



# PICKLEBALL *Press*



**Pickleball in 2025 continued its incredible rise after being named the fastest-growing sport in the United States for the fifth consecutive year.**

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

Locally, APA supported and expanded the game by purchasing nets, offering free clinics, launching after-school programs, recycling used balls, connecting players with courts, advocating for portable restrooms, engaging with correctional facilities, and relentlessly pushing for dedicated pickleball courts. Along the way, we supported charitable fundraisers as well.

Nationally, 2025 began with 16,210 places to play, representing 70,641 pickleball courts across the US - including dedicated courts and shared-use spaces such

as tennis courts with pickleball lines. Florida leads the nation with 1,228 locations, barely surpassing California at 1,223. North Carolina now boasts 586 places to play. Interest in pickleball has grown 550% over the past five years, and 2025 continued to validate that momentum. (Data provided by USA Pickleball's Annual Growth Report and Google Trends.)

In 2025, APA was offered a seat on the Buncombe County Parks and Recreation (BCP&R) Advisory Board - an important step in strengthening our voice. Also in 2025, BCP& R

received a \$1,975,920 grant from the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) for Phases 2 and 3 of the Enka Recreation Destination project.

The project will create a dynamic hub for recreation, sports, and greenways. Most exciting for our community, Phase 3 includes plans for 16 covered, lighted competition pickleball courts. Depending on the completion of Phase 2, the projected timeline for the courts is late 2026, more likely 2027. This milestone is part of the long-term master plan for BCP&R.

**Christina Dupuch**  
*President, [AVLPA.org](https://www.avlpa.org)*

# PICKLERS CLUB

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

*(List reflects members through 1/1/26)*

## Dink Level - \$500 and above

Nancy Carr  
Bonnie Knox  
Jane Lawson

Mark Livingston  
Esther Nevarez  
Mimi Sexton

---

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

Anonymous  
Christina Dupuch  
Tom Hardecker  
Dee Pierce  
Kathy Scarborough

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

---

## 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

---

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

“It’s not how much we give, but how much we put into giving.”  
– Mother Teresa



# CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

by Molly McMillan

Thanks to our volunteers, in 2025 we expanded access, provided education, focused on sustainability, and provided fundraising support in these ways:

## Expanding Access & Education

- Painted a pickleball court and led a clinic for inmates at **Craggy Prison**
- Taught **eight clinics at Oakley Park**, serving 25 – 28 participants per session
- Launched pickleball programming at a **new after-school program at Eblen Middle School**
- Completed the **second year of programming at Isaac Dickson Elementary School**
- Led our **first wheelchair pickleball clinic at the VA Hospital**
- Monitored **13 recycling boxes for damaged pickleballs**, expanding locations to include **Asheville Racquet Club** and **Ace & Eagle**

## None of this would be possible without the generosity, time, and energy of this group:

Tammy Banich, Mike Brown, Trish Brown, Nancy Carr, Susan Dixon, Stephanie Fish, Jill Fletcher, Allison Grant, Kevin Hall, Rachel Horn, Marshall Janes, Jeff Jelenek, Annie Jonas, Jennifer Kupper, Sheri Lalumondier, Kathy Lane, Bill Lyng, Teri Lyng, Bob Maier, Jayne McDonald, Molly McMillan, Susan Meyers, Esther Nevarez, Tom Robertson, Kristi Schleder, sexton, Mike Spivey, Bob Sterr, Meg Turner, Cathy Underdown, Dara Wittenberg, Bill Wolfe, and April Yount.

# APA MEMBERS

Thank you to our valuable members!

