

PICKLEBALL IS FOR EVERYBODY!

THE VANCITY PICKLER

May - June 2023 Newsletter



PRESIDENT'S GREETING

Greg
Feehan



Much of this edition is about youth and the future. We can reasonably anticipate that 10 years from now far more youth will be playing our game. We can also reasonably worry that we do not have enough courts as it is. In the short term, more players will probably bring more congestion. In the long term, that youth incursion may be the factor that forces the widespread construction of new courts or repurposing of old ones. The Parks Board have intimated privately that they, too, are frustrated by the pace of development. Everyone I have talked to there assures us that new courts are in our future. The only question is when.

As important, the Parks Board does not control School Board land or school gyms. The more schools that teach students pickleball, the more likely they are to set up courts both inside their gyms and on the tarmacs and playing surfaces beside their schools. Youth may be the very thing that brings us our needed courts.



THE FUTURE OF PICKLEBALL

Greg
Feehan



We had two paddles up at Queen Elizabeth. Two buff men in their twenties reluctantly agreed to play us seniors. Two facts became quickly apparent. One, they were oblivious to the need to stand at the kitchen, they had never heard of a reset, and dinks and drops were not part of their repertoire. The other fact, though, proved more decisive – they were young. Also, very quick. I pulled out all my best stuff (yeah, I know my best stuff is only adequate), but despite their lack of reverence for the nuances of the game, they were beating us.

One of them would be completely out of position and I would skilfully and deceptively angle a speed-

up dink shot to their offhand side. With most opponents, given such poor positioning, I would have just hit a winner. But both were so quick that it was not possible to hit a ball away from them even with deception, topspin, speed-ups, and placement. When they did get the ball, which they always did, it routinely came back with speed. A lot of it. In the end, we managed to eke out an 11-9 victory, but this relied on us frequently hitting the top of the net with the ball barely dribbling over or them just barely hitting outside the line (or that's how we called it anyway).

However, quickness, reaction time, hand-eye coordination, and power washed away all the advantages of our superior appreciation of the fundamentals and our carefully executed play. I can only imagine how good they will be when they learn to play proper position and add in a soft game. Given their athleticism, I am guessing this will take two weeks. Pickleball is rapidly evolving from its gentle recreational roots to a game of

quickness and power.

In May, a Washington Post opinion columnist, Rick Riley, described our sport as one where you move “less than 18 inches in each direction for two hours” defending “an area the size of a rug” against “mostly very old people”. That was yesterday. Today, the incursion of youth is changing our game. The requisite third shot drop is now increasingly a third shot drive. Quickness and footwork are now neutralizing placement. Powerful groundstrokes are now making skilled resets increasingly difficult. Ernes are now being made from the opposite side of the court by individuals capable of leaping six feet across the kitchen.

This evolution from pastime to athletics shouldn't be surprising. We have seen it with other sports, from golf to tennis to basketball, whereby a gentle recreational pursuit increasingly comes to rely upon speed, coordination, power, and quickness.



Photo credit: Tom Liao

I asked two teenagers who often frequent Queen Elizabeth how they thought the incursion of youth would change the game. I asked Sebastian Dulmage how he saw the sport being different 10 years from now than it is today. He listed, among other aspects, vastly improved technology, Olympic representation, stronger youth development (hopefully with scholarships), and bigger and better facilities.

I asked Justin Liao the same question. He responded: "I can see pickleball as a school sport with cities and provincial just like every other school sport at the moment. I can possibly see the sport growing so much, there will be post-secondary scholarships for pickleball." I also asked Justin whether he thought more young people on the court would change the dynamics of the game? He responded: "The sport will change with less resets and soft game and with the reaction time of youth and athleticism, I can see the sport with more hand battles and more attacks."

I thought I should ask someone even younger than Justin and Sebastian. As this article is about the future, I asked ChatGPT how youth would change the game. Here is how it responded: The increasing number of youth participating in pickleball is expected

to have a transformative impact on the nature of the game. As this younger demographic embraces and contributes to the sport, several changes are likely to emerge, influencing various aspects of pickleball. Let's delve into how the increased youth participation will shape the game:

- **Agility and Speed:** Youthful players tend to possess natural agility, speed, and quick reflexes. Their physical abilities may introduce a new level of athleticism to pickleball. The game may see faster-paced rallies, swift court coverage, and lightning-quick reactions. The heightened speed and agility among young players could elevate the overall intensity and excitement of the matches.
- **Technological Adaptations:** With the rise of technology, youth players may introduce innovative adaptations to enhance the game. This could include the development of specialized pickleball equipment, such as high-performance paddles, advanced court surfaces, or wearable technology to track performance metrics. Technological advancements may shape the future of pickleball and optimize players' experience.

