



March 2024



This is what leadership looks like.

New Courts Grand Opening

Courts 5-8 had their official Grand Opening on January 31st, with a boffo celebration that included food, a celebrity(ish) pickleball game, and a practice circuit complete with targets, ladders, broomsticks and other flotsam and jetsam.

The highlight of the grand opening was a celebration honoring those who started pickleball at the Highlands. Bob Hassett represented those pioneers who began playing years ago and saw the potential of the sport.

As an aside, I first heard of pickleball in 2015. My wife and I were looking for places to retire, and came across a tanned, fit, happy couple from Connecticut at the new Del Webb community in Ocala, Florida. Beside the strange name, we heard that pickleball was the single activity that caused the most injuries. We left it at that. But they were happy.

That had nothing to do with our decision to come to Arizona, but pickleball was already here. Thank you all for having the foresight to see into the future of sport and working hard to get pickleball courts at the Highlands. First two courts, then four, now eight. That's considerable growth.

And thanks to those who put on the Grand Opening celebration. The HPA has many volunteers who work behind the scenes to make the HPA the Highlands' best organization.

Since much of this work is done behind the scenes, I can't possibly acknowledge everyone who contributed to the Grand Opening. I apologize in advance for not recognizing you. But can I recognize a staff member who leverages our volunteer activities? I refer to Megean Vicino, our Wellness and Fitness Director.

Megean is that perpetually happy, posturally perfect person who facilitates a great deal of the activities here at the Highlands. She does a great job and it was nice to see her at the Grand Opening. Thanks, Megean.



Mike looking happy - just take it in



The perfect couple - Amy and Mr Amy



Bob Hassett - a true legend



The original pickleballers - we owe it all to you.



Megean and Esther- they always look happy



It's Helen. Say no more.



You talking to me?



I'd need a drink too if Mike made me wear this



Lonnie performing hosting duties flawlessly



It was a good time, wasn't it?



Yes, they'll let you play on the new courts



Melinda - shirt czar

The Three Stages (Not Stooges) Of Pickleball

Submitted by Mike Cravens - without editorial comment

Stage 1



Fashionable - no game

Stage 2



Overkills every return shot. Trash talks. Pretends to be good sport when losing. Best to avoid.

Stage 3



Poster-child senior. Shows up for his group on wrong days, wrong times. Hangs around courts anyway."

HPA Annual Meeting and Election Results

The annual meeting of the Highland Pickleball Association was conducted on Sunday, 2/18/24, at 4:00 PM. One of the agenda items was the election results of 3 Board members filling the vacancies of President, Vice President and Member at Large. For those members not able to attend the meeting the results were:

President: Tom Harris

Vice President: Helen Yarmoska

Member at Large: Donna Hover



El Presidente meeting with new constituents



Helen - Winning!



Yeah, it was boring



This is how you hold an audience

Marketplace

Reminder: This is the catchall section of The Prickly Pickle, and readers are encouraged to submit tournament results, stuff for sale, photos, etc. Submit your contributions to newsletter@highlandspickleball.com.



Jim Widdows offering his instruction to a couple of eager students



A happy group of pickleball players on a winter day.



Jim Githens and his crew, posing for photos instead of playing



Jeff LeMaster and the tall guy new kitchen line rule



Mike Cohen strutting his stuff



Dennis, you're a good example.

SELKIRK PADDLE DEMO DAYS

Have you ever wanted to try the various models of Selkirk pickleball paddles and see how they play? Wonder if a new paddle will help your game? This is the event for you. Come to the Highlands Pickleball courts to try out - free of charge and with no obligation to buy - the entire line of Selkirk paddles from the SLK beginner paddles to the most innovative Power Air model and the newest paddle the LUXX. Jim Widdows will be available during the demo to talk about which paddle might best suit your game and then you can take them on the court and give them a try! Demo paddles are provided by Selkirk through Jim Widdows who is a PPR Certified Pickleball Instructor and is associated with Selkirk through their advocate program for Pickleball Instructors.

DOES YOUR CURRENT PADDLE NEED A NEW GRIP?

How is the grip on your existing paddle? A little worn, a little slick, not what it used to be? Even if you don't want to purchase a new paddle, replacing the grip can bring back the feel your paddle had when it was new. Jim is happy to put on a replacement grip during the demo days event. Feel free to purchase your own replacement grip and bring it down to the courts and Jim will replace your old grip at no cost. Or we will have several grip options available to purchase for \$10 that Jim can then install on your existing paddle.

PICKLEBALL PADDLE SWAP MEET

If you have a paddle that you no longer use that might be the perfect fit for someone else bring it to the demo day. Buy or swap or sell your paddle to fellow Highlanders. Everyone welcome.

When does all this goodness happen? Saturday, March 2 from 12-3 PM on Court 5.

Shirts!

