



President's Report - A Retrospective Year End Review!

2016 is the fifth anniversary of the Association's incorporation. In 2010 Wayne Roswell and group of proactive players, who shared both a passionate and a vision for this new sport, set the process in motion! The following year the PAO was born!

Over the last five years, the sport with the peculiar name, has rapidly expanded across our province! The top down growth in age and the ongoing continuous demand for court access has surprised many recreational facility managers! As this momentum snowballs, so has the increased number of resurfaced and combined outdoor Tennis/Pickleball courts across Ontario, to relieve recreational programming pressures. As well this year, our major provincial tournaments are witnessing the expanded participation of very young and talented players... good evidence of the sport's expanding and dramatic evolution!

We are not alone! Across Canada several of our Provincial Pickleball Association counterparts share these same observations! As the sport continues to define itself across the country, players, especially those transitioning from other recognized established

sports, are now questioning how this sport becomes officially recognized and someday..... achieves Olympic status.

How does this momentum influence the PAO's preferred future? During this past year, the PAO Board revised its three year strategic plan, to begin focusing on needed operational system priorities that will reduce our manual workload pressures e.g. an electronic membership renewal and registration program.

As the governing body for Pickleball in Ontario, it is also timely that the PAO begins to develop a Sport's Canada aligned coaching curriculum, while moving progressively forward towards the Sports Ministry designation of Provincial Sports Organization (PSO) for Pickleball! Why is this designation important? It positions the Association to receive future Ministry funding grants and is the first vital step in a long journey towards an Olympic future!

The PAO recently met with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. We are pleased to advise our members that for the first time there is a Ministry Sports Consultant assigned to Pickleball!!! He will guide the PAO in its' strategic journey of meeting the governance, referee certification and programming requirements for a PSO designation.

A critical element for achieving the provincial designation, shared by our peer organization in every province, is having a National Sport's Organization (NSO) in place. The NSO must be able to

demonstrate that it is meeting the Sports Canada requirements, to receive national designation and the associated funding.

The good news, Pickleball Canada (PCO) also recognizes this priority and is currently refocusing its strategic directives to achieve a NSO designation. As well, the respective leadership from various provinces are now beginning to dialogue around shared collaborative initiatives, including PCO. A Pan Canadian approach is now being considered.

Being a volunteer managed Association, the board at our September AGM meeting, will be requesting membership approval to increase our complement of Directors to 12. This augmented number is needed to assist with our growing workload and expanded strategic objectives.

Some of the Board's accomplishments this past year include:

- Responding to regional Club requests for introductory Pickleball sessions, led by board and/or PAO volunteer members. Some of these provincial regions include: Hastings, Guelph, Fenelon Falls, York University and Chatham-Kent.
- Responding to school program session requests in Orillia, Fenelon Falls, Whitby and Markham.
- Participating in the Markham Pan Am Centre RBC grant to provide physical literacy sessions in schools, using Pickleball as the focus.

- Participating as a member of the "Markham In Motion" Committee, along with several recognized PSOs.
- Registering with the Ontario Trillium Grant Foundation. The goal, to submit a proposal in early January, requesting seed money to fund our coaching curriculum project.
- Submitting a "Celebrate Markham" proposal and being one of five successful sport association recipients to receive a grant (\$2000) from the City of Markham, that will be directed towards our September Championship tournament costs. The PAO appreciates being acknowledged and selected, from among several PSO submissions!
- Acquiring a Sponsorship Grant and also increasing our complement of website Sport advertisements.
- Responding to more than 300 information requests from our *Contact Us* website link.
- Providing four regional Referee Clinic offerings, thanks to the leadership of Donna Leung, Sau Lin Wong, Peter & Susan Singleton and other volunteers.
- Providing an ongoing updated list of "Places to Play" capturing more than 205 provincial locations. We urge members to pass along ongoing updates and additional site locations for publication.
- Developing a Player Rated & Tournament Result Database, that is currently in progress, with regional input.
- Updating and refining our bylaws, policy manual and website information.
- Reviewing our insurance coverage options.

- Increasing the number of our "ALL IN CLUB" supporters.
We are pleased to welcome the Windsor Riverside Club and the Chatham-Kent Club, while recognizing and thanking our current "All in Clubs" for their ongoing support - London, Thornbury, the Oshawa outdoor & YWCA groups & Port Perry.

Becoming an "All In Club" allows individual groups of PAO members, to benefit from Third Party General Liability Coverage, under the PAO umbrella policy. Often this coverage is requested or needs to be purchased, when renting independent or private facilities for Pickleball.

This year, we are also very pleased to see our Annual Championship Tournament registration fill so quickly! With the extended weekend facility hours, we have introduced both rating and 19-49 age group and singles events. For the first time, we will have 225 players participating with a range of skill and ages. Next year, subject to lessons learned, it may be time to expand the Tournament to three days and add additional open events.

Of course, this takes many supportive and committed volunteers! We are very appreciative of all the Markham volunteers who have rallied to offer support. A special thank you is extended to Norene Clancy and Melissa Morris French, who will be working behind the

scene, to record results and structure the medal bracket events. Also, Donna Leung and Sau Lin Wong, who will be extremely busy, running all 15 courts!

2015-16 has been a busy year for all our board members including our two dedicated administrators and previous board members, Bill Gohn (finance) and Roy Wilson (membership). Their generous gift of time and talents should be recognized!!!!

Respectively submitted,

Joseline Sikorski