

Club Tournament Marketing Guide

Strategies, Ideas & Promotion Timeline for USPA-Sanctioned Events

Prepared for USPA Member Clubs

2026 Edition

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Introduction

Running a successful USPA-sanctioned tournament is about far more than court time and draws. The clubs that consistently fill their draws, create excitement in the local padel community, and keep players coming back year after year are the ones that treat marketing as part of the event itself, not an afterthought.

This guide combines the best strategies from successful amateur sports event marketing, the experience of the USPA staff and board in managing thousands of tournaments, and the specific operational context of the USPA Circuit. Whether you are hosting your first USPA 100 or a high-level USPA 2000, the principles here apply. The timelines and tactics are designed to align with the USPA's tournament calendar structure, registration windows, and branding requirements.

The USPA's 2026 Circuit includes a record 250+ tournaments across 30+ states and 120+ active clubs. In that environment, well-marketed events stand out. Clubs that build a reputation as the "place to play" attract larger draws, higher-level sponsorships, and ultimately qualify to host higher-tier events.

Why does it matter?

USPA membership grew 53.5% in 2025. Player participation is up 250% since 2022. Your marketing shapes where these players choose to compete.

Section 1: Know Your Audience

Effective event marketing starts with a clear picture of who you're trying to reach. USPA tournament participants, groups, and segments are not all the same. Understanding them helps you craft messages and marketing materials that connect with people.

1.1 Player Segments

Competitive Players (D1 & D2)

These players track rankings on padelusa.org, care about draw strength and prize money, and often plan their tournament schedule weeks or months in advance. They respond to:

- Point implications (ranking cycle, Race standings, Circuit Championships qualification)
- Draw quality and expected field strength
- Prize money clarity and payout structure
- Facility quality
- Tournament experience

Recreational Players (D3–D6)

The fastest-growing segment. These players are newer to competitive padel and motivated by:

- Social experience and community atmosphere
- Clear division structure that ensures fair matchups
- Accessible entry fees and a welcoming club environment
- Fun ancillary experiences: music, food, swag, raffle prizes

Age Group Players (35+, 45+, 55+)

A highly engaged segment with disposable income and strong loyalty to the clubs that serve them well. They respond to:

- Dedicated age-group brackets with appropriate scheduling
- Networking and social programming

First-Time Competitors

Players who have never entered a USPA tournament represent your biggest opportunity for long-term growth. Lower the barrier:

- Explicitly promote USPA 100 events as “no membership required” and entry-level friendly
- Offer a pre-tournament orientation or walkthrough of how draws work; this could be on a video call, in person at your club, or via a video that you create. Players want to hear from those running the tournament.
- Connect first-timers with experienced players prior to tournaments so they can learn from them.

1.2 The Padel Demographic Advantage

Padel in the U.S. attracts an affluent, active demographic with strong crossover from tennis, squash, and pickleball. This matters for your marketing strategy:

- Your players likely have professional networks, and word of mouth carries further than in many sports
- Sponsor and partnership conversations are easier when you can articulate your audience clearly
- Social media engagement tends to be high among this demographic, especially on Instagram and WhatsApp group communication

Section 2: Pre-Event Marketing Strategies

The window between tournament announcement and registration close is your most impactful marketing period. Every action you take here directly affects draw size, which in turn affects revenue, atmosphere, and the quality of competition.

2.1 Tournament Listing & Digital Presence

USPA Tournament Management System (TMS) & World Padel Rating (WPR) Platform

Your tournament must be set up in the USPA TMS (manager.tournated.com) with draws open 90 days prior. The player-facing portal (uspa-tournaments.worldpadelrating.com) is where most competitive players discover and register for events. Make your poster compelling:

- Use the USPA Poster / Flier Template www.padelusa.org/flier
- If you want to communicate additional information, then you may create a second page or fact sheet, and write a tournament description that goes beyond logistics, describes the club, the vibe, and what makes your event worth traveling for
- Use high-quality photos of your courts and facilities
- Ensure that entry fees, division options, and registration deadlines are clearly visible.

Tournament Calendar

The USPA lists your tournament on www.padelusa.org/calendar. Ensure your event appears correctly on the national calendar. Contact the USPA to verify your listing is accurate.

