

BPC Accomplishments; July 2019– July 2020

Note: While BPC has accomplished quite a lot since July 2019, it has also been a peculiar year with COVID-19 stalling most of the 2020 plans.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to all these accomplishments!

BPC Organization

- Enrolled 275 members in the second membership year, up from 155 in the first year. (Since the start of the current membership cycle in May 2020, BPC is already up to 190 new and renewed members!)
- Developed BPC bylaws (as required by law to guide BPC governance).
- Held 1st Annual General Meeting & Board Election in August 2019, in conjunction with a potluck & pickleball mixer. Elected Board: President Barbara Goebel; Vice President Stephen Dillon; Secretary/Communications Maggi Kriger; Treasurer Terri Vossbeck; At-large: Bob Hei, Gaby Gaiz, and Catharine Vader / Mark Livingston.
- Held eight Club Development Meetings to provide updates, and solicit input & approvals from membership.
- Changed insurance companies in order to obtain a cheaper, but better (required) liability policy.

Partnerships

- Developed and/or continued partnerships with: Bellingham Park Department; “Players Pickleball” (local paddle co.); Lithtex NW (local sign & publishing company); ImagineDS (local website & graphics developer); Birch Bay Activity Center; Whatcom Family YMCA; various pickleball clubs in the region; “Bellingham Fitness”; Bellingham School District; Meridian School District; Port of Bellingham; and any others we neglected to mention!
- Co-hosted Birch Bay Activity Center’s “PicklersPalooza” (9/14/19) for a very fun day with 130 players of various levels. (2020 planning was suspended due to COVID-19)
- Continued discussions with “Bellingham Fitness” health club for scheduling of three brand new indoor pickleball courts. Conducted a survey to assess player needs & preferences, and coordinated a Focus Group to solicit input to help Bellingham Fitness understand player priorities.
- Several BPC Board members participated in a committee led by Claude Blackburn, to explore potential for an outdoor covered pickleball pavilion in Bellingham. This is a challenging goal in the best of circumstances, and COVID-19 seems to have put an additional damper on progress towards the objective. Nonetheless, Claude and partners keep the dream alive for all of us non-snowbirds!
- Continued partnership with “[Players Pickleball](#)” including donation of PP demo paddles, Cornwall lock box sponsorship, Meridian gym session sponsorship, and discounts/ rebates on [paddle purchases](#) with code BPC10 .
- Continued partnership with Whatcom Family YMCA including: loan of two BPC nets to Ferndale Y; planning for regional “North Sound” Tournament (cancelled due to COVID); increase in scheduled sessions & lessons; and one-time donation of \$625 from BPC board members.
- Developed a partnership with Port of Bellingham, with the goal of building courts near Waypoint park Spring 2020. (This was postponed due to the pandemic.)
- Began relationship building with Western Washington University in order to add pickleball to some tennis courts.

