

Bocce Club of Sun City

Looking for excitement? If so, head over to the Bocce Club for fun, entertainment and to meet new friends. The Bocce ball courts and clubhouse are located at Sundial Recreation Center. Bocce ball is played on carpeted courts which are well shaded at both ends. All equipment is furnished and lessons are free. For lessons call Keith at 623-760-6927 or Dennis at 623-693-2881.

All courts are disability accessible. Dues are \$5 per year. All RCSC cardholders are eligible to join.

Daytime tournaments are played Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Open play is Thursday, Friday, and Sunday. Game times vary throughout the year. Check the clubhouse bulletin board for times and information.

Meetings and parties are 5 p.m. the second Monday of the month in the Sundial East Hall.

Club holds October Halloween costume party, November election party, Christmas party, Valentine party and a morning March picnic with fun games. Restaurant outings are also held as club fundraisers.

Appropriate, modest attire is required at the courts at all times. Open to all RCSC cardholders and their escorted guests. Call Edith Truitt at 623-271-0092 or Dennis Johnson at 623-693-2881 for more information.



SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT DEC. 26, 2001-JAN. 2, 2002

Sun City Bocce Club hosts students

By Juli Nessett
Independent Newspapers

Students from Desert Harbor Elementary School's National Junior Honor Society were treated to a special day Dec. 14, when the Bocce Club of Sun City invited them out for games and lunch.

The students assisted the club with the Special Olympics in October.

"The club was so impressed with their effort that they invited us back," said NJHS sponsor Melissa Trieckel.

Alyce Lind, a member of the bocce club, said the students did such a good job helping and showed such interest in the game that it was the least they could do.

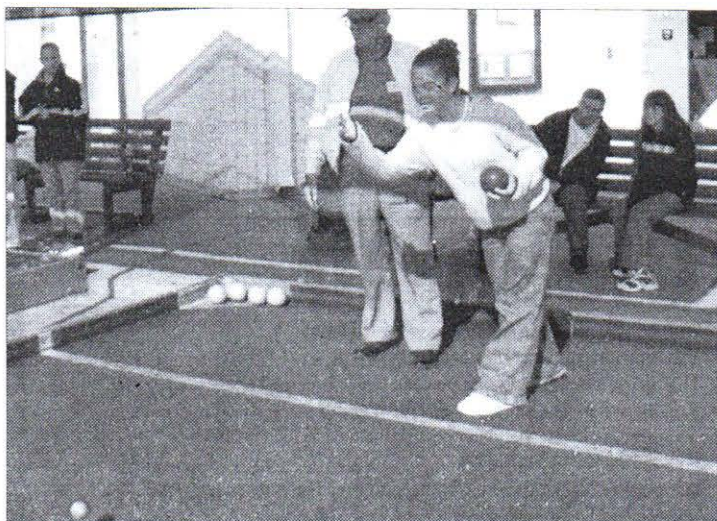
"It's just our way of saying thank you," said Bocce Club President Ron Lind.

Bayleigh Smart, NJHS president, said the students decided to help again this year because they had so much fun the previous year.

"It's really fun," she said. "There are so many diverse people we get to meet and it's just a really good experience for people our age."

Ms. Trieckel said projects like this are great for students.

"It's very good experience to help somebody to be a part of something," she said.



National Junior Honor Society students from Desert Harbor Elementary School were invited out to the Bocce Club of Sun City Dec. 14 for lunch and games of bocce. The day was planned as a way to say thank you to the students who helped the club when it hosted the Special Olympics in October. At left, Jessica LaBovich gets pointers from Gordon Nelson.

Photos by Juli Nessett/
Independent Newspapers

Daily News-Sun • Saturday, Feb. 24, and Sunday, Feb. 25, 2001

Sun Citians prepare for bocce competition

RICH BOLAS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Don Erickson has been on a roll for four years.

As bocce tournament director at the Arizona Senior Olympics, the Sun Citian and his volunteer staff will be doing more than keeping score when the competition begins Monday at Sundial Recreation Center.

"We've gotten better each year that we've done it," said Erickson, a Minnesota native. "Like anything else, the key is communication, communication, communication."

More than 100 competitors from around the state will participate in bocce, which is broken into three divisions: women on Monday; men on Tuesday; and mixed pairs on Wednesday. Players are divided into age groups based on a system of five-year increments.

Erickson and his wife, Margaret, serve as tournament directors. Fellow Sun Citians Tom Brady and Scott Peterson will work as assistant tournament directors.

Erickson and his team meet several times before play begins to go over logistics and scheduling. They work from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the three days of competition.

Peterson said changes in the scoring system and scheduling have made the games more enjoyable since Sundial began playing host the games in 1998.



JOY LAMBERT/DAILY NEWS-SUN

From left, Don and Margaret Erickson along with Scott Peterson, and Tom Brady sit near the Sundial Bocce courts. The quartet runs the Arizona Senior Olympic bocce tournament.

