

A Supreme Court for Asheville

by David Langdon

If the supreme lawn bowling court in the country is now in Asheville, the “chief justice” might just be OLLI Lawn Bowling instructor Stan Glickman. This is the story of the Asheville Lawn Bowling Club, that amazing, world-class lawn bowling court and how you could take a College for Seniors class this spring at OLLI to play on the court while Stan teaches you how to lawn bowl.

A little history first: Back in 1994, Jack and Nicki Benatan, a couple familiar with lawn bowling, were returning from South Africa to discover that Carrier Park in Asheville was being developed into a sports complex. They set about convincing city officials to build a lawn bowling court because it would satisfy the needs of the burgeoning retirement community for a low-impact, fun sport. In 1998 a 110' square court was completed. Now fast forward to the fall of 2018 when the Asheville Lawn Bowling Club upgraded that old, small court to a state-of-the-art 120' square, artificially surfaced court through the efforts of City of Asheville Parks and Recreation department's Susan Travis and current Asheville Lawn Bowling Club president Bill Stoermer.

“How do you play the game?” you ask. Lawn bowling is played with four bowls individually or on teams of two or four players. At the risk of stealing Stan’s thunder, the bowls are solid and round on one side but tapered on the opposite side. This allows them to travel in a gentle curve. The object of the game is to get a bowl (think ball) closest to a little white marker ball called a “jack.” The rink (think lane) is 14’ wide and 120’ long. This, of course, takes a lot of finesse and is the subject of Stan Glickman’s spring session CFS class on lawn bowling. It really is a lot of fun and great for eye-hand coordination.

Glickman has been involved with the Asheville Lawn Bowling Club for 10 years and is a past president. He retired from the U. S. Postal Service. He suggests that if you can master the intricacies of the sport you might want to get competitive when the club hosts a regional tournament in early September with clubs from Williamsburg, VA, Pinehurst, NC and Pittsburgh, PA. The new world-class lawn bowling surface will make Asheville very desirable for hosting regional and even national tournaments. Imagine what you could do if you only knew how to lawn bowl through a College For Seniors class at OLLI.