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adult dodgeball

Two teams of mostly guys fire a stream of foam balls the full length of Great Bridge Family YMCA's basketball court. They do this with impressive speed and accuracy. Balls slam into the padded wall behind the basket with alarming force.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Play dodgeball like this in elementary school and you are going to the principal's office. Perhaps that's part of the allure of adult dodgeball. You get to be a kid, but you won't get in trouble for playing tough.

What a way to get a workout.

"It's the newest thing," says Shawn Derrick, the facility's sports and youth fitness director. "It's a way to be competitive, but you don't have to be extremely skilled.

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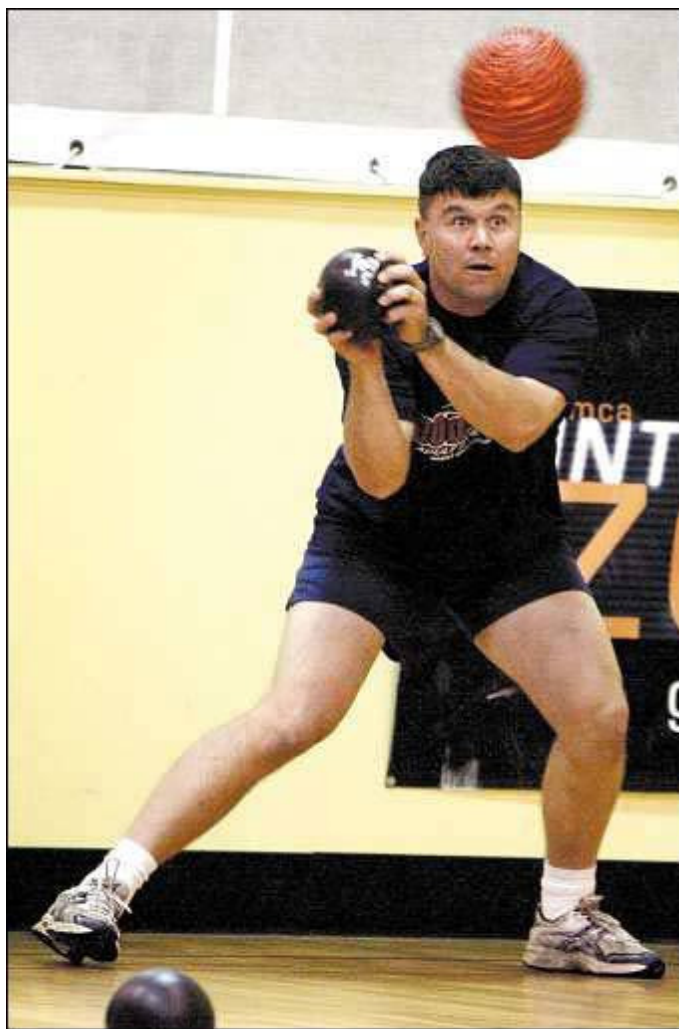


STEVE EARLEY/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Kellie Maler takes aim at an opponent during an adult dodgeball game at the Great Bridge Family YMCA in Chesapeake.

get game

Shawn Derrick has room for two more teams in the co-ed league at the Great Bridge Family YMCA, 633 S. Battlefield Blvd., Chesapeake. Games are Monday and Thursday nights from 8:15 to 9:15 and run through March 8. The cost is \$40 for YMCA of South Hampton Roads members and \$55 for nonmembers. Call (757) 546-9622.



STEVE EARLEY/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Brian Snell uses a ball to defend himself. There are four teams in the adult dodgeball league at the Great Bridge Family YMCA.

adult dodgeball

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Anyone can dodge a ball and dive."

There are four teams in this dodgeball league. Players are mostly in their early 20s, late 30s or 40s, Derrick said. Tonight there are 17 men and three women.

Before I step onto the court, Derrick gives me a short course on the rules. We play full court, and players may not cross the center-court line. The basic rules are the same as they were back in the day: Get hit and you're out. Catch a ball thrown at you and the thrower is out. A game is 5 minutes max, with as many games as possible in an hour.

Before I do this, I need to grip that ball. Not so bad – it's like a Nerf ball with crust. Might stun, but it sure won't sting.

To begin, opposing teams of six players (one must be female) line up at the ends of the court. At the ref's

whistle, we rush to center court to grab six balls – four 8-inchers and two smaller "stingers" that are harder to aim and catch. I'm not fast enough to get one of either.

Players start stalking the opposition, waiting for a turned back or a lapse in attention to make their moves. My team twists this way and that to dodge enemy fire, sometimes deflecting it with the balls in their hands (that's allowed).

We get two guys out, but no thanks to me. (Hint: If you can't fire a ball like a cannon, take your shots nearer center court. You risk getting pummeled at close range, but you do your part.)

A couple of our guys get sidelined. Then a couple of theirs.

In the end, we triumph. But a moment later, another game is under way.

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