



Special Edition of Kitchen Talk



Pickleball Association of Sun City Texas Newsletter

2015 PASCT Board Members

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Volume 1, Issue 8

Fun, Friends and Fitness

August 15, 2015

We'rrrrre Back

By Kathy Carr
PASCT Communications Director

Last month we reported that some of the key contributors to this newsletter were headed to the National Senior Games in Minneapolis, Minnesota to represent Texas in pickleball. Since our focus during the first three weeks in July was going to be on playing pickleball and not writing about it, we did not expect to have an August issue of Kitchen Talk. Well, as they say, stuff happens and things change.

While sitting in a hotel in Wichita, Kansas for 8 days, waiting for my RV to get fixed on my way back from Minneapolis, it occurred to me. I'm not in this alone. There are 11 other folks from Sun City Texas who participated in the National Games with me. Why not tap into their memories and ask them to share their experiences from this incredible opportunity we had to represent the state of Texas at the Games.

That's exactly what I've done. As a result, this special edition of Kitchen Talk is dedicated to the men and woman who proudly represented Sun City Texas and the great state of Texas in pickleball at the National Senior Games. In the pages that follow, you will learn their stories.

It is our hope that you will be inspired to get out of your pickleball comfort zone and challenge yourself. If you're on the Beginner's Courts, work with the Club mentors to move up and integrate with the rest of the Club on Courts 1 – 4. If you've already moved over, but are looking for more of a challenge, sign up for the Fall League and the upcoming Fall Sun City Tournament. And if you want to see just how good you are, sign up for a local tournament at the Georgetown or Cedar Park Recreation Centers. It's all up to you.

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Mary Payne, Nancy Grafton, Stan Payne, Pocket D', Kathy Carr, Don Hunt, Steve Timmons, Bill Chalmers and Jack Warner line up for the Parade of Athletes. Missing are Joe Lish and Chuck Flanagan, who were still refereeing games, and Dorinda Williams.

What Are the National State Senior Games

In 1985 in St. Louis, MO, a group of seven men and women formed the original leadership for what was initially known as the National Senior Olympics Organization (NSOO). The vision was to promote healthy lifestyles for adults through education, fitness and sport.



In the fall of 1985 they hosted a meeting of individuals who were currently conducting games for seniors in their 33 states. That group planned the first National Senior Olympic Games, held in 1987 in St. Louis. The games were a great success with 2,500 competitors. The NSOO was formalized during the games with a Board of Directors elected, articles of incorporation filed in the State of Missouri and by-laws adopted. Over 100,000 spectators viewed the first Games ceremonies featuring Bob Hope at the St. Louis Riverfront Arch.

The second National Games also took place in St. Louis in 1989, hosting 3,500 seniors and were covered by the New York Times, ESPN and Good Morning America.

In 1990 an agreement was reached with the United States Olympic Committee based on their objection to the use of the term Olympic in the organization's corporate name and the name was changed to the U.S. National Senior Sports Organization, and the organization began working under the name National Senior Games Association. The organization continued to name its signature event the National Senior Games - The Senior Olympics and, through a grandfather clause, States that were using the name Senior Olympics at the time of the USOC agreement were allowed to continue that privilege.

The NSGA exists today as a non-profit organization dedicated to motivating active adults to lead a healthy lifestyle through the senior games movement. The Games, a 19-sport, biennial competition for men and women 50 and over, is the largest multi-sport event in the world for seniors. This year nearly 12,000 senior athletes from throughout the US competed in the games in Minnesota. More than 650 of those athletes competed in pickleball.

12 Sun City Pickleball Club members, who previously qualified at the Texas State Senior Games in San Antonio, proudly represented both Sun City Texas and the entire state of Texas in Pickleball at the National Senior Games held in Minneapolis, Minnesota from 10 - 15 July 2015.

The pool of talent was deep and competition was fierce as more than 650 of the nation's best pickleball players fought it out for 6 days on 22 pickleball courts in the Minneapolis Convention Center. Medals were presented to the top three finishers and ribbons were given to those who placed 4th through 8th in each category (Doubles, Mixed Doubles, Singles) and age group. While not all of our players came home with a medal or ribbon, they all came back with the knowledge that they represented our community and the state of Texas well in a national level competition that included **the best the game has to offer.**



Minneapolis Convention Center, where the Pickleball competition for the 2015 National State Senior Games was held.



The Sun City Texas players don their team shirts provided by Pulte.



