

PICKLEBALL IS FOR EVERYBODY!

THE VANCITY PICKLER

September - October 2023 Newsletter



PRESIDENT'S GREETING

*Greg
Feehan*



Pop-up courts magically appear. Garbage unexpectedly gets picked up. Paddleboards get built. Leagues suddenly start. Special events (Box League, National Pickleball celebrations) seemingly materialize. Boxes with nets appear. Newsletters simply arrive. Social media groups somehow get formed. Pictures and videos appear online. Turf wars with tennis are quelled. T-shirts are ordered. Noise complaints are handled. Indoor time becomes organized. Mini-tournaments occur. And all this just happens.

Or perhaps not, perhaps hundreds and perhaps thousands of hours went into these accomplishments, hours provided by selfless volunteers. From organizing events to maintaining the courts, the efforts of volunteers in Vancouver have been making the game enjoyable and accessible for all. In September, we held an event to honour those volunteers. It was such a success that we intend to repeat this, having an end-of-summer volunteer appreciation night each year. Why don't you think about what you can do for the sport to get invited to this event in 2024. We would like to see you there.



VANCOUVER'S FIRST PICKLEBALL HUB

*Jacqueline
Clarke*



As the rain rolls in and the temperature drops, it seems like a good time to look back on the biggest initiative the VPA has undertaken to date: the Curling Rink's conversion to a pickleball hub for 4 months this summer.

The willingness of the Vancouver Park Board (VPB) to take on this experiment comes on the heels of many, many, many months of relationship-building, and your support for the pop-up courts last summer.

The VPB is responsible to 30 sports organizations who all ask for more and

better facilities. Unlike Surrey or Langley, the VPB doesn't have unassigned space. Every court or space given to pickleball must be taken away from some other sport/purpose. There is no fallow land in the city.

As an association, we quickly learned that saying "pickleball is fun" gets us nowhere. Saying that pickleball is growing exponentially helps a little, but not much.

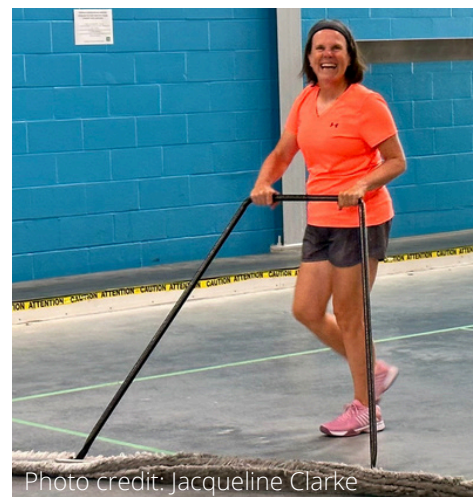
We found that we have two winning arguments:

1. The city is rapidly **densifying**. We are a **densified sport**, i.e. potentially 16 players on a space that tennis would have only two players.
2. Aligning **our values** with the Parks Board which got their attention. Specifically, we represent **diversity and inclusion** more than almost any other sport, e.g. the Rainbow League, taking pickleball to East Vancouver via the Ray Cam Community Centre, bringing pickleball to East Vancouver schools via the Eves Project.

The conversion of the Curling Rink into nine pickleball courts at the Hillcrest Curling Club for 4 months this summer was because of this work.

So how did we do? Of the available time slots at this Pickleball Hub, the VPA took on Friday nights and Saturday mornings. As far as the rest of the programming, the Parks Board was responsible for setting up the schedule.

We reached out and many of the VPA coaches stepped up to take on this challenge on top of their current workload at community centres. We were excited for the opportunity to offer play sessions that catered to specific demographics, playing levels, interests. We reached out to our members to hear what you wanted. It was a learning experience!



