A PIONEERING INITIATIVE IN INCLUSIVE SPORT

CEREBRAL PALSY

PARA PICKLEBALL

A JOURNEY OF INCLUSION, ASSISTED PARTICIPATION, CLASSIFICATION AND HUMAN HAPPINESS

YES! PICKLEBALL FOR ALL.

BY

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INTERNATIONAL PARA PICKLEBALL ASSOCIATION (IPPA)

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A note about this publication

Purpose, authorship and use

This booklet presents the vision and work of Raghu Kumar Raghavelu in bringing Para Pickleball opportunities to people living with cerebral palsy in the World, with particular attention to people in the PP1–PP4 sport classes and to assisted participation.

Its technical foundation is the International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA) Para Pickleball Book of Rules, 2026 Edition, especially its provisions on Cerebral Palsy eligibility, functional classification, classification evaluation, ongoing observation for classification, classification system, digital visually assessed skill rating for classification, coaching assistance, half (side) of court rule for singles for some categories and the Additional Bounce Rule.

The Assistant 1 and Assistant 2 concept reflects an important principle of Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball which enables the player to participate, but not replace the player's participation. Assistants facilitate the playing experience while respecting the player's dignity, comfort, safety and opportunity to be actively involved in the game.

Alongside this technical framework, the booklet presents the founder's philosophy and personal experiences from interacting with people living with cerebral palsy in Nepal, Thailand and India since 2019. These experiences have strengthened his commitment to making Para Pickleball accessible, particularly to players in the PP1–PP4 Categories, and have allowed him to witness the happiness, excitement and sense of achievement the sport brings to their lives. The booklet emphasizes the importance of participation, dignity, confidence and inclusion through sport. These observations reflect the founder's personal experiences and are not presented as clinical or medical research findings.

This is an introductory and educational publication intended to promote awareness, understanding and wider participation in Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball in the World. It does not replace the official IPPA rules or classification procedures. For sanctioned competitions, the current official IPPA Book of Rules, classification regulations, event instructions and decisions of duly authorized classification panels shall remain the governing references.

A Dedication

Raghu Kumar Raghavelu dedicates this booklet to every person who deserves the opportunity to play para pickleball.

This booklet is dedicated to people living with cerebral palsy across the world, especially those who have been overlooked or denied opportunities to participate in organised sport because of their movement, balance, coordination or support needs.

It is also dedicated to the families, parents, caregivers, assistants, coaches, classifiers, therapists, volunteers and organisations who make inclusive participation possible with dignity and respect.

Above all, it is dedicated to every cerebral palsy para pickleball player whose smile, excitement and determination remind us that the true value of sport goes far beyond points, medals or rankings.

May every cerebral palsy person have the opportunity to step onto a court, be welcomed, participate and experience the joy of sport.

"I believe that physical activity and participation in sports do much more than strengthen the body. Every movement, every challenge and every game creates an opportunity for the brain to grow, adapt and develop. Through physical activity, we stimulate Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF), an important protein that supports brain health, learning, memory and neuroplasticity. To me, sport is not simply an exercise for the body; it is an investment in the growth and well-being of the human mind."

– Raghu Kumar Raghavelu

The central message

Sport must include the joy of participation

Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball is presented here as more than a competitive category our eyes can see but also what the player can feel. It is also an invitation to widen the meaning of sport: from performance alone to participation, from medals alone to meaningful experiences, and from a narrow definition of ability to a wider recognition of human potential.

For some players, success may mean learning a stroke, serving a ball or completing a rally. For others, it may mean joining a group activity, anticipating the ball, expressing excitement or enjoying a shared moment with an assistant, coach or fellow player.

Raghu Kumar Raghavelu's message is that a person should not be excluded from the joy of para pickleball simply because they may not be able to participate in a conventional competitive format.

Restoring Life – Let's Do It Together www.parapickleball.org

THE TRUE VALUE OF SPORT LIES IN THE JOY OF PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION AND BELONGING.