The Minnesota "Pickleball" Viking cheers on the Sun City Texas players.

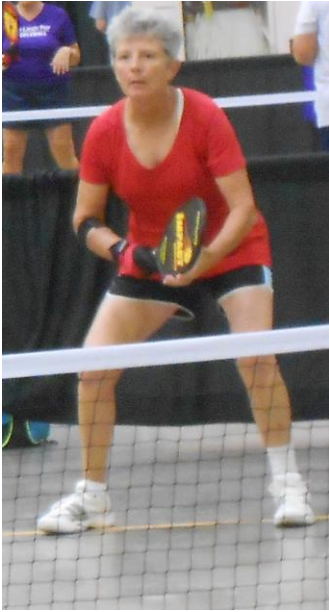


Chillin at the Opening Ceremonies



Texas athletes enter the stadium for the opening ceremonies.

Kathy Carr



We've all heard the word "hacker" association with the game of golf. It's a guy or gal who is not particularly skilled in the sport, but likes to get out and play anyway. I am a pickleball hacker. I get waxed on the Sun City courts on a regular basis, but I just keep coming back for more. That's because I love this game and I love the people who play it. It is the single reason I moved to Sun City two years ago.

I learned how to play pickleball while traveling to different RV parks throughout Texas and Arizona. I found that I didn't have to know anybody or make an appointment to play. I just had to show up with a paddle and other pickleball players would invite me in. No matter where I went, I always felt welcome. My affection for pickleball has only increased since moving to Sun City. I get a charge out of competing, but I am equally excited when I get beat by someone I showed how to play the game. It is the highest compliment that can be paid a coach.

In 2013, Don Garbe asked me to be his Doubles partner in the Sun City Fall League. That was my first taste of competition, and I have to admit, it left me wanting more. Joe Lish took me under his wing and asked me to be his partner at the 2014 Brazos Valley Senior Games in College Station. He drilled me for

weeks in preparation for the tournament, and we won a Silver medal for our efforts. A couple of months later I partnered with Chuck Flanagan at the Texas Senior Games in Mixed Doubles and with Mary Payne in Doubles. I was walking on air when I went home with two Silver Medals for doubles play and a Gold Medal for Singles. Even better - I was now qualified to play in all three events at the National Games in Minneapolis.

Knowing that you are representing Sun City and the state of Texas at a national level competition is quite an honor. But when I walked down the long hallways of the Minneapolis Convention Center, strolled through the Athletes Village and entered the area for the pickleball competition, I knew I was in the big time. There were 22 pickleball courts, 2 big screen TV's tracking court assignments, and an incredible crew of organizers and referees that ensured that everything ran like a top.

I fell in love with the Minneapolis area. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, it has more parks per square mile than any other major city in the U.S., and is second only to Portland, Oregon for the number of bicyclists per capita. There are twice as many farmer's markets in Minneapolis/St. Paul than in the top 10% of all U.S. cities. The folks up there have figured out how to get around the winter months with an incredible number of indoor and outdoor venues. They change from their running and hiking shoes to their cross country skis. They have top drawer outdoor pickleball courts with lights for night play that actually work. In the winter, they play indoors in a sports arena that houses soccer fields, volleyball and pickleball courts and a trampoline park.

So, you might ask, how did I do at the games? Well, I played like a pickleball hacker. I learned that I need to improve in 3 areas. I call them the 3 P's – Practice, Patience and Placement. I need to drill until I can execute my shots with accuracy and consistency. I need to remember that the winning shot isn't going to be on the serve or on the first return. I have to take my time and let my opponent make the mistakes. Lastly, I have to be smarter on my strategy and put the ball, not where my opponent is, but where he/she is not.

Would I do it again and would I recommend others to try – hell, yes.

Bill Chalmers

My wife, Ann, and I moved to Sun City six years ago. I was a tennis player who had heard of Pickleball, but never played it or saw it played. I attended the introductory class sponsored by the Club and liked the idea that the game would be easier on my joints. I gave it a try and haven't looked back since!

I entered my first tournament at College Station in 2014. My doubles partner, Nadav Friedmann, and I continued entering tournaments. We were encouraged with each contest, but were a bit floored when we qualified for the Nationals on our first attempt in San Antonio. Unfortunately for me, Nadav was injured and would not be able to be my partner for the Nationals. I had to find someone else who was qualified.