- **Skill Mastery and Innovation:** The influx of young players brings fresh perspectives and a willingness to experiment with new techniques. As they immerse themselves in the game, youth may develop innovative strategies, shot variations, and playing styles. Their creativity and adaptability may inspire novel approaches to shot selection, court positioning, and game tactics, leading to an evolution in the overall skill set displayed on the court.
- **Competitive Levels:** Increased youth participation can raise the level of competition in pickleball. Young players, driven by ambition and a desire for excellence, may push boundaries and strive for higher skill levels. This heightened competitiveness could spur others to elevate their game, resulting in more challenging matches and a greater emphasis on training, coaching, and talent development within the sport.
- **Youth-Oriented Events and Programs:** The growing number of young pickleball enthusiasts may lead to the establishment of dedicated youth-oriented events, leagues, and programs. Organizers may design tournaments or leagues specifically catering to youth players, fostering their engagement, and providing opportunities for skill development and friendly competition. These initiatives can further nurture the talent pool of young pickleball players.
- **Social Media Influence:** The youth demographic is highly connected through social media platforms. Their participation in pickleball could bring increased visibility to the sport through online communities, sharing of gameplay highlights, and engagement with



Photo credit: Tom Liao



Photo credit: Tom Liao



Photo credit: Tom Liao

- The amplification of pickleball on social media may attract more players, sponsors, and supporters, ultimately expanding the reach and popularity of the sport.
- Inclusive Environment: The involvement of youth in pickleball can foster an inclusive environment that embraces players of all ages. Their enthusiasm and energy may encourage intergenerational participation, bridging the gap between different age groups. The sport may become a platform for building connections and fostering mentorship opportunities, creating a vibrant and diverse pickleball community.

Welcome to the "future shock" brought to us by teenagers and generative AI.

NATIONAL CANADIAN PICKLEBALL SURVEY

The results of a survey of 2,000 Canadian households conducted in January 2023, illustrates the continuous growth and changing face of pickleball in Canada. The results indicate that more than 1.37 million individual Canadians now play pickleball at least once per month, with more than half playing four or more times per month, up from just over 1 million last year.

Pickleball remains popular among older adults, but the growth in numbers is coming from younger adults – particularly those aged 18 to 34. More information available [here](#).

Upcoming Tournaments

2023 Pickleball Canada
Western Regional, Jul 6 - 9,
Medicine Hat, AB

2023 Douglas Park Charity
Tournament, Jul 6 - 9,
Langley

WRC Summer Classic, Jul 7 -
9, Whistler

Youth Slam 2023, Jul 13,
Surrey

Mid-summer Slam 2023,
Surrey, Jul 14 - 16

Shake & Bake, Burnaby, Jul
28 - 30

Canada Deaf Pickleball.
Surrey, Aug 4 - 6

Super Senior Slam, Surrey,
Aug 4 - 6

Fraser Valley Open, Surrey,
Aug 19 - 20

2023 55+ BC Games,
Abbotsford, Aug 22 - 26

Canadian Nationals, Regina,
SK, Aug 23 - 27

For more information or to
register visit:
pickleballbrackets.com

PANDORA CUP

TEAM PICKLEBALL

Major League Pickleball Format

Team construction:

Form your own teams of 4 or join teams

Strategy picking your team

Max 2 men per team

- Weekly substitutions allowed (substitutions must be within skill rating and must not exceed the number of men per team limit)

Prizes for best team name

Prizes for best team costume

Scan here for
details &
registration



For Level under 3.5
5pm-7pm

OR



For Level under 4.0
7.05pm-9.05pm

**EVERY TUESDAY STARTING FROM
4 JULY - 22 AUG, 2023**

PANDORA PARK TENNIS COURT
2325 FRANKLIN ST, VANCOUVER, BC

For any questions, please call/email :
Walt - 604.376.3936 (himongi@gmail.com)



BC PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIP

632 players took part in the first ever B.C. Provincial Championship, held at the National Bank Financial Okanagan Wealth Advisors Pickleball Complex in Vernon, May 11 – May 14, 2023.

