

Pickleball for Richmond Tennis Club

Proposal to convert courts 8 and 9 to six pickleball courts

Stage One ~ Do We or Don't We?

Stage Two ~ Funding It

Stage Three ~ Doing It

Stage Four ~ Promoting it

Stage One September 2023

"Do We or Don't We?"

1 Vision

- That RTC will not be expected to fund the project, it cannot go ahead until funding has been obtained.
- That pickleball players join RTC and can book and play on courts in the same way as tennis players do.
- That pickleball courts will be permanent and available for use at any time as tennis courts are.
- That organised sessions and coaching will be available as tennis sessions and coaching are.
- That pickleball players will organize themselves and become self-managing
- That the focus will be on players who can use the courts in the daytime i.e. seniors.

2 Rationale

To make use of courts unused during the morning hours by offering an additional racquet sport. Local astroturf courts are not underutilized to anything like the same extent as RTC courts. Those players who prefer hard courts are either at school or at work.

To increase membership and non-member fees [re organized sessions]

To provide a sport that *must* be played on a hard court but is not hard on the aging body! Pickleball is best played on hard courts due to the nature of the balls used.

To provide affordable, enjoyable and achievable activity for all ages, focusing on players able to participate on weekdays. Pickleball players will find this sport has a shorter learning curve, rallies are easier to sustain, they have health and fitness benefits and are a great social activity.

To provide a sport for the aging population. Consider this 2018 report from 'Stuff'.

The number of older people in Tasman district is tipped to almost double over the next 20 years – the biggest increase in New Zealand as a proportion of its total population. A new report on the district's ageing population reveals the number of residents aged 65 and over is projected to climb from 11,100 in 2018 to 20,500 by 2038.

As a proportion of the total population, this age group will jump from 22 per cent to 36 per cent, making the Tasman district population the second oldest in the country. In 2017, it was 16th.

By 2038, a whopping 20 per cent of the population – 11,500 residents – are expected to be aged 75 years and over.

3 What is Pickleball?

Pickleball is a fast growing sport, started in the USA and growing quickly in popularity in NZ and the rest of the world. It is a sport at the intersection of tennis, badminton and table tennis. Pickleball courts are small [20ft x 44ft] and the game is easy to learn and play for all ages. A small light bat is used with a wiffle ball, keeping it a low impact sport. **For the rules, please see Appendix 1**

3.1 The Equipment



Originally, pickleball paddles were made only from wood, however, today's paddles have evolved dramatically and are primarily made of lightweight composite materials, including aluminum and graphite. They are slightly larger than a table tennis bat.



Pickleball uses hollow plastic balls with perforated holes that is very lightweight. Most would refer to this kind of a ball as a "wiffle ball."

There are pickleballs for indoor *and* outdoor use.

4 Health Benefits of Pickleball for Seniors

Pickleball allows players to work on *balance, agility, reflexes and hand-eye coordination* without putting excessive strain on the body. Unlike other racquet sports, *joint injuries are much less likely*. Sports such as tennis and badminton require players to put significantly more power into their shots, leading to stress on joints and muscles.

Regular exercise *improves bone and muscle strength*, as well as reducing the risk of hypertension, heart attack and stroke. Staying fit can also lower the risks of other serious conditions.

When paired with a healthy diet, regular sessions can help players with age -related weight gain by increasing calories burned leading to *weight loss*. Pickleball is recreational and players will be more likely to continue with the sport over the long term.

Exercise is also recognized as a good way *to combat anxiety and depression*. Social sports like Pickleball serve as a community building function, they help prevent seniors from feeling isolated.

Playing pickleball can assist with *maintaining mental acuity*, along with the vascular benefits of exercise which increase blood flow to the brain. Studies have shown that regular exercise after age 60 can significantly reduce the risk of developing dementia.

5 Impact On Existing Court/Club Usage

RTC has 12 courts. Courts 8 and 9 have already been assigned POP and Pickleball given their position is independent of all other courts. Turning them into permanent pickleball courts leaves RTC with 10 tennis courts.

5.1 Interclub

The number of courts available for Interclub will be reduced by 2 with the loss of courts 8 and 9. These courts are not lit and so were never available for the winter weeks of Interclub competition. The RTC coach is contracted to always have 3 courts available, so only 9 courts were ever available for Interclub, two of which [courts 8 and 9] are not lit. This will be compensated for by the additional availability of both Mapua and Upper Moutere, as both Clubs will have lighting by the end of 2023.

