

TOPSERIES PICKLEBALL LAUNCHES AN INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL PICKLEBALL CIRCUIT FOCUSED ON THE EMEA REGION (EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA)

Luxembourg, 15 January 2026

TOPSERIES Pickleball, a pioneering startup, is launching an international professional circuit designed to accelerate the development of pickleball across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA). The tour brings together a unified calendar, a single ranking system, professional standards, and premium audiovisual production to support the sport's next phase of growth.

Pickleball, widely recognised as one of the fastest-expanding racket sports globally, has seen significant participation increases in recent years. Industry estimates suggest the global ecosystem is now valued in the billions, with strong momentum across multiple regions. While the United States enters a more mature stage and Asia experiences rapid expansion, EMEA stands as the sport's most promising growth opportunity.

Stepping into this landscape, TOPSERIES Pickleball becomes the first professional circuit built to structure the sport across the EMEA region. With a unified ranking, standardised prize money, and a media-first production model, the tour aims to support long-term growth and contribute to the sport's evolution into a global industry.

To provide clarity for industry stakeholders, TOPSERIES Pickleball operates as an independent, founder-led organisation headquartered in Europe, backed by international entrepreneurs with experience across sport, media, and financial services.

FROM TREND TO PROFESSIONALIZATION

A circuit redefining elite sport

Pickleball's rise is widely recognised across the industry. According to multiple market estimates, participation has increased significantly since 2020, and the global ecosystem is now valued in the billions. While the United States is entering a more mature phase, the Asian market is experiencing rapid expansion at both amateur and elite levels, with the emergence of a fast-growing professional ecosystem. EMEA represents the sport's greatest expansion opportunity, but the region requires a professional structure capable of sustaining this momentum and transforming it into a long-term industry. TOPSERIES Pickleball was created to fill that space and lead the development of the sport's elite circuit across EMEA.

The mission is clear: merge the professionalism of elite sport with the energy of contemporary entertainment. The circuit will feature Flagship Events in iconic EMEA destinations, standardised prize money, a unified ranking for professional and

semi-professional players, premium broadcast production from the early rounds, and a Live Event Experience designed to maximise engagement both on court and on screen.

As TOPSERIES Pickleball expands internationally, the tour is guided by a values-driven framework that recognises pickleball as both a high-performance sport and a people-centred community. This approach reflects a commitment to athlete wellbeing, professional environments, and long-term sustainability — principles that shape decision-making and the development of the circuit.

THE FOUNDING TEAM

Setting the professional standard for a new generation

A world-class circuit requires a world-class team. The mission, vision & strategy behind TOPSERIES Pickleball is powered by a founding group whose multicultural backgrounds and combined experience span sports business, entertainment, and innovation.

ADEL AREF — CEO

As the CEO of TopSeries Pickleball, Adel Aref brings an approach that blends racket sports, innovation, and global entertainment. A Tunisian-French visionary with a unique trajectory, Aref began his career in professional tennis officiating, earning the prestigious Gold Badge at an exceptionally young age and chairing finals at the world's most iconic tennis stages, including Grand Slams and the Olympic Games.

Adel's understanding of sport as a holistic experience was solidified during his tenure at Paris Saint Germain FC as Chief of Staff of the President, where he transformed the VIP Carré into a global benchmark for sports hospitality — attracting cultural icons such as Beyoncé, Jay-Z, Rihanna, Leonardo DiCaprio, and David Beckham and leading luxury brands. He later laid the ground for international padel by becoming the tour director of Premier Padel and supported the rise of Ons Jabeur, former World No.2 tennis player, bringing a strategic perspective that merges sport, personal branding, and global projection.

Aref's ability to unite sport, entertainment, and cultural influence defines his leadership at TopSeries Pickleball: shaping the circuit's international vision and positioning it as a cultural and sporting reference in the international world.

"Pickleball is stepping onto the international stage, and Europe, Middle East and Africa deserve an international circuit that reflects its potential. With TOPSERIES Pickleball, we're not just launching a tour — we're redefining the pickleball next era our way."