The journey into Para Pickleball

From an inclusive sporting idea to a worldwide framework

The IPPA Book of Rules records that Raghu Kumar Raghavelu began discussions in 2019, with support from Khatri Kumar Poudel of Nepal, to develop an international framework that could extend pickleball opportunities beyond wheelchair participation. The intention was to include people with a wider range of disabilities, including people with Cerebral Palsy and Intellectual Disabilities.

The same history records that the International Para Pickleball Association was formed in 2022 and that Raghu Kumar Raghavelu developed and introduced the Para Pickleball Classification System in 2022. The framework was designed to create more consistent and equitable competition for players with different impairments.

Within this broader development, Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball represents an important commitment: people with neurological and coordination impairments should have a recognized pathway into para pickleball, with adaptations that respond to functional needs.

Why cerebral palsy participation matters

Recognizing different functional experiences

Cerebral palsy can affect movement and posture in different ways due to differences in neurological function and neuro-response. The IPPA rulebook describes relevant sporting factors, including movement control, muscle tone, coordination, balance, mobility, functional reach, stability, neuro-response and the ability to perform sport-specific actions.

The effect on pickleball is not identical for every person. One player may experience difficulty with balance; another may have involuntary movement, reduced coordination, limited court mobility or asymmetrical movement. The impact may be seen during serving, returning, reaching, changing direction or recovering position. A useful sporting framework therefore needs to look beyond a diagnostic label and consider how an impairment affects the activities required in the sport. This is the principle reflected in the IPPA classification framework.

A wider definition of sporting success

From competitive achievement to meaningful participation

Traditional sport often celebrates measurable outcomes: points, match wins, rankings and medals. These outcomes matter in competition, but they are not the only meaningful outcomes of sport.

For people with more significant support needs, a successful session may involve taking part in a warm-up, tracking a moving ball, reaching towards a target, making contact with a paddle, responding to encouragement or sharing a positive activity with another person.

The founder's philosophy is to make room for these experiences while continuing to respect the ambitions of players who wish to train and compete. Recreational participation and high-performance competition can exist within the same inclusive sporting movement.

PARTICIPATION IS A SPORTING OUTCOME. JOY IS A HUMAN OUTCOME.

PP1 to PP4 & PP5: Opening the door wider

A focus on players with greater functional limitations

Raghu Kumar Raghavelu places particular emphasis on PP1 to PP4 and PP5 because players in these classes may face substantial barriers to conventional sporting participation. The intention is not to label these players by what they cannot do, but to recognize the support and adaptations that may make participation possible.

The IPPA rulebook describes PP1 as involving severe coordination impairment, PP2 as moderate-severe impairment, PP3 as moderate impairment and PP4 as mild-moderate impairment and PP5 Mild Impairment where Players demonstrate mild spasticity, ataxia or coordination impairment.

These are sport-class descriptions within the IPPA framework, not a measure of a person's worth, potential or identity.

The founder's approach asks a practical question: what changes to the activity, assistance, pace, equipment, communication and environment could allow more people in these classes to enjoy playing para pickleball?

The player remains at the Centre

Respect, choice and individual support

Assisted participation must never reduce a player to a passive object of care. The player is the participant. The assistant is there to enable the player's involvement and to respond to their needs.

Before an activity, the team should understand how the player communicates comfort, discomfort, interest, fatigue or a wish to stop. Communication may be verbal, non-verbal or supported by a familiar communication method.

The player should be offered meaningful choices wherever possible: whether to continue, take a break, try another activity or finish the session. The pace should be responsive rather than rushed.

Families and caregivers can provide valuable information about preferences and support needs, while the player's own responses and dignity remain central.

The assisted playing concept

Assistant 1 and Assistant 2

The assisted playing concept described for this booklet uses one or two assistants to help a person with cerebral palsy take part in Para Pickleball. Assistant 1 and Assistant 2 are support roles intended to make participation possible according to the player's individual needs in the PP1 to PP4 Categories and PP5.

The IPPA PP1–PP4 categories include players who require the support of one or two designated assistants to participate actively in Para Pickleball, depending on their individual functional abilities and support needs. These assistants play an important role in facilitating communication and helping the player understand and engage in each stage of the game. They may continuously communicate with the player, assist with positioning and movement, help hold or position the ball, support the preparation and execution of strokes, and facilitate contact between the paddle and ball.