*(List reflects members through 1/5/26)*

Tracy Absher	Barbara Durr	Steve Heiselman	Martha Marshall	sexton
Hillary Allgood	Rhonda Egerton	Samantha Herrington	Patricia Matteson	Mimi Sexton
Lisa Andrade	Gail Ely	Kelly Hinz	Timothy McCarty	Ricky Sill
Elaine Andrews	Holly Fairbairn	Audrey Hodel	Jayne McDonald	Bob Simmons
Kevin Babin	Darrell Farlow	Heather Housman	Molly McMillan	Jeff Smith
Tammy Banich	Nicole Farrell	Lisa Jackson	Jimmy Messer	Jody Smith Williams
Alan Barlow	Michael Feldman	Marshall Janes	Susan Meyers	Gina Snyder
Laurie Baugh	Rob Fillhaber	Joe Johnson	Candie Moore	Mike Spivey
Lucinda Beatty	Stephanie Fish	Pam Kellam	Barry Nadler	Billy Sproul
Thomas Beckstead	Jacqueline	Pat Kelly	Esther Nevarez	Rishi Srivastava
Cassie Beckwith	Fitzpatrick	Greg Killmaster	David Pearson	Fabienne Sterckx
Debbie Berletic	Jill Fletcher	Bess Kimberly	Lois Penn	Jill Sternberg
Kathleen Betts	Dave Foppert	Suzanne Kirby	Derrick Perry	Bob Sterr
Marcy Blick	Terry Foppert	Bonnie Knox	Howard Philips	Sheila Sterr
Betsy Blose	Rebecca Ford	Caroline Knox	Dee Pierce	Michael Tate
Mike Bohan	Michael Fortini	Susannah Knox	John Pierce	Pam Tellock
Bob Bridges	Laura Foster	Stephen Knox	Deidre Poe	Paris Topazi
Tiffany Brott	Carlton Freeman	Jennifer Kupper	Rhoda Poston	Laura Torres
Stuart Brown	Rachel Friel	Sheri Lalumondier	Eileen Poulos	Adi Toth
Leanne Brunton	Marjorie Frost	Jennifer Lanning	Pam Purvis	Catherine
Sandra Buchanan	Robin Garrison	Wanda Marie	Michelle Ramacciotti	Underdown
Richard Burgner	Amy Gaston	Lapointe	Anne Ramirez	Deborah Vigeland
Liz Button	Valerie Gortmaker	Nora Latta	Bob Rauch	Michael Wasson
Nancy Carr	Allison Grant	Jane Lawson	Melissa Reitkopp	Howard Waxman
Jeff Castleberry	Vlad Grebenuyk	Mark Lenzen	Lynn Roberts	Lisa Welch
Laura Chadwick	griff	Darla Letourneau	Terry Roberts	Alice Weldon
John Chapman	Christy Gunther	Gerardo Leunda	Tom Robertson	Jim West
Ashley Ciochetti	Annabel Haberkorn	Jonathan	Isaac Rosenberg	Rosie White
Katie Ciochetti	Maria Haddon	Lieberman	Judy Rosser	Reginald Widemon
Dennis Cole, Jr.	Caroline Hall	Caroline Lindow	Kathy Rubendall	Luke Willert
Adrienne Crowther	Craig Hall	Mark Livingston	Sean Sanborn	Dara Wittenberg
Leslie Davis	Tom Hardecker	Ade Lobel	Joel Sandvos	Cherry Wolfarth
Marzi Davis	Andrew Hart	Vickie Long	Kathy Scarborough	Bill Wolfe
Kathleen Dine	Janet Hart	Rick Lucas	Kristi Schleder	Stephen Wollentin
Susan Dixon	Jill Hartmann	Bill Lyng	Jackie Schmidt	Joe Wombwell
Michelle Dorsey	Meda Hatcher	Teri Lyng	Steve Schoenberger	David Wood
Cate Douglass	Thomas Hathaway	Bob Maier	Connie Schrader	Katie Woods
Christina Dupuch	Lynn Hawthorne	Bethany Malley	George Seibel	Concha Wyatt

As APA wraps up an outstanding 2025 season, we pause to celebrate a year of remarkable growth, outreach, and community impact.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

GOODBYE  
2025

*by Yia Pia Sanchez-Brugal*

### **A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Volunteers**

Our deepest gratitude goes to our incredible APA volunteers. Week after week, you made it possible for hundreds of people to discover and fall in love with this sport.

### **Because of your dedication, we achieved so much:**

**Beginner Lessons:** Hundreds of adults and children learned the game at Oakley Park.

**Youth Outreach:** Eight weeks at Isaac Dixon Elementary and five sessions at Eblen Middle helped nurture the next generation.

**Community Heroes:** We hosted sessions for Asheville veterans and dedicated court time for firefighters.

**Unique Engagement:** We brought equipment and instruction to Craggy Correctional Institution.

**Public Visibility:** We participated in local fairs

and the Adaptive Sports Day Fair at the VA hospital, spreading the message that pickleball is for everyone.

This has been an incredibly meaningful year - driven by our commitment to serve a growing community. We remain steadfast in our pursuit of more public courts and a more inclusive pickleball community. Thank you for making 2025 unforgettable.

# JOIN US!

## A Small Facility, a Big Community

*by Tom Hardecker*



Pickleball has become far more than a sport in Asheville - it's a gathering place, a wellness outlet, and a reminder of how strong community can be when people come together with shared purpose and good spirits.

