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# Sports Connection - The First 25 Years (1995 – 2020)

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**EXTREME SPORTS PARK**  
at the Sports Warehouse



**1986 - 1990**

**Allan Niles Haseley & Kelly Ann Beck meet in  
Chapel Hill, NC in 1987.**

Kelly graduated from UNC in 1986 and was helping as an assistant coach on the UNC Women's Golf Team where she played for 4 years. Allan graduated in 1986, also from UNC. They met playing on a coed volleyball team when Allan's neighbor invited Kelly to join the team.



**1990 – 1992**

**Allan & Kelly Haseley are married and move to Greenville, SC where they continue to play recreational volleyball together.**



**1992 – 1995**

**Allan & Kelly Haseley move to Charlotte, NC in 1992. They both continue to play volleyball multiple times a week in the Charlotte City League with the Ski Bees Group.**

Some of the original players on our volleyball teams included Beth Phifer, Joy & Darryl Owens, Rod, Denver, Debbie, Jeff, Scott & Jamie and Lynn & Reid. This group, over beers and pizza after our league games, helped encourage the Haseleys to consider building a Volleyball Center / Club to be able to enjoy playing competitive volleyball in a better facility without all the rules and regulations of the city leagues.

**Picture of Ski Bees**

1995

## Allan and Kelly Haseley open Volleyball Unlimited, a 4-court volleyball facility in Charlotte, NC.

The business plan was to provide a facility for the players in the Charlotte Parks and Recreation Men's, Women's, and Coed Volleyball Leagues where Allan and Kelly played, but were frustrated with the facilities and leagues.



# Volleyball enthusiast serves up dream job

Game plan called for finding site with easy access for players

BRIAN GIFT

PHOTO BY GIFT

When Allan Hawley got the idea for Volleyball Unlimited, he knew finding the right location would provide the spike he needed to make his business a success.

The volleyball enthusiast and his wife, Kelly, opened their indoor volleyball center in December in a warehouse on Wood Branch Drive off Wittinghouse Boulevard. But first a lot of planning went into site selection.

The pair first took a market survey.

"We distributed flyers and mailed back in August and September to deter-



Allan Hawley hopes to have 300 members and 100 teams signed up by the scheduled opening in year one.

PHOTO BY GIFT

## START-UP

mine whether there was enough interest in Charlotte to support a facility," says Hawley, who left a job with a property-management consultant to start the company. "We had a business-reply card people could return. We had over 500 returned and we determined where they came from with ZIP codes and plotted them on a map."

The survey was the basis for his search. Hawley knew he wanted a location near an interstate and a site that was less than 30 minutes from the ZIP codes of most of those who responded

to the survey.

He also had inflexible needs such as a building with at least 28 feet of clearance for volleyball action and a warehouse where poles weren't in the way.

"We (wanted) to have something down on South Boulevard, but we're not in a high-dollar profit business so most of the rent space down there was low ceiling and retail space vs. warehouse space," Hawley says.

He narrowed his search to two locations: I-77 at I-485 and I-77 at I-85. He chose I-485 because it's closer to Fort Mill, Rock Hill and Tryon City.

"Having it at 485 and 77, nobody would have to drive more than 30 minutes at most based on the route we got back. If we did it at I-85, a good

number of people would have had to drive 45 minutes," he says.

Hawley turned to Harry Taylor, a busi-

nessman for F&B, page 28

## Volleyball

CHARLOTTE-MEADOWS 11

ness with Whitacre Properties, to help find the site.

Taylor showed him the 18,000-square-foot Pleasanton warehouse he's now renting. The center is just minutes from I-77 and I-485.

There are a number of variables a business has to consider in selecting a site, Taylor says. To learn or build,

zoning, space needs, shipping and receiving needs, and, of course, location.

He says there are some common annoyances business make when looking for a site. A number of start-ups look for space based on price, he says, which is a mistake.

"One of the biggest mistakes I see is people don't leave enough space and they don't keep an option open on more space," he says.

Hawley says he ended up paying just a little more than he thought he would.

"It actually was a little more than what we were looking at, but the industrial space in Charlotte it was the going rate," he says of his space, which he rents for \$3.61 a square foot.

Hawley also had \$100,000 to start up costs, which included floors and lights.

Volleyball Unlimited now has 350

members who pay an annual \$35 membership fee. The center hosts up to 10 league levels each season and Hawley plans five to five seasons a year. The club also offers a number of other volleyball events. Its goal for this year is 500 members and 100 teams, which would start projected annual revenue of \$150,000.