5.2 Junior Tournaments

Junior Tournaments will be impacted as there will only be 10 courts at the RTC facility. This will mean the duration of the tournament may be extended somewhat as fewer games can be played at one time. It will NOT impact the Tiers of tournament NBTA runs. The extent of the inconvenience will depend on the number of tournament entries. Hope tennis Club has been used in the past when, for whatever reason [e.g. weather delays] capacity at RTC has been deemed insufficient.

6 Pickleball Perspectives

6.1 International Pickleball

The International Pickleball Federation [2023] replaced an earlier version of itself that started in 2016. It has expanded to over 80 countries and is growing. It is their aim to achieve recognition by the International Olympic Committee to establish pickleball as an Olympic and Paralympic sport.

The IPF HQ is based in Chevy Chase, Maryland and they have bases in India, China and Switzerland.

6.2 New Zealand Pickleball

The governing body for pickleball in NZ is the Pickleball New Zealand Association [PNZA]. In 2020 New Zealand became the 31st member country of the International Pickleball Federation through the PNZA. The sport was first introduced in Rotorua in 2015 and by 2020 there were over 50 clubs and many more have been formed since then.

The PNZA actively promotes the development and growth of pickleball throughout NZ. They have a strategic plan which can be found here.

<https://www.pnza.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PNZA-2023-2026-Strategic-Plan-Finalised-1.pdf>

This plan shows that they intend establishing local associations, but currently their membership is by individual application, not through an affiliated pickleball club. For a list of clubs see Appendix 2.

6.3 Nelson/Tasman Pickleball

Richmond Badminton Hall started Pickleball 7 years ago with 10 players. Today it has 75 regular players, with no action having been taken other than player recommendation to increase numbers. The Monday 18 Sept 1pm to 3pm session was 31 players over capacity.

In the Golden Bay area, between facilities at Takaka and Collingwood, daily indoor sessions are available. It is also proposed to convert outdoor netball courts to pickleball by the end of 2023.

6.4 Opportunities to compete at Regional and National Levels

A series of tournaments are also available, as below for 2023.

- Hawkes Bay "Battle of the Paddles Tournament"
- Rotorua Tournament Doubles Tournament
- Albany 'Xmas Bash' Pickleball Doubles Tournament"
- Maunganui "NZ Doubles Tournament"
- Tauranga 'Mount Pickleball classic

7 Richmond Tennis Club Membership

In order to keep administrative effort to a minimum, it is proposed that Pickleball [and Pop] player membership be treated as any other Richmond Club member. Tennis players can play pickball ball and vice versa. If players want to play just one discipline exclusively, that is their prerogative.

However, in doing so they will be paying a NBTA affiliation fee which is included in the published membership fees. Given that [1] Richmond **IS** a tennis club, [2] the facilities are primarily for that sport and [3] tennis volunteers are running the facility, this is not an unreasonable proposition.

Pickleball NZ Association affiliation is gained individually, currently for \$20, through their website. Therefore, should players wish to affiliate, it does not involve any administrative effort by RTC.

In the future it may well be that a separate Pickleball Club is desired by dedicated players. At that time [**and not before**] separate memberships and all the associated difficulties between NBTA and PNZA fees can be addressed.

7.1 New members

Players intending to play pickleball will be offered the standard membership fees for Super Seniors, Seniors and Juniors. At this stage we do not propose a reduced pickleball membership because [1] the pickleball court costs must be recouped and [2] it keeps it simple.

7.2 Tennis Club Members

Pickleball will be available to existing tennis members at no additional charge. Courts can be booked online in the same way as for tennis courts.

7.3 Non-members

Non-members can attend organized pickleball session for a fee of \$5 with all equipment provided.

8 Pickleball Ongoing Management

A pickleball subcommittee will be created to manage the sport and will be responsible to and will report back to the RTC Committee.

8.1 Pickleball Equipment

Organised pickleball sessions will be run on Friday mornings between 9.30 and 11am. All equipment will be provided. Players with their own pickleball equipment may book and use the courts at any time.

