

Organise Your Own Padel Game

How to get four players onto a court without the group chat dying · 5-minute read



Somebody has to be the one who says "Thursday, 8pm, who's in?" — and in most padel groups, almost nobody wants it to be them.

Not because it's difficult. Because it's thankless: you chase four adults through a chat that has already moved on, you put your own card down on a court nobody has agreed to pay for, and if it falls apart it falls apart on you. So the game everybody wants doesn't happen, week after week, for want of one person willing to absorb all that.

It doesn't have to work like that, and almost all of it comes down to **doing things in the right order** — which is not the obvious order. This is the whole job in five minutes: when to ask, which format to use, who books the court and when, how to handle the money without becoming everyone's bank, and what PadelPush sends on your behalf.

Never played? Read "Your First Padel Game" (padelpush.co/first-game) first — this one assumes you've been on court.

■ The chicken and the egg

Every organiser hits the same wall on their first game: **do you book the court first, or find the people first?** Both ways fail, and they fail differently.

- **Court first.** You book Thursday 8pm, then ask around. Now you own a bill nobody has agreed to pay, and you're negotiating from weakness — "who can do Thursday 8?" is a far worse question than "when can you play?". If it doesn't fill, you eat it or you beg.
- **People first.** You agree a time with three friends, go to book — and 8pm is gone. So you go back to the chat, propose 9pm, one person drops out, and by the fourth round of messages everybody has stopped reading.

The answer isn't a trick, it's lead time.

People-first only works when there's still a court left by the time you've agreed. A week out, 8pm Thursday is still there. Two days out, it isn't. **So: people first, court second — booked the moment it fills.**

- **Book first only when:** it's prime time at a busy club (weekday 7–9pm) *and* you can cancel free — or you already have the court, in which case the game is just "who's in?", the easy half.
- **If you do book first, say so and put a deadline on it.** "Courts are booked, €15 each, I release whatever isn't taken by Tuesday evening" turns your risk into everyone else's urgency — and it's the one message that reliably converts a chat full of "yeah, I'd play" into four names.
- **How PadelPush handles it:** you set the match up *without* a court. It sends the invites, chases the silence, and reminds you to book once the match is full. There's never a moment where you're holding a court nobody has said yes to.

■ Give it at least a week

The single biggest predictor of whether your game happens is how far out you asked.

- **People's weeks fill up.** Ask on Monday for Thursday and you're competing with plans that already exist. Ask ten days out and you're the plan.
- **Good court times go 3–7 days ahead.** Sunday morning and weekday evenings are the first to go.
- **You need room for round two.** Somebody will drop out — that's not pessimism, it's the base rate. A week gives you time to refill without panic; two days doesn't.

7–10 days out Set the amount per head and how you're paid, then invite — more people than you have seats

The moment it fills Book the court and **enter the court number** — that's what releases the confirmations. Nothing reaches the players until you do

Day of Nothing. The reminder sends itself; you turn up 10 minutes early

Court availability inside PadelPush changes with distance for the same reason: nothing live beyond two weeks, "this can change" in the middle, and "book now" inside three days — because that court will not be there tomorrow.

■ Why the group chat can't finish the job

Watch what happens in any padel group when somebody asks *"anyone up for a game near me?"*:

- 1 Four people say yes. Real players, real intent.
- 2 Someone posts a poll — 5–7pm or 7–10pm. Three votes to one.
- 3 "So we have a team! Friday evening?" — "Can't do Friday." — "After 7pm and I'm in."
- 4 It resets: "Anyone free Monday or Tuesday instead?" — "Tuesday works." — "Tuesday, but 1–4pm." — "That's roasting."
- 5 Day three. No date, no court, no game. Someone new asks "which day is this?" and the honest answer is "no day yet".

Nobody did anything wrong. A group chat simply can't do the four things that turn interest into a game:

- **Close.** A poll never ends — it just stops getting votes.
- **Count to four.** Eleven messages across two options don't tell you if any single slot has a foursome.
- **Hold a seat.** "I'm in" on Monday isn't a seat on Thursday, and nobody knows whether they're one of the four.
- **Book.** No poll ever booked a court.

Answer it with a link, not a poll.

