

Strategic Alliance Between USAPA/SSIPA – Opening the Communications Process

The purpose of this letter is to outline the progress that has been made between the USAPA and SSIPA since our Service Agreement/Strategic Alliance was signed in June 14, 2017 and to make recommendations on formalizing a communications process that will benefit both parties for the future.

SSIPA Accomplishments:

- 1. Built an annual paying membership base of approximately 1500 players, age 60+, using Age/Skill tournaments in 5 year increments and skill levels 3.0-5.0.**
- 2. SSIPA has significantly increased total USAPA membership since all circuit events are sanctioned by the USAPA and require USAPA membership.**
- 3. Supported the IFP and promoted USAPA and SSIPA internationally with tournaments in Mexico, Canada, Spain and Italy having been SSIPA circuit events.**
- 4. In 2018, built a 41 SSIPA Circuit Tournament Schedule on www.pickleballtournaments.com (PT.com). This included 30 tournaments and 11 USAPA Regional Tournaments. All 30 Tournament Directors signed a Tournament Director Commitment form agreeing to comply with the SSIPA Guidelines. (<https://www.ssipa-pb.org/tournament-planning>)
 - a. In accordance with our agreement, USAPA encouraged the Regional's to offer 60+ friendly events. Most complied exactly with our SSIPA guidelines and 3 did not.**
 - b. Each Region has used our SSIPA Circuit Logo to advertise and promote the regional tournaments.****

Current Situation:

- 1. There are 6 - USAPA Regional Tournaments (also SSIPA Circuit Tournaments) still to be played in 2018. All 6 of these tournaments are qualifying events for the 2019 National Championships. **See your USAPA requirements below.**
- 2. These Regional's list the SSIPA Circuit Tournament logo.**
- 3. The format for the 2018 National Championships has been made and communicated to the membership. For players 60+, competition will be in 5 year age groupings and skill levels 3.0 to 5.0. This basically follows the SSIPA Circuit Tournament Guidelines or call it the "Senior Model".**
- 4. What is missing?**

- a. Our observation is that a few Regional Directors/Tournament Directors are using different formats to run these qualifying tournaments.
- b. One would think USAPA Regional Directors would be required to run a qualifying tournament following the 2019 USAPA guidelines (which we assume would be the same format as the 2018 Nationals?)
- c. Limited communication with both Regional Directors and Tournament Directors has contributed to the variations in tournament formats being used.
- d. SSIPA had advised and coordinated with 30 tournament directors this year on how to set-up and manage Age/Skill tournaments on PT.com and has developed the expertise to assist the USAPA with the implementation of the guidelines for National qualifying tournaments.
- e. As a proud ally of the USAPA, SSIPA would like to assist the USAPA with regional support to either regional directors and/or regional tournament directors.

Recommendation:

1. Put a structure in place for future USAPA/SSIPA communications. This would strengthen our strategic alliance to assist in the future improvement of both associations.
2. Provide clear information to Regional Directors on the consistent format to be used for bracket development to ensure all players are able to qualify for Nationals using the same format.
3. Require Regional Directors to complete a SSIPA tournament director's commitment form prior to using the SSIPA logo for posting on PT.com.
4. Formalize a SSIPA non-voting liaison position on the USAPA Board to represent USAPA membership ages 60+.
5. Since the 2019 Regional Tournaments are being planned and posted on PT.com at this time, we would like your prompt feedback to our recommendations and clarification as to SSIPA's role moving forward.

Our point of contact is: Ford Roberson – 325-280-0044 – ssipa.pb@gmail.com

Respectively,

SSIPA Board of Directors

Ford Roberson, Tim Kuss, Marc Rinehart, Fred Thompson, Alice Tym, Vicky Noakes

***Service Exchange Agreement on June 14, 2017 – Strategic Alliance**

- B. USAPA will provide the following services to SSIPA.** Unless otherwise stated, all services will be provided at no charge.
- a. Place the SSIPA logo on the homepage of the USAPA website with a link to a dedicated landing page for SSIPA that features description of the organization, our connection and other the SSIPA details and a link to the SSIPA homepage.
 - b. USAPA will encourage 60+ Age Groups at all USAPA Regional Tournaments, by offering 60+ friendly events (at the discretion of the USAPA or the TD).
 - c. USAPA, during discussions with new non-industry sponsors, will inquire, if appropriate, if they have an interest in also sponsoring SSIPA events. If so, USAPA will aid in sharing contact information to establish a direct line of communication between the two parties.
 - d. Provide a table space and the ability to place a court banner at the USAPA National Tournament. Banner will be at the expense of SSIPA and must meet event specs.
 - e. Announcement on USAPA website of the mutual supportive relationship between SSIPA and USAPA to be included in the rotating news banner on the USAPA Website. Announcement will be active for a minimum of 60 days.

****From the USAPA web page: Listed below are the requirements for playing in the 2019 National Tournament. All participants must now participate in a USAPA Regional Tournament between July 15, 2018 and July 15, 2019.**

2019 Participation Requirements & Pre-Registration Opportunities

2019 Participation Requirements:

To participate in the 2019 USAPA National Championships at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, all participants must:

- Participate in a USAPA Regional Tournament or a Tier 2 or higher USAPA sanctioned event between July 15, 2018, and July 15, 2019. The USAPA National Championships do not count as a qualifier for upcoming USAPA National Championships.
- Open event entrants must have a minimum of a 5.0 USAPA Rating by July 31, 2019. Events may open up to 4.5 USAPA rated players, depending on participation levels in each event.

2019 Pre-Registration Opportunities:

Pre-registration is available to the following:

- All Medalists from the 2018 USAPA National Championship Open & Sr. Open.

- All Gold Medalists in any age/skill event from the 2018 USAPA National Championships.
- All Gold Medalists in a Tier 1 USAPA Sanctioned Tournament between July 15, 2018, and July 15, 2019.
- All Gold Medalists at any USAPA Regional Event held between July 15, 2018, and July 15, 2019.