

The NBPC Board would like to once again extend a very warm welcome to all new club members and all our returning members. We now have approximately 196 members in good standing with still a few more expected to join us. 2024 will bring a number of positive and exciting changes for our club.

Committees and Survey: A number of committees were formed last fall to advise the Board on various program activities. One of these committees, known as the Court Use Committee, spearheaded a fall membership survey asking a variety of questions to determine member preferences. The survey was well responded to, and the survey results were used to develop the 2024 on-court programming, tournament plans, player development, and social activities etc.

Types of Play:

Prior to the survey taking place, some members familiar with organized play in other clubs questioned why they were being assigned to groups and why they were then restricted in terms of being able to play in any group or session they wanted. NBPC is different from some other local clubs in this respect, in that the club believes (as confirmed in the survey) that the most enjoyable games for anyone, regardless of skill or ability, are usually played with other players at or near the same skill level.

Group Play isn't perfect. This is in part because, although it is based on each member's self-rating, some members are very hard on themselves and underestimate their own skills or abilities while others have very generous opinions of their skills and abilities. As a result, there is no doubt there are some players who are in the wrong Group. However, the vast majority are where they belong.

Level Play sessions will be held as well (primarily at the novice and intermediate levels), and these sessions will be a chance for members to go and play without strict adherence to their assigned Group placements. There will be three tiers of Level Play, namely Novice/Intermediate, Intermediate, and Intermediate/Advanced. Each Level Play session will be targeted at the indicated skill level, with registration being open to all members who feel they fit in that skill level. In each session, winners will split and move up, while losers split and move down.

Interestingly, a majority of the more than 100 respondents to the club's survey indicated a preference to stay with Group Play. In Group 1, 52% of respondents preferred Group Play over Level Play or Open Play. Group 2 was similar with 45% preferring Group Play (37% preferring Level Play). Group 3's and 4's preferences for Group Play were much stronger, at 83% and 87% respectively.

Challenge-Up Process: Key to Group Play working well is having a viable and fair challenge-up system, to facilitate the movement up of players to a higher-skilled Group as they develop. As a result of some dissatisfaction regarding how challenge-up was handled last season, the challenge-up system has been extensively reviewed. A new and improved challenge-up system was recommended by the Tournament, Player Development and Challenge-Up committee (the TPDCU) in March, and this has recently been approved by the Board for implementation. This April, twelve challenge-up opportunities are being scheduled, in an attempt to deal with last year's challenge-up backlogs. Six opportunities for Group 1 and six for Group 2 members will be held, for players who demonstrated their relatively-high skill levels at the end of last season. The improved 2024 challenge-up process will commence May 1st concurrently with the new court schedule.

Schedule, Clinics and Ladders: Regarding the club's 2024 play schedule, on May 1st the daily schedule will expand to 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. The Monday and Wednesday evening slots will continue, as will twice-weekly Skills and Drills sessions for G1 and G2 members. It is hoped that some clinics can be arranged for G3 and G4 players later this year. In May, two ladders will be established, and these will be open to all members.

Tournaments: Three tournaments are being planned for 2024, with the first being a "Mexican Madness" tournament tentatively scheduled for the weekend of May 12th, so mark that on your calendar.

Grand Opening: On May 4th, in cooperation with the RDN, NBPC will participate in the Grand opening of our new home base courts and the Jack Bagley Park redevelopment. In addition to all members, the community will also be invited. Festivities get under way at 11:30am. Refreshments are being served. NBPC has been asked to have a number of its members on the courts so that the general public can give it a try. We will be asking for 6 to 10 of you to volunteer for this. The grand opening event is expected to wrap up by 12:30, so you will all have time to make your way up to Nanoose Place for our 1:00 AGM.

Equipment: On the equipment front, we have now received our AED machine and 20 members are now trained in its use. We are also close to purchasing a ball machine for the club.

Website: Another exciting development is the club's new website, nanoosebaypickleballclub.com. This website provides a wealth of information about our club, from our committees and executive organization to the club's bylaws, policies, procedures, and play session schedule, along with a photo section of the club in action and also some useful links to other sites and much much more.

Volunteers: In closing, we would like to thank all our members who volunteer to help deliver our club's activities. In particular, we have had a number of recent additions to our Group Coordinator ranks, and it is these coordinators who are crucial to making on-court play run so smoothly.