

2022 Bios Pickleball Alberta Board Nominees and Continuing Directors

Kirk Jensen

Continuing Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2021 – 2023)



My name is Kirk Jensen (61) and I am proudly continuing 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

Continuing Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2021 – 2023)



My name is Haddow Thul (28) and I am continuing as **Vice President** of Pickleball Alberta supporting Kirk Jensen, the rest of the PA board, and the sport of pickleball in Alberta.

My pickleball journey began in 2017 where I competed in the Red Deer Provincials and saw first hand the amazing community of pickleball and the inclusivity the sport provides. Pickleball has been a staple in my life ever since and has led me

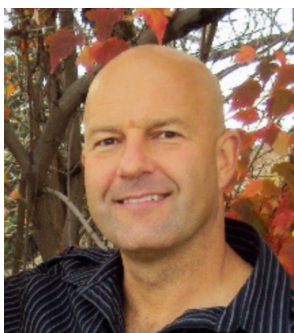
to playing multiple times a week, coaching, volunteering and playing in tournaments throughout North America.

For the past 10 years I have been working for a small pipeline integrity company as the Business Development Manager. During the past 8 years I started and completed my Bachelor of Business Administration and Minor in Innovation and Entrepreneurship at 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 Vice-President of Pickleball Alberta.

I will continue to advance Pickleball in Alberta through executing the Pickleball Alberta Strategic Plan developed by our Board, supporting various committees and the President of Pickleball Alberta.

Dwight Chalifour

Continuing Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2021 – 2023)



My name is Dwight Chalifour (52) and am continuing 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.

I will continue to 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.

Wanda Lazar

Continuing Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2021 – 2023)



I am delighted to continue for a second year as 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 18th.

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.

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.

Ilsa Wong

Continuing Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2021 – 2023)



My name is Ilsa Wong (54) and I am continuing as Director-Coaching for the Pickleball Alberta Board of Directors.

I grew up playing soccer and subsequently transitioned into coaching when I moved back to Canada after completing graduate school in Oregon. Throughout a long coaching career at the University of Lethbridge (2001-2020), I was fortunate to coach Provincial programs at Western Canada (2011) and Canada Summer Games events (2013). In 2001 I became the founding President of the Women's Soccer Association of Lethbridge and have been a member of the Alberta Soccer Association's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigeneity Committee (formerly the Women in Soccer Committee) since 2013.

Coaching has been the perfect avenue to combine my love for teaching with sport, not only in the technique of sport, but also the science of coaching. I have completed National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) sport-specific technical levels in basketball, volleyball, soccer and (hopefully) pickleball, and am a trained Learning Facilitator for multi-sport modules in the Competitions stream. This training in the science of coaching has complimented my work as a faculty member in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Lethbridge where I have Chaired the Department since 2007.

In 2015 my pickleball-addicted parents introduced me to a wonderful community of people in a 'new' sport – both of whom would enrich my life. Since then, I have played at Nationals in Canada and the US, become a Level II trained referee (Canada) and in 2021, joined the Board of Directors of the Lethbridge Pickleball Club where I organized a series of four 'Intro to Pickleball' clinics and two 'Advancing Skills' clinics during the summer. I completed the Pickleball NCCP level 1 training in November, 2021 and subsequently have been designated a Learning Facilitator, and have conducted level 1 NCCP sessions in Alberta in 2022.

The speed with which the sport of pickleball is growing brings many challenges from a coaching perspective. I see opportunities for the Director-Coaching to work towards a provincial program that contributes to that growth through alignment with a National program, a collective approach to program development, and grassroots, club-based programs for all. I look forward to playing a role in the continued success of pickleball in Alberta.

Brenda Feser

Nominee for Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2022-2024)



My name is Brenda Feser (68) and I would be happy to continue working on the board of Pickleball Alberta having previously fulfilled the roles of Membership Director (2016-2021) and most recently as Director of Junior Pickleball (2021-2022). During the very busy last term my involvements included establishing the Junior information for the PA website, a junior committee, maintaining junior demographics, Club Grants, School Grants, Youth Scholarships, as well as attending the Alberta Sport for Life and SPARC Summit, working with the Director of Coaching, familiarizing with the Long Term Athlete Development for Pickleball, and organizing the Junior Jamboree 2022.

I have been playing pickleball since 2014 when we joined the Red Deer Pickleball Club and served on the Red Deer Pickleball Club board as Director for four years (2015-2018) and President (2018-2020). In 2021 my husband, Dick, and I were privileged to co-host the Pickleball Canada National Championship along with Tournament Director Gene Vollmin.

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 ten years on the Board of Directors of Softball Alberta. In August of 2018 I completed the IPTPA Teach the Teacher and have continued taking NCCP courses most recently taking Commit to Kids for Coaches, Keeping Girls in Sport, Making Head Way in Sport, and SPARC-ing Positive Youth Development Through Sport.

I am happily married to Dick; we have three children and five grandchildren, all of whom play pickleball recreationally. This past year we have also initiated a family play group as our siblings, kids and grandkids are now getting into pickleball!

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.

Garand Jones

Nominee for Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2022-2024)

My name is Garand Jones and I am willing to put my name forward 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 1,600 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.