Congratulations to VPA members who medalled in their games!

- Sebastian Dulmage - Gold, Singles, 3.5
- Quentin Fong, Gold, Singles, 4.0
- Elaine Yagi, Bronze, Mixed Doubles, 4.5/55+
- Elaine Yagi, Gold, Women's Doubles, 4.0/65+
- Jackie Steede, Bronze, Women's Doubles 3.0
- Ruth Johnson, Silver, Women's Doubles 4.0
- Diane Dol, Silver, Women's Doubles 4.0
- Patrice Leung, Bronze, Singles, 3.5/60+



Photo credit: Mario Bottazzini



video credit: Jacqueline Clarke



Photo credit: Tom Liao



Photo credit: Tom Liao



Courtesy Patrice Leung



Photo credit: Tom Liao



Photo credit: Tom Liao



Photo credit: Tom Liao

DEVELOPING YOUTH PICKLEBALL

*Tony Casey
Sharon Hoy*



The EVES Slamboree '23 happened on June 8! Forty-eight grade 6/7 students from the Eastside participated in this celebration. The pickleball sounds of happiness bounced off the walls of Gladstone School. It was a great success.

East Vancouver Elementary Schools project is all about kids experiencing the joy of pickleball while at school. This has been made possible through the visionary leadership and tremendous commitment of East Vancouver elementary school teachers.

Teresa Harris-McKinley, Raja Sabbagha, Sean Smith, Willy Wan, Brian Ee, Curtis Lai and their colleagues are creating more opportunities for more students to play the game. And their approach is to build pickleball within school settings in a way that ensures growth and sustainability.

The June 8th Slamboree involved students from Sir Wilfred Grenfell, Chief Maquinna, Tecumseh and



Photo credit: Sharon Hoy and Tony Casey (this page and the next page)



... EVES is spreading the joy of pickleball by making it accessible to all, especially East Vancouver children. I'm energized and even more committed to the "Pickleball is Life" belief that I'd like to instill in students and their families. Willy Wan, Grenfell Elementary

Thunderbird schools. Pickle.Pods with mixes of students competed in a friendly round-robin tournament. Coaches Cyndi Boado, Jeff Willett, Justin Liao, Tony Casey, Sharon Hoy and Chris & son Preston guided the Pickle.Pods along with teachers Willy, Raja, Teresa, Brian and Curtis. Great team effort, everyone! Thank you.

The Vancouver Pickleball Association is proud to have sparked the creation of EVES. A variety of events have taken place since November 2022. The next 12 months promises to see even greater enthusiasm and more pickleball activities in schools.



In the Neighbourhood

The Lynn Creek Community Recreation Centre is expected to open in the new Lynn Creek Town Centre in **North Vancouver** in early 2024.

The new community recreation centre will include a full-sized gymnasium to host court games including pickleball, and 49 underground parking stalls with several electric vehicle charging stations.



Congratulations to the **Richmond** Pickleball Association. Twenty-six of the association's members won medals at the BC Provincial Pickleball Championships, including a podium sweep for the 4.5 men's doubles division, all ages. Well done!



RAINBOW PICKLEBALL IS BACK

May 7th kicked off the return of the [Vancouver Rainbow Pickleball](#) initiative. Sunday sessions include drills, play and introduction for newbies. [Fridays at the Curling Rink](#) are play sessions with social time in the Curling Lounge afterwards!



MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to VPA members who won gold, silver or bronze medals at five tournaments in May and June: Bob, Brett, Caitlin, Calvin, David, Diane, Jackie, Jeanine, Keith, Kelsey, Mario, Marisa, Mary-Jo, Nashila and Ruth. Full results available [here](#).



STEVE DEAKIN AT ROGERS CENTRE

BC boy, Steve Deakin, [threw out the first pitch](#) for the Blue Jay's Pickleball Day on May 20. "I was proud to be a part of such a memorable moment that will surely help the growth of the sport we all love." said Deakin, Canada's top men's player.



THE INSIDE DROP: THE PERFECT PADDLE

Anita
Bora



Finding the right fit in pickleball can be challenging; whether you're a beginner or an experienced player, the paddle is probably your most important accessory and usually a difficult choice. We talked to Luca Berg from Vancouver's flagship store, [Rackets & Runners](#), for the inside drop on finding the perfect match. The store offers services and products in top-quality rackets, paddles, running shoes and athletic gear.

