



Pickle Juice

Words from the Editor

Carol White

Although Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow and predicts six more weeks of winter, the HCPA picklers are not daunted. We will continue to shovel the snow, squeegee the puddles, and blow away the debris in order to play. Pickleball has kept us sane during the trying times of COVID. Let's hope that spring brings good health, warm sunny days, and plenty of court time.

Featured Articles

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From the President's Desk

Joanne Griesser

President's Desk

The Board has been busy during these winter months. We made presentations to Calvin Ball and the Howard County Recreation and Parks (HCRP) asking for more facilities. We wrote letters to the Columbia Association(CA), HCRP and Calvin Ball as follow-up to the presentations. (The correspondence is online and available to preview).

Many of you have seen the article discussing the new Cricket Fields for HCRP. I was happy for the cricket players but wonder why HCRP does not respond to our request for more pickleball courts. Our Association is 600 members strong, and it continues to grow every week. HCRP is painting more lines and putting up a shade structure at Atholton, but more dedicated courts will not be constructed until next year. Unfortunately, it is a fact in budget planning that it is a multi-year process and today's funds were debated and approved years ago.

We want to be responsive to all our members from the beginner to the advanced players. We just don't have the facilities. Our presentations and correspondence are acknowledged, but there is little movement to increase the number of courts. It is frustrating. The Board members have some wonderful ideas on how to improve our association, but lacking facilities, we have difficulty moving forward.

Some of our ideas include:

- Starting an Advanced Player league to compete against other Associations. HCRP does not allow exclusive use of their courts for pickleball, so we don't have a home court to host these kinds of events.
- Starting a Kids' League, again we are faced with no facilities.
- Securing indoor facilities for evening and winter play, especially for the members who are working during the day. The well-established sports like basketball and volleyball dominate the indoor facilities. Our Association was lucky to secure a few evening hours at the Sr. Center in Glenwood this year. There was no available time in Meadowbrook or Laurel for evening or weekend play.
- Starting an after-school program with the HCRP. We had volunteers ready to take the training and lead this program. There were no gyms available for this activity.

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There are some real positives that have been accomplished this year. Earl and Ken, along with all our session coordinators have implemented the Slack Team App. What a great tool for communications. If a session time or place changes, a message is sent to anyone who has signed up. If you have not signed up, please consider doing so.

Andy hosted a mini tournament at Glenwood. Everyone had fun. Someone went home with a jar of pickles.

As members of our organization, you too can do something to help. You can share your ideas with the Board using the suggestion box on our website. We do look at them. You can write letters to Calvin Ball and tell him we need more courts. You can send emails and letters to CA and HCRP requesting more facilities.

Please take care of yourself and be kind to others. See you on the courts.

Marc Austin, Pro Corner

Is anyone confused when playing doubles? Do you hear “that was yours” or “stop poaching”? If so, Marc’s article will help.

Click [here](#) to read Marc’s article on playing better as partners.

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Q: How I improve my game? A: Try our pickleball tutor

Harold White

Almost every pickleball player wants to improve his/her game. This can be done to a certain extent through playing a lot, and it’s fun. You can watch videos of highly skilled players and try to emulate their techniques and tactics. You can engage a professional coach through private tutors or Howard County Recreation and Parks. Pickleball camps are available all over the nation. You can attend the drills session on Sundays at 12:00 PM. All of these are good tools, and each has advantages and disadvantages, be it cost, accessibility, or rate of improvement.

I would like to add another tool to the above arsenal: the Pickleball Tutor. These machines cost well over \$1,000 and your association has one which we rent for \$20/day. It will include the PBTutor device, a container with 40 balls, a guide to several drills, a ball collector, a folding portable hand truck to carry the device and balls, the external battery and charger and a net if required (usually available, but not always).

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How does the PBTutor work? You dump the container of 40 balls into the hopper of the machine. You can adjust the velocity of the projected ball, the interval between ball firings, the elevation (or arc) over the net, and set the machine to oscillate from side to side if you wish. There is a remote control that allows you to start and stop the ball feed and/or oscillation from the other side of the net. This is very convenient if you are going it alone that day. An ideal situation for efficient time use is two players. One can be practicing while the other is gathering up the herd of balls all around the court.

