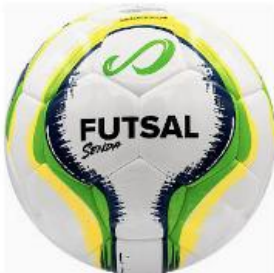


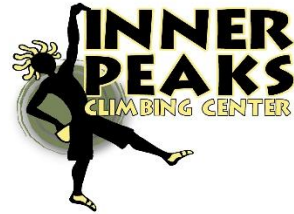


# ***“Keep Your Eye On The Ball”***



**Sports Connection**  
**The First 30 Years**  
**1995 - 2025**







**EXTREME SPORTS PARK**  
at the Sports Warehouse



**PICKLEBALL**  
*NetSkirt*



**...To Be Continued**

# Timeline - 1995 - 2025

- 1995 Volleyball Unlimited Opens In Rented Warehouse.
- 1996 Carolina Juniors Volleyball Merges With 3 Local Clubs.
- 1997 Indoor Soccer Rentals By Guillermo On Volleyball Courts.  
TeamWorks Adventure Center Built Above Volleyball Courts.
- 1998 Named Changed To Sports Warehouse. Built "Warehouse".  
New Indoor Soccer And Volleyball Center Opens.  
First Birthday Party.
- 1999 Inner Peaks Rock Climbing Partnership And New Facility.  
Encore Gymnastics Partnership.
- 2001 Purchase Charlotte Sports & Social Club.  
First Artificial Turf Field Built At Granite Street.
- 2002 Open Extreme Sports Park At Granite Street.
- 2003 Open The "Duece" - Volleyball Unlimited #2.
- 2005 Partner With Evan Miller and Charlotte Sports Center.  
Purchase Lil' Kickers Youth Soccer Franchise.
- 2006 Purchase Land In Ballantyne For New Sports Center.  
Change Name To Sports Connection.  
Change Plans To Build Family Entertainment Center.
- 2007 Sports Connection Family Entertainment Center Opens.  
Partnership with Peak Fitness To Manage Fitness Center.
- 2008 First Year Of FEC During 2008 Global Recession.
- 2009 Peak Fitness Declares Bankruptcy. Sports & Fitness Born.
- 2010 Sports Connection And Interlink Merge. Create SportsLink.  
Partner, Then Purchase AIM Fitness Training Center.  
Purchase Some Shares Of Charlotte Sports Center.  
Breast Cancer Walk And First Sports Connection Video.

- 2011 Purchase All Of Charlotte Sports Center And Building.  
Sell SportsLink To Focus On FEC, Fitness Centers and CJV.  
Purchase Building And Open 7<sup>th</sup> Sports & Fitness.
- 2012 Major Renovation Of Northlake To FEC and Fitness Center.  
Staff Builds Habitat House From Ground Up For 12 Days.  
Sports & Fitness Sold To Fitness Connection.  
New Turf And Walls for Northlake Indoor Soccer Field.  
Granite Street Indoor Soccer Renovated With New Turf.
- 2013 Partnered With John Lytton With Performance Unlimited.  
Purchase Evan's Shares In All Businesses And Buildings.
- 2014 Northlake Renovated Again To Add More Volleyball Courts.  
Residential Division Added To Lease Houses To Employees.
- 2015 Created Carolina Futsal And Partnered With Guillermo.  
Added More Volleyball Courts. Shared Soccer Fields.  
Carolina Juniors Volleyball Makes Major Changes For Future.  
Sports Connection Celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- 2016 Built New Dedicated Beach Courts On Neighbors Property.  
Converted Both Indoor Soccer Fields To Volleyball Courts.
- 2017 More Volleyball Courts Added. Beach Courts Moved. CJV Bug.
- 2018 Volleyball Tournaments Added. Food Truck Purchased.  
Partnership With Beach South To Grow Beach Volleyball.
- 2019 24-Year-Old Sport Court Replaced With Tarkett Flooring.  
Pickleball Charlotte Is Created. Pickleball Boom Starts.
- 2020 Inner Peaks Purchases Building And Moves After 21 Years.  
CJV East Opens In Old Inner Peaks Building. Purchases UVC.  
COVID Closes 6 Locations. Hundreds Of Staff Laid Off.  
Mike And Bre Rhem Join Allan And Kelly To Help Manage SC.  
Major Renovation Plans For All Locations Created.

