



# Pickle Juice

Thanks for reading this newsletter.  
We welcome your comments/suggestions/articles.

Send them to: [Carol White](#)

Editor

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## Winter 2025

### From the President's Desk

Andy Dalal

HCPA board is excited to announce the move to CourtReserve as our main technology platform for registering for all our open play, both free and paid, as well as other event registrations such as clinic and happy hours, membership management, and notifications. With almost 2000 members, we have outgrown our current systems, Stack Team App and our current website. We will be using CourtReserve to replace both the mobile app and the website starting on Sunday, February 2, 2025. This means that the first paid indoor sessions to be purchased on CourtReserve will be for Friday, February 7 and Sunday, February 9 rather than on Stack Team App. We expect these tickets to be available on CourtReserve at about Noon on Sunday, February 2.

We want to thank Earl Sneeringer for designing and maintaining our current website and helping to get HCPA off the ground. In addition, we want to thank Joe Pagan, Earl Sneeringer (again), and Troy Osten, for building this exciting new platform.

Additionally, to enable HCPA to continue to put on fantastic pickleball and non-pickleball events, to replace and to buy new equipment, and for upkeep of the new electronic platform, we are increasing each membership levels by \$15 when your current membership expires.

What this means for you:

- In the next week, you will be receiving a "Welcome" email directly from CourtReserve with a link to join. Please follow the instructions to join.
- All HCPA members have been imported into CourtReserve at their current membership level - individual, couple or family - and your membership will continue until the current expiration date, so members should not have to purchase another membership during the transfer unless your membership has expired. The membership transfer was a large import, and we expect some errors, so please bear with us as we straighten them out.
- CourtReserve requires all members to have a unique email - even if they are part of a couple or family membership.

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- When logging into CourtReserve for the first time, you will be required to provide a credit card number, this is so any events and membership renewals can be paid. If you already have an account due to being a member of Dill Dinker's or The Put Away, then you won't have to make a password or provide a credit card again.
- The new website will be at [HowardCountyPickleball.org](http://HowardCountyPickleball.org) and will continue to have a wealth of HCPA information.

Since CourtReserve lacks a chat capability, HCPA is forming a WhatsApp group for member communication. If you would like to join the WhatsApp group, please click the following link in STEP 3.

The following is our countdown to a successful launch to get everyone onboard: 4...3...2...1...LAUNCH

### **4.) CourtReserve action items, all members need to do:**

- a) Use the link in our Welcome Email (to be sent on or about January 15, 2025) to access your CourtReserve account
- b) Create a password in CourtReserve if you haven't previously done so
- c) Sign the HCPA waiver
- d) Fill out the Personal Information form and Payment Profile on CourtReserve if you haven't previously done so.

### **3.) Join the HCPA WhatsApp group at: [HCPA WhatsApp Group](#)**

### **2.) Things to keep in mind:**

- CourtReserve uses the Personal Information profile to determine eligibility for events which is why birthdays, event type preferences, and addresses are required. If you do not fill out the Personal Information form, you will be ineligible for any events which have qualifications such as a Women's league ages 50+ .
- Members who want to play in a scheduled session must now register (RSVP) in CourtReserve. There are no exceptions. This is because when a session is

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cancelled, only members who have registered for a particular session will receive the notification rather than the notification going to all HCPA members. Thus, we expect many fewer notifications/emails regarding scheduled sessions being generally sent to our members.

- This is a huge undertaking and there will be hiccups, please be patient.
- Should you have any questions or concerns, please send them to our WhatsApp group chat as other members may have the same question or alternatively if it's a member specific question via email to [hocopball@gmail.com](mailto:hocopball@gmail.com), please use the subject "CR Question".

### 1.) APP to download

Download the CourtReserve app; never miss another event registration.

Also, here is a video on the overview of CourtReserve. [Overview](#)

Paddles Up!  
HCPA

## Vice President of Operations

Patty Guzman

HCPA had a wonderful 2024, with increased player development opportunities, several new session coordinators, the addition of a new pickleball machine and lots of fun, social events. Highlights of the member relations committee included a couple happy hours at Nottingham's with games, appetizers and non-pickleball socialization; open play at the PutAway to thank session coordinators for their hard work, our annual picnic at Savage Mill Park, with play on eight courts, music, and sandwiches; a party at Oakland Mills High School to welcome new HCPA members; and a Halloween party and pickleball play at Western Regional Park. On the equipment management front, HCPA bought several new Swiftnets, and we are in the process of reconciling our inventory of equipment.

