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Tuesday July 29, 2014

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Pickle Ball

Waterloo lands pickleball provincial, national championships

North America's Fastest-Growing Sport Coming to the K-W Area in Full Force

Waterloo - The game that has been turning heads and seeing unprecedented participant growth is scheduled to make both the provincial and national championships home at the Manulife Financial Sportsplex and Healthy Living Centre at RIM Park over the next two years. Waterloo has recently been named the host destination for both the 2014 Pickleball Ontario Provincial Championships, and the 2015 Pickleball Canada Eastern National Open Championships.

Pickleball is widely recognized as one of North America's fastest growing sports. The game



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is played on a doubles badminton-sized court with the net lowered to 34 inches at the center, with a polymer ball slightly smaller than a wiffle ball and paddles made of composite material. Rules of play are simple and the game is easy for beginners to learn, but can develop into a quick, fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players.

Municipalities across North America are converting existing tennis court facilities to meet pickleball specifications or even building new dedicated venues for the sport. Private tennis, golf and fitness clubs are adding courts to their established facilities. Senior retirement homes and lifestyle communities see pickleball participation on the rise and are developing new facilities to accommodate the phenomenal growth. A well-established Florida retirement community boasts over 140 permanent courts with a line-up for access every morning.

According to the USA Pickleball Association, the game was co-invented in 1965 in Seattle, Washington by U.S. Congressman Joel Pritchard, William Bill Bell, Jordan Steranka, and Barney McCallum. The name came from a family dog named Pickles who would chase after balls and then hide them in the bushes. Pickle's Ball was later shortened to "pickleball." Initially, families played pickleball in their backyards on a hard surface, on driveways, and on residential dead-end streets. As the sport grew throughout the 1970s, it evolved from a family activity into a paddle court sport with formalized rules. Now, pickleball is played in school physical education programs and at parks and recreation centers, correctional facilities, camps, YMCAs and retirement communities. The sport is popular among active senior adults and at community centers.

The 2014 Pickleball Ontario Provincial Championships will be held September 17-18, 2014. The championships are organized by the Pickleball Association of Ontario and are open to PAO members only. Divisions for competition include open men's and women's and men's, women's and mixed 50-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70+ age classifications. Interested players are requested to go to the PAO website at www.pickleballassociationofontario.org, for membership and registration information

The Pickleball Canada National Open Championships have been held in Abbotsford, BC each of the past three years. The 2015 Pickleball Canada Eastern National Open Championships will be the first time Pickleball Canada has awarded a Canadian championship to an Ontario host. There will be a Western National Championship as well, having been awarded to Kelowna, BC. As an open Canadian championship, participants from anywhere in Canada and around the world can register to compete. Details about participation in the 2015 Pickleball Canada Eastern National Open Championships are currently being developed. More information about pickleball in Canada can be found on the Pickleball Canada website www.pickleballcanada.org.

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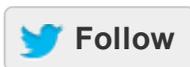
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Exchange Business Communication Inc.
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

“Pickleball Canada is excited about hosting the 2015 Pickleball Canada Eastern National Open Championships in Waterloo”, stated Shirley Shepherd, President at Pickleball Canada. “We have wanted a national championships to come to Ontario for some time and believe there are many participants in eastern Canada looking forward to participate. Waterloo is a great location, within close proximity to many pickleball playing markets in Canada and the United States and the Manulife Financial Sportsplex and Healthy Living Centre at RIM Park will be an ideal venue.”

The bids for both events were submitted by the Regional Sport Tourism Office (RSTO) in concert with the Regional Tourism Office 4 (RTO4), the Waterloo Regional Tourism Marketing Corporation (WRTMC) and the City of Waterloo.

“There is a great deal of pickleball programming going on within Waterloo and even more within the local region”, explained director of sport tourism for the RSTO, Laurence Bishop. “Winning the rights to host both the provincial and national championships will help further the growth of the sport within our community. It may provide even further support towards a broader vision in establishing Waterloo as world-class destination for the sport, ultimately leading to a sustained open international championship and a new home-grown sport tourism property”.



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