Hawley had 27 teams in various leagues for the seven winter seasons.

"When we see our growth in team organizations and churches putting in corporate-sponsored teams," he says.

Volleyball Unlimited also seeks with sponsors. A corporate sponsor can bring inside the club for \$150 per season or \$400 per year. Businesses also sponsor teams and then have an opportunity to bring business inside the center.

Spring leagues begin in April.

1996

## Volleyball Unlimited merges with Charlotte Juniors, Queen City Rivals, and Mizuno South to form Carolina Juniors Volleyball (CJV)

The goal of this merger was to offer a combined youth volleyball club in the Charlotte area. CJV utilized the 4-court rented indoor Volleyball Unlimited warehouse as their main practice and tournament facility. Today, Carolina Juniors Volleyball (CJV) has over 2000 members and hundreds of teams each year.



*(Logo by Karen Haseley)*

**TEAM PROGRAMS**

Charlotte's **PREMIER** Volleyball Club!

With over 1,600 girls ages 8-18 and the most successful high school, middle school and collegiate coaches in the area, we offer Team Programs for all levels of players!

**LEARN MORE >**



## Volleyball Unlimited Newsletter

August & September, 1996

"Where Volleyball  
Is More  
Than Just A Game..."

### Congratulations

Congratulations to the following Spring League Winners. Stop by and see their team pictures hanging on the wall at VU.

Men's B - Brew Crew  
Men's BB - Graduated  
Women's BB - Nationwide

Coed B - Law Engineering  
Coed BB - Killer Bees  
Coed A - Short Setz

Men's A - Picasso's  
Women's A - Escape Routine



Volleyball Unlimited would also like to congratulate all the Charlotte Juniors and South Carolina Juniors for their success in the past USAV season. Everyone worked very hard and should be proud of their season.

Special Congratulations to

Charlotte Red  
and  
SC Mizuno Juniors

for qualifying for the USAV Nationals in San Jose, CA.

### Extra Cash? Free Play?

Volleyball Unlimited is looking for a few dedicated members to referee on Monday, Tuesday and/or Wednesday nights for our Fall season. If you are interested please call Allan at 583-1444.

### What's Inside?

League Information  
Carolina Junior Volleyball News  
Corporate/Church Leagues  
Facility Rules & Reminders  
Skills Clinics & House Teams  
August & September Calendars



### Facility Rules & Reminders

- Everyone (members & non-members) must check in at the front counter before entering the VU facility.
- Only VU members with a league game are allowed to play for FREE on the Open Courts.
- Team fees are due by the registration deadline unless special arrangements are made with the VU director.
- No food or drinks are allowed on or near the sport courts.
- No balls are allowed in the netted concession area.
- On league nights, the open court will be used at 10 minutes till the hour by teams that have the next league game. This warm-up time will end at the top of the hour.
- Please do not leave empty bottles and trash lying around.
- Sixes have priority on the Open sport courts.
- The sand court and sport courts can be rented at anytime.
- Please do not hang or pull on the volleyball and drop nets.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Volleyball Unlimited does listen to your suggestions and comments. Many of the recent changes have been from member suggestions. VU is your vball club, so speak up!

## FALL LEAGUE REGISTRATION

Registration deadline is August 12, 1996.  
Play begins August 19, 1996

### VU Information

#### Phone

(704) 583-1444

#### Fax

(704) 543-7290

#### Email

Vucjv@aol.com

#### Mailing Address

P.O. Box 470881  
Charlotte, NC 28247-0882

#### Physical Address

1327-G Wood Branch Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28273

### Standard Hours Of Operation\*

Monday - Thursday

5:30 pm - 10:30 pm

Saturday

9:00 am - Noon

Saturday & Sunday

1:00 pm - 6:00 pm (if raining)

\*Hours are subject to change.

### 2 Times A Night!

Your team can now elect to play two times (2 hours) a night. Teams can choose to pay \$320 per season (versus \$240) and play 6 games per night. This is only 30% more to be able to play twice as much volleyball in the same season. Space in the upcoming season is limited, so be sure to register early to ensure your team a spot...or two.

