

HSV PICKLEBALL PLAYERS LEAD THE WAY AT MID-AMERICA INDOOR PICKLEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

271 pickleball enthusiasts from 23 states met at the Bank of the Ozarks Arena in the Hot Springs Convention Center March 24 to 26, to determine winners of 261 medals that were offered in 48 divisions. Twenty-eight Hot Springs Villagers won 26 medals, including nine gold, six silver, and eleven bronze. Players from as far away as Maryland, Florida, Minnesota, and North Carolina traveled to Hot Springs to play 467 matches in the largest pickleball tournament ever held in the middle United States. 104 Arkansans competed in the tournament, followed by 41 Texans and 33 Missourians. 92 players came from an additional 20 states

Co-Directors Jim and Sandy McPherson expressed their gratitude for the over-whelming support of the Hot Springs and Hot Springs Village Pickleball Clubs. Over fifty volunteers worked together in a cooperative effort to bring "big-time pickleball" to Arkansas. "We have elevated our skills in the ten years of pickleball in this state to the level of being recognized as a force among the hotbeds of the sport in Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, and Florida, where pickleball has been played for over forty years," stated Jim McPherson. "This event was only possible because of the involvement and devotion of all the volunteers, who taped twenty pickleball courts, erected fencing around and between courts, checked in players daily, provided tournament information and sold raffle tickets, hung banners and signs, furnished snacks and drinks for twelve hours each day, photographed and videoed players, presented medals, ran errands, managed 467 referees, one for each match, and of course the end of it all, the massive cleanup," added Sandy McPherson. Running the entire tournament at the Control Desk was "The Sensational Six",

Peggy Farnsworth, Holly Harck, Twilla Tompkins, Mary Heflin, Mary Ann Stewart and Charlene Vickers, all from HSV.

A total of 26 sponsors, including the major sponsor, ProLite Sports, partnered with Hot Springs and Hot Springs Village Pickleball Clubs in support of the tournament. St Jude Children's Hospital was awarded \$3,196.42 as the benefit charity of the Raffle and the special Memorial Court, honoring deceased pickleball players. As for next year? A good possibility.

PHOTOS: (1) SUPERior 80's Bracket--L to R--Ed Smith, Warren Walters, Howard Buell, Al Stout, Dom Greco, Rex Lawler

(2) HSV PB Players; Gold Medal Winners, Front L to R: Rick Gautier, Christie Borne, Howard Buell, Al Stout, Jim McPherson, Dave Walsh, Ken Unger

Silver, Bronze Medalists and HSV Competitors, Back Row L to R: Sue Fisher, Harry Thomas, Tony Ross, David Tappe, Bub Lachel, Dian Ramsdell, Jane Riffel, Nancy Ross, Jo Goings, Betty Wilhite, Steve Wilhite, Vince Forte

Winners not pictured: Gold, Geoff Hodsdon, Silver and Bronze, Winnie Montgomery, Darrell Riffel, Ed Smith, Warren Walters

Additional Competitors: Larry Thye, Tammy Tappe, Kent Kuch, Mary Heflin, Diane Day

(3) HSV Color Guard

(4) Mid-America PB Tournament Action: Bank of the Ozarks Arena, Hot Springs Convention Center

(5) Mahaley Hemund 4th Grader and Granddaughter of Bobby and Debbie Roling, drew all the Raffle and Door Prize tickets Sunday March 26.