



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Thursday, April 18, 2024

TO: PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: JOSE BARRERA, RECREATION SUPERVISOR

SUBJECT: REPORT ON 2023-2024 SPORTS PROGRAMS

STATEMENT OF ISSUES:

Report on 2023-2024 sports programs.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive the report on 2023-2024 Sports Programs.

DISCUSSION:

1,827 individuals between the ages of 1 to 70 years of age have participated in our sports program for FY 2023-2024. Two youth recreational soccer seasons, two youth competitive soccer seasons, Itty-Bitty sports, gymnastics, adult softball and an array of enrichment classes such as karate, tennis, pickleball and swim lessons were offered. With the passing of Measure R in November 2022, many opportunities for sports programming have come as a result including new skateboarding camps, sports camps, and training for our volunteers, to name a few.

Youth Recreational Soccer

Two recreation soccer seasons were offered in 2023, with each season consisting of 10 weeks: 1 hour of practice during the week and a total of 8 games played on Saturdays. Teams get the opportunity to practice twice before playing their first game. This allows participants the opportunity to build relationships with their teammates and coach before playing their first game. Games and practices were held at Ramsay Park's Sotomayor Soccer Field. 246 participants (176 boys, 69 girls, 1 other) registered for spring season while 244 participants (175 boys, 66 girls, 3 others) registered in the fall. This is a 35% increase in participation compared to our 2022 seasons with 315 total participants registered.

Youth Competitive Soccer

Our partnership with the Breakers FC has allowed us to participate in the Nor Cal Premier League for the last 2 years. We've seen a decline in the number of teams participating with us in the last two years primarily due to player recruitment from other competitive programs. Post pandemic we've had 4 teams return to play with just 2 teams remaining that are currently playing with us this spring. Post Pandemic we had a 2008 boys team, 2011 boys team, 2010 boys teams and a 2007 girls team. In 2022 and 2023 our 2008 boys and 2010 boys were

recruited internally to play at a higher division while the 2010 team were recruited to play with another soccer program. Our 2007 girls remain strong and in 2023 we formed a 2012 girls' team to compete. Girl power! With our contract with the Breakers FC set to expire at the conclusion of our spring season we are not pursuing contract renewal. We are thankful to the entire Breakers FC organization for allowing our department to be a part of their program and wish them the absolute best in their future endeavors.

Itty Bitty Sports

Our monthly itty-bitty sport sessions continue to be a great introduction to sports for children ages 3-5. Itty bitty sports is scheduled in monthly sessions for 1 hour per week on Fridays. We offer two time slots: 4:00 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. Itty Bitty is offered 8 months out of the year, March through October. With the success of the program, we are looking to expanding Itty Bitty programming throughout the entire year. The goal of itty-bitty sports is to build motor skills, teach cooperation and foster socialization. These goals are achieved through play of basketball, soccer, flag football and t-ball. We had 207 participants play in itty bitty sports in 2023 which was a slight decrease from our 228 numbers in 2022. For the month of October in 2023, we tried to offer an Itty bitty superhero's skills and drills instead of our flag football program and we saw minimal registration for the new offering. As a result, we are planning to bring back flag football this October.

Gymnastics

We launched our gymnastic program in June of 2023. Since the return of gymnastics, we've had 108 participants ages 1-6 participate in our program. We recently hired a dedicated gymnastics instructor to be able to expand the program. We're extremely excited to see our gymnastics program continue to develop and grow.

Adult Sports

Men's and co-ed softball for ages 18 and beyond continue to be the foundation of adult sports currently. We offer two softball seasons per year: spring and summer season. The season duration is 9 weeks per season: 8 regular season weeks and 1 playoff week for those teams eligible to play. Our regular season is comprised of a round robin schedule and the top 4 teams in each division will get to play in the playoffs. Our Men's softball teams are organized by skill. Teams just starting to play in an entry level play will be assigned to our division 5 league played on Monday nights. Men's teams that have experience playing softball will be assigned to our division 4 league played on Tuesday nights. We offer a co-ed division for teams to play on Friday nights. The co-ed teams are comprised of mixed skilled men and women. We had 16 teams participate in the spring: 6 men's teams in division 5, 5 men's teams in division 4 and 5 co-ed teams in our co-ed division. 16 teams comprised of 288 men and women participated in our spring season. Fall play brought: 5 division 5 teams, 3 division 4 teams and 4 coed teams. This brought our Fall numbers to a total of 14 teams comprised of 252 men and women. In total, our 2023 participation included play for 30 teams for a grand total of 540 men and women. This is a 15% percent growth in participation compared to our 2022 statistics which included a total of 26 teams comprised of 468 men and women. Our plans include to bring back co-ed volleyball as well as Men's and Women's basketball in the late fall of 2024 into early winter of 2025 as we get settled into the Veterans Hall.

