



Words from the Editor

Joanne Griesser

The new normal: Skinny Pickleball, masks during breaks, hording toilet paper, chapped hands from the frequent washings and the smell of hand sanitizer wafting in the air. We were all sorry to see our courts closed and social distancing begin just as the weather was ripe for Pickleball. Recreation and Parks finally responded to the need for more courts that unfortunately sat empty.

However, the times are changing once again. Instructors are back on the courts. Doubles teams are practicing again for future tournaments. We have developed the special ability hear and understand the words of a masked player and recognize a smile in someone’s eye. We are adapting. It will get better. This too shall pass.

Please stay safe. Do not risk your health or the health of others. We all want to live to see our “old normal” back.

This Newsletter is for our members. If you have a story, a helpful tip, pictures, travel information, an event or you just want to have your voice heard, send your article to Joanne.Griesser@verizon.net. Your input could appear in the next newsletter.

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From the President's Desk

By: Earl Sneeringer

As we continue to struggle with the “new normal” due to the pandemic, we are contending with some challenges that we did not have to deal with prior to the pandemic. These challenges include competition for courts, maintaining the CDC guidelines to limit the COVID-19 risks, locating volunteers to manage the open sessions and technical issues with the association website. All the while, trying to have fun during a difficult situation.

It appears that during the recent stay at home phase of Maryland's national emergency, many people purchased their own pickleball nets. We now must compete with individuals using the Columbia Association (CA) open space courts at the same time we are attempting to schedule large groups at these venues. Unfortunately, this is out of our control. The CA Open Space courts that we use, namely Oakland Mills Ice Rink Courts, Locust Park and Vantage Park, are all first come first serve to the public and CA does not permit people to reserve these courts. To further exacerbate this situation, the courts created by Howard County Recreation and Parks are not available to organizations, so there is no way for our association to establish a hold on any of the facilities available to us. The best we can do is hope that when we get to the location we are using, that these courts are available. If not, we must be respectful of the rights of the people who are using them and hope they will be finished soon so we can use them afterwards. I know this is frustrating for both the players and the session coordinators but that is the best our association can do at this time.

Our association established the Return to Play Protocols to allow our members to go back to playing pickleball while minimizing the risks to all members. Some of our efforts started out well but failed to gain enough interest, such as the modified singles games we offered on Monday evenings. Other guidelines have been completely ignored due to lack of interest by the players, such as “play with your own ball”. Additionally, we are using the doodle sign-ups to obtain people's name and email for contract tracing. We are requesting names and email addresses for those who did not pre-register. This also attempts to limit the number of people playing but it is at the discretion of the session coordinator to decide how many people are allowed to play if they haven't registered. Our objective is to offer those who desire to play at their own risk the opportunity while maintaining a low risk environment for all our members. Please be considerate of fellow participants, maintain the social distancing, and wear a mask when not playing. Both actions will help minimize the risk to our fellow players. Considering that several pickleball organizations in the region are not going back to play, our efforts at least allow those willing to take the risks the opportunity to get a little exercise and fun in during this stressful time.

So far, we have been fortunate to have several of our members step up to take on the open play session coordinator roles, which allow for the establishment of weekly open play sessions. Since volunteers are essential for the association to continue to offer our members playing opportunities, we are grateful to those folks who have taken on these responsibilities.

We have experienced some technical difficulties with our web site. We recently resolved the issue with obtaining a lost password that took a good deal of time and effort from various members and in the end

required a workaround to establish the fix. Now we are experiencing another issue with the password, new members are not receiving their emails to create their initial passwords. We are currently troubleshooting this issue while manually sending out temporary passwords.

I mention these issues only to enlighten you to some of the association activities that go on in the background to support our members and attempt to offer fun activities. Our board members and volunteers are working together to offer playing opportunities as best we can. Your patience, compliance and support are greatly appreciated.

The Sonny Side of the Court, The importance of staying healthy...