I found Don Noakes from Oklahoma at the San Antonio games in 2015. He had also lost his partner for the Nationals. We were only able to play together once before we landed in Minneapolis. When I got to the games I was a bit apprehensive, but I had the support of my family – my wife, Ann, my daughter, Stephanie, my granddaughter, Bailey, my daughter's boyfriend, Tim; and Tim's

three daughters Jenna, Emily and Abigail. They helped me keep my mind focused on the game and not my fear. Ann and Don's wife, Vickie convinced us to wear same colored shirts so we'd look like we belonged together. Bailey spearheaded a cheering campaign complete with a poster, face paint and a cheer! She nicknamed us the Dills (Don + Bill = Dill). They were so cute and charged that I had no choice but to be focused on doing my best not to let them all down.

Three highlights from the games begin with my personal cheering section – my family. Second, I was amazed at the level of play; there was not a weak player in any of the games that I watched. I was humbled to be representing Sun City Texas. Lastly, I was moved by the opening ceremonies with the Parade of Athletes into the CHS Baseball Stadium.

My whole family thought the tournament was well organized and the TV screens identifying where and with whom your next match would be was fantastic. Ann and I enjoyed dinner down by the baseball field before the opening ceremonies with Steve and Elayne Timmons.

Following our competition, we spent a day at the Mall of America with Stephanie, Tim and the four girls. I don't think we saw a fraction of it. It was unbelievable that there could be a miniature amusement park complete with zip lines all inside the mall and so many halls of stores – sure looks like the economy is doing well in Minneapolis!

After playing in Minneapolis, I realize I have to change my style of play to be competitive. I have to "force" my opponents to play "my game" instead of them forcing me to play theirs. I need to have several styles of play so I can change it up as needed. I think it is important to have a regular partner, one you know and with whom you are comfortable.



Bill Chalmers (back row on the right) stands with his personal cheering section at the Convention Center.

Pocket D'haeseleer



Pocket referees a match at the National Games in Minneapolis.

One of the main reasons I moved to Sun City in June of 2014 was the accessibility to the game of Pickleball. Having just begun playing the game a couple of months before, I fell in love instantly.

I was a pretty decent tennis player before being introduced to Pickleball, so I was able to pick it up rather quickly. The ability to play with better players has helped me develop my game.

To my surprise, Joe Lish said he would like to partner with me in a qualifying tournament for the National Games. We played at the Mid-South Regional Tournament in Monroe, Louisiana and we did indeed qualify for the National Senior Games. A partnership was formed and from that time on, my game evolved.

I love playing tournaments and Nationals was a blast. What a neat city, Minneapolis. The Skyway System was a cool feature. It's an interlinked collection of enclosed pedestrian footbridges that connects various buildings in sixty-nine full city blocks of Downtown Minneapolis. It enables people to walk in climate-controlled comfort year-round. For us it was a way to the convention center without going outside, just a short walk from my room.

The games were fun to play, watch and referee. Our Sun City group was very supportive of one another. There was always one or more of us around to cheer the players on. Time off the courts was special also sharing times with others over some really good food just around the corner.

So bottom line is...I LOVE being a part of the pickleball family here in Sun City.



Pocket, in the winners' circle with her mixed doubles partner, Joe Lish, accepting their 4th place ribbon.

Chuck Flanagan

Elaine and I settled in Sun City six and a half years ago, after spending 13 1/2 years living in an RV, looking for the perfect place to retire...that offered pickleball. We found that here. Our first exposure to pickleball was in 2006 in an RV parking lot in Benson, AZ. Some friends of ours stopped by to show a group of us this crazy game with the funny name. We thought it was great, even though balls hit long always ended up in a cactus patch. I fell in love with the game. Two years later we bought our home in Sun City and anxiously waited for our new courts to be built.



In 2009, I started playing competitive pickleball and entering various tournaments in Texas. One tournament lead to another and soon I was playing a regular tournament circuit throughout Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. Other competitors I met mentioned the National Senior Games and suggested that I try to attend. After several years of competing (and always qualifying to attend the National Senior Games), I decided to make a serious attempt to attend the 2015 games in Minneapolis. The first step would be to qualify by placing high enough in one of the state qualifiers, held in 2014. I managed to do this in three separate state tournaments that year, so the stage was set.

It's hard to describe the feelings I had in Minneapolis. First was the enormous venue. The walk from the entrance to Hall D was longer than the walk from the hotel. Once there, I discovered that half of Hall D contained 22 pickleball courts and 16 full-sized volleyball courts. The real kicker was that we were surrounded by 656 eager picklball players, all excited to be playing at a national event. The atmosphere was electric!