9 Costs

9.1 The surface

Court resurfacing and 6 sets of lines
Plexipave acrylic sports surface \$28,000 + GST = \$32,200

Travel costs for Plexipave \$ included in the above

9.2 Posts and Nets

1 pair Elite 80 x 80 pickleball posts inc
Internal winch and ground sleeves

+
1 x 22 ft 3mm braided Pickleball net \$975 + GST = \$1121.25 per court

1 x Ground Installation of 12 Ground sleeves/post \$6000 [local contractor?]

Installation team travel if required \$TBA

9.3 Total costs [inc GST]

Surfacing and lines \$32,200.00

Posts and Nets \$ 6727.50

Installation \$ 6000.00

\$44,927.50 [plus any travel expenses charged]

10 Next Step

Seek RTC Committee agreement to go ahead. A recommendation from the RTC Committee would be needed to proceed to member agreement by SGM.

Appendix 1

Pickleball Rules

The following pickleball rules and scoring are in abbreviated form to give an overview of the game.

- Pickleball is played either as doubles (two players per team) or singles; doubles is most common.
- The same size playing area and rules are used for both singles and doubles.

*The Serve

- The server's arm must be moving in an upward arc when the ball is struck.
- Paddle contact with the ball must not be made above the waist level (navel level).
- The head of the paddle must not be above the highest part of the wrist at contact.
- The serve is initiated with at least one foot behind the baseline; neither foot may contact the baseline or court until after the ball is struck.
- The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.
- Only one serve attempt is allowed, except in the event of a let (the ball touches the net on the serve and lands on the proper service court; let serves are replayed).

* A new rule allows for a "drop serve." The server has the option of dropping the ball and hitting it after the bounce. The ball can be dropped from any height but cannot be thrown, tossed, or otherwise released with any added force to bounce it.

Service Sequence

- Both players on the serving doubles team have the opportunity to serve and score points until they commit a fault *(except for the first service sequence of each new game).
- The first serve of each side-out is made from the right/even court.
- If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left/odd court.
- As subsequent points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until a fault is committed and the first server loses the serve.
- When the first server loses the serve the partner then serves from their correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game*).
- The second server continues serving until his or her team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.
- Once the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right/even court and both players on that team have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.
- In singles the server serves from the right/even court when his or her score is even and from the left/odd when the score is odd.

*At the beginning of each new game only one partner on the serving team has the opportunity to serve before faulting, after which the service passes to the receiving team.

Scoring

Pickleball scoring basics

- Points are scored only by the serving team.
- Games are normally played to 11 points, win by 2.
- Tournament games may be to 15 or 21, win by 2.
- When the serving team's score is even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10) the player who was the first server in the game for that team will be in the right/even court when serving or receiving; when odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) that player will be in the left/odd court when serving or receiving.

Two-Bounce Rule

- When the ball is served, the receiving team must let it bounce before returning, and then the serving team must let it bounce before returning, thus two bounces.
- After the ball has bounced once in each team's court, both teams may either volley the ball (hit the ball before it bounces) or play it off a bounce (ground stroke).
- The two-bounce rule eliminates the serve and volley advantage and extends rallies.

Non-Volley Zone

- The non-volley zone is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net.
- Volleying is prohibited within the non-volley zone. This rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone.
- It is a fault if, when volleying a ball, the player steps on the non-volley zone, including the line and/or when the player's momentum causes them or anything they are wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone including the associated lines even if the volleyed ball is declared dead before this happens.
- A player may legally be in the non-volley zone any time other than when volleying a ball.
- The non-volley zone is commonly referred to as "the kitchen."

Line Calls

- A ball contacting any line, except the non-volley zone line on a serve, is considered "in."
- A serve contacting the non-volley zone line is short and a fault.

Faults

- A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.
- A fault by the receiving team results in a point for the serving team.
- A fault by the serving team results in the server's loss of serve or side out.

Appendix 2

The PNZA list the following locations where pickleball is now played.

Albany	Oakura
Ashburton	Panmure
Blenheim	Parua Bay
Browns Bay	Rangiora
Cambridge	Richmond
Dunedin	Rotorua
Ellerslie	Selwyn
Gisborne	Te Pai
Golden Bay/Tarkaka	Tikipunga
Gore	Thames
Hamilton	Waiheke Island
Hawkes Bay	Waipu
Kumeu	Waipukurau
Lynfield	Wanganui Rivercity
Manurewa	Warkworth
Morrinsville	Wellington
Motueka	Whanganui
Mt Albert	
Mt Maunganui	
Mt Roskill	