Looking forward, we will be partnering with Howard County Recreation and Parks on a large festival at Western Regional Park in May, 2025. We're also looking forward to the opening of dedicated pickleball courts at Rockburn and Blandair Parks in 2025.

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### What's New

Joanne Griesser

This year the Association teamed up with Howard County Recreation and Parks (HCRP) and hosted the 2nd Annual Halloween event on the Western Regional Courts, The PickleBoo! This Potluck event was held on October 25th. Tickets were \$5 for a fun night of food, friends and pickleball. All of the dedicated courts were reserved for the event and an additional eight courts were set up by HCRP on the tennis courts. A total of 96 people bought tickets. The courts were full! Many of the attendees wore costumes, and prizes were awarded to some of the more elaborate entries.

We would like to thank our volunteers, Lisa Babcock and Teresa Love for organizing this fun event. The decorations were great and got everyone in the mood to celebrate.

HCPA hosted a thank-you event for session coordinators and instructors at Dill Dinkers on December 7th. Over 40 individuals enjoyed open play on seven courts. We served pizza, veggies, and cookies and raffled off a few small items. In addition, representatives from Grass Roots and the Alzheimer's Association were on hand to thank HCPA for our recent donations to these worthwhile causes.

#### New Indoor Sessions:

The Association has contracted with Dill Dinkers in Columbia for indoor courts Friday mornings 9-11 and Sunday Afternoon 1-3, (March 3-5). If you haven't seen these on the schedule, please check it out. Only \$10 for 2 hours of play.

### Treasurer's Report

Ken Billingsley

As of our last Board meeting (December 2024), the HCPA had over \$68,000 in cash. This is up from our beginning of the year balance and reflects a sizable investment in equipment over the year, specifically new nets. We have donated over \$10,000 to charities during the year, which does not include equipment donations. Because of the success of our prior tournaments coupled with our growing membership, we were required to file a detailed tax return this past year and expect to file another detailed tax return for the upcoming year.

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The funds available to HCPA are providing flexibility to replace assets as well as support the growth of Pickleball at local schools.

### New Year's Resolutions

Gail Kennedy

As I awoke on New Year's Day, I wasn't feeling very positive and I thought, what can I do to make this year worthwhile? Playing pickleball was my first thought, of course. Well maybe not the first, but that thought was in there. What really came to mind was helping others--shifting the focus off of myself and onto those around me. I love that HCPA has given us many opportunities to give. The first example that comes to mind is our connection with Special Olympics. You can make a difference in the lives of those athletes. Your positive attitude, pickleball expertise, and kindness can make the day of people in our community. Contact Bob Sans if you're interested. The second example is volunteering to teach beginners the game that we love. By getting people to start playing they get exercise and opportunities to socialize that they didn't have before. We know how important pickleball is to us; it makes sense to share it with others. Contact Jay McTighe if you'd like to help. We are always looking for session coordinators. Contact Mark Covington if you are willing to run a session. We need many volunteers to run the Maryland Open each year. We will advertise for volunteers in the months before the tournament. The tournament revenue along with your membership dues have enabled HCPA to donate over \$21,000 to Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center over the last several years. That's powerful giving. And just recently we have connected to the Maryland prison system to introduce pickleball to inmates at a men and a women's prison in Jessup. Please see the article by Patty Guzman. I hope you will join me in reaching out helping hands in our community through pickleball and other endeavors. What we'll receive in return is priceless.

### Session Coordinators

Mark Covington

Greetings to all our HCPA members

The year 2024 saw continued growth in the sport of pickleball and for our organization as well. The number of sessions has increased, and we expect to add more opportunities for play throughout 2025. I must pause and give a huge shout

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out to all of our session coordinators. We can't grow our program without the dedication and commitment of these volunteers! Many thanks to all the folks who run sessions throughout the year.

