

# No Love Lost

## Tennis vs. Pickleball

By Larry Hayes, USTA captain/tennis player



Learning how to play pickleball from friend Milton Iha

**A friend Milton Iha recently convinced me to try pickleball which is reported to be America's fastest growing sport for boomers and seniors.**

As an active USTA tennis captain/player for over 30 years, I was a little hesitant to try. For one—I really don't have time for another sport as I play tennis 2-3 times a week, lawn bowl with my wife once a week and love to fish when I find the time.

Compared to tennis, the game looked "slow," not very competitive and not providing much exercise. It also looked like an easy sport to learn.



I was wrong for the most part.

The game is not slow. Points come fast and furious. Games are over quickly. To my surprise, pickleball is very competitive, especially among the better players who showed me no mercy even though it was my first game.

Exercise wise—tennis gives me a better, all around workout. After two hours of pickleball, I felt a little winded but not really tired. (However, my chest muscles were somewhat sore the next day. Obviously, you use different muscles playing pickleball than tennis.)

Contrary to what I thought, pickleball is NOT that easy to play.

The weird looking plastic "wiffleball" doesn't look, act or bounce like a tennis ball. With pickleball, you hit with a paddle similar to a table tennis paddle. All wrist action. Different strokes. Different positioning. Different scoring. Played indoors and outdoors on a court smaller than tennis with a lower net.

Being a long time tennis player, I mistakenly thought I could master pickleball within a few games. My biggest adjustment was "hitting and returning" the ball. Since the wiffleball has little bounce, I found myself swinging and missing. Embarrassing and frustrating.

Eventually, I got the hang of it... somewhat...but my returns were lob-like and easily put away by the opponents.

### Observations

- Pickleball is NOT tennis. It's an entirely different sport with different rules and scoring. It will NOT help my tennis game because everything is different and more ping-pong like. Actually, it may hurt my tennis game.
- While challenging, it's not for me at this stage in my life. When no longer able to play tennis, I may give pickleball another shot. But for now, I'm going to stick with tennis. My first love.

## Where to Play Pickleball?

Contact your local community and senior centers. Some city tennis clubs also are reconfiguring their courts to accommodate pickleball much to the chagrin of many tennis players.