

PICKLEBALL IS FOR EVERYBODY!

THE VANCITY PICKLER

January - Feb 2023 Newsletter



PRESIDENT'S GREETING

Greg
Feehan



We have reached that season when outdoor play means choosing between compression tights under shorts or perhaps covered by nylon workout pants. Toque or baseball cap? Gloves or bare hands? One of the beautiful things about pickleball is it can be played under all conditions and in almost all circumstances – okay all circumstances for the truly obsessed. Many of my playing group are in the habit of throwing squeegees and plastic snow shovels into their trunk before heading out to the court. Addiction means we all need to adapt, because not playing is not a choice.

If toques seem a step too far, Palm Desert, or southern Mexico beckon. Outdoor play is always available; all that is required is that insatiable desire to play, and a little ingenuity (or the wherewithal to head south).



OUR TRANSCENDENT LITTLE GRINDHOUSES

Chris
Koentges



In Vancouver, when the temperature drops below 4° Celsius, Franklin X-40s begin to crack. At 2°C, you can shatter a half dozen in a couple of minutes. Some local players have made a ball for these precise conditions. It plays like a Dura Fast-40 and holds up to 1°C. There's a subtle rhythm to the way experienced players rotate dry warm balls from their pocket to the server before each point, and how artfully they build each rally—so as not to waste a warm ball.

Below these temperatures, thin layers of ice form in the court's shadier corners. On especially cool days,

snow piles up. A dedicated cadre will play in mittens and trail runners. They'll play a few points, shovel off the icy rivulets. Rehydrating with hot tea and coffee. It's pickleball. But it's a game unto itself too.

In the Okanagan they play in more extreme conditions, on much thicker patches of ice—wearing skates and helmets instead of shoes and toques. This too is a game unto itself.



Photo credit: Black Press Media

The snowbirds begin to leave after Thanksgiving, they spend parts of their winter playing pickleball in paradise. For others, though, winter pickleball is paradise. Every moment of it.

By November, most of the pickleball community has gone indoors. Badminton nets will be strung across the entire width of an old community center gymnasium—across four or five, sometimes six courts—and lowered jaggedly between 33 and 37 inches. As the game becomes more popular, players burrow deeper into the cracks of the city, taping space in churches and covered parking lots, taping lines in

warehouses, on carpets in motel conference rooms. Eastern European Cultural Halls. YMCAs. The indoor season turns players into [*flaneurs*](#). Winter pickleball is a ticket to get into the places you wouldn't otherwise see. To play on every manner of experimental sports surface that didn't catch on over the years; with so many lines from so many sports over the years, it's like inhabiting a Kandinsky painting.

Each one of these “courts” has its own terroir. Some players learn every dead spot in certain gyms—they attack and protect those spots. Some know exactly where the centre of the net is higher in the middle than the outside. Some have mastered a lob that goes over the basketball rim without hitting a low ceiling.

Higher level indoor players use what the savvy ball manufacturers now refer to as the “hybrid ball,” which skids on the wood floors. There are players who complain about this spin. About being served into the gymnastics equipment. Or the fact that the ball is indistinguishable from the surrounding walls. And then there are players who jump off a church pew to hit an Erne.

In some clubs, they play [squickleball](#). In a little gym at Douglas Park, which is two feet too short for two pickleball courts, we like to end the session with a game called Octopus. Four vs. four between the badminton lines. There's a two-foot strip between courts, which we call the Dixon Line. Two bounce rule, NVZ—everything else is the same. But the Dixon Line is “out.” Some teams will designate a blocker to prowl the Dixon line, looking for Ernes from two directions.

All these incarnations resemble pickleball, but they are likewise games unto themselves. There is a unique intimacy to these sessions, shared by the players slashing their way through the winter together, cramming in points before they're kicked out of the gym by the step aerobics instructor, and the cherry blossoms come out.

Chris Koentges has written about true underdogs and sports subculture for The Atlantic, ESPN The Magazine, and Bleacher Report. Recently, he helped revive the fabled Jericho Hill Pickleball School jerichohillpickleball.com.



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Upcoming Events

[WRC Winter Classic](#), March 11-12th, Whistler

[Global March Madness Pickleball Tournament](#), March 25-26th, Kelowna

[Battle of the Paddle 2023](#), April 21-23, Coquitlam

[Pickleball Depot BC Provincial Championship](#), May 11-14, Vernon

[2023 Pickleball Canada Western Regional Championship](#), July 6-9, Medicine Hat AB

[2023 Pickleball Canada National Championship \(the Nationals\)](#), August 23-27, Regina SK

ESCAPE THE WINTER BLUES

Jacqueline
Clarke



Most of us probably know at least one or two Canadian snowbirds who head south for winter and play pickleball for several hours a day, every day. We listen to their stories when they get back or read their Facebook posts in with a mixture of envy and admiration, looking forward to the day when we can do the same.

