

## 2021 Bios Pickleball Alberta Board Nominees and Continuing Directors

### Kirk Jensen

#### Nominee for Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2021 – 2023)



My name is Kirk Jensen (61) and I have proudly agreed to let my name stand for a second two-year term as a Director and President of Pickleball Alberta.

Professionally, I was the owner and president of Jencess Software & Technologies (1983- 2008) that developed golf course management software that was used in 15 countries and 7 languages. Our company was the official software supplier to the Alberta Golf Association, Ontario Golf Association, Canadian National Golf Course Owners Association, and the Singapore Golf Association.

I have served on numerous corporate and volunteer boards: Board of Directors of Pickleball Canada as Vice President of Competitions and President, VP Promotions for Toastmasters District 42, attaining the designation Distinguished Toastmaster, Board of the Windermere Golf and CC for seven years and as President (2013), Team Alberta Director for Albert Minor Roller Hockey Association, and the U18 Director for the Southwest Zone Hockey Association.

I started playing pickleball in the winter of 2017 and currently played and compete at a 4.0+ level. I have achieved success in the first four years of play, winning three dozen medals, including the 2019 and 2021 Alberta Provincials and the 2021 Canadian Nationals. I have run 18 marathons, including the Six Marathon Majors: Boston, Chicago, New York, Berlin, Tokyo, and London.

I have coached in both the school system and sport associations including hockey, inline hockey, tennis, cross country running, golf and chess. I coached Team Alberta to three inline hockey AAA North American Championships (2016-2018), the first Canadian team to do so. I was the general manager and assistant coach for Canada's National Men's team for the 2017 IIHF World Inline Championships in Bratislava, and 2019 FIRS World Inline Championships in Barcelona. I have officiated in several sports at the provincial and national levels. In pickleball I have achieved the Level 2 Accredited Referee status.

I live in Edmonton and have two great kids Michael (18) and Kira (16) who have both played pickleball. Michael has won medals in several tournaments including gold in 3.0 doubles and singles.

With your support, I look forward to working with the incredible team we have assembled on the Pickleball Alberta Board and continuing with the momentum that we have established.

## **Haddow Thul**

### **Nominee for Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2021 – 2023)**



My name is Haddow Thul (28) and I have chosen to put my name forward to be a part of the Pickleball Alberta Board for a two-year term supporting Kirk Jensen and all of Alberta as the Vice President.

Reluctantly, I found pickleball as a young adult and have been addicted to the sport for just over a year. I fell in the love and found a great respect for the game when I lost in the Red Deer Provincials in the 2.5 bracket to two people twice my age. Since then I have graduated to a 4.0 level with aspirations to be competing at a 5.0 level.

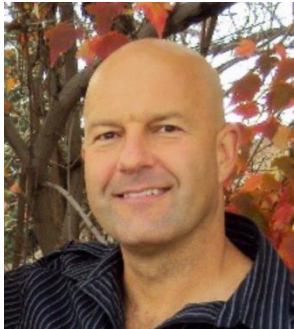
I am a proud serving member of the Calgary Pickleball Club (CPC) and the Red Deer Pickleball Club. I fully enrolled pickleball into my life playing religiously multiple times a week, playing and volunteering in tournaments throughout North America, and now sitting on the CPC Long Term Planning Committee (LPC). I am a student of the sport and as much as I enjoy pickleball I know it is my responsibility to give back to the sport we all admire.

For the past 8 years I have been working for a small pipeline integrity company where I worked my way from the Summer Student to the Business Administrator. During the past 8 years I started and completed my Bachelor of Business Administration and Minor in Innovation and Entrepreneurship from Mount Royal University. My experience of being a board member includes fulfilling the position of Co-Founder and Vice President of the Calgary Surf Club, Director at Large for my Condo Board, and currently the Competitive Representative for the LPC. I have experienced great success with the Surf Club. My partner and I started the club with 0 members and finished our term with over 300 paid members and generated over \$10,000 for the club and donated over \$4,000 in a short 2-year term.

If elected I hope to continue to advance Pickleball in Alberta through providing recommendations and implementing new ideas that prove to be effective for all levels and ages of pickleball players located throughout the great province of Alberta.

## **Dwight Chalifour**

### **Nominee for Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2021 – 2023)**



My name is Dwight Chalifour (52) and am willing to put my name forward for a further two-year term as Treasurer on the Pickleball Alberta Board.