Assistance may also involve preparing the player and equipment, helping establish a safe and comfortable position, presenting or directing the ball, supporting the flow of an activity, offering clear encouragement and allowing sufficient time for the player to respond.

The assistant's role is to facilitate the player's participation, not to take over the experience. The player should remain at the centre of the activity, with their choices, comfort, communication and dignity respected at every stage. The purpose of the Assistant 1 and Assistant 2 model is to make participation possible while ensuring that every player experiences the joy and value of playing Para Pickleball.

The precise tasks of Assistant 1 and Assistant 2 should be agreed in advance for each player and activity. Assistance must be appropriate, safe, transparent and consistent with event rules and safeguarding requirements.

Happiness and the experience of playing

The human observation at the heart of the mission

Raghu Kumar Raghavelu describes witnessing the happiness on the faces of people with cerebral palsy when they are given the opportunity to play Para Pickleball with

assistance. He has observed smiles, excitement, enthusiasm and visible enjoyment during these moments.

These firsthand observations have shaped his conviction that the experience of sport matters in its own right. A player may enjoy the sound of the ball, the movement of a rally, the attention of a supportive team or the feeling of being included in a shared activity.

The booklet presents these experiences as the founder's observations and motivation. They are important human testimony, while further structured research would be needed to measure effects consistently across participants.





THE SMILE ON A PLAYER'S FACE IS A REMINDER OF WHY THE OPPORTUNITY MATTERS.

Physical activity, endorphins and well-being

A science-informed rationale

Physical activity can stimulate physiological processes associated with mood and well-being, including the release of endorphins. Endorphins are naturally occurring chemicals in the body that are involved in pain modulation and are associated with positive feelings.

Raghu Kumar Raghavelu's idea is that enjoyable, supported physical activity may contribute to a better everyday experience for people living with cerebral palsy. When a person is engaged, encouraged and happy to participate, the activity may support positive mood, social connection and a sense of inclusion.

The booklet does not claim that Para Pickleball has already been proven to increase endorphins or improve clinical outcomes specifically in people with cerebral palsy. Those questions require appropriately designed research. The scientific rationale supports further investigation, not a promise of a guaranteed medical effect.

The central proposition remains valuable: create safe opportunities for enjoyable movement and participation, and study their effects carefully.


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The IPPA classification framework

A sport-specific structure

The IPPA Book of Rules explains that classification is intended to evaluate how an eligible impairment affects the fundamental activities required in Para Pickleball. The purpose is to support fair and meaningful competition by grouping players with comparable activity limitations.

Eligibility criteria must be carefully structured to ensure that opportunities for participation are extended to as many players with Cerebral Palsy as possible, while maintaining a fair, inclusive and appropriate classification framework across the PP1 to PP8 categories.

The rulebook's Chapter 43 sets out an Intellectual Disability and Cerebral Palsy classification framework. It describes the Cerebral Palsy Players Categories PP1 to PP8 and identifies relevant factors such as coordination, balance, movement control, mobility, muscle control and sport-specific performance.

The classification framework should be applied by appropriately appointed and trained classifiers under the applicable IPPA rules. A diagnosis alone does not determine a sport class; the impact on sport activity is central.

Understanding PP1 and PP2

Higher levels of coordination and movement limitation

PP1 – Severe Coordination Impairment: The IPPA rulebook describes players with severe impairment affecting balance, coordination and movement control. Listed characteristics include significant movement limitations, severe spasticity or involuntary movements, limited court mobility and the need for substantial adaptation during play. Players exhibit severe impairment affecting balance, coordination and movement control. Frequently require full-time on-field assistance. Plays sitting in a wheelchair.

- Significant movement limitations.
- Severe spasticity or involuntary movements.
- Limited court mobility.
- Requires 1 or 2 Assistants.

PP2 – Moderate-Severe Impairment: The rulebook describes significant impairment with greater functional movement than PP1. Listed characteristics include reduced balance and stability, limited running capability and restricted agility and directional change. Frequently require full-time on-field assistance

Players demonstrate significant impairment but possess better functional movement than PP1 players.

