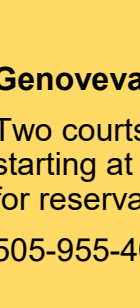
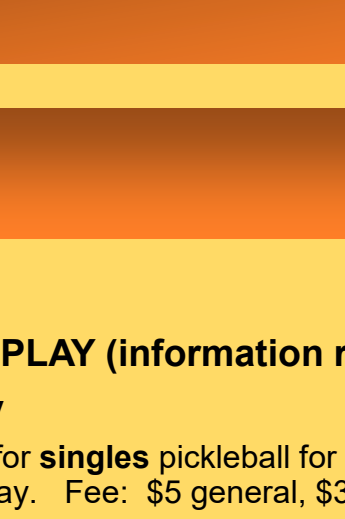


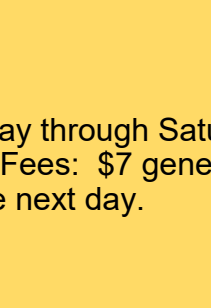


## Santa Fe Pickleball Newsletter

April 2021



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# Message from the Board

### INDOOR PLAY (information received as of April 2021):

#### Fort Marcy

Open M-F for singles pickleball for 1-hour reservations, 505-955-2500. Only one court will be set up all day. Fee: \$5 general, \$3 seniors.  
 According to the facility manager, wearing of masks during play is flexible.

#### Genevva Chavez Community Center (GCCC)

Two courts are set up for singles pickleball Monday through Saturday. One hour play time, starting at 6:30 a.m. and last court time at 5 p.m. Fees: \$7 general, \$4 seniors. You can call for reservations the day you want to play or for the next day.  
 505-955-4065/4066. Masks required.

#### Santa Fe Community College (SFCC)

As of this time, SFCC does not have indoor pickleball play. For-credit pickleball class will begin this summer. Course registration begins mid-April.

#### WINDSCREEN PROJECT

Last month, Cindy Lawton spearheaded the effort to collect donations and purchase windcreens for the outdoor courts at Fort Marcy. Just as impressive as Cindy's efforts to make this happen, so too were the efforts of so many volunteers who came together on a recent Wednesday morning to install the windcreens! Check out the pictures in this newsletter that capture the efforts. Thank you to all that helped and a huge thank you to Cindy for making it all happen!

#### AMAZONSMILE

For those that have been replacing Amazon purchases with AmazonSmile and having .5% of purchases go towards the Santa Fe Pickleball Club (SFPBC), as of March 2021, the club has collected over \$15. Doesn't sound like much, but the more people that participate and purchase using the site, the more our club benefits. Thank you to those people using AmazonSmile to help our club!  
 See you on the courts!  
 Jeff Holbrook  
 SFPBC President

# AMBASSADORS' CORNER

#### Publisher's Note:

**Christine Wantuck** is Northern New Mexico's Southwest Regional District Ambassador.  
**Cindy Lawton** is the USA Ambassador for the City of Santa Fe.

### March was a very busy month for Christine and Cindy. Here is a snapshot of the month.

- Several meetings with the city to continue our journey of dedicated courts.
  - Sent in cost estimates for conversion of courts to help parks dept. with budget proposal due in June.
  - Walk down of Fort Marcy with manager Elizabeth Roybal.
- Met with two city councilors, Elizabeth Roybal (Fort Marcy Manager), Jeff Holbrook and Melissa McDonald (Parks Director) at the Fort Marcy Tennis courts to discuss conversion to pickleball courts as well as the pickleball needs in Santa Fe.
- Sent a power point presentation to improve understanding of the pickleball needs in the city of Santa Fe to the Parks and Rec dept leads and councilors.
- Worked with a city councilor to request money for semi-permanent nets at Fort Marcy.
- Wrote and sent ideas on different ways parks departments structure pickleball for their communities; This included getting a copy of a lease agreement from a club in Florida which runs pickleball in the public park.

- Provided a pickleball lesson to Sig Lindell – City Councilor district 1.
- Worked with Southwest district ambassador and youth coordinator to purchase equipment to line courts more efficiently.
- Set up a deal with Paddletek to provide inexpensive paddles for youth programs. We now have paddles available for teaching youth in New Mexico and Arizona. The Southwest Regional director provided the funds to purchase 50 paddles.
- Set up a pickleball outing at the Gorietta Convention Center for several of the SFPBC members.
- Worked with Nancy Mroz and Rocky Mountain Pickleball to bring a discount and early registration for the SFPBC members for the New Mexico Open PPA tournament in September.
- Participated in a zoom meeting with the Albuquerque Parks Department and the public in regards to the conversion of tennis courts to pickleball courts.
- Windscreens: received permission from the city to put up windcreens at Fort Marcy. Raised funds, thoroughly researched various companies and screens, bought screens and helped to organize installation of the screens. SFPBC members were both generous with money and time to make this happen. Many thanks!