"We used to have a situation where if a person lost their first game, they were done," Peterson said. "That's pretty tough to ask a person to drive up from Tucson, lose one game, and then have to turn around and go home."

All competitors are now guaranteed at least three games.

Erickson said the new scoring rules are easier for everyone to understand.

Three years ago, tournament organizers used a points system based on margin of victory to crown champions.

"People really didn't like that as a way to keep score, so we changed it," Erickson said.

Champions are now determined based on wins and losses. Playoffs are used to break ties.

It's not all work for the volunteers.

They find time to participate and even have a win streak to protect at this year's tournament.

Peterson and Brady are part of a three-man team which has won gold in its age bracket the last two years.

"We're going for a three-peat," Brady said.

Players have ball with Italian game of bocce



Joe Sauter takes his turn at throwing the bocce ball during a match.

By Jim Gintonio
The Arizona Republic

Once a game linked to old Italian men wearing funny hats and playing in unkempt parks, bocce ball has evolved into a passion.

Millions of aficionados nationwide, regardless of ethnic background or gender, flock to courts daily.

Bocce remains a game not given much thought until retirement, but it quickly catches on. Rather

than supplant other sports as favorites, it becomes part of an exercise and entertainment routine.

That's evidenced by the enthusiasm shown by the Sun City Bocce Club, which has about 400 members during its peak times. Men and women play in almost equal numbers, and it also has become a sport for couples — although they are seldom paired on the same team in tournaments.

A sign at the club's facility at the Sundial Recreation Center leaves no doubt as to the way veterans view their sport:

"If you want to be happy for a

few hours, get drunk. If you want to be happy for a weekend, get married. If you want to be happy for a week, barbecue a pig. If you want to be happy for all your life, become a bocce player."

The Sundial facility is being expanded from eight to 11 courts, and even that might not be enough to handle the overflow crowds always trying to get a spot in the daily tournaments.

Like all sports, the teamwork and camaraderie is there, and even though it's a relaxing way to

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Age doesn't deter anybody. It's not a masculine-dominated sport, and unlike bowling, it doesn't take a lot of power. It's mainly skill and having fun. It's a simple game, easy to learn. But it's frustrating because it never turns out the way you want it to.

RALPH DANIEL

PRESIDENT, THE SUN CITY WEST BOCCIE CLUB



Players Bill Cedar (left), Jeanette Sauter and Emma Charske watch play on the bocce court. Sauter and Charske cheer for teammates who scored three points.

— **PLAYERS**, from Page 1

pass some time, that doesn't mean the excitement level doesn't rise.

"Some people say they couldn't sleep at night because of how they played," club President Dave Wieckert said.

"Some take it too seriously, but it's still mainly for enjoyment. Still, some people get angry or yell. We can hear things like, 'You dummy, how come you shot that way?'"

The club's oldest member, Marino Bruno, is 97. He's still skillful in placing the ball where he wants, but after falling from a tree recently, he's not ready to return to the courts yet.

"These 'old people' out there don't stay at home," Wieckert said. "This keeps me away from the TV set."

The Sun City West Bocce Club plays on 14 courts at the Johnson Recreation Center. There are 1,400 members, and club President Ralph Daniel said there are a couple of things that make the sport what it is.

"Age doesn't deter anybody," he said. "It's not a masculine-dominated sport, and unlike bowling, it doesn't take a lot of power. It's mainly skill and having fun. It's a simple game, easy to learn. But it's frustrating because it never turns out the way you want it to."

The game is handicapped-accessible and easy to learn, but it does take a lot of practice. Those who have never played the sport can pick up the rules and nuances quickly.

Contested on a court 70 feet by 12 feet, the first player throws out the pallino, a small ball, to start the game. The object of the game is to roll the larger balls as close as possible to the pallino.

"It's an easy game to learn," Wieckert said. "But you have to watch. If you sit and talk and don't know how the court is playing, or if you don't watch the player in front of you, you don't do it right."