My first day was Thursday and it was practice day. Since my actual partners hadn't arrived yet, I spent about three hours playing with various other players just to get a feel for the courts. Friday was women's doubles day and I spent all day as a referee and helping the referee coordinator. Spending that much time in the center of all the action gave me a good feel

for the overall organization of the event and I was very impressed with how well it was run. I was really impressed by all the volunteers that came to help. Many knew nothing about our sport, but all were excited to be there helping run these games.

Minneapolis is an exciting place to visit. There's a great downtown area that's alive with activity as well a tremendous variety of restaurants. Add to that a great many friendly people as well as really big convention center.

I'd strongly recommend that anyone who really likes pickleball to make every attempt to qualify for the opportunity to attend one of these fantastic national events. Now is the time to start preparing for the next one, scheduled to be in Birmingham, Alabama in 2017.

If you want to go, you'll need to qualify at one of the state senior games in 2016. And to do that you should start practicing (with drills) right now. Our club recently acquired a ball machine and, I hope, may soon start regular drill sessions open for all club members. If you're interested in this, talk to your board members and let them know.

Nancy Grafton



Doubles partners, Nancy Grafton and Jack Warner, pose before playing a match.



Nancy Grafton on the podium. She earned a Silver medal in Women's Singles for her age group

Clark and I have lived in Sun City for 2 ½ years, after living in Cedar Park for 8 years and Ohio prior to that. My sister and brother-in-law were introduced to pickleball in Ohio by a friend who played at The Villages in Florida. They came for a visit and showed Clark and me how the game was played, but we didn't take it up seriously until we moved here and had courts to play on.

My first tournament outside Sun City was with Donna Duffy - and we won a jar of pickles. I actually won a state tournament in Arkansas that qualified me for Nationals, and earned me a spot representing Texas - it was quite an honor. When I stepped on the court at Nationals, I just wanted to get the first point over so my nerves would settle down.

Highlights of Nationals for me was all the friendly competitors, the well run tournament, and all the "seniors" who gave it their best shot! We loved Minneapolis, especially the outdoor venues, the Mighty Mississippi, and the hospitality of the host city.



It is here, on Court 13, where Nancy won the Silver.

Don Hunt

I've been living in Sun City almost 4 years, and that's where I discovered pickleball. I've always played a lot of racquet sports like tennis, racquetball and table tennis, so I decided to give pickleball a try about 3 years ago. My first Sun City pickleball league was on Tuesday mornings and I remember walking over from the tennis courts where I was playing in an early morning tennis league with about 30 minutes to spare to make the adjustment to pickleball.

My first pickleball tournament was in San Antonio at the Texas Senior Games in April of 2013. I've played in 2-3 tournaments every year since then, and in the 2014 Texas Senior Games qualified for the National Senior Games in Minneapolis in Singles, Men's Doubles, and Mixed Doubles. This was all pretty exciting especially when my doubles partners, Steve Timmons and Dorinda Williams said that they were all in for Minnesota too.

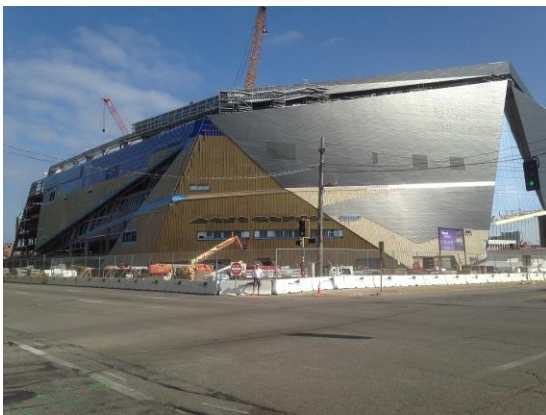
Needless to say, when you play your first match at any level, let alone Nationals, there are some butterflies. I try to tell myself that the other guys have them too, so for the first few points I try to just keep the ball in play and hopefully let them make the mistakes.

One of the things that was really great about the National Games was watching some excellent pickleball matches at the different age levels. It was nice to see the how athletic players were in all age groups. There was a lady playing that had played tennis at Wimbledon 6 or 7 times and had recently taken up pickleball. I believe she won a gold medal in Doubles.

