Protective Eyewear Policy

1. Purpose

Pickleball England is committed to taking reasonable and proportionate measures to reduce the risk of avoidable injury during participation in pickleball.

Eye injuries can occur as a result of impact from a ball, paddle or another player. While the risk of serious injury is relatively low, the potential consequences can be significant.

For this reason, Pickleball England has adopted the following requirements and recommendations.

2. Players Under 18

All players under the age of 18 must wear suitable protective eyewear while participating in:

- Pickleball England-run competitions;
- Pickleball England-sanctioned competitions;
- Pickleball England junior events and festivals; and
- any other activity where Pickleball England specifically identifies protective eyewear as mandatory.

This requirement applies regardless of whether the player is participating in a junior or adult age category.

Protective eyewear must be worn throughout play, including warm-up on court.

A player under 18 who does not have suitable protective eyewear may not take part until appropriate eyewear is available.

3. Junior Coaching, Training and Recreational Play

Pickleball England strongly recommends that players under 18 wear protective eyewear during all pickleball activity, including:

- coaching;
- training;
- club sessions;
- recreational play;
- school and education-based activity; and
- informal competition.

Affiliated clubs, coaches and activity providers are strongly encouraged to adopt the same approach within their own junior programmes and to communicate the requirement or recommendation clearly to parents and carers.

4. Players Aged 18 and Over

Pickleball England strongly recommends the wearing of protective eyewear by all adult players.

Adults may choose whether to wear protective eyewear unless it is specifically required by:

- the conditions of a particular event;
- a venue;
- a club or activity provider;
- an insurer; or
- another applicable regulation.

Pickleball England encourages players to consider the potential consequences of eye injury when making that decision.

5. Suitable Protective Eyewear

Protective eyewear should be specifically designed to provide impact protection for racket or paddle sports and should meet a recognised safety standard approved or accepted by Pickleball England.

Ordinary prescription spectacles, sunglasses or non-impact-rated eyewear should not be assumed to provide suitable protection.

Players who require corrective lenses should use appropriately rated protective eyewear that accommodates their prescription or is designed to be worn over prescription glasses.

Pickleball England will publish separate guidance identifying appropriate standards and types of protective eyewear.

6. Responsibility of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers of players under 18 are responsible for ensuring that the junior has suitable protective eyewear and understands the requirement to wear it.

Event organisers, coaches and officials are responsible for applying the requirement consistently within activities for which they are responsible.

7. Medical, Disability or Accessibility Considerations

Where a player is unable to wear standard protective eyewear because of a medical condition, disability or other accessibility requirement, the matter should be considered individually.

Reasonable adjustments should be explored wherever possible without compromising the underlying safety objective.

Where necessary, Pickleball England may seek appropriate medical or specialist advice before determining whether an alternative form of protection is acceptable.

8. Enforcement at Competition

Where protective eyewear is mandatory, tournament officials may prevent a player from entering the court or require a player to stop play if suitable protective eyewear is not being worn.

A player will be permitted to resume participation once compliant eyewear is available.

Failure to comply with the requirement may result in withdrawal from the relevant match or event in accordance with the applicable competition regulations.

9. Club Autonomy

Nothing in this policy prevents an affiliated club, venue or activity provider from adopting a higher standard of protection.

Clubs may, for example, require protective eyewear for all participants regardless of age.

10. Review

Pickleball England will keep this policy under review in light of:

- emerging injury evidence;
- developments in protective equipment standards;
- international pickleball rules and guidance;
- safeguarding advice; and
- experience from clubs and competitions.

Policy approved by PbE Board 19.11.26