By: Sonny Tannan

Even during these challenging times, we are all finding ways to stay safe as well as active. Some are still hesitant about stepping out on to a court to play pickleball with our other enthusiasts. Guess what, that is ok!!

Now, others have created their own groups to manage time on court as well as playing with those that they have become familiar. Of course, there are those that have just begun to learn the sport and are looking to join in the fun.

No matter which group of players you find yourself amongst, we all must be mindful of staying healthy. Especially since many of us are playing outdoors in temperatures that sometimes push well into the warmest of warm days.

How many times have you found yourself feeling like you have hit a wall and run out of energy?!

Especially on those days that you started early enough in the day (or perhaps early enough in the evening time) but for whatever reason, just find that you are running low on energy or feel drained? We have all been there and done that...so what should we be aware of and how do we address this?

I typically play and observe in a variety of events (rec play and tournament play) and no matter what the skill level, there seems to be less attention being paid to what we hydrate with (or re-hydrate). This is probably one of the biggest challenges that we can face...not taking better care of our health.

But this must start off the court before we ever begin to play AND must be a part of our lifestyle after we have finished playing. Why is this something that seems so simple and yet difficult at times to adhere to?

As #Fansof3 here are 3 lines of thoughts, and this is in no means the only ways to think about this...let us just keep it simple though:

1. **Whenever I feel thirsty, I'll just wait until my game is over and get some water from my jug! But first I have to stay on the courts just a bit longer...**
2. **If I drink water, then it means my opponent is making me work and I am just showing weakness! I'm just going to tough it out and keep on playing...**
3. **If I do a better job of preparing and taking care of my body, my pickleball game both physically and mentally may show consistent improvement...why not learn how to do just that?!**

Can you guess which lines of thoughts are from certain style of players...maybe you even cross lines on any given day. At the end of the day, here's the thought you might want to take away...

- **Before you play** – hydrate and eat well before you ever hit the courts. The minute you start to feel thirsty, it's probably already too late and you can probably expect those cramps to set in very shortly.
- **During play** – keep hydrating and re-hydrating. There are plenty of nutritional drinks and supplements out there, don't be afraid to try some out and incorporate into your own daily play.
- **Post play** – what you put into your body before is just as important as what you put in afterwards. Be sure to re-hydrate your body in a safe and intelligent manner so you can be ready to play again the next day.

Remember, it's a great time to be a part of our sport as well as introduce others to join in the competition and fun. Our health is just as important as getting out on the courts to play. Make it a point to approach how you play just as much as what you do to stay out on the courts just a little bit longer...in the long term, it matters.

If you want to learn more about how to bring out the best in your own play, feel free to connect with me on Facebook, LinkedIn or Instagram and let's get to work on enhancing your game.

See you on the courts!

Pickleball Instruction

By: Dorothy Bolton

Beginner (never played before) and novice (still new to the game) sessions are held on Saturdays from 9 – 11 a.m. at the Ice Rink courts and at Vantage Park courts on Wednesdays: session one is 4:30 – 6pm, session two from 6 – 7:30 pm.

Anyone interested in beginner or novice play should contact Barry Leech, eb1jr49@gmail.com

Marc Austin is currently offering pickleball lessons and clinics beginning in September through Howard County Rec and Parks. The costs for clinics are \$42, multi-week lessons are \$95. Info and registration are at www.howardcountymd.gov/pickleball.

Sonny Tannen is planning a series of free demo/clinics on Columbia Association open space courts. The sessions are full! Our association is looking into more of these clinics to include more of our members.

Humor

Are you feeling guilty about your kids watching too much TV during the quarantine? Mute the sound and turn on the close caption. Now they are reading!

Slender Singles

By Earl Sneeringer

Here is where the new game of Slender Singles comes in! Using an 18-foot net (instead of the 22-foot regulation size pickleball net), players who would like to play full court singles but could use a break from all that extra running have a perfect solution.