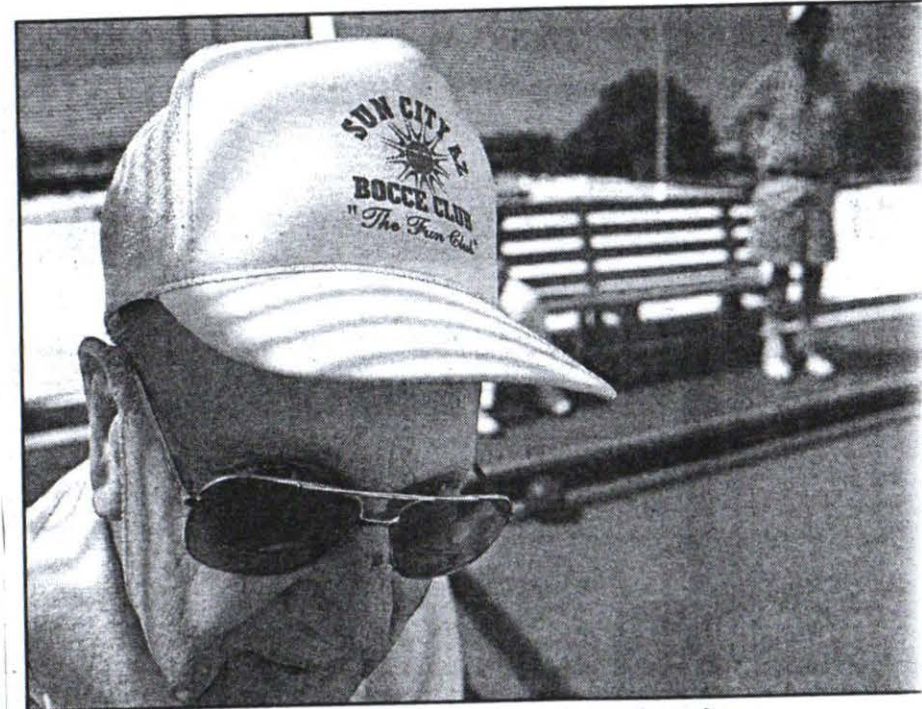
Jim Gintonio can be reached at (602) 444-7125 or at jim.gintonio@pni.com via e-mail.

OVER



Photos by Suzanne Starr/The Arizona Republic

Ellie Nutting (left) and Barbara Shupe measure the distance between the pallino (a target ball) and the bocce balls to determine which is closest to the smaller



Joe Sauter displays his Sun City Bocce Club hat.

Bocce draws Sun Citians outside

By RICH BOLAS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Fun Day didn't last long enough for Kay and Ken Schultz.

The Sun Citians received an introduction to bocce five years ago at Sundial Recreation Center and decided to turn it into more than a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Fun Day activities are designed to introduce residents to the amenities at area recreation centers.

During their visit, the Schultzes wandered over to the bocce courts.

"They were such a fun group," Kay Schultz said of the Sun City Bocce Club. "It was better being outside than being cooped up inside."

The Schultzes now play bocce at least three times a week with the Sun City club. They have also begun to prepare for the Arizona Senior Olympics bocce tournament, which will be played at the Sundial courts March 1 through March 4.

"Our 10 grandkids think we are heroes with all our medals," Ken Schultz said of the seven medals they've earned in two years. "It's a relatively easy game to learn, but it takes practice and a lot of luck."

The Schultzes participate in the men's, women's and mixed pairs portion of the Arizona Senior Olympics. The bocce competition drew a record 54 teams and 208 participants at Sundial last year.

"We really went all out to make sure everyone had a good time," said Dave Wieckert, president of the Sun City Bocce Club. "We think we'll have even more players this year."

Kay Schultz said the key to success is to find partners who complement each other.

"A good team is one which has one player who is really good at bank shots and another who throws a good straight ball," she said. "It also helps when everyone is congenial."

Arizona Senior Olympics



Steve Chermek/Daily News-Sun

Kay and Ken Schultz have won seven medals in the past two years while participating in bocce at the Arizona Senior Olympics.

More than 7,000 athletes are expected to participate in the Arizona Senior Olympics, which will begin Saturday and run through March 7. Six events are scheduled in the Sun Cities.

The opening ceremonies will be 9:30 a.m. Saturday in Sun Angel Stadium in Tempe. The opening day will consist of a parade of athletes, lighting of the senior

olympic flame and track and field competition.

The events in the Sun Cities are:
 ■ Golf on Feb. 21, Feb. 22, Feb. 28 and March 1 at Desert Springs Golf Club in Surprise. Golfers will tee off at 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. each day.

■ Lawn bowling on Feb. 22, Feb. 23, Feb. 25 and Feb. 26 at Sundial Recreation Center in Sun City. P

► See Senior Olympics,

Senior Olympics begin Saturday

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begins at 8:30 a.m. each day.

■ Billiards begins at 9 a.m. Feb. 27 in the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center in Sun City West.

■ Bocce on March 1 through March 4 at Sundial Recreation Center in Sun City.

■ The road races and fun walk on March 6 at Sun City Grand in Surprise. The 5-kilometer race begins at 8:30 a.m. and the 10-kilometer race begins at 9 a.m. The 5-kilometer fun walk starts at 9:30 a.m.

■ The triathlon starts at 8 a.m. March 7 at Happy Trails

Resort in Surprise. The event will consist of an 800-meter swim, 20-kilometer bike ride and 5-kilometer run.

Editor's note: The Daily News-Sun will print results of the Arizona Senior Olympics as we receive them from event sites and organizers.

— SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT— APRIL 24-30, 1996

Having fun is essential to Sun City Bocce Club

By **GEORGE WITKOWSKI**
Independent Newspapers

Confucius say:

If you want to be happy for a day, get drunk.

If you want to be happy for a weekend, barbecue a pig.

If you want to be happy for a week, get married.