Bellingham Parks Department/ Cornwall Park

- After many years of planning, two tennis courts were converted into 6 dedicated pickleball courts at Cornwall Park!
- As a result of a three-week fundraising drive in coordination with Whatcom Parks and Recreation Foundation, BPC raised \$16,000 for ball-barrier fencing and other capital expenses @ Cornwall.
- Installed a Lock-box for secure storage, and a locking broom and squeegee rack. (Thank you "Players Pickleball"!)
- Developed and coordinated a "Lockbox Guardian" system with 20 volunteers.
- Coordinated "Hosted" Drop-in Sessions 6 mornings a week, & scheduled "no-host" Wednesday evening drop-in sessions.
- Implemented eight weekly "Hosted" skill-level sessions which were very popular. These included: three Beginner-Novice sessions; four Lower/ Upper Intermediate Sessions; and one evening "Shoot-out" for 3.75 & above.
- Developed & implemented a level-tag system to allow for both skill-level groupings during drop-in sessions, or mixed levels when preferred.
- Initiated a "Facilities' Team" to measure and chalk/ spray-chalk/ paint pickleball lines at Cornwall & Elizabeth Parks. This team also tended to all maintenance and upgrade needs at Cornwall Park
- Constructed & installed a ball barrier gate at far end of pickleball courts to create a fence "extension"
- Held a very fun "Soft Opening Celebration" for the Cornwall Courts with acknowledgements, court history, and carnival-type games and atmosphere.
- Problem-solved with the Park Department regarding court conflicts with some tennis players.
- Received commitment that Cornwall Park's two tennis courts have officially become "multi-use" courts, with equal access for pickleball players. Additionally, the courts at Elizabeth, Padden, & Fairhaven Parks are now also "multi-use".
- Renewed two Memorandums of Agreement regarding Cornwall Park court area rights and responsibilities.
- Solicited player input for Six-Year strategic "Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan" via city survey and public meeting. Approximately 180 picklers completed the city survey, and 35 attended the public meeting.
- Held work parties to keep Cornwall courts usable throughout the year, (instead of out-of-commission winter and early spring while waiting for Parks Dept pressure washing). Unfortunately this was halted March-May due to Phase 1 closure.
- Successfully lobbied for painting of pickleball lines at Elizabeth & Padden Parks for use with tennis nets, and on Birchwood basketball court for temporary nets. (Still also hoping for additional lines in the future for lines for portable nets.)
- Collaboratively developed COVID-19 Phase 2 protocols and signage in spring 2020 to promote safe guidelines, (which allowed doubles play in Phase 2 rather than waiting until Phase 3).
- Secured tentative permission for Phase 3 "No-Host" Drop-in Sessions, and a variety of hosted skill-level sessions.
- Continued to engage in conversations about building additional pickle courts with private funding on under-utilized park property, and/or converting some additional tennis courts to pickleball (but nothing has yet materialized).

Indoor Venues

- Hosted 3 ongoing weekly sessions for beginners/novices in a local church gym, (with an invitation list of up to 90 people and usually had waiting lists for sessions).
- Held a total of 112 weekly skill-level sessions in Bellingham School Gyms (Fairhaven, Sehome, Happy Valley and/ or Larrabee), which represented a huge increase from the previous year's total of 19 sessions. These Oct-March sessions for various levels also produced over \$1,400 income for BPC. If not for rental suspension due to COVID-19, there likely would have been an additional 20-40 gym sessions in early spring.
- Hosted five Saturday afternoon sessions at Meridian High Gym, with plans for several more that were cancelled.
- Successfully supported an increase in scheduled weekday pickleball sessions for designated levels and beginner lessons @ the Ferndale facility.
- Participated in stakeholder interviews for a proposed Whatcom County "Multi-purpose Sports & Event Center". Many club members completed a related community survey to voice support for pickleball opportunities.
- Initiated conversation with the "Locker Room" gym regarding the potential for pickleball at their new Ferndale facility (the former Ferndale Y).

Communication

- Conducted and analyzed three surveys to assess the make-up, needs, & preferences of local pickleball players.
A) Debriefing Cornwall 2019, and preferences for winter and spring play; B) Input re: Bellingham Fitness' pball courts;
C) Input re: Cornwall during Phase 2 & Phase 3
- Expanded and enhanced BPC's website. (Thank you, Keith & Lori Turley!)
- Updated BPC membership form to allow for opting-in to share contact information (and to clarify liability wording).
- Created Member Contact Directory, and offered a match-making survey with playing preferences to facilitate compatible connections.
- Provided regular emails, Facebook posts, and website updates to inform picklers of opportunities and developments, as well as to request input.
- Quickly responded to all inquiries directed to the club or via the website "Contact Us" form.
- Initiated the use of "Spond" for indoor skill-level session sign-ups & communication.
- Researched use of potential court "reservation" systems for Phase 2, but the City of Bellingham wouldn't allow it.

Other

- Club members provided consultation & support to those wanting to build or upgrade a private pickleball court, including construction of a court as a gift for the Family Partnership Program, and help for brand new club members.
- Hosted an intermediate clinic, and a club-level ratings clinic.
- Held a BPC "Skill-Assessment" Clinic in order to help players assess their skills in relation for the purpose "self-rating".
- Offered club name badge to members (for a nominal fee).
- Offered face shields (made by a member) at no-cost.
- What else did we forget....?