



# PICKLEBALL *Press*

Save the (party) date: DEC 17 See details inside!

## C O U R T C O M M E N T A R Y



**As we gather for Thanksgiving, a new tradition is taking hold – one that challenges the long-standing dominance of backyard football. Many are discovering the joy of a pre- or post-feast pickleball game, an inclusive activity suited for nearly everyone around the table.**

Thanksgiving is a day for gratitude, reflection, and of course, a hearty meal. But before their big meal, many people are lacing up their court shoes for a moderate-intensity workout that burns roughly 350 calories an hour.

With its smaller court size and easy rules, pickleball accommodates all ages, from energetic kids to grandparents who may prefer something gentler than high-impact sports.

Enter the Pickleball “Turkey Bowl,” a growing tradition that has evolved from the familiar touch-football scrimmage into a friendly, sometimes competitive, doubles

match. Pro player, Ben Johns, shared that his family switched from football to pickleball to protect “valuable hands” – a reminder that the game prioritizes fun and reduced injury risk. Add in the mental-health benefits, and it’s easy to see why pickleball is becoming a holiday favorite.

Thanksgiving pickleball offers a chance to get outside, share laughs, and build an appetite. Its accessibility and low-impact nature allow multiple generations to participate together, making it an ideal activity for family bonding.

Thanksgiving has always been about connection, and pickleball adds a fresh, active twist that brings everyone together. So this year, consider starting your own tradition: enjoy a game that delivers exercise, camaraderie, and joy. You may discover that you’re most thankful for this new holiday ritual. And don’t forget to capture the fun with photos and videos.

APA wishes you a Thanksgiving filled with gratitude, laughter, and maybe a little dinking. Happy Thanksgiving!

**Christina Dupuch**  
*President, [AVLPA.org](http://AVLPA.org)*

# PICKLERS CLUB

We would like to recognize our Picklers Club members for their elevated membership in APA!

*(List reflects members through 11/17/25)*

## Dink Level - \$500 and above

Nancy Carr  
Bonnie Knox  
Jane Lawson

Mark Livingston  
Esther Nevarez  
Mimi Sexton

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## Paddle Level - \$250 to \$499

Anonymous  
Christina Dupuch  
Dee Pierce  
Kathy Scarborough

sexton  
Howard Waxman  
Alice Weldon *(in memory  
and honor of Stef Roemer)*

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## Pickle Level - \$100 to \$249

Tracy Absher  
Anonymous (4)  
Bob Bridges  
Liz Button  
Holly Fairbairn  
Stephanie Fish  
Michael Fortini

Annabel Haberkorn  
Bill Lyng  
Teri Lyng  
Molly McMillan  
Howard Philips  
Lynn Roberts  
Terry Roberts

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If you'd like to learn more about the Picklers Club, [click here](#).

“Every person can make a difference, and every person should try.”  
– John F. Kennedy

# CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

**Shout out to two more sites who have joined the APA recycling initiative - Ace & Eagle and Asheville Raquet Club South.**

**To save shipping costs to the recycling facility, [P3 Cares](#) comes to Asheville two or three times a year and picks up a growing pile of damaged balls that you, our community, are keeping from the landfills.**

**Many thanks to volunteers who keep each box clean and gather balls to be recycled. It's not just a good idea. It's a movement.**



Two springs ago, a group of APA volunteers went to Isaac Dixon Elementary's afterschool program to teach second, third, fourth and fifth graders pickleball. We met for two hours weekly for eight weeks, spreading three nets across the basketball court in their gym.

Some of the kids could hardly put their hands around the handles, but they all knew how to keep score, dink, and show enough control to keep the ball in play by the end of the sessions. Just as important was teaching the kids to congratulate their partner and opponents after each game, to not interrupt a game to chase balls, and to practice control, instead of hitting the ball as hard as possible.

We've expanded our youth programs to hour-long monthly sessions for 20 kids at Eblen Middle School. These fifth and six graders, with youth-sized paddles purchased through APA membership funds, play across 4 1/2 nets placed on a concrete path.

Helping these kids learn a new sport, control and good sportsmanship has been challenging and rewarding. Big shout out to the newest volunteers who are helping at Eblen: Annie Jonas and Meg Turner, both former educators, Stephanie Fish, acupuncturist, and Camille Cushman, teacher at Eblen.





## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

# TOM HARDECKER

by Nancy Carr

APA would like to recognize a special group of members, led by Tom Hardecker (2nd from left), at Kenilworth Park. Tom published a request on PlayTime Scheduler for food donations to help our hungry neighbors. Dozens of pickleball players stepped up to the plate and donated food. On Wednesday, November 5, 133 pounds of food was collected; on Friday, November 7, 91 pounds was

collected. The two-day total of 224 pounds went to Loving Food Resources in Kenilworth. Thanks to all who donated - we are continuing to make a difference on and off the court!