I am married with four children and live in Parkland County. I have been playing pickleball for 4 years. My sport background is hockey, soccer, triathlon, ironman, marathon, baseball, cycling, squash and tennis. I am a member of the Parkland Pickleheads, Pickleball Canada and the USAPA. I have played in BC, Alberta, Ontario, Mexico and California. As a player I am rated 4.0 and have played in over 15 tournaments and proudly winning 9 gold medals. I am a level one referee and have refereed games from 3.0 to 5.0. I have also coached club soccer in Edmonton from 2003 to 2016.

In March of 2016 I retired from the Alberta Sheriffs. In business, I own two very successful corporations that involve multiple real estate properties in western Canada along with heavy equipment and employees. I monitor and oversee the financial records and daily business decisions.

If re-elected, I will work on the board to monitor and manage financial resources, maintain integrity, safeguard the assets of Pickleball Alberta, maintain control over the receipt and disbursement of the funds, prepare for the annual budget and bring my experience to the Board.

I look forward to giving back to this great game and bringing my time, financial expertise and business experience to the clubs and the members.

## **Ray Keroack**

### **Nominee for Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2021 – 2023)**



I'm Ray Keroack (65) and, if elected, I would be happy to serve on the PA Board as Director of Technology and Membership.

I fell in love with pickleball in 2018 and have played as much as I can since then. I love the camaraderie and community, the laughter and joy, the thrill of a good play, and the glow of physical exertion.

In 2018, I also joined the board of the St. Albert Pickleball Club and I continue to serve as its Treasurer. I have enjoyed guiding and implementing the club's technology advancements and administering its systems. I'm also using my financial, engineering and planning skills

on the club's Facility Task Force, which is developing a strategy for more pickleball facilities.

I have introduced pickleball to my lovely wife Deb (married 42 years), my kids, and my three grandchildren. My son Rob and my eldest grandson Jaxon (12) have taken to the game like a duck to water, as they say. I can see that the future of pickleball resides in our youth.

Over the last few years, I've also worked with our provincial and national pickleball organizations, and with all affiliated clubs in Alberta, helping to procure, plan and implement two generations of membership management systems. Working hard on project teams helps develop friendships and gives all its team members the satisfaction of building and accomplishing something. These were the drivers of my working days as a civil project engineer, business manager and government executive director, and they continue to drive me. That and playing one more game of pickleball.

## **Wanda Lazar**

### **Nominee for Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2021 – 2023)**



I have agreed to let my name stand for the position of Competitions Director for Pickleball Alberta.

As a long-standing member of the Medicine Hat Pickleball Club (MHPC), I am very passionate about the sport of Pickleball and the Pickleball family. I am an enthusiastic promoter of our sport and believe that anyone can and should play pickleball. As an IPTPA Certified Level One instructor, I teach, mentor, play socially and play competitively with the constant hope to ignite the passion in others that pickleball has lit in me.

Since my first game of pickleball in 2014, I have been on a journey to play my best both in Canada and as a Snowbird in Arizona. To help those that are interested in the game, I have taken on the role of Player Development Officer. This has allowed me to organize and promote Learn-to-Play programs for beginners, weekly two-hour Skills and Drills sessions, mentored play sessions, recognized Rated Round Robins, and clinics with pros and IPTPA instructors for 3.0, 3.5, 4.0 players. I have chaired in house tournaments and coordinated Club Skill Assessment Sessions and Getting to the Next Level round robins. Most recently, I was the Tournament Director for the 2021 "Warm Up" for Canadian tournament I Medicine Hat and am currently the Tournament Director for the Alberta 55 Plus Qualifying Tournament to take place in Medicine Hat on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

In order to advance my own personal game, I have taken many lessons and clinics from professional players, am lucky to have a 4.5 Mentor and I play in numerous tournaments. I have been fortunate enough to have won several medals but most importantly have come away

from these tournaments with lifelong friendships. I also referee and a highlight was refereeing at the Nationals in Red Deer in August of this year.

On a personal note, I have a son Dallas, a beautiful daughter in law Amy and a precious two-year old granddaughter and future pickleball player, Savannah.

If elected, I look forward with great enthusiasm, to working with fellow Pickleball Alberta Board members and Pickleball Club members all across Alberta not only to promote and grow our sport but to provide healthy, competitive play for all.

## **Brenda Feser**

### **Continuing Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2020-2022)**



My name is Brenda Feser (67) and I have agreed to continue as provincial Youth director on the board of Pickleball Alberta. I have been a Board member since 2016. I am happily married to Dick, we have three children and five grandchildren, all of whom have been members of the Red Deer Pickleball Club, Pickleball Alberta, and Pickleball Canada.

