

# currents



## Adult Recess

Inside the Boys & Girls Club gymnasium downtown, it's time for recess. Two teams of eight players each line up on either side of a row of six cones, each cone holding a rubber ball. A whistle blows, beginning the third of several dodgeball games played within the course of 30 minutes. The players rush to the balls; those who grab one must quickly decide who is their opponent's weakest link. Is it the pony-tailed girl, jeering at the other team? The guy with the sweat-stained shirt? A player lobs a ball at one of the girls, hitting her on the cheek. Her teammates look at her, panicked. Will she start crying? Not >>>

P.E. was never this much fun.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARL COSTAS

today. She shakes off the pain and throws a retrieved ball at the opposition, determined to get someone out before recess is over. But this bunch won't be heading to geography class after recess. The players, all 21 or older and part of Xoso Sport & Social League, will take off for a local bar to enjoy discounted pitchers of beer and perhaps some nachos.

Started in Sacramento in May 2008, Xoso (pronounced ZO-so) was founded by Nick Berruezo, a sports fan with an entrepreneurial spirit. More than three years later, nearly 4,000 people have participated in sports including kickball and volleyball through Xoso. Adult recess was added in July 2010 and has quickly become one of Xoso's more popular

leagues. For \$65 per season, a member gets to sample the sports Xoso offers, rotating every week among dodgeball, indoor kickball and volleyball.

With these noncontact sports, Berruezo encourages socializing over competitiveness. In fact, it's the social component that keeps Xoso players coming back for more. "It's hard to pout about a loss when you're sharing cheap pitchers of beer with new friends," says Jerry Legrande, a Xoso player since 2010. With its pub crawls and league bars, Xoso gives participants a distinct advantage over city-run leagues. Another advantage: Players can sign up individually, rather than try to hunt for a team in need of players.

The social aspect has a long reach, as many players forge friendships—and even date—through the group. Jessica Duvall, who's been playing with Xoso since 2009, met her boyfriend of two years through the league and regularly travels with her Xoso pals. TammyLynn Fraser, another Xoso player, says her circle of friends has expanded because of the league. "I'm constantly meeting new people," she reports. And all the unofficial Xoso parties ensure "there's something going on every weekend," says Berruezo.

But it's not just beer and parties after recess: The league also provides players an opportunity to give



Gym class for grown-ups: After the game, players head out for beer.

back to the community. Last summer, Xoso worked with Sacramento Metro Chamber's Metro EDGE program to put on a charity dodgeball tournament, with proceeds going to the Educational Opportunity Program at Sacramento State. More recently, Xoso donated prizes and

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provided volunteers at local fundraising events for the American Lung Association and Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services. This new facet to the sports league has been a big hit with its members.

"The volunteer aspect is a great way to give back and also do something with your friends," says Xoso player Scott Fong.

This year, Xoso expanded into two new markets: Fresno and San Jose. There are plans to add more cities in the coming year.

The best part of Xoso's adult recess—aside from the post-game cocktails, that is? You're never the last one picked for a team. "It's low-key and a fun atmosphere," says Fraser.—Corinne Litchfield