

Paddleball Sport History

Chapter 1 excerpt Draft

What is Paddleball?

Paddleball is an exciting fast moving urban racquet sport played on a one-wall "handball" court. Simply put, it's handball with a paddle. All you need is a ball, a paddle and of course, a court. For a beginner it is easier to develop skills in paddleball as compared to handball, which probably is why paddleball became so popular. The game presents a dazzling display of speed, maneuverability and techniques that make it the equal of any sport in the world. Yet, it is a relatively simple sport and the readily available nature of the necessary equipment makes it equally attractive and exciting for more casual participants.

Paddleball first started to gain traction in the early 1950's and its momentum increased through to the 70's into the 80's and peaked in the 90's, when there are purported to have been a half million players participating in New York City alone. Paddleball has been a unique sport because, unlike tennis and racquetball, it is relatively unorganized in that anyone can go to the courts by themselves or with a friend and call "I got Next!" and get in a game. It's a sport that enables people of all levels of athletic ability to learn techniques and improve their game and ultimately find their niche. Men and women of all ages as well as kids can get great exercise and have fun. For the children, especially in urban areas, it can provide a safe outlet and keep them out of trouble. For highly competitive people, there is no shortage of serious games. It's also a sport where people and families can readily spend quality time with one another or with friends and in the good weather have a great day at the beach or park.

Howie Hammer, who is Mr. Paddleball, has these insightful thoughts on the sport of paddleball: "Few competitive sports afford an opportunity for people of such divergent physical attributes to play on the same court together. The popularity of paddleball is due to the fact that it offers instant participation and enjoyment. The game provides physical exercise and competition to gratify each player based on their own level of physical condition and playing skill."