When the "anyone up for a game?" message appears, set the match up (fixed time, or 2–4 options if you genuinely don't know) and drop the link into the chat — so the replies land somewhere that can count them, hold the seats, and tell you the moment you've got four. **A group chat is a great place to find players. It's a terrible place to finish.**

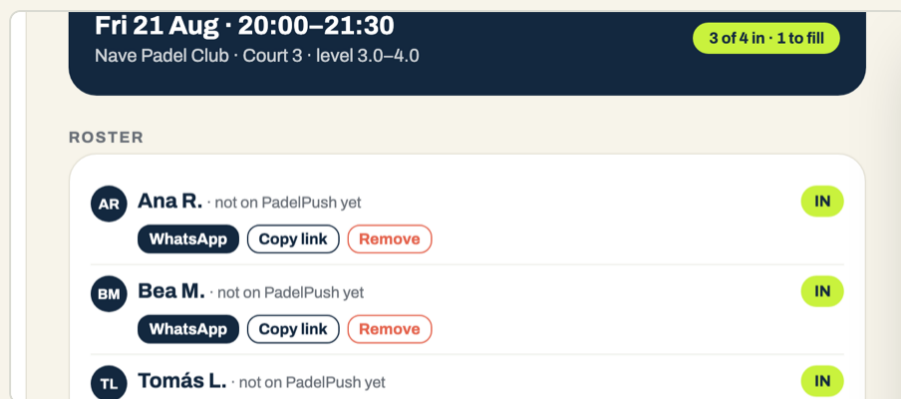
Three ways to fill a game — pick the right one

Most failed games are the right idea in the wrong format.

1 • Fixed time

You know the time and roughly who. Everyone gets the same invite and the first yes takes each spot. Fastest fill, no decisions for you afterwards.

Use it: your usual four.



Fri 21 Aug · 20:00–21:30
Nave Padel Club · Court 3 · level 3.0–4.0

3 of 4 in · 1 to fill

ROSTER

AR Ana R. · not on PadelPush yet **IN**
WhatsApp Copy link Remove

BM Bea M. · not on PadelPush yet **IN**
WhatsApp Copy link Remove

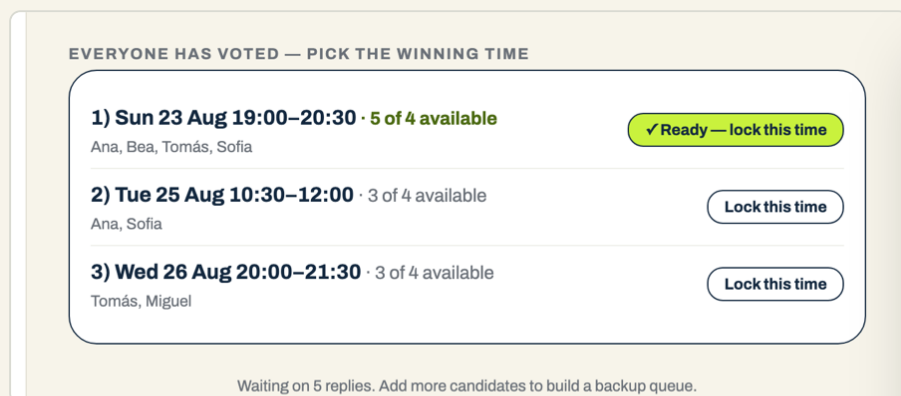
TL Tomás L. · not on PadelPush yet **IN**

The match console — who is in, who you are waiting on, and the cards that follow: fill the last spot, split the cost.

2 • Let players vote

One match, no time locked. Offer 2–4 options, invitees tick what works, you book the winner. Turns a twelve-message argument into four taps.

Use it: hard-to-pin-down people.



EVERYONE HAS VOTED — PICK THE WINNING TIME

1) Sun 23 Aug 19:00–20:30 · 5 of 4 available ✓ Ready — lock this time
Ana, Bea, Tomás, Sofia

2) Tue 25 Aug 10:30–12:00 · 3 of 4 available Lock this time
Ana, Sofia

3) Wed 26 Aug 20:00–21:30 · 3 of 4 available Lock this time
Tomás, Miguel

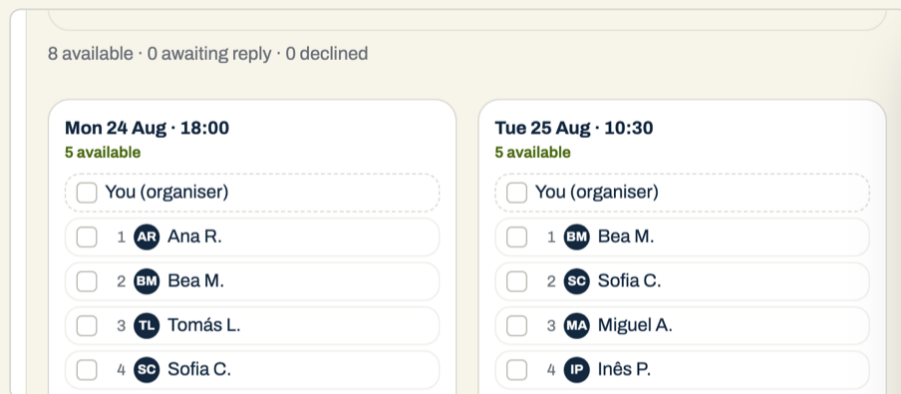
Waiting on 5 replies. Add more candidates to build a backup queue.

