

November 2022

PICKLEBALL FIRE

HOW TO GET
QUICKER HANDS
WHEN VOLLEYING

CALLIE
SMITH'S RISE
TO THE TOP

WHAT YOUR BODY
NEEDS TO PLAY
PICKLEBALL



OFFICIAL PICKLEBALL
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WHAT YOUR BODY NEEDS TO **PLAY PICKLEBALL**

Pickleball is highly addictive in a positive way in most cases. This sport can easily make you want to play more and more. And when that happens, your muscles can become sore. But people keep playing rather than taking some time off. However, according to senior pro and host of the Pickleball Recovery podcast, Tim Ringgold, the body needs as much rest as it needs activity. “If you’re always playing, your body doesn’t have time to repair the damage that you did from the previous activity,” he explains. So, you really need a recovery plan.

Tim noticed that almost everyone among the seniors wore some compression armor on the court. Also, many started to disappear for six weeks with some injuries. Tim felt that it doesn’t need to be that way. “Pickleball has a fundamental problem which is that it’s deceptive. People don’t really think that it’s athletic. And it’s very athletic, and because of its size and its social juice, people just mistake it for being unathletic. And so people are having injuries, and then they’re frustrated because they’re on the sideline,” he says.

Tim suggests two basic methods to



help in your recovery from playing Pickleball. The first is sleeping. Unfortunately, we live in a culture that rewards sleep deprivation. But, in Tim’s house, sleeping is non-negotiable. “I learned how vital sleeping is for body recovery. I’m going to sleep, and I don’t care what others are doing. My body needs 8 hours of sleep every night. And, so, I give it to it,” he admits.

The second method is hydration. Many people need to pay more attention to getting enough fluid to replenish their bodies. Not only when playing Pickleball, but people are also dehydrated chronically. Those two seem like the two easiest things to do. You probably wonder: how much rest should I have, and how much should I hydrate? So, here it is. “There is not an exact answer to it. It definitely depends on the person. It’s not the same if you are just playing for fun and if you are a pro playing the tournaments. Because tournaments have a very different effect on the body. They are so intensive,” Tim says.

And Tim knows about the intensity of tournaments as he plays at the senior pro level. He took up the game after he suffered a concussion playing soccer. So after one too many shots to the head, he had to give up his cleats. “I began treatment for a mild traumatic brain injury related to the multiple concussions. So, I had to learn a lot about head injuries and how progressive and cumulative they can be,” he remembers.

Unfortunately, that was it soccer-wise. Being an athlete all his life, he took that as a ‘death sentence.’ He just had to do something. The fateful moment happened on his birthday. One of his friends got him tennis lessons as a gift. Tim hadn’t played it in almost 20 years, but it was a nice gift. And soon enough, he was on a quest to find a tennis instructor. But, instead, he discovered Pickleball!

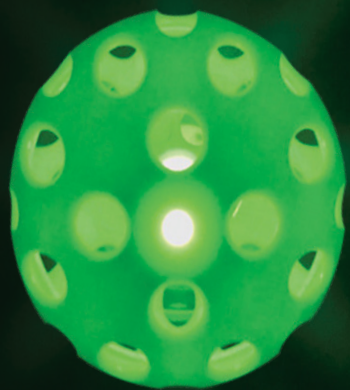


“I used to walk my dogs every day by that court. It looked strange. I was always wondering: what’s that? So, I saw a woman from that house, and I asked her if her husband does teach tennis. She said, ‘no, but he teaches Pickleball.’ The first lesson was for free, and after it, I was like: sign me up,” he remembers.

In his very first lesson, the man taught Tim all of the ten shots in Pickleball. And after that, he asked him: how old are you? Tim was 48 at the time, and the man started giggling. Tim was confused, but the man told him he would be 50 and hit the senior pro tour in two years.

So Tim practiced and achieved that goal. But he kept getting injured, so he had to learn why that was happening. The key for him and many players are to take the time to recover.

The message is clear. Take a break, a day, two, or more. Listen to your body, and you will know how much rest you need. Don’t be afraid! The competition won’t get any better in those couple of days. And, of course, get plenty of sleep and remember to hydrate, as this is all part of letting your body recover.



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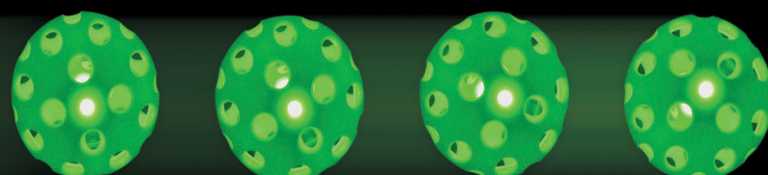
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MESSAGE FROM THE IFP PRESIDENT



It gives me immense pleasure to share recent significant developments in pickleball that will eventually positively shape the world of pickleball.

The International Federation of Pickleball's (IFP's) Bainbridge Cup World Championship is scheduled to be held in Mumbai, India. This IFP signature tournament will create history with its international participants and an unprecedented cash prize award, sponsored by the All India Pickleball Association (AIPA).

The 5th anniversary of the Bainbridge World Cup Tournament will be held from November 29 to December 4, 2022.

- The All India Pickleball Association (AIPA) sponsors the tournament, which offers the winners \$50,500 in cash prizes.
- Top Indian players will compete in this tournament.
- Nine (9) countries, including; Peru, Egypt, Spain, Singapore, Dominica Republican, USA, Iran, UAE, and Nigeria, have sent their top players to compete in this tournament.
- All tournament matches will be played on specially constructed prefabricated synthetic courts.
- This tournament will showcase India's cultural and culinary diversity.
- Notable personalities and dignitaries, including Consulate Generals of various foreign
- Countries operating in India will attend this sporting event.

Mr. Arvind Prabhoo, Chairman of AIPA, and his dedicated

team are working relentlessly to make this tournament a super success. I invite all world players to compete in this once-in-a-lifetime tournament and support the organizers of this competition.

Another exciting development in the world of pickleball is the appointment of Mr. Carl Burnett as the Vice President of the International Federation of Pickleball. I welcome Carl to the leadership of the IFP. As a decorated retired U.S. Army Warrant Officer, Carl Burnett brings to the IFP leadership and organizational expertise. He is an accomplished non-profit administrator whose rich experience and long-term vision will significantly benefit the sport of pickleball. I do not doubt that Carl's addition to the IFP Board of Directors will strengthen the organization and the world of pickleball.

In additional developments in the pickleball world, new patrons are investing in pickleball leagues and tournaments. Entrepreneurs and athletes like LeBron James, Tom Brady, and Drew Brees are flocking to the sport and investing in the opportunities to get while the "sport gold rush" is on. These investors have ramped up pickleball's standing and exploding popularity.

I would also like to emphasize that the IFP is developing strategic plans to address the mounting challenges created by the phenomenal growth of the sport. Global leadership at the international level and continued expanded access for all populations will enable the continued internationalization of pickleball, which remains our top priority. As the World Governing Body of pickleball, we remain committed to our motto - "Leave No Country Behind"!

CARL M. BURNETT ELECTED VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE IFP

USA - October 10, 2022 - Carl M. Burnett has been elected Vice-President of the International Federation of Pickleball. The Board of Directors of the International Federation of Pickleball (IFP) recently elected Carl Burnett to fill the open seat. Carl is a Charter Member and a Strategic Advisor to the Board of Directors. He is also a USA Pickleball (USAP) Ambassador and Professional Pickleball Registry (PPR) coach. He is the founder of the Washington Area Pickleball Players Association, Inc. (WAPPA).



Carl Burnett brings to IFP a wealth of experience as a non-profit leader certified in Non-Profit Board Management, Fundraising, and Financial Management. As a retired United States Army Corps of Engineers Officer, he is also the Chair of the Past National Presidents Council (PPC) of the United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA). His service as a veteran includes being a lifetime member and officer of the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), American Veterans (AMVETS), U.S. Army Engineer Society (AES), and the National Association of Minority Veterans (NMVETS).

