

SPORTS LEAGUES FOR

ADULTS



BY STEVEN NESTER

Being an adult no longer means you have to put away the bats and balls and confine your athleticism to surfing the big screen TV. Plenty of McKinney residents are still playing strong, says McKinney Recreation Department Athletics Supervisor Mike Lung. They're getting back on the diamond, the rink, the gridiron, the courts, the soccer field and the links. Whatever the sport, it's out there waiting for more young at heart players.

The McKinney Recreation Department, grassroots clubs, and internet message boards such as Meet Up, are resources to get active and involved. A wide range of activities including volleyball, flag football, adult soccer, ice hockey, adult latino soccer, slow pitch softball, disc golf and the schoolyard favorite kick ball, are booming in McKinney and the Metroplex.

Steve White has been playing and

coaching McKinney adult softball for over 20 years, and has seen the league grow from around 20 teams to over 100.

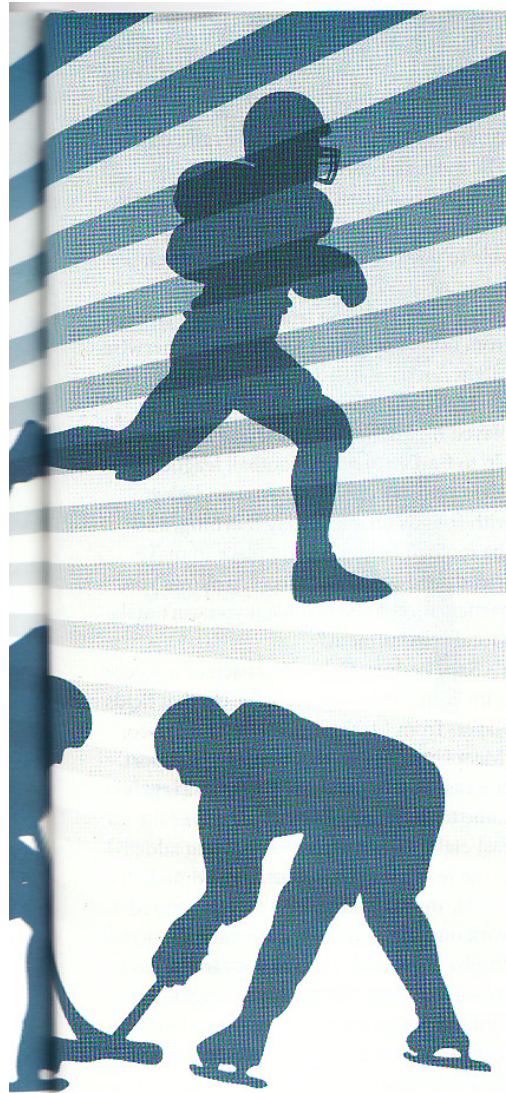
"Softball is a great alternative for men who grew up playing baseball," says White. "It gets you active and allows you to relive your glory days. We like to have fun but you can also take it seriously, as well."

Adult sport groups and leagues bring folks together on a social level in addition

to providing physical workouts. Still challenging and a great way to stay in shape, much of the competitiveness and workout stress of adult leagues and groups is geared for older players.

"We may be old," says Carlos Navarro, coach of the age 55 and up coed softball team, "But we have plenty of guys who can hit the ball."

Many of the players got involved to become a part of the community after relocating. Says California transplant Joe Allan, "I moved to McKinney six years ago and have made a lot of friends playing ball. You make friends with players from other teams as well." Allan says that one of the advantages of playing first base is the opportunity it gives him to catch up with his friends on other teams.



While older athletes love the competition, they're also aware of their body's limitations. Dave Yockey, Hockey Manager at the Dr Pepper StarCenter in McKinney at Craig Ranch, says that while competition is a draw, in the senior coed league, safety is key. "We're strict on aggressive playing and physical contact," says Yockey. "Every adult skating here told me they cannot believe the amount of exercise they get."

The league Allen and Navarro play in doesn't allow sliding or tagging or any contact that might cause injuries. Safety comes first, and the McKinney Recreation Department, as well as groups that can be found on Meet Up, sponsor lower impact sports such as coed non-spike volleyball and flag football.