### Next COED Tourney

Friday, September 20, 1996

6:30 - 10:30 pm

Sign up by 10:00 pm  
September 18, 1996

**1997**

## **Volleyball Unlimited rents extra volleyball court space to Guillermo Uribe.**

Guillermo uses volleyball courts to teach soccer and small-sided soccer leagues during times when the volleyball courts were not being used.



## **Volleyball Unlimited partners with Todd Jesso to create TeamWorks Adventure Center.**

TeamWorks built a “home-made” high ropes obstacle course between the columns of the volleyball courts to provide corporate team building programs during the day and weekends when the volleyball courts were not being used. Unfortunately, the new business never actually opened. (Note: 15 years later, Sports Connection adds two indoor “commercial” Ropes Courses above Arcade Rooms.)

**1998**

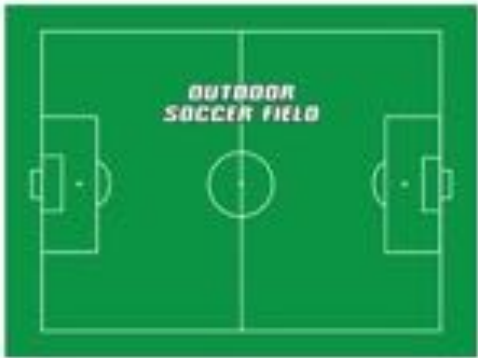
**Volleyball Unlimited changes name to Sports Warehouse in November of 1998 and builds a new facility to offer Soccer in addition to Volleyball.**

Sports Warehouse builds a 35,000 indoor sports complex on Granite Street with half of the new facility dedicated to Indoor Soccer with the other half dedicated to Adult Volleyball and CJV.



**Birthday Parties were not part of the original business plan, but were later added to Sports Warehouse's offerings.**

Mark Richardson of the Carolina Panthers asked to use the indoor soccer field for his son Ace's 7<sup>th</sup> birthday party before Sports Warehouse opened to the public. Twenty 7-year-old boys played football and soccer with Mark and Guillermo quarterbacking each team. What started with one party, as a favor, has turned in to 400 parties a month at Sports Connection's 3 Charlotte locations.



# The BUSINESS JOURNAL

SERVING CHARLOTTE AND THE METROPOLITAN AREA

## Volleyball center spiked to make way for more sports

A \$1.5 million, 35,000-square-foot renovated warehouse has opened as an indoor athletic center offering basketball, soccer, volleyball and lacrosse.

Sports Warehouse, owned and operated by Allan and Kelly Haseley,



Sports  
Business

ERIK  
SPANBERG

ley, is a revamped version of Volleyball Unlimited. The Haseleys started Volleyball Unlimited as an indoor facility in 1995. The venture was successful enough for the Haseleys to make it a full-time project, but it never became profitable.

"The problem we discovered was that there weren't a lot of 7-year-olds playing volleyball," Allan Haseley says. "It was all adults. With the new place, we've got sports that bring in kids and adults. It's much stronger in terms of potential."

Sports Warehouse employs five full-time, and expects annual revenue of \$300,000 to \$600,000 its

first year. It should begin turning a profit within two years. The company is already exploring expansion into the University City area as well as Columbia.

The Haseleys own the 3.6-acre tract on Westinghouse Boulevard that houses the facility. They paid \$306,000 for the land, formerly owned by Norfolk Southern. Gary Stephens of Coldwell Banker brokered the deal. Metrolina Builders Inc. handled design and construction for the project.

Sports Warehouse draws 80% of its business through recreational leagues such as the Charlotte Sport & Social Club. Fees for volleyball and basketball courts are \$35 an hour; indoor soccer costs \$75 per hour. The facility also includes a game room, snack shop and pro shop.

The facility opened late last month. Direct-mail flyers have been sent to the 5,000 people who have played at Volleyball Unlimited, and a three-month commercial run on WCCB-TV is airing. WFNZ-AM talk-show hosts Steve Crahan and Sandy Penner are promoting Sports Warehouse on-air,

and 20,000 flyers are being distributed at area parks and sporting goods outlets.

"Our marketing has been building for several months as we've gotten closer to opening," Haseley says. "The response has been very strong."

Haseley says competition isn't a problem because sports facilities such as the YMCA and health clubs have a narrow membership focus. By emphasizing recreational leagues, Sports Warehouse has a broader target audience.

"This is something that people have been asking for ever since we started the volleyball business," Haseley says. "It was a natural outgrowth."