An instructor by heart with over 40 years of teaching, he previously devoted most of his time to teaching information technology and advocating for the sport of pickleball. Carl holds a Master of Science in Information and Telecommunication technology from Johns Hopkins University. He resides in Laurel, Maryland, USA.

International Federation of Pickleball (IFP)

The International Federation of Pickleball (IFP) was created in 2016 to perpetuate the growth and development of pickleball globally. IFP has expanded its membership to over 63 member countries on five continents and is growing as new countries join the IFP. The IFP is the oldest international pickleball organization, and its goal is to be recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as the world governing body for the sport of pickleball by 2024.

3 TIPS FROM A 3-TIME NATIONAL CHAMPION

Seven years ago, Brett Noel started playing Pickleball, although he had no sports background. He played for three hours the first time and then could not walk for three days. Still, he was hooked on the game, eventually becoming a three-time national champion. Today he is a full-time instructor traveling the country for Engage Pickleball camps. Brett offers three tips for how to improve your game.

Ask Questions

Many people focus on enhancing their technique, but Brett found asking questions is just as valuable for going to the next level. He explained, “If I lost, I would always ask my opponents two questions. I would first congratulate them on the win, and I would say to help me become a better pickleball player, what was your strategy? So I wanted to know what their strategy was. And then I asked them, is there anything about my game that you would say I need to change?”

One tip Brett received was on-court coverage from Pickleball Hall of Famer Alex Hamner. She saw Brett was covering the sideline way too much. Alex suggested letting the opponent prove they can pass you a few times. Why defend something your opponent has never shown they can do?

Besides asking questions of your

opponent, also analyze your own game. Why did we lose? What strategies was your competition implementing against you? Whom were they attacking? Why did the opponent choose to attack one player over another? Brett would gain knowledge from the questions he asked himself or other players. In the next game, he would try to implement what he learned.

Define Your Purpose on the Court

Know why you are playing the game of Pickleball. It may be to have fun and get some exercise. It may be to win. And there is nothing wrong with those goals. But if your goal is to raise your game to the next level, you need to pay your dues to become better.

Brett said, “The reason that I am better than most players today is because I’ve lost more games than you have... I’d rather lose 11 to 0, but know that I got eight more drop shots into the kitchen. I’d rather lose a game, but know that I got ten more deep serves. And the wins will follow.”

Brett’s advice for those wanting to improve their game is to identify who is the better player on the opposing team. Then hit more balls to that person rather than the weaker player. You will learn more about your shot by going to the stronger player. For example, if you place a third shot drop to the advanced player and they can be offensive with it, you know

you need to do more work on it. As Brett said, “You’re gonna pay the price, and there’s value in that.”

Know What You Want to Work On

Brett likes to ask himself what do I want to work on this game? Sometimes the focus is on a drop shot to the opponent’s backhand. Other times it can be hitting drives down the middle or even a deep serve. Before a recreational game, Brett lets his partner know what he is practicing. He explained, “I would ask my partner or let my partner know, hey, I just want to let you know this game I’m practicing my drop shots to their backhand. Is there anything that you want to work on? And then if he says, yeah, I want to practice my deep serves, what we’ve both have done is given each other permission to improve.”

It also gives each player on the team permission to fail. So if you or your partner misses eight serves in a row, you are okay with it because you know the goal. However, if your partner is not of the same mindset, then it can be a challenge. “But if I tell my partner, hey, I’m working on my drop shots and my opponent’s backhand, and he or she says no, we’ve got to beat these guys. It’s all about winning. I just realize that player is not a match for me.” In other words, you need to surround yourself with players who want to improve their game and yours.





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HOW A 16-YEAR-OLD MADE IT TO THE PROS

Can you imagine going pro at age 16? Even that is possible in the world of Pickleball if you are a highly talented player like Jayden Broderick. But, if you think Jayden and Pickleball were love at first sight – you were wrong. His family bought Pickleball paddles, had a few games with them on the beach, and that was it.

Fortunately, for Pickleball, it was only temporary. “When we got back, we let the paddles sit around for about six months. Then we found out about some new courts in Greenville, and we just went there to try it. We got hooked on the sport and just have been playing ever since,” he recalls. The courts in Greenville were freshly built at the time Jayden started playing. They converted two tennis courts into six Pickleball courts. Now, there are 40 to 60 people at the park every day.

While Jayden played other sports competitively, like soccer, Pickleball is his priority for now. This fall, he will be pausing other sports to focus on Pickleball. Jayden’s goal is to compete in more tournaments. He started playing in some local competitions on the east coast. He started traveling a bit with his family. But now it’s time for another step toward a Pickleball career.

Jayden partnered with his father in tournaments for over a year. After that, they became aware that it was time for a change. Jayden needed the space to improve his game, mostly in singles. “It was in January of 2022 that we stopped playing doubles together. He wanted me to reach the higher levels of Pickleball in singles,” he says.

And Jayden indeed did that. He currently plays at a 5.0 level. The plan is to start playing more pro-open singles. Jayden has already tasted what it is like to play at that level. Getting the ball back is his biggest challenge. To win a single point, you usually need to hit multiple winners. Your opponent’s shots are a lot more consistent.

But Jayden has some advantages that other players do not have. He is 6’4 and can easily cover the court with that length. Add his tennis background to the mix, and you get one of the most talented players of his age. Oh, there is another one. Jayden is left-handed. And you know what that means. Very few people like to play racquet sports against lefties. “Most people think that they are targeting right-handed backhand, but they are actually hitting most of their shots to my forehand. So, it gives me a bit of advantage with my shots,” he admits.

Playing more tournaments means that he will miss some days in school. Luckily, his teachers allow him extra time to make up for it. Getting homeschooled is not an option for him. Why? Because Jayden describes himself as a regular kid. He likes to be in school among his friends. “I have

experienced virtual school with Covid, and it was just very hard to do your work. When in school, you actually have to do your work,” he says.

Jayden was also a part of the APP’s Next Gen series of tournaments. But, like the love for Pickleball, that also didn’t happen on the first try. His first trip to the competition was canceled because of a snowstorm. When he finally could attend an event, it was worth the wait. “It was amazing being able to play on the center court and live streamed with commentary. And the seminars were great with the senior pros,” he recalls.

Jayden received some critical advice regarding singles play: hitting patterns and triangles. He realized that you should keep your hitting pattern the same during the point. So, here is a piece of advice for everyone – don’t change something that is working. If you do, it usually doesn’t go well.

He also mentioned triangles. What? Is this a geometry lesson? Jayden was taught that there are six triangles you must aim for on the court. There are two on the baseline corners, two on the right and left side of the court towards the middle, and two towards the sides of the end of the kitchen line. Sounds complicated? When you visualize it on the court, it is not. But the challenge is hitting those spots.

Certainly, Jayden’s future is bright both in terms of his education and Pickleball. “My focus will be mainly to go to college, and I want to keep Pickleball as a side thing,” he explained. Who knows what will prevail in the end? At least he will have a choice since he picked up that Pickleball paddle a second time after a six-month pause between the first and second time playing the game.



THREE STEPS CRITICAL TO YOUR IMPROVEMENT

By CJ Johnson

CJ Johnson is the co-founder of WeArePickleball.com and a professional three-sport athlete. She has spent her entire adult life earning a living from playing and coaching sports. When she is away from the courts of slopes, you'll find her watching Star Trek with my husband John and our two fur babies, Shirley and Ralph.



Step 1 - Consistency is built on fundamentals

During a recent online training on minimizing pop-ups, Tony Roig (my partner in WeArePickleball) was comparing two players side by side to demonstrate the cause of pop-ups being hit by one of the two players. The side-by-side was used to show the difference in the player's backswings: the player hitting the pop-up had a backswing while the other player did not.

Suddenly the chat of the training exploded with comments:

- One has her left foot forward, and the other has her right foot forward.
- What about grip pressure?
- Isn't this different?
- What about that?

Were the observations in the chat irrelevant? Not in their entirety, as those things could have been contributing errors. However, they were not the major cause of the pop-up error.