Here are some observations and (personal) opinions from having used the machine on several occasions. In a controlled and repetitive environment, you can practice forehand, backhand, lob return, serve returns that fall at the base line or shorter into the court, third shot drop, and defending against the drive at the net or mid court. With the oscillator in use, you can speed up your reaction time and trajectory estimation in moving to where the ball is going to land. Even without the oscillator, small differences on ball wear and inherent mechanical variables will keep the ball dropping a couple feet on way or another. The tutor can be used when you have some injury that keeps you from being able to run and stop on the court because you can practice shots while still being relatively stationary.

I think the biggest advantage of the PBTutor is the instantaneous feedback loop. I get to see the result of my shot (whatever it may be), analyze everything I did or didn't do, how much/little power I used, build muscle memory of the feel of the ball contacting the paddle and the follow through, and two seconds later make a micro adjustment and repeat the process. In the space of a one and a half- or two- hour session, I can get 150-200 whacks at improving some element of my game. All the mistakes are guilt free because no points are lost or won. I'm under no pressure.

A word of caution before you spend PBTutor time on some aspect of your game: engage a knowledgeable player or instructor for the proper technique to execute that aspect. I think it was Vince Lombardi who said "Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect."

You can find rental instructions on the HCPA website by clicking on the Equipment Management tag and then choosing the link for "PB Tutor Rental." And if you have questions, feel free to contact me at 410-799-5563.

Q: What is America's fastest growing sport?

Click [here](#) to find the amazing answer.

Webmaster Tidbits

Earl Sneeringer, HCPA Webmaster

One of the primary functions our HCPA website offers is a communication mechanism. The website can be accessed to see what is happening. The website provides multiple avenues for this communication, such as: the news banner at the top of the home page for any current changes to open play sessions, the announcement page where notifications go out the following morning to all those who have subscribed, the members discussion forum where members can post topics and solicit feedback, and the posting of association news such as newsletters and flyers. We now have another means to communicate information to everyone via the mobile application Team App. We recently implemented Team App and I have received a lot of positive feedback on the use of this app. It is great for a quick lookup of any schedule changes as well as another means to post links for our sign-up application. If you haven't had the opportunity to try Team App, I recommend you download it from your application store, register for free with Team App and then search for the Howard County Pickleball Association Team. Instructions for this are located under the Members menu item

Travel with...

Duane St. Clair: Pickleball in the Florida Keys

A few years ago, pickleball courts were few and far between even in Florida. We made vacation decisions based on the quality of pickleball courts. Six years ago, I learned that the Key at Marathon had pickleball courts, so it became our destination of choice. Even though it is an eighteen-hour drive from Columbia, we always look forward to our Winter escapes each January. Having played there over the years, we always look forward to seeing our pickleball friends there each year. It is nice to be part of a pickleball community when we travel. While Key West has long had pickleball courts, other keys are now recognizing that retiree travelers are drawn to their location by having courts. Some have converted unused tennis courts.



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Special Olympics

Bob Sans

As many of you know, in recent months, we have been trying to introduce Pickleball into the Special Olympics. The Special Olympics Maryland Howard County (SOMDHC) in the entire State of Maryland currently does not offer Pickleball in any county. If successful, we would be the first county in the State to “officially” pull this off.

Together with our Association and coupled with the SOMDHC and with Howard County Recreation & Parks, we are now one step closer to making this a reality. On 2/6/22, the SOMDHC put out their Registration for participation online (without any fanfare) and yes it did include Pickleball for the Spring session!!!!!! By the end of the first week, I am told that 16 Athletes had signed up for a maximum of 26 slots

Plans have now been formalized for the Spring Pickleball session to start on 4/3/22 and we would be playing every Sunday from 1PM to 3 PM at the Schooley Mill Park courts. Thanks goes to Recreation & Parks for allowing us to use these courts. We will not be playing on 4/17/22 (Easter), 5/15/22 (55+ Tournament) and 5/29/22 (Memorial Day). We do plan on having a 10-week schedule that will continue through 6/26/22.

It seems that we will not only be the first county in the State to offer Pickleball, but our group of Special Olympic Athletes and Volunteers have been asked to put on a demonstration the weekend of 6/25/22 during the State Competition within Special Olympics that is comprised of all the counties in the State. It is thought that what we are doing will indeed catch on to surrounding counties and within the year will be a part of the State run championships.

