

For Release on Wednesday, February 23

Pickleball Coronado Association Founded to Encourage Local Play

The country's fastest growing sport is growing in Coronado. So much so that the sport of pickleball needs more courts to continue its growth in our town say residents who recently founded the **Pickleball Coronado Association (PCA)**.

Local resident, **Brenda Arnold**, the PCA's first President, reports there are already several hundred women and men of all ages playing pickleball in Coronado. "As a health and fitness enthusiast, you would think I started playing pickleball for the good things it could do for my body, instead, I started playing pickleball for what it could do for my brain. The takeaway from a recent podcast was that every time you learn something new your brain makes a new connection. The podcast highlighted ping pong, tennis and pickleball as wonderful brain sports. Since I didn't own a ping pong table and had never really played tennis, I decided I would learn pickleball. I borrowed a paddle, learned the rules, and played my first game—I was hooked! Next I recruited my friends and family to join me. Everyone I know who has tried the game loves it. Pickleball checks all the boxes... fitness, friendships and most of all fun!"

Brenda invited 8 friends to play on courts at the Coronado Island Marriott Resort & Spa. Those friends, both women and men, invited others, who then invited others. Now, Arnold's group "Brenda's Ballers" includes more than 20 for Wednesday afternoon fun.



Coronado resident, Brenda Arnold, is President of the newly formed Pickleball Coronado Association. Her group includes women and men of diverse ages who play Wednesday afternoons at the Marriott.

When **Bridget Stoll** moved to Coronado in 2018 she knew only a few people. "I retired in 2020 and started playing pickleball that fall. I've met so many new friends playing pickleball, but this city is falling

behind the curve when it comes to accommodating the growing number of players. Coronado really needs permanent, dedicated pickleball courts in both the Village and the Cays.”

There are presently 19 public tennis courts in Coronado, but no public pickleball courts. Most who have joined the new Pickleball Coronado Association play on permanent courts at the Marriott or on temporary courts at the City’s tennis facility in the Cays. A single tennis court on which 2 to 4 people play may be laid out at as four pickleball courts accommodating up to 16 players. After assessing relative demand for the two sports, the Marriott converted two of its tennis courts into eight courts for pickleball. The courts are often filled to capacity.

The process for playing at the Cays is more complex. PCA President Arnold credits another resident, **Tammy Carney**, as Coronado’s Pickleball Pioneer. It was Carney who, in 2012, began the time-demanding and back-breaking work of laying down temporary tape lines twice each week –first on a high school court and now at the Cays --to create Coronado’s first public pickleball venues. And, it was Carney, first as a City employee and more recently, as pickleball coordinator for Impact Activities, who organizes clinics, gives lessons and even provides paddles and balls for beginning players. Impact Activities is the private vendor with whom Coronado contracts to manage tennis and pickleball on Citycourts.

“It’s exciting to see how many people are now playing pickleball in Coronado,” say Carney, “but the demand for court time now exceeds the courts available. Not only do we need more courts, we need permanent, dedicated pickleball courts that don’t rely on the labor of one or two people to periodically lay down temporary lines.” How long does it take to lay down the special tape necessary to temporarily create four pickleball courts on a tennis court? “Well, it would take you at least 45 minutes”, said Tammy, “however, I can do it in 20 minutes because I’ve been doing it for 10 years.”



While pickleball is certainly a sport friendly to women, gender representation in the new PCA is evenly split. **Jon Pollock** captains a group of 36 players – all men – who play at the Marriott on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. “Pickleball has gone viral” said Pollock. “Two years ago, there were three of us looking for a fourth to play doubles. Today, our group has 36 players ranging in age from 16 to 84. In how many other sports could this happen?”

Coronado resident Jon Pollock (right) captains a group of 36 ranging in age from 16 to 84. “In how many other sports could this happen?” asks Pollock.

Harry Smith volunteered to be the PCA’s Communications and Technology Associate in which capacity he is now building the new group’s website pickleballcoronado.org. “Coronado City leadership needs to come out and see the activity on the pickleball courts EVERY day of the week. I think it’s

important that they see firsthand the size, scope and popularity of this growing sport in Coronado. It's magic: friendships being made, neighbors meeting neighbors, and memories being created."

Who is the **PCA**? As stated on their website, "**Pickleball Coronado Association** is a local group of pickleball enthusiasts of various ages and backgrounds. They welcome all players from beginners to advanced and foster community both on and off the court! Their goal is to see the advancement of the sport so more residents and visitors can enjoy the game of pickleball! We encourage all those interested in learning, playing and enjoying pickleball to join **Pickleball Coronado Association** right away. Joining is easy and it's free. Just go to our website pickleballcoronado.org. We hope to see you on the courts!"

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