



THAT

PICKLEBALL MEMBER PROFILE

Number 15

By Laurie Einstein Koszuta

The Condor Takes Flight: How Pickleball Became Kim Richow's Passion

They call Kim Richow “The Condor,” a nickname earned for her unusually long arms and for how she seems to swoop across the court, claiming points with ease.

“I’m tall, she says with a laugh, and I love to poach. I think I get to the ball faster and better than most.”

It’s not unusual to see fellow players flap their arms in playful tribute after she scores. With her formidable wingspan, opponents learn that getting the ball past her is no easy task.

Pickleball became part of Kim’s life almost by accident. “I used to play tennis,” she explains. “I had stopped for a while because of several injuries, but I thought I’d give it another shot. I even had my racquet restrung. But when I tried to play again, my shoulder flared up and I had to stop. So, to keep in shape, I just went to the gym and walked, but it was boring.”



Kim (on the left) with her partner after winning the bronze medal!

Hooked From The Start

That changed in 2019 after Kim and her husband, Jerry, moved to Orlando from Boca Raton to be closer to their daughter. One day, while walking with a friend, they passed some pickleball courts. Her friend then mentioned that she had just bought paddles and encouraged Kim to give it a try. Intrigued, Kim took a lesson and was immediately hooked.

“I started looking on YouTube for more information about pickleball,” Kim noted, “and that Pickleball Guy, Kyle Koszuta, always kept popping up. I liked the graphics and the way the information was presented. I



Kim with pro Augie Ge

just started looking for him because he matched my style and way of thinking. And then when he started the pickleball school, I joined as soon as I could.”

Building A Drill Group

What began as a personal interest soon became a passion for teaching and organizing others. “I started a small drill group, and at first, the others thought I was being silly,” she says.

“They thought I was too into it. I’d say, ‘Did you see that match on TV?’ They’d say, ‘Where do you even *watch* pickleball?’ I’d send them videos from YouTube—drills, warm-ups, pro matches. When I’d get to the courts, I would stretch, do shuffle steps and lunges, and they’d roll their eyes. But now they’re into it. They see how I play and can easily get to the ball. They realize there’s a method to my madness.”

The group meets weekly on rented courts in a park in Oviedo, Florida. What started with six players has since doubled, with new people eager to join, but Kim feels that the small group setting is easier to work with. “We’ve collected nets, ball machines, hoppers, barriers, targets, and coordinated who brings what to the sessions. I ask people what they want to work on the next time we meet, and then I scour the internet for drill ideas.”

Kim’s dedication extends beyond her local court. She has introduced many people to the sport, including her 74-year-old sister in Wisconsin and a friend on Long Island, who are now both regular players.

A personal interest became a passion for teaching.

Kim Richow

Noble Competitor and Teaching Others



Kim doesn't just play recreational games; she also competes at a 3.5 level in tournaments. While early nerves were challenging, she's learned to embrace competition and has collected gold, silver, and bronze medals. "Tournaments are good for me," she says. "I get anxious, but it's getting better."

She's taken an online community instructor course and is now considering formal certification. "I used to think it was silly to get certified because I'm not looking for a job. But after reading an article recently, I thought, 'Why not? I'm

already doing the work."

Her determination is even more impressive given some physical challenges she has faced: a spinal fusion, pins in her ankle and thumb, and surgeries on both shoulders. "I feel worse when I don't play," she says. "Playing keeps me going."

Pickleball has even worked its way into her home life. "At night, my husband asks what I'm doing on my iPad. I tell him I'm watching 'porn'—then flip it around and show him the pickleball videos," she laughs. "Pickleball porn."

"At one time, Kim says, "I played pickleball to supplement my gym workouts. Now I go to the gym to supplement my pickleball. I just love it."