For those that read my initial article about bringing Pickleball to Special Olympics, you would know that this was just a thought of mine while being stuck in traffic on the NJ Turnpike. I floated this idea to both the SOMDHC and to our Association and have received complete backing from the Board. It is even more astounding and gratifying that 60+ members have volunteered to participate in this endeavor demonstrating an eagerness to bring our sport to other members of the community. Please note that we can always use volunteers so if you are interested, please feel free to contact me by email at rwjs@verizon.net. I want to take this time to thank each person for extending themselves and to Joanne and the Board for going beyond what it is that I had ever hoped to achieve while being stuck in New Jersey. I can honestly say that I am truly proud to be a part of this Organization.

Thank you to all! See you on the Courts!

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Tournament News

Mini-Tournament for Intermediate Players

Andy Dalal

On January 31, HCPA held its first indoor Mini-Tournament for Intermediate Players which was a very successful event. The tournament reached its limited capacity in only a couple of hours once registration was opened. In addition, the tournament had a full waiting list for players who wanted to play in the tournament in the event any of the registered players could not attend the event.

The session was held from 5:15 to 6:45pm at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center and to start and complete the tournament within that time frame, participants arrived by 5:00pm and helped with both setting up and taking down the nets. Participants were required to always wear masks in the gym, including when playing in the games.

The tournament used a round robin format. This way each team was guaranteed 5 matches and had a match against every other team. The tournament scoring for each match was one game to 15 points, win by 1 point using rally scoring. In rally scoring, a point is awarded to whichever team wins the rally – be it the serving team or the non-serving team. Primary benefits of rally scoring are that games end more quickly and have predictable game durations, both of which were necessary for this tournament.

Matches were competitive and there was parity among the teams. None of the teams won all their games and none of the teams lost all their games. The winner of the tournament was based on a tie breaker! More importantly, the players had fun and displayed excellent sportsmanship!

Players and Teams who participated:

Bob S & Garth
Cherise & Mark S.
Mark C. & Nancy
Meredith and Hitesh
Barb & Nick
Mike & Jeanne

And the winner of the tournament..... drum roll.... Mark & Nancy Carter.



2021 Thanksgiving Mixed Double Tournament raises over \$2,000 for Grassroots

Ken Billingsley

On Saturday, November 27th, the HCPA hosted an indoor mixed doubles pickleball tournament at Forty West. The event was full and had 31 teams and 62 participants broken down among four groups, Novice, Intermediate (x2), and Advanced. *See below for a list of medal winners.*

The event helped raise over \$2,000, plus donated items that we dropped off to Grassroots prior to the holiday season. We wish to thank everyone who volunteered, sponsored, and participated in this event. We look forward to putting on future tournaments in which we can partner up with local charities.

This event could not have happened without the volunteers who helped the event run smoothly from start to finish. I would personally wish to express my thanks to Duane St. Claire (*who Livestreamed the event on the HCPA Facebook page*), Patty Guzman, Tami Balwin, Jeannie Bausch, and Harold and Carol White. In addition, thank you to the participants who helped during set-up and take-down.

We had a number of sponsors for this event which helped cover the cost of the venue and other incidental expenses. This allowed 100% of player registration fees to go to Grassroots. Please be sure to consider those companies in the future if they offer services you are searching for. It is important to patronize those companies that are aligned with helping the HCPA support local charities. Our sponsors this year were, Vennari's Pizza (*located next to Owen Brown Tennis/Pickleball Club and offers a 20% discount on Mon, Tues, Wed if you ask for*

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the *'Pickleball Special'*), Jeannie Bausch of Douglas Realty, Caplan's Auction & Appraisal, Fulton Bank, and Varsity Graphics.

For more information on Grassroots (*GrassrootsCrisis.org*): Located near Atholton High School, Grassroots operates a 24-hour general crisis hotline and walk-in counseling program, and is the first point of contact in Howard County for homeless services. Grassroots provides a much-needed resource here in Howard County that helps people when they need it the most. If you are interested in donating, *they are always looking for Toiletries (body wash, body lotion, toothpaste, deodorant for men and women, shampoo and soap)*.

HCPA Thanksgiving 2021 Mixed Doubles Medalists:

NOVICE:

Gold - Mark and Nancy Carter

Silver - Lea and Aaron Billingsley

Bronze - Brian and Lisa Hessler

INTERMEDIATE (crt 2):

Gold - James and Stephanie Martin

Silver - Mike and Gina Asher

Bronze - Jason and Angela Berry

INTERMEDIATE (crt 3):

Gold - Scott Kapinos and Linda Wheeler

Silver - Marc and Joanne Villapando

Bronze - Richard and Tara Adlesic

ADVANCED:

Gold - Waymon Peet and Karaline Kelbaugh

Silver - Jonathan and Dao Vissering

Bronze - Alex Nguyen-Barrale and Virginia McGovern

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Interview with Milton Klein

Joanne Griesser and Carol White

Meet Milton Kline:



Being an orphan from age 11 on, he fell in love with sports which was his salvation. He spent the rest of his life as a participant, camp director, teacher, and coach. Track was his first love, then basketball, softball, and later tennis.

