



December 2023



Breaking News

The new courts are open and available for play. Here's the first group to break in the new surface.



Shelli and Lonnie out bright and early to break in the new courts. Not sure how Jeff and Bruce were able to crash the party, but they look happy/guilty

Here we go. The Hotshots, the Highlands' own 3.5 women's team, giving the new courts a try.



Guest Column

I asked Lonnie Leifer to write something for this newsletter a few weeks ago, with something Christmas in mind. Obviously this is not about Christmas and by the time you get this, Thanksgiving will be over.

As soon as I read what Lonnie wrote, I knew this was the right article. Not only did I like what Lonnie wrote and the way he wrote it, I liked the fact that you'll read this only a few days after Thanksgiving. The turkey is gone, the Cowboys won the football game, visitors will have gone home, and we'll have already started planning for Christmas.

It's good now and then to take a quick look back at what we just experienced. Read and enjoy.

Hopefully, you've enjoyed this Thanksgiving season with family and friends. America's Thanksgiving tradition began in 1621 when Plymouth colonists joined Native American Wampanoag people sharing an autumn harvest feast over 3 days. Canadians celebrate Thanksgiving every year on the second Monday in October. Their first Thanksgiving celebration predates America by 40 years, beginning in 1578.

Thanksgiving celebration in North America actually began with First Nations (the indigenous peoples of Canada) and Native Americans, holding harvest festivals long before Europeans arrived.

In Germany, where my family originates, my mother spoke of "Erntedankfest" Thanksgiving, a "harvest festival of thanks", and takes place the first Sunday in October.

In Japan, Thanksgiving, Kinro Kansha no Hi (Labor Thanksgiving Day) evolved from an ancient rice harvest festival, Niinamesai, the roots of which go back as far as the seventh century A.D.

China celebrates Thanksgiving with the annual "Chung Chiu" Moon Festival, a three-day feast featuring mooncakes containing duck egg yolks, lotus seed paste, and sesame seeds. became popular during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE).

Malaysia honors the harvest with the Kaamatan harvest festival where the indigenous Kadazan-Dusuns people celebrate the festival in May with a two-day public holiday.

These are a sample of countries and cultures that celebrate a season of Thanksgiving where harvest, freedom, and new beginnings are at the center of their gratitude. While our Thanksgiving tradition has grown into Football, Turkey (*not the original Thanksgiving meal*), and Parades, hopefully, the sentiment of gratitude remains.

I read a story recently of a teacher, Mrs. Klein, who had her first graders draw a picture of something for which they were thankful. Children from her class lived in a deteriorating, impoverished neighborhood, so she anticipated that most of the class would draw pictures of turkeys or of bountifully laden Thanksgiving tables.

What took Mrs. Klein aback was Douglas's picture. Douglas was so quiet and likely to be found close in her shadow as they went outside for recess. Douglas's drawing was simply this: A hand.

But whose hand? The class was captivated by his image. "I think it must be the hand of God that brings us food," said one student. "A farmer," said another, "because they grow the turkeys." "It looks more like a policeman, and they protect us." "I think," said Lavinia, who was always so serious, "that it is supposed to be all the hands that help us, but Douglas only drew one of them."

When Mrs. Klein had the others at work on another project, she bent over his desk and asked, "Douglas, whose hand is it?"

Douglas mumbled, "It's yours, Teacher."

Then Mrs. Klein recalled that she had taken Douglas by the hand from time to time; she often did that with the children. Perhaps, she reflected, this was her Thanksgiving, and everybody's Thanksgiving—not the material things given unto us, but the small ways that we give something to others.

We have the privilege of living in a wonderful community. Let's be mindful, and grateful, for the hand that so often reaches our way.

**I HAVE A PARTICULAR SET OF SKILLS.
I WILL FIND YOU ...**



**AND DRAG YOU OUT ONTO A PICKLEBALL
COURT AND DRILL WITH YOU UNTIL YOU'RE
ABLE TO LAND A DROP SHOT.**

@pickleballjones

From The Committees

HPA Board Elections Coming Up

The HPA Board will have three positions opening in February of 2024. They include President, Vice President and Member at Large.