- 2021 New Software Purchased To Manage Pickleball Charlotte.  
Ballantyne FEC Slowly Begins To Reopen.  
New Partner, Jon Brady, Joins The FEC Team At Ballantyne.  
Tennis, Futsal, Basketball And Field Hockey Added To SC.
- 2022 Pickleball Charlotte Set To Merge With Charlotte Indoor.  
First Indoor Dedicated Pickleball Facility Opens Nov 2022.
- 2023 Outdoor Pickleball Courts Open At Ballantyne.  
Sports Connection Purchases Charlotte Indoor Tennis.  
Pickleball Charlotte Opens 2<sup>nd</sup> Dedicated Indoor Facility.
- 2024 Pickleball Is Booming At Pickleball Charlotte.  
Pickleball Charlotte Opens 3<sup>rd</sup> Dedicated Indoor Facility.  
Northlake Renovated AGAIN For Volleyball AND Pickleball.
- 2025 Jon Brady Leaves Sports Connection Family Entertainment.  
Charlotte Padel and SC Partner To Add Indoor Padel Courts.  
Golf Simulators Are Added To Ballantyne FEC Location.  
Sports Connection Acquires Matthews Tennis Center.  
Sports Connection Celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! 1995-2025.

## **To View Complete SC History Online**

<https://SportsConnectionNC.com/the-history-of-sports-connection/>



1995

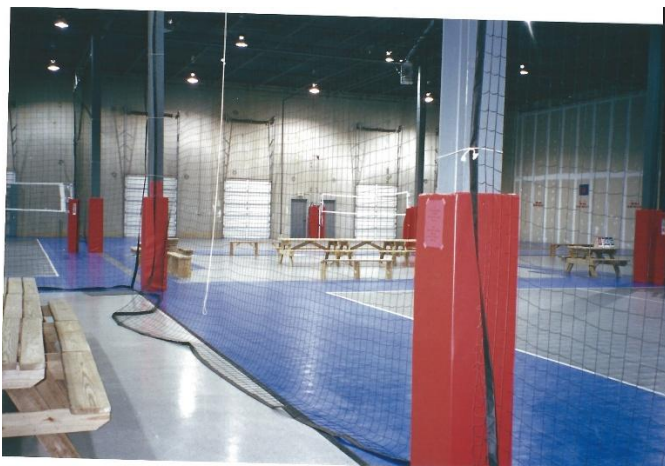
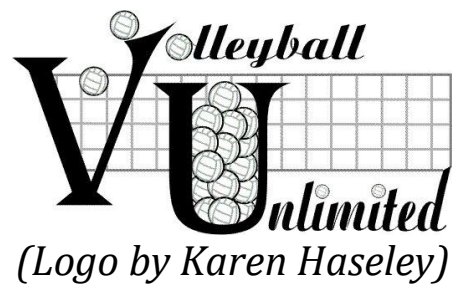