Rather, the major error originated in the player's fundamentals: a backswing that was too big.

The exchange in the chat on this subject reminded me of a common limitation that players needlessly impose on themselves. Many believe that they are past the fundamentals:

"Fundamentals aren't for me. I'm a _____" fill in the blank with the rating of your choice.
"That's for new players." "I am ready for more advanced material."

The reality is this: fundamentals are the building blocks of a sound, consistent pickleball game. If you want to improve as a player - we mean really improve - rather than avoiding fundamentals, lean into them. Focus primarily on fundamentals, and you will see positive and long-lasting results in your game.

Step 2 - Closing the Gap

Once you place the appropriate importance of fundamentals to your game, there is still one more thing you need to improve. We call it closing the gap. And in the information age, that is getting harder and harder for most players to do.

To frame this out, take a step back to the days before you had a high-speed computer in your pocket. You are a farmer in the middle of the country in the early 1800s. You have a friend from a neighboring county who comes to visit you and shares a brand-new irrigation technique to help grow your crops.

Since it is the 1800s, this new technique you have been

shown is likely the only such irrigation advice you will see for years. As a result, you have plenty of time to spend implementing and perfecting that singular piece of advice.

Today, however, it is not a lack of advice that stunts our growth. Rather, it is the overabundance of advice. There seems to be a new video daily nowadays.

The problem is that the majority of us do not close the gap between receiving the advice and implementing the information.

We listen to the advice. Perhaps even practice it a time or two, but we do not spend enough time on implementation. If you want to improve, you need to close the gap between where you are now and the information you received to where you want to go.

Step 3 - Accepting failure as part of the learning process

Think back to when you were a kid learning to do something new. Chances are you practiced for hours on end. And you also failed ... a lot.

I recently watched a ten-year-old who documented his 43-day journey to landing his first kickflip on a skateboard.

We could take a couple of lessons from this young man's progression. First, he broke the move down into simple pieces and tried over and over again until he mastered each piece. Then he started putting all the pieces together. These were the fundamentals.

He then closed the gap on each one. He did not move on to the next step until he had learned the prior one.

And he failed. A lot. But he kept trying.

Finally, 43 days after he started, he landed his first kickflip. Was it perfect? No. It was wobbly at best, but he did it. Perfection was going to take more practice.

What are you doing to close the gap in your pickleball game?

Does your learning style resemble that of a child? Or are you like most adults who try something a few times, hate failing, and search for another piece of advice to solve their problem?

Sports are an unforgiving master. Fluid motion is built from hours of repetition. If you are going to close the gap, failure and repetition are prerequisites.

There is no secret to good pickleball. Develop good fundamentals and practice them repeatedly to create consistency. The next time you're frustrated because you are not achieving your goals, just remember there is no shortcut to playing your best pickleball.



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THE CHALLENGES AND GROWTH OF THE US OPEN PICKLEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS



One must have much courage to leave a job and commit to Pickleball way before it became the fastest-growing sport in the USA. But that is precisely what Terri Graham and Chris Evon did in 2015. They were selling sports goods for Wilson, mainly racquetball products. But they started to get more and more questions about Pickleball. What was that? They didn't know about it at that time.

A friend invited Chris and Terri to try Pickleball to give it a chance. "Honestly, we didn't warm up to it right away. We were still playing racquetball back then, and it's a whole different speed," Chris admits. But they created a business plan for Pickleball for Wilson Sporting Goods and realized the game would explode. So they changed careers from the stability of a corporate job to start the US Open Pickleball Championships.

The Challenges

Funding the new project was, of course, the issue at the beginning. So, Terri and Chris decided to support it and keep it running for three years. If it shows a good result,

they will continue; if not, they will close it. Fast-forward to 2022, and the results are excellent. As they like to say – the rest was history, but the event founders experienced many challenges along the way.

One of the most significant decisions was where to hold the US Open. That was a million-dollar question. After long thinking and negotiating, the decision was to organize it in Naples, Florida. It is easy to say why. For Terri and Chris, that place is a paradise. Some other big cities were considered, like Las Vegas or Orlando. But, the same question always popped up in their minds – do we want to fly over there every time to organize the event? And the answer was no, so Naples was a perfect choice.

"It was a little bit by chance, too. We were doing some things for Wilson there, some players testing stuff, and we stumbled upon east Naples. Later, we did some research and talked to the people there," Terri says. They quickly reached an agreement to use East Naples Community Park. At that time, in 2015, the park had 18 temporary Pickleball courts. And if you want to know how things have changed over the years, the championship court now has a million-dollar shade structure over it.

With all the success of the US Open each year, there always seems to be a curve ball thrown at Chris and Terri. Perhaps the biggest challenge was the 2020 tournament when COVID-19 first struck. At first, the tournament founders thought they would be able to hold the event. "We kept holding out and holding out. And finally, it became apparent that I think it was March 17th, actually, that we made the decision, and that was very stressful. We were in the ninth inning. Everything was already done. Everything was already planned. So many hours were put into it, so it was a big disappointment," Chris said. It was also a significant revenue loss, so it was a good thing Terri and Chris had always put away money for a rainy day.

Even the 2022 championships had its curve ball. In this case, it was the welcome center that the county was building. Unfortunately, limited labor and supplies caused a delay in its construction. "The building wasn't getting done on time. And it was ticking down to our opening day, which was party in the park, and the grounds were a mess. If anybody had come to that park, which a lot of regulars did, they couldn't believe what the parks and rec did to get that park looking good. In literally two weeks, we got a temporary occupancy certificate. So we were able to use the bathrooms, the showers, the meeting rooms, the pro shop area," Terri remembers.

The Growth

Today, there are 60 permanent Pickleball courts at East Naples Community Park. The participation numbers follow, too. In the first year, 850 players competed over five days. In the most recent edition, 2,800 players participated over seven days. But the real difference between the US Open and any other tournament is the spectators. Around 20,000 to 30,000 people come to Naples to hang out with friends, watch Pickleball, and go to local restaurants. The authentic festive atmosphere is in the air during the tournament.

The US Open has become the most popular tournament. Everyone wants to get in. So, the process for the application has changed. "We ended up going to a lottery system because there are so many people that want to get in. Before, you needed to be at your computer at 12:01 on a certain day, and you'd have to click the button, and you'd have to hope that the website does not crash," Chris says.

The US Open is becoming increasingly popular, even for international players. Last year, many of them could not come because of the pandemic. But for the 2022 edition, 25 countries were represented. There will likely be even more in 2023, when the tournament is held in April 2023. The duo did a fantastic job, but the work never stops. There is room for upgrades, always. Chris and Terri are working on, as they like to call it, a master plan. The next step is to turn the old soccer field into a parking lot. Over and above, they also try to resurface the courts. And that is a costly thing to do. The work has already started on the championship court.

The last edition of the US Open recently finished in April, and Chris has her favorite memorable moment. "My highlight was how many people were there each day. Anywhere you walked in that park, it was crowded. I was afraid of how will we handle it, but from Thursday to Sunday, it went like clockwork," Chris recalls.

Terri and Chris have come a long way from quitting their corporate jobs to starting the US Open. It was hard for them even to imagine what the US Open Pickleball Championships will look like in a few years. But you can have a chance to experience the biggest Pickleball party in the world by entering the lottery to be held in January 2023 or being a spectator at the 2023 tournament, which runs April 15-22.



THE PERSON BEHIND CALLIE SMITH'S RISE TO THE TOP OF THE PRO GAME

By Stephanie Snell Povey



How did nationally-ranked tennis player Callie Smith get her start in pickleball? “I was a tennis snob and wanted nothing to do with the silly sport!” Callie smiles. “I couldn’t imagine playing with that little paddle and a ball full of holes! But how do you say NO to your grandfather when he asks you to play with him?”

So, in the fall of 2017, Callie picked up a pickleball paddle for the first time and played in a Thanksgiving Day tournament in Davis County, Utah.