When not playing pickleball, there was plenty to do in Minneapolis. Just walking around the city was fun. Going to Nationals was a nice combination of activity and vacation. Like many other participants, we visited friends along the way and did the sights around Minneapolis on the off days.



Don serves up a storm to his opponent.



U.S. Bank Stadium, new home to the Minnesota Vikings in 2016.

Check out the new stadium they're building for the Minnesota Vikings in the picture to the left. Called U.S. Bank Stadium, it has a clear roof, world's largest pivoting glass doors and an entire glass wall that overlooks the downtown Minneapolis skyline. Scheduled to be finished in 2016, it will give users an outdoor feel in a climate-controlled environment. It will be one of the most technologically-advanced stadiums in the country and house some of the NFL's closest seats to the field.

Now that I've had my first Nationals experience, I'm anxious to work on my game by doing drills and then working on specific shots in pickup games.

Joe Lish



Joe Lish and his doubles partner, Pocket D'haeseleer charge the net.

I have lived in Sun City for 7 1/2 years. Prior to moving here, I had never heard of pickleball. One day I moseyed over to the courts and decided to take a look around. There I met a “cheery fellow” named Chuck Flanagan, and the rest is history. I started playing pickleball on a regular basis about a year after the original four courts were completed. The first time I competed in a tournament outside of Sun City was at the Texas State Games in San Antonio in 2010.

When the Texas State Games came around in 2014, I was on a trip. In order to qualify to play in the 2015 National State Games, I competed in the Mid-South Regional Games in Monroe, LA. While it is not required to qualify in your home state, you must qualify in a designated USAPA qualifying state game. It took a little time for me to realize that I might actually be going to a NATIONAL event that would have nearly

700 pickleball participants, potentially representing all US States. This was the BIG SHOW. Nothing would have prevented me from attending.

Although I visited the Minneapolis area 2 years ago, I didn't remember it as such a large city. All of Minnesota is a wonderful place to spend the summer months. We had spectacular weather. I would definitely visit again.

When I stepped on the court for my first game in Minneapolis, I was very excited and a little anxious. I have two prayers I recite in these types of situations. The first is to please let the opponent have more butterflies than me; the second is please don't let me make a total ass of myself.

The matches were run perfectly; they could not have been better. It was nice to have enough volunteer referees. That's usually a problem at the larger competitions. I very much appreciate the hard work of all the volunteers. We must give special thanks to Winnie Montgomery and Tom Burkhart. One small suggestion would be for the organizers to provide more fruit and perhaps make power bars available.

I was asked what I considered to be highlights of this year's national games. Although I did not medal at the NSGA, there is one opponent, that in four years of my competing against, I have never beaten. This time my partner and I won the match against him. YEAH. I consider the pickleball family of players to be a wonderful group to be involved with, and I thoroughly enjoyed being part of this sport. And the thought of seeing 80 plus year old athletes competing – well, that's just amazing.

What advice would I have for other pickleball players about participating in regional, state and national level competitions? Try it. Expect to be humbled. Enjoy the skills that higher level advanced players have achieved. Have realistic expectations. As much as possible, compete against players a little better than you. I do not think much is gained by playing well above or below your own skill level. Beginners need to play better beginners or possibly intermediate players, but not advanced players,

Knowing what I do now as a result of this experience, here's what I'd do different. DRILL DRILL DRILL.

Ed. Note: Even though Joe didn't medal, he was awarded a ribbon for 4th Place in Mixed Doubles (70-74), and 8th Place in Men's Doubles (70-74).

Mary and Stan Payne

We have been living in Sun City for 10 years. The first year we heard of Pickleball there was a huge boom. We heard over 400 members joined the first year. We had never heard of Pickleball and the description of the sport made it sound like it was a really slow game and more for “older” folks.

Our interest in Pickleball began to grow and we became intrigued with what this sport was all about. The club offered an intro class for \$5 per person, so we figured we had little to lose. So, we signed up for the class, and have been playing ever since! After taking the intro class, we signed up right away and have been members since 2010.

The first tournament that we attended was the Texas Senior Games in 2013 where several of our advanced players participated in. That particular tournament was held outdoor using tennis courts marked for Pickleball. We really enjoyed watching and cheering our team members on!

In 2014, Kathy Carr, my now doubles partner, pushed me to play in the Texas Senior Games...“We can do it” she said! And we did, we took silver (2nd) in women’s doubles. Stan and I also competed and took 4th place. Competing and medaling in the Texas Senior Games was exciting and raised our eagerness to improve our games.