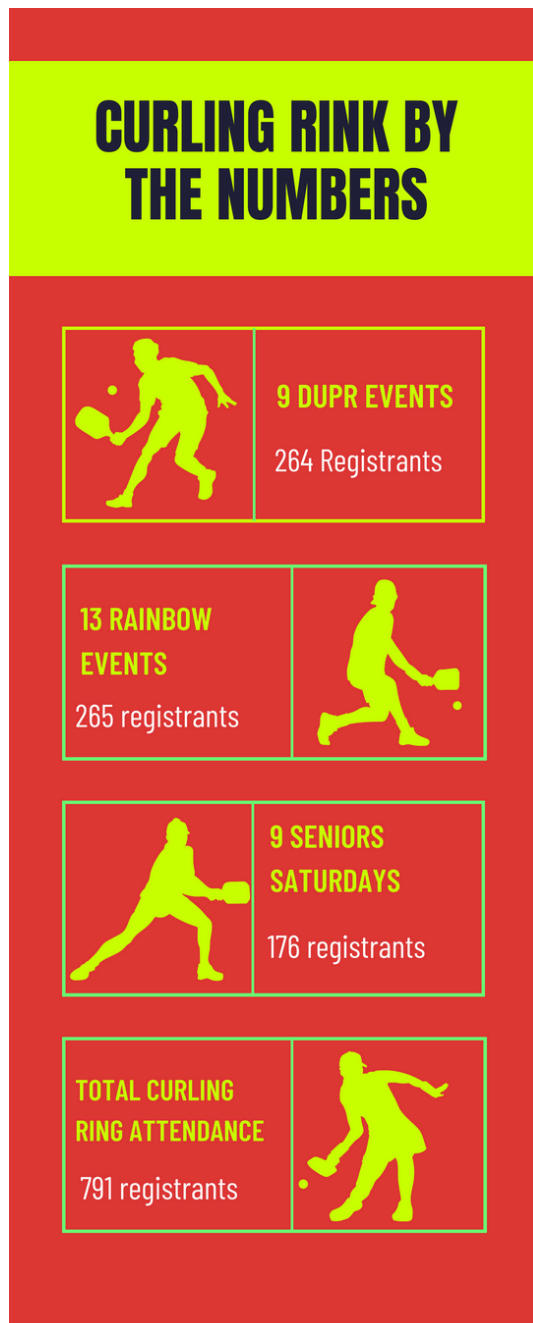
May, our inaugural month, saw us offer many events, some of which had little or no uptake (think Drills, Box Rental, Doubles for Singles, Family Event). We came into June with a better sense of what was working. As a result, Rainbow League, DUPR and over '70s

were scheduled as our regular monthly offerings. One suggestion we were really excited about was "Glow Pickleball". Unfortunately, the associated costs and the logistics were more than we could handle this year. Fingers crossed for next year!

The space also presented a few challenges. The cement floor was slippery when dusty. We increased the sweeping and then stepped up the mopping as well. We added wet towels that people could wipe their shoes on or else a blue sticky pad which seemed to make it much safer. The cement floor also posed an issue. Several players reported that the surface was hard on their joints. The lay-out for Curling posed at least one significant challenge for pickleball – the rim around the edge of the playing area was not easily visible. We addressed this by putting up caution tape and being sure that the facilitators at each event pointed out the dangers to the participants.

And your feedback was positive! Players were pleasantly surprised at the air conditioning and the availability of space.

The Curling Lounge. The VPA negotiated for the Curling Lounge to be open on the days/evenings of our Events.



Attendees enjoyed the option to socialize/hang out after their pickleball events and the Curling Lounge reported that they covered their costs! Patrick Parade, manager of the Vancouver Curling Club, would be happy to do this again!

Thank you: The VPA's experience at the Curling Rink would not have been possible without the volunteers who stepped up. A HUGE thank-you to Janet and Kinder for organising the booking and registration for the events as well as the members devoting time to run each event..... Andre, Catalin, Duncan, Jacqueline, Janet, John, Mona, Paul and Ronith.

What's next?: We hope that the VPB will continue the "experiment" next year, so look out for information in Summer 2024.

FAREWELL TO A BUILDER

*Greg
Feehan*

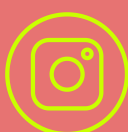


It was 2017. Although pickleball had been played in Vancouver since the 1970s, six short years ago, few of us had heard of the game. But the boom that was to come had already begun to gather steam.

