



April 2022

RE: Update on Gates Tennis Center's Inclusion of Pickleball

Dear Gates Tennis Center Community,

We hope you are well and enjoying the start to spring. We wanted to provide an update on some activities at the center.

Due to high continued demand for more pickleball opportunities, The Park People and Gates Tennis Center (GTC) is excited to announce the continued evolution to include pickleball. GTC will now have 16 dedicated tennis courts and 10 dedicated pickleball courts. Additionally, there will be 2 blended tennis courts that have the flexibility to be used for either a 17th or 18th tennis court; or for additional pickleball courts. The new pickleball courts will be professionally-painted pickleball courts with lights for nighttime play, and professional net systems.

The above changes were based on multiple community and statistical factors. GTC continues to strive for the optimal balance to become a great community partner and home to both sports. The Park People (the oversight and governing body of GTC) took recommendations from our management group (HSM) and received strong support from the City and the Gates Family Foundation, which aided in the decision process.

For pickleball players, the new additional courts represent opportunities for more pickleball play in general, plus the opportunity for a variety of new programming to be introduced. New programming could include instruction, league, competition, level-based, youth, families, beginners, intermediate, advanced, social, and much more.

For tennis players, it should be noted that The Park People and GTC plan to continue running a robust and vibrant tennis center. We will be working hard to “not lose a beat” in the domain of running a great tennis program; and especially GTC’s reputation of having tons of good tennis instruction, lots of special events, and loads of fun in tennis programming. No further imminent plans exist to divert any additional tennis courts into additional pickleball courts. As community demands evolve and as the years pass by, this determination of what is the optimal balance of tennis and pickleball always remain subject to re-evaluation and continued adaptation.

Based on the size of GTC and the good weather of Colorado, GTC typically offers nearly 80,000 annual hours, available for tennis play. GTC recognizes that “the loss” of two tennis courts over the past two years equates to almost 8,000 annual “lost hours” of annual tennis court availability. (Note: after being split into smaller courts, these courts turn into over 24,000 “found hours” resulting in a significant net positive of general recreation hours for the greater

Denver community.) In recognition specifically to tennis players and with respect to the valued history of tennis at the facility; GTC has made the commitment to the tennis community to thoroughly research and explore the possibilities of trying to “gain back” a strong percentage of these 8,000 “lost” tennis court hours; albeit on two fewer dedicated tennis courts.

The two concepts that are being explored are

- 1) Engaging in a capital improvement pursuit to add professional, LED tennis court lighting on tennis courts #1 through #4, located on the northeast side of the GTC facility. Historically, this bank of 4 tennis courts never received lighting. If funding can be secured, this capital improvement would add significant available hours for tennis play.
- 2) Increasing the facility’s hours of operation to either open 30 minutes earlier or close 30 minutes later; or potentially both; based on demand. This potential exploration would come at some cost to the Concessionaire group for labor and utilities. If this change is approved, this could add significant available hours for tennis play.

In all, GTC has determined it can “gain back” almost two-thirds of the “lost hours” for tennis play while also maximizing the facility in service to our community.

It is The Park People’s honor to help run an excellent, inclusive public facility that serves the growing and evolving needs of our Denver community. Thank you for your enthusiasm and care for this special shared space. Thank you for being a part of Gates.

Sincerely,
The Park People
Board of Trustees