If you want to be happy for a lifetime, become a bocce player.

That's the unofficial motto of the Sun City Bocce Club.

"We call the Bocce Club of Sun City the fun club," club president Pete Cipriano says. "We look for excuses to have parties."

The club has a membership of 250 persons, double the number of active members at the end of 1995, Cipriano says with pride.

"Hardly a week goes by where we don't initiate 10 to 12 new members," he says. A person doesn't have to be an experienced bocce player to play with the bocce club, located just east of the Sundial Recreation Center.

"Most people who have come here have never played before, but it's the kind of

thing where we invite them to throw a few balls and they're hooked," Cipriano says. "We have a lot of people who live in the neighborhood who have joined up."

Cipriano gives an introductory lesson to newcomers, and shares bocce's rules and the club's history (it was started in 1980 by Ed Crist).

"After that, they're thrown in with the sharks," he says. "It's amazing that they become so proficient so fast."

Prior to the opening of the bocce club's eight courts at Sundial, the club played at two bocce courts at Lakeview, two at Marinette Recreation Center and two at Bell with 75 members. The courts at Bell have been turned into tennis courts.

The Sundial project was a major initiative. "It was a mess keeping track of scores from other sites," he says. "It took four or five years of trying but we got the court this year."

The club recently hosted a two-day bocce tournament with Sun City West and Sun City Tucson at Sundial.

With the success of the Bocce Club of Sun City, Cipriano knows that games and camaraderie go together.

"Some of my best friends are people we (Cipriano and his wife, Doris) met at the club," he says.



Shirley Sekel of Sun City became interested in bocce when she saw the growing number of players at Sundial Recreation Center in her neighborhood.

OVER

The rules of play for the Bocce Club of Sun City

The following are the rules of the game as played by the Bocce Club of Sun City. They were revised April 25, 1983 by the executive committee.

- Bocce is played on a carpeted flat court that confines the area of play to an approximate width of 10 to 12 feet and an approximate length of 70 feet.

- The object of the game is to place one's ball(s) as close as possible to the pallino (small ball), which is thrown first to start the game. This can be done by throwing or rolling the ball or by deflecting a ball off either side board.

- The winner of a coin toss selects the color balls his team will use. The pallino will be thrown along with the first ball to start the game. The side winning the frame or the game throws out the pallino to start new play.

- The team throwing first must place the pallino anywhere in an area past the court's center line and not beyond the last white line. If this placement is not accomplished in two tries, the opposing

team takes possession of the pallino.

- When throwing, the player must not step on or go beyond the first white line (delivery line) under penalty of having his/her ball declared illegal and out of play and removed from the court.

- After the first ball is played, the opposing team must play until it delivers a ball closer to the pallino. The team making the original throw must attempt to place a ball closer to the pallino. Play continues until one side has used up all of its balls. Then the side having the point(s) will deliver all of its remaining balls to the end of the frame or game.

- Any thrown ball can displace any ball in play, including the pallino.

- All balls must be played to the end of the frame or game.

- The team with the closest ball to the pallino is awarded one point for each ball closer to the pallino than any opponent's ball.

- Eight balls (usually four green and four red) are played in a game and divid-

ed equally as to sides and players. Up to eight players can play on each team and play alternatively from each end of the court. Each player will play no fewer than two balls per game.

- When more than two people are playing, each frame is played from the same end of the court until the end of the game. To start a new game both teams change places in the opposite direction.

- The game proceeds for whatever number of frames are necessary for one side to reach the goal of 12 points to be declared winners. The winner of the game throws first to start the next game.

- A player can't throw out of turn under penalty of having his ball declared out-of-bounds and removed from the court. If any balls were disturbed by an out-of-turn ball or any illegal ball, they will be repositioned to their original location or left where they lie, with the opponent having the option (advantage rule).

- Neither person can score when opposing balls are judged to be of equal

distance from the pallino.

- If a frame ends in a tie, no score is posted. The team having the fist closest ball to the pallino starts the new frame.

- It is the referee's role to call the point by measuring which ball can be challenged for measurement. When no referee is present, one member of each team will work jointly in calling the point.

- Player(s) unintentionally throwing the wrong color ball will have it replaced with his ball wherever it comes to rest with no penalty.

- Any ball hitting the backboard is out of play and is removed from the court. This includes a ball near the backboard hit against it by a thrown ball.

- If the pallino is hit so that it comes in contact with the backboard, it is placed on the red dot near the end of the court.

- If a thrown ball rebounds from the backboard hitting a displacing the pallino or any other ball, the thrown ball is out of play and the displaced pallino or other ball(s) is replaced in its original position.

Bocce treats the body good

Bocce is truly a seniors game.

The first game of the ancient sport was believed to have been played in Egypt around 5,000 B.C.

"It has to be the most senior sport in the world," said Pete Cipriano, president of the Sun City Bocce Club.

The game is still alive and growing stronger in the retirement communities.

