

From The Picklehoods....Literally. May, 2022

This month's column will be dedicated to our 20+ pickleball ambassadors across the state of Hawaii and the great work they're doing in their respective 'picklehoods.' The pandemic halted play across the state (each island operating under sometimes different parameters) but our ambassadors continued to work within those parameters to help local players on their island maintain some semblance of sanity during an upside down 16-18 month period. The great work continues.....

Starting with our state's oldest island, Kauai. Did you know that?

Westside Kaua'i. Ambassador Lucia Bartels reports that play at Hanapepe (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday mornings) and Kekaha courts (Monday, Wednesday afternoons and Sunday mornings) is thriving and players of all skill levels are welcome. Indoor play has recently been introduced again at the Kalaheo Neighborhood Center Gym. Lucia (and husband Ray) oversees all three venues.

Southside Kaua'i. Ambassador Mike Wellman shared the following: The Kauai Christian Fellowship courts are better than ever thanks to the expert refinishing work of pickleballer Bob Day who not only donated the material needed to refinish the aging courts, but also came down from the north shore and did the refurbishing work. Players remark that KCF now has the finest fixed net courts on Kauai. Open for visitors and new players alike on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday 8:30-10:30 (social play) and 10:30-11:30 (competitive play).

Southside Kaua'i continued. Ambassador Jack Hodges organizes play at local venue Kalawai Park. Days of play include Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. 8:30-11:30. Evening play (courts are lighted) also takes place on Wednesdays and Fridays. Play on these two evenings is word-of-mouth.

A piece of great news was announced late last month....the County of Kauai will completely renovate two tennis courts in Koloa (Knudsen Park). The project, when finished, will include four permanent dedicated pickleball courts and two blended lines PB courts on the new, adjacent tennis court. This will be Kauai's first public dedicated pickleball facility. Work is scheduled to start the end of this month and be completed in late October.

Lihue, Kauai. Time to mention that Lihue Ambassador Nolan Ahn, along with the tireless help of many local players, continues to 'expand' the game in Lihue and across the island. Nolan is also Board President of Pickleball Association Kauai, a registered 501(c)3 corporation whose mission is to continue to develop

the game, and venues, here on Kauai. All with the spirit of Aloha. See more at Kaua'i's brand new pickleball website: pakauai.org

Moving Down The Island Chain. Oahu.

Honolulu Ambassador Donna Ching reports that Pickleball is booming on Oahu. The island now has 160 temporary and 3 permanent net courts for pickleball. Kaka'ako's Mother Waldron Park has two permanent net courts that were built in partnership between Parks and Rec and HPD. The Oahu Pickleball Association continues to advocate for more permanent net courts, meeting with council members, key decision-makers and other community organizations. They have created a survey and website to help gather real data (e.g. number of courts, number of players, pickleball activities, etc.) on pickleball in Hawai'i, and will be working with ambassadors and promoters across the state to help with this effort. It is their hope this will help bolster the case for more permanent net courts and attract sponsors for tournaments. OPA runs two team leagues on the weekends, bringing together 44 players to Diamond Head Tennis Center. They play four events: singles, men's, women's and mixed. This current season, there are more 19+ than 50+ year old players.

OPA is also a co-sponsor for the upcoming Hawaii Pacific Rim Cup tournament (mid-June), where representatives are responsible for court setup and logistics. Anticipation runs high for this event as it will be the largest to date on Oahu.

North Shore/Waialua, Oahu. *Ambassador Jenny Vierra reports continued growth on this part of Oahu. "We're beginning to see more families playing. The age range....from 11 to 80+. Some of our firefighters are playing pickleball after a few quick lessons from us. My daughter Adell Vierra and myself recently became PPR certified coaches in the Waialua area. We hope to hold a small tournament to benefit our elementary school students soon. Since we only have 4 lined courts in our area, our goal is to get better lights and more courts on the North Shore of Oahu."*

Honolulu (Moanalua), Oahu. *Ambassador Kyle Kaneshiro reports that since the inception of Covid 19, he hasn't been able to do anything for the past two years at his Moanalua High School facility. When open for play, his pickleball venue is one of the best in Honolulu, sporting 12 courts with awesome lights for night play. Once his facility opens, he will continue to introduce his great pickleball programs for the community.*

Honolulu (Waikiki), Oahu. *Annette Cottle, Oahu's longest reigning ambassador, shares that the Diamond Head Tennis Center is open for free play seven days a*

week from 7:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. Annette is also a certified PCI (Pickleball Coaching International) instructor and has been providing drills and additional play at Paki Park (Waikiki) on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 8:00 till Noon. In addition, she offers free lessons for beginners/intermediate players at Paki Park on Wednesdays at noon. The true embodiment of a pickleball ambassador.

Honolulu (Waikiki/Kaka'ako), Oahu. One of two new Oahu ambassadors, Makana Tavepholjalern is just getting used to his new role. "I do not have much to update you on yet. I have played often on the two permanent courts in Kaka'ako. My brother lives right around the corner. I've been exploring some new places to play and meeting new pickleball players, which is always a plus. It has been nice to see and participate in some leagues that have been going on at Diamond Head Tennis Center on Sundays and weekly singles matches that have been happening on Tuesdays. I have a few opportunities that I wanted to explore by reaching out to schools and community service groups, but nothing to report on those fronts yet."

From Linda Goear, East Oahu Ambassador. "Here in East Oahu we have been blessed with 6 new courts (bring your own net though) and boy have those courts been crowded. PB has really grown on the East side and we are lucky to have many courts to use. Currently working on getting the Koko Head Gym back open for Pickleball play. We do have a gentleman who works with the Parks and Rec who is using the gym and giving PB lessons. I and many other ambassadors/volunteers have been busy with our upcoming tournament here in June. It will be a good one."

