



Pickle Juice

Thanks for reading this newsletter.
We welcome your comments/suggestions/articles.
Send them to: [Carol White](#)
Editor

From the President’s Desk 2

What’s New 4

Treasurer’s Report 5

Recycling Pickleballs..... 5

Howard County Special Olympics Pickleball 6

Outdoor Play Opportunities 7

Senior Olympics and JOOLA Maryland Open Tournaments 8

Communications Committee 9

Competition Committee 10

Member Relations Committee..... 12

Player Development Committee 13

Technology Committee 13

Spring 2024

From the President's Desk

Andy Dalal

Greetings!

I hope everyone reading this letter had a wonderful winter and had a chance to play pickleball indoors or outside. With the weather getting warmer and longer daylight hours in the evening, HCPA has expanded organized open sessions, including additional novice, weekend, and evening sessions.

When you visit the courts, please look for and use the recycling boxes for cracked pickleballs. They are located on most of the courts that our members frequent, including Locust, Western Regional, Dill Dinkers, and the YMCA. We should also be getting boxes for the Ice Rink and Vantage courts. The volunteers behind the recycling boxes are Duane St. Clair and Ray Farrar who both reached out and suggested the idea.

Volunteers like Ray and Duane along with our session coordinators, referees, and committee members are the backbone of our organization. We cannot continue to put on fantastic events or increase the variety of events without our member volunteers. This is a request to all readers to please consider volunteering in any facet of our organization, especially as NEW and back-up session coordinators. As you may know, there have been additional dedicated courts added in the county and HCPA would like to set up regularly scheduled play at these new courts. However, we cannot do so with the existing number of session coordinators. By being a session coordinator, you are not only able to control the day and time of the session, but also the skill level, and the number of folks who may attend that session. In addition, the board tries to provide a number of other perks for our session coordinators, including special thank you sessions and dinners, and waving membership fee for those that have served as a session coordinator for at least one year.

Speaking of volunteers, a shout out to Gail Kennedy who on March 11th was recognized and awarded as the Good Sports Official of the Year for the Mid-Atlantic Region. The Mid-Atlantic Recreation and Parks' Sports Alliance (MARPSA) recognized youth players, coaches, administrators and officials throughout the Maryland and Virginia area at a special reception and awards ceremony in Annapolis. Gail was only one of three officials selected to represent the Mid-Atlantic Region. If you don't already know, Gail holds a leadership position within

Spring 2024

the club's officiating team and is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the refereeing activities during tournaments, events, and matches. Her role is critical in maintaining the integrity of the game and ensuring that all matches are conducted fairly and in accordance with the rules. Some of her responsibilities as a head referee include supervision, coordination, training and fostering a positive officiating environment within the club and the county.

As you may recall, Howard County recognized three of our very own HCPA members in October as a Good Sports Award Recipients for being Official of the Year (Gail), Administrator of the Year (Earl Sneeringer) and Coach of the Year (Nancy Hartka) at the Howard County Celebration of Sports Banquet.

HCPA is continuing to build relationships with different organizations to expand Pickleball for various groups of people, including Special Olympics, Senior Olympics, Howard County Recreation and Parks and Active Aging departments as well as in high schools, to date - Oakland Mills High School and River Hill High School. If you would like to volunteer to help the pickleball growth within any of these organizations, please let a board member know. HCPA will continue to look for opportunities to put on leagues and tournaments, including those that can benefit charitable organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association.

Finally, HCPA continues to lobby for more courts in the county and surrounding areas for public and member use, including with the County Administration and Columbia Association. For example, on March 7th, I represented HCPA at the County Executive's Residents' Budget Hearing. At the hearing and in my written testimony, I requested more dedicated courts at existing tennis facilities, which are not being extensively used such as, the one in Savage Park or the one at the North Laurel Community Center as well as a public dedicated indoor facility and an outside dedicated court that is covered and lit so that we may continue to play at night and in inclement weather.

Spring 2024

What's New

Joanne Griesser

Welcome Spring! The weather has been perfect for outdoor play. If you have not explored the HCPA webpage recently, you might have missed that there are now new courts at Gateway, and Oakland Mills High School. The latest news is that work on the Blandair Park courts should be starting soon in hopes to have them complete by the end of summer. Check out the [Places to Play](#). Thanks to Earl, Jay, and the Communications Committee for keeping this up to date. If you know of a new place that we haven't discovered yet and you don't want to keep it a secret, send the information to [Earl Sneeringer](#).

