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President's Report - October 2025

Nolan Ahn, PAK President



TOUGH DECISIONS MADE

Six years ago, Jack Hodges and I set up a meeting with our new Kauai Mayor and his newly appointed Parks and Recreation Director. Our mission was to inform them of the pickleball explosion and encourage them to consider dedicating two of the four tennis courts in Hanapepe to pickleball. We even offered to raise the money to accomplish this. (We naively estimated the cost to be about \$50,000.) Most of the meeting was to try to convince them that pickleball was real, it was growing fast, and that it deserved adequate and safe facilities. We were asked who we represented and by what authority we were able to speak on others' behalf. Great question. We had no organization and purpose and no members. Our request was subsequently refused, because the existing tennis community objected, claiming they used those courts "all the time".

We went to work and organized a steering committee, then a board of directors, and a bona-fide non-profit organization. Our goal was to show that we were serious, we were organized and we were determined. Our membership peaked at about 500 members. We also came to realize that the County likes to operate and do things their way without "outside" input. Six years after our meeting, Hanapepe Courts are slated to start a refurbishment that will include 6 dedicated pickleball courts on two of the tennis courts. Our mayor will soon serve his limit of terms and there will probably be a new Parks Director.

PAK has learned that facilities alone do not meet all the sport's needs. There is a need to have consistent organization for play, for instruction, and for supervision of behavior. Without organization and maintenance, even new facilities will remain largely unused most of the time. There must be ways for visitors and Kamaaina to be able to play and learn the game outside of the free play offered by volunteers now. The present model for County facilities is to build and offer free, unorganized play to all. Private facilities across the country are at near-capacity use for the entire day and night because they organize and innovate.

During our five years, PAK's primary objective was to identify a site where we could build and operate our pickleball facility. With a site, we could show our vision, firm up our budget, and then get to business of fund-raising. We have failed to find a site. Even if it was offered for free, the construction costs and operating costs of a proposed facility have risen to make our original purpose unfeasible. Our board voted in September to evaluate whether to continue to exist as an entity with a deadline of December 31, 2025, for the decision. Our decision will be based upon whether committed individuals step up to serve on the Board of Directors to carry out the new mission of PAK, which is to generically support pickleball. Two existing directors have resigned. I will remain as president until the end of the year but will not lead the search for new directors. I am most grateful for the dedication and loyalty of our Board of Directors over the years. We had a shared dream, and we put our hearts and souls into trying to make it a reality. Thank you to all our members and friends that believed in our mission as well. I am reminded of Albert Einstein's quote:

Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.

Aloha and mahalo,

Nolan

Previous Months Articles

Jan '25	Feb '25	Mar '25	Apr '25	May '25	Jun '25
Jul '25	Aug '25	Sep '25			
Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24
Jul '24	Aug '24	Sep '24	Oct '24	Nov '24	Dec '24
Jan '23	Feb '23	Mar '23	Apr '23	May '23	Jun '23
Jul '23	Aug '23	Sep '23	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23
Jan '22	Feb '22	Mar '22	Apr '22	May '22	Jun '22
Jul '22	Aug '22	Sep '22	Oct '22	Nov '22	Dec '22
Dec '21					

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