

Bancroft Curling Club hosts first pickleball tournament



By Nate Smelle

On July 8 the Bancroft Curling Club brought together 43 athletes for its first pickleball tournament. As the Bancroft Curling Club's second vice president and pickleball coordinator, Karen Easlick has been working to increase awareness for the availability of pickleball. Through her role as pickleball coordinator, she has witnessed firsthand just how fast the sport is growing in popularity locally.

'We had lots of community sponsorship and we do play pickleball regularly at the club throughout the summer months,' Easlick told Bancroft This Week. 'Our participants however, came from all over not just the Bancroft area. Pickleball is a fast growing sport and we're happy to be apart of it.'

Expressing how grateful she is for the community's support for the first 'Picklespiel,' Easlick said the day was made possible not only by the participants, but also by the club's volunteers and sponsors, and the Bancroft Curling Club for hosting. When players weren't competing during the tournament, she said they had the chance to enjoy a variety of food and drinks, and check out the many door prizes and try their luck in the 50/50.

Taking home first place in the 'Picklespiel' was Naman Mehrota, with Kelli McRoberts coming in second place, and Liz Bouchard in third.

'Our sponsors were amazing! It was really difficult for me to go and ask for sponsorships, but they all made it so easy on me. I can't tell you how nice they were to me. I was just stumbling over my words, and they would say, 'What can I get you?' And I would say 'I don't know, anything you want is fine.' Holy smokes! That's not something you see in the big city.'

While most people know about pickleball, Easlick said people don't understand how fun it is until they give it a try. Another reason to take up pickleball, she said is because it is a great way to exercise and be healthy.

'I enjoy the fact that I can have fun while I'm getting exercise, but it's not so rigourous that it's hard on my joints,' explained Easlick. 'It's like a scaled down tennis. It's a great way to socialize, have fun and get exercise. You're not only exercising your muscles but your heart your lungs your brain.'

Easlick said anyone interested in playing pickleball or learning how to play pickleball is welcome to stop by the Bancroft Curling Club Monday through Thursday each week throughout the summer. Noting that no experience is required, and equipment is

provided by the club, so all are welcome to participate, she said that beginners tend to come out and play on Tuesdays and Thursdays. To help educate people further about the sport, and make it more accessible, Easlick said they are also planning to hold pickleball lessons in the next May. She said they are also in the process of organizing another tournament in September.

?It's going to be another fun filled Picklespiel! A day of pickleball, camaraderie, prizes, and food. Women 50-plus intermediate/advanced and a Men's open 35-plus.?

As they are always looking for more players, she said anyone interested in playing or learning more can drop in and play for three hours for \$5. There is also more information on their website at: www.bancroftcurlingclub.ca.