

Current Situation and Path Optimization of Pickleball Development in Urban Communities Under the Background of National Fitness

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Abstract: Pickleball is a contemporary emerging sport that effectively integrates the characteristics of table tennis, badminton and tennis. It boasts advantages such as flexible venues, simple rules and suitability for people of all ages, which is conducive to promoting National Fitness. As a pioneering city for pickleball development in China, Guangzhou has witnessed the early spread of this sport. This paper mainly analyzes the current situation of pickleball development in Guangzhou communities and puts forward optimized paths for pickleball development, including increasing the supply of community sports venues, improving the talent training system, expanding the scope of competitions, and promoting the integrated development of "Sports +", so as to provide practical references for the promotion of pickleball in urban communities.

Keywords: Pickleball; Urban Community; National Fitness

1. Introduction

National Fitness has become a modern development trend. The National Fitness Plan (2021-2025) clearly states that a higher-level public service system for National Fitness should be established, and emerging sports loved by the public should be encouraged. Pickleball originated on Bainbridge Island, Seattle, the United States, in the 1960s. With strong fun, high adaptability and obvious social attributes, pickleball has developed rapidly under the background of National Fitness and attracted numerous participants^[1]. Guangzhou has accumulated abundant sports and cultural resources. Actively promoting pickleball in communities helps improve citizens' physical fitness and overall health, and effectively expands the influence of Guangzhou's sports culture.

2. Current Situation of Pickleball Development in Guangzhou Communities

At present, Guangzhou has built more than 600 standard pickleball courts, most of which are located in schools. Meanwhile, some pickleball courts open to the public are available in Panyu, Pazhou, Conghua and other districts. In terms of community venues, pickleball courts were included in the first batch of community sports facilities in Liwan District in 2025. Communities such as Clifford Estate in Panyu District and Jingtai Street in Baiyun District have actively organized public welfare pickleball training camps and parent-child pickleball activities. The venue development model is constantly innovating: Pazhou has rationally used underground space to build a small pickleball center inside a metro station; some areas have developed intelligent unmanned pickleball halls, where the public can reserve playing time via an intelligent system platform. However, public pickleball courts are insufficient in sub-district communities, and some residents give up playing pickleball due to long distances to venues. In terms of competition system, Guangzhou has gained successful experience in holding pickleball open tournaments, but competition resources are concentrated in central urban areas. A normalized pickleball competition mechanism has not yet been established in communities, and some sub-districts and communities have weak participation in pickleball events, which is not conducive to nationwide pickleball promotion. In terms of professional talent reserve, Guangzhou lacks sufficient experience in training pickleball social sports instructors and coaches. Although more than 150 trainees in Liwan District have obtained Level-3 social sports instructor certification, this number still cannot meet the guidance demand of a large number of potential participants. The shortage of high-level competition organizers and referees has hindered the high-quality development of

community pickleball events to a certain extent^[2]. In the module of community people's cognitive depth and participation enthusiasm, Guangzhou Sports Bureau and the College of Sports Science of South China Normal University jointly conducted a community sports survey in 2025, and randomly selected 36 communities to conduct a sports survey. The results show that the percentage of residents who understand the sport of the ball is 58.7%, and the percentage of residents who can clearly describe the difference between the ball and badminton and tennis is 12.4%. At the same time, most residents said that the current community ball sports are basically random and temporary, and a stable ball sports community has not yet been formed. This shows that the level of organization of Pickball in community management in Guangzhou is low. The time for the community to arrange the ball game is more concentrated. The common activity time is the weekend day, which is less arranged in the evening and early morning of the working day. The office workers cannot relax through the ball game after work. In addition, some residents are less motivated to participate in the sport because they are not familiar with the sport.

3. Optimization Paths for Pickleball Development in Guangzhou Communities

3.1 Increasing the Supply of Community Sports Venues

The promotion of pickleball in communities requires venue support. Although Guangzhou has more than 600 pickleball courts, most are located in schools, with a small number in public community areas, making it difficult for residents to access school courts. Therefore, Guangzhou needs to further increase the supply of community sports venues to improve convenience for residents.

Firstly, Guangzhou can scientifically plan idle factory buildings, small spaces, corner land and spaces under elevated roads in communities to build simple pickleball courts according to local conditions. In the renovation of old communities, pickleball courts should be planned and constructed in light of actual site conditions. Meanwhile, social forces should be mobilized: government departments guide enterprises to build a "Sports + Commerce" model and create more business-district integrated pickleball spaces; schools are encouraged to open

pickleball courts to community residents free of charge. Sports and education departments can jointly formulate management measures for the opening of school pickleball courts to the public, specifying an appointment system so that residents can reserve courts during holidays and non-teaching hours^[3]. Guangzhou should further explore the "shared court model", sort out idle sports venues in the city through an intelligent information platform, improve the scheduling efficiency of community pickleball courts, and enable residents to quickly find the nearest court.

3.2 Improving the Talent Training System

Wide promotion of pickleball in communities requires guidance from professionals. Given the shortage of pickleball professionals in Guangzhou, including social sports instructors, coaches and referees, the talent training system needs to be further improved.

Firstly, pickleball should be incorporated into social instructor training. Sports authorities in all districts of Guangzhou should regularly organize social sports instructors to attend pickleball training and expand the coverage of training. Training should cover pickleball activity organization, sports skills, safety protection and public teaching methods to improve instructors' ability to independently organize community teaching activities^[4]. Secondly, sports colleges such as the School of Physical Education of Guangzhou University and Guangzhou Sports Polytechnic should be encouraged to offer pickleball courses. A systematic "Junior - Intermediate - Senior" certification system for coaches and referees should be formulated with certification authorities, along with specific and clear assessment criteria. Thirdly, college sports students should be encouraged to participate in community volunteer services. Teachers guide students to enter communities in spare time, organize pickleball activities and popularize pickleball knowledge for residents. This approach not only provides an effective practical platform for students but also alleviates the shortage of community instructors. Fourthly, a "training through competition" model should be established to provide more opportunities for coaches and referees to participate in actual community pickleball matches, continuously improving their capabilities and accumulating experience in practice. Through the above measures, more certified pickleball social sports instructors, coaches and referees will be

cultivated to support community pickleball promotion.