Change is the only constant. The move to Court Reserve (CR) is upon us and the Session Coordinators (SC) are ready to help you through the process. Session Coordinators have been beta testing the CR app since November. In fact, SCs have been working closely with Joe, Earl, Troy and Andy to work out as many bugs as possible before we go live. We got this!

Although we are entering the slow season for pickleball, Old Man Winter better think again if he believes he can shut us down completely. There are multiple outdoor sessions for open play and drills still meeting regularly. We have also partnered with Dill Dinkers to offer indoor sessions for those who prefer to feel their fingers as they play. Refer to StackApp/Court Reserve for more information. As part of my acclimation to the position of Coordinator of Session Coordinators (Yes, we are workshopping that title) I have visited about half of the sessions offered during 2024. No matter which session I have dropped by, I am always impressed by the sportsmanship and positive energy displayed by members and coordinators. The laughs, cheers, friendly trash talk, and peer coaching make for a welcoming and safe environment. Sure, the occasional curmudgeonly act happens but, the focus on respect and the mutual love of the game overshadows the few bits of drama that occur. HCPA has fostered that culture and, with your continued cooperation, will continue to do so in 2025.

Pick your bliss! Keeping track of the sessions that interest you can be challenging because HCPA provides so many opportunities to enjoy your favorite sport. We cover levels from Beginner to Advanced. Drills, clinics, pop-ups, open play, DUPR Events, leagues and tournaments are all on the menu. Perhaps 2025 is the year you challenge yourself and sample some of the variety we offer. If you are looking to up your game, think about drills. Consistent drilling is by far the most effective way to take your game to a new level. Perhaps you almost never lose a match at open play. Perhaps it is time for you to move up and give intermediate or advanced play a try. For some of us, the joy of competing is what it is about. If that is the case, DUPR Events, King/Queen of the Court and tournament play will allow you to scratch that itch. HCPA has much to offer, and our hope is that everyone finds their pickleball groove.

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### Howard County Special Olympics Pickleball

Bob Sans

It seems like yesterday that we ended our 3<sup>rd</sup> successful season of Pickleball in the Howard County Special Olympics and put on a demonstration of the sport at the State Games in June. Since that time, I have been working together with Baltimore County/City, Calvert, and several other counties towards getting a program up and running. This comes in conjunction with the Special Olympics Maryland offices recognizing Pickleball as a sanctioned sport for inclusion in all counties. I am working together with the State program to organize and structure a statewide program that should lead to competition in the State Games for our Athletes this coming year. This could not have been accomplished without each person who has volunteered over the past 3 years, many who come by way of the HCPA!

We start our 4<sup>th</sup> season on March 2, 2025, at Dill Dinkers in Columbia and will continue for 10 weeks with breaks due to holidays. I am expecting there to be changes in the program for 2025 both on how we operate as well as to become compliant with whatever procedures are established by the State. I ask if you are interested in becoming a volunteer or have been in the past and would like to continue that you get in contact with me at your earliest convenience as I am in the process of trying to put together a roster. Again, you do not have to commit to volunteering each week. I expect that the first session will consist of an orientation/open play for the volunteers. Going into the season the aim is for everyone to be familiar with their roles and expectations for the season to minimize any confusion.

No matter what changes comes this season the primary goals remain to educate the Athletes on how to play but more importantly to have fun for both Athletes and Volunteers.

Best

Bob

[rwjs@verizon.net](mailto:rwjs@verizon.net)



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### HCPA Supports Local Correctional Facilities

Patricia Guzman

After nearly a year of security background checks and specialized training, in December HCPA began providing pickleball lessons to incarcerated individuals (IIs) at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women in Jessup, MD. Several HCPA members are participating in this worthwhile and rewarding effort. The 16 IIs in our group were excited to learn how to play and several of them are close to being able to teach other IIs. They really appreciate that we have shared our joy of pickleball with them and have stated numerous times that they really look forward to interacting with us. We also taped outdoor courts at the Dorsey Run Correctional Facility for Men in Jessup; however, the weather turned cold before we were able to begin lessons. We will begin lessons at the DRCF in the spring. If anyone is interested in volunteering with this great program, please contact Patty Guzman.

