

Pickleball Report by Ruth Lapworth

Our pickleball group is thriving with 24 members plus another two who join us outside the tennis season. The standard of play is now much improved and most of us are now fairly familiar with the bizarre scoring system. However we thought it a good idea to have some coaching and a member suggested we approach Julie Vickerman who had set up the Richmond and Wellfield Pickleball Group. Julie and her head coach, Kieron Pearce, kindly agreed to come to our Monday session on 28 July to go through the basics and ensure we were playing and scoring using Pickleball England Rules.

We started with making sure we had the correct grip on the paddle and then practised “dinking”. It appears we have been spending too much time trying to hit the ball hard from the baseline when we should have been dinking from just outside the kitchen! This skill means that winning is based more on strategy rather than speed or strength; the aim is to keep the ball low over the net to land at your opponent’s feet. We then focused on court placement with serve and return. It was interesting to learn that there is also a drop serve which some of us might find easier than the volley serve.

Thankfully, Julie and Kieron confirmed that our interpretation of the rules was correct. They also introduced us to the concept of rally scoring which is completely different but is being increasingly used; so we may need to exercise our brains to get to grips with this in the future!

We all agreed it had been a very worthwhile session enabling us to develop our skills and increase our knowledge of scoring methods and rules. We expressed our thanks to Julie and Kieron and hope they can return for another session later in the year. In the meantime we need to keep on dinking and practise some of the drills to improve further.

There is now a waiting list for members to join the group but if you are interested in having a free trial session please contact me through the u3a Teesdale website.