Until that day comes, some of us have figured out how to find a respite from Vancouver's dark, wet winter season! Here's an insight into possible options.

1. **Travel and play with friends**

In November, Suzanne extended her regular play with a group of four friends in Vancouver, to a trip to play pickleball with friends. "We found a great VRBO in Scottsdale which was a 10-minute walk to an 8-court outdoor facility with free drop-in play AND lights. We played twice a day, and we really enjoyed playing with the "locals". I'm already looking forward to our Las Vegas trip next year".

Resorts with courts and a three-hour direct flight from Vancouver, make Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Palm Springs within reach for a long weekend pickleball fix.



Photo credit: Janet Martini



Photo credit: Janet Martini



Photo credit: <https://vollibellingham.com>

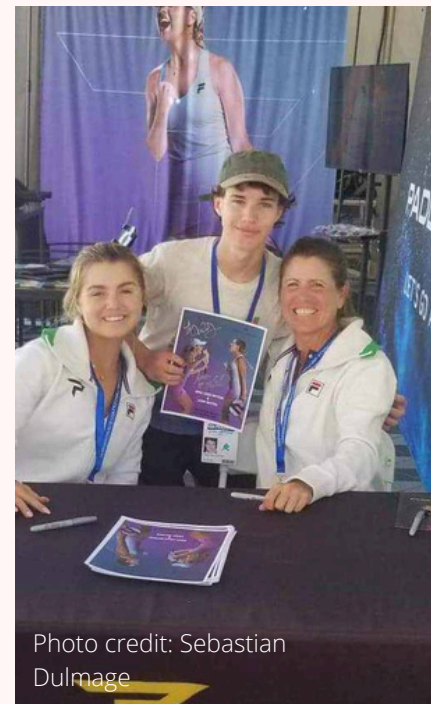


Photo credit: Sebastian Dulmage



Photo credit: Janet Martini

2. Participate in a pickleball clinic –

In January, Gail joined Vancouver-based [Morica Sports](#)' pickleball clinic at a resort in Las Brisas, Mexico to meet other Vancouver pickleballers and to improve her skills.

Clinics typically offer daily instruction, play-time and competitive games. "The round robin play every afternoon was one of the highlights for me. I really enjoyed the opportunity to play against other players at my level as well as to watch the higher-level games."

The resort activities on offer, kayaking, sailing, and snorkelling, also made the trip worthwhile. Gail is sure that she learned a lot from her time in Mexico and is looking forward to better weather in Vancouver so she can practice what she learned. In the meantime, she's already played with some of the folks she met on the trip since she's been back.

3. Travel to compete – in November, Sebastian Dulmage and his dad travelled to the 2022 Margaritaville USA Pickleball National Championships at Indian Wells Tennis Garden, just outside of Palm Springs, CA, so Sebastian could participate in the Junior competition. Aside from competing, "seeing the pros play and seeing so many people gathered for pickleball was really inspiring", said Sebastian. The explosion of organized

pickleball competitions ([PPA](#), [APP](#)) provides lots of options to flex competitive muscles and escape the Vancouver winter blues.

4. Take a pickleball tour – several companies quickly jumped on the pickleball bandwagon – offering organized tours to warm destinations in the US and Europe that include cultural or destination highlights as well as pickleball play options.

5.. Take a "pickleball" cruise – every ship in the Holland America fleet will feature dedicated pickleball courts with top-deck views by Feb 2023. Several groups offer pickleball themed cruises with converted courts, clinics, lessons and special group activities.

6. Day trip to get out of the rain – two new private indoor pickleball facilities opened recently in Bellingham – [Volli](#) and [Armory Pickleball](#). Courts are available for rental by the hour and both facilities offer food and beverage options and other activities such as darts, shuffleboard and cornhole.

With two more months of rain and cold any one of these options sound good to me!

Likes and Dislikes: QEP Renovations

Those braving the elements have had a chance to play on the newly renovated courts at QEP.



Like: Increased separation between courts.

Why: Fewer balls straying into courts
Shawn, Member for 1 year



Dislike: No lights (but likes everything else!)

