

## Ambassador, Venice - Sarasota County - Jack Beck

### Jack Beck – Ambassador of Sarasota County, Florida



Jack Beck is the Sarasota County, FL, Ambassador for the USAPA. His mission: "grow pickleball". Pickleball is catching on in Sarasota and Venice in a big way thanks to Beck.

Jack (front row -right) says it all started in January, 2008. With a great group of experienced players like John Haler, Wayne and Betty Tucker, Ron Graf, Jim Whyatt, Russ Cuccia and many others, they gave demonstrations and instructed

players on Mondays. With publicity they received from the local Venice paper, they worked with over 180 individuals, sold 90 plus paddles and dozens of balls. Some people were already experienced players and came with paddles in hand looking for someone to play with.

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The Sarasota Department of Parks and Recreation was very helpful to this emerging club and they've made the tennis courts at Raymond Foxworthy Park available for pickleball play. After only two demonstrations with taped lines on the tennis courts, the Parks and Recreation department decided to paint permanent lines and, at a recent pickleball exhibition, 46 eager participants showed up to play, prompting Beck to say, "Hopefully, if we build it, they will come."

Jack Beck traverses the 20-by-40-foot court, bellowing instructions and encouragement to his new recruits: "You have to adjust. It's a paddle, not a racket." It is through Jack's hard work and dedication to the game of pickleball that the game has taken off in the Sarasota and Venice area.

Today, there are over 30 players who come during the week to play pickleball with their "new" friends. Jack states, "what a sight it is to see a mother and daughter team play a father and son duo in this great game of pickleball.

Jack Beck did build it in the Sarasota and Venice area and they came.