“I was four months pregnant with my son Stockton, and just before the tournament began, grandpa was trying to teach me how to score, where to stand and how to stay out of the kitchen. I was so confused!” Callie laughs. “But it changed my perspective forever. I am so thankful for his invitation to play because, without it, I may never have picked up a paddle!”

Within two years, Callie had grown to love pickleball so much that in the fall of 2019, she made the decision to become a full-time professional pickleball player.

Who is this man who helped



kickstart one of the PPAs top women players?

The now almost 90-year-old George Snell! He is often seen in the predawn light pulling up to the pickleball complex known as Barnes Memorial Park, wearing his favorite t-shirt that reads, “Never underestimate an old man with a pickleball paddle!” And when it comes to George Snell, it is absolutely true!

As a younger man, George excelled in many different sports, including swimming, basketball, and tennis. He also had a love for running, cycling, and participated in several marathons and triathlons. George aged gracefully and astonished his family and friends with how spry he remained even into his 70s. But alas, the day came when he finally had to hang up the basketball sneakers, convert his Nike runners into yard shoes, and find something new.

In 2014 pickleball was taking off in Utah, so he decided to give it a try and discovered he loved it! There were not any courts close to his home, so often, he had to drive to neighboring communities to play.

Because of this, George became extremely involved with a friend Tammy Wursten, in campaigning and fundraising for Kaysville City to create a complex of outdoor pickleball courts of their own. “George was my righthand man on the committee,” Tammy says, “Together, we raised \$250,000 to go towards building 11 new pickleball courts!” She adds, “We would not have been able to build the courts without George and his stellar reputation as a longtime resident and wonderful family doctor in the community. People knew him and respected him, and he brought credibility to our cause.” After much hard work and effort, the



courts were finished, and in June of 2017, Kaysville City celebrated the grand opening of its beautiful new pickleball complex, and of course George was there!

All of George’s eight children and their spouses have enjoyed playing pickleball with him over the past six years. In fact, during the pandemic of 2020, a few of them met at a local church gym and played several times each week, being sure to sanitize the ball in between games and never hugging or giving high fives. His children giggle when they recall receiving his late-night texts saying, “Who’s up for playing in the morning? I’m getting the shakes ‘cause I haven’t played for a couple of days!” They are thrilled their father is so competitive and has such excitement for staying physically active.

His family and everyone in the pickleball community who know him will tell you that George Snell is a pickleball phenomenon! They know for certain that pickleball will be a part of his life for as long as he is around.

As for Callie Smith, she can’t thank him enough for introducing her to the sport that has changed her life. “I love Grandpa Snell and will always be grateful he invited me to play!”



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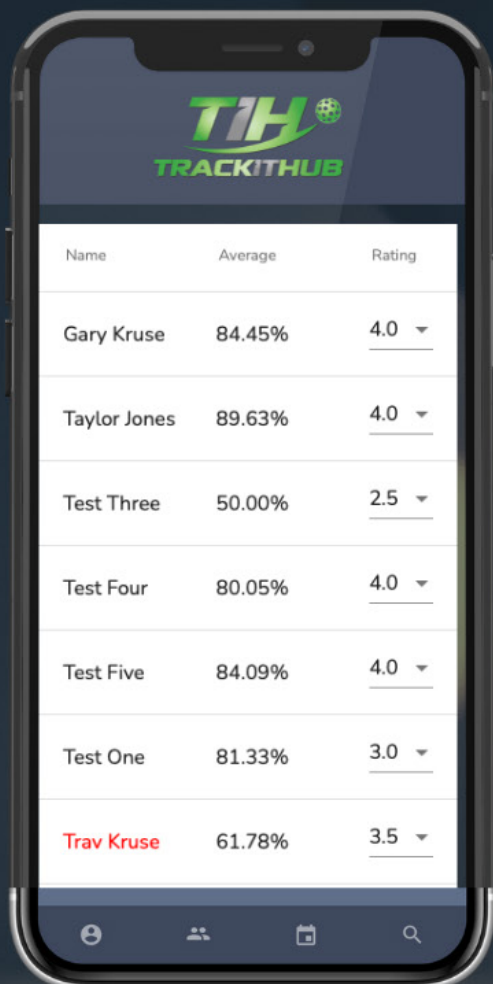
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USE THE EARTH AS YOUR GUIDE FOR A BETTER CONTACT POINT

Pickleball is now a game played around the world. But have you considered looking at the ball as the Earth to help your game? It may sound like an odd concept but Engage Pickleball instructor Kevin Beeson believes it has merit and will stop you from hitting balls into the net.

He elaborated, “When somebody hits the ball into the net, it’s their paddle’s fault. And then, after that, they asked to see the ball to make sure the ball isn’t cracked. And then when they find that the ball isn’t cracked well, then they look at their partner, and then they it’s their partner’s fault.” But hitting the ball into the net is not because of your paddle, the ball, or your partner. It’s because you need to hit the right part of the ball or the Earth if you think of the ball as the world.

You are hitting a moving target like the Earth. So think of how the equator goes around the middle of the planet. Then focus on contacting the ball below the equator, where Australia is located, rather than North Dakota, which is north of the equator. If you are unsure where North Dakota or Australia is located, focus on hitting the bottom half of the ball. Kevin explained people are always told to watch the ball. But there was no explanation on what part of the ball to watch. So, thinking about the ball as the Earth provides a metaphor that is easy to remember.

Of course, there are times when your opponent hits a high ball, and you can contact North Dakota and swing down. However, you will get only a few easy opportunities as your skill level improves. Kevin commented, “So most of the balls that I’m hitting are from below the level of the net. So this is a lifting game because somebody put that net in



the way. So you must get underneath the ball and use your shoulder. So you’re going to lift when you get underneath that ball.”

Because you need to lift and contact the ball south of the equator, players need to bend their knees. Kevin says you must compress and get your head as close to the ball as possible. By getting low, you have a better chance of seeing the bottom half of the ball. If you stand straight up and look down, you cannot see Australia. That means you will hit many more balls into the net. So stay down all of the way through the shot. Kevin emphasized, “Don’t come up. No pop tarts. Don’t pop up early.”

As with any new concept in Pickleball, you should practice hitting the bottom of the ball. Kevin suggests doing the focus drill. You can use it a simple idea during a game or while practicing. The goal is you cannot look up until you say the word focus. In other words, you must keep your head still and down until you have said focus. It can be challenging because players like to look and see the result. But Kevin thinks you will soon know if you hit a good shot by how it feels.

So, thinking about a Pickleball as the Earth helps players to learn which part of the ball to contact. In most cases, lift the ball by hitting south of the equator near Australia rather than North Dakota.

FROM A WHEELCHAIR TO OWNING A PICKLEBALL RESORT

A few years ago, Kristie MacDonald experienced a tragedy when she fell from the ladder on a second-story roof. The result? A lot of broken bones and a highly damaged knee. After that, her sports career ended. Well, it was not professional, but Kristie enjoyed playing the sport called paddle tennis. Her favorite place to do that was Venice Beach. “It was a devastating moment for me. Not only physically but also emotionally and psychologically. From being a very active, outdoor person to being wheelchair bound,” she recalls.

During the recovery time, which took a whole year, she became depressed. Also, she started to gain some weight. Then a life-changing thing occurred when she visited her daughter, who was playing volleyball for Virginia Tech University. Somebody asked her about her paddle tennis career. They know how competitive Kristie was.

So, Kristie started explaining what paddle tennis is, but they were like: wait, that is Pickleball! “I have never heard the word Pickleball in my life before that. And I’ve been playing paddle tennis for 20 years. So, they told me that they play Pickleball at the recreational center,” she remembers.

Kristie wasted no time. The day after, she went there and saw a group of people playing Pickleball. She just watched them. The game seemed interesting to her. At the time, she still had knee braces on. But they asked if she wanted to have a go. Kristie picked up the rules pretty quickly and won her first game. The next thing she knew, she bought a used paddle for \$10. Her career and experience in paddle tennis also came in handy when



playing Pickleball. Paddle tennis is much faster than Pickleball, so naturally, your reaction time needs to be faster.

