

CANADIAN RIVALRY

Making the Covid-Time Pass

by CAREY LOW



Up north at the Kingsway Platform Tennis Club in Toronto, Canada, we have only recently come out of full Covid-19 lockdown. For a while, there was no play at all. Then we were allowed to play singles, which is an entirely different sport and frankly not that appealing. As the snow started to fly, we were allowed to play doubles again—outdoor tennis and platform tennis were deemed acceptable by the local public health agency. Given the plunging temperatures and the fact that platform tennis flies so far below the radar, I am sure the politicians didn't expect much uptake, but of course, the paddle courts were immediately packed. Outdoor tennis on icy courts with snowbanks on the sidelines, not so much.

KEEPING SCORE

One caveat to the loosening Covid-19 restrictions was that we were not allowed to offer organized play, so leagues were suspended until this past September. If you wanted a match, you arranged it yourself. Throughout all of this, three longtime friends and I managed to play once a week as we have for many, many years. We would switch partners each set and drink a few beers afterward, blissfully unaware of the scores. As we approached January 2021, with no end in sight to the pandemic restrictions, we had another thought. What if we set teams for the entire calendar year, kept track of sets won and lost for the entire year, and declare the winner on December 31, 2021? Thus began our year-long competition.

RULES-ISH

There were really no rules, but occasionally we made them up as we went. For whatever reason, we played on the most remote court at the club, which is court 5, so we referred to ourselves and our ongoing match as Court 5. If we needed to find a sub, the scores don't count towards the total. We played FBI in the first set, sometimes in the second, third, and fourth set, and always in the fifth set if we made it that far. We preferred to have music playing courtside. We had Hawaiian shirt day once. We even

made our own swag, as evidenced with the KPTC baseball hats.

LEADERBOARD

Here is the most fascinating part of the ongoing match. At the end of November, the score was Tim Hunter/Scott Calderwood 109 and Mike Page/Carey Low 107. Over the course of the entire year, neither team has been more than three sets ahead. The leaderboard changes every other week, and it is rare to have a set where a team walks away with an easy win. Had we counted tiebreakers, I would bet it was in the 40-50 range. It would be inappropriate to say the battle 'rages' on, given there isn't much rage in any of our games, but the battle continues, and the laughs remain at a fever pitch. «»

This magazine went to print before the Court 5 rivalry was completed. Look for final results posted on the APTA website and social media in early January.



CAREY LOW has been an avid paddle player for over 40 years and has served on the Kingsway Platform Tennis Club executive board for 11 years in various roles. Follow him @paddlebabyyeah on Instagram!