All these projects involved SFPBC members or the board. Thank you for the support!

Cindy Lawton

# NEWS / UPDATES

## Rocky Mt. Pickleball & Don Siegel

By Nancy Mroz

### Who is Rocky Mountain Pickleball?

Cindy Lawton and I met this month via Zoom with the organization's Director, Don Siegel, to find out more about Rocky Mountain Pickleball (RMP) including their 2021 tournament schedule.

While RMP is primarily a tournament organizer, its efforts include promotion of the sport through a variety of activities that include demo days, localized social events, and introductory boot camps. RMP also works with communities to expand the number of courts being constructed or converted. Siegel mentioned that support is often initiated through groups reaching out to the RMP team regarding specific projects.

In 2019 Rocky Mountain Pickleball launched the Rocky Mountain Tournament Series with two venues in Colorado, the Steamboat Springs Tennis & Pickleball Center and the Apex Pickleball Complex in Arvada. RMP is continuing consideration of additional prospective venues to accommodate future tournaments. Unfortunately, COVID disrupted the momentum in 2020 with all tournaments being cancelled during the pandemic.

For the 2021 season, RMP has aligned with the Pro Pickleball Association (PPA) to bring an enhanced tournament experience to players and spectators alike. The tournaments provide a combined platform featuring both amateur and pro competition. We are elated to welcome RMP/PPA to the Manzano Mesa Courts in Albuquerque in September for their inaugural New Mexico Open tournament!

This summer's expanded 2021 RMP Tournament Series now features three exciting venues. There are two national pro/amateur PPA tournaments, including the Rocky Mountain Championships, in Denver on August 11-15, and the New Mexico Open, happening in Albuquerque September 2-6. Siegel reiterated that RMP plans the New Mexico Open to be one of the elite tournaments on the annual pro schedule. Player registrations for these tournaments are expected to reach over 1000, including many of pickleball's best pro players and competitors from around the entire country. The third tournament in the series, a USA Pickleball sanctioned event, is the Steamboat Classic, July 8-11. This is a fun tournament in one of Colorado's classic mountain towns.

In addition to the competition at the Championships, New Mexico Open, and Steamboat Classic, RMP is proud to be featuring pre-tournament clinics given by some of the world's best players including: Ben Johns, Riley Newman, Lindsay Newman, Corinne Carr and Adam Stone.

Tournament and other information are available at RockyMountainPickleball.com. Player registration for these exciting tournaments and for the pro clinics are now open and available by visiting each tournaments page on PickleballTournaments.com.

Rocky Mountain Pickleball welcomes players of all ages and skill levels to participate in its tournaments and is thrilled to be a part of this exciting sport. As the pickleball community continues to grow, RMP seeks to maintain its support and encouragement of the eclectic mix of players which make up our sport. The organization is in for the long run and acknowledges things are just getting started and there's an exciting ride ahead.

FYI: RMP will need about 150 volunteers for this tournament. Watch the RockyMountainPickleball.com website for sign up opportunities as there is nothing better than being really involved in our great sport at this premier level.

# COACH'S CORNER

## Inner Game—Focus & Concentration

By Jimmy Parker, USPTA Master Pro

In surveys across multiple sports, one of the factors in high performance that was invariably mentioned was "mental toughness." For years, coaches had a hard time figuring out how to instill mental toughness in their players because it was hard to nail down – more like pushing air around in your head. In recent years, we've learned a lot more about it – what its components are and how to achieve them. One factor that always comes up is the ability to maintain focus.

We all give excellent lip service to the need for concentrating when we're playing pickleball, or really anything else that we want to do well. But what does that actually entail, and how do you get better at it?

The process of concentrating is really two-fold. One, you are narrowing your focus to a single object of attention – in this case, the ball, and two, you are screening out any other distractions for an extended period of time. That would include both a rally and a match.

The key words in staying centered in the present are "Here and Now." You could be now, but not here. For instance, you've gotten distracted by listening to a conversation that's easy to spot on the next court. Or you might be here but not now – you're still dwelling on that tasty shot you butchered right here!

A good way to practice concentration is to simply call out "Bounce!" precisely when the ball bounces, and "Hit!" when your paddle strikes the ball. Have an objective by-stander, or your practice partner tell you whether you are being completely accurate. This great exercise *demands* that you stay entirely in the present.

Being perfectly present is the key to good timing. Good timing is certainly a major component of playing well. It's easy to see how intimately connected the mind and body are. How can you expect your body to perform at a high level without a clear direction from the mind? It is not so much a thought process (paralysis by analysis) as it is a state of being.