If you are interested in running for any of these positions please contact the secretary of the HPA at: secretary@highlandspickleball.com.

Thanks For Our Next Generation of Highlands Pickleball!

With opening of our four new courts, some thanks are warranted:

To US for making our needs known to the HOA Board of Directors and showing up at Board meetings to voice our HPA needs and it's value to serving the Highland's Mission Statement.

To the Scheduling and Court Usage Committee who mined data from the Court Reserve system adding objective metrics to our request of the BOD.

To Mark Oswald and Megean Vicino as HOA management team who made the acquisition process and BOD coordination happen.

To present and past HPA officers and its many adjunct members (with both solicited and occasional unsolicited inputs 😊). All had a vision and started the momentum.

So, if you apply Marissa Buell's chronological history, we're in our fifth milestone of Highland's Pickleball:

1st Gen. Temporary Nets and Markings in parking lot.

2nd Gen. Courts 1 and 2 open

3rd Gen. Courts 3 and 4 open

4th Gen. Court Reserve system implemented

5th Gen. Courts 5,6,7 and 8 open (with lights)

Thanks to all. Keep vision for a 6th Generation.

Mike Cravens

Social Committee

HPA Social Committee Events

- January 17, 2024, 3 PM - Annual event for New Members (2022 - 2023)
- February 18, 2024 - HPA Annual Meeting/Voting of new Officers
- April 10, 2024 - Migration north annual Pizza party
- July 4th celebration - Member breakfast potluck to celebrate the holiday
- November 6, 2024 - Welcome back snow birds potluck



Don't these folks look happy? You'd be happy too if you attended the HPA Potluck

Competition Committee

In response to the recent HPA survey, you'll find several new HPA Organized events scheduled for the new courts during the time before the January High Season begins. We'll run these events on a trial basis to gauge the level of interest before determining if they should become a regular part of our court schedules.

Starting December 4th:

- Monday and Tuesday 8:30 to 10:00: Mixed Open Play – all 4 courts - Intermediate and Above
- Monday and Tuesday 10:00 to 11:30: Mixed Open Play – all 4 courts - Intermediate and Below
- Wednesday and Thursday 8:30 to 11:30: Mixed Open Play – all 4 courts - All are welcome
- Friday 8:30 to 10:00 and 10:00 to 11:30: Ladder League

This marks a return to our pickleball roots, where the open play sessions will be organized using paddle racks, though we're considering using the white board method which is currently in use at the Oro Valley Community Center. More details to come.

Ladder leagues will incorporate 4 different levels of competition so that everyone in the community will have a chance to participate, though the first 2 will be based on initial sign-ups. More information will be provided once the sign-up process has been finalized.

In addition to the open play and ladder league, there will be a several HPA organized skills classes. Outside of these items, the new courts will be open to on demand reservations until the new scheduling session starts on 1/14/24.

January High Season Coming Soon

January 14 marks the start of our new High Season pickleball schedule. This is an exciting time, since we'll have four new courts to incorporate into HPA organized, group and on demand time.

The preliminary timeline for establishing the new schedule is:

December 21st Scheduling committee issues call for group play requests via email to HPA

December 28 th	Group leaders submit requests for days, time and number of courts (to establish preliminary time slots by court counts for groups – does not guarantee that any particular time will be available to your group)
January 4 th	Preliminary schedule published showing available group slots
January 10 th	Group Play Lottery
January 11 th	Final schedule published with HPA Organized and group times
January 11 th -13 th :	Group leaders set up group events in Court Reserve
January 14 th	High Season schedule begins

Competition Committee - NEW Ladder League Coming

With the opening of the new pickleball courts, everyone in the Club is welcome to join us once a week as we trial a new HPA Ladder League in December and early January.

The purpose of Ladder League is to match players with others in the community with similar skill levels, making it more fun for everyone. Using the scores from the previous weeks' play, the Club will be able to match you more closely with similar players each and every week.

