

## Glades Pickleball Association

*By Dave Robinette in 2021 with updates by Claudia Schena*

The history of Pickleball started in 1965 in the state of Washington. It slowly moved across the country until it reached The Villages outside of Orlando Florida where it became extremely popular among older retired residents, and it grew rapidly after that. Today pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the country.

Pickleball at The Glades Golf and CC started in the summer of 2014 on the hard tennis courts across from the Pro Shop. Chalk was used to modify the tennis courts to the dimensions of a pickleball court. Glades residents enjoyed playing on the hard courts until we discovered that the hard courts could only be used as a tennis court or a parking lot. We had to look for another venue to play. We gathered at the East Naples pickleball courts. Here again we were not allowed to play exclusively with Glades residents, which was our preference but had to share the courts. So, again the search was on for another venue.

The process began with Dave Robinette and Debora Crist attending every Board of Directors meeting for 3 years and circulating Petitions to convince The Glades Board to approve pickleball as a new amenity at The Glades. The Board did approve the addition of 3 courts on a temporary basis on April 20, 2017. However, the Pines and Palmetto re-grass project was already underway and due to delays caused by Hurricane Irma we had to postpone the start of temporary courts until the fall of 2019. The first game was played on the temporary pickleball courts in December 2019.

Pickleball has become an extremely popular amenity at The Glades and has been accepted and played by all age groups, membership continues to grow. We currently have outgrown the 3 temporary courts with as many as 20 plus residents waiting their turn on the courts. We look forward to growing the sport even more in the future and moving from the temporary courts to new and improved permanent courts.





**First Official Glades Pickleball Association Game on the new “Temporary Courts”**  
 Shirley Robinette, Debra Crist, Dave Robinette, Wally Maurer & John Dense

**2019-2020:** President Debora Crist, VP Dave Robinette, Treasurer Wally Maurer, Secretary John Dense, Communications Mike Wilmhoff

**Tournament Directors** Mike Wilmhoff & Dave Robinette



*Bracket 1 Champs: Andy Moore & Dave O'Dell*



*Bracket 2 Champs: Yusaf Samiullah & Rachael Hutchinson*



**2020-2021** President John Dense, VP Dave Robinette, Treasurer Craig Johnson, Secretary Claudia Schena,

**Communications:** Connie Cappelli

**Tournament Directors:** Dave Robinette, John Podnar & Steve Bourke

In March of 2021, there were 101 members. Growth of the popularity is also reflected in the tournament participation as 3 brackets were needed to accommodate 42 players. Membership to the GPA is open to both owners and renters, and although membership is not required for residents to use the courts, members are given priority court times.

The Glades Pickleball Association holds a Welcome Back Party, generally in January, and a Pickleball Tournament, with a follow-up awards party in March.



**Bracket 1 John Podnar & Steve Bourke**



**Bracket 2: Bob Hamilton & Mike Schena**



**Bracket 3: Carol Curry & Mike Brown**



**2021-2022 Officers;** President John Dense, VP John Podnar, Treasurer Craig Johnson, Secretary: Claudia Schena

**Activities:** Connie Cappelli, Past President Debora Crist

**Tournament Director:** John Podnar

The association had 276 members and there were 5 brackets for the 84 tournament players.

**GPA 2022 Tournament Results:**

- Bracket 1 Ken Brownlee & Jacques McKay
- Bracket 2 Dave Robinette & Tom Sweeney
- Bracket 3 Mike Brown & Craig Johnson
- Bracket 4 Rick Dunn & Steve Kuhls
- Bracket 5 Marlene Haag & Dennis McCabe



**Row:** Steve Kuhls, Dave Robinette, Ken Brownlee, Tom Sweeney. Mike Brown, Marlene Haag, Dennis McCabe

**Front Row:** Rock Dunn & Jacques McKay

**2022-2023 Officers;** President Ken Brownlee, VP John Podnar, Treasurer: Stephen Bourke, Secretary: Claudia Schena

**Activities:** Connie Cappelli, Past President John Dense

**Tournament Director:** John Podnar

March of 2023, the association had 476 members, with new applications arriving throughout the year and there were as many as 30 plus residents were on the sidelines, waiting a turn to play.

The annual tournament also grew to 7 brackets to accommodate 108 contestants, over two days of tournament play. The GPA also sponsored its first Pickleball Dinner Dance in March of 2023.

### **GPA 2023 Tournament Results**

- Bracket 1 Ken Brownlee & Tom Butterfield
- Bracket 2 Craig Johnson & Denny Chubb
- Bracket 3 Robert Omansky & Willie Behr/Ross Markell
- Bracket 4 Susan Maslowski & Carol Chubb
- Bracket 5 Frank Ross & Art Connolly
- Bracket 6 Joe Gross & Steve Havig
- Bracket 7 Phyllis Kuhls & John Peterman



**Back Row:** Ken Brownlee, Tom Butterfield, George Omansky, Ross Markel  
**Middle Row:** Craig Johnson, John Peterman, Joe Gross, Havig  
**Front Row:** Phyllis Kuhls, Susan Maslowski, Art Connolly, Frank Ross



**2023 -2024 Officers:** President John Peterman, VP Wendy Haldorson, Treasurer Stephen Bourke, Secretary Claudia Berwager

**Activities:** Connie Cappelli.



**12 new courts opened for play on December 2, 2023**