The Sun City Bocce Club's membership has increased from 150 to 200 members in the past two months since it began playing all of its games on eight new courts in the Sundial Recreation Center.

The Sun City West Bocce Club, which began with 40 members in 1978, now has 1,500 players engaged in 74 leagues on its 14 courts at the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center.

"The basic appeal is you don't have to be an athlete, women can compete pretty even up with the men, it's simple on a time basis, not a serious sport where people feel they have to be competitive all the time, and basically, it's fun," said Ralph Daniel, president of the Sun City West Bocce Club, who never played the sport until he moved to Arizona in 1988.

"People over and over who have tried it a short while or been there a long time said, 'This is fun.' It's not a drudgery."

Carmen and Chester Krejecki moved to Sun City West and have been members of the Sun City West Bocce Club since its inception.

"I thought we'd like to try it and we're still here," Carmen said.

In just a few minutes of instruction, a person can learn how to play.

"It's that easy," Daniel said. "As long as they're consistent and show up, they're ready to compete and have some fun. This becomes an ongoing relationship."

It doesn't take long for people to become attached to the game.

"Anytime somebody

throws a few balls, they get hooked on the game," Cipriano said.

Two teams compete by trying to roll a round ball on a carpeted court as close to a smaller white ball, called a pallino, which is rolled out at the beginning of each round.

Each player rolls four balls and whoever gets their ball closest, or touches the pallino, scores a point. If a team has more than one ball closer than the other team, they score two points. And so on for three or four balls.

The first team to 11 points wins.

"It sounds like a simple game and it is," Daniel said.

Bocce draws a large number of people because it's an outdoor activity that allows the women to compete with the men on a level field.

"It's fun," said Bobbette Abram, a member of the Sun City West Bocce Club.

RULES OF THE GAME

Bocce is somewhat like horseshoes played with balls.

- The game is played on a hard dirt, carpet or sand lane.
- Players use four wooden balls.
- The players roll the balls as near as possible toward a smaller target ball.
- Each player rolls four balls, and whoever rolls their ball closest, or touches the target ball, wins a point.
- If a team has more than one ball closer than the other team, they score two points, and so on.
- The first team to 11 points wins.

Marie Perry, at left above, adds to her score after Joseph Perry and Herman Mismahl finish measuring the closest ball during bocce play on the R.H. Johnson courts. At right, Marie Perry wants her partner's ball to slow down and Rosa Mismahl hopes it speeds up to pass by the pollino.

"Even the women can beat the men sometimes."

Coed teams play at both clubs.

"It's a good partners game," Daniel said.

Most members play with their spouses, but not everyone does. However, all married couples must roll on opposite sides of the court with the Sun City West club "to keep the arguments to a minimum," Daniel said with a smile.

Bocce also offers its

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players several health benefits.

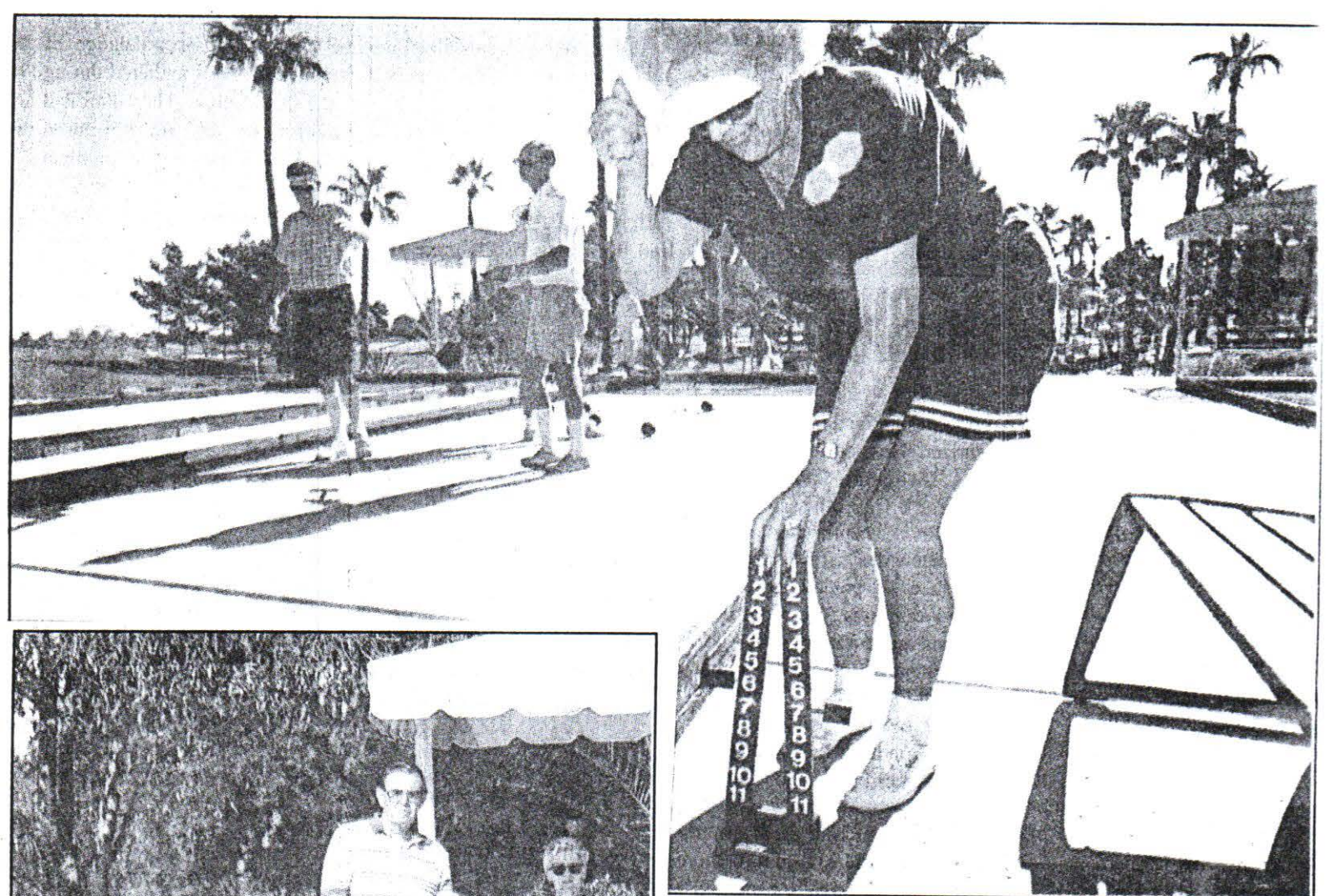
"Besides the camarade and fun you derive out beating out somebody else ball," Cipriano said, "you out in the healthy outdoor throwing balls, bending over, walking to the ball. You're exercising your body without even knowing it. You're pumping up your heart every time you breathe. It's very exciting and very rewarding."