The first ladder will be Mixed play, including both men and women. Subsequent ladders will be Mens only then Womens only. The level of play scheduled first will depend on the number of sign ups received in the various categories. We hope to have enough court time and enough participants to trial 2 different levels of ladder play for approximately four weeks.

The following play categories should encompass everyone in the Highlands who is interested in participating.

1. Leisure (Beginner or just for fun)
2. Recreational (Looking to improve)
3. Competitive (wanting to play with better players)
4. High Competitive

More details on where and how to sign up will be coming once the scheduling committee has put the new courts into Court Reserve. Please plan to join us for this fun and exciting new event.

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.

Tournament Winners

Congratulations to Ed Agner and Lonnie Leiffer for **WINNING** the 3.5 OVRocks Turkey Trot Pickleball Tournament. That's them. In the middle. In front of the word **GOLD**.



Kudos for Coach Dave

Started playing pickleball about 18 months ago. My lessons began with coach Dave (Dave Epperson) and other beginners at the same level. With the help of the coach,

we were able to set up several groups that formed because of the lessons that Dave gave us. Just recently completed advanced beginner lessons with the coach which was also very informative and helped me with my play today. I would like to personally thank Dave for all his hard work, he has made me a better player. Mike Cohen

Godzilla Update

Good news on the Godzilla front. The King of the Monsters is enjoying a resurgence of popularity. Today is the release of “Godzilla Minus One”, a Japanese language release set in the 1950’s. It’s conceptually in line with the first Godzilla movies, and reviews are very good.

Apple TV is currently releasing episodes of “Monarch”, about the organization in charge of monitoring the Titans, of which Godzilla is, of course, King. I’m waiting for the entire season to drop so I can binge watch it.

Godzilla 3 is rumored to be in the works. I’m proposing a scene where pickleball players get stomped by a Titan in the middle of a hands battle. Good times.

Pickleball Clinics

Highlands Pickleball Association Free Pickleball Clinics in December

If you are not willing to learn, no one can help you. If you are determined to learn, no one can stop you. Zig Ziglar

Want to learn how to play Pickleball or improve your game? The HPA is sponsoring three free December workshops. NOTE: Each of the four sessions builds on the previous session therefore, you must commit to attending each session.

Level 1 Introduction to Pickleball

Target Audience	People that want to learn how to play the game.
Instructor	Dave Epperson
Dates /Times	Four Sessions: 12/5, 12/7, 12/12 and 12/14 1:00-2:30

Class Size Limit 10
Registration None required--simply show up for the first session. If you have questions email Dave at man2gator@hotmail.com.
Prerequisites None

Clinic Description This clinic is designed to introduce new players to the game and learn the basics of the sport: how to hold the paddle, score, serve, and return. Paddles are available to use at no charge if you don't have a paddle. Court shoes (not running shoes) are strongly recommended. Dave will help register you on court reserve and explain how the system works.

Level 2 Skill Building

Target Audience People that have mastered Level 1 skills
Instructor Tom Harris with HPA volunteers
Dates /Times Four Sessions: 12/5, 12/7, 12/12 and 12/14. 2:30-4:00
Class Size Limit 10
Prerequisites Participants should have a rating of 2.5 or higher. If you do not have a rating, please contact Dave Epperson to determine if you would be eligible.
Registration Submit requests to Tom at Thomas.harris9337@icloud.com Tom will approve registration and enter names into court reserve.

Clinic Description Participants will develop dinking skills, work on deep serves and returns, volleys, court position, and the third shot drop.

Level 3. Advanced Skill Building

Target Audience People that have mastered Level 2 skills
Instructor Jim Widdows with HPA volunteers
Dates /Times Four Sessions: 12/4, 12/6, 12/11, and 12/13. 2:30-4:00
Class Size Limit 10
Prerequisites Participants should have a rating of 3.0 or higher. If you do not have a rating, please contact Tom Harris to determine if you would be eligible.
Registration: Submit requests to Jim at jim@eastrivergroup.com and Jim will approve registration and enter names into court reserve.