Why: Can't play past 4:30pm

Abby, Member for 1 year



Like: New nets

Why: Regulation height, consistent, no sagging.

Joe, Member for 1.5 years

SPONSOR SHOUT-OUT

When you're ready to travel, the [CRBN Pro Team Tour Bag](#) and [Gearbox Court Backpack](#), available from [R&R](#) comply with airline carry-on size restrictions. And, you can take a little bit of Vancouver with you - [KINeSYS](#) sunscreen and [Lija](#) clothing are both locally-made.



Photo credit: Rackets & Runners

MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to VPA members who won gold, silver or bronze medals at the Chilliwack Winter Tournament and/or the WRC Fall Classic: Brett, Catalin, Diane, Elizabeth, Ryan and Soo-Mi.



DOWNTOWN PICKLEBALL

The YWCA is offering court rental and drop-in play bookings, Monday to Sunday, 535 Hornby St. Nets are provided, bring your paddles and ball. More info [here](#).



Photo credit: YWCA

THE STORY BEHIND....

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 pickleball court renovations at QEP.

VPA: Why were the renovations undertaken at QEP?

Erica McDonald (ED): A couple years ago, the VPB became aware of some acoustic concerns from the community related to the percussive noise generated by pickleball. We formed a working group to determine whether the concerns had merit and if they did, identify, and implement options to mitigate the noise. We contracted a firm with expertise in this area to conduct an acoustic study at all pickleball courts across the City. The report indicated that the decibel levels exceeded City noise by-laws at some courts and but could be addressed with acoustic barriers or other treatments.

VPA: Why were the renovations undertaken during the busiest time of the playing season?

ED: There was a level of urgency because we wanted to ensure no community action was taken that could affect the long-term play of pickleball at QEP of a legal action undertaken by members of the community to prevent play at QEP

due to noise concerns. For the longer term, we're aware of the ongoing noise complaint issues in other communities throughout BC. We want to ensure that wherever pickleball courts are added in the City (and we know there will be more), they will be received positively both by local residents as well as pickleball players.

VPA: And has this trial been successful?

ED: Yes, we conducted acoustic tests before and after installation and the results show that the barriers are effective, and they do mitigate the noise made by pickleball play.

VPA: Nets and barriers were also installed at the same time as the acoustic barriers. Is there a reason why both upgrades were done at the same time?

ED: Since they're dedicated courts, we knew we wanted to upgrade the nets and barriers to bring the location up to a good standard for pickleball play. But we felt that it would be best for all stakeholders if the work was

completed in one go.

- For Metro Vancouver (owner of the reservoir the courts are built on) – Their significant concerns about potential damage to the reservoir membrane by the drilling required to install the barriers had to be addressed before any work could be done.
- For the community – upgraded facilities (nets and barriers) would likely encourage more users which would increase the noise.
- For pickleball players – preferable to close the courts once instead of twice for two installations; or closing the courts repeatedly if inadequate installation resulted in the barriers being blown down.

VPA: Can you share any of the VPB's short- and long-term plans for pickleball?

ED: We are looking at extending some of the pop-up court locations until the Sport Court Strategy (tennis, pickleball, volleyball, etc.) can be developed and implemented. The Strategy would include a deep dive into sport trends, predicting future demand, assessing existing court conditions as well as identifying best practices from other municipalities. This Strategy will guide future pickleball development in Vancouver.

Erica is a long-time admirer of pickleball. Based on her suggestion, the 2011 Ontario Senior Games, hosted by the City of Oshawa, was the first major games event in Canada to include pickleball as a demonstration sport. She and her colleague, Ian Stewart, will be presenting at the BC Parks Conference on February 22nd regarding VPB's experience with the "pop-up solution" and noise mitigation at QEP. She says "The VPA has been a delight to work with. They are passionate, advocates for their sport".

Note: VPA research suggests that resurfacing either of the two pop-locations could cost \$100,000+.

BREAKING NEWS!

Pickleball players in Vancouver will be pleased to hear that as of February 24, 2023, the conversion of temporary pop-up courts at Jericho Beach Park and Champlain Heights Park has been extended indefinitely.

The two southern-most tennis courts at Jericho Beach Park and the two eastern-most tennis courts at Champlain Heights Park will be dedicated to pickleball use for the duration of this extension, but there will be a short interruption in court availability this spring as both of these locations are scheduled to have new lines painted.

Read more [here](#).

BOX TOURNAMENT NEWS

Last summer's VPA Box Tournament was a huge success! 101 women and 90 men took part, taking advantage of the opportunity to meet new people, test themselves and improve their game.

