



To Santa Rosa Pickleball Community,

I have received a handful of questions and concerns regarding the schedule of pickleball classes for the Fall/Winter Activity Guide, so I wanted to address those in this letter. Numerous meetings and correspondences with pickleball leadership over the years show there are conflicting needs between players wanting social and recreational play and players wanting more structured skill development and training for match and tournament play. It is Recreation's responsibility to manage these conflicting needs. We need more pickleball courts, and I will continue to be an advocate to try and get that done for Santa Rosa! In the meantime, we must continue looking for creative solutions to utilize our current court space to serve a growing pickleball population. With that said, let me respond to some of the questions addressed to me:

- **Why weren't the pickleball ambassadors consulted?**

Staff has had numerous conversations with the pickleball ambassadors over the past couple of years. When talks over programmed use of courts stalled, the group decided to focus their efforts on expanding court space instead of competing for the limited space. Those conversations led to the ambassadors presenting a proposal to dual strip the remaining tennis courts at Finley. While cross stripping is not a be-all solution, we understood it was our best short-term solution. I supported the proposal on behalf of Recreation, understanding that Recreation would have to manage the shared space with tennis players and the pickleball community. Utilizing the addition of court space at Finley to accommodate players more focused on match/tournament play was part of our conversations and was included in the proposal that I supported. As we move toward incorporating some of this programming, I acknowledge that I should have done a better job communicating this decision to the pickleball community. I apologize that the new programming was communicated through our Fall/Winter marketing as opposed to communication from myself. I will continue to strive to be better in this area.

- **How will this impact peak time, 9am-12pm, at Finley?**

I am aware of the history of the 9am-12pm play, and as stated above, Recreation and the pickleball ambassadors have been in numerous conversations regarding how to balance the competing desires for play during this time. Over the next 5+ months, the current schedule of classes will impact the 9am-12pm play time at Finley by a total of 10 hours. These 10 hours are broken down as 8 hours on Monday mornings (8 weeks, Sept-Oct, 9-10am) and 2 hours on Sunday (4 weeks, Oct, 9-9:30am). I have been out at the courts in the morning multiple times, and I drive by daily, so I know there is no such thing as a small impact during this time. Still, I hope that breaking down the schedule as I did above shows the pickleball community that we are considering the current usage and looking for solutions to court access while considering its current user's value.

- **How will this impact peak play at Howarth Park?**

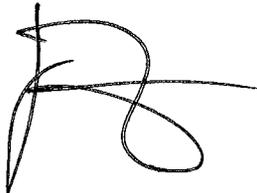
While there was never a designation of the time at Howarth, we know that peak play at Howarth Park has been adjusting with a lot of growth in evening play at Howarth under the lights. With this in mind, classes at Howarth Park have been consolidated into Tuesdays to minimize impact. There is a total of 11 hours of impact on 9am-12pm play (11 weeks, Sept-Dec, 9-10am) and a total of 36 hours of impact on evening play (18 weeks, Sept-Feb, 5:30-7:30pm).

- **Why is Recreation supporting instructors making money over the public playing?**

Recreation is in contract with approximately 40 instructors at any given time, offering programs for community members from toddlers through seniors. Thanks to these instructors, we can provide a wide range of activities in Santa Rosa, from water aerobics to science camps, line dancing to karate classes, and so on. While supporting local small businesses through contract instructor programs is great, Recreation does not enter any of these contracts to benefit the instructors financially but rather to provide desired programs to the community.

We know that pickleball players in our community are looking to access our court space in ways our current structure does not facilitate. These organized classes, designed specifically with more structured match and tournament play in mind, are intended to serve a desire in the community that has historically been ignored. Through these classes, we will get a very good sense of how much demand there is for this and will use that information as well as continued communication with our ambassadors regarding what did and did not work during this season to educate decisions on future operations.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey Tibbetts'. The signature is stylized with a large loop and a horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeffrey Tibbetts

Deputy Director, Recreation