

## Hank Miller - Nov. 2023 - The Pickleball Noise Problem

<https://www.hankmillerteam.com/blog/the-pickleball-noise-problem.html>

### The Pickleball Noise Problem

Unlike tennis, the pop pop pop pop sound from a pickleball court cuts into the white noise of general activity. Combine that with the number of people involved, longer hours of play and often, the group activity surrounding games and it's easy to see how the increased noise can become grating. Toss in the sporadic ambulance runs as well, pickleball injuries are through the roof. It's a combination of age and mindset - the brain says "dive" and the Achilles says "snap". The game is not the same as tennis...

The paddles used in pickleball are made of rigid materials like wood or composite, and the balls are hard plastic with holes. When the ball is struck, it produces a distinctive and sharp "pop" sound. This sound tends to be higher in pitch and can be more jarring to the ear, contributing to its perception as being louder. The sound can echo off hard surfaces like buildings and fences, amplifying the noise level

The frequency of ball strikes in pickleball is typically higher than in tennis, leading to more constant noise.

The sound of a pickleball being hit by a paddle typically ranges from about 65 to 75 decibels. The distinct "pop" sound of the pickleball is not just about volume; it's also higher in pitch, which can make it more noticeable and potentially more disturbing, especially in a repetitive play context.

The sound of a tennis ball being hit is often below 60 decibels. Rubber ball and strung rackets avoid the hard "pop". The lower pitch and less frequent striking of the ball in tennis contribute to its quieter perception.

Consider the mix of multiple courts, hours and hours of play and the associated screams associated with the joy of victory and the agony of defeat (de feet too)...

### Pickleball Can Impact Home Value

Some home owners living in close proximity to parks, community rec facilities or subdivision amenities are beginning to find this pop pop pop annoying. Complaints are on the rise and as the sport grows, efforts are being made to mitigate the noise. Living in close proximity to community amenities or recreation facilities is a double edged sword and one that home buyers need to consider. While it might be appealing to walk to the community courts or pool, the increased activity can be considered an adverse impact on value and appeal. This is called external obsolescence and it's an adverse impact on value due to something from the area that cannot be corrected - train tracks, busy roads, airports, commercial uses, and more. Homes impacted by noise from the development pool, playground and facilities, increased activity, maintenance activities, lights on after hours and similar things typically sell for less than comparable homes not similarly impacted. Usually the homes with some type of external influence are listed for less to reflect this, however in tight markets many buyers will overlook those factors. Priorities are different for each buyer.

This isn't unique to pickleball and the sport isn't breaking any new ground here. Before the rise of the sport, common complaints to homeowner associations revolved around (and still do) the "thump thump thump" of basketball, the noise from pools and playgrounds, and even language and behavioral issues.

With the rise of pickleball, communities are considering a number of options to reduce the impact on nearby residents. These are unique to each situation but primarily include reduced hours of play and sound barriers. The sport is exploring different materials for balls and paddles, they want to maintain both the game and address issues due to the rise in popularity. The takeaway here is that any buyer needs to evaluate all aspects of a potential home purchase. Take the time to think things through, the last two years have seen an incredible amount of buyer's remorse - don't add to that number.

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