



Connection

October 24, 2024 Editor: Pam Lottinville

Pickleball History

I want to share with you the history of the game called pickleball, how it started, how I became involved and what it could mean to the future of our children (and even our seniors), oh, that means for everyone!

Washington State Congressman Joel Pritchard and his family spent their summers on Bainbridge Island. The Pritchards hosted Bill Bell and his family on a weekend in early 1965. Joel and Bill returned to the cottage after playing golf, only to find their children disgruntled that there was “nothing to do.”

Nearby, there was an old badminton court that had been used by the neighborhood. After rummaging in the outdoor storage shed, they found ping-pong paddles and a perforated plastic ball. The net was set for badminton. The entire purpose of this venture was to have family fun—all ages of children and adults to play a game together. Experimentation led them to lower the net to 36 inches and by 1967, Pritchard and friend, Bob O’Brian constructed the first court to be used.

In 1972, they formed a corporation and by 1975 the *National Observer* wrote an article on the “sport.” Word spread when *The Tennis Magazine* referred to pickleball as the “newest racquet sport.”

The first organized tournament was held in Washington State, organized by Sid Williams in 1982. Two years later, the first rule book was written and the United States Amateur Pickleball Association (U.S.A.P.A.) was born. Also, in 1984, the first composite paddle was created by Arlen Paranto who was a Boeing Engineer. If you have played with a wood paddle then with a composite paddle, you understand what a breakthrough this was!

By 1990, the new sport was being played in all 50 states; by 2001, the Arizona Senior Olympics included pickleball and drew in 300 players.

A new corporation was needed by 2005 and rules revision by 2008. There has been a constant growth in recent years from 10,000 member in 2015 to well over 70,000 members in 2023.

Very briefly, the way that I got involved is as follows: In the 1970s, I played tennis; in the 80s, I played racket ball; in 2013, I attempted to play pickleball. I loved the game, but I had suffered a broken foot six months earlier which inhibited my serious play. This game is played at many retirement centers in southern states. I personally know an entire family that played tennis and switched to pickleball.

This game is fun. My five-year-old great grandson asks me to play quite often. When the entire family comes to the farm, we sweep out the shed and the game continues all day long.



<https://usapickleball.org/what-is-pickleball/history-of-the-game/>

Join in the fun and exercise—you won’t be sorry! Get 4, 6 or 10 players together and I will put up the net. Respond to this page and let me know if you are interested.

Note:

Good Luck to SACHS Football Oct. 26 Saturday at 1:00 pm at South Fork High School in Kincaid, Illinois. Located southeast of Springfield

Chili Supper at Presbyterian Church on October 26 from 4:30-7:00 pm.