One of Vancouver's early adopters was Catalin Costea. 2017 was the year that he had the vision to create a not-for-profit group to support the growth of our sport in this city, forming what we now know as the Vancouver Pickleball Association.

When I became involved with the Association several years later, I came to recognize that there were a large number of people with the energy to talk about things that needed to be done and a small number of people with the energy to do the things that needed to be done. Catalin was one of those who did things rather than talked about them. Without him, many of the things that we see as integral to the sport in our city, including the initial development of Queen Elizabeth and the organization of our summer leagues, would not be here, or would

Connect with the VPA



have been much delayed without his focus on getting things done.

Personally, I will miss his ready smile and the winking glint in his eye as much as his willingness to roll up his sleeves and do what needs to be done. I will not miss his easy ability to hit passing shots by me.

Whether you know him or not, I can guarantee that you will miss some of the things that he would have done in the future had he stayed in Vancouver rather than relocating to southern Mexico. Wherever he goes, he deserves our recognition as a foundational builder for the sport in our city. Goodbye from all of us, Catalin.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR CATALIN?

Taking on pickleball full time! I'll be the professional pickleball coach for Las Brisas Resort as well as the liaison between the "pickleball world" and the resort. My goal will be to interpret the increasing interest in pickleball in its source markets into opportunities for the resort. One of the key initiatives I'll be working on is creating a local "club" for the Canadian snowbird residents who need a place to play (and are willing to pay for it!)

I also want to introduce pickleball to Mexico. The prolific Nissan-sponsored covered playing courts offers a unique opportunity to introduce the sport to hundreds of communities across the country.

I'm excited to be part of pickleball's growth in Mexico!



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THE INSIDE DROP: PICKLEBALL IN THE CURLING RINK

In this issue we speak to Erica McDonald, Manager, Recreation, Strategy, and Innovation at the Vancouver Park Board (VPB) to get the story behind last summer's Curling Rink conversion to a "Pickleball Hub".

VPA: How did this come about?

Erica McDonald (ED): Traditionally, the Curling Rink space has been used for rentals when the ice is not down. There was some discussion about putting in programming rather than just rentals. But we didn't want to compete with what the Hillcrest Community Centre does since they're our partners. We were looking for something that would be sustainable for the whole summer. We thought that converting to pickleball would be the best use of the space to cater for a growing sport that has such a high demand.

VPA: What needed to happen to make this a reality?

ED: Purchasing equipment such as nets, paddles and balls. But even more importantly, consultation with the VPA.

VPA: Why consult with the VPA?

ED: As an organization, the VPB is working hard to become pickleball savvy. This is a

new sport and a new area of growth for us. Consulting with the VPA meant that we had the necessary insight to figure out what was best to go into space for programming, court set-up, registration, etc. We tracked the data this year and we'll use this data our sport court strategy.

VPA: Were there any challenges?

ED: The main challenge was the timing. We made this decision a little later than we would've liked which meant that there wasn't as much time as we'd have liked for promotion/getting the word out. One other challenge was the good weather in May and June. Usually, rain in May and June would likely have meant that there would have been more uptake for indoor pickleball, but the sunny weather may have reduced registration. We'll take this into account for future plans.

VPA: What's next?

ED: We'll be using the data collected to decide about Summer 2024. And we're likely be looking to engage VPA earlier.

BOX LEAGUE RESULTS

The end of summer means the end of the VPA's competitive season. Congratulations to the most improved players:

- MX Doubles: Irene and Justin
- WM Doubles: Susan and Irene
- WM Player: Vic Tait
- MN Player: Graham Robertson

Final standings:

Mixed Doubles (DUPR rating)

- 1 Nashila Jamal (4.48) / Catalin Costea (4.16)
- 2 Irene King (4.53) / Justin Liao (4.57)
- 3 Mona Lee (3.83) / Jeffrey Wong (4.36)
- 4 Margaret Eiriz (4.52) / Jamal Harb (4.44)

Women's Team Play (DUPR rating)

- 1 Susan Chang (4.43) , Irene King (4.53)
- 2 Penny Uy (4.11) , Emily Fung (4.11)
- 3 Brenda Tansley (3.56) , Kinder Uppal Mottus (3.93)
- 4 Julie Luciani (3.35), Marlis MacAulay (3.56)