Most importantly, bocce players enjoy themselves.

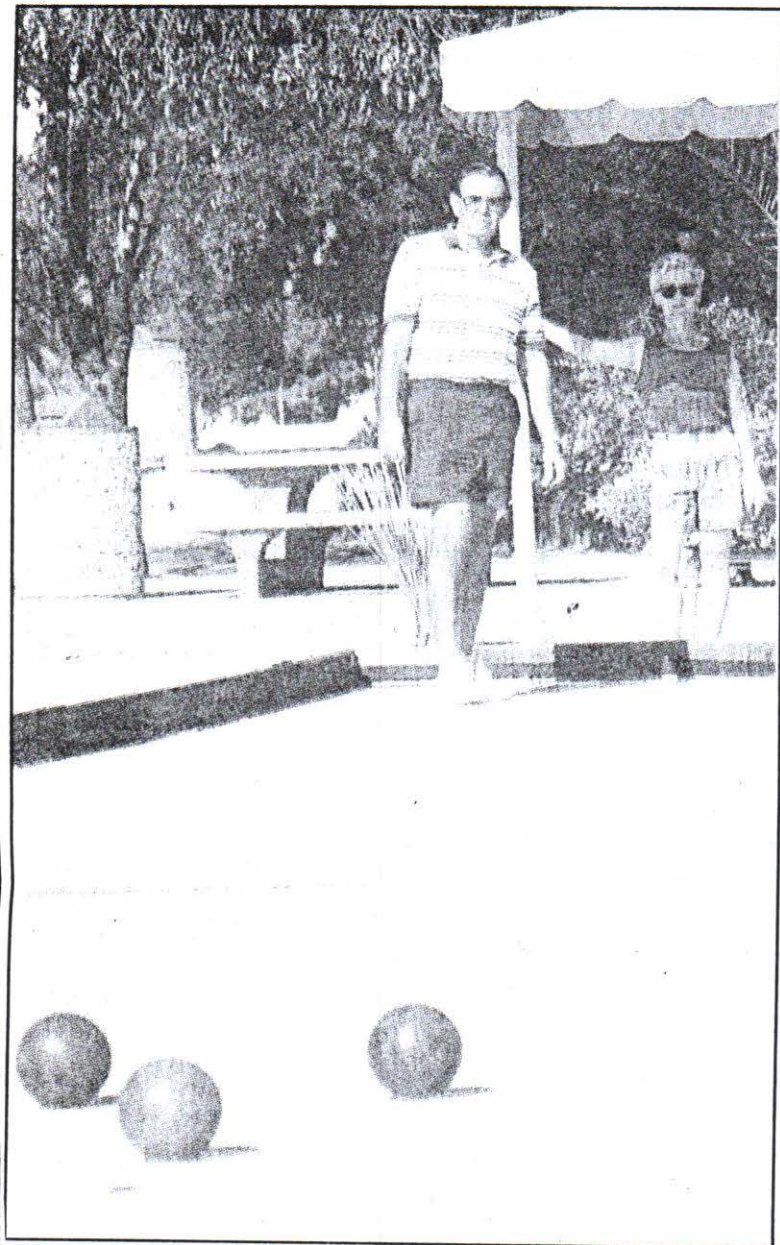
"People are just there have fun and do the best they can," Daniel said.

they can't win, next week they'll try harder. The balls rolls different each week.

