



ROGER DODGER WEEKLY PICK-UP DODGEBALL GAMES BRING ONE LUCKY LOCAL TEAM TO LAS VEGAS FOR A NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

When most of us are bored, we channel surf or surf the Web. Andy Vilaythong and his roommates set up a dodgeball league.

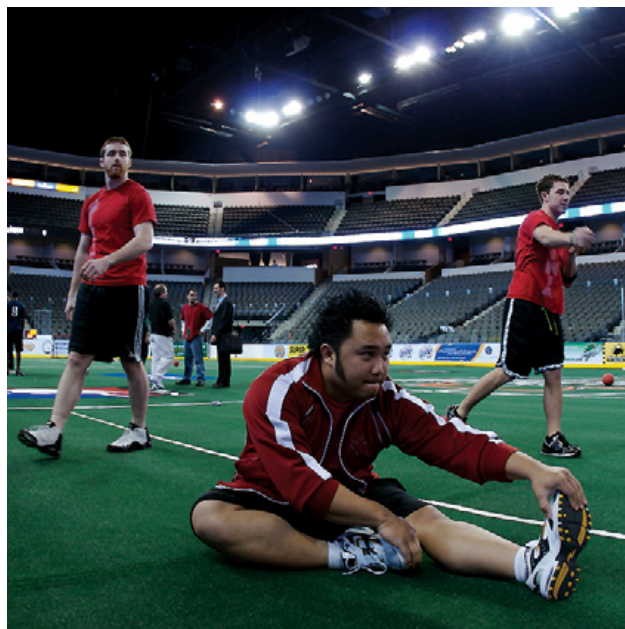
In October 2004, the crew bought a bunch of rubber dodgeballs from Target and took over Sheridan Park in University Village. That first night, they had 10 people playing. Now they average about 30 players twice a week (when it's not raining or below freezing).

Sure, there are plenty of summer sports leagues, led by the Chicago Sport and Social Club, that run the gamut from softball to soccer to flag football—even dodgeball, too. But why pay to play traditional sports when you can join in on a pick-up game, pretend you're back in elementary school and throw some balls at people? (And, if you're lucky, go to lemonade stand Mario's around the corner and get some Italian-ice style treats afterward.)

The most ironic part of this impromptu project? The team leaders practically talked their way into qualifying for a national championship tournament in Las Vegas in August (not that they don't have the skills to back it up—they've teamed with Ryan McGeehan, a co-captain of DePaul's club dodgeball team, the biggest club team at the university, to expand their pool of players). "We kind of out-cooled the other teams and convinced the president of the National Dodgeball League to let us fly out because he liked our personalities so much," says team regular Joe Reyes. They're even hitting up a Gurnee, Ill., dentist and Crunch Fitness to sponsor their uniforms.

At the heart of the matter, though, is good, old-fashioned fun. Even the cops who are occasionally called by residents to check out the racket join in. "They'll drive by and shout through their loudspeaker, 'Hey, you in the blue shirt! You're out!'" Vilaythong says. —KIM JEFFRIES

Get your dodgeball on at Sheridan Park (910 S. Aberdeen) every Tuesday and Thursday at 9 p.m.



RYAN MCGEEHAN, JOE REYES, AND MILOS OTIC AT THE NATIONAL DODGEBALL LEAGUE AMATEUR TOUR - CHICAGO