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TrendsCape Cod Couple Blame Pickleball Court for Failure To Sell Their Home: How the Popular Sport Could Affect a Sale

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While America’s ubiquitous pickleball craze seems to be serving up rabid devotion, there is one well-defined demographic that is souring on the sport: people who live near pickleball courts.

A growing number of homeowners across the country are complaining that the pop, pop, pop of pickleballs (and the occasional cursing of its players) is not only annoying, but also undermining their real estate values and ability to sell their homes.

Home sellers in Cape Cod’s Sagamore Beach claim they’ve been unable to unload their property for seven months—despite several price reductions—due to noise from the private club pickleball courts that border their backyard. They’ve hired a lawyer to fight their case and close the court until their house is sold.

“It clearly qualifies as a nuisance sound” and is “not something that can be mitigated,” their attorney told the Boston Globe.

In San Francisco, six courts at Presidio Wall Playground were shut down in 2023 after a wealthy couple living nearby filed a petition claiming the “endless racket” was “grating,” threatened native ecosystems, and dragged down home values. (Ironically, their 106-year-old home had its own private pickleball court, and was sold since then for \$24 million.)

Pickleball drama has reached such dramatic heights that in Needham, MA, vandals took justice into their own hands, slashing the nets and throwing them out of the courts, prompting residents to claim, “It’s a war.”

How pickleball courts affect home values

Do pickleball courts actually drag down home values? Some say it could go either way, depending on the buyer.

“Noisy nearby attractions, such as a pickleball court or a bar or restaurant, may drive away some noise-sensitive homebuyers,” says Realtor.com senior economist Hannah Jones. “However, other home shoppers may be excited to be close to these lively hubs of activity. Proximity to buzzy gathering points may have some positive or negative impact on home values depending on the type of attraction, opening hours, and other factors.

“Overall,” she concludes, “it is likely that nearby attractions, such as a pickleball court, will skew a home’s appeal to certain types of buyers, just like any other amenity.”

Real estate agents agree that pickleball issues have been cropping up more frequently as the sport’s popularity has soared.

“Homes that find themselves suddenly next to a court have not only caused problems between neighbors, but have actually motivated many people to want to move,” says Josh Judge of Verani Realty, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices in New Hampshire.

Judge has had pickleball problems with buyers, too.

“I had a client who was in love with a home from the listing,” Judge recalls. “But when we got there and they saw the court, they instantly ruled it out and didn’t even want to go inside and check out the house.”

Proximity to pickleball courts even affects Judge’s personal life.

“This has also caused problems with homes next to the club where I work out,” he says. “The neighbors to the club, I hear, have been complaining about the noise.”

If complaints and messy lawsuits ensue, he fears that the courts could have a negative impact on nearby residents as well as the gym and its members.

Solutions for pickleball noise

As pickleball and its ensuing noise problems become more prevalent, some solutions have been found, too.

In 2022, the city of Braintree, MA, spent \$450,000 on new pickleball courts. However, once they were completed, nearby residents complained about the noise. So the town approved an additional \$22,000 budget to install acoustic panels to mitigate the sound.

Other solutions have involved limiting play to certain days and times, or moving courts to spots where nearby residents will not be affected.

Still, not everyone is irked by the pernicious pickleball racket. Las Vegas resident Sandy Selig, who lives in a house right next to her community's pickleball courts, says that while the din can be distracting at times, she doesn't really mind it.

Then again, she's a major pickleball fan herself who enjoys having a court nearby.

"Sometimes when I hear it, it makes me want to get out there and play," she admits. "But most of the time, I find it soothing to hear a sound that reminds me of something I love."