

## **SPORTS:** *Adult dodgeball leagues !*

There's no doubt that the current adult dodgeball movement actively tries to tap into a player's inner child. "You kicked ass in high school," reads the website of **Hot Shots Volleyball Club** in Rochester, NY, "so how good are you now?"

### **How can you NOT accept a challenge like that?**

Hot Shots offers 10-week summer leagues that feature playoffs and 12-person rosters. Manager Sal Gerbino says the people who turn out for the leagues are usually people who loved dodgeball as elementary- and middle-school students - and who want to flash back to those hormone- and adrenaline-fueled days by throwing stuff at other people and being rewarded for it.

It's the same at **Sportspark of New York in Chili**, where adult co-ed dodgeball leagues are offered in the spring and summer. Sportspark first offered its dodgeball program in 2006 with about a half-dozen teams playing pick-up games. It was an immediate hit and grew from there.

Players "**can relive their youth**," says former Sportspark of NY owner, **Don Aselin**. "They loved dodgeball in grade school, and they can bring back those memories." It's also fun. "It's a short game, but you get a huge adrenaline rush," says Russell Barkley, who coordinated this year's charity dodgeball tournament at **Rochester Institute of Technology.[RIT]** "It's really intense."

**The burgeoning dodgeball** scene in Rochester, NY reflects the massive growth of an activity once known - and banned in many schools - as a children's game, but that has found new life as a full-fledged adult sport. Several national and international dodgeball organizations have evolved into sanctioning bodies for leagues and tournaments the world over.

The **National Dodgeball League**, for example, offers a pro circuit, a hall of fame, and a world championship, while the **International Dodge Ball Federation** has nurtured organizations in, among other places, Puerto Rico, Pakistan, and Australia.

One of the most popular organizations for the recreational dodgeball player is the **National Amateur Dodgeball Association**, a governing body based in Illinois that offers its own set of regulations for a style of game that stresses teamwork, strategy, and safety. Numerous leagues across the country, including those at Sportspark of NY in Chili, adhere to **NADA's** rules of play.

"If you'd have asked us seven years ago when we had our first event that we'd have 200 teams at a national tournament, we wouldn't have thought so at first," says **NADA** vice president Bill DePue. "But when we saw people's reaction to it, we knew this was something that could grow."



~ continued ~



## Adult dodgeball leagues !

**Dodgeball** has grown because of its adaptability, accessibility, and simplicity, says DePue "It's an easy game to play and organize," he says. "All you need are a set of dodgeballs and an area to play, whether it be indoors or outdoors, and it doesn't require a whole lot of athletic ability."

Adds Sportspark's Aselin: **"A lot of people don't have many sports skills, but this is a game anybody can play."**

**It can also** be played any time during the year. While Hot Shots and Sportspark offer summer leagues, it's not hard to find dodgeball being played somewhere in Rochester year-round. The annual RIT dodgeball tournament - which benefits St. Jude Children's Hospital - takes place each winter. Barkley says 18 teams from both the campus and the community hit the court this year for the seventh edition of the event.

After playing for several years, Barkley says a good dodgeball player needs two key traits: speed and accuracy. Well, and a decent threshold for pain. "The (RIT) baseball team had a team this year, and they won," he says. "When you got his by them, you really knew it."

The RIT tournament is strictly regulated, as are the leagues at Hot Shots and Sportspark of NY, where referees make sure tempers don't flare too much. However, that doesn't mean players don't get their juices flowing, especially when they start channeling their inner 14-year-old. Says Gerbino: **"It gets as competitive as teams want it to get."**

{ You can also check out the websites for the **National Amateur Dodgeball Association** ([www.dodgeballusa.com](http://www.dodgeballusa.com)), the **National Dodgeball League** ([www.nationaldodgeball.com](http://www.nationaldodgeball.com)), and the **International Dodge Ball Federation** ([www.dodge-ball.com](http://www.dodge-ball.com)). }

Reprint: Rochester, NY

