

Paddle Recommendations

Pickleball paddles range greatly in price from wooden paddles for less than \$20 to super high-end paddles for greater than \$250. The high-end paddles have very specific characteristics such as increased power, weight, softness, or speed but when you are first starting out playing, you won't know what type of paddle fits you and your playstyle best so it's best to go with an all-around quality paddle that can last you a year or so until you get a better idea what type of player you will be.

If you're not quite sure pickleball is for you, and are still trying it out, I recommend buying a paddle from Amazon in the \$25-\$50 range but do stay away from wooden paddles. One example is:

Niupipo: These are inexpensive paddles for about \$40 or sometimes two for \$60 and they will perform fine for beginners.

If you're already hooked on Pickleball and know you will keep playing, I recommend going with a more intermediate-level paddle in the range of \$60-\$90. There are many good paddles in this range to include:

Paddletek Phoenix G6 or Phoenix Genesis
Selkirk SLK Latitude
Onyx Z5
Engage Trident
Rally Tyro 2 Pro
Rally PX Graphite
Head Radical Elite
Gamma Mirage
Gamma Dart

Summary: Paddles are extremely subjective and once you get into the higher end models there are so many different factors it makes your head spin but while you are starting out there are three main things you should avoid: (All the paddles mentioned above fit this)

- No wood paddles (too heavy, won't be happy in long run)
- Avoid Elongated shape paddles
- Avoid heavyweight paddles (stay in the 7.5-8.2 oz range).

All in All, if you stick with this, you really can't go wrong with your first paddle. I guarantee it won't be your last!

If you end up purchasing a paddle from www.pickleballcentral.com please use code CRFCPA to get 5% off and they will donate 5% to our association.

A Little More Technical Details (The Engineer in Me)

There are three basic characteristics of paddles:

- Dwell Time: How “soft” a paddle feel. Sometimes described as “touch” or “control”. Basically, the longer the ball stays in contact with the paddles, the more control or feel you have on the ball. Important for dinking, drops, and placement shots.
- Power: How much energy you can put into the ball with a given stroke. Important for drives and put-aways.
- Handspeed: How light the paddle feels in your hands and how quick and maneuverable it is. Important during fast kitchen exchanges.

These three characteristics: Dwell Time, Power, and Handspeed are all related and unfortunately, you can't have all three so you must choose which is most helpful to your game. You can have two out of three but sacrifice the third; it's like a 3-person see-saw.

The three characteristics are determined by two primary specifications:

- Softness of Core
- Swingweight (percentage of paddle weight concentrated towards the head-end of paddle)

For a given core, as the swingweight increases, the Dwell Time stays the same, the Power increases (more kinetic energy transferred into the ball), and the Handspeed decreases.

For a given swingweight, as the core becomes harder (thinner), the dwell time decreases, the power increases, and handspeed stays the same.

Some Examples:

Joola Hyperion 16mm Ben Johns: Heavy, Thick Core. This is a very popular paddle due to the Ben Johns endorsement. It is a thick core paddle with one of the highest swingweights on the market. This results in a soft but powerful paddle but feels very sluggish during fast kitchen exchanges. This paddles works for advanced players who have fast hands and quick reflexes so they aren't as affected by the high swingweight.

Kinetic Paddles: Light, Thin Core: This paddle is powerful due to it's thin, hard core and has good handspeed due to its moderate swingweight but doesn't have the same soft feel as thicker core paddles.

Gearbox CX14: Light, Thick Core: This paddle is very light but still has a fairly soft core resulting in a very maneuverable, relatively soft feeling paddle but not as powerful.

Most other paddles fall somewhere between these three extremes.

Paddle Shapes

There are two primary paddle shapes:

- Standard: Length of 16" Width of 8"
- Elongated: Length of 16.5", Width of 7.5"

Standard Shape: Larger sweetspot, Slightly lighter swingweight (compared to same paddle elongated)

Elongated Shape:

Pros: Longer reach, Slightly heavier swingweight

Some Technical References:

https://twu.tennis-warehouse.com/learning_center/pickleball/comparepaddles.php

<https://thepickleballstudio.notion.site/5bdf3ee752c940eba864a81bc3281164?v=a5170d43e5ab4573b18f48c363cce7ec>