In his younger days, Milton coached all different types of major sports. At age 18, he began coaching a group of 14-year-olds in basketball winning two city championships and two South Atlantic AAU titles, compiling a 72 and 2 record.

Milton started playing tennis in his 40's. He went on to win the 70 and over league and came in 4th in the nation.

Two years ago, at age 85, he got the pickleball bug. He participated in the Senior Olympics in 2019 and took home a gold and bronze. If that wasn't enough, Milton also participates in track and field

Milton likes to compete, but he said the number of people in his age group is getting smaller and smaller. Right now, he is preparing for the Senior Olympic Nationals in May in Fort Lauderdale. He doesn't have high expectations with athletes coming in from all over the country, but we wish him the best.

When did you start to play pickleball?

I started in Howard County with the Association about two years ago. I asked a friend to come dink with me a few times and then I went to several novice sessions with Barry Leech. Those helped me get going. I still take clinics from Marc Austin while I work on improving my game.

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Where do you play most of the time?

I play at the ice rink mostly when I am here in Maryland. I try to play daily. I also play at Linwood where they have social events, dinners and parties. On Halloween, we were playing in costumes! They even host tournaments. The spirit and enthusiasm are absolutely incredible.

What is your most exciting pickleball moment?

To be able to play with people a level above me. When I successfully use my forehand and backhand at the net. Just learning the game is great and I love the excitement of mastering a new skill.

Can you tell me about any struggles you have had on the court?

I do not like people that are all about winning. They ruin the game for all of us. I have had a few run-ins with people that just want to win at any costs. It does not make for a pleasant game, and I find that most people don't want to play with them.

Anything else that you would like to say?

I am happy when I am given the opportunity to learn and teach. Pickleball is a great game for both. Playing fairly is the most important part of the game. Winning is just the cherry on the top of the ice-cream.

Donations

Bob Sans

If anyone has any used paddles or balls that you are not using, would you consider donating them for use by the Special Olympic athletes? If so, contact Bob Sans at rwjs@verizon.net, Earl or drop them off to one of the Session Coordinators who will pass it along to Bob. Many thanks!

Also, the HCPA voted unanimously to contribute \$200 for equipment to Special Olympics! Your donation of dollars is always welcome, too!

Opportunities to Volunteer

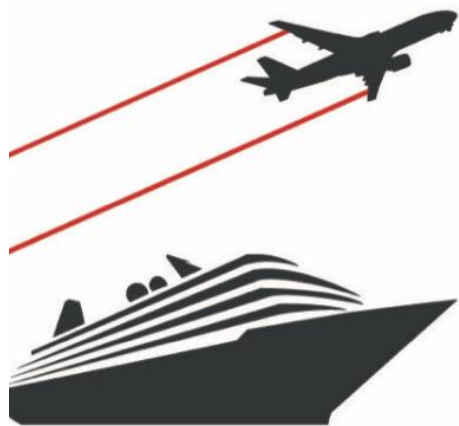
Bob Sans is always looking for volunteers for the Howard County Special Olympics. Give him a shout if interested! His email is: rwjs@verizon.net

Tip of the month

Duane St. Clair

Ever find yourself in the wrong position to take a shot? Have you ever had an opponent hit you with an unreturnable shot when you are standing at the no volley line? Understanding where to position yourself to play offense or defense allows you to hit more winning shots or just keep the ball in play longer. You can play offense when you and your partner are closer to the net than your opponents. When you and your partner are farther from the net than your opponents you have to play defensively by hitting soft shots that are dropping below the top of the net so that you have time to move forward and neutralize your opponent's advantage. Once you successfully accomplish this you will find yourself in a dinking battle. So how do you know when to move up or when to stay back? It all depends on how well you or your partner hit your soft shot. Move up with a good soft shot and stay back with a ball that is attackable for your opponents above the net--especially if the ball is rising. Here is a YouTube video to show this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuvYdhpaRzQ&t=44s>

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