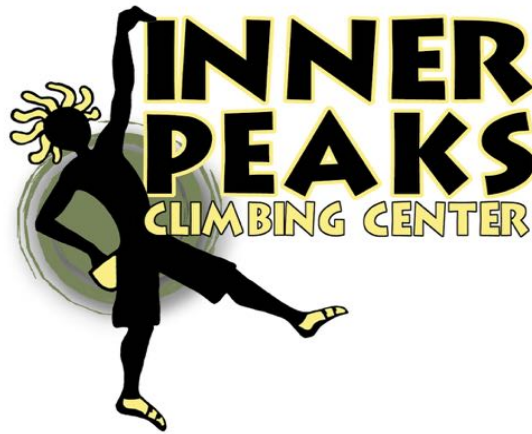
Volleyball Unlimited has been folded into Sports Warehouse. Haseley, a 36-year-old former computer specialist, expects the client base he built from the volleyball venture will help build business at Sports Warehouse quickly.

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**1999**

**Allan and Kelly Haseley partnered with Doug and Page Cosby to create InnerPeaks, an Indoor Rock Climbing Facility.**

Doug and Page were originally looking to rent space inside of Sports Warehouse, but all partners agreed to rent a larger warehouse instead in the Five-Points area of Charlotte. InnerPeaks offers memberships, public climbing, parties, and camps and works closely with Sports Warehouse on marketing, joint parties, etc.



**Sports Warehouse partners with Sharon Davis of Encore Gymnastics to create a 2500 sq. ft. Gymnastics studio inside Sports Warehouse.**



**2001**

**Sports Warehouse purchases Charlotte Sports Connection, an Outdoor Sport and Social Club, and hires the owner, Bryan Paschal.**

Together Sports Warehouse and Charlotte Sports Connection becomes the largest provider of Adult Sports & Social Activities (Indoor and Outdoor) in Charlotte.



**Sports Warehouse hires Medallion Athletic Products to build the first outdoor artificial turf field in Charlotte in the back of Granite Street.**



**2002**

## **Sports Warehouse partners with Metrolina Paintball to form the Extreme Sports Park at the Sports Warehouse building.**

The Sports Warehouse building was remodeled to have Paintball (outside on the soccer field), Paintball Pro Shop, Skate Park, and Laser Tag in place of the volleyball courts. The courts were placed under the indoor turf field and soccer was played part of the week and volleyball the other part of the week by rolling and unrolling the turf each week.

### **EXTREME SPORTS PARK**

at the Sports Warehouse



# **The Skate Park was designed by Brandon Davis, using his Tony Hawk Video Game!**

Brandon, the son of Encore Gymnastics owner Sharon Davis, designed the entire Skate Park with his Tony Hawk Video Game. Sharon then converted the video game design to a set of plans and Medallion Athletic Products was hired to build the Skate Park.



# 2003

**From 2003 to 2007, Sports Warehouse rented a 20,000 sq. ft. indoor warehouse across the street from the Granite Street location and called it Sports Warehouse #2 to use for Adult Volleyball Leagues and CJV. Most customers and employees referred to the second location as “The Deuce”.**

It was at “The Deuce” that the volleyball programs grew to their highest numbers and allowed the original location to offer Soccer, Skate Park, Paintball and Laser Tag. Birthday Parties grew to over 200 per month.



**2005**

## **Sports Warehouse partners with Evan Miller and Charlotte Sports Center.**

Sports Warehouse and Charlotte Sports Center were competitors for many years. In 2005, Allan & Evan met each other and decided to work together to cross-market leagues, parties, and camps, and purchase an internet-based software (Sports-IT) to allow for a shared customer database between the two companies, but with separate accounting.

Evan Miller then becomes a partner of Sports Warehouse and Granite Street Real Estate Investors. Charlotte Sports Center continues to be owned by Evan and 17 other investors. Allan and Kelly chose not to become partners at this time of the Charlotte Sports Center and be partners with so many people they did not know and had no interest in business on the North side of Charlotte.