Clinic Description: The Level 3 clinic is designed to develop more consistent dinking skills and introduce the concept of placement of dinks. It focuses on footwork and partner court position. Serve and return are emphasized. The concept

of placement in the court in addition to depth is introduced. The third shot drop is emphasized and how to use the third shot drop in addition to a third shot drive. Skills like block volleys and defending against pace are also taught. This clinic is designed to help a 3.0 player take steps to advance toward a 3.5 skill level. For those members who are interested in clinics but are unable to attend these sessions please stay tuned for more instructional opportunities in the new year.

Safety First

If there's anyone who cares about player safety, it's Mike Cravens. Here's something he contributed. Please take a look at this, because it's a serious issue and some day you might need to know this. Remember, you could need this to help a friend.

Lifesaving on the Court 101

YOU are the First Responder when a fellow pickle baller goes down on the court and is unconscious and non responsive. Knowing in advance what to do will increase that friend's survival rate.

Note: Trauma-care providers indicate that for every one minute delay initiating the following three steps, the survival rate diminishes 10%.

STEP 1: Point to a specific bystander and direct "Call 911 and stay on the line until EMT or Paramedics arrive onsite".

STEP 2: One individual commence cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) at rate of 100 compressions per minute. Your chest directly over victim's with your folded hands centered over chest bone. Two inch deep pushes.....and don't stop until relieved by EMT or Paramedic.

AND,

STEP 3: Simultaneous with Step 2, a second individual deploys and uses the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).

Note: We have two AEDs within the courts' areas. One is mounted beneath shade Ramada at Court 1. The second within the current tennis courts ramada at base of stairs and leading to our new courts 5, 6, 7 and 8.

View the two minute YouTube video at

[▶ How to use an AED | Automated External Defibrillator - OSCE Guide](#) for an accurate, brief and clear tutorial on how to deploy and use an AED.

Mike Cravens

Self appointed Pball safety guy

More Safety

Maybe you won't die from a heart attack on the court, but what about pulled muscles, sprains and strains? Hmm? Pull your hamstring and forget about playing for a while. What to do? I know! Read this from Melinda Norris, warm up and play forever.

Pickleball Warm-ups

TUCSON ORTHOPAEDIC

SportsMedicine

It is always important to warm up prior to any physical activity. Pickleball is no exception. Two of the best ways to warm up for pickleball is to do a general warm up first and then do some dynamic stretching.

Here is a quick routine to get you ready to play.

General warm-ups

1. Jog or walk briskly two to four times around the court.
2. Do jumping jacks. You can take the jump out of the jumping jacks if you need to go slower. Just move your arms up and down quickly to the side one to two sets of ten repetitions.

Dynamic stretching

Dynamic stretching is a way to put your muscles through a range of motion that mimics physical activity, such as pickleball. With dynamic stretching you are moving through a range of motion and increasing your heart rate by moving your body.

1. Forward lunge with rotation: This dynamic stretch works on stretching the muscles in your legs and in your trunk that are used during pickleball.

- Start by standing with your feet together.
- Take a comfortable lunge step forward and pause with your hands in ready position.

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- Twist your shoulders and chest toward the legs that you step forward, so you are facing to one side.
 - Turn back so your chest faces forward.
 - Step with your front foot back to your rear foot and then repeat on the other side. Do five to ten repetitions on each side.

2. Leg swings: While standing, grab the edge of the net pole with both hands.

- Facing the net, you want to lift one leg and kick it forward and back as if you were kicking a soccer ball. Don't put your foot on the ground and swing it back and forth like a pendulum.
- Continue to swing your legs for the desired number of reps before switching legs. Ten repetitions on each leg is a good start.

3. Arm circles: Arm circles help get your upper body, shoulders, chest and upper back ready for pickleball.

- Stand with your feet together and straighten your arm out at your side, parallel to the ground.
- Draw small circles in the air moving forward, five to ten repetitions.
- Draw some small circles in the air moving backward, five to ten repetitions.
- Draw some large circles forward, five to ten repetitions.
- Draw some large circles backward, five to ten repetitions.

As with any exercise program consult a physician before starting, start slowly and work up. Stop if there is any pain and consult with a health care provider. Good luck playing pickleball!