Meet Up is a website which lists sports

groups and their meet up times and dates. The modern equivalent of the pick-up game on a sandlot, Meet Up keeps athletes abreast of various league sports so they're able to participate in a game when their schedule allows. It also enables local athletes to organize and team up with players from other areas with whom they otherwise might not have had a chance to play.

McKinney resident Jeff Williams, 24, played high school football and used Meet Up to find an area flag football league three years ago. "It's good to get out and play with friends on a Saturday morning, and the football field is a good place to make friends and hang out. Meet Up allows your participation to be flexible if you can't make a total commitment."

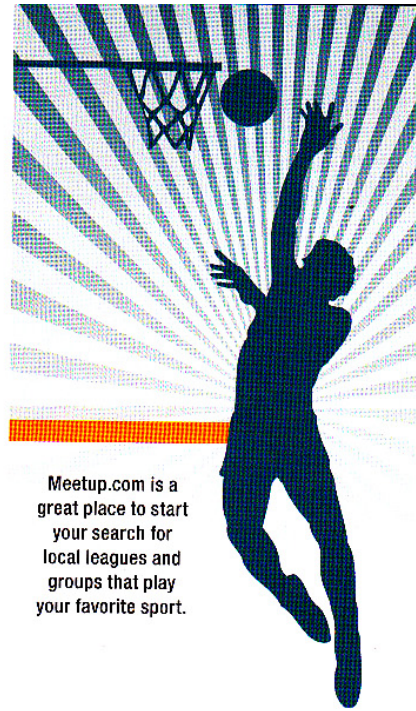
Says Rodney Caldwell, coach of a soccer team with a presence on Meet Up that fields players from McKinney, Plano and Frisco, "Meet Up is a great way to play your sport in a casual yet determined setting. Players come to meet and get involved. Over the past eight years people keep getting added to the teams and everyone is welcomed."

For those looking for a less structured work out, the rec department offers a Zumba class, and if you're not careful, says instructor Marla Shinault, you might not even know you're exercising. Some women get intimidated by weights and machines, and many don't want to get a typical gym membership, says Shinault. But here they feel comfortable unleashing their inner Jennifer Lopez. You'll be having so much fun, says Shinault, that you might not even know you're burning almost 600 calories an hour. To extend her reach beyond McKinney, Shinault also maintains a presence on Meet Up.

For those who like individual workouts with changing scenery, the McKinney Runners Club welcomes runners and families, whether they're walkers or elite marathoners. Founded as a non-profit for families and individuals two years ago, Club Vice-President Alberto Guterrez says the club is a low-key way to connect on many levels.

"We allow runners to come together and make friends and training partners. Running in groups makes training for races go faster. We also integrate with community with sponsor discounts and fun runs. People run and network and meet others while training."

Some sports come directly from the



Meetup.com is a great place to start your search for local leagues and groups that play your favorite sport.

schoolyard or the casual atmosphere of college quads; and for those who still enjoy the playground, the McKinney Recreation Department sponsors a kickball league. "It's a place where all men and women," says McKinney Police Officer and coach Curtis Logan, "are created equal."

"Kickball is nostalgic," he says. "People think, wow, I haven't played that since 6th grade. It makes everyone feel equal because it reminds them of a time when they were all the same. And you don't have to be in great shape to play, either."

For those who want something unique, disc golf is a nice walk in the park with cutthroat competition. McKinney Disc Golf Association member Dewayne Furr began playing in 1995 while in college, and this summer he led his team to the World Disc Golf Championships in Emporia, Kansas. The attractions of the sport, he says, "are exercise and the people I meet. They become friends and family. At the Worlds you get to see players you haven't seen in a long time. I'd like to see the sport go mainstream. It isn't difficult to throw a Frisbee." The two disc golf courses in McKinney give beginners and experts plenty of opportunity to get their game up to speed, too.

From organizations to casual meetups, McKinney has opportunities for any adult with the desire to move off of the couch and onto the court, field or course.

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