I have been playing pickleball since 2014 when we joined the Red Deer Pickleball Club. In our first year as members Dick and I played in eleven tournaments across the province and many tournaments since that time. In addition, we have played at the Pickleball Canada National Championship in Kelowna, the World Senior Games in St.

George, Utah, and have attended two Margaritaville USA Pickleball National Championships in Indian Wells, CA. We have had great pleasure in assisting with the annual Red Deer Pickleball Club tournaments, as well as the Pickleball Alberta Provincial Championships in 2019 and 2020 (i.e., not held due to Covid-19). This year Dick and I were so fortunate to Co-Host the Pickleball Canada National Championship 2021 along with Tournament Director Gene Vollmin and an extraordinary group of Officials and volunteers.

I served on the Red Deer Pickleball Club board as a Director for four years (2015-2018) fulfilling roles as secretary, treasurer, membership, winter play coordinator, and then as President in 2018/19 and 2019/20. Throughout the winter play season and this past summer, I offered morning practice with those members who were new to the club and new to pickleball to assist them in developing their pickleball skills and strategies. As an official, I have refereed tournaments in Red Deer, Spruce Grove (Provincials, 2018), and the Sun City Showdown in Las Vegas at the Plaza Hotel. I am currently working towards a Level 1 accredited Referee.

My background is in education (B.Ed. – major P. Ed.; Masters – Ed. Psych.) and was fortunate to spend 28 years as a teacher in Red Deer, initially teaching P. Ed. and concluding my teaching career with 15 years as the district lead of the Early Reading Intervention program for schools in

Red Deer, Sylvan Lake, Rocky Mountain House, Innisfail and Olds. As a coach of volleyball, basketball, and softball, NCCP training became a significant component of my career as a teacher and my volunteer work with Red Deer Minor Softball and the ten years on the Board of Directors of Softball Alberta. In August of 2018 I completed the IPTPA Teach the Teacher, and I have continued taking NCCP courses most recently taking Commit to Kids for Coaches (2018), Keeping Girls in Sport (2019), and Making Head Way in Sport (2020). It is momentous that Pickleball Canada has now launched the pickleball coach program including Mark Renneson who has a strong reputation in pickleball coaching development. I am very excited to see this NCCP program roll out and what a huge impact it will have for Pickleball in Canada, particularly in the development of youth pickleball across the country.

I look forward to continuing the work of the Pickleball Alberta Board of Directors and the awesome skills, knowledge, and dedication that the Board members bring to their roles.

## **Sara McNeill**

### **Continuing Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2020-2022)**



My name is Sara McNeill and I'm a member of the Parkland Pickleheads in Spruce Grove. I agreed to accept the position of Secretary on the Pickleball Alberta Board for the 2020-2022 term.

I started playing pickleball November 2018 when I learned there would be a tournament at my sports club, the Royal Glenora Club, at the end of December 2018. We entered. We trained for 1 month. And then played. The first time I stepped on the court I fell in love with the game and haven't looked back since. My husband and I entered with another couple and did the mix/match thing. We got a bronze medal in the 3.5 level and we were hooked. I played round robins, took clinics, took lessons and drilled and have improved to a 4.5+ level. Addicted is the only word for it and I play probably 4-6 times/week. I am hoping to play some tournaments in the US to see what the competition is really like.

I have played a lot of sports in my life but pickleball is the most fun! I have a background in squash, tennis, badminton and ping pong which is a great fit for pickleball.

My 3 kids have all played and the youngest is really interested. She is playing with the youth group at Spruce Grove. I have been doing a little bit of coaching with her, her friends and other kids who are interested in playing.

Regarding my volunteer and committee background, I was on the Edmonton Squash League (ESL) executive from 1998-2002 helping to form teams, organize lessons, help run the league, organize the wind up banquet. I was on the Royal Glenora Club squash committee from 2011 – 2015 helping to organise Club Championships and the Canadian Squash Nationals in 2014.

I have been a physiotherapist for the last 31 years and have worked for the WCB for the last 20 years. My experience with body mechanics and injuries comes in handy for the pickleball population.

I am one year into my two-year term and I am really enjoying seeing the development of this fledgling sport.

## **Danica Wu**

### **Continuing Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2020-2022)**



My name is Danica Wu (29) and I agreed to accept a position for a two-year term starting in 2020 as Communications Director on the Pickleball Alberta Board.