HPA pickleball shirts are in. If you haven't gotten your shirts, contact Melinda Norris at mjn616@hotmail.com. If you haven't paid for your shirt, don't forget that.

The Highlands Women

The Highlands Hot Shots 3.5 womens APPL league team is 6-2 for the season!! Come watch and cheer us on at our last home game (at the Gallery Sports Club) at 1 pm on Friday 3/8! Team captains Marissa Buell and Helen Yarmoska.



Highlands Hotties



The Hotties, representing women in the 50+ age bracket and 3.0 skill level, are 6-0 as we approach the end of an 8-game season. Our next match is on 2/28 at 10:00 AM, at Corbett's, Tucson's only combination Restaurant-Bar-Pickleball venue! And finally on March 8th at 2:00 PM we travel to Saddlebrook Ranch to take on the Binge Dinkers.

We'd like to send a shout out to all of those Highlands mentors who have helped us on our pickleball journey. THANK YOU ALL!!! We wouldn't be here without you!

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS CARMEN SAN DIEGO?

Some things never change and some things never go away. Take a look at this mug shot:



Yes, it's Blake Couture, formerly of The Highlands, now of Median, ID. Not everyone had a chance to meet Blake, but no one who met Blake can forget him, no matter how hard we try.

We met Blake at The Flying Pickle, an indoor facility in Meridian with 19 courts. Unsurprisingly to those of us who know Blake, he has a group of 45 people who play at TFP. Blake is infamous for the Nelson, which for those who don't know is a body bag shot from the serve. He got me twice while he lived here, and had a \$10 bounty for anyone who got me, which went uncollected.

Blake sends his best to his many friends at the Highlands. Rematch in September. He's promised to raise the bounty to \$20.

DON'T GET SIDELINED

Here's how to prevent injuries while playing pickleball

MATTHEW SOLAN | Harvard Health Publishing

Pickleball continues to skyrocket in popularity. According to the Sports and Fitness Industry Association, the number of pickleball players in the United States increased from 3.5 million in 2019 to 8.9 million in 2022, a 154% surge. 'Unfortunately, more playing leads to a higher incidence of injuries, especially among older adults,' says Linda Murray, an orthopedic clinical specialist with Harvard-affiliated Spaulding Outpatient Center Malden. In fact, a study in the December 2021 issue of Injury Epidemiology found that more than 85% of pickleball injuries involved players ages 60 and older.

Types of injuries



Because pickleball uses a lighter ball that needs less force and requires no overhead shots, it rarely causes shoulder injuries like those common to other racquet sports.

'With pickleball, most injuries are strains and sprains in the legs and knees,' says Murray. 'And research has found that men are 3.5 times more likely than women to have these types of injuries.'

The wrist is another common site of injury, with sprains and fractures caused by falls.

Pickleball injury prevention is threefold: performing lower-body strength exercises at least twice a week, doing a dynamic warm-up before playing and working on agility and balance. Here's a look at each.

Lower-body exercises

Murray recommends squats, lunges and heel raises.

'They target all major muscle groups in the legs and incorporate movements that you would be performing while playing pickleball,' she says. 'Plus you can do them at home using body weight or light dumbbells.'

Squats: 'Squats use multiple muscle groups at the same time,' says Murray. 'Although you may seldom perform a full squat on the court, you want to strengthen and tone your leg muscles through a greater range of motion. This will enhance leg power, improve mobility, and reduce joint stiffness and tendon injury.'

Lunges: Lunges work the muscles in the thighs and buttocks. There are numerous variations of lunges — reverse, forward, side — that can train your muscles and joints to function in all directions. 'Lunges also challenge your balance and leg strength,' says Murray. 'This is a powerful training approach for pickleball, as it will enhance your ability to get to the ball no matter which direction it's moving.'

Heel raises: This exercise helps build calf muscles. Pickleball courts are smaller than other racquet sport courts, and there is much less long sprinting involved, especially when you play doubles. 'Instead, you need quick foot action and the ability to lunge for the ball, which requires power from calf muscles,' says Murray.

D U N E



Today, March 1, 2024 is the release of Dune Part 2. If you haven't seen Part 1, it's available on Netflix, although it's "leaving soon", whenever that is. You should watch it, then go see Part 2.

For both of you who don't know anything about Dune, here's a bit of background. Dune was written in 1965 by Frank Herbert. The book has action, and the movie focuses more on the action, but the book is deep in political science, philosophy, and religion. It can be a heavy lift at times, but it's worth it. If you're looking for a western in outer space, go somewhere else. Dune's plot is way too complex for me to summarize here.

Dune's complexity and inner dialogue make movie adaptations very difficult. However, Dune is directed by Denis Villeneuve, the best of this genre, and Dune Part 1 was excellent, in my opinion.

So go see Dune Part 2, and I'll see you at the theater.