Men's Team Play (DUPR rating)

- 1 Solomon Seow (4.24), Justin Mah (4.30)
- 2 Paul Scheffer (3.97), Bruce Cahusack (4.19)
- 3 Dylan Segal (3.76), Jamal Harb (4.44)
- 4 Khalil Srasra (3.59), Flannan Tam

Women's Play (DUPR rating)

- 1 Irene King (4.53)
- 2 Arlene Epp (3.40)
- 3 Patrice Leung (4.05)
- 4 Jane Thorne (3.61)

Men's Play (DUPR rating)

- 1 Richard Xiang (4.83)
- 2 Justin Liao (4.57)
- 3 Keith Brilz (4.55)
- 4 Leo Bell (4.0)



WE HEARD YOU...

IPOP is on a quest to find an indoor Pickleball space in the Lower Mainland at the right price.

Our survey on the lower mainland Pickleball scene has revealed some interesting insights;

Here are the Findings:

On average,

85%

of the community plays Pickleball
2 to 5 times a week.

We were expecting a high demand for a dedicated indoor facility and the survey showed that

98%

of players expressed the need for one.

bam

84%

Of respondents would be willing to play in a facility located less than an hour away.

&

45%

Would want to come play pickleball after 4pm.

swish

If you haven't had a chance yet to fill out the survey, there's still time, and we would love to hear from you. Please fill out the survey [here](#).

Thank you

To keep up to date with our quest to find us the ultimate Pickleball space, please sign up to our newsletter [here](#).

Yours in Pickleball,

Chris White
Chief Paddle Boss
The Inclusive Place of
Pickleball (IPOP) Team



How do I watch live pickleball?

The three biggest professional pickleball leagues schedule tournaments throughout the year. Tournaments usually run Thursday to Sunday, with elimination rounds on the first three days and a Championship Sunday finale.

The most well-known players are with the [Professional Pickleball Association \(PPA\)](#). Most of the PPA's tournaments are streamed on their [YouTube channel](#). New agreements with the Tennis Network, ESPN2, and Amazon Prime are bringing pickleball to new audiences.

[Major League Pickleball](#) (MLP) tournaments are streamed on their [YouTube channel](#). 24 teams of 4 players each compete in games to 21 points using rally scoring. An exciting innovation to this fun game!

The [Association of Pickleball Players](#) (APP) streams their tournaments on their [YouTube channel](#). The APP is known for hosting new talent the game.

SPONSOR SHOUT-OUT

Fifty of our members showed their support for the VPA! T-shirts orders will be available for pick-up at [Rackets and Runners](#) in November.



Photo credit: Jacqueline Clarke

WE'RE PROUD OF YOU!

Medal winners in Sep/Oct: Andy V., Anthony A., Barbara M., Brett G., Calvin J., Colleen O., Colin O., Colin W., Cyndi B., Danica S., Eric N., Evan D., Henry I., Irene K., Jackie S., Jamal H., Justin L., Katherine A., Keith B., Kelsey G., Leo B., Lisa Y., Mark B., Marisa G., Rick T., Ross C., Sebastian D., Solomon S., Soo-Mi C., Tim M., Vincent P. and Will W.

OTHER NEWS

Congrats to BC boy, [Todd Fought](#) and his team on their Championship win at Major League Pickleball Atlanta AND Dallas 2023! Todd started off in tennis but discovered pickleball in April 2021 and hasn't looked back since! *DUPR: 6.47. PPA Player ranking: #35.*



Photo credit: Major League Pickleball



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Thank you, thank you, thank you....there isn't enough room in this, or all of our newsletters, to adequately express our gratitude and appreciation to all of the people who step up every year to make pickleball happen in Vancouver.

But we tried! The VPA hosted a Thank You "Burgers and Beers" on September 13th at the [Diced Discovery Cafe](#) at Jericho Beach to acknowledge and reward their contributions. Congrats to Volunteer of the Year, Kinder Mottus, for her amazing work on managing, coordinating and filling the Curling Rink events!