Congratulations to Elizabeth Dulmage, the Tournament's most improved player! Elizabeth started the league in position #37, climbed to #5 and ended the season at #9. Lookout for updates on the Ladder League for Summer 2023. The League is open to VPA members. *Note: (x) = number of times at #1*

Women Players League

1	Lisa Yang (xxx)
2	Yeena Feng (x)
3	Kinder Mottus (xxx)
4	Sandra Matsuyama (xx)

Men Players League

1	Richard Xiang (x)
2	Tim Mallach (x)
3	Leo Bell (x)
4	Catalin Costea (xxxxx)

Women Teams League

1	Julienne Joe (xx)	Mona Lee (xx)
2	Marisa Guan (x)	Sandra Matsuyama (x)
3	Louisa Flinn (x)	Ruth Johnson (x)
4	Marilyn Massong	Karen Wain

Men Teams League

1	Bruce Cahusac (xxx)	Rick Dietrich (xxx)
2	Catalin Costea (x)	Richard Lee (x)
3	David Xu	Taron Hall
4	James Jonghoon Lee	Norm Wolff

Mixed Teams League

1	Nashila Jamal (xxx)	Catalin Costea (xxx)
2	Ruth Johnson (x)	Bruce Cahusac (x)
3	Diane Dol (xxx)	Tim Mallach (xxx)
4	Mona Lee	Richard Lee

Men Singles league

1	Rick Dietrich (x)
2	Leo Bell
3	Paul Bain
4	Quentin Fong (xx)

In the Neighbourhood

Volli Pickleball opened the first pickleball sports bar in **Bellingham, WA** in November 2022. Located at 4190 Cordata Parkway, the 24,000 square feet of indoor space offers pickleball court rentals, golf simulator, shuffleboard, cornhole and darts. Check it out [here](#).

Pickleball players in **North Vancouver** are facing a possible court rental fee increase from \$8.04 to \$8.50. The proposal was considered but not decided at the last District of North Vancouver meeting. A motion regarding the increase of rental fees for local outdoor sports facilities was referred to staff along with a call for further community engagement.

Have you heard the rumors? A major new pickleball facility will be opening soon in **Richmond**. Keep an eye on the [PBC website](#) - they'll be making an announcement on February 28, 2023.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

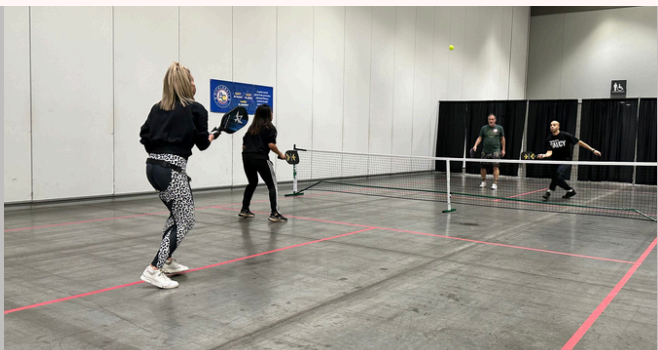
There is one upside to less outdoor play time. It gives VPA members more time for community outreach. “Building our connections and bringing pickleball to new and diverse communities is one of the VPA’s highest priorities”, said VPA President, Greg Feehan. The VPA has been taking advantage of the “free time” to start new and grow established initiatives



At the end of January, the VPA undertook its most ambitious project yet – raising funds to provide 300 paddles for 10 elementary schools, 1,800 intermediate students. Five VPA volunteers, Catalin, Cyndi, Jeff, Sharon and Tony, teamed up to launch the EVES (East Vancouver Elementary Schools) Project. The project includes a professional development session for staff from 10 elementary schools led by the EVES Team. Each participating teacher will receive 30 paddles and 30 balls so they can immediately start a program in their school. It’s not too late to get involved. Make a donation [here](#)

VPA members, Cheryl, Janet and Praveen ran a "Learn to Play Pickleball" session for residents and staff at the brand-new [Covenant House](#). The new 10-storey building has 40 new shelter units and various supporting amenities and services, including an art therapy room, classrooms, fitness facilities, and outdoor areas. They left behind a donation of a net, 10 paddles and 30 balls that youth who visit the centre can use. “I know everyone – youth and youth workers alike – had a great time learning the sport. I think I can speak on behalf of us all that our faces were sore from all the smiling and laughing” said Kaleigh Gellert, Manager, Leadership Giving. In 2022, Covenant House provided drop-in support for 510 youth.