Fast-forward to the year after, Kristie was on a podium, winning the gold medal at the Nationals for women’s doubles. She made a considerable achievement with such a limited movement. Her knees were still not fully healed, and Kristie even had difficulty climbing up the podium to receive her medal. But, she developed other skills to compensate – observing and anticipating. She used to work as a special education teacher. That means a lot of watching and making notes. Kristie managed to translate that to Pickleball. She reads the feet and shoulders position of her opponent.

Kristie fell in love with Pickleball so much that she brought it along as she traveled the world. “I thought it would be fun to bring a Pickleball net, paddles, and balls with me. I like to set up demonstrations and clinics everywhere I go. I did it in China, on The Great Wall, as well as in front of the Taj Mahal in India,” she says.

Traveling around the world and the States was also a weight loss

journey for Kristie. “In the last couple of years since I started playing Pickleball, I’ve lost 40 pounds. I was almost completely immobile. I don’t believe I could have ever got this far without Pickleball,” Kristie claims.

Her Pickleball ambition didn’t end with that. During the pandemic, she took the opportunity to buy a piece of property in Southwest Virginia. And the idea was, of course, to turn it into a Pickleball resort where she could run clinics and camps.

But now it’s time that we introduce the funny part of her. Kristie also does stand-up comedy. Most of her jokes were about her trying to get back into shape and trying to lose weight. It became her hobby when she realized that all her students were just comedy gold, as she likes to say. She even combined both of her loves – Pickleball and comedy. Kristie held a Pickleball comedy night, and it ended up on YouTube.

Pickleball saved Kristie from depression after a tragic fall and encouraged her to get up from a wheelchair. Now, she aims to expand her resort by adding at least one more indoor court, so people can come and play no matter the weather.

SENIOR PRO

JEN LASSANDRO MIXING PICKLEBALL AND TENNIS

Jen Lassandro, a former collegiate tennis player, did not want to play Pickleball. But then her friend Neil Mediratta, a future professional, invited her to the Pickleball court. She eventually agreed and fell in love with the game, becoming a senior professional. But her case differs from most others in that she wanted to keep playing tennis.

Jen's childhood sport is still a big part of her life, especially when you have a nice community and a lot of good friends to play with anytime. "Pickleball singles are like mini tennis for me. I also do it for exercise. That way, I can work on my endurance training, as well as the footwork. But, before the tournament, I usually don't play tennis for a week," she admits.

Footwork earned playing tennis helps Jen a lot in Pickleball. She quickly gets from the baseline to the kitchen line. Her feet are always in a good position to strike the ball. So, the answer is no! You can continue other sports if you are playing Pickleball. Moreover, as Jen did, it is best to take the good things from other sports and implement them into your Pickleball game.

Another skill she uses from tennis is a two-handed backhand. Jen used it a lot in tennis, and now it's one of her deadliest weapons' in Pickleball. She learned quickly how to hit the top-spin shot. And it makes her opponents crazy. "When people see it, they often wish that they had a



tennis background. It comes very naturally to me, the top-spin shot. People often play to my backhand on purpose, thinking that it will be a difficult return for me," she says. Some of them ask for advice and help. And Jen never hesitates to share her knowledge. Her answer is more or less always like this: repetition and muscle memory! That's when it will become natural for you.

Jen is also very curious about Pickleball. She watches many videos of pros playing, analyzing their game to see their strengths and good shots. Then Jen tries to learn from what she sees and use it in her own game. That way, she mastered the (in)famous Erne shot. "I'm still trying to get as many different strokes and 'munition' as possible. I want to be unpredictable. I think that's what the key is in Pickleball. Sometimes I will just fake an Erne, then maybe hit it as the next shot," she says.

She also never thought that it would

be helpful to be short. Hitting the shots in Pickleball, you often need to get low. And Jen does that easily, given her height. Call that the unexpected advantage.

Jen is also trying to bring her love of Pickleball to her children. But they chose different paths, including tennis, soccer, and baseball. That's what they like. But they still play some Pickleball with their mother. And, as she says, they're still not ready to beat their mom yet. However, they try hard. Competitiveness runs in the Lassandro family.

Sports is a critical aspect of life if you ask Jen. But there are more important things, such as being humble and grateful! It is all about character. "I always try to spread kindness over anything. Pickleball can be over for me tomorrow. I can get injured. So, it's really important how you treat others. That means more to me than anything," she says. Jen, for sure, has the right attitude for both Pickleball and tennis.



LEARNING FROM “WINNING” PLAYERS?

Tony Roig is the co-founder of WeArePickleball.com. He is also a former tennis player – 40+ years and a Senior Pro player. But more importantly, he is an ITPA Certified Master Professional. When not thinking about or studying pickleball, Tony likes to travel with his wife Jill, especially if it's in Matilda (our RV).



It is natural for us to want to learn from winning pickleball players. Humans have learned and grown for millennia by learning from other humans who know something better than they do and then applying this new knowledge.

However, there can be a disconnect when we try to learn from the winning players at our local courts. And this disconnect can result in us following these players down a path that will not help our game

and that, in actuality, is not the right one to walk down. Let's use the successful local “banger” to explain how this disconnect can hamper our progress.

The Banger

This player is successful as they win many games on our courts. And it is frustrating for us when we play against them. This player probably competed in tennis or racquetball before pickleball and still plays pickleball the same way they used

to: hitting everything hard. If this player was a reasonably good tennis or racquetball player, then chances are good that they are winning a good number of recreational games.

But are they winning because of their pickleball skill set, or are there other factors at play?

First, many of the players the banger is playing against do not have the same tennis background and, thus, are not equipped to

successfully volley back the hard shots coming their way. Second, the bangers' opponents do not yet have the training necessary to avoid the many shots that are almost certainly going out.

In many cases, the banger's success is not due to that player's pickleball play. Rather, that success results from the banger simply overpowering opponents who are not equipped to deal with the hard shots being hit at them by this "successful" player.

More often than not, if you took that same banger and put them on a court opposite another former tennis player who had also learned pickleball strategies, the banger would no longer be the winner. In this game, the banger's opponents have the skills necessary to handle the hard shots, plus they also know optimal pickleball strategies. The banger does not have a chance.

I say this not just as an instructor and student of the game. I say this as a former tennis player turned banger turned pickleball player. I won many matches early in my pickleball career, just banging balls at players who could not defend them. As I advanced, I then lost plenty of games against players who could handle my drives when I could not handle their "soft" game. As I finally rounded my game out to include both hard and soft, I can now see how the soft game can be used to overcome the hard - just like paper beats rock.

The fact that the banger may be winning many games at your courts right now is not a reason you should seek to imitate, or learn from, the banger. As noted above, the banger's success is not the result of sound pickleball strategies - it is just a mismatch in play.

Trying to copy the banger's style of play can limit you as you follow the banger down a faulty path.

First, you are trying to learn to hit shots that the banger has probably perfected over decades of tennis or racquetball play. That is going to take you some time to accomplish. And it is at the cost of not working on other areas that: (a) are more readily achievable now and (b) will provide you with a better foundation for your game.

Second, even if you could learn the same shots as the banger uses, you will lack the pickleball strategies to build a well-constructed game that you can use successfully in various circumstances. Rather, you will create a game that is only successful when there is a mismatch in skillsets.

The Pros

An important side note here. Learning from watching pro players can also lead us down the wrong path. No doubt, the pros are the best players in the game. And their success is not based on a mismatch where they are simply overpowering their opponents. Their success is based on the application of sound pickleball strategies.

But they are applying these strategies in a different context than that in which most of us play. One example that comes to mind is playing a couple of feet away from the kitchen line. The pros do this in specific situations based on what is happening with the shot that was hit and the need to defend or set up a time for a counterattack. Playing off the kitchen line is not a strategy without the necessary context. Yet players who see this approach think, "maybe I need to play off the line now. The pros are doing it." This is a

mistake.

Rather than fashioning a game after your local banger or a pro player, take a bottom-up approach to your game, starting with a clear understanding of the game's framework.

