

PICKLEBALL IS FOR EVERYBODY!

THE VANCITY PICKLER

March-April 2022 Newsletter



PRESIDENT'S GREETING

Greg
Feehan



With this edition, we are welcoming the yearly turning from Community Centres to a focus on outdoor play, where, sadly, we are still contending with barely usable nets at Queen Elizabeth and closed courts at Memorial West (Dunbar). We know you need better facilities and more courts and are working hard to realize this. For over a year, the Parks Board has promised nets at Queen Elizabeth, writing in October 2021 that they would provide regulation nets and fencing between the courts “in the near future”. They have been clear Dunbar will not reopen but have promised “pop-up” courts at venues throughout the city. Both these promises are still winding their way through their various bureaucratic processes, but we remain hopeful we will have firm announcements for you prior to our AGM in late May.



ODE TO THE OUTDOOR SEASON

Chris Koentges



Indoor pickleball is a grindhouse chock-a-block with a stubborn kind of magic—the same set of faces, slashing their way through the winter together, desperately cramming points in before the Step Aerobics instructor arrives.

Spring pickleball, by contrast, is sweet and hesitant. The magnolias are in bloom. The clouds dramatic. Over WhatsApp, you goad three people you vaguely know into an impromptu game. You sneak out of work early. For a couple of hours, barely aware of the surrounding world, the four of you create something that feels intense and meaningful, dusty, and sweaty, before you find yourself swept into

some weird formless round-robin with some total random strangers. You lose track of time. “Stay for one more,” someone says. The strangers feed you different treats between games. You’ve missed dinner. And three more later, you’re imploring someone else you just met to just squeeze 11 more points out of twilight. The outdoor season begins differently for each of us. But that first long indulgent evening is when you know it’s on. The whole summer still unfurled ahead of you.

Queen Elizabeth Park in the height of summer is almost too good to be true. Not long ago, it was a single neglected tennis court. On warm June evenings, there are now upwards of a hundred people sharing the space. There’s a quiet mayhem, and an informal ethos: arrive as strangers, leave as friends. The mysterious board of paddles on the wall moves like a Ouija, channeling something deep and hopeful, an intersection of lives at a moment of time. You’ll hear two dozen different languages, each fluent in the universal language of a rally.

Summer pickleball is light and easy and filled with serendipity. Sometimes the 5.0 players turn up, and you glimpse the deeper level of the game itself. The breeze seems to carry their effortless strokes down from the sky like the pappus face of a dandelion. You recognize the structure of their rallies. But the points feel like free flow jazz riffs.

The controlled patter of these riffs, from one court to the next, the excited chatter between, creates a warm cacophony—like a plaza in Barcelona. The chance encounters, finding comrades. Spectacles. It’s the point of living in a city. There is no fee for this experience. Everybody is welcome. It’s hard to think of another space in Vancouver where so many total strangers gather outside to share something random and real, fragile, and so very fleeting.

Chris Koentges co-founded The Jericho Hill Pickleball School, an homage to those who create pickleball in the city’s secret nooks and wilder crannies.

www.jerichohillpickleball.com

MORE THAN A MILLION CANADIANS PLAY PICKLEBALL

A recent survey indicates that more than one million Canadians are playing pickleball at least once a month, with 45% of respondents playing four or more times/month. The age group showing the fastest rate of growth are players aged 18 to 34, with a 26% increase over the number of players in this group playing at least once per month in 2020. See the Pickleball Canada press release [here](#).

THANK YOU, VPA COMMUNITY!

In March, we let you know that one of our members, Leo Bell, had family in a refugee camp in eastern Poland, having just escaped from Kharkiv, Ukraine. The outpouring of generosity from pickleball players was heartwarming. Within weeks we had raised \$8,900 for this worthy cause (more than 79 members donated). These funds will be essential in helping settle Leo's mother, girlfriend, and girlfriend's mother here in Vancouver. They arrived on Easter Sunday. If you or your family need the VPA community's help please reach out to president@vancouverpickleball.ca.



Photo credit: Leo Bell



Photo credit: Mona Lee

WELL DONE!