Club Website & Email List

- Direct players to your tournament-specific page on the USPA TMS. This page is created by the USPA once your poster has been submitted and your Stripe account has been connected. See below for an example.
- <https://uspa-tournaments.worldpadelrating.com/tournament/10606>
- If you want to create an additional page on your own club website to provide further tournament information, you may do so and may find this helpful. On this page, ensure you include a link to the registration page.
- Send a minimum of three email announcements: launch, midpoint reminder, and final “registration closing” push. The USPA sends at least 2 emails related to each tournament.
- Include a direct link to the USPA registration page in every email

2.2 Social Media

Instagram (Primary Channel)

Padel is a visually dynamic sport, and Instagram is where the community lives.

Below is a list of recommended strategies to promote your tournament on social media

- **Announcement post:** Create a branded tournament graphic (use the USPA flyer template from padelusa.org/flier/ as your starting point)
- **Countdown posts:** “3 weeks to go”, “Last week to register”, “Registration closes today”

- **Behind-the-scenes content:** court prep, staff setup, sponsor banners going up
- **Player spotlights:** tag registered players who consent, especially local favorites or seeded teams
- Repost USPA stories and tag @usapadel to increase organic reach
 - *The USPA may reshare your content; this is an opportunity for valuable reach*

WhatsApp & Group Messaging

In the padel community, WhatsApp groups are often more effective than any formal marketing channel. Create a tournament-specific WhatsApp group for registered players and use it for:

- Draw publication announcement
- Schedule updates and court assignments
- Day-of logistics: parking, warm-up court availability, social event details
- This group will be helpful for promoting future tournaments at your club.

Facebook

Still relevant for some players. Post in local padel groups and your club page. Event pages on Facebook can serve as a registration reminder hub.

2.3 Partnerships for Promotion

Leverage Local Club Networks

Every club within a 60-90-minute drive is a potential source of entrants. Reach out directly to club managers with a clean one-pager about your event and a registration link. You can offer to promote their events in return.

Cross-Promote with Local Tennis, Squash & Pickleball Communities

Many players who switch to padel come from adjacent racquet sports. Post in local tennis club newsletters, pickleball Facebook groups, and squash club boards. Frame it as “try competitive padel for the first time.”

Local Business & Sponsor Engagement

The USPA Rules & Regulations allow clubs to seek local sponsors in addition to USPA national sponsors. Engaged local sponsors amplify your marketing by promoting to their own audiences:

- Sports nutrition brands, gyms, physical therapists, and local restaurants make natural partners
- Offer visibility in exchange for in-kind contributions (gift bags, food, prizes, sports drinks)
- A local sponsor who posts about your tournament to their Instagram following multiplies your reach at no cost
- The stronger partnerships that you can create with local businesses, the better your tournament will be.

2.4 Incentives to Register Early

Padel events benefit significantly from early registration because it allows you to build draw momentum, and a nearly-full draw is itself a marketing signal that attracts more entries.

- **Early bird pricing:** Offer a modest discount (\$5–\$10 per player) for registrations within the first two weeks. This can be set up within the software or it can be positioned as a club credit.
- **Team incentives:** Promote the “register early” message to competitive pairs that you know may sign up and then use them to promote the tournament.
- **Giveaways:** Gift bag or exclusive swag for the first 20 teams registered, promoted on social in advance

2.5 In-Person Communications

Coaches

When used effectively, the coaches at your club can be your most important marketing channel. Ensure that after every class, lesson, or event at the club, the coaches discuss the tournament and direct players to pick up a poster or flyer at the front desk. Coaches should have a number of flyers with them so they can pass them out to interested players. The incentive for coaches to encourage players to enter a tournament is that players who play competitive matches take more lessons in clinics, as they want to improve their competitive play.

Front Desk

Ensure that your front desk has all the required information available at all times and that it is printed so they can refer to it quickly and easily. Nothing is worse than a front desk member not knowing the information or having to go to the club's website or social media to find the information. The front desk staff should remind every person they speak to, in person or over the phone, in the weeks leading up to the tournament, about the upcoming tournament and ask whether they've registered yet. If the front desk is unable to answer any questions, they should request the players' contact information and pass it along to the tournament director or a coach so they can follow up. The front desk should not ask the player to speak to their coach, as it is the club, not the player, that should be making the effort to promote the tournament.

Posters

Many clubs use poster boards as an effective promotional tool for tournaments and other club events. If you use a poster board at the front of the club, ensure that the content changes frequently and is engaging so that players stop to read it and have an effective call to action, such as:

"Think you're good enough to win the upcoming tournament? Speak to the front desk to learn more."

Place tournament posters and information flyers in high-traffic areas of the club, such as locker rooms, cafe, tables, and the front desk.