1. First, given the game's framework, what are your objectives on the court - serve side and return side?
2. Next, what strategies will help you accomplish your objectives?
3. Finally, what shots do you need to be able to hit to execute your strategies?

As you can see, starting with strategies or shots (standing away from the kitchen line or learning a hard forehand drive shot) is backward. Working forward from framework to shots will ensure that the shots you work on fit into your overall approach to the game. This approach also allows you to customize the game to best fit your skill set and person. While there are some general principles you will want to understand and incorporate into your game, pickleball does not have to be a one-size-fits-all game.

The Three Pillars of Pickleball are a great way for you to start gaining a deeper understanding of pickleball and its framework. Download your copy of The Three Pillars Guide at [WeArePickleball.com](https://wearepickleball.com) and get a clearer picture of the game. <https://wearepickleball.com/pillars>

Avoid the distraction of imitating the "winning" player at your courts and stay on the right path for you and your game. With some work and a better understanding of the game, you will become the player everyone says, "should I play like [your name here]."

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HOW ONE PICKLEBALL PLAYER OVERCAME THE ODDS

Amy Zaterman Seltzer is beating the odds again and again. Life hasn't been easy for her. She was near death two times, but she overcame it, beat every obstacle, and became a Pickleball player! Her story is one you can say is truly inspiring. It will get you goosebumps or even a tear.

So, what happened to Amy? When she was only 15 years old, she was hit by a drunk driver. The left part of her brain was damaged, and she received many other injuries also. After she had done a lot of physical healing, it was time for the emotional one. It was her first near-death moment. But, unfortunately, it was not the last.

"When I was 30, I was diagnosed with stage four pancreatic and liver cancer. I was given only three weeks to live. My options and chances for survival were narrowed down to only experimental ones," Amy recalls. So, she just went to every doctor possible with pancreatic oncology expertise. And all of them suggested experimental methods. Amy decided to turn herself into a little 'Guinea pig,' as she would later describe it. She underwent stream radiation, chemo, and many other experimental treatments in general.

The results of that are, of course, a lot of side effects. For five and a half years after all that, she was disabled. The worst side effect was the rare condition when the blood supply to Amy's shoulder was cut off, and her shoulder joint disintegrated. So, she had a complete shoulder replacement. "I am an extremely stubborn person. I thought that I could beat the odds again. There wasn't a chance that I was going to die," she says.

After all that, of course, she beat cancer. Amy survived, and her Pickleball journey started when her husband suggested she play. Amy admits that he is very competitive. On the other hand, she is not, but she immediately fell in love with



the sport. Then came the most challenging part. How do you play with your weaker arm? Your need to rewire your brain. It is a difficult task, but it is possible. "For the first few times, it was really a comedy watching me play and trying to hit a ball. But, there was just something about Pickleball that I love and what made me want to play more and more," she remembers.

The big issue in using your non-dominant arm is footwork! You need to learn how to distribute your weight and rewire the brain. And that takes hours and hours of drilling. She revealed that she drills for two hours every day, on top of two hours of simply playing and enjoying Pickleball. Amy and her husband have even started competing in tournaments, winning five out of the six they played. "I wanted to play in the Nationals. Two people asked me to be their partner. My Pickleball journey just keeps getting better, and I don't know what to expect anymore. I'm just super excited about it all," she says.

Amy also claims that Pickleball makes her a better mother. By playing Pickleball, she gets everything out of her system and can focus on her daughter. "It's almost impossible to imagine my life before Pickleball, let alone without Pickleball. Even if I don't play for a few days, I get grumpy. It's such a great source of life and energy," she claims.

In her free time, Amy started another fantastic endeavor. She is mentoring people with cancer. And she usually suggests Pickleball as a way of dealing with mental health issues. Cancer can be very isolating, and as a person who went through it, Amy doesn't want that to happen to others. She feels like it's her duty to help other people with similar problems.

The message is clear. Never, ever give up! Even if the odds are 99% against you. Amy beat stage four cancer and became a Pickleball player winning tournaments along the way.

HOW TO GET QUICKER HANDS WHEN VOLLEYING

Pickleball players know the importance of having quick hands, especially when playing against a banger or in a fast-paced rally at the kitchen line. So what can players do to develop quick reactions in those situations? According to Phil Metz, a teaching pro at the Peak Performance Pickleball Academy in Naples, Florida, it comes down to paddle position.

However, it would help if you found the paddle position that works for you. “If you watch the better players, the pro players on YouTube for their matches, everybody kind of has a different ready position, and there’s not one universal way,” said Phil. The key to your paddle’s ready position is to find out what works best for you. Start by thinking about a clock. Do you currently hold your paddle straight up like high noon or tilt it to the left at 10 or 11 a.m. if right-handed?

Simone Jardim, who runs the Peak Performance Pickleball Academy, used to have a ready position at 10 a.m. but recently switched to 11 a.m. Phil explained, “I think they’re fearful of getting hit by the ball, and there’s a lot of body shots in Pickleball. And some players sit on their backhand too much because they know that backhand will protect them from getting hit by the ball. But then, if you’re sitting on your backhand too much, your forehand becomes pretty vulnerable.” So Phil believes



Simone switched because she can react quicker to balls coming to her forehand.

The other consideration for developing quick hands is how far you hold your paddle from your body. If you are in an offensive position at the kitchen line, try having your paddle further in front of you to contact the ball earlier. It means your arms are likely extended more than usual compared to when you are being attacked. If the other team is on the offensive, you may need to back off the line and hold your paddle closer to your body, giving you more time to react.

Another key to having quick hands is ensuring you return to a ready position after each shot. It is one reason most players shade their paddle to the backhand side, as it is a shorter stroke, so it takes less time to be in the ready position. “You can’t get into as much trouble on the backhand side because your body is there to prevent too big of a backswing where the forehand

nothing’s behind your backswing. So the backswing can get a little big,” Phil commented.

How you grip the paddle may also impact your paddle position. Many players use a continental grip, where they essentially shake hands with the paddle. It is also like how you hold a hammer if you are banging a nail into a piece of wood. The continental grip leads players to keep their paddle in a 10 or 11 a.m. position.

The bottom line is that you should do what works for you. According to Phil, pro JW Johnson has a very casual ready position as he stands with his arms at his side with the paddle down at his waist. However, this works for him because he is very efficient with his movement. On the other hand, pro Callie Smith holds her paddle straight up, with the paddle’s tip pointing to the sky right in front of her chin. Indeed, even the pros have their style so find the paddle position that works for you to have quick hands.