And you can also consult our resident stretching guru, Helen Yarmoska. She knows at least as much as these orthopedic types.

Member Profile: Interview with Tom Harris and Helen Yarmoska

Q. How did you guys get involved with the Boys and Girls club?

A. (Tom) We heard about the Boys and Girls Club through Veronica Davis. She's worked with them in the past, and Taco Bell, her employer, sponsors them. Veronica is also sponsored by Gearbox, and Gearbox committed to a 3 year

program where they provide all the paddles, nets and balls.



(Helen) This is the second year of the program, and Veronica's doubles partner, Megan, runs it. She's really a sweetheart.

(Tom) Yeah, she's this cute

little thing that seems really sweet, and she's a 5.1. She'll tear your heart out.

Q. So where exactly do you go? Isn't it quite a ways from here?

A. (Tom - Helen gets distracted and wanders off) It's about an hour from here. It's on the Pascua Yaqui reservation outside of Tucson. We go there every Tuesday evening and teach for about an hour and a half.



Q. Do they have any pickleball courts there?

A. (Tom) No. They play inside in the gym. There's about 15-20 kids and 3-6 instructors. It's part of a non profit called All In Youth Pickleball, and there are 4 locations throughout Tucson. They practice for 7 sessions and have 2 events.

Q. That sounds pretty nice. What's the age group of the kids that are playing?

A. (Helen regains focus and returns) It's younger kids in the 7-12 year range.



Q. What do you think about the program? Is it something you like to do? Do you feel like the kids are learning anything?

A. (Tom) Yeah. We really enjoy it. I think the kids do learn something. They seem to have a good time when we're teaching them. I know I get a lot of satisfaction out of being around the kids.

Q. Is this something you think you'll continue to do in future years?

A (Tom) I don't know. It's year 2 of a 3 year program, so I'll guess we'll have to wait and see.

Q. Do they need more people like you?

A. (Helen) I don't know, but anyone interested in helping can contact Nancy Hasford, who's the director of All In Youth Pickleball at mcgendus@msn.com.

Q. Thanks guys for the interview and thanks for helping out.

A. (Both) You're welcome.

A River Runs Through It

Ever read a good book, then saw the movie and went away disappointed? Me too. Something often gets lost in translation.

One of my favorite books and movies is *A River Runs Through It*, by Norman Maclean. Robert Redford directed the movie adaptation and is the movie's narrator. I think what makes it work is that Redford's narration quotes directly from the book and ties both together. Here's how both start:

“In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing. We lived at the junction of great trout rivers in western Montana, and our father was a Presbyterian minister and a fly fisherman who tied his own flies and taught others. He told us about Christ's disciples being fishermen, and we were left to assume, as my brother and I did, that all first-class fishermen on the Sea of Galilee were fly fishermen and that John, the favorite, was a dry-fly fisherman.”

As Norman described his father:

“To him, all good things - trout as well as eternal salvation - come by grace; and grace comes by art; and art does not come easy”.

You can learn the mechanics of fly fishing in 5 minutes, but that doesn't mean you can catch fish. It's an art and doesn't come easily.

You can also learn the mechanics of pickleball in a few minutes. But, unlike fly fishing, you can quickly play to where you feel like this is something you can do. And at the same time, you know you can get better. It's a game you can play for a lifetime and spend the rest of your life mastering. The surprise for many is how it brings people together. You meet nice people everywhere, but the ratio of nice to not so nice people seems higher at a pickleball court.

Fly fishing is mostly a solitary activity, and pickleball is not. It's peaceful to stand in a river in the fading light and cast to a rising fish. It's rewarding to sit under the ramada and talk to friends about pickleball and all the other things that friends talk about. Maybe that's what makes pickleball so popular. You come to the game thinking you'll learn a new sport, and you leave with that and new and deepening relationships.

Once in a while, pickleball is sublime. The light and temperature are perfect. Everyone plays their best. Shots are made and returned, rallies extend, and points are earned, not given. The whole experience, win or lose, is uplifting to each player. Pickleball becomes art.

“Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs.”

Keep playing and keep relating.