

• British tennis legend Annabel Croft takes her game to the fastest-growing sports in Britain

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NEWS RELEASE

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Annabel Croft named ambassador of Hurlands Pickleball & Padel Club

Former British tennis number one and Wimbledon broadcaster Annabel Croft has been appointed ambassador of Hurlands Pickleball & Padel Club, in Farnham, Surrey, joining the club to support two of the fastest-growing sports in the country, and the health and well-being benefits associated with staying active through sport.

The appointment, announced today, will see Croft working with Hurlands to help introduce pickleball and padel to new audiences; to spotlight the role racket sports can play in everyday fitness, mobility and mental well-being, and support Hurlands as it continues to grow its presence across southeast England.

Pickleball and padel are experiencing exponential growth in the UK, attracting both regular and returning racket sport players, as well as families and complete newcomers.

Annabel said: "Pickleball and padel are doing something remarkable – they're helping to bring people into racket sports; the health and well-being benefits are real, but so is the simple fact that they're great fun. Hurlands has built something genuinely special here, and I'm delighted to be joining as ambassador to help more people discover what these sports can do for them."

Philip Newborough, chairman of Hurlands Pickleball & Padel Club, said: "Having Annabel join us as ambassador is a huge moment for Hurlands. She's been at the heart of British racquet sports for decades, and her belief in what pickleball and padel can offer, for fitness, for wellbeing, and for community, is exactly what we've built this club around.

"We created Hurlands as a place to play and belong, with everything from premium courts to health, fitness and sports therapy under one roof. Annabel's voice helps us reach many more people who'd love these sports if only they knew where to start," he added.

Hurlands Pickleball & Padel Club is the UK's largest indoor pickleball and padel venue, with nine indoor pickleball courts and five padel courts alongside a dedicated health and fitness offering, sports therapy, and restaurant & café. The club is built around social play, expert coaching and a welcoming community for players of every level.

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Notes to editors

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About Hurlands Pickleball & Padel Club

Hurlands is a premium indoor pickleball and padel venue offering nine pickleball courts, five padel courts, a yoga and pilates studio, a fitness room, sports therapy, a restaurant and a courtside café.

The club hosts social play, coaching, leagues, holiday camps, school partnerships and corporate events, with membership open to all and many activities accessible to non-members. More information at

Media:



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About Annabel Croft

Annabel Croft is a former British number one tennis player, broadcaster and presenter. At just 15, she became the youngest Briton in nearly 100 years to play in the Wimbledon main draw, before later becoming one of the nation's most loved tennis broadcasters. She has been a familiar voice in British tennis coverage for more than three decades, covering major tournaments including Wimbledon, the US Open and Roland Garros.

Why Pickleball and Padel can be good for you

Pickleball and Padel are attracting growing interest not just as a sport, but as a potential contributor to cognitive wellness. Proponents suggest the games' combination of physical, mental and social demands may offer the following brain health advantages:

- **Neuroplasticity:** The fast reflexes, split-second decision-making and constantly shifting gameplay involved in pickleball and padel are thought to challenge the brain in ways that may support its ability to adapt, learn and form new connections.
- **Social connection:** As a doubles-friendly, community-oriented sport, pickleball and padel encourage regular, meaningful interaction, which is widely associated with reduced stress and protection against cognitive decline.
- **Cognitive engagement:** Tracking the ball, anticipating opponents' shots and coordinating with a partner are believed to activate areas of the brain associated with focus, memory and executive function, going beyond the benefits of repetitive physical exercise.
- **Stress reduction:** Like other forms of physical activity, pickleball and padel are thought to increase endorphin levels and lower cortisol, potentially improving mood and supporting long-term mental wellbeing.
- **Cardiovascular benefit:** As an aerobic activity, pickleball and padel get the heart pumping, which may increase blood flow and oxygen delivery to the brain, with potential benefits for cognitive function and memory.

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