**Sports Warehouse purchases a youth soccer franchise called Lil Kickers for kids ages 18 months to 9 years of age for South and North Charlotte.**

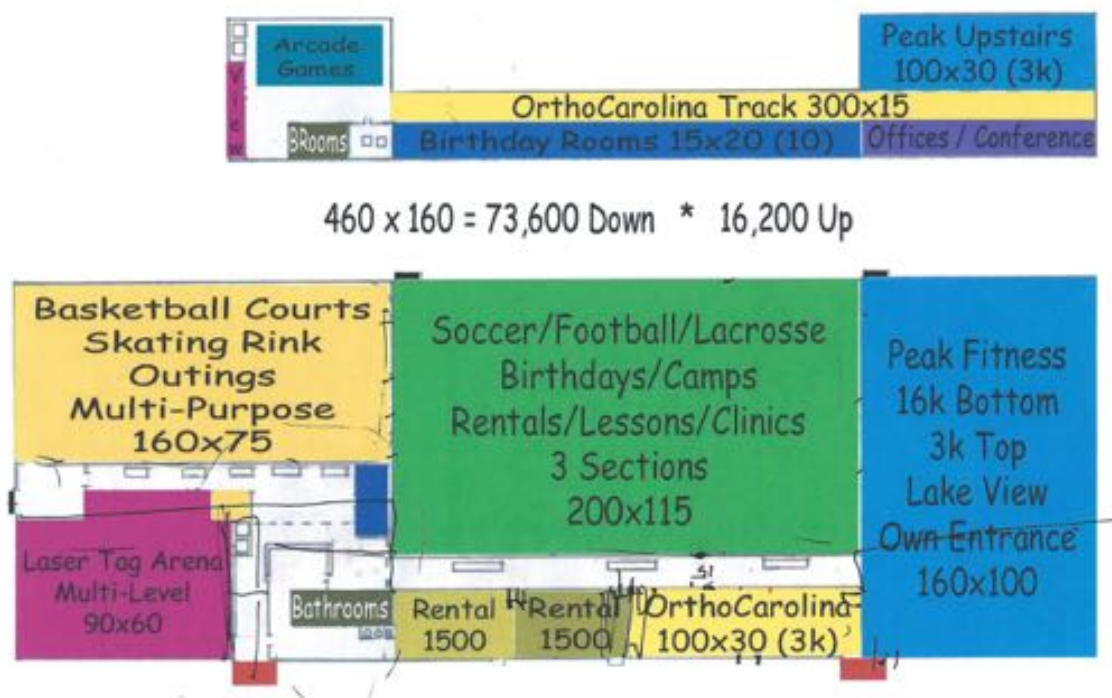


2006

## Sports Warehouse begins plans to build a new Sports Center on a residential piece of land in the Ballantyne area of Charlotte.

A deal is structured with Parks & Rec to do a land swap to allow more street frontage for the new Sports Center. A rezoning permit is granted allowing the land to be rezoned from residential to Institutional-Conditional. A full set of building plans were created for a new 70,000 **Sports Center**, with Basketball, Roller Skating, Fitness Center and Laser Tag. After spending money on designs and rezoning, the estimates to build the building were 1.5 million over budget due to an error by the civil engineer, so the project was put on indefinite hold and never built. That mistake may have cost Sports Warehouse a lot of money in the short term, but saved us from potential bankruptcy in the long term.

Sports Connection – New Floor Plan (Main Revenue Areas)



**Sports Warehouse changes name to Sports Connection to have a more “sophisticated” name than “Warehouse” in anticipation of opening a new facility in Ballantyne. Adds the Tag line “Sports & FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT” to the name/logo.**



2007

## **Sports Connection builds a Family Entertainment and Fitness Center (versus a Sports Center) in the Ballantyne Area and opens in December 2007.**

After much research (and a little luck) it was decided a Family Entertainment Center focusing on KIDS and FAMILIES and PARTIES had a better chance of success than catering to young adults just playing SPORTS. Using the concept of the Food Court at the mall, the plan was to have a number of traditional stand alone forms of family entertainment all under one roof for all ages.



**Sports Connection partners with Peak Fitness to own and operate a Fitness Center inside the Sports Connection – Ballantyne.**