My name is Ilsa Wong (54) and I have agreed to be nominated for a 2-year term (starting 2021) as Director-Coaching for the Pickleball Alberta Board of Directors. I grew up playing soccer and subsequently transitioned into coaching when I moved back to Canada after completing graduate school in Oregon. Throughout a long coaching career at the University of Lethbridge (2001-2020), I was fortunate to coach Provincial programs at Western Canada (2011) and Canada Summer Games events (2013). In 2001 I became the founding President of the Women's Soccer Association of Lethbridge and have been a member of the Alberta Soccer Association's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigeneity Committee (formerly the Women in Soccer Committee) since 2013. Coaching has been the perfect avenue to combine my love for

teaching with sport, not only in the technique of sport, but also the science of coaching. I have completed National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) sport-specific technical levels in basketball, volleyball, soccer and (hopefully) pickleball, and am a trained Learning Facilitator for multi-sport modules in the Competitions stream. This training in the science of coaching has complimented my work as a faculty member in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Lethbridge where I have Chaired the Department since 2007. In 2015 my pickleball-addicted parents introduced me to a wonderful community of people in a 'new' sport – both of whom would enrich my life. Since then, I have played at Nationals in Canada and the US, become a Level II trained referee (Canada) and this year, joined the Board of Directors of the Lethbridge Pickleball Club where I organized a series of four 'Intro to Pickleball' clinics and two 'Advancing Skills' clinics during the summer. The speed with which the sport of pickleball is growing brings many challenges from a coaching perspective. With a 'blank slate' to fill, I see opportunities for the Director-Coaching to work towards a provincial program that contributes to that growth through alignment with a National program, a collective approach to program development, and grassroots, club-based programs for all. I look forward to playing a role in the continued success of pickleball in Alberta.

Dean Kroetsch

Nominee for Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2022-2024)



My name is Dean Kroetsch (59) and I am putting my name forward for a two-year term as Provincial Junior Director for Pickleball Alberta.

My wife and I live in Hanna, AB. We have four adult children, all married, and we are further blessed with five grandchildren, so far.

Over the years I've been involved in many volunteer executive committees with minor hockey, competitive swimming, dance society, etc. working on everything from fundraising to player selection to bylaw re-write committees and pretty much everything in between. I have played, coached and officiated in minor hockey, volleyball, basketball, competitive swimming, baseball and softball. I have personally raised over \$80,000.00 fundraising for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada by running half and full marathons in Canada and the United States, including the 2018 Boston Marathon.

Professionally I've served on the corporate Group Accident and Sickness Board of Governors for ATCO, both union and management Collective Bargaining teams and many task force initiatives. I've also served as a municipal Councillor for the Village of Forestburg and their various assigned portfolio responsibilities. Although now retired from full time employment, I am currently the Public Information Officer and Firefighter with the Volunteer Fire Department for Hanna, AB.

In the fall of 2018, I retired from a long and successful career as a Power Engineer with ATCO, most of which was spent in supervisory and management positions. At my Saturday evening retirement party, a fellow retiree insisted that I had no more excuses and I had to try playing Pickleball. My wife and I played the following Monday. And Tuesday. And Wednesday, Thursday and we took an IPTPA instructional clinic for beginners on the Saturday. Yes, we were hooked!

We quickly developed a passion for the game. A self-professed student of the game, I began putting together drills and skill development sessions, sharing them with our small local club. Broadening our Pickleball experience, my wife and I started playing in tournaments that first year that we began our Pickleball journey.

Competitive by nature, I currently play at a 3.5 level with the goal of competing at 4.0 in 2023. But it's the social aspect of our sport that very much appeals to me. Having played in many tournaments in Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan, the Alberta Provincial Championships, the 2021 and 2022 National Championships and the 2022 Western Regional Championships, I treasure the opportunities we've had to meet and network with such wonderful people from all across Canada.

Further to my passion for the game, I have also completed my Certification as an Instructor under both the International Pickleball Teaching Professional Association (IPTPA) and the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) here in Canada. Through my contacts I developed while coaching and instructing it became very clear to me that the youth of our Province is a very small pickleball demographic with so much untapped potential. With previous experience in minor sports coaching and officiating the different sports our children were involved in, I wanted to contribute to the development of Pickleball for kids. I became involved with Pickleball Alberta's Junior development initiative this past year working with Director Brenda Feser and the team she put together. I'm also working with Director Ilsa Wong and our Coaching Working Group on the direction of coaching in Alberta. I believe we have a very bright future for our youth and I would like to share the passion I have for our game with them, leading our youth to become the next generation of passionate pickleball players.

Murray Young

Nominee for Pickleball Alberta Board Member (2022-2024)



My name is Murray Young. I hope to advance pickleball in Alberta with service on the Board of Directors for Pickleball Alberta. So many people have contributed to my enjoyment of the game, I want to 'pay it forward' with you and others on our shared 'pickleball journey'.

From Red Deer Provincials in 2019 to being part of tournaments this year in Medicine Hat, Regina, Red Deer, and Spruce Grove, I have seen the terrific work of Pickleball Alberta volunteers, players, officials, and support staff. As a member of the Calgary and the Cochrane Pickleball clubs I enjoy programming offered by Pickleball Alberta and Pickleball Canada (coaching; officiating).

I've worked with undergraduate and graduate students at universities in Canada, the United States and several institutions in Asia. Building partnerships, creating learning pathways, and mentoring current and future leaders in business has been the focus of three decades of endeavour.

Along the way, I've been able to contribute to the work of boards of directors of several not-for-profit organizations with regional and national mandates. Those efforts focused on policy, governance, and operational effectiveness from a client perspective.

Perhaps like you, I have had many people 'invest' in me as a person, a player, and an advocate for pickleball. Join me in helping build, refine, and expand that tradition in Alberta. Together we can shape lives and legacies.