The next time you see Tom, please congratulate him on this successful drive and for being a newly elected APA Board member. Since Tom will focus on growing

membership, please consider joining APA today. **For just \$20 a year**, your membership supports clinics, advocacy, prison programs, pickleball recycling, afterschool events and more!

*Pictured above from left: Joe Wombwell, Tom Hardecker, Mark Lenzen, and Gina Snyder*



# JOIN US!

**Come celebrate the season with APA!  
Don't miss our "Check It Out" and Holiday Fundraiser & Celebration!**



**Date:** Wednesday, December 17th

**Location:** Asheville Sports Club  
137 Coxe Ave, Asheville, NC 28801  
Parking garage available behind Swannanoa Cleaners.

From 3 – 5 PM, we'll host our monthly "Check It Out." **APA members only** can enjoy free play on two pickleball courts.

From 5 – 7 PM, we shift into our Holiday Fundraiser & Celebration, **open to everyone**. Enjoy pickleball and snacks provided by APA. Beverages available for purchase.

This season, we're coming together to support the WNC YMCA Mobile Food Markets, which bring fresh, healthy food directly into our community through free farmers-market-style distributions at libraries, churches, doctors' offices, and other neighborhood hubs – no questions asked and no limits placed.

Thanks to the generous owners of Asheville Sports Club, we can enjoy the season, connect with friends, and help our neighbors access nutritious food.

Suggested donation: \$10 (or more) per person.

We hope to see you there!

## THANK YOU, APA SPONSORS!

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[avipa.org](http://avipa.org)





# STEPS *to* SUCCESS

by DAVID KELLY



**“If you learn from losing, you haven’t lost anything.”**

*Anonymous NYC Washington Park chess hustler*

## **Another. Dull. Message. About. Footwork.**

Sorry to do this to all of you, but I refuse to give up on the most high value improvement within the reach of all players. The ability to prepare properly with the lower body either enhances your options with the paddle or

radically diminishes them. And the good news is, in overwhelming instances, your feet adjustments are taking place inside the area of an imaginary 4-foot hula hoop on the ground. Imagine not making contact with the ball behind your belly button, but instead, making contact

to your side and in front with freedom to swing as needed. Proper and consistent footwork will bail out mediocre paddle skills but the paddle will rarely optimize poor foot preparation.

We all know this, but there’s rarely action to implement. Be the change!



# FACE PULLS: THE UNSUNG HERO OF SHOULDER HEALTH FOR PICKLEBALL PLAYERS

Written by: Dr. Asa Walker,  
PT, DPT, LAT, ATC, OCS, CSCS  
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If you want to keep playing pickleball for years without dealing with nagging shoulder pain, you have to take care of the muscles that protect the joint - and the face pull is one of the best ways to do that. While there's no single "golden exercise" that magically bulletproofs your shoulders, this exercise gets surprisingly close. It's simple, effective, and hits the major needs of shoulder strength pickleball requires - all without requiring fancy equipment or a gym membership.

Here's why the face pull deserves a spot in your weekly routine: it strengthens your scapular retractors and shoulder external rotators, which are two of the most important muscle groups for safe and powerful overhead or rotational movement. If you want cleaner smashes, better overhead control, and shoulders that don't complain after a long weekend tournament, these are the muscles that keep everything aligned and moving the way it should. Plus, the face pull can be done at home with a resistance band or at the gym with a cable machine, making it one of the most accessible "shoulder insurance policies" out there.

To do it well, follow these key cues:

- Set the band or cable at or above face height.
- Pull toward your forehead or above (not your chest) while keeping your elbows slightly high and wide.
- Squeeze your shoulder blades together and make a proud chest as you pull - but don't shrug your shoulders up toward your ears.
- Return the band with control instead of letting it snap you forward and allow it to stretch your shoulders forward.

Get those ingredients right, and you're doing 95% of the exercise perfectly.



The cherry on top? Face pulls are easy to progress. At home, just scoot back to increase band tension. At the gym, add more plates to the cable resistance. And once your technique feels dialed in, you can sprinkle in a little power work by adding speed to the pulling portion. A couple sets of 10 - 20 reps, 2 - 3 times per week, and your shoulders will feel steadier, stronger, and far more prepared for the rotational demands of pickleball. It's a small investment with a big return - exactly the kind of thing that keeps you playing this sport for a long, long time.



# HAPPENINGS

2025