VPA members did their community proud at both the Chilliwack Pickleball Club Winter Tournament (March 19-20, 2022) and Coquitlam's Battle of the Paddle (April 22-24). Congrats to VPA members, Andrew, Diane, Elizabeth, Julie, Leo, Mona, Quentin, Sally, Sebastien, Todd and Trevor for their gold, silver and bronze medal wins. Check out all the results [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congrats to VPA member, Catalin Costea, the new Director of Competition for Pickleball BC. In his new role, Catalin will be assisting new or smaller clubs with tournament prep/planning, making a Provincial tourney happen, running a Western Regional tourney (BC, AB, SK & MB) in 2024 and encouraging clubs to run competitive events.



Photo credit: Jacqueline Clarke

IT'S TIME TO SWITCH BALLS AND WHY IT MATTERS

One of the considerations of moving to outdoor play is switching from indoor to outdoor balls. Is there really a difference and does the difference affect play? Yes, it does. A pickleball is made of a durable material with a smooth surface. This could mean resins, rubber, plastic, or a mixture of various substances. The ball must meet certain specifications according to the rules of pickleball. For example, the ball must be made of smooth molded material and be a uniform color. It must have between twenty-six and forty circular, evenly spaced holes. When the ball is dropped from a height of seventy-eight inches, it must bounce between thirty and thirty-four inches high.

So, what does this mean for outdoor vs indoor balls? Indoor pickleballs are made of softer plastic than outdoor ones because the surface of indoor courts usually isn't as hard and rough on the ball. Indoor balls are lighter (0.8 ounces) and have bigger holes than outdoor balls because the wind is not an issue when playing indoors. Outdoor balls are harder, larger, heavier (0.9 ounces) and more resistant to wind and impact. These balls have thicker walls than indoor balls and usually don't have seams because of the rotational molding process.

What does this mean for play? Indoor balls:

- are unlikely to crack,
- are easier to control,
- are difficult to hit as hard as outdoor balls,

Pros and Cons: Preferred ball brand for outdoor play?

We reached out to VPA members to find out their outdoor ball brand preference. Here's what they told us.



Preference: Durafast
Why: They're hard and fast!

Stanley, Member for 3 years



Preference: Penn
Why: A bunch of us got a deal!

Marta, Member for 2 weeks



Preference: Onix G2 Fuse
Why: More weight so bounce is more controlled in windy conditions.

Willy, Member for 2 years

- rallies tend to go on longer in indoor games,
- don't travel as far or as fast as outdoor balls,
- aren't suitable for windy conditions and are not as resistant to impacts on outdoor courts.

Outdoor balls:

- are easier to hit hard,
- come off the paddle

- faster and harder,
- are not likely to be affected by the wind,
- Will fly straight and true instead of wobbling unpredictably,
- are a bit harder in cold weather than in hot weather,
- are not recommended for indoor play because if the court's surface is smooth, they will

skid, significantly reducing playability.

Need some outdoor balls? VPA sponsor Rackets & Runners carries Onix, Franklin, Durafast and Penn outdoor balls in a range of colours.

Source:

<https://theracketlife.com/what-is-a-pickleball-made-of/>



VPA's COACHES CORNER

Considering taking lessons? Find a coach that best suits your needs using the VPA's Coaches Corner. Every month, we showcase one of our VPA member certified coaches. This month, [Diane Dol was our featured coach](#). Check out previously featured coaches [here](#).

PLAYING OUTDOORS CAN MEAN SETTING UP A NET

Playing at Brewers or Pandora is perfect for playing with your pod (4 players), eliminating the wait time at QEP (less busy) or for getting in your league games (you can play for at least 30 min at Brewers/Pandora). The only "catch" is you've got to set-up one of the VPA-provided nets to play. This is a lot easier than it sounds! Watch Bill Dorfmann, VPA's Treasurer, demonstrate how to access the lockbox and set up a net at Pandora or Brewers in [this video](#).



VPA MEMBERS' BOX LEAGUE IS BACK!

Jacqueline Clarke



The return to outdoor play also means the return of the Box League. Catalin Costea, the organizing force behind the League, believes that the League is the best way to improve your game and, even more importantly, to find players at your level to play with.