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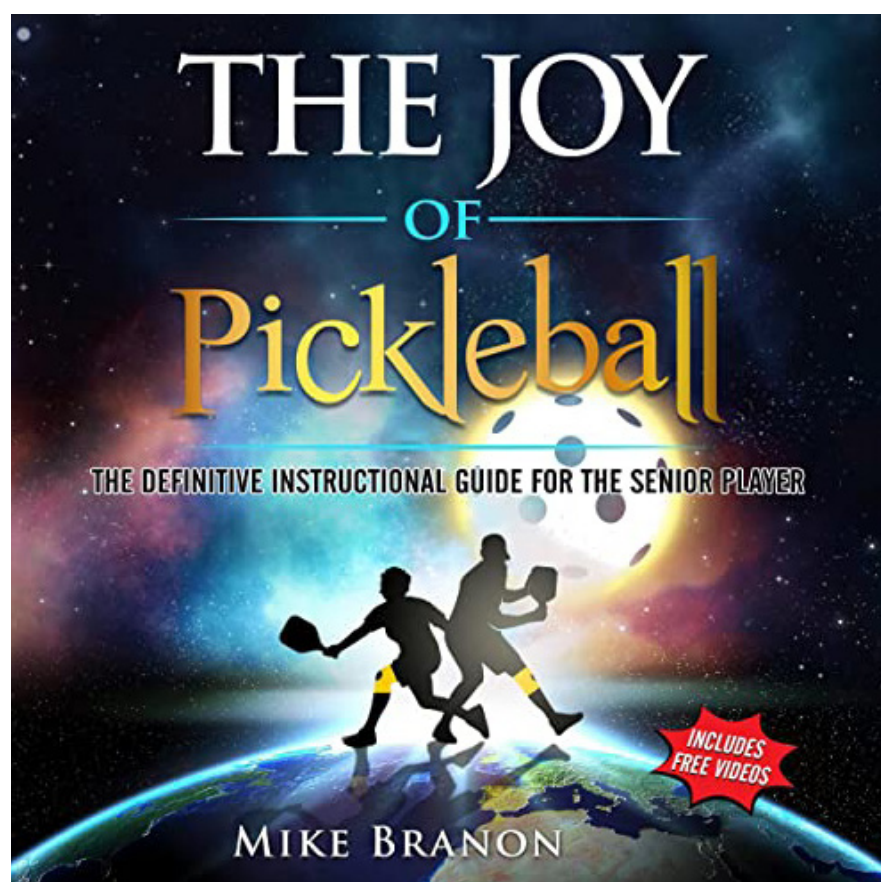
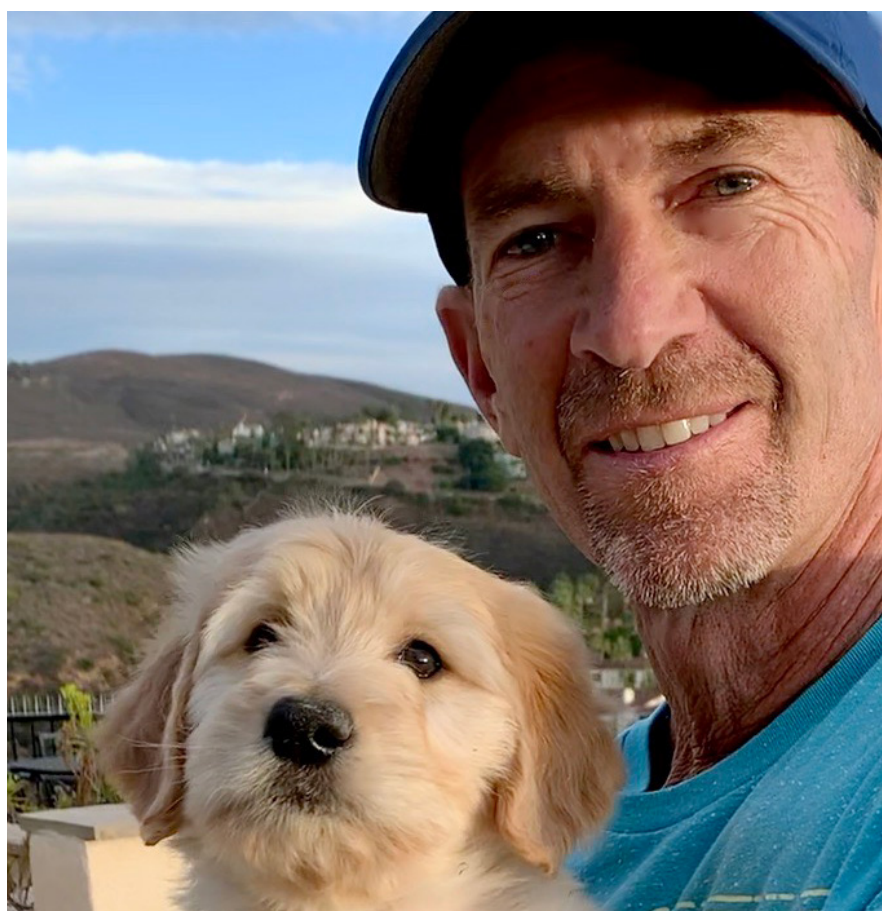
THE JOY OF PICKLEBALL

Pickleball against COVID-19? Who wins the battle? We all know the answer. Pickleball can be a lifesaver. Something similar happened to Mike Branon. Writing a book which, in the end, turned out in a book about Pickleball helped him to 'survive' a difficult period.

And it all looked like a fairytale in the beginning. Mike was cruising the south Pacific with his wife. They were having the best time, as he would later describe it. But, in the middle of the trip – the pandemic struck. So, everyone aboard ended up stuck on the ship for weeks. They were cruising around, trying to find a country to let them off the boat, but nobody wanted the ship to dock. "I figured out I can do something constructive or just go to the bar like most of the other people. So, I ended up writing, just my stream of consciousness, writing down my thought about what's it like to live well," Mike recalls.

The book was finished, and at that time, it had nothing to do with Pickleball. He submitted it to people in the book publishing business. They liked his writing, but they told him that nobody would pay attention to it because he was not already famous. So, Mike had no option but to find his niche. And he decided that it would be Pickleball. Later, he redesigned the book by using Pickleball as a metaphor for life. It turned out to be a significant success. But the fans wanted more.

"I found out that nobody really wrote a book specifically for seniors. The second book contains a lot of instruction, and it's tailor-made for senior players," he says. Pickleball is a perfect sport for seniors. A lot of people started playing it after retiring from their first sports. Injuries often happen, and Pickleball works great as a recovery. Pickleball also brings a lot of joy. Playing it, people have so much fun. "I have never experienced a sport where I am laughing so much. There is a lot of happiness in the air and a lot of joy,"



Mike says.

All in all, it is an excellent combination of accessibility and challenge. Pickleball is a sport that is easy to learn and hard to master. Mike realized it before writing his second book. The title is *The Joy of Pickleball*. The book starts with an interesting line – Humans love to play. "We don't do Pickleball. We don't work at Pickleball. We play Pickleball. And it is so rewarding to put in the time and effort to do the best you can", he pointed out.

Mike also tries to keep a holistic approach to the game of Pickleball as he practices Buddhism and meditates. Everybody wants to win, but he thinks a well-rounded experience is more important. The message Mike wants us to remember is clear – don't remember the score. Remember the experience instead!

The author also offers a lot of tips and strategies. Mike emphasizes keeping a paddle in front of your all the time. Because you can't hit effectively what you can't see. Also, if the opponent launched a strong hit at you, don't listen to your reflex and try to get it back quickly. Instead, use that pace to get the ball back even harder.

The other important part of his book is how to stay healthy as much as possible. "Just keep moving. When you are moving, you practice agility and mobility, and you will be less likely injured. Also, I'm a big fan of stretching. Our power comes from the ground, from the legs. So, it's very important to build a strong core and legs", he says.

As we mentioned, the focus is on the senior players. And Mike used the thought of the famous French philosopher Albert Camus. Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower. He wants the senior players to find and recognize the joy of their age. And Pickleball can play a significant role in that process. The goal is simple – to feel happy and fulfilled. Pickleball offers that possibility. We just need to grab it.

HOW ONE MAN IS GROWING PICKLEBALL IN MEXICO

Emanuel Sanchez went from a small fishing village in Mexico to playing and winning Pickleball tournaments in the USA. He is one of the best examples of how following your passion can change your life.

Emanuel's Pickleball story didn't start like all others. Furthermore, he doesn't even have a background in tennis or any other racquet sport. His favorite sport growing up was soccer. But, the connection to Pickleball did not come via that sport. It was basketball that connected him to Pickleball. "I was playing basketball with my friends one day when I saw three players playing some game on the other half of the court. So, they invited me to play, and I tried it. It was strange initially, but later I got used to it", he remembers.

The group, needing a fourth player for doubles, turned out to be Canadians who came the following year to his village. And they invited him again. Emanuel agreed again, and they played for a month. The following year the group left him some Pickleball equipment.

Suddenly, Emanuel had a whole house of Pickleball stuff: paddles, nets, and balls. And then came the most challenging part. He wanted to teach his family how to play. His wife disagreed in the beginning, so he started to teach his three years old daughter. They played for a few days, and then their friends joined them. Soon enough, the cousins and suddenly everyone he knew became crazy about Pickleball.

It took him just two months, and he encouraged 35 locals to play Pickleball on the basketball court. Emanuel saw the potential of this growing sport in the USA and started a club in Mexico. He comes every day to set up the court and prepare everything. "I told my wife that I want to become one of the best Pickleball players in our country. I also wanted to play in some tournament abroad", he recalls.