Enrichment Sports Programs

Partnerships with organizations like Quicksilver swimming allow us to make a greater impact in our community. Quicksilver is a nationally recognized USA swimming provider who allows us to continue to provide aquatic programs year-round through our partnership. We started our relationship with competitive swim lessons and masters swimming with only 7 participants registered in 2022. We've since then pivoted all our focus to beginner swim lessons on Saturdays for 2023. This pivot resulted in an 81% growth in participation compared to our 2022 numbers.

Michael Loleng continues to offer pickleball lessons for ages 10 through our active older adults. Since the start of our pickleball program in May of 2022, we've taught 144 individuals how to play the fastest growing sport in the nation. We've expanded our tennis offerings to all tennis courts in Watsonville with private lessons available at Joyce McKenzie, Callaghan, Crestview and Ramsay. Private tennis lessons are available to our community with Michael Loleng. Although our tennis programs have expanded to all tennis courts in Watsonville, we've seen 57% decrease in participation in 2023 compared to 2022 program registration numbers. In 2022 we had 64 individuals ages 6- adults participate in tennis lessons with Jon Tarr at our Ramsay Tennis courts. While in 2023 we saw 27 individuals participate in Jon's program.

After evaluation by both parties, it's with a great amount of gratitude and respect that we say thank you to Mr. Fred Castillo and his Shotokan Karate. After March of 2024 Shotokan Karate will now be offered Solely through Mr. Fred Castillo at the Body Zone Dojo.

Measure R

Measure R has provided more programs, trainings, and overall opportunities for our community. This year, a partnership was finalized with the Positive Coaches Alliance to provide our volunteer coaches and sport stakeholders in our community live workshops. As a catalyst for a positive youth sports culture, Positive Coaches Alliance provides research-based training and resources for coaches, parents, athletes, and leaders to ensure a positive youth development experience for ALL kids in our community. We successfully held our first live workshop in March. We are excited to continue to offer these trainings to empower our coaches and sport stakeholders in our community.

Youth ages 5-13 will now have the opportunity to learn how to skateboard through our skateboarding camps. In addition to our skateboarding camp, we are collaborating with Forever Fly skate shop to provide participants in our skate camp free skateboards, helmets, and safety pads to ensure youth continue to recreate long after camp's over.

Our partnership with Skyhawks sports will allow us to expand our sports programs as well as our footprint in more of our parks. Through our Skyhawks sports, golf camps will be provided at Franch Park along with basketball and volleyball camps. All these new opportunities are funded by Measure R.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

Sports programming supports Strategic Plan goal 05 – Community Engagement & Well-Being. Participating in sports programs continues to provide opportunity for not only personal well-being but also provides variety opportunities for the community to engage in leisure activities.

Youth soccer provides the framework for teaching values such as sportsmanship, respect, and integrity. Our volunteer coaches serve as role models teaching life lessons that serve our youth on and off the field. Itty-bitty sports create opportunities to make friends and develop social skills. Gymnastics provides opportunities for successes and challenges resulting in personal growth, boosting self-esteem and confidence. Our softball program promotes community engagement by bringing families together during game nights, fostering a sense of pride and unity. Overall, our sports programs serve as a cornerstone of community development, enriching the lives of everyone in our community.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Expenses for sports programming including aquatics is included in the adopted FY 2023-2024 Fiscal Year Budget. Skatedogs, Skyhawks and Positive Coaching Alliance programming is brought by Measure R funding.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

None.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

None.