- Reduced balance and stability.
- Restricted agility and directional change.
- Plays sitting in a wheelchair
- Requires 1 or 2 Assistants.

These descriptions are intended to support sport-specific assessment. They should not be used as casual labels or as substitutes for an authorized classification decision.

Understanding PP3 and PP4

Recognizing moderate and mild-moderate impairment

PP3 – Moderate Impairment: The rulebook describes activity limitations affecting movement and coordination. Listed characteristics include functional independent mobility, noticeable coordination deficits and reduced movement efficiency during play. Players have moderate activity limitations affecting movement and coordination.

- Better Functional independent mobility than PP2.
- Reduced movement efficiency during rallies.
- Plays sitting in a wheelchair
- Requires 1 Assistant.

PP4 – Mild-Moderate Impairment: The rulebook describes mild neurological impairment affecting sport performance. Listed characteristics include good functional mobility, mild balance limitations and effective participation with some movement restrictions. Players display mild neurological impairment affecting sport performance. The para pickleball player's arms and hands generally display near-normal functional strength and range of motion. They exhibit a clean, consistent follow-through and propulsion motion when pushing a wheelchair or throwing sports equipment. While both PP3 & PP4 categories generally use a wheelchair, PP4 para pickleball players have noticeably better head control and trunk symmetry than PP3 players, allowing them much greater stability during movement. Because individuals in the PP4 category possess good trunk stability and near-normal functional strength in their arms and hands, they are physically independent within the field of play. They can propel their own sports wheelchairs, handle sports equipment, and execute play without active physical assistance.

- Good functional mobility and Mild balance limitations.
- Effective participation with some movement restrictions.
- Plays sitting in a wheelchair and does not require an assistant to play.

The focus on PP1–PP4 in this booklet is a focus on widening access and developing support options.

Understanding PP5 and PP6

Mild and minimal impairment descriptions

PP5 – Mild Impairment: The IPPA rulebook describes players who may demonstrate mild spasticity, ataxia or coordination impairment. Listed characteristics include independent movement, a mild reduction in agility and a minor impact on stroke execution. They are ambulant (able to walk) and do not require a wheelchair for everyday activities. However, they may require assistive devices like canes or braces for walking longer distances. Players demonstrate mild spasticity, ataxia or coordination impairment. They retain **greater functional control of their upper body** compared to wheelchair-bound classes (PP1–PP4). Arm limitation is minimal to moderate, and they maintain a normal cylindrical, spherical, or opposition grip in their dominant hand

- Independent movement.
- Mild reduction in agility.
- Minor impact on stroke execution.

PP6 – Minimal Impairment: The rulebook describes players with near-normal functional abilities and observable neurological impairment. Listed characteristics include good balance and mobility, slight coordination limitations and minimal effect on competitive performance. Players possess near-normal functional abilities with observable neurological impairment.

- Good balance and mobility.
- Slight coordination limitations.
- Minimal effect on competitive performance.

These descriptions are included to explain the full PP1–PP8 framework. Class allocation is determined through the official classification process, not by self-assessment from a short summary.

Understanding PP7 and PP8

Unilateral involvement and minimum eligible impairment

PP7 – Unilateral Involvement: The rulebook describes neurological impairment primarily affecting one side of the body. Listed characteristics include asymmetrical movement patterns, reduced strength or coordination on one side and adapted stroke mechanics. Players have neurological impairment primarily affecting one side of the body. The defining medical trait of a PP7 para pickleball player is **true ambulatory hemiplegia** meaning one side of the body (lateral half) is moderately-to-severely affected by hypertonia, spasticity, or ataxia, while the other side functions with near-normal. The leg on the affected side is minimally-to-mildly impacted. The player can play and sprint independently but will exhibit a noticeable limp or uneven gait due to poor weight transfer onto the affected limb.

- Asymmetrical movement patterns.
- Reduced strength or coordination on one side.
- Adapted stroke mechanics.

