

October 5, 2026

**TBS and dentsu Jointly Establish
Pro Pickleball Team “THE DOTS TOKYO”
to Compete in Asia’s Premier League MLP Asia 2026
- The Two Companies Will Jointly Lead the League’s Japan Round
to Accelerate the Growth of Japan’s Pickleball Industry -**

TBS Holdings, Inc. (Head Office: Minato-ku, Tokyo; President & Chief Executive Officer: Ryujiro Abe; hereinafter “TBS”) and Dentsu Group (Headquarters: Dentsu Group Inc.; Location: Minato-ku, Tokyo; President & Global CEO: Takeshi Sano; hereinafter “dentsu”) announced that TBS and dentsu Sports & Entertainment, dentsu’s group-wide initiative, have jointly established “THE DOTS TOKYO,” a professional pickleball team based in Japan. The team will compete in “MLP Asia 2026,” Asia’s premier professional pickleball league, which will be held for the first time in 2026. In addition, TBS and dentsu will jointly host and operate the league’s Japan Round, which is scheduled to open in Japan on November 13, 2026.

About “THE DOTS TOKYO”

THE DOTS TOKYO is a professional pickleball team representing Japan on the global stage.

The name “THE DOTS” embodies the spirit of “Connecting the dots.” Each “dot” represents an individual with a unique background, personality, and experience, including players, staff members, and fans. Through the sport of pickleball, these individual passions and experiences become connected, creating excitement and momentum that will help shape a new sporting culture. The team name reflects this vision of bringing people together to build something greater than the sum of its parts.

LOGO CONCEPT

DOTS CONNECT. ONE TEAM.

The letters D, O, and T take shape as three people standing side by side, representing players, staff, and fans united as one.
The blue dot embodies the twilight moment when Tokyo is washed in blue, a symbol of day and night, tradition and future, local and global merging into one. It tells the story of different people, ideas, and values connecting, and of a new culture emerging from the collective energy of a single team.

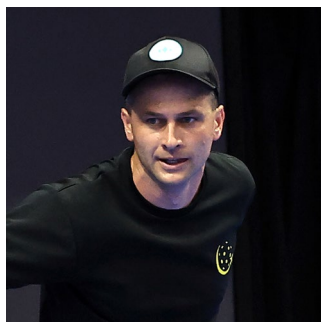


Through this collaboration, TBS and dentsu have established a joint management structure for THE DOTS TOKYO and will fully support the team’s pursuit of success in MLP Asia 2026.

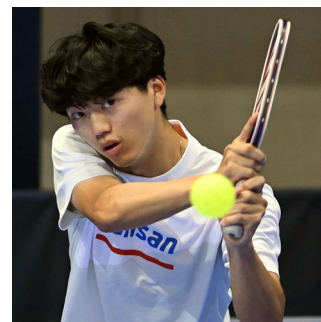
THE DOTS TOKYO 2026 Roster (Six Players in total)



[Captain]
Yuta Funemizu



Daniel Moore



Nasa Hatakeyama



Rika Fujiwara



Aiko Yoshitomi



Mihae Kwon

As the Asian version of Major League Pickleball (MLP), which originated in the United States, MLP Asia 2026 will take place from November 13 to December 12, 2026. This newly established professional pickleball league aims to enhance the competitive value of pickleball and expand the market across Asia. The league is expected to contribute to the growth of the spectator sports market by offering fans opportunities to watch the elite international competition featuring top professional players.

Pickleball continues to experience remarkable growth globally, particularly in the United States. In Japan, the number of participants is estimated to have increased approximately fivefold year-on-year in 2025*¹ and approximately sevenfold year-on-year in 2026, reaching around 330,000 players.*² Against this backdrop of rapid market expansion, there is growing demand for initiatives that support sustainable development of the sport and industry, including the enhancement of competitive environments, athlete development, fan community building, and sponsorship opportunities.

Through the operation and brand development of THE DOTS TOKYO, management of the Japan round of MLP Asia, sponsorship initiatives, and marketing activities, dentsu and TBS will work closely with sporting organizations and business partners to contribute to the development and value creation of Japan's emerging pickleball industry.

Going forward, dentsu and TBS will continue to explore the many possibilities of pickleball while creating new value in the fields of sports and entertainment. Through these efforts, they aim to foster vibrant communities and cultures that connect people, businesses, and society.

■ League Overview

League Name	MLP Asia 2026
Organizer	United Pickleball Association Asia Pte. Ltd.
Hosts of Japan Round	TBS Holdings, Inc. Dentsu Group Inc.
Event Period	November 13, 2026 – December 12, 2026
Participating Teams	THE DOTS TOKYO (Japan), Dragon Warriors (China) Manila Helios (Philippines), Viet Panthers (Vietnam) Hong Kong Cannons (Hong Kong), Malayan Stripes (Malaysia)
Match Schedule / Host Locations (Rounds)	Group Stage ■ November 13, 2026 (Japan Round) 1st Match: THE DOTS TOKYO (Japan) vs. Manila Helios (Philippines) 2nd Match: THE DOTS TOKYO (Japan) vs. Malayan Stripes (Malaysia) ■ November 14, 2026 (Hong Kong Round) 1st Match: Hong Kong Cannons (Hong Kong) vs. Viet Panthers (Vietnam) 2nd Match: Hong Kong Cannons (Hong Kong) vs. Dragon Warriors (China) ■ November 20, 2026 (Philippines Round) 1st Match: Manila Helios (Philippines) vs. Dragon Warriors (China) 2nd Match: Manila Helios (Philippines) vs. Hong Kong Cannons (Hong Kong) ■ November 21, 2026 (Vietnam Round) 1st Match: Viet Panthers (Vietnam) vs. Malayan Stripes (Malaysia) 2nd Match: Viet Panthers (Vietnam) vs. THE DOTS TOKYO (Japan) ■ November 27, 2026 (China Round) 1st Match: Dragon Warriors (China) vs. THE DOTS TOKYO (Japan) 2nd Match: Dragon Warriors (China) vs. Viet Panthers (Vietnam) ■ November 28, 2026 (Malaysia Round) 1st Match: Malayan Stripes (Malaysia) vs. Hong Kong Cannons (Hong Kong) 2nd Match: Malayan Stripes (Malaysia) vs. Manila Helios (Philippines) Knockout Stage • December 11, 2026: Semifinals • December 12, 2026: Final

*1: "Survey Finds Japan's Pickleball Population Increased Fivefold in One Year to Approximately 45,000 Players", Pickleball One, May 14, 2025 (only in Japanese.)

<https://pickle-one.com/news/news-population/>

*2: "Japan Pickleball Market Survey 2026: 330,000 Participants and 11.89 Million Potential Participants in a Rapidly Expanding Emerging Sport," Pickleball One, August 14, 2026 (only in Japanese.)

<https://pickle-one.com/research/2026-competitor-population/>

Related Release:

“TBS Innovation Partners Invests in Pickleball One, a Pickleball Business Operator”, TBS Innovation Partners LLC, April 7, 2026 (only in Japanese.)

<https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000022.000010013.html>

“Dentsu Sports & Entertainment to Support the Development of the Pickleball Industry through Investment in PICKLEBALL ONE”, News Release from Dentsu Group Inc., April 7, 2026.

<https://www.group.dentsu.com/en/news/release/001642.html>

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