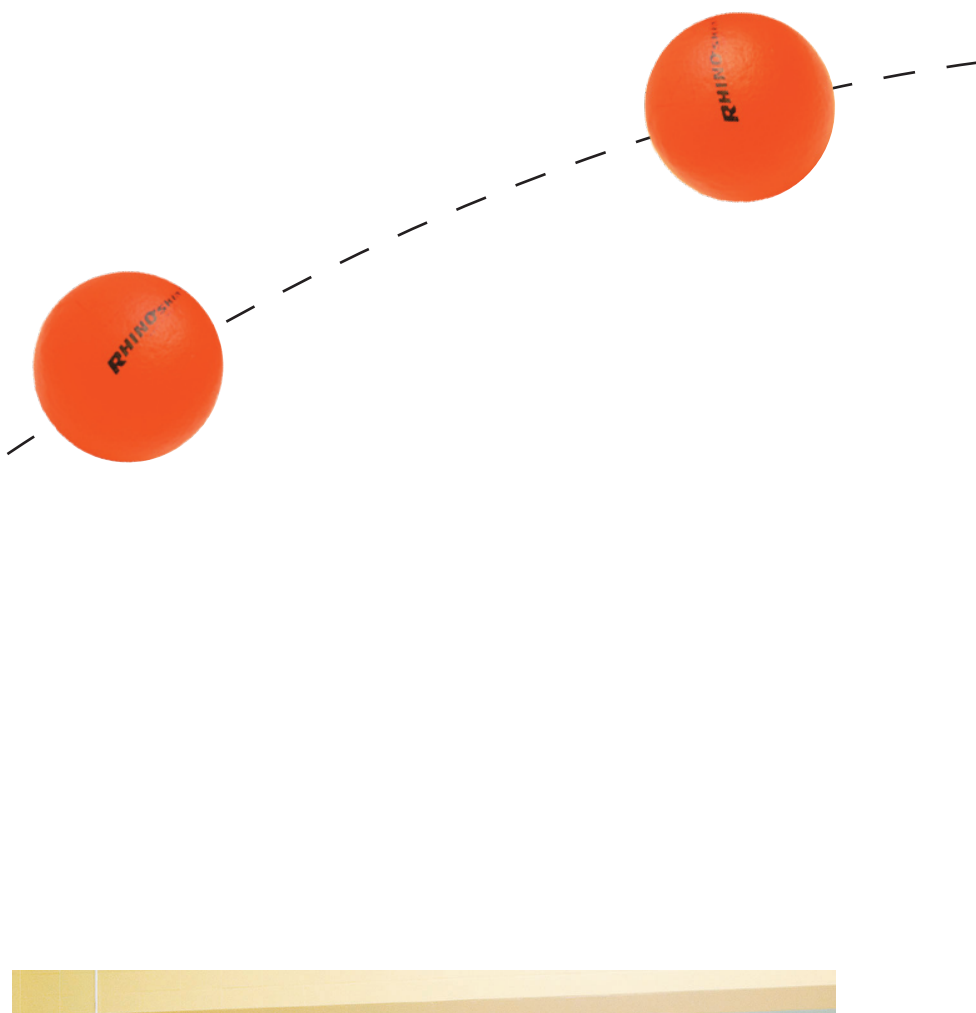


DODGEBALL > LIFE



EXAMINING A LISTER OBSESSION, A&E EDITOR PAUL BLINOV CHARGES INTO THE LISTER DODGEBALL LEAGUE.

PHOTOS BY: STU TREBELCO AND
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“Dodgeball is everything to everyone”: the slogan for the Lister Dodgeball League seems interchangeable with any other concept (Pie could be everything to everyone, for example). But that little boast, which can be read off of any of the rainbow of dodgeball shirts around campus, probably isn't far from the truth in Lister. The league has more than 1500 active participants, a feat of participation that completely dwarfs any SU-run event—or even anything in the residence, for that matter. There's even been bubbling interest in the game outside of Lister—the Business Student's Association holds an annual tournament—though a league of such proportions remains exclusively for Listerites.

According to Chris Ford, the LDL's rules administrator, that massive involvement is just one of the many appealing things about the sport.

“One of the coolest things about it is there isn't [any other] Lister-wide competition, like the King Louis in the '70s and '80s,” he explains. “In my first year, we had the Lister Olympics, but it wasn't well attended; there wasn't any spirit. But with dodgeball, anyone can play it.”

The LDL started up in 2003/04, when a few organized Listerites put the newly constructed David Tuckey Gym to good, healthy, ball-whipping use with dodgeball's maiden season. Since then, the league has just kept on expanding: now, every floor in Lister partakes in weekly sessions of everyone's favourite grade six gym class

game. But at the university level, it's not just dominated by the big, cannon-armed guys. Unlike the elementary-school days, nobody gets picked last for a dodgeball team, and everybody has something to offer.

“Everybody on your team can fill some role in some way. It doesn't matter if you're a star athlete who can huck the ball at 70mph or if you're someone who's had dance training and can weave around the balls. And because you're living with and interacting with [the people] you're playing with on a day-to-day basis, it creates a bond.”

Richard Sampson, the LDL's officiating administrator, agrees. With Listerites eating, sleeping, and being quarantined together, Dodgeball acts as extra intra-floor mortar. It's particularly helpful in the early, gelid months, when the 40-some new students are trying to find some common ground with the people surrounding them.

“I think it's the glue, at least in the beginning. [Dodgeball's] kind of the ice breaker,” he says. “You have your little things, but once you start playing on a team, there's that kinship that develops that helps build a floor up together. You don't even have to be the best. Last year, I was on the third-worst team in the league, and we still got together, got drunk, and played dodgeball; whereas, this year, I'm on one of the top ten teams, and we still

get drunk and go play dodgeball.”

That's not to say that player-to-player issues don't pop up every once in a while—after all, pitting one tightly knit group against another in a sporting competition is bound to spark a few rivalries. Greg Courtice, a dodgeball liaison for his floor, notes that although teams usually keep the competition friendly, the occasional disputes creep up off of the court—mostly from behind a keyboard.

“There's been a fair bit of stuff going down on the website; there's a forum where you can post your thoughts on whatever, and there's been a few cases [of disputes], especially with the all-star week: there's a lot of controversy over who got picked and who didn't get picked. People like the anonymity of the forums and will trash talk people.”

Though they can't control the anonymous comments of the Internet, the LDL Executive tries its best to keep

feuds off of the court by settling disputed themselves. As officiating administrator, Sampson's duties include choosing, training, and maintaining the game's head referees, who oversee each game with the help of eight additional rule-enforcers: eight extra referees, half plucked from each team scheduled to take the court after the game-in-contest finishes.

“If [a floor] doesn't send refs, we dock them two players per [unsent] for their game,” he explains. “Also, if the head refs feel that if [a floor] may as well have not sent refs at all, they can dock them that way.”

Sampson also has to maintain the equipment, a job that seems simple enough considering the minimal amounts of gear necessary to play—people, dodgeballs, and the occasional net for a game of Doctor are about it. But apparently the tools of the game weaken to the point of replacement regularly.

