



Children Can Play Racquetball, Too!

Pearl Harbor Racquet Club - By Frank Bantell

Some people think of racquetball as a sport for older or "mature" adults, but it can be enjoyed by all ages, especially children. They just need to be taught the unique safety aspects of the game, how to hit a ball and how to have fun on the court.

Understanding the safety rules is an important aspect to learn. Impact resistant eye protection should be worn on the court at all times, whether or not someone is hitting the ball. The usual racquetball court door is heavy and should be closed by letting it slam shut instead of reaching for the door's edge. Handles should be used at all times to avoid injury to hands. And, learning proper racquet control and obeying the word "STOP" are key issues.

After learning safety, children can begin with the easiest stroke, the forehand. To demonstrate and reinforce proper mechanics of the swing, place a ball on

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a large paper cup turned upside down (the racquetball version of "tee ball"). Select a cup that puts the ball at or just below the child's knee. The racquet should make contact with the ball in the center of the strings, or the "sweet spot." The cup will go flying but it will help the beginner (child or adult) practice hitting the ball at the proper height.

Having fun on the court is vital in teaching children to enjoy the game. Hitting a paper cup may hold their interest for a while but at some point they need to play a game. Using regular rules can be too hard for beginners, so check out the modified rules for children on the USA Racquetball (USRA) official website at www.usaracquetball.com. The modifications allow for multiple bounces, giving kids a chance to set up and swing at the ball. Other modifications include a shorter game and restrictions on how and where the ball may bounce. Refer to the rules for greater detail.

For additional tips on how to teach racquetball to children or other racquetball questions please contact Frank Bantell at fbantell@teamektelon.com.

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