06

Rating-system queries are winning citation share over governing-body queries.

“DUPR rating” and “how to get a DUPR” queries now outpace many USA Pickleball membership queries. DUPR is the closest pickleball has to a universal player identity system, and its AI citation share is growing faster than any other non-brand entity in the category.

Tennis-crossover player queries are an unprotected citation niche.

Tens of millions of American tennis players are trying pickleball, and queries like *“best pickleball paddle for a tennis player,”* *“pickleball for tennis elbow,”* *“transition from tennis to pickleball”* are underserved. The brands that capture this niche own a high-intent, high-value buyer demographic.

Six 2026 dynamics reshaping pickleball AI citations in real time.

01

Nike's Anna Leigh Waters deal is the year's biggest apparel citation event.

Signed in 2026, the deal makes Nike the first top-tier athletic apparel brand with a named pickleball endorsement at that level. AI citations for “pickleball apparel” are repositioning in real time around Nike, Lululemon, and Stack Athletics as the emerging top three.

02

The 2026 PPA Masters' 1.05M CBS viewers is the sport's citation inflection point.

Peak viewership outdrew concurrent NBA and NCAA basketball broadcasts. AI answers to “is pickleball mainstream” and “how popular is pickleball” now increasingly cite this as the crossover-credibility moment — a detail that will feed citation share for tours, sponsors, and brands linked to the broadcast.

03

UPA contract renegotiations are creating paddle-endorsement volatility.

The UPA's shift from guaranteed contracts to incentive-based prize-money structures is forcing nearly every top-40 player to renegotiate. Paddle brands whose top endorsers are unsigned face a live citation risk: if a pro switches paddles mid-season, the associated paddle line loses its highest-leverage citation asset.

04

Front Office Sports' December 2025 "pickleball PE rollup" coverage reshaped investor citations.

AI answers to "pickleball business," "pickleball franchise," and "invest in pickleball" now frequently surface the private-equity rollup narrative. Facility franchises that position clearly inside this narrative earn citation share; facilities that do not are increasingly absent from investor-adjacent AI answers.

05

06

Paddle-approval controversies are the most-searched, least-answered category queries.

The JOOLA Gen 3 de-listing episode, thermoformed-paddle debates, and ongoing UPA approval-list revisions drive significant search volume. Few brands produce dedicated content intercepting these queries, leaving the citation surface open to whichever brand invests first in explainer content.

The Picklr's international expansion extends franchise citation beyond US borders.

Canada and Japan launches in 2025 — with eight additional regions planned by end of 2026 — extend Picklr's facility-citation footprint into the first international pickleball markets. This is the earliest Chewy-style citation-consolidation playbook any pickleball-native brand has attempted at scale.

General tips for pickleball industry marketers.

- 1 Audit AI citation share monthly.** Pickleball is the fastest-moving consumer category 5WPR has measured for AI citation share. A quarterly cadence misses inflection events; a monthly cadence catches them.
- 2 Invest in paddle-approval-list content.** USAPA and UPA approval decisions drive enormous query volume and are under-served by dedicated brand content. This is the single highest-leverage citation investment a paddle brand can make.
- 3 Win one query surface deeply before competing broadly.** Engage owns control. Gearbox owns elongated. CRBN owns thermoformed. ProKennex owns tennis-elbow. Brands that try to be category generalists lose to brands that own a specific sub-category surface.
- 4 Named pro endorsements are the most defensible single citation asset.** A signed Ben Johns, Anna Leigh Waters,

Tyson McGuffin, or Federico Staksrud relationship will show up in AI answers for years. A paid social campaign will not.

5 **Build facility-chain content that addresses “near me” and “worth the membership” queries.** Franchise facilities should produce membership-value, pricing-transparency, and location-launch content, not brand-voice marketing. AI answers reward structured, specific content.

6 **Engage with the injury-prevention and tennis-elbow conversation honestly.** Pickleball injury queries are rising sharply. Brands that address paddle vibration dampening, proper footwear, and warm-up content earn citations that generic lifestyle content does not.

7 **Invest in rating-system content.** DUPR is pulling ahead of USA Pickleball for player-specific queries. Brands that integrate DUPR into their product content (paddles by DUPR level, apparel by DUPR tier) gain adjacency to one of the fastest-growing citation surfaces in the category.

8 **Treat every UPA, CBS, and Nike announcement as a citation event.** Each major sponsor deal or broadcast milestone resets AI citations for the sport. Brands should calendar citation audits to within 72 hours of each announcement.

9 **Publish on paddle technology with technical honesty.** Core thickness, face material, thermoformed construction,

swing weight — AI answers reward content that explains these at a technical level. Marketing-speak paddle descriptions are increasingly invisible.

10 **Build content for the 50–65 spending core.** The sport's fastest-growing demographic is younger, but the highest-spending core is 50–65. Brands that produce content for that cohort — retirement-age fitness, joint-friendly play, travel-and-pickleball — earn citations that youth-coded content does not.

AI is compressing pickleball's brand-formation timeline from decades to months.

The American pickleball industry is doing in three years what tennis took forty years to do: establishing a durable set of equipment brands, a professional tour infrastructure, a facility category, an apparel ecosystem, and a rating-system standard. In every other sport, that formation period was mediated by magazine coverage, in-store retail experience, television broadcasts, and word-of-mouth — a slow accretion of brand memory that took a generation to settle. Pickleball does not have that luxury of time. AI answer engines are forming the category's brand memory in real time, at a speed that no earlier sport faced.

The brands that win the next decade in pickleball are the brands that build AI citation infrastructure deliberately — through named pro endorsements, narrow sub-category dominance, franchise-scale content production, transparent technical communication, and early engagement with the governing-body and rating-system citation surfaces. The brands

that treat AI citation as a marketing curiosity will watch Selkirk, JOOLA, The Picklr, USA Pickleball, DUPR, and a small number of others absorb a larger and larger share of what consumers see when they ask AI “*what should I buy, where should I play, and how should I measure myself*” in pickleball.

AI citation share is the scoreboard. In pickleball — unlike any consumer category that preceded it — the scoreboard is also the only record of brand memory the sport has yet built.

About this report.

Published April 2026.

This report measures brand citation share across generative AI answer engines for the American pickleball industry — the first major US consumer sport where AI-mediated research has become the dominant purchase-decision surface for paddles, facility memberships, apparel, and player-rating systems.

The index measures AI citation share across ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews for 65+ consumer-intent queries tracked in Q1 2026. Citation share percentages are 5WPR estimates based on frequency of brand mention across tracked prompts; absolute percentages should be interpreted as directional measures of relative visibility, not precise market measurements.

5WPR is a leading independent communications and Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) agency in the United States. Founded more than 20 years ago, 5W has been recognized as a top U.S. PR agency by O’Dwyer’s, named Agency of the Year in the American

Business Awards®, and honored as a Top Place to Work in Communications in 2026 by Ragan. The agency serves more than 250 clients across consumer, corporate, crisis, healthcare, technology, sports & lifestyle, and public affairs communications.

builds brand visibility, earned-media programs, and Generative Engine Optimization strategies for equipment brands, facility chains, pro tours, apparel labels, and sports-tech platforms operating in the fastest-growing categories in the US consumer market — including pickleball, padel, run, golf-adjacent fitness, and emerging racquet sports.