

They're in a Pickle at the Rec Center – You Might Like It

by Irena Granaas

Auburn Hills is one of several Michigan cities that have become a magnet for fans of a relatively new, yet fast-growing sport.

It's called pickleball and, despite the quirky name, is an activity that is taken quite seriously by thousands of players. Although anyone can play, the sport is really hitting the sweet spot with the over-50 crowd, explained Jennifer Angus, health & wellness coordinator for senior fitness programs at the Auburn Hills Community Center.

Pickleball combines elements of badminton, tennis, and table tennis. The net is similar to a tennis net, but is mounted two inches lower. The game is played with a hard paddle instead of a racquet and uses a smaller version of a wiffle ball.

It's a team sport played on a court about the same size as a doubles badminton court, with two-person teams on each side of the net.

Pickleball can be played indoors or outdoors, and is popular with players who have played tennis and other racquet-based sports but have grown older and may have injuries or joint problems making those other sports more difficult to play. But the game can also be easily picked up by those who haven't played a similar sport before.

"It is the fastest-growing senior



Two-person teams battle it out in a game of pickleball at the Auburn Hills Recreation Center.

– photo by our own Bill Springer

sport in the United States," Angus said.

She noted that the Auburn Hills Community Center offers two levels of play – a recreational league and an advanced competitive league. Time slots are available on Mondays and Wednesdays for 2.5 hours.

"I can tell you our pickleball players are very passionate and dedicated to their sport," Angus said.

On Tuesdays, the center has a pickleball Ladder League. Scores are tracked and players move up and down the ladder based on

their winning percentage. Tennis courts at the center are set up for pickleball play.

Angus said it's a fairly new sport, but growing quickly.

"Nearly every surrounding community I've checked with has some form of pickleball program," Angus said. "It's been just amazing."

"Our spring and summer sign-up started Monday (March 18) and our intermediate and advanced groups are already full – we have people that are on a sub list. We have folks who come from as far as St. Clair County to

play – they're a dedicated group."

Gordon Statz, community center pickleball coordinator of advanced sessions, and Dick Manasser, who plays the game at the advanced level, spent a few minutes talking about the game.

Statz is retired from GM as a quality/data systems manager, and Manasser did consulting work for EDS before his retirement.

Manasser said pickleball was invented in 1965 by members of three families who were vacationing in the state of Washington.

They put their heads together, gathered the materials they had on hand and made it their mission to create a game that family members of all ages could play.

One of the families had a dog named Pickles who had a habit of snatching the ball during play and running off with it, because it was "Pickles' ball" – and that's where the name of the game was derived.

The game remained local in Washington for years, but as people came to the state, were exposed to the game and then returned home, it began to spread.

CHIEF FINANCIAL
CREDIT UNION

Drive off with a great rate!

Auto Rates as low as

1.89% APR*
Up to 60 mo.



Call, Click or use
your Smartphone to apply!
(800)844-5440
www.chiefonline.com
or use our Mobile App!

Scan this QR Code to get
entered into a
\$50 drawing!



*APR is subject to terms, conditions and credit score. 2011-2013 models only.

NCUA

SAE
2013
World Congress

ACHIEVING
EFFICIENCY

THE ESSENTIAL AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY EVENT



What is SAE 2013
World Congress?

April 16-18, 2013
Cobo Center
Detroit, Michigan, USA

Join the
automotive industry—
Register today!

sae.org/congress

Host Company



CHRYSLER

Tier One
Strategic Partner



SAE International

P135283