There are many new courts but there are a large number of new players to fill the courts. The Association has been teaching introductory classes all winter. In many of the courts, the rules of etiquette are not posted. If there are people waiting to use a court, the unwritten rule is 90 minutes on and then release the court. I know sometimes it is difficult to stop, especially if you are drilling or just having a great day! We feel frustration when tennis players stay on the court past 90 minutes, and we wait to use the courts. Let's set an example and follow the rules.

Winter play was interesting this year. The bad weather didn't chase people inside on Tuesday mornings. The Association reserved four courts at Dill Dinkers from 9-11. We didn't ever fill that space. So, we let it go and backed down to one court, then stopped the sessions entirely. A similar thing happened at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center. We rented six courts in the evening, and we might have filled it once or twice. We were surprised because in previous years, we filled and sometimes exceeded the need for indoor courts. We will be conducting a survey later this year and asking your opinion on the indoor courts we should rent in the winter.

The Board is trying very hard to work with Howard County Recreation and Parks, teaching classes and helping to organize sessions. We have started to help Oakland Mills High School set up leagues and organize sessions. We are also working with North Laurel Community Center to develop a Novice 1 and Novice 2 series of classes. Each of these relationships has its perks and pitfalls. Although it might be slow, we know that if we continue on these paths, we will have access to more courts and more opportunities for our members. If you have suggestions of organizations or agencies that would be interested in working with us, please send that information to [Andy Dalal](#).

Spring 2024

The Association is built on member participation:

- Come to one of our fun events hosted by [Patty](#) and her committee
- Join a league organized (and sometimes won!) by Troy
- See a need for an additional session and be willing to become a Session Coordinator (reach out to [Andrée](#) and we will set you up).
- Volunteer at a Skills and Drills session hosted by James, Donna, Steve, and Geoff
- Volunteer at the introductory classes run by Nancy, Barry, Don, and the Bobs

All of these activities take time and energy. We could use your hands and your time. If you have an interest in any of these areas, please reach out to me, [Joanne Griesser](#).

Treasurer's Report

Ken Billingsley

The account balance of the association was over \$53,000 as of January 1, 2024, up from \$25,000 as of January 1, 2023. The growth in our account balance is attributed to an increase in our memberships and the JOOLA Maryland Open hosted in October 2023. We made investments this year to expand our purchases of nets and equipment. In addition, we are exploring our ability to purchase paddles, balls, and nets at a discount to help support the expanding opportunities to play Pickleball at the local High Schools as they add Pickleball lines to their tennis courts.

Sponsorship and Advertising Opportunities. If you know of a company that may be interested in hearing about our sponsorship opportunities for our Association or our Tournaments or may be interested in advertising with the HCPA, please reach out to hocopball@gmail.com.

Recycling Pickleballs

Duane St. Clair

Our Association is now involved with an organization, [P3 Pickleball](#), to recycle our broken pickleballs. You may have noticed the recycling boxes that have been placed at several places where we have weekly play. The broken balls are not recycled into

Spring 2024

new balls because of the type of plastic used to make our balls but the balls are recycled into other products. As the company explains, " The used balls are recycled and the composites are being made into other non-pickleball materials, but not made into new balls just yet. We are working on it with different ball manufacturers and hope to move to the product being made into new balls in the future." We are asking our members to look out for these boxes and to place any broken balls into the boxes.



Duane & Ray by the recycle bin at Locust Park

Howard County Special Olympics Pickleball

Bob Sans

We started a Pickleball program with the Howard County Special Olympics (HCSO) office in 2022 with 25 Special Olympic Athletes and 35 volunteers primarily coming from our HCPA rolls. As we enter our third season, I proudly report that HCSO Pickleball has grown to 81 (9 on a wait list) registered Athletes which is up from 61 Athletes in 2023. We have become the second most registered sport offered by HCSO trailing only the Athletics program. It would be a gross understatement to say that we could not do this without the members of the HCPA who continue to give of their time to volunteer. Just as the number of Athletes participating each year has increase, so too has the number of volunteers from the original 35 to 60 to 90+ for this season. My thanks go out to everyone who has agreed to volunteer this season which is shaping up to be our most challenging one since its inception. To all members, feel free to stop by Dill Dinkers Sundays until 6/16 from 1-3 PM to check out what we are doing and to cheer on the Athletes. With any luck we might be participating in the State Games in June!

Spring 2024



Special Olympics Athletes and Volunteers

Outdoor Play Opportunities

Andrée Cates

Hello, Howard County Pickleballers!

