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President's Report - December 2023

Nolan Ahn, PAK President

WHY DON'T WE HAVE ENOUGH COURTS?

We are continuing our discussion of pickleball courts on Kauai. My last two reports have discussed why we are considering covered courts. We got another reminder at the Lihue Pickleball Ohana monthly potluck and Christmas party recently. It was held on December 15, the official end of the three-month long annual moratorium on lights for our stadiums and parks due to the shearwater fledgling season. The lights were scheduled to come on at 6:15 pm, but by then, some of the more than 70 picklers were already playing in the dark. The courts were set up for round robin play, decorated with balloons and then the rain came. The delicious potluck was still enjoyed, and the grab bag and games went on, but pickleball play was pretty much over, and the festivities came to an early end. We need covered courts!



Why don't we have enough pickleball courts on Kauai? I will try to answer that below:

1. Why doesn't the County or State build courts? We are very far away from having suitable, tournament class pickleball courts built by any government entity. They are typically short of money and adhere to master plans for recreation that just do not include pickleball. They do what they can, but because of existing limitations, results, if any, will be slower and generally more expensive than what the private sector can do.
2. How about private facilities? There are numerous private, for-profit facilities being built and operated on the mainland because they recognize and are capitalizing on the huge demand. On Kauai we are hindered by a small population base, and a perceived reluctance for people to pay for the privilege of playing. Land costs are high, zoning and building restrictions are tough to navigate, and the cost of construction is much higher here than on the mainland. We estimate that a pickleball facility built here would cost 3 to 4 times more than one built on the mainland. To a private owner, the potential for profit is too small to risk the amount of capital needed.
3. What about the hotels? We are seeing pickleball being recognized by resorts as a legitimate activity for our visitors. As such, the recent refurbishment of tennis courts at Princeville Makai into 6 dedicated pickleball courts and the near completion of courts at Royal Sonesta have been noticed. Both will concentrate on visitor use with secondary consideration for local players. Poipu Athletic Club recently converted some tennis courts into pickleball courts, but generally requires a membership fee to play. On Maui, the Wailea Resorts have 10 dedicated



sympathetic individuals. Our covered courts concept would require a minimum amount of \$1.5 million to build.

We are currently engaging the pro bono services of two architects who play pickleball and are sympathetic to our cause to create conceptual renderings of what our dream facility would look like. Prior to that we need some idea of where we would build it. Over the last two years, we have explored numerous possible sites without success. Our latest exploration in Puhi has shown that the potential site is unsuitable in terrain and access for our purposes. We are currently exploring a nearby site that may meet all of our needs if we prove to be an acceptable tenant.


In the meantime, we are planning on making 2024 a meaningful one for our members with a calendar of events we are finalizing. Our biggest problem is the lack of court space to hold events like clinics, tournaments, leagues and ladders, and lessons. We will do our best, but until we have our own courts, it is an uphill battle.

In the meantime, we have created and adopted a new PAK mascot: PAKman! Be watching for his appearance all over our website, and in a new line of shirts soon to be released.



Introducing **PAKman!**

- **PAKman is the new mascot for Pickleball Association Kauai. (pakauai.org)**
- **PAKman is neither male nor female.**
- **PAKman was named for the sound a pickleball makes when it hits a paddle.**
- **He/she/it is NOT related to the video game.**

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- **PAKman eats pickleballs, not dots.**
 - **PAKman is cool...always wearing shades.**
 - **PAKman's mission is to build dedicated pickleball courts on Kauai.**
 - **Watch for PAKman on our website, on merchandise, and swag soon!**

Your board of directors and I thank you for your continued support of our mission, and wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Until next month,
Nolan

Previous Month's President's Reports and Photos