The idea for the Box League came to Catalin after competing at his first pickleball tournament. Based on his previous experience with tennis, he knew that competing against others was a guaranteed way to improve play and keep up interest in the game. But his first tournament experience was unexpected. "When I went to compete at my first pickleball competition, I had a bit of panic attack, even though I'd competed in tennis tournaments before", said Catalin. He realized that if the competition experience was intimidating for him, it would probably be even worse for anyone who hadn't ever competed. He figured what was missing was a way for players who wanted to compete to ease into competitive play and for those that weren't interested in competing at tournaments, a way to get the benefits of competing without having the panic attack!

2021 was the League's first year. "We started with 20 people, but they began to spread

the word about how much fun it was to compete and how much they were learning. By the end of the season there were 200 people registered", said Catalin. "It's great to play with friends but they get to know your play and you get to know theirs, so you probably stop learning and improving. And think about it, the better you play (more dinking, longer rallies) the more time you get to spend on the court at QEP!"

This year, with 80% of last year's group already registered, seven leagues have been scheduled to accommodate all the playing levels and teams. And 25 players have signed up to play in three of the leagues – singles, gender, and mixed



Photo credit: Jacqueline Clarke

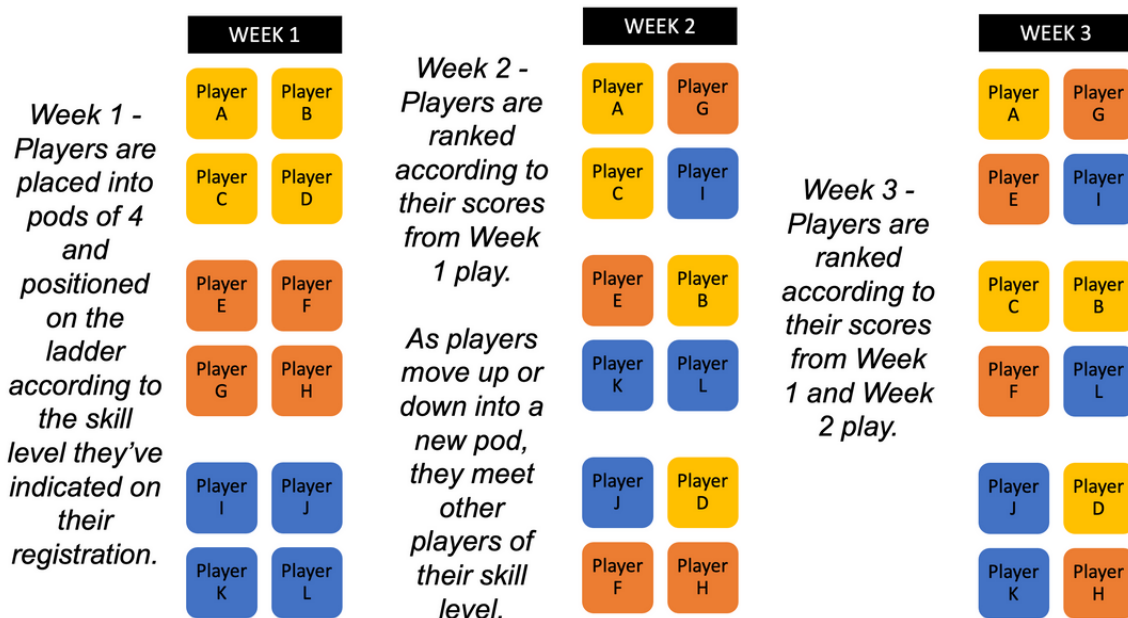
team play!

But the Box League is not only for the hard-core competitors. Catalin says he received many emails from people who were enjoying the League because they were growing their pickleball playing network. One participant reported that, "I have 12 new friends at my skill level, and we're having so much fun playing on a weekly basis!"

The Box League is available to all VPA members at any level of play. To register or to find out more about the League, visit the [VPA website](#).

Catalin Costea is a founding member of the VPA, a Level 2 ITPA Instructor, Certified Rating Specialist level 5, and is currently working on his Pickleball Canada coaching certification.

How the League works:



The VanCity Pickler is the Vancouver Pickleball Association's monthly newsletter publication:

Building and keeping our community connected

Have an idea for a future edition? Have a question? Want to provide feedback?

Email: newsletter@vancouverpickleball.ca

VPA SHIRTS ARE HERE!



