

Villages Pickleball Club

Contact: Linda Eige

LindaEige@gmail.com

408-930-0771

Please publish October 15, 2020

Yipes, It's the Yips!

While we have all done our part to avoid the COVID pandemic, another outbreak has found its way to our pickleball courts. It is not contagious but it will never be completely eradicated. If you have ever stepped up confidently to hit your usual reliable serve, only to find that you suddenly can't get your serve into the correct court, you know what I am talking about. It's the service yips!

The yips are defined as "a sudden and unexplained loss of skills in experienced athletes". The yips can start with a subtle unconscious change of technique or can also be caused by involuntary muscle contractions while doing a specific task, often related to over use. In both cases anxiety compounds the effect. In pickleball, a team only earns points if they have served the ball. Missing a serve means missing a potential number of points, which adds to the stress and frustration.

For no known reason, we have had a large amount of people affected with the service yips recently. The good news is everyone gets over it eventually. There is no "cure all" but here are a few tips. Take a moment to focus before you serve: clear your mind, consciously relax your neck, shoulders and arms, breathe fully. Develop a routine to help maintain consistency with your serve. Another tip is to recruit someone to watch your form closely and help with your technique. The peer support and encouragement from this co-player can also be very helpful.

Be understanding and sympathetic of your partner if they are affected, they are well aware of the problem and feeling the added stress of frustration from your partner only makes it worse. Also, there is always the possibility, you may be next!