

**SPORTS****Guess what's coming, Memphis? More pickleball!**

By [Geoff Calkins](#), Daily Memphian

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**Adam Clay and Jacob Eliason staged pop-up pickleball parties across Memphis last year.** (Courtesy Pickleball 901)

Good news for all you totally obsessed Memphis pickleball players: Pickleball is coming to the Memphis Sports and Events Center in Liberty Park.

The courts will debut with a kickoff party at the events center on Sunday, March 24.

“We’re starting with six courts,” said Adam Clay, one of the co-founders of Pickleball 901. “But we could do 50. We’ll see what the demand looks like and go from there.”

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If history is any guide, the demand will be crazy. It's pickleball, after all, the sport that inspired Clay to quit his job in software sales.

Last year, Clay and his partner, Jakob Eliason, launched a series of pickleball pop-up parties around town. They staged events at Grind City Brewing, Wiseacre Brewing, Memphis Made Brewing and Crosstown Brewery. They even threw a pickleball party on Beale Street.

"It was an incredible ride," Clay said. "But then we were, honestly, just figuring it out. Now we're professionals. We have much better courts, the courts that they use in tournament play. This is going to be better in every way."

The summer series will return with Orion Federal Credit Union as the presenting sponsor. But this year, each event will stretch over three days. The series will kick off at the Orion 5K on Saturday, May 11, and will include a Memorial Day event at the pavilion in Tom Lee Park.



**Adam Clay**  
(Courtesy Pickleball 901)



**Six pickleball courts will debut at the Memphis Sports and Events Center in Liberty Park on Sunday, March 24.**  
(Courtesy Pickleball 901)

In the meantime, Clay and Eliason will be opening a string of pickleball pop-up clubs in existing, large, empty — or underutilized — buildings around town.

The Memphis Sports and Events Center will be the first such site. But more are on the way, including pop-up clubs in Cordova and Collierville.

“Long term, it is possible these will be transitioned into permanent pickleball facilities,” Clay said. “But as soon as they open, the playing experience will meet the highest standard of pickleball players.”

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In addition to all that, Pickleball 901 continues to host corporate events across the country under its national brand, Pickleball Pop-Ups.

“Next month, we’re doing an event at a tech conference in Las Vegas,” Clay said. “We’ll be at Mandalay Bay, in the exhibit hall. And we’ve got more big news coming. We are Memphis first and foremost — but we’re doing business outside of Memphis, everywhere.”

**TOPICS**

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ADAM CLAY

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### **Geoff Calkins**

Geoff Calkins has been chronicling Memphis and Memphis sports for more than two decades. He is host of "The Geoff Calkins Show" from 9-11 a.m. M-F on 92.9 FM. Calkins has been named the best sports columnist in the country five times by the Associated Press sports editors, but still figures his best columns are about the people who make Memphis what it is.