Whether it's the design, technology, or weight - there's a lot of headway being made in the world of pickleball paddles. From terms like 360° Proto Molding to Air Dynamic Throat, and Sweet Spot - it can all be quite intimidating for a beginner who's just starting out playing a few games with friends at the local neighbourhood courts.

How does one "swipe left or right" in this high-tech and rapidly changing game?

Beginner Play. We asked Luca for some tips on how beginners should choose their first paddle.

According to Luca, there are usually two types of beginner players in pickleball - those who have never played any sport at all and those who have some experience with a racket sport (e.g. tennis, table tennis, squash and/or badminton).

Best options for tennis players - these players are usually focused on power play so the longer paddles (16.5 inches is the longest) might be better for them.

Best options for TT/ badminton - these players might be better off with the shorter, wider paddles, which offer more opportunity to spin the ball and play the soft touch game.

That's great advice but if you're a complete beginner. here are some of the factors you need to look out for in a paddle.

Length: The longest paddle is 16 inches and the handle can be as long as 10 inches. Longer handles give you more leverage for power shots, and the spinning shots will be better. In general, the standard size is the most popular shape and it also gives you more control at the net. The disadvantage of the longer handle is that it's harder to control. And therefore, probably not

the first paddle you want to start your pickleball journey with.

Weight: When it comes to weight, heavier paddles do give you more power. They are better for power, absorbing shock and stability. And overall, they will feel softer. The downside is that they are harder to maneuver. A long heavy paddle is a good choice for top-end spin control and power. Tennis players, for this reason, gravitate towards a heavier paddle.

Width & Shape: The paddle width (and total area of the paddle) determines the surface area available for play. The longer paddle will have a narrower playing area, while the wider one has a larger sweet spot area and is more forgiving.

Core Thickness: Paddles come with a certain thickness and generally the thicker core feels softer as the balls spend more time on the paddle 'bed' - or the area of the paddle. Drop shots can be more effective. To sum it up, the thinner core gives you better spin and power so for extreme power play, you would choose a long thin paddle. While for the touch and more nuanced shots, you'd choose a light, thick and

shorter paddle.

At this stage, Luca's advice is that the best solution is to try out a paddle first through a demo program (R&R offers one).

While the demo paddle can be beneficial, the other thing one could do, suggests Luca, is to get a very basic \$20 paddle just to kick off the journey. If a beginner has some background in sports, the chances are pretty high that they'll quickly get into the pickleball game because let's face it... it's an addictive game!

Intermediate Play. So you've been playing pickleball consistently now

Top 5 Budget-Friendly Paddles (below \$ 150)

1. Vatic Pro Prism Flash 16mm (\$137.98)
2. Babolat RNGD Touch (\$129.98)
3. Babolat RNGD Power (\$129.98)
4. Franklin X-1000 (\$99.98)
5. Head Extreme Elite (\$99.98)

Top 5 Best Sellers

1. Selkirk Invikta Vanguard 2.0
2. Vatic Pro Flash 16mm
3. Joola Hyperion CFS 16mm
4. Selkirk Epic Vanguard 2.0
5. CRBNIX Power 16mm

Recommended Ball Brands

- Fast Play: Durafast/Franklin
- Slow Play: Onix/Penn
- Indoor Play: Onix



Photo credit: Rackets& Runners



for over a year and are looking for a new paddle. What are the few things you need to watch out for?

"Paddles do have a life span and they don't last forever", says Luca. Once you've been playing regularly, you might feel less control, some areas of your paddle might seem 'dead' and there's a significant drop-off in spin. This is probably a sign to change your paddle. Again, demo paddles are the way to go. By this time, you would also know some of your strengths and weaknesses. Luca points out this interesting way to assess your next paddle. The question to ask is whether you want to improve your weaknesses or play your strengths.

As an example, Luca points out that being from a tennis background, he likes to complement his strengths (which are hard shots and spin control) and he looks for paddles which offer him these options.

Advanced Play. Moving on to intermediate and competitive/advanced players. At this stage, you're playing in some leagues and want to bring out your "A" game. What Luca advises is to make sure you know your strengths and play to your advantage, with a paddle which works for you.