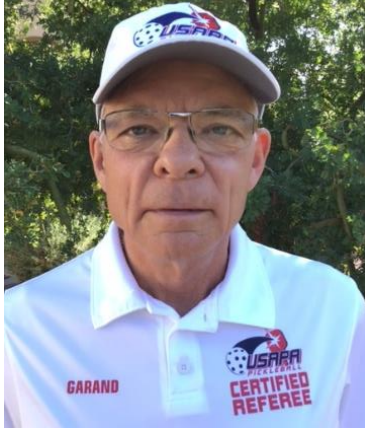
I am a retired professional and national team football player- after graduating from The Ohio State University in 2014, I moved to Germany to play in the top women's league before hanging up my boots in 2020. I am currently working towards my National Youth Coaching licence through Canada Soccer and am on track to finish next year. Sports played a major role in shaping me into who I am today and I want to continue impacting future generations.

Pickleball found me, as both my parents are pickleball fanatics and convinced me to try it while I was home on break. Since retiring, it has become my sport of choice with the majority of my "family time" being spent out on the courts ☺ Time really flies when you're out there, one minute you're warming up and the next time you check you're three hours late for dinner! I've met some amazing people in the pickleball community and lifelong friends. While there may be a certain stereotype surrounding pickleball, all my friends who I've managed to drag out end up loving it and coming back for more!

I am a strong advocate for inclusion and maintaining an active lifestyle and I look forward to bringing my youth and female perspective to the board to help grow the sport of pickleball in Alberta.

## Garand Jones

### Continuing Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2020-2022)



My name is Garand Jones and I am proud to be the Director of Officiating on the Pickleball Alberta Board. I came onto the board in September of 2020 and have really enjoyed my involvement with the Board, the Referee Trainers and the Officials throughout the Province.

I started playing pickleball in 2015 and became a member of the Parkland Pickleheads in Spruce Grove. I started refereeing in 2016 and refereed 400 + matches before being certified in February of 2020 in Pebble Creek, Goodyear, Az. Currently I am a Club Rated 4.0 player and am the President of the Parkland Pickleheads, a position I have held since 2018. I am also a member of the Pebble Creek Pickleball Club in Goodyear, Az. I have refereed close to 700 matches at all levels from 2.5 to the Pro Level and enjoy refereeing in tournaments more than playing in tournaments.

As the Director of Officiating with Pickleball Alberta I also represent Alberta on the National Officiating Advisory Council. We as a council have several projects underway to enhance our Referee Program in Canada.

Prior to retiring in 2014 I was involved in several businesses and this experience has helped me greatly in my involvement with Pickleball. The reason I am involved in the Pickleball positions I am, is because I want to give back as much as I can to this great game; a game where anyone of any age and capability can find enjoyment and develop great friendships.

## Brad Hurshowy

### Continuing Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2020-2022)

Bio to be submitted.



## Beverley Walker

### Pickleball Alberta Past President



My name is Beverley Walker and I'm a founding member of the Calgary Pickleball Club and Pickleball Alberta.

I started playing pickleball when my husband, Peter, and I were in Surprise, AZ for a few months many years ago. When I returned to Calgary, I signed up for an introductory program that was offered at West Hillhurst Community Association and started my pickleball adventure. At that time, I was starting to think about retirement from a very full career in Human Resources. Finding pickleball and a great group of similar minded (aka aged) folks who were also learning a new sport was a lot of fun! I've played many sports including several racquet sports which I really enjoy.

Peter and I helped organize the Calgary Pickleball Club in 2012 holding the formation meeting in our living room! I held the positions of Secretary, then President of the Calgary club until getting involved with Pickleball Alberta in 2016. I often wonder what my pickleball adventure would have been if I hadn't taken a call from Val Vollmin (Red Deer) who at that time was the President of Pickleball Canada. She convinced me to head up a small group to look into forming a professional sports organization for pickleball in Alberta. Brenda Feser was part of that group and the rest is history. It's exciting to see the growth of pickleball in Alberta and the strength and organization of our clubs who have supported the aims of Pickleball Alberta from the beginning.

I have been on the Pickleball Alberta Board since 2016; the last two years as Past President. I will continue in an advisory and consultative role to the Board and look forward to the new directions and initiatives that this very dynamic and energetic Board will undertake. I also look forward to teaching pickleball to my two, young grandsons and playing with them. Pickleball is truly a sport for all and I hope to continue playing for at least another decade!