



## 2022 Pickleball Ontario Awards

Pickleball Ontario is an organization that depends entirely on the volunteer contributions of members, Ambassadors, Club Directors and all the unnamed member volunteers. It would not exist without the work that you do.

Pickleball is growing and thriving in Ontario largely due to our volunteer base. It is only fitting that we take the time to recognize those who have made a significant impact.

### **Wayne Roswell Builder Award**

This person was one of the original builders of pickleball in Ontario. They initiated a program(s) in their region (city) which has resulted in the rapid growth of pickleball. Their enthusiasm and positive energy has encouraged others to become involved in the development of the sport. They were a founder of a pickleball association in the province, which helped increase participation in the sport.

### **2022 – Winner – Malinda Hebert**

Nominators: Daphne Reid, Joni Ouellette, Terry Morais

There is no one more deserving of this award, this year, in all of Ontario than Malinda Hebert. Malinda is a tireless worker on behalf of Pickleball. She lobbies mayors, councilors, and business owners alike with her charm and knowledge, all to develop and grow pickleball in Essex County. This year has marked the culmination of four years of hard work, led by her, when the town of Tecumseh opened 10, state of the art, pickleball courts in her hometown. With her at the helm, her team raised more than \$145,000.00, easily reaching the goal the Tecumseh Town Council had set for community funds to build the courts. And even now businesses are on a waiting list to donate money to get their names associated with those pickleball courts.

But her desire to see pickleball grow is not just directed to her town, Malinda is very generous with sharing her knowledge with anyone that comes asking. I know this because I'm one of those people. She has shared with me what I need to do, how to approach my area council, how to go about fundraising, how to get my community excited about the prospects, even suggesting that we might want to also adopt bylaws like theirs. She never considers anyone competition but rather the more the merrier.

Malinda's creativity, inclusiveness, and leadership has resulted in this small town of 23,300 people having the largest affiliated club in Ontario. The Tecumseh Pickleball Association membership is at 579 and growing. People from all around Essex County want to join in. On the offering are women's and men's leagues, mixed leagues, beginner classes, youth programs, tournaments, and mixed abilities days. In August the Tecumseh Pickleball Association is hosting its first tournament on the new courts. There will be 250 participants from Southern Ontario and Michigan. Malinda makes everything look easy but it's the hard work she puts in that makes it a success. She always deflects her success and gives credit to her team. I agree she has built a great team, but this too reflects her.

Malinda has accomplished all this while still retaining her infectious smile, her humility, and exuberant demeanor. But most importantly she has retained the respect of her colleagues and her membership.

Congratulations Malinda

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## **Merrie Lee Ambassador Award**

This volunteer ambassador has been a positive influence and has greatly impacted the way that pickleball has grown in their community. This person has not only shown leadership but has also increased awareness and participation of pickleball in their region. They have acted as a liaison between Pickleball Ontario and their own community.

### **2022 – Winner – Kim Porter and Gil Metcalfe**

Nominators: Barb McCarthy, Kelli Patterson McGrath, Dave Dougherty

Kim and Gil have been instrumental in the pursuit of bringing Pickleball to Barrie. They have worked alongside The City of Barrie, sought out and received grant funding for Pickleball in Barrie and have been incredible Ambassadors for the Sport in our area. They have spent countless hours to ensure that Barrie is a HUB for Pickleball for years to come by creating the non-profit Barrie Pickleball Club. Through their efforts we received an additional two courts and will be getting 8 additional outdoor courts including accessible courts.

Kim and Gil also support the growth of the game by running various clinics for beginner to advanced players in group settings or individual lessons all in a very supportive and gentle manner. From working with the community centres in the winter and outdoor courts in the summer these two are actively promoting this game year-round. They also actively encouraged others to get involved to increase club membership which is now over 700 members and growing as well as facilitating league play for all level of players. They are truly committed to Pickleball in Barrie and deserve to be recognized for their efforts.

Congratulations Kim and Gil

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## **Official Award**

This individual has demonstrated a positive influence as a dedicated, skilled official, in refereeing pickleball at local, regional, or provincial tournaments. They are recognized by their peers as having given countless hours to improve the professionalism of pickleball as a qualified referee.

### **2022 – Winner – Ian Campbell**

Nominators: Karen Hill

Ian has been a very accommodating referee. He began refereeing 4 years ago as a level 1 and moving to a Level 2 in 2019 in the USA. He has officiated at all the large sanctioned tournaments in Ontario including the last 2 Provincials, the Red Deer Nationals 2021 and also the Kingston Nationals 2019 and 2022. In addition, he has also refereed at the US Open in Naples, FL, 2019 and 2022. He has also refereed at the Tournament of Champions in Utah. He became a Referee trainer for Ontario, in 2021, hosting clinics for his area of the GTA and Peel Counties. He has also developed the skill and purchased the supplies for providing the tournament players, volunteers and officials, with identification cards, for all of the Canadian tournaments...as a gift to the participants. It was a particularly thoughtful gesture on his part to provide ID cards at the Kingston Nationals for other Province's officials that included their Provincial logo. While at the Kingston Nationals, he also provided assessment or the referee in training (RIT's). I have come to rely on Ian's steady pace while at the Net....and have placed him in many Gold medals matches.

Congratulations Ian

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## **Community Award**

The Community Award recognizes an individual who inspires others to actively participate in pickleball. This volunteer has given much of their time and effort to create or maintain programs in their community. Their leadership skills and positive inclusive attitude fosters a fun and enjoyable learning experience for all.

### **2022 – Winner – Tom Keane**

Nominators: Mary Beth Denomy, Kim Hines, Sally Jorgenson

I cannot think of anyone more deserving of Pickleball Ontario's Community volunteer award than Tom Keane. He has worked tirelessly to promote Pickleball in East Toronto. He and 3 like-minded individuals (Mary Beth Denomy, Kim Hines and Aine Scully) founded ETPA. Tom will play anywhere, anytime and will set up nets and support play even if he is not playing himself. He clears courts of snow and water and leaves with all the kit for this in his car all the time. He meets with local community organizers and council members to promote Pickleball as a sport and to increase the number of venues we can play at. He has arranged for permanent lines to be painted at a variety of outdoor ice rinks in our community. He is friendly and always ready to talk pickleball and is particularly supportive and welcoming to new members of the pickleball community.

And....

When I think of pickleball, which I quite often do, I think of Tom Keane. Tom has dedicated himself to the growth of pickleball in our community. He has established a variety of ways to community and connect with the pickleball community so that everyone has information on when and when to play. He arrives early and stays late to facilitate pickleball equipment and always allows others to play before himself.

The pickleball community is a wonderful community. Everyone that joins finds them self among friends. Tom embodies that sentiment and is the first person to greet everyone who comes out to play, offering a warm welcome. For many newcomers that may be a big part of the reason they come back.

Tom is a strong pickleball player and often spends countless sessions helping and instructing new players without worry of him missing his game times. He is a volunteer extraordinaire. I can't thank him enough for the ever-growing community he has helped build. We are all so grateful.

Congratulations Tom \_\_\_\_\_

A special thanks to the other Community Award nominees:

Kelli McRobert, Lorna & Jim Popowski, Courtney Warner, Linda Rainville, Tammy Giles & Bill Casselman, Shelley Trocki