

# Pickleball Monthly Newsletter



ISSUE #1

June 2024

## Hello and Welcome!

To better communicate all that is going on at the UWM Sports Complex relative to pickleball, please enjoy our inaugural MEMBER NEWSLETTER. This will be sent exclusively to our 200+ PB members on a quarterly basis. Our commitment is to be informative and brief, but since this is our first newsletter, there is a lot to report - so here goes!

## Mission Statement

We realize that the Complex is unique and unlike dedicated PB clubs. Usually when you play PB here, you feel and hear the energy of many young athletes playing after school sports, so last-minute court reservations can be hard to come by. We thought it would be good to share our mission in welcoming you to our community here - ***"Our primary mission is to provide a safe, youth focused environment at the UWM Sports Complex...It takes a village to make an impact on a generation of youth, and we aim to play an active part in what it takes to create growth, access, and opportunity for young people through recreation."*** Thank you for joining our village! All of us at Reimagine are very proud of the PB community we have created (almost 3800 folks have played pickleball here since we opened less than two years ago!). You, our loyal members, are a big part of that community – so Good Pickling!

## Member Appreciation Night

We held our first ever member appreciation night in mid-April where 70+ members, along with their family & friends, enjoyed a fun filled evening which included:

- Pickleball Mixer with fellow members
- Time with a PB Pro to sharpen their game
- Custom t-shirt
- Food/Beverages for all attendees
- Raffle Prizes
- A spirited demonstration of Reimagine's "Lobster" machine



Member T-Shirt

At the end of the evening, the owner of Reimagine (Steve Sack) gave a short talk about the state of pickleball at the Complex. Please know members can still pick up their free t-shirts at the front desk!

## League Structure

One of our most popular PB offerings is our leagues and we get many questions about them from our picklers. We have increased the number and structure of our leagues to better serve our members. We heard the demand for a hyper competitive league, but also recognized the need for a "novice plus" league. Our lineup for the Spring session included 3 leagues (listed to the right) and we hope to continue this in the Fall.

For all our DUPR leagues, Reimagine is working with a few dedicated PB platforms to automate the opt-in process and better manage the administration of the leagues. Our goal is to make this a smoother process for our league players - stay tuned for further developments.

### **SUNDAY EVENING**

Targeted players in the 3-3.5 DUPR range (like past leagues) for a fun but competitive environment - we had 40 players participate.

### **WEDNESDAY EVENING**

Targeted the hyper competitive player (3.5-4.0+ DUPR rating) with a smaller group (20 players) and at the end of the season half the league boasted 4.0+ DUPR ratings!

### **TUESDAY AFTERNOON**

Goal was to create a fun, welcoming and skill appropriate environment for the "novice plus" player - we had 32 players sign up.

email us at: [pickleball@reimaginerec.com](mailto:pickleball@reimaginerec.com)

## Drop In

To support our "novice plus" league, we have created a drop-in session that runs Tuesday/Thursday 12n-3p, and it's a big hit! We will continue hosting a M-F 9a-12n general drop-in session, and plan to add an evening session this summer for the working crowd. Exceptions are listed on our website so that you may check interruptions to our regular drop-in schedule before you travel. As Steve Sack likes to say, "it's always 70 degrees with no wind at the Complex!"

## Court Reservations

We have streamlined how we book and manage court reservations, and now have a dedicated team member (Christina) managing this process. We hope that you have seen improvements in both response time and ease of booking a PB court, but feedback is always welcome.

## Member Benefits

We are constantly looking to enhance our member benefits, so stay tuned! Here's what's included now:

- Member only appreciation nights
- Exclusive use of our PB Lobster machine
- Discount for drop in play
- Preferred status for leagues and DUPR rating nights

\* Coming Fall of 2024 \*  
Court reservation discounts

## Social Media

We have made improvements to both the PB dedicated content on the Reimagine website and the content we post on our FB page. We encourage feedback from our members on how to make this content more relevant and informative.

## Lessons/Clinics

Some of you may be familiar with our pro, Michele Kowalkowski (who BTW won a gold medal at the US Open in Naples!). Michele has brought on Cameron Billes to assist her with clinics/lessons at the Complex. All info on how to book clinics/lessons can be found on our website.

## Reimagine Recreation Pickleball Team



Ted

Ted enjoyed a successful career in sports media where he held sales leadership positions with companies like Turner Sports, ESPN and Fox Sports. He is an avid pickleball player and proud to be part of the team that has created a pickleball "community" at the Complex, which includes 3800+ players and 200+ members. Ted is a pickleball "ambassador" for Reimagine and his duties include managing our leagues, tournaments, DUPR rating nights, and the structure for drop-in play. His passion for sports and coaching strongly connects with Reimagine's mission statement.



Christina

Christina is a retired educator with 30+ years of experience. She is a graduate of Eastern Michigan University and has a master's from Michigan State University. Christina enjoys playing pickleball and tennis and is eager to help athletes of all ages enrich their lives by engaging in sports.



Cameron

Cameron Billes is thrilled to be the newest member of the Reimagine Recreation pickleball team. Born and raised in metro-Detroit, Cameron got his start in pickleball during COVID in the summer of 2020 and instantly fell in love with the game. Cameron has spent the last several months training with Michele Kowalkowski, improving his own skills, as well as, learning the nuances of helping others with their game through private lessons and clinics. As a former full time nanny, Cameron has a very patient, visual, and descriptive coaching approach. He truly wants you to walk away not just learning the skills but being able to implement them on your own. Outside of coaching, Cameron works as a Events and Social Media Manager for NEXTGen Detroit, enjoys watching Detroit sports, reruns of The Office, It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, and of course playing pickleball as much as possible.



Michele

Michele Kowalkowski was a former college tennis player who transitioned to pickleball in 2019 and competes around the country. She started teaching pball in 2022 and is now the head teaching pro at Reimagine Rec and Knollwood Country Club (summer). Her husband, Scott, and daughters, Liv and Emma, play competitively as well.



email us at: [pickleball@reimaginerec.com](mailto:pickleball@reimaginerec.com)