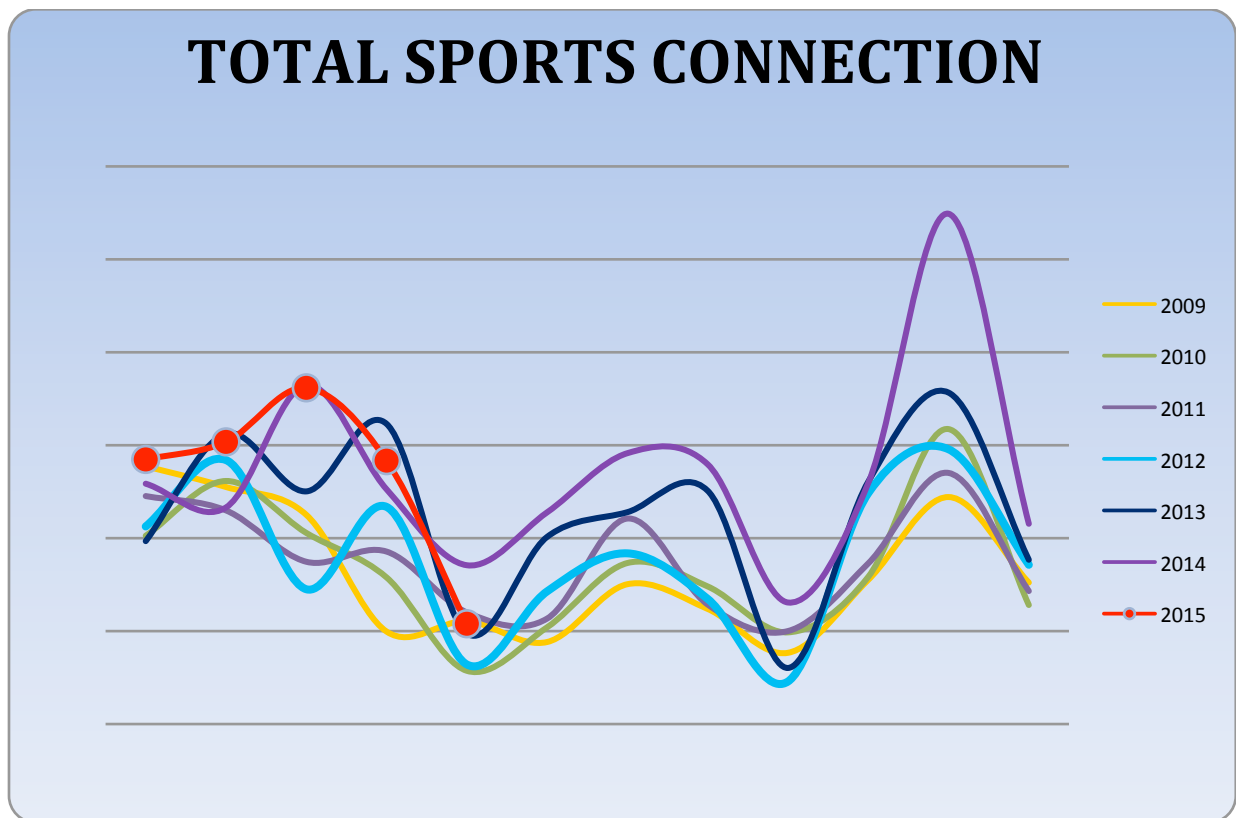
*Family Fun & Fitness*



# 2008

**Sports Connection-Ballantyne is very fortunate during the first full year of business to survive during the “recession” in 2008 and 2009 and actually experienced tremendous growth.**

Many families chose to save money and gas by having “stay-cations” at the Sports Connection, versus traveling on more expensive “vacations” out of town. Birthday Parties and Alcohol sales also were very high during this period.



**2009**

**Sports & Fitness is created to take over the management of the Sports Connection-Ballantyne and Charlotte Sports Center–Northlake Fitness Centers when Peak Fitness went bankrupt.**

Evan Miller focused on the Fitness Centers while Allan continued to focus on the Sports and Family Entertainment operations. Sports Connection provided much of the financial backing and support to begin expanding Sports and Fitness to other locations including Northlake, South Boulevard, Morehead, University, Lake Norman, and Indian Trail.



2010

**Sports Connection merges with Interlink to create SportsLink.**



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SportsLink owned and managed all Adult Leagues and Programs for Indoor and Outdoor Sports in Charlotte and also sponsored many Social Events. Most Indoor Games were played at the Sports Connection locations and Outdoor Games were played all over town. SportsLink offered leagues in most all Sports, including over 400 softball teams each season.

# **Sports Connection purchases AIM Fitness and assumes the lease of a 10,000 sq. ft. personal training facility on Carmel Road.**

After bailing the original owner out of debt, Sports Connection hired the owner and other trainers to offer Personal Training to Adults.