### 2025 Maryland Senior Olympics - Pickleball

Ken Billinsley

This year the Maryland Senior Olympics (MSO) Pickleball event will be held from May 16-18 at two indoor Dill Dinker locations (Columbia and Finksburg). The website went live for public viewing on January 8th, and registration for Maryland residents begins January 22nd. Space for most events will fill up quickly. If you intend to play, be sure both you and your partner already have registered for an account on PickleballBrackets.com. Despite access to 24 indoor courts, space is still limited as the MSO has to allow for 150 different brackets across 10 age groups, 3 skill levels, and 5 events.

#### ***Recommendations for best opportunity to get a spot in the 2025 MSO:***

1. **Have a PickleballBrackets.com account:** Make sure you (and your partner) have accounts on PickleballBrackets.com before registering. You will not be able to register a partner who does not have an account. You can register without a partner, but you will have to add them within 14 days, or you will be moved to the waitlist.
2. **Register early:** With limited initial spots, you want to register both you and your partner as soon as possible, even if it means you go on the waitlist.
3. **Join Waitlist immediately:** If you don't get into an event, be sure to register as soon as possible. Many events will be expanded. The waitlist will be used

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to fill open slots, either through teams being moved from the event to the waitlist, or if the event is expanded. Despite the waitlist showing in Alphabetical order, it actually pulls teams based on the date when both partners are registered for the event.

4. **Ratings:** The MSO will be using DUPR, WPR, and self-rating for placing players in events in that order.
5. **Events:** There will be three skill groups - 3.0 and below, 3.5, and 4.0 and above. For the 4.0 and above skill level, at least one partner must have a rating of 4.0 or higher. This restriction will be removed after approximately one month.
6. **Out of state registration begins February 3, 2025, at 8am:** If your partner is out of state, they will need to register as soon as it opens for out-of-state residents, so you don't lose your spot in the event. Remember, that all partners have 14 days to register from when you register for the event. So, if you register for an event on January 22<sup>nd</sup> with an out of state partner, they will need to register by February 3<sup>rd</sup> to make sure your team does not get moved to the waitlist.
7. **Registration closes on May 2<sup>nd</sup>:** After that time, if your partner pulls out and there are full teams on the waitlist, they will likely replace your team. Be sure to replace any partners before May 2<sup>nd</sup> if you suspect they will not be able to play.

## Player Development Committee

Jay McTighe

### Improving Your Game

Ben Johns, the world's top-ranked pickleball player, emphasizes the importance of dedicated practice and drilling to enhance one's game. Even as touring professionals, Ben and his brother, Collin Johns, dedicate 1-2 hours daily to practice and refine their skills. Ben's commitment to consistent drilling has been a key factor in his success, allowing him to execute shots reliably under pressure. This video highlights some of the basic drills that the Johns brothers regularly practice: [Watch the video](#).

The Howard County Pickleball Association (HCPA) offers numerous opportunities for members to improve their skills. Weekly drill sessions provide players with ample

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repetitions to develop a wide range of essential techniques. In addition, HCPA continues to offer specialized courses, clinics, and “boot camps” that provide targeted instruction and personalized feedback for players at all levels. You’ll be able to find the schedules of these various player development offerings in the new Court Reserve system described elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Another valuable resource for improvement is the HCPA Resource Library, which features an extensive collection of videos and articles covering a broad spectrum of skills and game strategies. These resources include tips and tutorials from pickleball professionals on virtually every aspect of the game. The library currently contains more than 260 instructional video and text resources, catering to everyone from beginners to Level 5 tournament players. Explore the resources here:

- [Video Tutorials](#)
- [Articles](#)

*Note: The Resource Library is updated regularly, so check back often for new content.*

**Remember:** While games are fun, true improvement comes from consistent practice and dedicated drilling!

### Competition Committee

Troy Olsen

HCPA will team with Howard County Recreation and Parks to host a **Pickleball Festival 2025** on May 3rd & 4<sup>th</sup> at the Western Regional Park in Woodbine, MD.

This event will be a fun and competitive event to promote pickleball in Howard County and will include music, food trucks, open play, clinics with certified coaches, competitive events, skills competitions, and pro exhibition matches.

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If you are interested in sponsorships (\$500 - \$1000) or a vendor tables (\$100), please contact :

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