This tournament was apparently a qualifying state tournament for the 2015 National Senior Games, which we were excited about, but really didn’t have a clue what that meant or what to expect.

Stan and I felt so proud when we checked-in and received our credentials for the tournament. We were going to represent Sun City and more importantly Texas in our first national games...WOW!

We have met so many great people during other tournaments, and we saw lots of these folks in Minneapolis. It felt like a family reunion and we were all excited to be competing.

This helped us to be less nervous about playing in our first nationals’ tournament. We knew there would be some great matches, and WOW,

To help move the games along, I refereed a match of 80+ men’s singles...I KNOW...AMAZING! They looked great for their age, they had great patience but even better placement. I had to really keep from just watching the match to refereeing but couldn’t resist calling Kathy Carr to come watch the match. We were both amazed and looked at each other...WE HAVE TO LEARN TO PLAY LIKE THAT!

After refereeing this match, I noticed an elderly lady (maybe one of the player’s wife) with 6 tournament medals attached to her bag. I thought, she must be hold them for someone else. I walked up to admire the medals and asked her if they were hers. She just gleamed with pride. They were all hers and she told me that she won gold



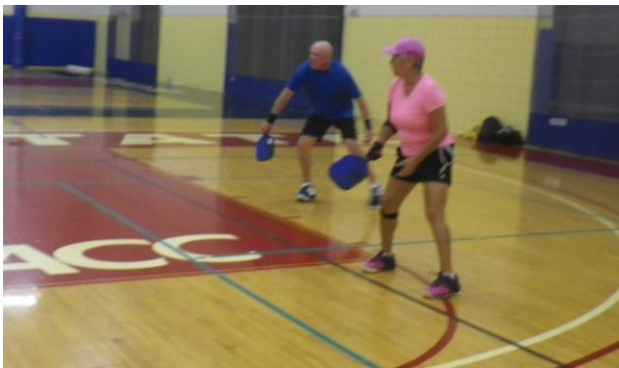
Mary and Stan Payne model the shirts that Pulte donated to the Sun City Texas players who participated in the National Senior Games.

in Pickleball; ladies singles, doubles and mixed doubles. The others were (2 gold and 1 silver) from badminton. I was so inspired! We were truly amazed at the level of talent at all age levels and look forward to our next tournament!

We really enjoyed Minnesota. The RV Park we stayed at was just wonderful, great surroundings and very convenient to everything we needed. Yes, even Pickleball courts! Using the USAPA “places to play” link, we found 6 outdoor Pickleball courts where we could practice. We also found 7 indoor courts at Champions Hall, where many 4.0+ players were preparing for Nationals as well. Overall, I thought the tournament was very well run. Because this was a USAPA sanctioned tournament, referees are required for every match. The biggest delay was the lack of referee’s.

It is always very intimidating to play in your very first tournament BUT “JUST DO IT”! You will be glad you did. Once you get to meet the folks that also enjoy competing at this level, you become more comfortable and familiar with what to expect.

Practice, practice, and more practice is the secret to success. Once we realized that we were “going to Nationals”, we decided we needed some expert guidance and preparation. So, in January of this year, we approached Chuck Flanagan...resident/club expert...in my opinion, and asked him if he would coach and help train us for upcoming Nationals Tournament. Fortunately, he agreed and we are so extremely grateful for everything that he did for us. We feel, Chuck’s instruction and guidance has improved our game tremendously and truly believe that it is extremely important to drill and practice on an on-going basis.



Stan and Mary practice for the games at Champions Hall.



Hanging out with friends.

Steve Timmons

We moved to Sun City 7 years ago and I took up pickleball around 2010. I have always played sports but not many racquet sports.

I loved playing Basketball, football, and track. Pickleball is more appropriate for our age group here in Sun City. I started playing to get some exercise and meet new people. With over 400 members in the club you can make many new friends

My Fitbit gives me about 3 miles for every 2 hours I play and it improves hand/eye coordination. I love competition and have played in many tournaments including Texas Senior games, Iowa games, etc. I qualified to play in the National Senior games last year and my men's doubles partner (Don Hunt) and I decided to give it a try. My mixed doubles partner was from Irvine CA. It was an honor to represent Texas at the National Senior Games in MN this year. I was nervous when we played at the national level because every team was very strong.

