

**Rotary**  
Club of  
Charlotte



# THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

January 9, 2024

## 2023-2024 Board Members

President Edwin Peacock

Pres Elect Kim Brattain

Past Pres William Bradley

Secretary John Cantrell

Treasurer Craig Field

Exec Sec Christine Cipriano

### Directors 2022-2024

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Linwood Bolles

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Andy Dinkin

Donna Dunlap

David Head

Joel Ford

Membership Terri DeBoo

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Andy Dinkin



Craig A. Lemley,  
Pickleball Pro Emeritus,  
Myers Park Country Club



Kelly and Allan Haseley,  
Owners Pickleball Charlotte  
and Sports Connection



Jim Kucera,  
Rally Entertainment,  
Director of Pickleball

## *If Fun's Your Aim, Pickleball's Your Game*

by **Marilynn Bowler**

Who could imagine that the hottest sport in America got its name from either a crew of leftover rowers (aka pickle boaters) or a cute little dog who loved to run after a colorful rolling ball? But fact may once again seem stranger than fiction since many believe Pickleball is so-called because of that darling pet whose name was "Pickles" and who just happened to belong to the originator of the game ... a little girl's Daddy who was looking for a new game to entertain his daughter and, in so doing, put together ping pong paddles, a badminton net, and an already used little plastic ball. A tip of the hat to **John Tabor** for researching the origin of the name and the rules of the game of Pickleball.

Implementing a panel discussion format instead of the usual speaker-at-the-dais, we were treated to insight, instruction, and even a demonstration compliments of our three Pickleball experts: Craig Lemley (20-year tennis pro career which started Pickleball at Myers Park Country Club), Allan Haseley (owns Charlotte Sports Connection with his wife, Kelly), and Jim

Kucera (at first a Pickleball "naysayer" who is now actually Rally Entertainment's Director of Pickleball). Each has enjoyed a career in professional sports and/or owning a sports facility which has led to their excitement over promoting the enjoyment of the sport of Pickleball.

Best described by our panelists, Pickleball is a game for people of all ages and all sports capabilities. It may have begun as a game for children, but it has morphed into a gigantic, fun-filled, easy-to-learn, and easy-to-play sport for adults (including the "past 60 years old" category). Who could ask for a better way to attract people to return to being social after all those COVID shut-in years?!

Referred to fondly as the fastest growing sport in America, our panelists each stressed the availability for players to enjoy the game simply by using public courts with no need to join an expensive club; to keep fees down by using cost-efficient paddles (around \$100 should do it); to be sure to wear tennis-type shoes to avoid slipping and/or falling. Also stressed: One does NOT need to be a tennis player to become a solid/good Pickleball player.

Over-and-over we heard the word "FUN!" used to describe the game. We also consistently heard the phrases, "Easy to learn" and "Great way to meet people and enjoy human socializing again." (In fact, we even learned the word "Kitchen" as it applies to the 7-foot rule regarding play distance from the net.)

What began as a children's game has grown to boast an estimated 4.8 million players in the U.S. today.

Grab your paddle, lace up your tennis shoes, and head for the closest Pickleball court in your neighborhood. It's FUN!

A recording of the meeting can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/901299355>  
The speaker's introduction begins at approximately 27:30 minutes.