Are you ready to get your game on? Now that Daylight Savings has kicked in providing us with longer evening times, please watch out for new sessions cropping up on the Stack Team App. Below you will see the many up-and-coming sessions for the spring and summer:

- Tuesday evening intermediate/advanced session held at Vantage Point and hosted by Van Doan is now back.
- After the spring break, Lorna Josiah is starting her Wednesday intermediate session from 4-6 at Locust Park.
- Michael Spinnato will be starting up his Sunday advanced sessions on St. Patrick's Day.
- On Wednesday afternoon (beginning March 13), Donna Kahn and James Martin are resurrecting their skills and drills session at Vantage Park.
- Nancy Hartka is starting up three Novice 1 (evening and daytime) sessions starting March 16 and a Novice 2 session beginning March 22.

As always, if you are interested in being a net coordinator for HCPA please contact me ([Andrée](#)) and we can set you up. Demand continues to grow but we

Spring 2024

need YOU to assist with this growing demand.

Be on the lookout for pop-up sessions that are not regularly scheduled on the Stack Team App. One important pop-up session to be looking out for soon will be opening day either on March 30/31 or April 6/7. The dates are still being worked out. Several of our net coordinators have already created pop-up sessions this past winter. A huge thank you to the net coordinators who have done this like Geoff Silberman, Steve Radant, and Troy Osten.

For all of you who are members of Dill Dinkers . . . we miss you! Please keep your HCPA membership going so you can play outdoors with our fabulous HCPA members. Getting sunlight is important in maintaining our health and also our social contacts. Who says you can't play both indoors and outdoors?

Finally, some Board members are developing more community connections by teaming up with various Howard County schools. Recently for example, some of us went to Oakland Mills High School to teach pickleball to the PE teachers who were having their professional development day. There are going to be more teaching opportunities as we expand our community connections. Be on the lookout for future requests to volunteer!

As for shopping for used and new equipment: checkout eBay for reduced prices on paddles and local thrifting stores like ReStore, 2nd Avenue and Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake. You never know what you'll be able to find.

Thanks to everyone who volunteers their precious time and energy in supporting the various pickleball engagements. Yay for spring!!

Senior Olympics and JOOLA Maryland Open Tournaments

Ken Billinsley

Calling All Players and Pickleball Enthusiasts!

Get ready to dink, volley, and smash your way to two exciting upcoming events: the **Maryland Senior Olympics Pickleball Tournament** and the **JOOLA Maryland Open!**

Maryland Senior Olympics (May 16th - 19th)

Spring 2024

This qualifying event for the National Senior Games offers various skill levels (3.0 and below, 3.5, and 4.0 and above) for players aged 50 and above. Whether you're a seasoned competitor or looking for some friendly competition, this is a fantastic opportunity to showcase your skills and connect with fellow pickleball enthusiasts. Be sure to sign up for any waitlist (it doesn't cost anything) and many events will be expanded. ([click here for website](#)) This year the event will be held at two indoor locations (Dill Dinkers-Columbia and Dill Dinkers-Finksburg).

JOOLA/HCPA Maryland Open (Date TBA) - Partnering with the PPA to get Your Golden Ticket to Nationals!

This prestigious tournament, hosted by the HCPA in partnership with the PPA (Professional Pickleball Association), is the only qualifying event in Maryland for the coveted Golden Ticket to the National Championship! Compete in various divisions (singles, doubles, and mixed) across different skill levels and age groups. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for registration details coming soon. Don't miss this chance to vie for a spot at the biggest stage in pickleball! The Gold Medalists from each Event will automatically secure invitations to the year-end PPA United States Championship in Dallas, TX, in November and all event fees will be waived.

Be a Part of the Action: Volunteer Opportunities

Both events rely on the dedication of volunteers to run smoothly. Whether you are a seasoned player or simply want to contribute to the pickleball community, we encourage you to volunteer! We need help with various tasks, such as:

- Court monitoring and officiating
- Scorekeeping and registration
- Set-up and clean-up
- Hospitality and concessions

Volunteering is a rewarding experience that allows you to be at the heart of the action, meet new people, and give back to the sport you love.

Be on the lookout for a volunteer link for the Maryland Senior Olympics soon.

We look forward to seeing you on the courts!

Communications Committee

Carol White

The Association formed a Communication Committee to provide the most efficient and effective way to communicate with our members. Our committee's current

Spring 2024

activities include:

- Renovating and updating the HCPA website, making it more user friendly and updating the content. Although we realize many members depend on the Stack Team App for news, the website is the first introduction to our organization for new and non-members.
- Making recommendations to the Board on policies such as :
 - Member and non-member advertising
 - Inviting outside clinics to offer services for our members (e.g., injury prevention clinics)
- Working closely with the Player Development Committee. As they schedule new courses, clinics and drill sessions and produce new resources (e.g., video tutorials and articles), we are looking for the best ways to present these to our members.
- Compiling and publishing this Newsletter.