(over)



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun



Board gets the ball rolling on bocce courts

Club president joined summer recall drive

By KATHLEEN WINSTEAD
Sun Cities Independent

After being called on the carpet several times by irate members of the Bocce Club of Sun City, the Recreation Centers of Sun City Board of Directors has finally agreed to get the ball rolling on the construction of a new bocce complex at the Sundial Recreation Center.

Inadequate facilities, say members, prevent the club from attracting new members and from hosting

such events as the Arizona State Senior Olympics.

Bocce is an Italian game similar to lawn bowling. The object of the game is to roll one's ball as near as possible to a smaller ball, often referred to as a "marker."

Although the Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc. 1995 budget earmarked \$60,000 for construction of bocce facilities at Lakeview Recreation Center, the board of directors at a meeting last week agreed instead to construct bocce facilities at Sundial Recreation

Center, a move which could save the Rec Centers a good deal of money.

Director Don Pritchett cited several reasons for the change of locale. The lawn bowling greens at Sundial were abandoned some time ago, and could easily be converted to a bocce court.

The costs associated with construction of a multiple-court bocce complex at the Sundial site would be less than the cost of adding a bocce facility to Lakeview because all the lighting, parking and side-

walks are already in place.

Building a bocce complex at Lakeview would require removing the roof, a portion of the shuffleboard courts and some shrubs. A parking area would have to be added to accommodate golf cars, and the construction of such a complex at the already overcrowded center would increase congestion.

Sun City is home to six bocce courts — two at Bell Recreation Center, two at Lakeview and two at Marinette. Bocce Club members have long maintained the courts at Bell are "practically unusable." All

these courts will remain as they are for the time being, although Bocce Club members say the courts at Bell could be used by the tennis club and the courts at Lakeview by mini-golfers.

Construction on the new multi-court facility will begin sometime this year, Mr. Pritchett says.

Not all directors favored the move.

Director Doris Gregory, along with Board Vice President Dick Austin and Director Carol Jaslow, believe their fellow directors acted

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in haste in agreeing to the change.

Because the Sundial property is worth at least "six figures," Ms. Gregory believes using the area for any outdoor sport would be "unwise" and could lead to a decline in property values.

The area at Sundial is more appropriate for an administration building than a multiple-court bocce complex, she says.

"The need for a member business facility was paramount (and it) will continue to be a primary need," she says.

Plans for a multi-court bocce facility at Lakeview were presented to the board, but no plans for a site at Sundial have yet been submitted.

Ms. Gregory also contends the project could cost more than initially expected.

"I believe we need more in-depth research and a special meeting for this," she says.

Director Chuck Westerveld disagrees with Ms. Gregory when it comes to property values.

"The value of any property depends on what someone is willing to pay for it," he points out.

"I haven't heard of anyone willing to pay six figures for that property. In the foreseeable future and to the year 2000, we have no plans for that area at Sundial."

Board President Ed Anderson says the addition of a bocce complex at Sundial will not entail the use of all available land at the recreation center. Thus, an office building could one day be built on the site if needed.

"We still have adequate land" at

Sundial, Mr. Anderson explains.

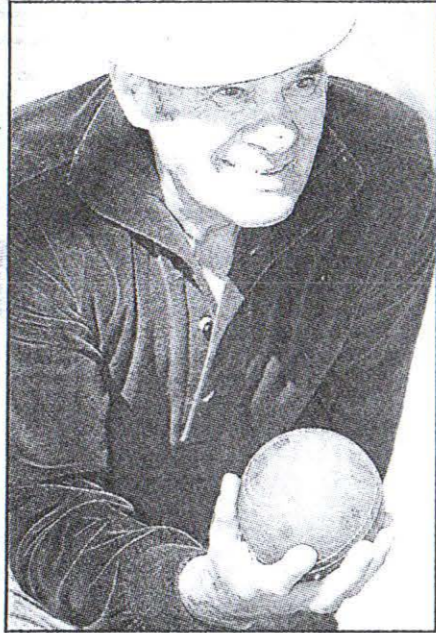
The bocce courts have been a long time coming.

Last year at this time, members of the Bocce Club of Sun City were crying foul over what they claimed was the board's refusal to provide them with a centralized bocce complex at Sundial Center. Bocce Club President Pete Cipriano estimated the cost to remodel the site at \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Mr. Cipriano is a member of a group of former Rec Centers directors who spearheaded a recall drive which eventually led to the ouster of two directors. Mr. Cipriano said members of the Bocce Club first approached Rec Centers General Manager Jim Warfield in 1992 to discuss the shortcomings of bocce facilities in Sun City.