PP8 – Minimal Eligible Impairment: The rulebook describes players who meet the minimum impairment criteria while maintaining high functional ability. Listed characteristics include excellent mobility, minor coordination deficits and competitive performance close to that of able-bodied players. Their functional impairments are so minor, PP8 para pickleball players look nearly identical in movement to able-bodied athletes unless they are executing highly complex, explosive movements or operating under heavy physiological fatigue

Together, PP1–PP8 provide a structured Para Pickleball Categories Classification. The framework recognizes that cerebral palsy can affect Para Pickleball activity in different ways and to different degrees.

How classification is evaluated

Documentation, functional assessment and sport observation

The IPPA rulebook describes a multi-stage evaluation process. It may begin with review of eligibility criteria based on medical documentation, such as diagnostic reports and neurological evaluations, together with relevant functional information, digital assessed Skill System for Classification and Ongoing Play Observation System.

A functional assessment may consider coordination, balance, muscle control, range of movement, reaction speed and sport-specific movement patterns. Technical assessment may include serving, returning serves, groundstrokes, court movement, net play and match simulation.

The IPPA Digital-Assessed Skill System is designed to support the classification process through the digital assessment and visual evaluation of a player's sport-specific skills. It helps assess functional abilities such as serving, returning, ball control, paddle coordination, stroke execution, movement and overall playing performance. By recording and evaluating these skills, the system provides additional information to assist authorized classifiers in determining the appropriate sport class under the IPPA classification framework.

Classifiers may also observe players during training or sanctioned competition. Observation helps assess court movement, use of assistive equipment, performance under match conditions, the effect of fatigue and consistency between assessment findings and actual gameplay.

The purpose is to determine the sport class and status that best reflect the player's functional abilities in Para Pickleball.

Classification status, review and fairness

A process that must remain transparent

AIR CLASSIFICATION. TRANSPARENT DECISIONS. ATHLETE RIGHTS PROTECTED

The rulebook identifies classification statuses including Confirmed (C), Review (R) and New (N). Confirmed indicates that the classification is unlikely to change; Review indicates that future reassessment may be required; New indicates that an initial classification is pending confirmation through competition observation.

A review may be appropriate when there is a significant medical change, surgery, injury, rehabilitation, recovery, growth and development, new medical evidence or another reason to believe functional ability has changed.

The rulebook also provides for classification protests and appeals. These procedures are intended to protect fairness, impartiality, athlete rights, due process, transparency and accountability.

Classification decisions should be handled through the official IPPA process. A booklet summary does not replace the full rules or the decision of a properly appointed panel.

Playing adaptations in the IPPA rules

Service, positioning and coaching support

The IPPA Book of Rules includes specific provisions for Intellectual Disabilities and Cerebral Palsy service and positioning. It states that ID players in PP20-A and Cerebral Palsy players PP1–PP4 may serve from inside the court but from outside the Non-Volley Zone (NVZ).

The rulebook also exempts Cerebral Palsy players PP1–PP8 from certain standard positioning requirements and allows coaching assistance for these players under the specified provisions. These adaptations recognize the functional needs of players while preserving an organized competition framework.

Tournament officials, coaches and assistants should consult the current full rulebook and event regulations before applying any adaptation. The precise implementation must be consistent with IPPA requirements.

The Additional Bounce Rule

An accommodation identified for PP1–PP8

The IPPA rulebook's Chapter 29 identifies Cerebral Palsy players classified PP1–PP7 as eligible for the Additional Bounce Rule. For eligible players, the second bounce is optional: the player may return the ball after either the first or the second bounce.

The rule is designed as a sport-specific accommodation for players whose functional abilities may limit court coverage and movement efficiency. It recognises that a player may need additional time to position and prepare for a return.

The Additional Bounce Rule is not a separate sport. It is an adaptation within Para Pickleball intended to support participation and competitive fairness for the classifications identified in the rules.

Coaching for cerebral palsy participation

Patient, individual and player-centered practice

Based on his experience working with people living with cerebral palsy, Raghu Kumar Raghavelu strongly recommends that coaches never rush players into performing or mastering the game. Every player needs sufficient time to become familiar with the court, equipment, movements and activities at their own pace. Coaches must allow players to adapt gradually, without creating pressure to perform, achieve results or meet expectations. Unnecessary performance pressure can cause psychological stress, anxiety and loss of confidence, negatively affecting the player's overall experience and willingness to participate.

