



The four pickleball courts at the Petersfield Curling Club have been popular this summer.

Pickleball proves popular in Petersfield

During the off season, the most predominant sound coming from the Petersfield Curling Club used to be, well, nothing, unless there was a good time being had on a Saturday night at a social.

But now, the squeak of running shoes, the swoosh of rackets and plenty of laughter can be heard a couple mornings a week as the pickleball crowd does its thing. Where there was ice in the winter there are now four pickleball courts full of people having fun and getting fit.

“We wanted to utilize our curling rink all year round and we have a beautiful venue here and it was closed for so many months of the year,” says Gail Charlo, organizer of the pickleball program.

“We decided last winter that we wanted to pursue a pickleball program here...and we were very fortunate to get grant money from the Selkirk & District Community Foundation which enabled us to do this. That was wonderful.”

The Selkirk & District Community Foundation is accepting grants for the fall intake period until Oct. 2. Last year, the Foundation granted \$5,000 to the RM of St. Andrews through its Community Fund, which allowed the Petersfield Community Club to put in the four courts.

The ice at the curling club is out in April, so the pickleball group set about transforming the cement floor into a pickleballer's paradise.

They purchased equipment and paint to create the courts and have been playing since the last week in May.

"June and July and part of August we were basically full courts, we had great turnout," Charlo said in late August.

"Now that summer is winding down and some of our seasonal folks are leaving their vacation sites, we're a few less, we have three courts going today and we usually have four."

The goal is to provide a place where local people can play. The courts are open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30am to 12:30 pm and Tuesday evenings from 6:30-9:30.

"We only charge \$2 drop-in fee which is very inexpensive for this program, but we wanted people from the community to learn how to play pickleball, we wanted our doors open...so it's been great," Charlo said.

"We added (Tuesday evenings) in at the beginning of July because we had some working folks who wanted to come out, they'd heard about us but they couldn't come, so we added Tuesday evenings into the mix."

They plan to get the season going earlier next year, at the start of May, and maybe rent the facility out on off days and increase the number of days they play to three a week.

Pickleball will wrap up for the season at the end of September so the ice can go in for curling. The SDCF also provided a grant to the Petersfield Curling Club to go towards replacing its ice plant. The updated ice plant is allowing pickleball to go an extra week because less time is needed to put the ice in.

Applicants must be a Canada Revenue Agency registered charity or non-profit volunteer-based organization, located and providing services within the City of Selkirk, or the R.M.s of St. Andrews or St. Clements.

Applications are accepted only online at sdcf.ca before Oct. 2.



Pickleball regulars after a recent morning session.