In Skinny Singles, you only use half the court: either using diagonal courts and changing the diagonal side with each serve, or using half the court directly across from your opponent. There tends to be more dinking and doubles-like strategy in Skinny Singles, but with only one player on each side of the net. It's a great way to help your doubles game and work on your skills since you really have to focus on ball placement.

What about "regular" singles? For many pickleball players, especially those coming from tennis, a singles match is a super fun way to enjoy competing against another player while getting an excellent workout, pounding out groundstrokes and making passing shots.

Singles is great for working on shot depth and control, aiming for the sidelines to keep your opponent moving. But for many people (especially those of us getting on in years who might have a few injuries or not be at our peak fitness levels), covering a full 20-foot wide court without a partner is a big ask. Sure, it's much smaller than a tennis court, but it's still a lot of ground to cover!

Pro Corner

Instructional Article by Marc Austin

PPR Nationally Certified Professional Pickleball Instructor, mmfaustin@gmail.com

Hello HCPA members. For this Newsletter Article I want to talk about how important it is to work your way up to the Non Volley Zone Line(NVZ) or "Kitchen Line" when playing pickleball. Understanding what to do when you are there is critical as well as we all should work on our "patience" which can open up significant offensive opportunities when playing at the NVZ.

Instead of writing on this topic from scratch, I found a super mini article from Sarah Ansboury (no introduction needed) that captures it all. Reprinted with her permission:

"One of the harder things to teach in Pickleball is patience. Most players especially new players struggle with what this means. They come out and tend to overhit the ball and play more like a small tennis court than what we try to teach them with the soft game.

What we try to create a few things with the soft game i.e. drinking and third shot drops.

1. To neutralize our opponents.
2. Create and attachable opportunity

With the soft game, the goal is to take away pace and height from the ball making it more difficult for our opponents to attack...thus forcing them to become off balance, thus getting them to pop the ball up, creating an attackable opportunity.

Utilizing the soft game also enables players to control tempo. Various depths and pace are utilized with dinks. Often players will just try to hit the ball so it lands soft in the 'no volley zone' but without any idea of what they are trying to create.

A couple of key things to work on with your students utilizing the soft game:

1. Maintaining position at the no volley line - this will help them create more consistent dink's that set up the point.
2. Taking dink's in the air- this will take time away from their opponent as well as maintain their position. When players back up and force the bounce on a regular basis, this will cause the ball to pop up on their opponents side and make it more difficult to defend against offensive dinking.
3. Recognizing what is attackable and what is not - often players will attack when the ball is too low and the hit they ball in the net or they are not prepared for the ball to come back.

Patience is easier when a player knows what is attackable and what is not." Enjoy playing this great game and I hope to see you all out there.

Pro Corner Bonus!

For the first time in Howard County, Howard County Recreation and Parks has decided to include adult pickleball instructional offerings in their huge and widely distributed Fall Activity Guide. This guide was just sent out to practically every resident in Howard County and also to residents of surrounding counties who participate in Howard County activities. Since pickleball has up until now not really part of these guides I want to bring this to your attention in case you received the booklet and just assumed there is no pickleball information in there based on previous history. I have attached a picture of page 88 which lists the fall instructional offerings for my classes and also my unique specialized topic specific clinics I am super excited to announce. Please review and consider registering for one or more of the offerings. Registration will be open on or before 5 August. Hope to see you out there.

Also- please stay tuned for our totally redesigned fall adult pickleball leagues!!! To be announced soon.

Marc F. Austin

410.336.2460 / mmfaustin@gmail.com

Travel

By: Chris Brun

My sister Lisa who lives in Topeka Kansas is an avid pickleball player and has often told me about her facilities. They have 18 public dedicated pickleball courts at one location. She tells me they are planning for another 24 on the other side of the city. Had a chance to visit last week and their morning crowd fills about 12-15 courts and the evening crowd fills all 18. Wow, was I jealous. We also stopped by to play mid-afternoon one day (it was hot) and had 18 courts to ourselves!