Some of the stuff our volunteers do:

- **Court hosts** – manage the storage boxes, maintain the nets, etc. at outdoor courts
- **Events** – Canada Day, National Pickleball Day and the Curling Rink.
- **Board** – lobby, organize, coordinate, communicate, transport, set-up, etc.!
- **Social media** – posts on Facebook and Instagram to keep our members informed.
- **Newsletter** – writing articles for an issue/s of the bi-monthly newsletter
- **EVES** – developing pickleball in the East Vancouver school system



Photos credit: Irene King



VPA VOLUNTEERS 2023

Andre Ploude	Guy Martel	Nariko Takayanaki
Anita Bora	Irene King	Patrice Leung
Bernice Robillard	Jane Thorne	Paul Scheffer
Bill Dorfmann	Janet Martini	Praveen Varshney
Brian Ee	Jasmine Eng	Raja Sabbagha
Catalin Costea	Jeff Willett	Ronith Cogswell
Cathy Daniel	John Cringan	Ross Hetherington
Cheryl Clausen	Justin Liao	Ruth Johnson
Chris Koentges	Kelsey German	Sandra Wilkins
Colin Whelan	Kinder Mottus	Sandra Franke
Colleen Dowdall	Lauren Tai	Sandy Ko
Colleen O'Gorman	Lauri Riddle	Sean Smith
Curtis Lai	Lenore Rosen	Sharon Hoy
Cyndi Boado	Lillian McClanaghan	Stella Ko
David Lai	Lisa Gibson	Sylvia Smith
David Luk	Maizie Mah	Teresa Mckinley-Harris
David Xu	Marg Ellis	Tim Ames
Debbie Boersma	Marlis MacAulay	Todd Dulmage
Doug Wong	Mary-Ellen Pearce	Tom Liao
Duncan Saunders	Maxwell Smith	Tony Casey
Elizabeth Dulmage	Michael Chan	Trish Duffney
Eva Sharell	Michael Smith	Ury Segal
Gary Cummings	Mike Smolnicki	Vic Tait
Glann Eng	Mona Lee	Walt Woo
Greg Feehan	Monica Tam	Willy Wan

If you'd like to get involved in developing pickleball in Vancouver, email us at info@vancouverpickleball.ca

In the Neighbourhood

Two **North Vancouver** sisters, Angie and Alex Walker (DUPR Rating 5.31, 5.39), signed on to the U.S.-based Professional Pickleball Association ([PPA](#)), joining Quebecois tennis sensation Eugenie Bouchard to compete in the 2024 season.



Courtesy of Alex Walker

On October 1, 2023, the **Abbotsford** Pickleball Association (APA) entered into a rental agreement with the city's Ag-Rec Building to transform the location's main floor into 12 indoor pickleball courts.



Photo credit: The Abbotsford News

A dedicated, indoor pickleball facility is set to open in **South Richmond** in late 2023. The new Pacific Pickleball Center is currently under construction.

EAST VANCOUVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS PROJECT

*Tony Casey
Sharon Hoy*



The EVES project was initiated in the summer of 2022 with the goal of embedding and sustaining pickleball within East Vancouver schools. EVES is a collaboration of the Vancouver Pickleball Association and Vancouver School Board teachers.

Inside the first set of eastside schools, EVES has been led, promoted, and guided by enthusiastic classroom teachers, physical education specialists and school administrators.

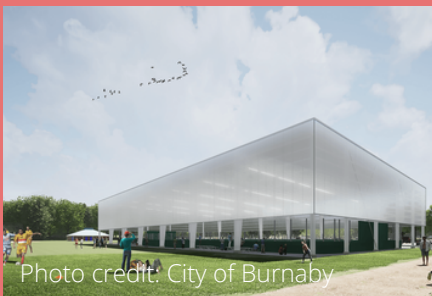
Educators in many schools are keen to create and keep alive a pickleball presence in their schools if provided with instruction, lesson plans, tools & resource materials and equipment, and the space for their students to experience the joy of pickleball.

For Year Two, the EVES leadership group has set its focus on the following priorities:

- Enable the existing Hubs of Pickleball Schools to thrive through sharing of equipment, additional in-services, professional development and pickleball Networking.

