



## Rebuilding Pickleball Courts Without Rebuilding the Entire Facility

*By Tom Maellaro, Vice President of Business Development, Modern Recreational Technologies (MRT)*

Pickleball continues to reshape recreational spaces across the country at an incredible pace. From dedicated clubs and municipal parks to country clubs and former tennis facilities, demand for playable court space keeps accelerating. The challenge for many facility owners is no longer whether they should invest in pickleball, but how to improve and maintain courts efficiently while keeping downtime and long-term costs under control.

One of the biggest misconceptions in court renovation is that aging or underperforming courts automatically require full reconstruction. In most cases, they do not. A large percentage of courts can be significantly improved through proper evaluation, preparation, resurfacing strategy, and coating selection. The process matters just as much as the products being used.

The first step in any successful pickleball court improvement project is understanding the condition of the existing substrate. Asphalt and concrete both behave differently over time. Asphalt courts may experience oxidation, minor movement, or low spot development, while concrete surfaces often present shrinkage cracks or previous coating failures. Before any resurfacing work begins, the facility should evaluate structural integrity, drainage performance, and existing coating adhesion.

Preparation is where successful projects separate themselves from short-lived cosmetic fixes.

Too often, resurfacing failures occur because the focus stays on color and appearance rather than substrate preparation. Courts should be thoroughly cleaned to remove dirt, chalking, biological growth, and contaminants. Cracks must be properly addressed with compatible repair materials, and surface inconsistencies should be corrected before coatings are applied. Skipping these steps is like painting over rust on a car. It may look better for a short period of time, but the underlying issue eventually returns.

Once the surface is properly prepared, the resurfacing system itself becomes critical. Modern elastomeric court systems are designed not only to restore appearance, but to improve playability, traction consistency, and overall durability. Texture balance is especially important in pickleball. Players want reliable footing and predictable ball response without creating an overly aggressive surface that increases fatigue or joint stress.



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Climate also plays a major role in coating performance and project scheduling. Facilities operating in warmer southern climates face different challenges than clubs in freeze-thaw northern regions. UV exposure, rainfall frequency, humidity, and seasonal temperature swings all influence product selection and application timing. Choosing systems designed specifically

for recreational court environments helps improve longevity and reduces maintenance frequency over time.

Another important consideration is operational downtime. Many facilities cannot afford to close courts for extended periods, particularly during peak seasons. Efficient resurfacing planning can dramatically reduce disruption. Staging projects in phases, sequencing repairs correctly, and selecting systems with practical cure windows allows clubs to maintain operations while still

upgrading facilities. In today's environment, speed matters, but consistency matters more. Fast

projects that fail early become expensive projects twice over.

Color selection has also evolved beyond aesthetics alone. Facilities are increasingly using court colors and layout designs as part of their branding and customer experience strategy. Blues remain extremely popular for visibility and contrast, but clubs are becoming more creative with accent colors, out-of-bounds zones, and multi-court layouts that improve both appearance and player flow. Modern systems like Tuff Court also allow colors to be intermixed, giving facilities the ability to create custom color combinations that align with branding, improve visual identity, or create a more distinctive playing environment. A visually clean facility often creates the perception of a better playing experience before the first serve is even hit.

From a business perspective, resurfacing and conversion projects can also create significant revenue opportunities for contractors and facility operators alike. The rapid growth of pickleball has created demand for court conversions, dedicated pickleball complexes, and multi-use recreational spaces nationwide. In many markets, underutilized tennis courts are being transformed into highly active pickleball environments with relatively modest renovation investments compared to full reconstruction.

At MRT, we've seen firsthand how thoughtful resurfacing strategies using systems like Tuff Court can help facilities modernize courts efficiently while improving durability and aesthetics. But regardless of the coating brand selected, the larger lesson remains the same: successful pickleball court projects are built on preparation, planning, and understanding how players actually use the surface every day.



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The facilities seeing the greatest long-term success are not simply repainting courts. They are creating durable, attractive playing environments designed around player experience, operational efficiency, and sustainable maintenance planning.

As pickleball continues its rapid growth trajectory, facilities that approach court improvement strategically rather than reactively will position themselves to maximize both player satisfaction and long-term return on investment.

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