Notice that when you've played well, you likely weren't necessarily thinking a lot while the ball was in play. And notice that sometimes when you've played poorly, you had too many thoughts flashing across the screen of your mind. Learning to concentrate begins to calm your mind, freeing it from the non-essential. Now you can focus like a laser beam, seeing the ball come off your opponent's paddle, and seeing it all the way in to your own!

It's amazing how much better you play when you know where the ball is!

## At What Level Should I Play?

Meet Stacie Barron, New Mexico's only 5.0 ranked pickleball player!

*I asked her about her pickleball journey... this is what she told me.*  
 "I discovered pickleball in 2017 and fell head over heels with the game from day one. I love so much about this sport – the social aspect, staying in shape while having fun, a sport that is easy to pick up even without a racquet sport background and the competition that it has provided during this chapter of my life. I started playing local tournaments at the 3.5 level a couple of months after I picked up the game, having so much fun. I was inspired to work hard to improve. I now play National tournaments and the Senior Pro circuit."  
 "I also really enjoy teaching players of all abilities when my schedule permits. Pickleball techniques vary from person to person depending upon their sports background, mobility and skill level. I enjoy working with players to find techniques that work for them. I love to teach players at every level game strategy and shot selection."

You can reach Stacie at (915) 373-8210 or [staciebarron@aol.com](mailto:staciebarron@aol.com)  
 Nancy Mroz

### Advice from Stacie Barron



On what level court should I be playing? I find this question up continually for all of us. Most of us want to play with the higher-level players, convinced that we just want to win every game so we purposely avoid higher-level players and look to a court we can dominate. And some of us just don't care all that much, and have a great attitude regardless of who's on the court with us...for the love of Pickleball, right?

I was recently found myself in what I call a "pickleball funk". It seems I was losing the majority of rec games and then started to feel the pressure of my partners not wanting to play with me. That may not have been the case, but it was how I felt, which reflected low self-confidence and poor and inconsistent play on the court. So what did I do? I remembered my mentor's advice.

When I first started playing pickleball, I was one of the players who really wanted to improve quickly and was convinced I should just be playing with more competitive players every time I went out, otherwise I was *wasting my time*. My mentor suggested I play a third of my time with players at my level, a third with players that are at a lower level, and a third with players at a higher level. I've come to appreciate this advice over and over, and it's been so helpful to my physical and mental game and continues to be as I move up in skill level. I didn't ask my mentor why, I just took his advice and over the years I have come to find out how it has helped me.

#### Playing with players "at my level"

At my level... what does that mean? To me that means most of the games can go either way and they usually do. But keep in mind, it is almost impossible to find an even playing field in any sport and many times it is very hard to get four players at relatively the same level on the same court. Pickleball is a game of consistency... the more consistent players usually end up on top. If you find yourself losing most of these games, you may be overrating yourself or overrating your consistency. Most players think they are better than they actually are, so you really need to pay attention to how you fare in these situations. Use these matches to really push yourself and stay sharp, especially in your mental game. If you know you are playing at your level, you should be able to play consistently with the group, and find you are not questioning if you are in the right group. If you start to doubt your play continually in these situations and your physical game suffers, you should consider playing down for a while to get your confidence to match your actual skill level. On the other hand, if you are winning consistently you probably aren't at the right level either.

#### Playing below my level

Ideally when I play with lower-level players, I like to play with a partner who is at or above my level. This way, the opposing team cannot avoid hitting me balls. I like to use these games to practice something specific I'm working on in my drill sessions. For example: driving the ball down the sideline, a cross-court drop shot, poaching, offensive lobs, resetting a hard ball, attacking the right hip/shoulder, etc. It can be anything, even just working on my confidence, but I choose something specific. I also like to tell my partner what I'm working on so they don't get frustrated with me when I keep taking the same shots, especially if I keep missing them. I try to win these games, to give my opponents a good game and something for them to work on, but I try not to prioritize the game outcome over my practice. If you are partnered with a lower-level player and the opposing teams really want to beat YOU, you likely won't see the ball much and it's hard to pull off a win. This is a big reason higher-level players don't like to play down in level. And at the same time, the opposing team may be playing great, above their normal level, and hitting to you for a win. This is great to see and many times shows you the players you used to beat are getting better. We need to be good sports and give the other team credit when they win.

#### Playing above my level

These are the levels that are usually hard to get into initially. And remember that you should only try to be playing up one third of your time. There are many ways to go about it. I like to ask a higher-level player if it's possible for me to get in ONE game with their group. I play ONE game and I don't hang out on their court expecting to play all day unless they need me, and then I don't hesitate and jump right in and play. If I play at their level consistently, I know I will get asked to play again. It's a natural maturation. If you get blown out of the game, you are likely getting into a group that is a couple of levels above yours, so it may take you some time to figure out where you fit in. When you do get these opportunities, pay attention to the shots and situations that are beating you. You can even ask the other players since they will likely see something you don't, and then go drill on that and implement at your level and lower levels. All of us have strong areas and weak areas. The better players just play a lot more consistent than we do and their weaknesses become less and less.

