

Pickleball—What a Name! What a Game!

Pickleball? What a strange name for a game! Do you play with pickles? How did this ever-growing sport start? These are questions our newcomers might be asking. Welcome to all our Village Pickleball newcomers!

Here's a little history and two stories of how our sport got its name.

It started on Bainbridge Island in the state of Washington on a hot summer day in 1965. Joel Pritchard, congressman from WA State and Bill Bell, successful businessman, returned to Joel's home after a round of golf. They found their families sitting around acting bored. So, they lowered an old badminton net, found some old ping pong paddles and a Wiffle ball and said to their children, "Here you go, have fun!" In the following days, the children were delighted and the families established a few rules. They had achieved their goal of creating a game that the whole family could enjoy.

Little did they know that the fun game they created that boring summer day would today be USA's fastest-growing sport. In 2021 Pickleball statisticians reported there were 4.8 million players in the US. The average age of a PB player then was 38.1 years! During the first 2 years of Covid, there was a 39.3% growth in players....and many of us Villagers are part of that statistic! "Thank goodness for PB during the Pandemic," we would often hear.

How did PB get its silly name? There are two theories.

1. When the original families played, the Pritchard's dog Pickle would chase after the ball so they named the game Pickleball.

2. Joel Pritchard's wife Joan, a competitive rower, came up with the name because "the combination of different sports (badminton, tennis, pinf pong) reminded me of the pickle boat in crew where oarsmen were chosen from the leftover people of other boats.

Apparently, the second story is the truth, because the Pritchard's have been quoted as saying, "Our dog Pickles wasn't around until 2 years after we invented the game."

All we can say about that is we are thankful to the families that had the creative idea to come up with a new sport!

Just for fun: What do call a Villager woman standing in the middle of the pickleball court?

Annette (hahahahaha!)