Competition Committee

Troy Osten

The Competition Committee is happy to report on a number of indoor events in January and February.

The first event was an Indoor Mixed Doubles league at The PutAway in Millersville, MD. This brand-new facility has seven courts, bathrooms with showers and a very nice lounge area for holding social events. There are great seating areas at the end of the courts for players waiting for their matches. The Mixed League started 1/6 and ran for five weeks. It included four weeks of play and a final week of playoffs. We had 12 2-person teams. The league ended with a full-fledged double elimination tournament based on the first 4-week rankings. Congratulations to winners Will Redick and Shannon Towner who were dominant throughout the season! Special thanks to our league directors, Mary and Joe Pagan, for keeping the league organized.

Spring 2024



The Mixed Doubles League at The PutAway

On 2/17 HCPA held a friendly competition at The PutAway for all the wonderful session coordinators who volunteer all year long to keep our 30+ sessions per week running smoothly! In the colder months we don't see each other as often and it was great to see everyone who keeps our organization strong!

On 2/24 HCPA board members and other HCPA volunteers participated in a Minor League Pickleball Event with the Annapolis Pickleball Club board members and volunteers at The PutAway. We were trying out the MLP (Major League Pickleball) format for the first time and think it works well. Two men and two women make up a team. There are four matches played per round: a men's doubles, women's doubles and two mixed doubles matches. If there is a tie at the end of those four matches, then a 21-point singles match is played where each team member gets to play five points before switching out. Team captains choose the order of players not knowing what the other captain has chosen. As this was a friendly match, only one round was played. Both clubs enjoyed the format and exchanged ideas about various club management topics.

Sadly, due to a lack of signups, HCPA had to cancel all of the events scheduled for March at The PutAway. We hope this is because you have great opportunities for winter play at other locations! We plan to conduct a survey to determine what best fits our needs in colder months.

We had announced a co-sponsored tournament with Howard County Recreation and Parks in the May timeframe. We were unable to come to an agreement this

Spring 2024

year but are looking to the future when we can co-host a large event at the new and great courts at Western Regional Park.

And as a last competition update, we are looking forward to announcing the details of the MD Open very soon. This has been the largest pickleball tournament in Maryland in the last few years and we are planning to continue the trend.

And as always, we welcome volunteer support and your ideas on what interests you. Please send any thoughts to tdosten@gmail.com.

Member Relations Committee

Patty Guzman

Over the past quarter, the Member Relations Committee held several fun events. In January, we organized a non-pickleball social event. Led by Elaine Masker, 50 HCPA members gathered at Nottingham's Tavern for drinks, appetizers, games, and door prizes. The Left Right Center game was a big hit!



Playing Left Right Center game

In February, we organized an indoor open play session to show our appreciation for our Session Coordinators. The event was held at The PutAway, and everyone enjoyed lots of pickleball at a nice facility and shared snacks. Also in February, HCPA board members and other HCPA volunteers participated in a Minor League Pickleball Event with the Annapolis Pickleball Club at The PutAway. It was nice to exchange ideas with another local pickleball organization and to play some friendly games. Finally, as part of our mission to give back, the HCPA donated a beautiful basket of pickleball-related items to a Howard County Library System Fund raiser.

Spring 2024

Player Development Committee

Jay McTighe

Player Development News

The Association has formed a Player Development Committee to support members in improving their play. We currently offer courses, drills, open play sessions, and tournaments and these are listed on the Stack Team App. We plan to expand player development offerings for various levels, including specialized clinics on targeted skills. We will announce them as they become available. In the meantime, here are some resources that can help your game:

Tip of the Month: You will receive a Tip of the Month email containing one or more articles and associated videos on one aspect of the game. This month's topic is "Playing Better with a Partner" and offers suggestions for doubles play. Here is a link to view it: [Tip of the Month](#)

Video Tutorials: View more than 180 YouTube videos addressing a wide range of pickleball skills and strategies for all levels at: [Video Tutorials](#)

Articles: Download more than 60 articles on various pickleball skills and strategies at: [Pickleball Articles](#)

Podcast: 4.0 to Pro

This informative Podcast targets more experienced players (3.5 and up) who wish to improve their games. The Podcast offers more than 50 episodes in which pickleball pros address various skills and strategies. A great thing to listen to while traveling to your favorite courts! You can download this free Podcast on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and Spotify.

Technology Committee

Earl Sneeringer

The Technology Committee is currently assessing three different technology platforms to support an integrated website and mobile presence. We compiled a list of requirements that we are looking for and sent them to these companies. We are reviewing their responses and will be conducting demonstrations of them if warranted.