Going back to my "pickleball funk"... I recalled my mentor's advice and realized I was playing just above my level a little too much, which was affecting my confidence and consistency. So I set up some games with lower-level players. The lower-level players were happy to get invited and it gave me an opportunity to bring my confidence back up and lighten my mood. A win-win for all of us.

In reality, at my current skill level, I play about 50% of my time with players at my level, 25% with players below and 25% of players above. In any case, the point is to pay attention to where you are on your pickleball journey and seek out the best level court at that moment – lower, same, or higher level – and take advantage of every situation.

#### Have Fun!

Of course, there are times when I find myself playing against players that are several levels below or several levels above my level, and all I try to do is keep the ball in play and let the laughs continue.



Have you got something you'd like to share with the group either about pickleball or yourself? Would you like to contribute an article to the Newsletter or just submit some ideas? Contact Nancy Mroz at 505-660-4600 or [nancymroz@gmail.com](mailto:nancymroz@gmail.com)

# RULES & REGS

## What's the Call?

By Christine Wantuck

**Question:** During my doubles match, both my partner and I went for a ball. Our paddles clashed, but I was able to make contact with it and hit a winner. Our opponents claimed that they won the point because our partner hit each other. Were they correct?

**Answer:** Looks like you and your partner need to work on your communication. You are lucky you hit paddles and not each other! Although not ideal, as long as it is clear that only one paddle hit the ball, your return is legal. (IFP Rule 11.A.)

## Identifying 'Out' Balls

By Christine Wantuck

Beginning and even seasoned pickleball players have difficulty judging whether a ball hit by their opponent will land in the court or travel out. As a result, they try to hit every ball on their side of the court. If you want your win percentages to increase, you need to practice identifying balls that are going out of bounds.

Next time you are out on the courts, here are a few things to consider when helping to judge out balls. Always be aware of where you are positioned on the court, which will help you decide whether or not to hit a certain ball. For example, if you are fully forward at the No Volley Zone, fast powerful groundstrokes from your opponent that are shoulder high will tend to travel out. Let these balls go.

When you are at the net, your dinks should be directed to open spaces, keeping your opponent moving and reaching for the ball. Stay low and compressed watching for when the opponent swings forcefully and tries to attack a ball from below the net. Let that ball go, as it will frequently fly out of bounds.

During doubles play, you can assist your partner, and they you, in deciding whether or not to take a ball. Communicate early, say "No" if you see the ball going out, or "Bounce" if you are not sure.

Other things to consider are court conditions. For example, is the wind at the opponent's back? That will often help push the ball long. Is the opponent hitting on the run or off balance? Their return will likely be inconsistent and result in an out-of-bounds ball.

Practice with intention. Do not let your opponent build confidence based on you hitting their out balls, giving away free points. Learn to clearly identify the look of an out ball headed your way. This skill takes time to develop. Accept that you will misjudge some balls that ultimately land in. As you gain experience, your instinct for judging out balls will improve, as well as your winning percentages. Have fun out there!

# PARAPHERNALIA

## Defense!

Provided by Christine Wantuck



TOP 10 DEFENSIVE STANDS OF THE YEAR - 2020

The defensive stand highlights more incredible points, but specifically where one team gets exclusively caught on defense, and ends up winning the point! Check out the top action from 2020!

# SWEET PICKLES

## Member Recognition/Accomplishments

# MARCH MADNESS CANYON CLUB TOURNAMENT—ALBUQUERQUE

- ★ Santa Fe Pickleball Club Players ROCKED last weekend!
- ★ CONGRATULATIONS!
- ★ Chris Chakeres & Mike Nava 3rd Place in 4.0 Men's Doubles
- ★ Julie Bugg & Cindy Lawton 3rd Place in 3.5 Women's Doubles
- ★ Cindy Lawton & Jon Bernard 2nd Place in 4.0 Mixed Doubles
- ★ Julie Bugg & Stan Sikoro (Albuquerque) 1st Place in 3.5 Mixed Doubles
- ★ Brandon Garnass 1st Place in 3.5 Men's Singles
- ★ Chris Chakeres 2nd Place in 3.5 Men's Singles

In addition, both Christine Wantuck and Michael Jackson completed referee training with Mark Peifer, the newly named USA Pickleball Referee Coordinator. Christine said she was awarded a level 2.

## A Few Snapshots from Albuquerque



# CAUGHT ON THE COURTS

## Wind Screen Work Party