VPA volunteers, Chris, Cheryl, Colleen, Jacqueline, Janet, Mona and Paul joined the Pickleball BC team on February 12th to promote pickleball at the 2023 Wellness Show, Western Canada's biggest and most established health and lifestyles showcase. On a taped court, the volunteers helped 220 show attendees try pickleball for the first time. Interested persons got a list of all the BC clubs so they can connect with the local community and take the next step in making pickleball part of their lives.

In conjunction with Pickleball BC, the VPA participated in an "Intro to Pickleball" session for members of the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA). The BCRPA is a not-for-profit organization that plays a central role in leading the enrichment and improvement of the quality of life of British Columbians and their communities. Of the twenty participants, 16 had never played pickleball before. Several members of the Vancouver Park Board team were also in attendance.



“WE BOTH LOVE SUNSHINE”

Introducing VPA’s newest sponsor: Shift Energy Group

The VPA’s sponsors are critical to our success. In 2022, funding from sponsors was used to provide the nets and lockboxes that made the Vancouver Park Board’s five pop-up court locations “ready to play” for our members.

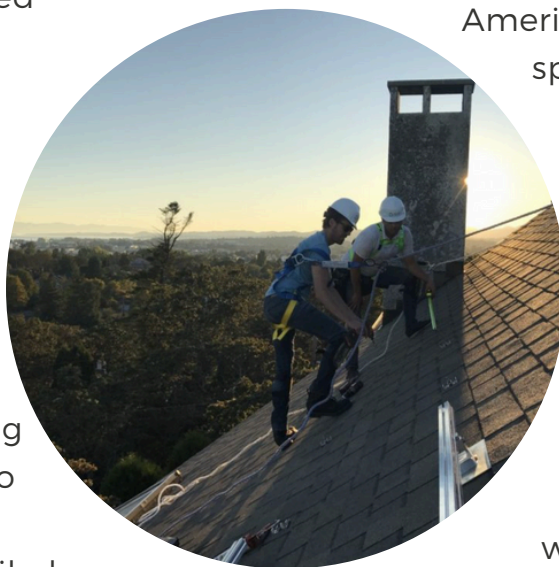
This month, [Shift Energy Group](#), joined the VPA family. We spoke with Chris Palliser, the company’s National Marketing Specialist, to find out more about the VPA’s newest sponsor and their link to pickleball. Chris thinks accessibility and growth are clear connectors between solar energy and pickleball.

When Chris recently started playing pickleball with his wife and two daughters (aged 8 and 9) he immediately appreciated the sport’s accessibility. “By the second time out, we had a couple of rallies going and we’re all looking forward to warmer days so we can get out and play regularly”, said Chris. Similarly,

converting to solar energy is easily accessible for Vancouver residents. 0% interest federal loans, a south-, east- or west-facing roof with lots of sun and BC Hydro’s [net metering program](#) make switching to solar energy an easy option for homeowners and commercial users. Additionally, Shift Energy Group offers free quotes and a 25-year energy production warranty.

According to the Canadian Renewable Energy Association, Canada’s solar energy capacity grew by [25.8% in 2022](#). While this doesn’t quite match the rate of pickleball growth in Canada (tripling the number of players between 2020 to 2021 according to Pickleball Canada), Chris is also excited to connect North America’s fastest growing sport, pickleball, with the fastest growing segment of the renewable energy sector in Canada.

There are other similarities too. Solar panels work better in cooler weather. “As with any other technology, solar



panels produce optimum performance in cooler temperatures,” said Chris. So even though Arizona or California gets more sun, the heat in these locations reduces the panels’ efficiency. The same can be said for pickleball players!

Thankfully, Chris was not put off by his first competitive experience, participating in the Victoria Regional Pickleball Association’s Christmas Tournament held on December 10, 2022. “I got my butt kicked!”, ex-tennis player, Chris admitted. Shift Energy Group sponsored the tournament, providing locally sourced medals for the winners. “We hope to grow our involvement in solar energy and pickleball, across Canada in the years to come”, said Chris.

Shift Energy Group is based in Victoria, BC and provides solar energy solutions to clients across Canada, growing from 1 megawatt (MW) of solar installed in 2020 to 6MW installed in 2022, enough to power 500 homes for one year. The company design-builds solar photovoltaic systems and energy storage systems for residential and commercial clients.

To find out more, visit their [website](#) or check out Shift Energy Group’s [weekly podcast](#).



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?

Email: newsletter@vancouverpickleball.ca