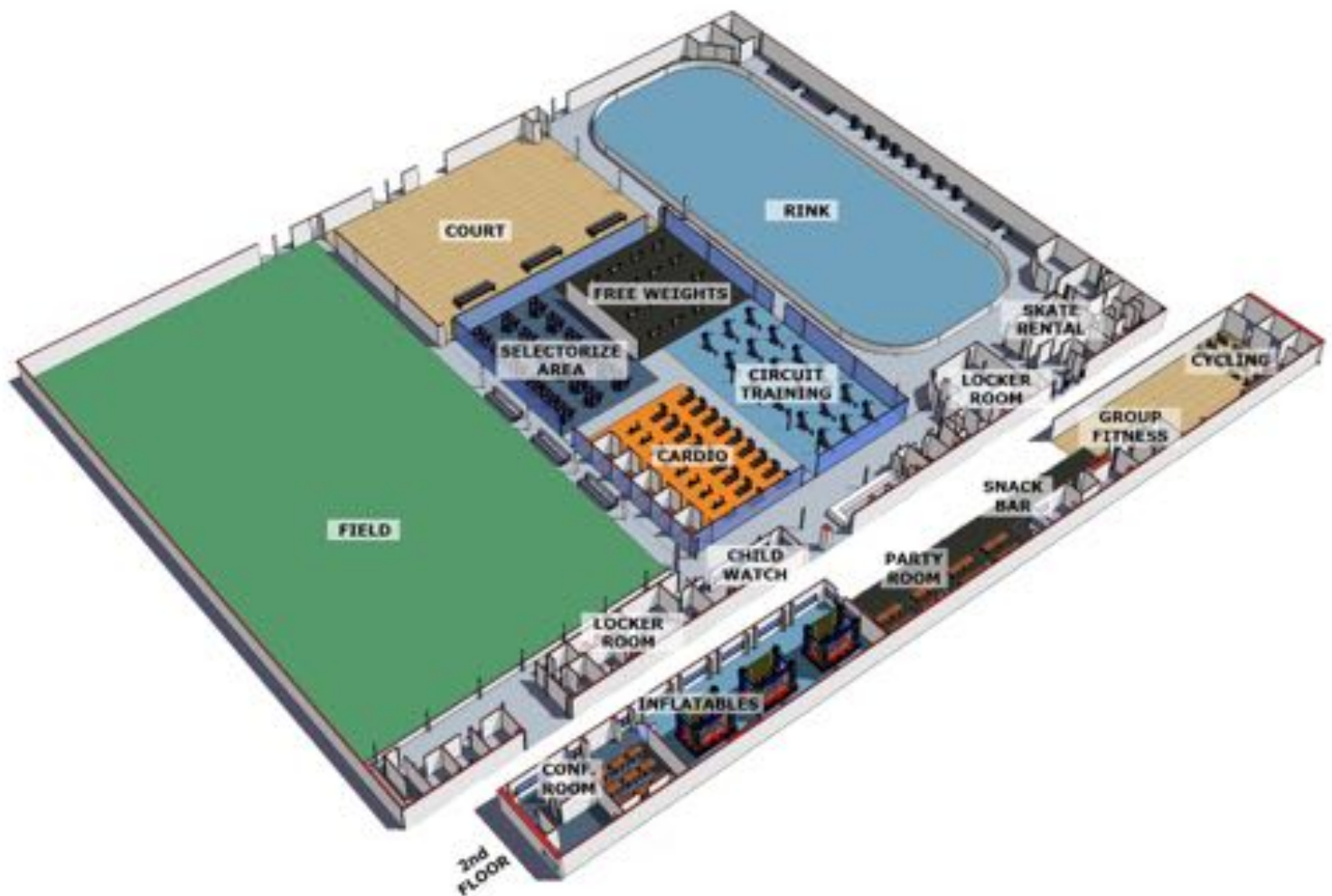


After discovering the owner was a thief and the trainers proved they could not manage and grow AIM Fitness, Sports Connection dissolves AIM Fitness and renames it Sports Connection–Carmel Road and adds a soccer field and offers leagues and Lil' Kickers classes.



# **Sports Connection purchases some shares of the Charlotte Sports Center (Operations) and CSC Real Estate (Building) when one of the 17 original investors passes away.**

Evan Miller is still the managing member of CSC. Sports Connection continues to choose not to be more actively involved with CSC at this point and focuses on current Sports Connection locations. CSC and Sports Connection continue to share resources and partner on marketing, leagues and programs.



(Charlotte Sports Center in 2010)