

RICHMOND – “This is a fantastic facility for Pickleball.”

Ben Johns, the world’s number one ranked singles, doubles and mixed doubles player by the **Pro Pickleball Association**, lavished praise on the new Pickleball courts featured at the new **Belvedere Club** at 1751 Savage Road. The American was the special guest for a pre-opening event for the first 100 family founding members at the club, which is anticipating a September opening.

“I’ve played all over the world, and the Belvedere Club is one of the finest facilities I’ve seen yet,” says Johns, who lives in Austin, Texas. “Everything from the layout of the eight indoor courts, the surface itself, the inter-court barriers and the massive video screen is first class. As the first private family sports club built in Vancouver in 60 years, Belvedere is going to be a signature location to play Pickleball in B.C.”

The **Association of Pickleball Professionals** states that over 36.5 million people play pickleball globally. **Pickleball Canada** estimates there are over 350,000 players in the country.

“Pickleball is one of the world’s fastest growing sports, and it’s really taken Canada by storm,” states Johns. “It’s catching up very quickly.” Johns played a series of fun games against local Pickleball players to highlight the event, which featured fine dining in the Gold Lounge and the first pizzas produced in the new ovens that just arrived from Italy.

Belvedere has a new name, transforming from the Greater Vancouver Sports Club, and a new logo that plays tribute to the six racquet and other sports to be played on site, as well as the arts, activities and dining options – accented by the Chinese symbol for longevity.

Belvedere offers over 100,000 square feet of indoor facilities, including 21 courts for Pickleball, Padel, Badminton and Squash, all designed for players and their families to enjoy together.

It also includes playing surfaces for other racquet sports: Red Ball Tennis and Ping Pong, as well as multi-purpose space for Futsal, Basketball and Volleyball. Another section on the site will include a fitness centre.

A major **Monarch Academy Preparatory Daycare**, designed to place graduates at the front of the line for private educational institutions once they come of age, will also be on site. These amenities will also be used by students with access to all the club's 25 sports.

The sports mall property is already home to **Marina's Swim School** and **Clip'n Climb**, used by thousands of kids to learn how to swim and climb. Members will also have food services available at the club, including a café, food truck, restaurant and Gold Lounge. Members choose their sport and no longer will players have to take a number and wait for available time on community courts or recreational centres, as membership guarantees 9 assured hours of shared court time per week.

Vancouver Island native **Glenn Cho** is Managing Partner of Belvedere Club for a group of private investors whose dream has transformed the former industrial park factory property a block from the north arm of the Fraser River into a dynamic and affordable oasis for families.

"We believe that our club idea with all the different sports that members can choose from is going to be well received," states Cho. "We've been really pleased with the level of interest shown in what we're building here so far, without even starting a marketing campaign, given that we're still many months away from having everything open."

Of the major comparable sports clubs in the lower mainland, the Arbutus Club is the most recently built, back in 1964. Hollyburn was completed in 1958, and Capilano in 1952. With the Richmond Golf and Country Club and Vancouver Lawn Tennis Club both started around a century ago, Belvedere is the first new, major sports club in 60 years.

Designed as a member-only club, the initiation fee for Belvedere Club is only \$1,500, with monthly dues of \$255. Cho says "This is the most affordable option in the lower mainland by far." For that, each family of four is guaranteed a total of 9 hours to share each week on the court of their choice, every week of the year. This is referred to as "6-49", as it breaks the cost of court time down to \$6.49 per player each hour. Only 2,500 member families will be admitted.

For more information, contact Cho through www.belvedereclub.ca

