



From left, junior Brody Troth rallies a pickleball while junior Kaden Massie watches his team as their coach on Feb. 12 at Southern Boone High School. Brody was confident going into finals, where they competed against the team Saratoga. "They have to beat us twice, it's barbecue chicken from there," Brody said.

Teamwork and rivalry:

Southern Boone hosts inaugural Courtwarming pickleball tournament

BY NOAH SYMES • Boone County Journal

Friends, teams, rivalries and school spirit filled the Southern Boone High School gym this week for a pickleball tournament, this year's Courtwarming fundraiser. Ten two-player teams, many in costume, faced off in a double elimination bracket for a chance at a \$50 prize, trophies and — of course — bragging rights.

The tournament was hosted by the Southern Boone High School Student Council. Funds raised from the tournament's entry fees went to help cover the cost of Courtwarming and senior student council scholarships.

Student council adviser Melissa Duckett said it's the first year hosting a pickleball tournament — a break from tradition. In previous years, the student council hosted a dodgeball tournament for Courtwarming but were forced to pivot after injuries.

"There was definitely a craving and a want from the student body to come up with something," Duckett said. "The turn out for maybe the audience

hasn't been as big as we've had in the past, but as far as teams signed up, this is pretty on par with when we had started dodgeball."

Duckett said she isn't discouraged by the lack of audience attendance, and as the tournament becomes more established, more people will show up.

Players were encouraged to dress in costumes and themes with their teammates.

Seniors Lainie Scheer and Sadie Ahern entered the tournament dressed in outfits inspired by the movie and musical "Wicked," — Lainie in all pink for Glinda, and Sadie in all green for Elphaba.

"I love green, she loves pink, and we were like, we look like Elphaba and Glinda," Sadie said. "We're best friends, so we felt like we embodied them well."

Other teams joined in, each coming up with their own themes or matching outfits, such as chefs or senior citizens, while other students coordinated with matching colors, brands and

styles of clothing.

Collectively known as "The Pink Panthers," juniors Brody Troth and Zach DeHaas, along with their coach junior Kaden Massie, donned neon pink to take over the tournament.

"We thought of a color — pink — and then we just thought of Pink Panther, kind of sneaky," Brody said.

Their strategy for winning was simple, yet effective.

"Just hit the ball hard, that's all you have to do," Zach said.

While Zach and Brody focused on hitting the ball, their coach Kaden focused on his whiteboard, scouting other players and giving tips to his team throughout their matches.

"I'm just looking for their flaws," Kaden said of the other teams' players.

Through a combination of confidence, strategy and hitting the ball pretty hard, the Pink Panthers took home the cash, the trophies and the bragging rights, placing first and going undefeated in the Courtwarming Pickleball Tournament.



From left, seniors Jackson Woodward and Tate Muzzey reach for a pickleball on Feb. 12 at Southern Boone High School. Jackson and Tate, collectively known as team "Saratoga," finished second.



Senior Lainie Scheer reacts to a missed hit on Feb. 12 at Southern Boone High School. "I'm really proud of the way we played because we are not pickleball players," said Sadie Ahern, Lainie's teammate.



Junior Kaden Massie coaches the Pink Panthers during the pickleball tournament on Feb. 12 at Southern Boone High School.



From left seniors Lainie Scheer and Sadie Ahren compete in the Courtwarming pickleball tournament on Feb. 12 at Southern Boone High School. Their team outfits were inspired by Glinda and Elphaba from "Wicked."