Coaching should begin with the person, not with a fixed drill. The coach should understand how the player communicates, what movements are comfortable, what activities create interest and what support is needed for safe participation. Patience, observation, encouragement and trust must guide every session.

Sessions should use short, simple activities, predictable routines, sufficient rest and positive encouragement. The coach can gradually adjust the pace, distance, target, ball presentation and activities according to the player's comfort, responses and readiness. Progress should be measured by participation, confidence, enjoyment and individual development rather than speed or performance. For PP1–PP4 participants, an assisted format may be appropriate. Assistant 1 and Assistant 2 can support the session according to a plan agreed with the coach and the player or their representative. The objective is to encourage genuine player engagement while respecting individual abilities, communication and comfort.

Coaching assistance during sanctioned competition must follow the applicable IPPA rules and event instructions.

Guiding principle: Give every player the time to adapt, the freedom to participate and the confidence to enjoy the game.

Coaching assistance during sanctioned competition must follow the applicable IPPA rules and event instructions.

A suggested assisted session structure

A practical model to be individualized

The following is an illustrative session structure, not a clinical prescription. It should be adapted by suitably qualified personnel to the participant's abilities, preferences, fatigue, communication and safety needs.

1. Welcome and check-in: greet the player, confirm readiness and understand how the player indicates comfort or a wish to stop.

2. Preparation: arrange the court space, paddle, ball, seating or positioning support and assistant roles.

3. Gentle engagement: introduce the ball and paddle through a simple, enjoyable activity at the player's pace.

4. Assisted play: facilitate ball contact, a short exchange or a target activity, with the player remaining central to each action.

5. Rest and response: allow breaks and observe the player's comfort, interest and fatigue.

6. Safeguarding and Dignity: Maintain professional boundaries at all times. Avoid unnecessary physical contact, private or inappropriate interactions, and any action that could cause embarrassment or discomfort. Protect the player's privacy and ensure that assistance is provided respectfully and transparently. Always seek the player's consent before touching or physically assisting them. Explain why assistance may be necessary and where physical contact will be made. This is particularly important when coaching female players. Respect personal boundaries, privacy, cultural sensitivities and individual preferences. Physical contact must be limited to what is reasonably necessary for safe participation. Where appropriate, ask whether the player would prefer assistance from a female coach or assistant. Never assume that a player's disability gives anyone permission to touch, move or handle them without consent.

Remember: Every player has the right to personal space, dignity, choice and respectful treatment. Assistance must always be provided with sensitivity, consent and care.

Families, assistants and the community

Building a circle of support

The successful participation of people living with cerebral palsy in Para Pickleball depends on a strong support network involving families, parents, caregivers, assistants, coaches and the wider community. Each has an important role in creating an environment where players feel welcomed, respected, encouraged and motivated to participate. Families and parents often understand the player's communication, movement, preferences and individual support needs better than anyone else. Their knowledge and involvement can help coaches develop suitable activities while ensuring that the player's choices, independence and dignity remain central.

Caregivers help players prepare for and attend coaching sessions, communicate relevant support requirements and identify signs of discomfort, fatigue or anxiety. Assistant 1 and Assistant 2 play an equally important role by facilitating communication, positioning, ball presentation, paddle handling and stroke preparation according to the player's individual abilities. Their assistance should be continuous, patient and respectful, allowing sufficient time for the player to understand, respond and participate. Assistants must always support the player's involvement rather than take control of the activity. Coaches are responsible for creating a safe, welcoming and encouraging environment. They should work closely with families, caregivers and assistants, understand each player's abilities and develop individualised coaching approaches without rushing progress or placing unnecessary pressure on performance. Schools, special education institutions, rehabilitation centres and community organisations can introduce Para Pickleball, provide accessible spaces and equipment, and create regular opportunities for participation. Sports clubs, NGOs and local organisations can further support this initiative by arranging coaching sessions, friendly matches, workshops and community programmes.

National federations and IPPA have an important responsibility to develop the sport through appropriate classification systems, coach and assistant education, workshops, academies, competitions and international opportunities. By bringing together families, institutions, sporting organisations and trained support personnel, a sustainable pathway can be created for players to progress from their first introduction to regular recreational and competitive participation.