Opening ceremonies of the Games was exciting! Each state marched into the stadium behind their flag. Sun City had our own banner! We wore matching shirts and hats so we looked like quite a nice organized group. WE have friends living on Lake Minnetonka so we spent time boating and enjoying their company. The Convention Center in Minneapolis is huge allowing for over 25 Pickleball courts along with Volleyball courts and a table tennis area. The games were very well organized!

It is always different playing indoors so I would recommend getting some indoor practice before any tournament. I will be working on my skills, and advise people intending to play tournaments tough competition is the best way to prepare yourself.



Steve and his doubles partner, Don Hunt, await their opponents' line call.



Steve awaits the serve from his opponent.

Jack Warner

I've lived 9 years in Sun City, and when I heard about the game of pickleball and that courts were going to be built in Sun City, I laughed and said "who would play a silly game called pickleball". Little did I know that after approximately 1 year of driving by the courts, I stopped to see what the game was all about. I watched a group of 4 players on the court and was starting to leave, when Larry Hudson came over to me and asked me if I wanted to learn how to play the game. He explained the rules and had me hit a few balls. That one experience changed my whole routine of what I did for recreation and exercising. This happened in 2010, and now I can't stop playing this "silly game"

After playing about 6 months I heard about the tournaments in San Antonio, College Station, Louisiana, and Arkansas and played in all of these games in 2011. I was fortunate to have medaled in each of the tournaments in singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles.

At the beginning of 2012, I went through a series of surgeries that kept me from playing pickleball most of that year. Little did I know that this was a qualifying year for the Nationals for 2013. When the qualifying year for 2014 took place, I was able to qualify for all three events and could not wait to play in Minnesota this year. Just to think that I would be playing against all medal winners in the country was great.

As it so happened, while playing in the games at Monroe, Louisiana, 5 weeks before the Nationals, I had a pretty serious injury to my hamstring muscle in my right leg. As most active people know, this injury is long lasting and this was one of the worst things that happened to me when I was trying to prepare for the Games. With this handicap I guess the highlight of my experience at the games was just to be able to play against some of the best. I think I could have held my own, but there was no way of knowing when you can't run after balls that should be easy to return.

Our Sun City players have developed a great feeling of comradery at the tournaments. We attempt to watch each other play, and we feel the excitement when our friends win. You also share in their disappointment when they lose. You get to meet and become friends with many people from various states and begin to know their names as you play them in the various tournaments. During the tournament in Monroe, Louisiana, I played against at least 8 players from Tennessee. They have kept in touch with me through e-mails asking about my injury.

One other point to make is that many of the larger tournaments have a huge contingent of players and you may have a long wait between games. I had approximately 2 1/2 hours of wait time to play the games in Monroe. When I was called to play, I went to the courts to warm up by hitting the ball. I didn't do anything to loosen my muscles and stretch. The result was that I hurt my hamstring muscle only after 4 points into the game. I have learned too late. **STRETCH YOUR MUSCLES AFTER A LONG PERIOD OF REST.** Don't make the mistake I made. I waited 4 years for this chance to play singles in the Nationals and I blew it in about 4 minutes. I might be getting old, but that won't stop me from attempting to qualify next year for the national games in 2017

Ed. Note: For an old guy with a bum leg, Jack did alright. He was awarded a ribbon for 6th Place in Men's Doubles (75-79), and 8th Place for Men's Singles (75-79).



Jack Warner referees a match in between his own competitive schedule.

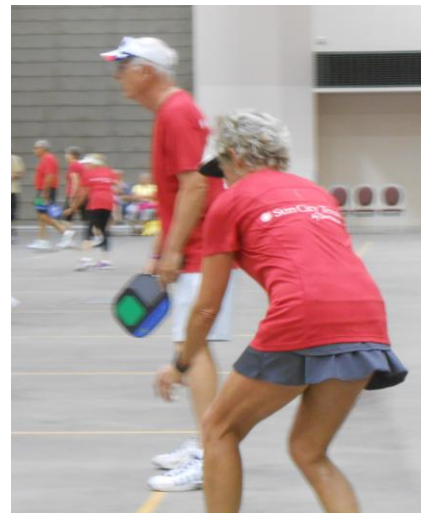
Dorinda Williams



Dorinda confers with Chuck Flanagan on strategy as they watch the games.



Dorinda awaits her next match.



Dorinda and her mixed doubles partner, Don Hunt, return a deep return from their opponents.



Dorinda Williams and her doubles partner rally at the National Games.