Photo credit: Mona Lee

Good news! The VPA shirt order has arrived. The shirts are available for pick up at VPA sponsor, Rackets & Runners ([3880 Oak Street, Vancouver](https://www.racketsandrillers.com)). If you ordered a shirt, just go to the store and ask the staff for your shirt(s). They have a list indicating what shirt style, size and colour you ordered. It appears that all your first color choices were available.

Note: if there are any issues with your order, please contact us at:
info@vancouverpickleball.ca.



Photo credit: Ken Nowlan

YOU'RE INVITED

Picklebox in Surrey started league play on April 25th. This season there will be standings, statistics, and a variety of different divisions to suit players of any skill or age. Check out the options [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS - May/June

[Surrey Pickleball Club Spring Launch Tournament](#),
May 7, Surrey

[Comox Valley 5th Annual Indoor Tournament](#), Comox,
May 7 & 8

[Mayday at Picklebox 4.0+ Men's & Women's Doubles](#),
Surrey, May 21

[Chilliwack Pickleball Mayday Mayhem](#),
Chilliwack, May 21-23

[Kamloops Open](#), Kamloops,
May 27-29

[Advanced Men's Invitational Scramble](#), Chilliwack, Jun 6

[Victoria Classic](#), Victoria, Jun 10-12

[2022 National Pickleball Canada \(the Nationals\)](#),
June 20-26, Kingston ON

[Douglas Park Pickleball Charity Tournament](#),
Langley, June 24-26

Visit the [Pickleball BC website](#) for more listings and info.

ARE YOU A "3.0" OR "3.5"?



Photo credit: Jacqueline Clarke

You've probably been asked this question or something like it. Before April 25th, the only way to figure out your rating was using the USAPA's self-assessment. But that all changed on April 25th when the VPA's first Skills Assessment sessions were held at the Creekside Community Centre. "The VPA is moving towards skill-level-based playing groups and more leagues and tournaments. We are advocating for skill-level-based play at community centres", said Bill Dorfmann, Treasurer of the VPA. "We're putting on these sessions because we think it's important for our members to be able to figure out their skill level".

Thirty-two VPA members were individually assessed by Caitlin Costea (a Level 2 ITPA Instructor, Certified Rating Specialist level 5). To determine their skill level, each participant dinked, played a drop-shot, served, and returned to Caitlin. Using a scale, he

allocated a rating for each shot. Each player's rating will also consider the consistency of their playing skills. Before/after their assessment, participants played against each other while a second coach observed their play.

Each participant will receive their assessment result in the next week or two via email. The result will not only include the player's rating but also feedback that they can use to improve their play such as grip pressure, hand pendulum, shuffle vs. cross steps, setup position, hand-eye coordination, and movement during shots.

While it felt a little intimidating to be assessed, participants thought the session would provide useful information. "Knowing your skill level helps you to sign up for the right lessons and playing sessions", said one participant.

The VPA continues to work on options for skill assessments.



Photo credit: Jacqueline Clarke

FROM THE "BOARD ROOM"

The VPA's Board meets twice a month. Here's what they've been up to in the last two months:

- Tony Casey has been recruited to oversee outreach committees for the LGBTQ, First Nations, youth and financially disadvantaged communities.
- Skill rating sessions have been scheduled for April and May.
- Return of the [Box League, May 1](#).
- Purchased nets for the (new) Jericho site.

- Followed up with the VPB regarding new semi-permanent nets and fences for QE.
- Approved a new event: Introduction to Curling and Pickleball (in partnership with Vancouver Curling Club) - September 2022.
- Spring schedule at Community Centres on our Website.

Get involved with the VPA! Join a committee or [donate to the cause!](#) Minutes of all VPA Board meetings are available on the [VPA website](#).

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR VPA AGM

All members are invited to the VPA 2022 AGM, May 17th, 7:00 - 8:30pm on Zoom. The agenda includes updates on our financial status, our leagues and ladders, update on our actions related to the Parks Board, our ideas on

what we might do to increase our available courts, both outdoors and within Community Centres and on any emerging developments on new courts or improved facilities. You'll have the opportunity to provide your views on our leagues and on how we should organize play time once we get pop-up courts through-out the city.

Our current board will be running again as a slate. If you'd like to join our board, please let us know.... all volunteers with time, energy and commitment are welcome!

Current VPA members are eligible to vote. You can check your membership status [here](#). Members are asked to register [here](#) to attend the meeting.