Bowling green

AZ Rep Mon - 2-19-90
P.1W



Jacques Barbey / Staff photographer
Ralph Gaier prepares to roll a ball
at Marinette Recreation Center.

Sun Citians let good times roll

By Julia Jones
Staff writer

It may be the perfect game.

Participants don't have to work up a sweat, it's practically forbidden for husbands and wives to play on the same team, and ripping off a few crisp phrases of frustration, preferably in Italian, is part of the fun of playing bocce.

It's a sport that's becoming more popular every day, says Pete Cipriano, chairman of the Sun Cities first annual invitational bocce tournament, held last month.

Cipriano's home team, the Bocce Club of Sun City, prevailed over the Bocce Club of Sun City West in hotly contested play in two of the three divisions to take the Del Webb traveling trophy.

"I tell everybody that this is the most fun you can have without sinning," Cipriano says. "And once you throw the

ball, you become addicted. It's very active and noisy, and it's a common man's game, all over the world."

Although bocce is popularly thought to be of Italian descent, Cipriano says, research indicates that its origin is probably Egypt, some 5,000 years ago.

"Implements have been found in Egyptian tombs that are something like the equipment we use to play bocce," he says, "so historians figure when the Romans were doing their thing around the world, they took the game along. When they got to England, the people there figured the game was too good for common folks, so they decided to play it on a green, on the lawn, whereas the game had always been played on dirt courts.

"They called it lawn bowling, and there's a lot of that played in the Sun Cities," Cipriano says. "In fact, I think See BOCCE, Page 3



Jacques Barbey / Staff photographer
Enes Bongarzone watches her
successful throw with delight.

OVER

we're known as the lawn bowl capital of the world. It's very formal, very serious. They wear whites, and nobody talks."

Bocce, on the other hand, has graduated from packed dirt courts to 70-foot courts that are about 12 feet wide and covered with outdoor carpeting.

The game is played from both ends of the court. Players throw balls, or bocce, as closely as possible to a smaller ball, or jack, that is tossed out first. Each ball is about 5 inches in diameter and weighs about 1 pound. When all four balls on each side have been thrown, those closest to the jack receive points for the team.

"There are no real rules about how to throw the ball," Cipriano says. "You can throw it straight, or bounce it off the wall, or you can knock an opponent's ball away. Here, on a carpeted course, we roll the ball, but on a dirt court, you can throw that ball through the air and hit your opponent's ball 60 feet down the lane. To do that and be good at it is an amazing thing to be seen."

There are no real rules about playing with your spouse either, he says.

"But it's one way to avoid controversy. If she's your opposition and makes a good move, or if she's on your team and misses a point, you're going to end up making a remark."

The idea of having women on the playing field is in itself a departure from historical ways, Cipriano says.

"It was always a man's game. In the old country, to this day, I think they would think it awfully strange to have women playing this game. I remember writing to an uncle in Italy some eight years ago and asking him if he'd ever heard of it, and he thought it was just a crazy question and that it was incredible that I should ask," Cipriano says. "So from our inquiries, we think that we're one of the first to have coed play, if not the first."

It only makes sense, he says, since it's an active, but not particularly strenuous activity with lots to recommend it.

"Number one, you play outdoors," he says. "Number two, you

don't need excessive strength even if you throw the ball way down to the other end. And Number three, you have to bend down to pick up the ball, and when you do this often enough, it constitutes exercise."

Cipriano convinced a neighbor, lame and on crutches since childhood, to come along to the bocce court a few years ago. The neighbor, leaning on one crutch, tossed the balls; Cipriano did the bending to retrieve them. One day, the retriever was momentarily distracted, and his neighbor forgot to wait, and bent down himself to pick them up.

It grows on you, says Joe Huyter, who retired to Sun City from California about five years ago and was introduced to bocce through friends in golf and bowling. He calls himself "a straight ball sort of guy." But with that weapon, he won the men's division of the January tournament for the Sun City team. He won, he says, "just by luck."

His widowed sister, Elizabeth McKenna, retired to Sun City at the same time. She walks with a cane, he says, and had to give up bowling because of arthritis. "But she still wants to bocce."

"It isn't as hard as bowling," McKenna says. "The balls are not as big or as heavy. They fit in the palm of your hand."

"It's an easy game to learn, too," she says, "and we get done in about an hour and a half."

The Sun City Bocce Club runs three tournaments each year, Cipriano says, and although there's no organized competition, play goes on all summer. And after a lifetime of working 12-hour days in the wholesale produce business in Detroit, he says, he has enjoyed every minute of play in his 12 years of retirement.

"There are bocce players and tournaments all over the country," he says.

Cipriano keeps tabs on how the rest of the world plays during his frequent trips abroad.

"It's a very common form of diversion played all over southern Europe, and it's nothing unusual to run into people playing the game on neighborhood lots and in the streets, especially on Sunday."