Every candidate time with its votes and who picked it — and one button to lock the winner.

3 • A blast

More players than one court, or no idea who's free. Message a group — or drop one link into a WhatsApp group. Replies land on a board; you build matches four at a time.

Use it: growing a regular thing.



8 available · 0 awaiting reply · 0 declined

Mon 24 Aug · 18:00
5 available

☐ You (organiser)

☐ 1 **AR** Ana R.

☐ 2 **BM** Bea M.

☐ 3 **TL** Tomás L.

☐ 4 **SC** Sofia C.

Tue 25 Aug · 10:30
5 available

☐ You (organiser)

☐ 1 **BM** Bea M.

☐ 2 **SC** Sofia C.

☐ 3 **MA** Miguel A.

☐ 4 **IP** Inês P.

A column per time, side by side — tick four in one, confirm the group, then do the next.

Nobody gets booked into two games by accident

A ticked slot means "I'm free then", not "I want two games" — and PadelPush never reads it as the second thing. If a player is already confirmed for one time in your blast, their own page asks them: *"You're already confirmed for Thursday. Still want Sunday as well?"* — yes keeps them in both, no takes them off that time and leaves their other votes alone. And if you go to place them in a second match yourself, the board stops you first: *"they picked several times, not all of them."* You can confirm anyway; you just can't do it silently. Which matters, because a player booked into a game they didn't want is a no-show — and a no-show strands three people on a court they've paid for.

- **Nobody is confirmed until you place them.** A blast is the wrong tool for "my usual four on Thursday" — that's a fixed game with extra steps.

■ What gets sent, and when

Organising here is less work than in a chat not because the setup is clever, but because seven or eight messages go out over the following week and **you write none of them**.

While it's filling

- **The invite.** WhatsApp, by name, with the time, the place and a link. They reply YES or tap through — no account needed.
- **The chase.** Anyone who's gone quiet gets one automatic nudge, halfway through your reply window (3h on the normal setting). You pick the pace: fast, normal or relaxed.
- **The "you're in".** Instant, the moment they say yes. Can't make it but named other times? That availability is saved and passed to you.
- **"You missed out."** When the last spot goes, everyone still pending is told at once — nobody wonders whether they're playing.
- **A nudge to you** if the queue runs dry before the match fills.

When it fills — the one step that's yours

Book the court, then **enter the court number**. That is what releases the confirmations — until it's in, PadelPush holds every one of them back, because a "you're confirmed" message that can't say where to stand isn't worth sending. The confirmation carries the date and time, the venue *and the court*, who else is playing, a calendar link — and, if you set a pay destination, the amount and where to send it.

- **On the day**, everyone gets a match-day reminder — the time, the venue and who organised it — sent once in the morning, never in the middle of the night (it respects quiet hours and slides to the previous evening for an early game).
- **If it doesn't come together**, you call it off and everyone active gets the honest version — "not enough players", never "it filled up". That honesty is why people reply to your next invite.

■ When someone drops out

Somebody always does. It's the part that kills a game arranged in a chat, and the part that costs you least here — a drop from a full match fires two messages at once:

- **The three still in**, straight away: *"Sam dropped out, so it's not full anymore. We're finding a replacement — you're still in (3 of 4)." No silent limbo, no rumours in the chat.*
- **The waitlist:** *"A spot just opened on Ana's match Saturday 18:00 — still in? Reply YES, first to reply takes it."* First reply wins.

■ Your waitlist builds itself

- **This is the real reason to invite more people than you have seats.** Anyone who said yes after the four were taken isn't turned away — they're waitlisted and told so at the time. Already keen, already know the time and place: the fastest possible refill.
- **No waitlist?** The invite queue picks up where it left off and invites the next person on your list automatically. Queue empty too? Post the open spot as a card into a WhatsApp group — people tap the link and grab it.
- **An unpaid seat past its hold deadline is released down this same path**, and a refilled match confirms itself. The only decision left to you is the one a human has to make — play as three, or call it off.

■ Why this is harder on Playtomic

Playtomic is where the courts are. It is not where the *games* are, and the difference is worth being clear about.

The level ranges are the big one.

An open match advertised as "2.0–3.5" is not a level, it's a shrug. Ratings start as a self-assessment, they only move on results inside Playtomic's own system, and they drift between cities and countries — a 3.0 in one town plays like a 2.0 in the next. On a *competitive* match Playtomic sets the range itself, anchored to that same wobbly number; on a *friendly* one it's the creator's to choose, and it tends to get set wide, because a narrow range doesn't fill. Either way you pay up front, show up, and find out. When it's a mismatch, all four of you have a bad hour: one pair is bored, the other is embarrassed.