Kailua, Oahu. Eastside Oahu ambassador Frank Appel reports that many of the Oahu Ambassadors have been working on the planning committee for the upcoming Hawaii Pacific Rim Pickleball Cup to be held on Oahu June 16 - 19. With 480 players already registered, it will be the largest tournament to date on Oahu (perhaps in Hawaii). To support the tournament, a referee training clinic was held earlier this month led by Teri Carter, regional Referee Coordinator. As a result, Oahu now has a good number of Level 1 and Level 2 referees, with more likely to be certified during the tournament.

Continuing on to Maui.

A complete view of Maui Pickleball was reported by Maui's first two ambassadors, Laurie Loney and Todd Richter. Maui now boasts 16 dedicated public courts. 8 in Kihei (Waipulani Park) and 8 on the West Side (Lahaina and Napili). Waipulani is Maui's most popular place to play. Oftentimes you will see 70-80 players there enjoying the games. Eddie Tam Gym in Makawao is once

again open for indoor play on Wednesday mornings. A private/public facility called Aloha Pickleball will be constructed in Kihei at the Maui Research and Technology Park. The facility, when finished, will include 15 permanent dedicated outdoor courts with 1 stadium court to accommodate 300+ spectators. Ground breaking is expected in early fall. There are also plans to build dedicated courts in a Central Maui park in Kahului. No ETA on those. Maui also hosts a large tournament in Wailea in early January each year. 320 players have registered for this event so far. This past January the Maui Pukaball Tournament was held at the Grand Wailea courts. There were 300+ entries from 14 different states and 3 Canadian Provinces. Ambassador Richter also wanted to mention the name Sam Martone. Sam is at the Waipulani courts every morning managing play rotation. He also does free teaching of the game to beginners on an adjacent tennis court. Richter goes on to say that with the large number of players at Waipulani, it would be utter chaos without Sam's presence. Thanks Sam.

Worth Noting: For those of you who do not know Laurie Loney, I am going to share a bit of info....She has been playing pickleball for 50+ years. When this game was invented in 1965 by Joel Pritchard and Bill Bell, Laurie and family had the great fortune to meet these two men (and their families) when they came to Maui in the late 60's to vacation. The Loney family had a paddleball court in their yard. Pritchard and Bell introduced them to the game on that court. You won't meet many who have played the game for as long as Laurie.

Central Maui (Wailuku and Kahului). Ambassador Brett Reeves sent me the following....Central Maui (Wailuku and Kahului) is the most densely populated section of Maui yet there are only two tennis courts that are painted with pickleball lines. We have to share the two courts with tennis players and play with tennis nets that we lower to meet pickleball height. There are no dedicated pickleball courts. I have been working with the mayor's office, the Maui county council, and Maui county parks and recreation to get some dedicated pickleball courts constructed in central Maui. Last year during the mayor's budget call, I requested \$800,000 to construct new courts. More recently several other Maui ambassadors, numerous Maui pickleball players and I have given our written comments to the county council budget review committee requesting additional pickleball courts be constructed. Stay tuned.....

Lahaina and West Maui. Ambassador Mark Tillman reports that Lahaina and West Maui continue to thrive as new players are joining regularly. Facilities are strained in Lahaina as 4 courts aren't enough most days to accommodate everyone, especially Saturdays. And, we get our fair share of visitors with at least 25% of our players visiting from off island. The Kaanapali resort area is only two miles away and the tourists love joining in and meeting the locals. It's a great way to spread the Aloha spirit. Mark continues to communicate with the West Maui

County Council on all things pickleball. For now, the council's position on expanding facilities on the westside is that since they recently built brand new courts up north in Napili, that will have to suffice for the time being. Mark continues his ambassadorizing and feels that eventually his area will see more courts.

....And finally, on to the Big Island.

Waikoloa, Hawaii Island. *Ambassador Lani Larrua reports that she and Lyle Cabacungan recently became Certified Pickleball Instructors with PPR (Professional Pickleball Registry). Lyle works with the County Of Hawaii Department of Recreation and Parks to serve over 50 seniors in learning the game weekly. Lani continues to teach locally and as she travels on the mainland. The First Annual Ambassador Cup Tournament will be held at Holua Racquet and Paddle in Kona on May 27-28. Registration is still available.*

Kailua-Kona. *Andrew Carrell, Kailua-Kona's hardworking ambassador shared that he has introduced 80+ people to Pickleball this year through hosting my clubs "Newcomers Night". We provide everything...paddles, balls, 5 free sessions/lessons and fabulous prizes for those that complete the drills. My club has raised over \$20k to help pay for badly needed court repairs to our facility through hosting two tournaments. Better and increased facilities will absolutely help grow the game! I have obtained two swift nets and Pickleball Central has donated paddles for the elementary school program I am starting at Holualoa Elementary School this August. I have recruited 6 volunteers to help me teach the kids. A retired PE teacher, a current tennis coach from a local high school, and a little league coach are amongst the generous folks who volunteered!*

Whew....that's it for the month of May. *I hope all of you readers have a new appreciation for the work our USA Pickleball Ambassadors do. Remember, each and every one is a VOLUNTEER. When they are doing their best to manage daily play at a particular venue, when they ask for volunteers to help with 'pickleball things', when they are at the courts early and are the last to leave, tell them how much you appreciate the work they do. Thanks for taking the time to read.*

*Jack Hodges
District Pickleball Ambassador - State of Hawaii
Home - Kauai*