In the Neighbourhood (cont.)

Two community facilities in **Burnaby** are scheduled for upgrades in Spring 2024. The lacrosse boxes at Riverway Sports Complex and Confederation Park will be enhanced with coverings, lighting and additional spectator seating to accommodate year-round and late-night play for pickleball, lacrosse, ball hockey, volleyball and badminton.



The organizers of **Surrey's** Super Senior Slam pickleball tournament donated \$50,000 to three local non-profit organizations. The funds, raised over two years by the tournament, were donated by the Heavy Dinkers to Sources food banks, Women's Resource Centre and Ned's Wish.



- Increase the number of hubs through sessions with prospective pickleball schools.
- Expand the EVES leadership group through the addition of more volunteers from the VPA and the community of Eastside teachers
- Recruit student players who are keen to promote and support junior pickleball.
- Support schools to apply for grants and other sources of funding.
- Stage the 2024 SLAMboree – an April celebration of pickleball for Eastside students.

EVES is a project that has enormous potential to introduce many students to pickleball in East Vancouver and later to other parts of the City of Vancouver.

If you are interested in hopping-on the EVES court and providing some volunteer leadership in some way, please email --- secretary@vancouverpickleball.ca

Tell us your area(s) of interest: planning, organizing events, coaching, communications & social, fund raising, grant writing or something else!

EVES will welcome you!



PICKLEBALL SAVED MY LIFE!

VPA member, KJ LaVallee shares her story of how pickleball has been a game changer...

In 2020 I was diagnosed with severe PTSD. We had recently moved to Vancouver and I had very little support given the CoVID restrictions.

It was recommended to me in 2022 by my therapist (after I withdrew from everything I love) that I should “put myself out there” to learn ‘something new with my spouse’ so he could help me integrate back slowly into social situations and physical activity. I had been active my whole life.

It all began with beginner pickleball lessons at the Kerrisdale Community Centre lessons together in March 2022. I never played a game till I took a second set of beginner lessons in September/October 2022 in preparation for my sabbatical in Palm Desert (California).

I played pickleball every day for 5 months during the winter of 22/23.

Pickleball saved my life; quite literally!

I forced myself to go to the court every morning at 8 am. I developed my social skills again as well as my physical skills. My first



KJ (on the right) in the St. Patrick's Day event at her club.
Courtesy KJ LaVallee

game was on November 3, 2022, and I have played almost every day since then. I have made lifelong friends in Palm Desert (we even ended up purchasing a home there) as well as playing here.

I LOVE pickleball and me not playing every day is just not an



Courtesy: KJ LaVallee

not an option for me. The courts are my happy place, and the players are 'my people'. We even hosted a tournament at our club last February with our new posse. My newfound confidence on the courts even got me back on the golf course for the first time in 15 years. I now play at a 3.25 level and take clinics and private lessons to improve my skills. I turn 60 soon!

NOTE: Happy birthday wishes to you, KJ, and if you bump into her at the courts, don't forget to wish her on her 60th!

KJ talked to our VPA volunteer, Anita Bora. If you have an inspiring story or know anyone whose life has been transformed by this game, feel free to reach her with any tips and leads:

anitabora@gmail.com

Serve and Dink with KJ!

Where can we find you on the courts?

Brewers Park, Queen E and Hillcrest (Curling Club) for tourneys and clinics.

What do you enjoy most about the game?

Everything, especially the partner encouragement and social aspects of the game. I have met people through pickleball of all ages, races, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Most are kind. Pickleball is a great equaliser. No one cares if you're a ditch digger or a doctor; they will play with you. There is no prejudice on the courts. It brings back the carefree days of our childhood when you just showed up to the playground (courts) and someone would play with you.

Where are you heading in the winter months?

Heading to Palm Desert for five months to escape the rain and feed my addiction to pickleball in the sun. I can't imagine watching the rain for 5 months and do not like playing indoors due to vision problems.

Any other recommendations?

I love the club we joined - The Monterey Country Club. We have 20 dedicated Pickleball Courts sectioned off by 4's for the level of play from 'Social-no Slam' to 'Advanced Challenge' courts.