At our public courts, players of all ages and backgrounds meet not just to compete, but to connect. Friendships form between games, mentorship happens naturally across generations, and laughter is often as common as the sound of a well-placed dink. For many, pickleball has become a cornerstone of physical health, mental well-being, and social connection.

Which brings us - quite practically - to the photo accompanying this article.

Yes, you'll see smiling pickleball players in a porta-potty, representing something meaningful: advocacy, responsiveness, and progress. Its presence is the result of the Asheville Pickleball Association working with Asheville Parks & Recreation to address real needs at our courts. When a community speaks thoughtfully and collaboratively, it's heard.

At its heart, pickleball in Asheville is about inclusion, accessibility, and care - for the sport, for the players, and for the shared spaces we love. Whether it's advocating for court time, welcoming new players, or yes, ensuring basic amenities, these efforts help pickleball continue to thrive as a positive force in our community.

Thank you to everyone who shows up, speaks up, and plays on.

Sometimes progress looks like a beautifully executed third shot drop.

And sometimes... it looks like an orange door in the background of a group photo.

Both matter.

**Join or renew today.**  
**We need you!**



# STEPS *to* SUCCESS

by DAVID KELLY



“We cannot change anything until we accept it.”  
– Carl Jung

Scrolling through the usual clickbait – “*Do these 5 things and you’ll be a 5.0 in 5 days!*” – I came across an interesting perspective. One content creator analyzed a 30-second clip he personally recorded from a recent pro men’s doubles match. That short clip translated into roughly 2,400 still frames.

In this single rally, play quickly unraveled for one team. They found themselves pinned on the baseline, scrambling to

survive. Together, they hit 17 shots.

Here’s the question:

What percentage of those still frames actually showed them striking the ball and completing a swing?

**Answer: just 7% — about 170 frames.**

So, what consumed most of their time?

**Perception** – gathering the right information to prepare for the next shot

**Movement** – prioritizing footwork and lower-body positioning before the paddle ever comes into play  
A good reminder that pickleball is far less about the swing than we like to think.

2026 pickle resolution, anyone?

And a little pickle philosophy from Carl Jung to close it out:

***“We cannot change anything until we accept it.”***



# THE SIMPLE SHOULDER MOBILITY DRILL EVERY PICKLEBALL PLAYER NEEDS

Written by: Dr. Asa Walker, PT, DPT, LAT, ATC, OCS, CSCS

Owner of [Built For Pickleball](https://www.builtforpickleball.com)

Learn more at [builtforpickleball.com](https://www.builtforpickleball.com)

Email: [asawalker0910@gmail.com](mailto:asawalker0910@gmail.com)

Pickleball asks your shoulders to do a lot: reaching overhead, rotating quickly, and stabilizing the paddle during fast exchanges at the kitchen. When shoulder mobility is limited, those movements can become less efficient and more stressful - often showing up as stiffness, loss of power, or nagging pain over time. Improving shoulder range of motion doesn't require a long routine or fancy equipment, though. A simple drill can go a long way.

That drill is the Wall Slide with Lift-Off. It's especially effective because it improves overhead shoulder motion while teaching your shoulder blades to move the way they do during gameplay.

In other words, it doesn't just stretch the shoulder - it helps it move better. This is huge for pickleball players, since optimal shoulder mobility allows you to generate power more easily and reduces unnecessary strain on the joint during serves, smashes, and high volleys.

To perform it, stand with your back, hips, and head lightly against a wall. Place your forearms on the wall with your elbows bent about 90 degrees, and gently tuck your ribs down so you're not arching your lower back excessively. Slowly slide your arms upward along the wall as high as you comfortably can. Once you reach the top, lightly lift your hands one to two inches off the wall while keeping your ribs down and shoulder blades engaged. Hold for a second, then return to the starting position with control and without touching the wall. Try to keep your forearms parallel to the wall on the way down each time. Aim for 8 – 12 slow, controlled reps.

A few reps of this drill before play - or as part of your regular routine - can make your shoulders feel more mobile, stronger, and more prepared for the demands of the game. It's a small investment of time that pays off in smoother overheads, better control, and shoulders that stay happy for the long haul.

# HAPPENINGS<sup>2025</sup> IN REVIEW



**THANK YOU,  
APA SPONSORS!**

**CHORUS**  
ASHEVILLE  
55+ ACTIVE ADULT COMMUNITY



**HOMINY**  
AT RIVERBLUE