3.3 Expanding the Scope of Competitions

Competitions help stimulate residents' enthusiasm for pickleball and strengthen community identity with the sport. At present, some communities and sub-districts in Guangzhou have limited access to pickleball events. Therefore, Guangzhou can further expand the scope of competitions and build a sound normalized community competition mechanism.

Firstly, district-level selection contests and community preliminary contests open to the general public should be designed so that all pickleball lovers in communities have the opportunity to participate. Sub-districts or communities can organize preliminary contests within their jurisdictions, with top-ranked participants advancing to district-level selections, and top-ranked district winners entering municipal leagues. This competition model largely guarantees competitive level and significantly expands participation. Secondly, free community pickleball benefit contests should be held in each district, with no restrictions on age, gender or skill level to lower participation barriers. It is suggested that community benefit contests be held once a month, with funding and equipment supported by district sports authorities and publicity undertaken by communities to attract more participants. Thirdly, pickleball matches should be integrated into special festival activities: for example, community pickleball challenges on "National Fitness Day" and "Pickleball Neighborhood Friendship Matches" during Spring Festival, Double Ninth Festival and other holidays. Festive atmosphere helps raise residents' willingness to participate. Expanding the scope of competitions through the above measures will make more people know pickleball and enhance its influence.

3.4 Promoting the Integrated Development of "Sports +"

The active integration of pickleball with other industries to build a "Sports +" model helps expand the social functions of pickleball and significantly improve its economic value. The "Sports +" model is embodied in the following aspects: Firstly, integrate sports with commerce. Government departments encourage the

construction of pickleball experience halls or pop-up courts in public places such as shopping malls and commercial complexes, providing integrated leisure services of shopping, catering and playing^[5-6]. It is suggested that pickleball experience halls launch "parent-child pickleball" preferential packages on weekends and holidays to attract more families. Secondly, integrate sports with culture and tourism. Sports and cultural-tourism authorities jointly develop pickleball-themed tourism routes; for instance, building pickleball venues in Conghua and other eco-tourism areas to attract visitors with a leisure mode of playing and hot-spring bathing. Thirdly, integrate sports with public welfare. Sub-districts and communities are guided to combine public welfare with pickleball: for example, regularly holding community pickleball challenges where participants pay a reasonable registration fee, which is used by communities to buy daily necessities for lonely elderly residents, with the use of fees publicized on community bulletin boards^[7]. Fourthly, integrate sports with digital technology. Community managers disseminate pickleball promotion videos via digital platforms such as WeChat, Douyin and Xiaohongshu, including interesting challenges, competition highlights and teaching skills to deepen public understanding of pickleball. Through cross-border integration, pickleball is no longer a single sport but an effective carrier linking community relations, promoting development through sports.

3.5 Establish a Community Ball Community and a Normalized Operation Mechanism

The community neighborhood committee effectively establishes a community self-organization and daily operation mechanism with residents as the main body. First of all, scientifically formulate the neighborhood interaction group of the ball game, and form a 3-5 people ball game interest group with units and buildings as units. The neighborhood committee provides a set of simple ball game equipment including ground adhesive stickers, removable ball nets, several balls, and several rackets for each interest group. The members of the group can schedule their sports in-house, and select two time periods each week to be fixed in the temporary marking site or shared space of the community for free practice of the ball. A liaison is selected in the group, and the liaison is responsible for coordinating the practice time

period, and is responsible for absorbing new members and maintaining equipment. The way of interest groups can effectively attract more community residents and realize the recycling of sports equipment. Residents' participation in activities is significantly higher than that of centralized organizations. Create a community ball open day system. The community open day can be confirmed as the Saturday morning of the first week of each month. The trained ball volunteers are arranged to guide the novices on the open day activity site. Any resident does not need to sign up to participate in the open day activity. Open day does not set strict competitive goals, mainly around the teaching, experience, freedom to play activities. The sports protection knowledge exhibition board is placed on the open day activity site, equipped with a simple blood pressure measuring instrument, so that the middle-aged and elderly people can be willing to try the pink ball movement after understanding the knowledge. Design a scientific community ball card scoring system. Community residents can obtain an electronic seal in the system after each open day activity or daily practice activity. With the increase of the number of punches, more small gifts can be obtained. Points can also be used to redeem community convenience services, such as the number of times you can redeem points for free use of sports equipment, and the opportunity to redeem points for free to book priority activity rooms. The scoring mechanism is conducive to improving residents' participation in Pickball activities. Finally, we can give full play to the advantages of information channels. In the interactive platforms such as Weibo forums, WeChat groups, and WeChat public accounts, we will post photos of the wonderful moments of this week's community pinball every week to show the best partners in this week's pinball activities. Residents can also feedback on the activities in the interactive platform. Through the above measures, let the ball game really integrate into the daily life of community residents, and promote the development of community fitness.

4. Conclusion

In summary, as one of the pioneering cities

promoting pickleball in China, Guangzhou has accumulated experience in venue construction, event organization, community pickleball training and cross-border integration. These experiences are conducive to vigorously promoting pickleball in communities, helping achieve the goal of National Fitness, enabling more people to enjoy happiness in sports, improving national physical fitness and further enhancing the city's image.

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