

Letter: A sports idea for South Lake Tahoe

To the community,

Sports town? Sure, but we could do better.

So, what are the fastest growing sports in America? Standup paddleboard? Nope. Mountain biking? Nope. Tennis, golf? Google it. The fastest growing team sports are rugby and lacrosse. I don't think either is played here.

They are fast and exciting, but require time, organization and a certain culture to develop.

But the fastest growing non-team sport in America is pickleball. Yes, PICKLEBALL! It also is fast and exciting. And it is also extremely social, inexpensive, and addicting. For those not familiar, it is played on a court, similar to, but smaller than tennis. The paddle or racket is also smaller and the head is solid graphite, composite, aluminum, or even wood. The ball is plastic, and hollow; a wiffleball.

Because the court is smaller, and because pickleball is almost always played as a doubles event, the amount of running is reduced. Volleys are generally longer, and can be extremely fast and furious. Pickleball plays more like a combination of tennis, badminton, and ping pong. It offers the experienced player a wide range of shot options and techniques. But pickleball has an easy learning curve, because it basically relies on hand/eye coordination and sports many people have played before. It is stimulating and invigorating and can be played by all ages. In fact, it is baby boomers and retirement communities which have caused the sport to explode. One community in Florida boasts of over a hundred courts AND long lines.

So, why is there no pickleball in South Lake Tahoe? We are the

only major community, and major recreational complex around the lake without pickleball. It is easy and inexpensive to convert unused tennis courts, or indoor hardwood courts to pickleball. Relining, even on a temporary basis, and setting up a portable pickleball net would cost under \$300. One unused tennis court, outfitted to play pickleball could host three side to side pickleball courts. This is not high finance. This is how to get people enjoying recreational facilities in South Lake Tahoe that have long sat sadly underused.

Clearly our administrators and facilities are handcuffed by underfunding. Still, people and communities all over America have shown enough interest in pickleball to support its rapid growth. Hopefully, we can do the same here by voicing our interest. We can all benefit.

Steve Szekely, South Lake Tahoe