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**ALERT** **TOP STORY**

## **Greensboro gets 40 pickleball courts ahead of 2025 qualifier**

**Skip Foreman**

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**G**reensboro is getting in on the national pickleball craze. The national governing body will bring a qualifying event to the city, and the city is installing new courts.



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In a presentation at Piedmont Hall, officials announced that the city purchased 40 pickleball courts to be installed at the Greensboro Complex which they say will create one of the largest portable indoor pickleball facilities in the U.S. Several courts already have been delivered, with the rest expected to arrive early next year. That will set the stage for USA Pickleball to hold its Golden Ticket qualifier for the East Coast.

“This event is a key step for athletes aiming for the national stage,” said Mike Neely, CEO of USA Pickleball, “and Greensboro’s top-tier venue makes it an ideal host. We look forward to showcasing the best talent and building a lasting partnership with this great sports city.”

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Henri Fournier, president of the Greensboro Convention and Visitors Bureau, told the audience that the qualifier is expected to have an economic impact to the city of slightly more than \$2 million.

“We are always looking for ways to make Tournament Town bigger and more dynamic,” Fournier said. “This investment allows us to recruit and host the biggest and most prestigious pickleball tournaments in the country. Hosting indoor tournaments at the Greensboro Complex will allow pickleball tournaments year-round, setting us apart from other destinations limited by outdoor courts.”

Richard Beard, president of the Greensboro Sports Foundation, also celebrated the news during the gathering.

“This is exciting to see one of the fastest, if not the fastest, growing sport in America that we’re taking it to another level and being able to capture major events when it comes to pickleball,” Beard said.

Other Golden Ticket events in 2025 are scheduled for Fort Lauderdale, Florida; San Diego; Tucson, Arizona; New York and Macon, Georgia, among other locations.

According to the aptly named website **www.pickleheads.com**, pickleball is now the fastest growing sport in the U.S. for the third consecutive year. The sport, which is a cross between table tennis, badminton and tennis, was invented by three vacationers on Bainbridge Island, Washington, near Seattle, in 1965.

The website said there are more than 36.5 million pickleball players in the country with nearly 29 percent of them between the ages of 18 and 34. Also, there are nearly 14,000 locations across the U.S. to play pickleball.

Pickleheads also says the game is easy to learn how to play and can be enjoyed well into one's later years, making it popular among seniors.

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