**White Paper #3 – “Game Etiquette”**

**PICKLEBALL CULTURE, NORMS and RITUALS**

***What defines a “pickleball player”? What traits and characteristics do players share? The most obvious is “love of the game”. They just can’t seem to get enough of it. The game is unexpectedly addictive. Sharing something you love with strangers easily morphs relations into friendships. The friendly and accepting environment among players helps define the etiquette of the game, on and off the court.***

***Good etiquette starts at the very beginning of play. Players setting nets up at the start of play and tearing them down after the session is over is expected behavior. Learn how do it correctly and do your part.***

***Pickleball is played as a “doubles” game. When you take to the court your playing partner is determined by your position on the bench. Name introductions at the beginning of the game and “taping paddles” at the net at the end is a customary sign of friendliness. Other examples of GOOD ETIQUETTE include: the equitable sharing of court time, avoiding arguments over line calls or rule interpretations, waiting for play to stop before moving behind an active court, playing to the stronger player, bending over to pick up a wayward ball. These and other courteous actions taken by players demonstrate good sportsmanship and respect for all players.***

***The USA Pickleball Association (USAPA) has an established “Code-of-Conduct” guideline. The code speaks to the do’s and don’ts that go into defining the games etiquette. The code discourages unsportsmanlike conduct, behavior that endangers other player’ safety and the use of profanity. The code encourages the respect of others, fairness and honesty.***

***One example of how the code translates to on-court behavior can be found in the job of “calling the lines”. USAPA rules say “players will call the lines on their side of the court”. Etiquette says “the judgement of the call stands unchallenged and play moves on”. You just do not argue about a line call! That behavior would be unwelcome and considered poor sportsmanship. The game after all is recreational!***

***One of the challenges that we look to “Good Etiquette” to help with, is the mixing of divergent skill levels on the court. Playing skills vary from the rookie just learning the game to the seasoned player with a high level of proficiency. Mixing of “skill levels” on the court can be challenging at times.***

***Some venues address the problem with court designations (i.e. beginner court, intermediate, advanced, etc.) This approach is helpful and reduces players’ frustration. However, when court designations do not exist, “self-policing” is required. This requires an honest assessment of your playing skills and acting accordingly. If you are always the weakest player on the court, you are probably playing with the wrong skill group. You should only “play up” when invited to do so.***

***Practice good sportsmanship, adhere to the “etiquette of the game” and be confident! This will ensure that your time on the court is enjoyable and others will look forward to having you as their playing partner.***

***PLAY SAFE…BE FRIENDLY…HAVE FUN!***