Section 3: Event Day Strategies

The tournament experience is the best marketing for future tournaments. Every player who competes at your event forms an impression that determines whether they return, whether they recommend it to their partners, and whether your club grows its reputation in the circuit.

3.1 Atmosphere & Hospitality

The Social Event (Saturday Night or Midpoint)

The USPA Competition Structure Guide recommends a player party, and data from tournament feedback supports this: social programming increases repeat attendance by 30–40% and drives word of mouth more than almost any other factor. Keep it simple but meaningful:

- Happy hour at the club with a complimentary drink coupon or discounted bar pricing
- Music through the club's existing speaker system
- Brief awards or recognition for Day 1 performances

This is also your best opportunity to capture content for social media and post-event marketing

Player Gift Bags

Gift bags are recommended for USPA 250 and above. They do not need to be expensive; the goal is to send players home with a tangible memory of your event. Options:

- Club-branded item (water bottle, towel, grip tape)
- Sponsor product samples or discount codes
- Some tournaments can monetize their gift bags by charging local businesses that want to reach the audience. Whilst you may not be able to do that yet, many businesses will provide complimentary giveaways or discounts to include in a gift bag.
- When you approach these businesses, do so with a collaborative mindset, and ensure you provide value by including them in tournament communications, social media posts, and emails, and by recognizing them during the event. Ensure that, in addition to contributing to your gift bag, they post on social media about your tournament and include information in the registration link in their communications, such as their own email database.

Activations

Often, local businesses are interested in producing an activation at your tournament at no cost, or in some instances paying to be present. This could include a variety of things, ranging from:

- Sports massages
- Ice baths
- Gelato, coffee cart, food vendors
- A local car dealership placing the car at the front of the club
- A sports nutrition company is setting up a tent with products to showcase
- An equipment manufacturer has a booth to promote its equipment

The only limit to activations is your imagination and your ability to communicate with local businesses. Ensure that once you secure an activation, the company posts about the tournament before the tournament registration and shares it on their social media and communication lists. During the tournament, ensure

that you also promote these activations on your own channels and tag the companies that have the activations so they can amplify your reach.

On-Court Hospitality

- Water availability is mandatory; make it visible and plentiful
- Fruits like bananas are a low-cost, personalized touch that players remember
- Ice on-site for injury management would mean professionalism
- A warm-up area (even a simple open space) makes your event feel organized and player-centered

3.2 Real-Time Content Creation

The best live event content is created by someone whose only job is to capture it. Designate one staff member or volunteer as your event photographer/videographer /social media manager. Some clubs hire a professional photographer to provide these services, and you may do the same. However, this is an additional cost, and often a member of staff or someone at the club is interested in providing the service. It is best to ensure they have a professional camera to ensure high-quality images.

- Post Instagram Stories throughout the day: match action, score updates, crowd shots, behind-the-scenes
- Tag players when possible (with consent), they almost always reshare, improving your reach
- Capture high-quality still photos per session for post-event use
- If possible and the budget allows, set up simple live stream cameras on your courts and share the feed on YouTube or your club's page for spectators who can't attend.
- If your tournament qualifies for USPA Live Coverage (including the Pendular AI highlights generation), ensure you plan accordingly and cooperate with the production team. This exposure, leveraged across USPA platforms, significantly boosts your club's visibility and attracts future players.
- At the end of each day of the tournament, upload all photos you have taken to a shared drive such as Dropbox or Google Drive, and make them accessible to anyone. Share this link with the players in the WhatsApp group and encourage them to download, post, and tag the club.

3.3 Officiating & Professionalism

Competitive players evaluate events in part on how well they are run. USPA-certified officials at appropriate tournament levels show that your club takes quality seriously.

For all USPA Tournaments, a USPA Level 1 Certified Official (or FIP certified) is required. As long as the Tournament Director is not playing in the tournament, they can serve as both official and tournament director, provided they have taken the required USPA officials course. If the Tournament Director is playing the tournament, they should not create the draws; you must then appoint an official.

- Briefings for players should be conducted before their first match; this helps reduce issues once matches start, especially for newer players.
- The TD and Official should be visibly present and approachable throughout the event
- The score reporting process should be clearly communicated, and the draw and schedule should be publicly displayed on a screen at the club; this is easily managed via the USPA TMS.

Section 4: Post-Event Strategies

Many clubs consider their work complete once the final match ends. However, clubs that successfully convert participants into long-term advocates strategically invest resources in the 72-hour window immediately after the event.