The objective must be to move beyond occasional coaching camps and create a lasting culture of inclusion. **A player may need support to enter the court, but it takes a whole community to keep that opportunity alive.** The true success of Cerebral Palsy

Para Pickleball lies in creating regular opportunities where every player can experience participation, confidence, dignity, friendship and the joy of sport.

The role of IPPA Academy

Education, coaching and classification development

The IPPA Academy can serve as an important platform for education and development in Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball. It can help build understanding among coaches, referees, classifiers, assistants, administrators and families.

Education can include the principles of the PP1–PP8 classification framework, player-centered coaching, assisted participation, sport-specific rules, safeguarding, communication and practical session design.

Classifier education should be delivered through the appropriate IPPA classification pathway. Coach and assistant education should clarify the difference between facilitating recreational participation and providing coaching assistance in sanctioned competition.

- Level 1: Coach-Referee Course
- Level 2: Coach-Referee Diploma

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The long-term aim is to build capable people and accessible environments so that more participants can experience Para Pickleball in their own communities.

Research and Learning Agenda

Turning observations into evidence

The founder's firsthand observations of happiness and engagement provide a strong reason to study assisted Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball more systematically. A research program could explore enjoyment, participation, social connection, perceived well-being, activity tolerance and the practical value of different support approaches.

Research should use appropriate methods, informed consent, accessible communication and respect for participants. Where health or physiological outcomes are being studied, qualified researchers should select valid measures and obtain relevant ethical approvals.

Which Para Pickleball activities do participants enjoy most?

What types of assistance and communication help players participate comfortably?

How do participants and their families describe their experience and enjoyment of the sport?

Do players demonstrate changes in confidence, interest, social interaction and willingness to participate over time?

How does the involvement of Assistant 1 and Assistant 2 support player engagement?

What coaching methods, equipment adaptations and playing arrangements are most effective for individual participants?

What further opportunities and support are needed to make Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball more accessible, regular and sustainable worldwide?

The purpose of research should be to learn with participants, not to make unsupported promises. Their experiences and voices should shape the questions and the interpretation of results.

The founder's message



A vision for the future – ***Raghu Kumar Raghavelu***

I believe that every person deserves the opportunity to experience the joy of Para Pickleball. When I see a person living with cerebral palsy smile, become excited and enjoy playing Para Pickleball with assistance, I see the deeper purpose of this movement.

For people in PP1 to PP4, the opportunity to participate must not be dismissed simply because conventional competitive sport may be difficult. With thoughtful assistance, individual adaptations and a welcoming environment, we can create meaningful ways for more people to play.

Our work must continue to develop the classification system, improve education, strengthen coaching and assistant support, and encourage research into the relationship between enjoyable physical activity and well-being.

I want Para Pickleball to be recognized not only for the competitions it creates, but also for the lives it touches and the happiness it helps bring into everyday experience.

Raghu Kumar Raghavelu
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Reference framework and closing

The rulebook behind this booklet

Primary technical source: International Para Pickleball Association, IPPA Para Pickleball Book of Rules, Official Rulebook – 2026 Edition, authored by Raghu Kumar Raghavelu and published by the International Para Pickleball Association.

Relevant source sections used in this booklet include the historical account of the development of Para Pickleball and the classification system; Chapter 25.6 on Intellectual Disabilities and Cerebral Palsy service and positioning; Chapter 27 on the Carry on the Paddle Rule; Chapter 28 on the Mandatory Bounce Rule; Chapter 29 on the Additional Bounce Rule; Chapter 43 on Intellectual Disability and Cerebral Palsy Classification; and Chapters 44–45 on classification evaluation, protests, reviews and appeals.

The founder's journey, observations of players' happiness, the assisted participation vision involving Assistant 1 and Assistant 2, and the 'YES! PICKLEBALL FOR ALL' philosophy are presented as the author's stated experience and vision for this booklet.

This booklet is an introductory publication and should be read alongside the latest official IPPA rules and classification regulations. It is not a medical guide, clinical protocol or substitute for professional advice.

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Opportunity • Inclusion • Dignity • Happiness • Sport