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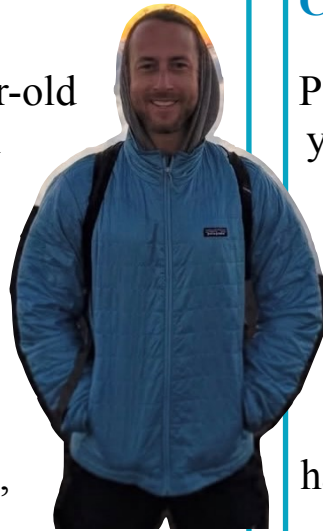
PICKLEBALL MEMBER PROFILE

Number 22

By Laurie Einstein Koszuta

For Ricky Theriault, Pickleball + Family Go Together

For thirty-seven-year-old Ricky Theriault, an all-time favorite place to travel and play pickleball was in Hawaii, at Waikiki Beach. When he was done playing, he could literally step off the court, walk to the beach, and cool off in the Pacific Ocean.



But playing at such exotic locations is not Ricky's pickleball origin story. Growing up in Connecticut, he was a wrestler and varsity singles tennis player in high school. In college, he picked up his racquet occasionally and played, but the urge to continue didn't last long. "I probably didn't play for a good ten years," he says.

About a decade ago, Ricky moved to St. Petersburg, Florida where he and his family had visited relatives when he was younger. For Ricky, warm weather was always a big attraction.

Catching the Bug

Pickleball entered the picture a few years ago on a trip to visit his parents in Maine, where they now reside.

They were completely obsessed with the game, playing five to six days a week, and they urged him to give it a try. "They kept telling me I would like it, and they were right. We had a blast."

Initially, the games were casual. Ricky would play once and then go months without picking up a paddle. "I didn't have the bug yet," he laughed. Becoming obsessed happened suddenly.



A Pickleball Hotbed



According to Ricky, St. Petersburg is a hotbed for all things pickleball. “It is often ranked among the top U.S. cities for courts per capita,” he says. “They just keep converting tennis courts because the demand is so high. There’s real energy here with paddle companies, new clubs, and great open play.”

That environment turned him from a casual player into a regular. “People ask how long I’ve been playing,” he said and my answer is about two or three years because that’s when I went from once in a while to four or five times a week.”

Beyond Open Play

For a while, open play was enough. But like many players, Ricky eventually hit a ceiling. “I had to admit that if I wanted to get better, I couldn’t just play games.”

That’s when he discovered Kyle Koszuta, better known as *That Pickleball Guy*. After watching his videos, Ricky joined *That Pickleball School* four months ago. “The videos pushed me into real drilling. Now I’m slowly increasing drill days versus open play.” He recruits partners at local clubs and has already seen results.

Even doubles, once his least favorite part of tennis, has become a highlight of pickleball. “It’s more of a chess match now, using good communication, patterns, and earning the kitchen.”



Snowboarding!

The Traveling Pickleballer

“I manage two Airbnbs in Florida and travel whenever I can because I am single,” Ricky says. “And I love to play wherever I go, including when I visit my parents in Maine.”

Ricky loves the warm weather of Florida, but he says if he is going to be cold, he might as well spend time snowboarding. Last winter, he spent a month in Salt Lake City, where he snowboarded in the mornings and played indoor pickleball in the afternoon.



Ricky with his mom and dad

sport, and that is his family. His parents now spend about six months as snowbirds in Clearwater, just across the bay. “That’s my favorite part, honestly. We actually play a sport together. It keeps them active and sharp, and it keeps us close.”



But Ricky also knows the frustrations of finding places to play in new cities. Things such as outdated Facebook posts, inaccurate park websites, and inconsistent information is common. To address this, he launched *The Traveling Pickleballer* in March, a free online group on Skool.com where players share reliable information about courts, communities, and connections.

“I want players to know where they can go, where they can play, and what level they can expect,” he says. “Sometimes it’s me connecting visitors to locals. Other times, members simply post their city and best times to play. It’s small, but it’s real.”

Family at the Center

Ricky never expected to build a life around a 20-by-44-foot asphalt rectangle. But at its center is something more important than