JONATHAN ROWLAND — Partner

Jonathan Rowland is a serial entrepreneur and businessman, and the founder of VVV Sport and R3 Sport, an emerging sport and media entertainment group with a strategic focus on the fast-growing global sports of pickleball and padel. He is also the founder of Redwood Bank, a UK challenger bank specialising in innovative and alternative lending. Known for decisive leadership and a strong commercial instinct, Jonathan has a proven track record of building and scaling businesses that sit at the intersection of sport, media, and financial services.

“Launching an international circuit is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. TOPSERIES Pickleball is built with the governance, ambition, and a global mindset that is required to shape the future of the sport.”

JOSÉ “QUECO” CATALÁN — Head of Sport

As the Head of Sport, José “Queco” Catalán stands as one of the key architects shaping the sport’s competitive future for the circuit. Madrid-based, Queco is widely recognized as one of the architects of modern padel and one of the professionals who best understands how to build sports competitions from grassroots to elite.

He has designed competitive structures that are now international benchmarks, connecting players, federations, and organizers under unified models. His experience includes creating circuits that have driven padel’s growth in multiple countries, directing large-scale international competitions, and coordinating events that have marked key milestones in the sport’s recent history.

Queco’s mastery of competitive architecture defines his role at TopSeries Pickleball: designing a solid, modern, and scalable ecosystem that connects the grassroots with the elite and shapes the competitive future of pickleball internationally.

“An international circuit demands clarity, structure, and ambition. TOPSERIES Pickleball gives the industry a professional pathway worthy of the sport — one ranking, one calendar, one destination for the best players.”

ALBERT ESCOFET — Head of Business Development

As the Head of Business Development, Albert Escofet drives the creation of a sustainable industry model for pickleball. Born and based in Barcelona, Escofet brings more than fifteen years of experience in the racket-sports industry, leading projects that combine business, community, and long-term growth.

He has created and managed sports facilities, organized amateur and professional events — including World Padel Tour stages and major regional championships — and developed initiatives that connect brands, clubs, and fans around innovative value propositions. His entrepreneurial background spans marketing agencies, sports clubs, and sports tech projects, as well as events like the Koeman Cup and the Padel World Summit. He also serves on the board of the European Pickleball Cluster and

coordinates the Spain Pickleball commission within AFYDAD, contributing to the sport's institutional consolidation.

Albert's ability to build alliances, identify opportunities, and develop scalable business models defines his role at TopSeries Pickleball: leading the circuit's strategic development and building a sustainable industry internationally.

"Pickleball's growth in the international landscape is promising, but growth needs direction. At TOPSERIES Pickleball, we turn momentum into a sustainable industry — the one that cities, brands, players, and fans can truly build around."

OLOF SAMUELSON — Advisor

From Sweden, Olof brings over two decades of experience in sports marketing and sponsorship.

He has worked at leading global agencies such as IMG and Octagon, managing top-tier events — from European Tour tournaments and ATP competitions to international marathons — and developing activations for major global brands. He currently leads Global Partnerships at 360Player, a sports management software company, where he drives the creation of integrated ecosystems for clubs and federations.

Samuelson's expertise and ability to connect brands, audiences, and sports properties define his role at TopSeries Pickleball, where he shapes the sponsorship strategy aimed at positioning the circuit as an attractive platform for international partners.

"Pickleball connects with the audience every brand wants: young, active, digital. TOPSERIES Pickleball gives partners a unique platform to enter the sport at the moment it's taking off internationally."

A DEFINING MOMENT

The official presentation of TOPSERIES Pickleball

The official launch will take place in London, UK, on 12 February 2026 at 19:00 (local time), bringing together international investors, media organisations, athletes, federations, and industry leaders.

The event will unveil the circuit's vision, competitive structure, strategic pillars, and calendar destinations. It will also offer the first opportunity to meet the founding team, discover the Live Event Experience, and preview the audiovisual identity that will accompany the tour.

For interviews, additional information, or access to media materials, please contact:

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