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Rob Girard quits as GF hoops coach; shifts to pickleball

Special to The Chronicle

Glens Falls boys basketball coach **Rob Girard**, fresh off a state title, announced Friday he will leave hoops to coach pickleball instead.

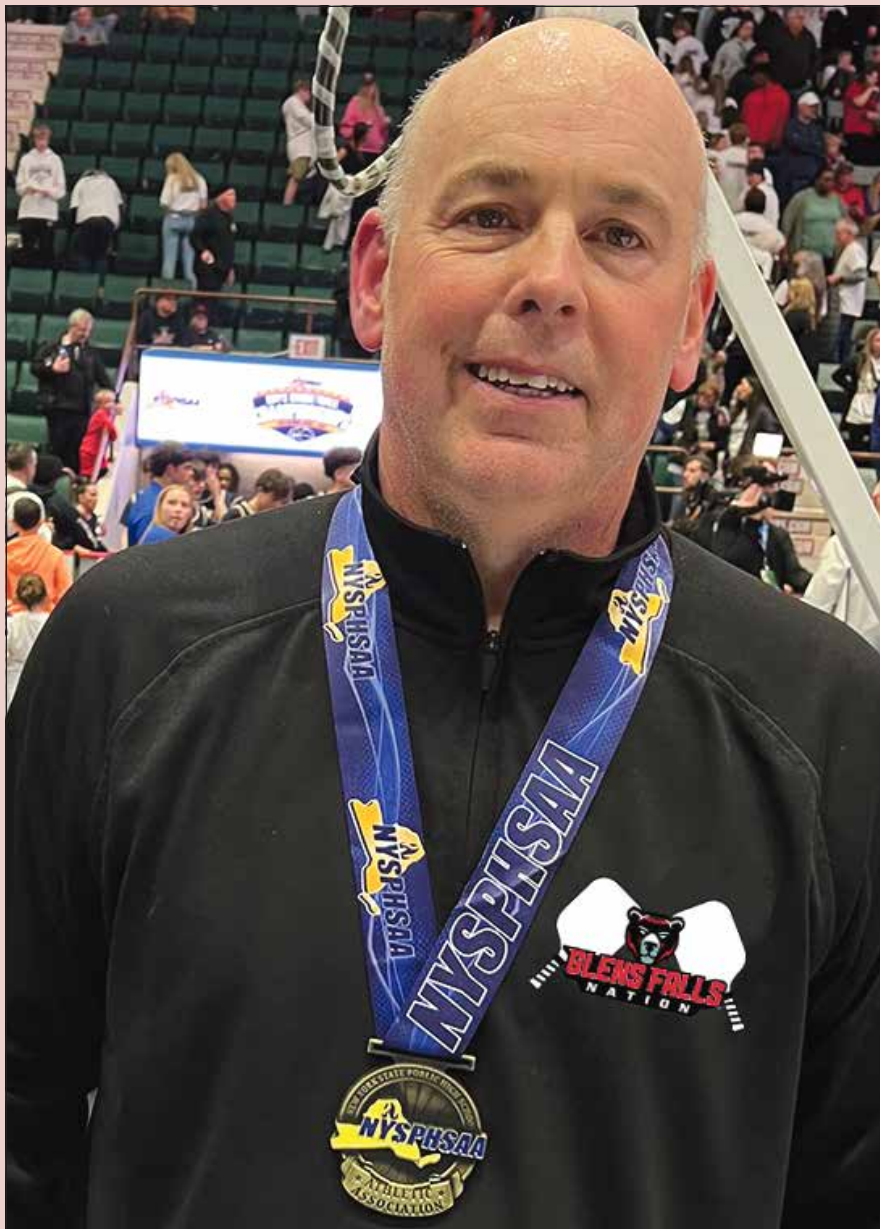
"It's definitely not a choice I took lightly," Coach Girard told *The Chronicle*. "I love basketball. I always will. The game has been great to me. I just think it's time for a new chapter. And **pickleball's time is now.**"

Coach Girard said that **all of Glens Falls' returning basketball starters will make the switch to pickleball** as well. "It came down to the fact **they really want to win another state championship in front of the hometown fans,**" Girard said. "This is their chance to replicate it."

Girard will coach the girls pickleball team too.

Next March the Cool Insuring Arena will host the first-ever Vlasic Classic Boys and Girls State Pickleball Championships on the same weekend that Binghamton will host the boy hoops state tourney. (See adjacent article.)

Can pickleball's new Vlasic Classic match the attendance mark of 4,165 who saw Glens



Players will join him; hope to win title when Cool Arena hosts NYS tourney next March

Falls win the state hoops final at the Cool?

"Easily," Girard said. "**I actually expect a turnout well above that. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in America** for the past five years. There's no bigger draw."

After winning the state hoops title, **several of the triumphant Black Bears booked a pickleball court at the Glens Falls YMCA** the next morning. Kellen Driscoll and Aiden Prunty played against Oscar Lilac and Brody Holcomb. "They told me afterwards, 'Coach, that was the most fun we've ever had,'" Girard said.

"Pickleball is like that. It just puts a smile on your face. That fun factor is so big for me. It's not as taxing of a sport either. Way better on the kids' knees. I think that's why the senior citizens like it so much." Girard said he's seen Driscoll practicing his backhand slice against the gym wall at school before classes. "He could be a pickleball MVP like he is a basketball MVP."



CDTA to bring amphibious buses to Lake George, Glen Lake, more

"We're not just taking you to Lake George, we're taking you on Lake George," announced CDTA, the Capital District Transportation Authority, which absorbed Greater Glens Falls Transit last year.

"Our amphibious bus stops at every island on the lake and at The Algonquin and Blue Water Manor restaurants. On Glen Lake we stop at The Docksider.

"Tell us where to go. Our motto is Innovation Beyond Transportation. All aboard!"

GF Pickleball World Open aims to draw thousands, celebs

Not only has Glens Falls landed the first-ever New York State High School Pickleball Championships next March, **the Civic Center Coalition** — with \$6-million in Occupancy Tax funding — **will launch the World Pickleball Open**, a monthlong April 2025 tourney expected to draw players, fans & celebrities by the thousands.

An organizer who asked not to be identified, said, "**Mick Jagger, Charles Barkley, John Cena, Roger Federer, Tiger Woods, Barack Obama and Jennifer Lawrence** will all be invited if we have their addresses."

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