

Date: Updated 14 December 2025

Subject: Prohibition of Counterfeit, Misrepresented and Unapproved Paddles in SPA Sanctioned Tournaments

## OVERVIEW

There has been a recent surge in paddles **falsely labelled or misrepresented** as USA Pickleball (USAP) approved. These may include:

- **Counterfeit copies** of certified paddles imported from online marketplaces, or locally distributed.
- **Legitimate paddle brands** using incorrect “approval” labelling on uncertified models.

The use of counterfeit or illegitimate paddles undermines the principles of fair play and does not align with the spirit of sportsmanship that our sport upholds. Players remain fully accountable for both the authenticity of their paddle and for presenting evidence — such as model details or approval listings — to confirm its legitimacy when called upon.

[This advisory is based on the USAP paddle approval submission requirements, current as of date of this advisory.](#)

### 1. HOW TO CHECK FOR APPROVAL

- a. Check the Paddle’s physical labelling - legitimately approved paddles are required to have:
  - i. A **printed mark** of the USAP licensed logo or text treatment on the paddle face(s). This has been enforced by USAP since 2019.
  - ii. Manufacturer and model names clearly marked and printed on the paddle.
- b. Verify on the USAP Approved Paddle List
  - i. Official link:
    - o <https://equipment.usapickleball.org/paddle-list>
  - ii. Search by <Model Name> and <Manufacturer Name> and the search shall return the List Date, Status (e.g. Pass, Delisted, Expired) and an Image of the listed paddle.

Avoid any paddles that shows any discrepancies or are not listed.

## 2. WHAT IS A COUNTERFEIT

Counterfeit paddles are those produced with the intent to mislead others into thinking they are authentic, certified and approved equipment. Typically by copying the appearance, labelling, or brand identity of an authentic USAP approved product.

Given the difficulty in visually identifying counterfeit paddles, the onus lies on players to ensure their paddle's authenticity. Purchasing from reliable dealers is strongly advised. Suspiciously low prices are often a red flag for fakes.

## 3. WHAT IS A MISREPRESENTED PADDLE

- a. All paddles must clearly indicate both the manufacturer and model name. Any paddle without this information cannot be validated against the USA Pickleball Approved Paddle List and will be deemed misrepresenting.
- b. [Under the USA Pickleball Equipment Submissions FAQ, paddle submissions must display final graphics \(manufacturer's name and model name must be on the face\), including the USA Pickleball licensed logo or text treatment. Different colourways are accepted provided the paddle is otherwise identical.](#)
- c. The final graphics of commercially sold paddles shall match the image listed on the USAP Approved Paddle List. While USAP allows for alternate colourways, the paddle must otherwise be identical to the approved model in design, materials, and construction. Any other visual discrepancy may indicate misrepresentation or counterfeiting.
- d. Regardless of the paddle design, paddles that do not have manufacturer or model names would be impossible to verify. Therefore if such a paddle is marked with the approval logo, it shall be deemed misrepresenting.

#### 4. LIMITED-EDITION AND CO-BRANDED DESIGNS

- a. There is a growing commercial trend toward Limited-Edition or Co-Branded paddles with different paddle designs from the model image shown in the USAP Approved Paddle List. This trend, while understandable, complicates our efforts to prevent counterfeit and non-compliant equipment.
- b. Limited-edition or Co-branded paddles with different paddle graphics from the USAP Approved Paddle Listed Model shall be allowed subjected to the following,
  - i. The paddles are riding on model that is already listed on the USAP Approved Paddle List and is launched by the Manufacturer of that specific model.
  - ii. All technical specifications, such as dimensions, core and surface material etc, are identical to the approved model.
  - iii. The only changes are cosmetic, such as graphics, colourway or additional logos.
  - iv. The brand or manufacturer shall undertake that the limited-edition version is identical in construction to the originally approved model.
- c. Important Distinction - This is very different from misrepresenting cases where a paddle is submitted to USA Pickleball for testing and approved, but subsequently the commercially launched version differs in construction and/or paddle graphic design.

#### 5. WHAT IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF USING AN UNAPPROVED PADDLE

While counterfeit and misrepresented paddles represent more serious violations, they are classified under the broader category of unapproved paddles. The use of any unapproved paddle in SPA sanctioned tournaments are strictly prohibited and will be subject to the applicable rules, unless otherwise stated as a concession in the specific Tournament's Rules and Regulations.