- You can't choose who you play with, and they can't choose you.
- The time is fixed — nobody's negotiating it with you.
- You pay before you know who's coming.
- The match can fail to fill and vanish — and now your evening is empty.

■ The split that works

- **Use the club's booking system for the court.** Playtomic is genuinely good at two things — showing you which courts are actually free, and taking the money. Use it for exactly that.
- **Use PadelPush for the people.** Invite players by name. Say the level in your own words — "intermediate, beginners welcome" tells a human more than "2.0–3.5" ever will.
- **Keep the same four coming back,** so the fifth game takes one message instead of twenty.

■ Covered or not? Ask before you book

Nobody thinks about the roof until they're standing under 35°C on a glass-walled court with no shade. It's the cheapest mistake to avoid and the one nobody warns you about.

- **Summer middle-of-the-day is brutal uncovered.**
Glass on four sides, sand on carpet, no breeze — it plays hotter than the forecast. Those 13:00–16:00 slots are free for a reason.
- **Winter flips it.** Covered courts are the first thing gone the moment rain is forecast, so an outdoor booking made a week out is a bet on the weather.
- **Book the shoulders of the day outdoors** — before 10:00 and after 18:00 in summer — and save the covered courts for the middle.
- **Check the lights** before booking anything after sunset, and expect covered courts to cost a little more.

PadelPush tells you which it is

Pick a club while creating a match and the court list says how many courts there are and how many are roofed — "5 courts · all covered" — with each free slot marked *N free · outdoor only* in amber when none of them are. Booking somewhere we don't have that? Ring and ask; it's one question. Then **put it in the invite**: "Court 3, outdoor — bring a cap" is what stops somebody turning up in black kit at two in the afternoon.

■ The money: know which kind of club you're at

This is the part that quietly stops people from ever organising a second game. There are two kinds of club, and they need completely different tactics.

Clubs where you can call to reserve

A lot of clubs — especially off-peak, and especially if they know you — will hold a court on a phone call or a WhatsApp message and take the money at the desk on the day. **Nothing is at risk.** Hold the slot while the game fills; let it go politely if it doesn't.

Worth five minutes: ring and ask. The answer is yes more often than people assume.

Clubs where you pay up front

Most Playtomic-integrated clubs charge the card the moment you book. Whoever books fronts the whole court — €30, €40 — then chases three adults for their share.

That's the real reason organisers burn out. It isn't the admin, it's **being everyone's creditor.**

■ Three rules for a prepay club

- 1 **Know the free-cancellation window.** Most prepay bookings cancel free up to 24 hours before — that window is your safety net. Check your club's actual one; some are shorter.
- 2 **Collect before you book, not after.** With the four shares already in, booking costs you nothing and chasing nobody — the difference between organising once and every week.
- 3 **Never front the money as a habit.** Once as a favour is fine. Every week is a subscription you didn't sign up for.

■ How PadelPush helps with the split

- **Set it up before it fills:** how you want to be paid — a Revolut, PayPal.Me, Stripe, Monzo, Wise, bunq, SumUp or Tikkie link, or an MB WAY number or IBAN — and the amount per head.
- **The ask rides on the confirmation.** The "you're in, here's the court" message every confirmed player gets also says what they owe and where to send it — no separate money message, and no gap between being confirmed and being asked, which is the gap they forget in. (Added your details late? One tap sends it to everyone confirmed.)
- **A board shows who's paid,** and whoever hasn't gets one automatic reminder — so you never nudge the group chat again. Cash at the desk gets marked *pays on arrival* and stops being chased.
- **You can require payment to hold a spot.** Unpaid spots release after a set number of hours and go back into the game — you're warned six hours first, never inside three hours of the match.
- **The money goes straight to you** — PadelPush never touches it and never holds it.

■ Money etiquette & the habits that make people say yes

- **Say the number in the invite.** "€8 each" up front prevents every awkward conversation that follows.
- **Split evenly, including yourself.** Organising isn't a job that earns a free game, and charging yourself keeps everyone relaxed.
- **Chase in private, not in the group** — or let the reminder do it.
- **Be honest about the level, in plain words.** "Relaxed intermediate" fills better than any number.
- **Answer everyone.** Even a "not this time" keeps someone on your list. Silence loses your bench.
- **Same time every week beats the perfect time once.** After a month, people hold the slot themselves.
- **Play in your own game.** Fill your seat first, then the other three.

Ready to run one?

Invites, replies, reminders, refills — handled. You keep the court and the money.

padelpush.co/organise