4.1 Results & Recognition

- Post full results on Instagram within 24 hours, tag winners, finalists, and notable performances
- Finalize all results to the USPA TMS by the end of the day on Sunday (the USPA and WPR rankings update depend on this)
- Consider a dedicated “Tournament Recap” post or short-form reel using footage from the event
- Email and send via the WhatsApp chat all participants a thank-you, results summary, and save-the-date for your next event

4.2 Photo & Video Distribution

- Upload a shared Google Drive folder with event photos and share the link with all participants
- Encourage players to tag your club when they share their own photos. This creates organic reach
- Save all video and photo assets for use in future tournament promotions (“Last year’s event” content would build great momentum)

4.3 Feedback & Data Collection

- Send a short post-event survey (3–5 questions maximum via Google Forms), ask what worked, what could improve, and whether they would return. The USPA also does this and will share the results with you a week after the tournament has concluded.
- Track your draw sizes, revenue, and registrant origins over time to identify which marketing channels are actually driving entries
- Note which divisions underperformed and which oversubscribed; this informs your next tournament’s structure and promotion

4.4 Early Announcement of Next Event

The best time to get a player to commit to your next tournament is immediately after they’ve had a great experience at this one. Announce your next event at the awards ceremony and in your thank-you email. Include the registration link even if draws are not yet open.

Section 5: USPA-Specific Opportunities

Beyond standard event marketing, USPA member clubs have access to several organization-level platforms and programs that can amplify your event’s visibility.

5.1 USPA Interactive Club Map & Directory

The USPA launched its interactive club map and directory in February 2026. Ensure your club’s profile is complete, up to date, and accurately reflects your facilities and tournament calendar. New players discovering padel in your area will use this map to find you.

5.2 National Sponsor Integration

Your tournament flyer and promotional materials must include USPA national sponsors, which can be found [here](#) (please check this page regularly for updates). Go beyond compliance, actively engage these relationships:

- Reach out to the current national sponsor contact about co-branded social content and if they want to set up a booth at your tournament.
- Feature sponsor logos prominently at the venue and in event photos (this is the content sponsors want to see and share)
- The USPA notes that clubs “may seek additional local sponsors in addition to USPA national sponsors,” and use national sponsor credibility as leverage in local conversations

5.3 USPA News Coverage

The USPA regularly publishes event recaps and club spotlights on the website. Proactively pitch your event to the USPA communications team at info@padelusa.org:

- Submit a short event recap with results and 2–3 high-quality photos within 48 hours of event completion
- Highlight anything distinctive: record draw size, first-time participants, notable community stories
- USPA coverage drives traffic back to your club and signals to higher-tier tournament eligibility reviewers that you are active and well-run

5.4 Collegiate Padel Connection

The USPA’s Collegiate Padel program is actively building a national network of university clubs. If your club is near a university, hosting a collegiate clinic or inviting the campus club to your USPA 100 is both a growth play and a community story worth telling.

Section 6: Suggested Marketing Timeline

The following timeline is organized around a standard USPA tournament week structure. Adapt the windows based on your tournament level (USPA 100 requires a compressed version; USPA 2000 may extend each phase).

Timeframe	Action	Owner	Notes
PHASE 1: 12–8 WEEKS OUT - FOUNDATION & LAUNCH			
12 weeks	Submit tournament flier to USPA for approval (info@padelusa.org)	TD/Club	Use the USPA flier template found here
12 weeks	Connect the club Stripe to the USPA TMS	TD/Club	If this hasn't been completed previously, the USPA will email instructions.
	Once the club has submitted the flier and connected their Stripe Account. The USPA will set up the tournament in the TMS, and the draws will open for registration	USPA	
10 weeks	Launch social media announcement (Instagram Post & Story)	Social/Marketing	USPA approval is required before publishing
10 weeks	Publish tournament landing page on club website	Club Manager	Include all USPA-required info
9 weeks	Send email announcement #1 to club membership & email list	Club Manager	Include registration link
9 weeks	Reach out to neighboring clubs with an event one-pager	TD / Club Manager	Target clubs within 90 min
8 weeks	Post early bird incentive (if applicable)	Club Manager	Drives early registration
PHASE 2: 7–4 WEEKS OUT - BUILD MOMENTUM			
7 weeks	Social countdown post #1: “7 weeks to go” & current registration stats	Social/Marketing	Social proof drives registrations
6 weeks	Post player spotlight or division preview content on Instagram	Social/Marketing	Tag registered players
5 weeks	Email announcement #2: midpoint reminder with draw update	Club Manager	Show division fill status
5 weeks	Confirm and announce local sponsors on social and website	TD / Club Manager	Tag sponsors in posts
4 weeks	Post in local tennis, squash, and pickleball community groups	Club Manager	Frame as introductory-friendly