Even while playing tournaments etc, his advice is to play with the chosen brand/type of racket throughout, rather than trying out too many options. This is important, says Luca: "You can have multiple rackets; but like in tennis where pros have the same brand of racket, strung exactly" - that's pretty much the same strategy you should be using when it comes to competitive play in pickleball.

Once you've found the shape that works for you; it's probably better to stick to it and only transition from shorter to longer to get more out of the paddle. Instead of getting too focused on gear, try and make sure you stick to the paddle which brings out your best. Every paddle has both a negative and positive side. You can't have it all! Find happy medium and what works best

Top 5 Paddles for Advanced Play

1. **CRBN1/2X Power:** Amazing power, feel, and spin potential. 1X for more power/spin and 2X for more manoeuvrability and hand-quickness.
2. **Joola Perseus/Scorpeus 16:** Perfect blend of every characteristic (power, spin, control, touch, stability and feel). Perseus for more power, stability and spin and Scorpeus for more hand speed and manoeuvrability.
3. **Selkirk Invikta Vanguard 2.0 MW:** Best-in-class control and touch. Almost a cheat code for dinking and resets.
4. **Vatic Pro Flash 16mm:** Amazing maneuverability/power/spin/control in an exciting hybrid package that is great for stability, hand speed and quick movement.
5. **Joola Hyperion CFS 16 mm:** Still amazing playability even though Ben Johns has moved on to the Perseus. Softer and more touch-oriented than Perseus with less power and spin, but the best feel and stability in class.

for you, is Luca's advice.

Avoiding Pickleball Injuries

We talked next about injuries and the few things to watch out for are elbow and wrist issues. Tennis elbow seems to have made its way into the PB world too, now with players sporting all kinds of elbow and wrist support.

It's not so much the weight of the paddle, says Luca, as much as your technique. Also, a lot of new players, never having used some of the muscles required, start developing these aches

and pains.

However, contrary to popular belief, a thicker core paddle might work better in this case as it's able to absorb a lot more of the stress, as compared to a thin paddle. So switching to a 'lighter' paddle might not be the solution. Working on technique might be a better option.

According to Luca, it's easy to snap the wrist or a sudden movement, which will definitely result in injury. The key is to be aware of these joint-related movements and be mindful that you're not stretching out your wrist completely. Pickleball shots don't usually require too much of the backward swing and though it's a very commonly seen issue, being aware of it can avoid some of these injuries. Be aware of how much strain you're putting on your wrist and elbows.

And lastly, but most importantly, pay attention to your shoes! Avoid running and other casual shoes and opt for court shoes anytime you're playing - they help avoid common injuries caused by rolling of the ankle and foot.

Thanks for the advice, Luca!

By the Numbers

VPA at the Curling Rink

9 Volunteers for venue set-up

15 VPA Events run in May and June

211 pickleballers registered for events in June

2 Tournaments scheduled in July

7 DUPR events in 4 months

10 Rainbow events scheduled in 4 months

Visit the VPA's [website for events](#) or visit the [Vancouver Recreation site to book court rentals, open play and lessons.](#)



Photo credit: Janet Martini



Photo credit: Kelsey German



Photo credit: Kelsey German



Photo credit: Jacqueline Clarke



Photo credit: Irene King



Courtesy: Louise Bryce



Photo credit: Irene King



Photo credit: Kelsey German

A FOND FAREWELL

We are saying farewell to Diane Dol. Diane is moving to Campbell River at the end of summer!

Diane has been an active Pickleball player in our community: coaching pickleball, organizing lots of play groups and successfully participating in tournaments all over BC.

Pickleball is not just a great sport. If you are lucky enough, you find and make new friends like Diane.

Diane, they are very lucky to have you on the Island. We will miss you, your jokes and big smile. Wishing you all the best. This is farewell and not good bye.



HAPPY CANADA DAY!

**Registration is open for
the Canadian Nationals !**

551 players have already registered for the [Pickleball Canada National Championship 2023](#), Aug 23 - 27 in Regina, SK.

So far, only 34 BC-based players have signed up. Don't miss out on the biggest Canadian pickleball event of the year!

**Canadian National
Pickleball Day is August
12th!**

How are you celebrating? Look out for the VPA events coming to an outdoor court near you!

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

Building and keeping our community connected

Have an idea for a future edition? Have a question?

Email: newsletter@vancouverpickleball.ca