It wasn't long before he got the opportunity to play in a tournament in Canada. It was his first trip outside of Mexico. He calls it the best experience in his life. Emanuel



also learned how to speak English well. But, more than that, he found a mentor, a person who matters to him. His name is Matthew Bloom, a USA National Champion. He would often invite Emanuel to stay at his house when traveling. "He called me one day and said that he wanted to do a Pickleball clinic in Mexico. I was wondering why. But, he said that he wants to show everyone the real Mexico", he says.

That was not the only good deed that Matthew did for Emanuel. One day, after playing Pickleball, Matthew asked him about his biggest dream. For Emanuel, it has always been playing in a tournament. But, it was costly for him to travel to Mexico City from a distant village. And then pay for a visa and flight tickets. It wasn't easy. Emanuel thought that it was impossible.

Matthew didn't waste any time. One day, he came up with an envelope full of money and gave it to Emanuel. Just three weeks later, he had a visa. The life of his dreams was suddenly in front of him. He soon started traveling across the USA and Canada and playing in tournaments. Success immediately followed. He also won gold and bronze in the last competition he played in. "I was staying in different places and houses. I met a lot of new friends, and every one of them is like my family now. They invite me all the

time to come and stay with them", he says.

Pickleball changes lives. That statement may sound like a cliché, but it's not. It was proved once again in Emanuel's case. He also achieved the goal we mentioned at the story's beginning. He became the best Pickleball player in Mexico. He won the gold medal in both singles and doubles. And that was not an easy task because the Pickleball community in Mexico is growing and has more than 1,000 players.

The years quickly passed for Emanuel. From accidentally starting to play Pickleball to having his club. But it's not his ultimate goal. Emanuel wants to do even more. The next thing will be to build a small resort, a hotel with a pool and a bar, and of course, Pickleball courts. There, he plans to organize Pickleball tournaments and offer the whole experience of Mexico. "Pickleball is my life now. I'm teaching it, having tournaments, clinics, and giving lessons. I want to show everybody how beautiful this sport is", he says.

And what does he do when he's not playing pickleball? Fishing and surfing are his other two passions. Emanuel has proved, once again, that even a single passionate individual can make a huge difference. He, for sure, started a "Pickleball fire" in Mexico.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

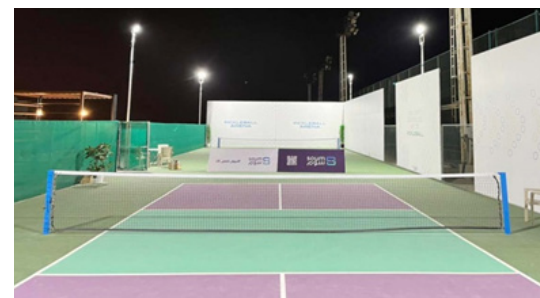
TURKEY – Diplomat Davut Güngör is a rock! Appointed in early October, Davut reported receiving great inquiries from many schools and clubs in Turkey within a week. Many players want to volunteer as pickleball trainers. Sports clubs and schools call Davut to play pickleball in many cities. There is a potential that hundreds of thousands of people can play pickleball. This development is significant, considering pickleball is not an official sport in Turkey. Diplomat Davut Güngör has also started to work on this issue and is working to establish a Turkish Pickleball Federation. This essential work is needed for professional pickleball as a sport. He is also working on projects to support disadvantaged individuals.

There additionally are no pickleball materials in Turkey, so they decided to produce the paddles and balls, so players who want to learn to play in Turkey have easy access to equipment. IFP Diplomat Davut initiated the production of pickleball paddles that were ready in 1 week. Ball production is also estimated to start soon. Diplomat Davut's team will begin the distribution of paddles and balls to schools and disadvantaged individuals - free of charge. They have introduced about 10,000 new players to the sport of pickleball. The first target is to introduce pickleball to 200,000 people through direct participation. Diplomat Davut's team goal is to reach 3,000,000 people in Turkey through social networking.



AUSTRIA – On October 4th, 2022, the first Pop-Up Pickleball Event in Austria happened in Lieboch by the Diesel Cinema. The Vice Champion of Austria for paddle tennis and additional tennis players were in attendance. The participants and guests were introduced to the sport of pickleball! All participants were immediately enthusiastic about this new trendy sport. The largest pickleball facility in Austria is scheduled to be built in Styria in April 2023. The facility is planning to hold the first Austrian State Championships in 2023. We plan on promoting this trendy new sport from the USA in all of Austria.

SAUDI ARABIA – In 2022, Saudi Arabia established its first beautiful and dedicated pickleball courts in a public club. With a team of trained Saudi men and women, they trained new players in the game, which has started to grow dramatically in the capital city of Riyadh. Captain Abdulrahman Alnafia became a Diplomat of pickleball in this country because of his efforts to spread the sport of pickleball. He is now recognized by the International Pickleball Federation (IFP) as a Global Diplomat. In September 2022, a three-day pickleball tournament took place with 32 participants. The feedback from the participants after experiencing the game was above expectations. People enjoyed the game and kept on coming back to play more games. It's demonstrated that the acceptance of the sport of pickleball will take time here in Saudi Arabia; however, with the help of IFP, they can accelerate the expansion of pickleball in the region.



LEBANON – Pickleball Club Lebanon was registered with the Ministry of Sports and Youth in July 2022. Its mission is to introduce, train, and grow the sport in the country. In August 2022, Lebanon's first Pickleball Club (PCL) officially opened its doors to the public. Despite the advice given against investing in a war-torn country and a declining economy, Naji and Najwa Mourad invested in and built a club with 6-outdoor and 1-indoor court with the support of 60 members. The club's mission is to develop a fun and competitive pickleball community that shares its love of the sport. Its mission is also to accept all players willing to put in an effort, engage in the sport, and become IFP pickleball diplomats to help spread the benefits of playing pickleball. The club management is organized and has completed its first pickleball round-robin tournament in September 2022. The pickleball tournament had 20 participants,

of which 45% were women. The club management is currently in discussions with high schools around the country to introduce the game within the school curriculum to engage kids when they are young and expand the sport across the country. PCL is excited to teach the game and grow the experience enough to be able to begin participating in tournaments on an international level.

CROATIA – It is a relatively small country (less than 0.05% of the world by population) but has a storied history in many sports, including tennis, water polo, and skiing. The sport of pickleball is almost unknown in Croatia, but this is due to change very soon. Four pickleball clubs are in the process of being started (Zagreb, Slavonski Brod, Veli Losinj, and Supetar). A team of volunteers has been established, and there are regular Zoom conferences to monitor progress and stay on mission. Investor/Developer enthusiasm is high. Advanced discussions are being conducted to create four permanent pickleball courts in 2 or 3 different venues around the country. Early July 2023 is the tentative date for the inaugural Pickleball Tournament to begin in Croatia (including many visiting professional pickleball players). To help establish, promote the sport, and educate the general public, branding has been secured to include pickleballcroatia.com and pickleball.hr. These sites are being finalized.

PORTUGAL – The first Portuguese Pickleball group was started in October 2017 by Leon Geuens, a Belgian living on the Silver Coast. The group has been growing steadily, and they organized the first national tournament in September 2022 with 32 participants. Most players were foreigners living in Portugal, but hopefully, we will see this trend changing, with more locals getting excited about the sport. Since the summer of 2021, pickleball has been "growing like mushrooms" (a Portuguese expression) in Portugal. Small groups have started in Porto, Lisbon, Braga's main cities, and the Algarve region. Fans in Guimarães, Setúbal, and the island of Madeira are also likely to develop the sport very soon. As mentioned earlier, most groups use tennis facilities or indoor gyms. However, some visionary athletes such as Hugo Condense in Lisbon and Paulo Moroso in Braga have built dedicated pickleball courts in their sports facilities. There are also rumors that a large pickleball facility in Portugal is underway... But that is a story for another chapter.

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