Timeframe	Action	Owner	Notes
4 weeks	Finalize gift bag items, social event plan, and hospitality logistics	TD	Secure donations/in-kind early
PHASE 3: 3–1 WEEKS OUT - LAST CALL			
3 weeks	Social countdown post #2: urgency messaging	Social/Marketing	“Only X spots left in Men’s D2”
2 weeks	Email announcement #3: “Registration closes” heads up	Club Manager	USPA 100 Entry Deadline is Monday. USPA 250 and above is Thursday the week prior.
2 weeks	Publish seeding / draw teaser if seeding is complete	TD	Builds anticipation, drives late entries
Monday (USPA 250 - 2000)	Publish full draw by 3pm(required by USPA rules)	TD	Announce on social & WhatsApp group
Tuesday (USPA100)	Publish full draw by 3pm(required by USPA rules)	TD	Announce on social & WhatsApp group
Week of event	Send logistics email to all registered players	TD	Parking, schedule, warm-up, social event
Week of event	Post venue prep / “We’re ready for you” content	Social/Marketing	Courts, signage, setup shots
PHASE 4: TOURNAMENT WEEKEND - LIVE COVERAGE			
Day of	Brief players on schedule, score reporting, and conduct (30 min head start)	TD	USPA rules: players arrive 30 min early
Throughout	Post Instagram Stories: match action, scores, atmosphere	Social/Marketing	Stories disappear; save highlights
Throughout	Capture 5+ high-quality still photos per session	Social/Marketing	Use for post-event and future promo
Evening	Host player social event; capture content	TD / Club Staff	USPA recommends Saturday night party
Final round	Announce next event at awards ceremony	TD / Club Manager	Momentum is highest at this moment
PHASE 5: 48–72 HOURS POST-EVENT - CAPTURE & CONVERT			
24 hours	Post results and winner photos on Instagram	Social/Marketing	Tag winners; reshare encouraged
24 hours	Submit results in USPA TMS	TD	Mandatory for rankings update

Timeframe	Action	Owner	Notes
48 hours	Share the photo gallery link (Google Drive) with all participants	Club Manager	Free, goodwill gesture
48 hours	Submit event recap & photos to USPA (info@padelusa.org)	Club Manager	Pursue padelusa.org news coverage
72 hours	Send post-event thank-you email with survey link and next event announcement	Club Manager	Include the next event registration link
1 week	Analyze survey results and draw performance data	TD / Club Manager	Inform next event improvements

Section 7: Marketing Ideas Quick Reference

The following ideas are organized by cost and complexity. Every club can implement the low-cost, high-impact ideas immediately.

Zero Cost

- Tag @usapadel in all tournament-related posts (organic reach)
- Create a WhatsApp group for registered players and use it throughout the event
- Post in local tennis, pickleball, and squash community Facebook groups
- Upload photos to a shared Google Drive and email the link to all participants
- Submit a post-event recap to USPA for potential coverage on padelusa.org
- Announce your next event at the awards ceremony while the energy is at its highest
- Ask players to tag your club when they share their own tournament photos

Low Cost (\$1–\$10 per player)

- Player gift bag with branded item and sponsor samples (low-cost supplier: Alibaba)
- Fruits and sports drink mix at courtside (in-kind sponsorship or budget item)
- Medal or trophy for division finalists (low-cost supplier: Alibaba)
- Early bird registration discount to drive momentum
- Post-event survey via Google Forms with a small prize raffle for respondents

Medium Investment (\$10–\$15 per player)

- Player social event: happy hour with one complimentary drink coupon per person
- Custom event-specific t-shirt or athletic shirt for all participants
- Designated event photographer (freelance or club staff) for full-day coverage
- Branded tournament banners featuring USPA and local sponsor logos

Higher Investment (Sponsor-funded or USPA 1000/2000 level)

- Livestream with USPA YouTube with Pendular AI highlights integration
- Professional photographer and same-day photo delivery link
- Physical therapist or athletic trainer on-site (required at USPA 1000/2000)
- Custom mobile app or digital scoreboard display
- Title sponsorship package offered to a local or regional brand

Got Questions?

Contact the USPA at info@padelusa.org

[Review the Tournament Director Resources](#)

USA Padel | padelusa.org | [@usapadel](https://www.instagram.com/usapadel)