2025

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

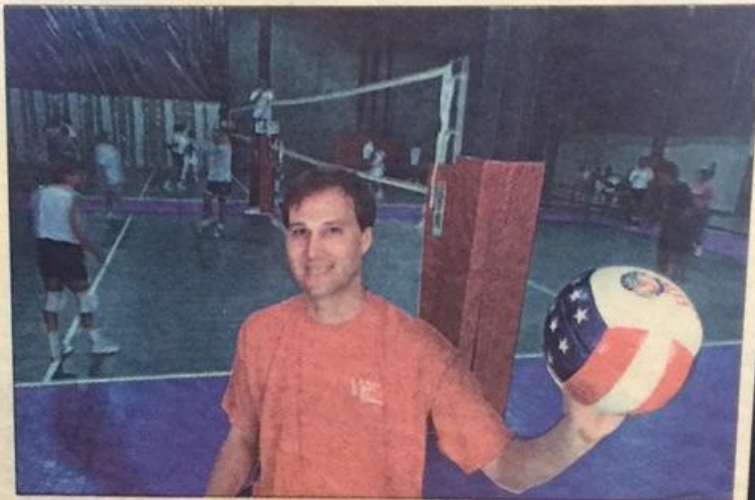
BRIAN GOTT

STAFF WRITER

When Allan Haseley 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 Westinghouse Boulevard. But first a lot of planning went into site selection.

The pair first took a market survey. "We distributed flyers and mailers back in August and September to deter-



Allan Haseley hopes to have 500 members and 100 teams signed on at his volleyball Unlimited by year end.

Wayne Morris

## START-UP

mine whether there was enough interest in Charlotte to support a facility," says Haseley, 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 300 returned and we determined where they came from with ZIP codes and plotted them on a map."

The survey was the basis for his site search. Haseley 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," Haseley 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 Tega Cay.

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

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

Haseley turned to Harry Taylor, a bro-

Please see VOLLEYBALL, page 20

## Volleyball

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

ker with Whiteside Properties, to help find his site.

Taylor showed him the 19,200 square-foot Pinebrook 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 lease or build;

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

He says there are some common errors small businesses 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 lease enough space and they don't keep an option open on more space," he says.

Haseley 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 for industrial space in Charlotte it was the going rate," he says of his space, which he rents for \$3.83 a square foot.

Haseley also had \$100,000 in start-up costs, which included floors and nets.

Volleyball Unlimited now has 350

members who pay an annual \$35 membership fee. The center hosts up to 10 league levels each season and Haseley plans four 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 meet projected annual revenue of \$150,000.

Haseley had 47 teams in various leagues for the recent winter season.

"Where we see our growth is from corporations and churches putting in company-sponsored teams," he says.

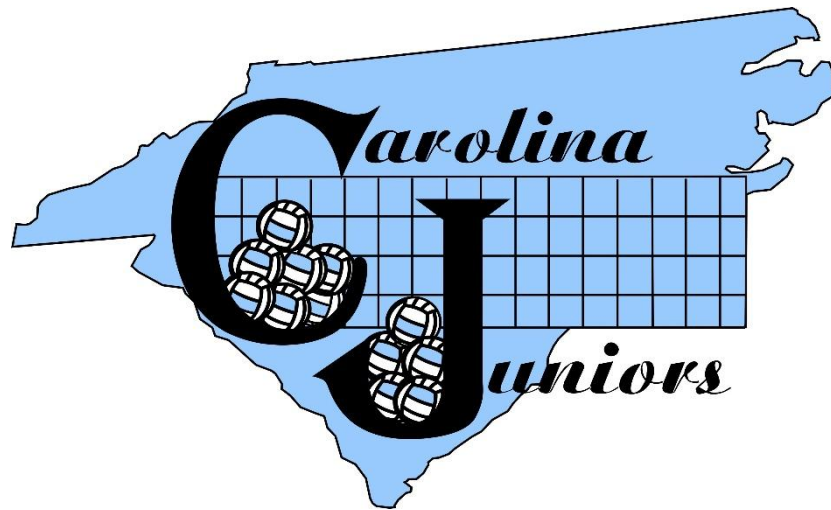
Volleyball Unlimited also works with sponsors. A corporate banner can hang inside the club for \$150 per season or \$400 per year. Businesses also sponsor teams and then have an opportunity to hang banners inside the center.

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 6000 members and hundreds of teams each year.



*(Logo by Karen Haseley)*

**TEAM PROGRAMS**

Charlotte's PREMIER Volleyball Club!

With over 1,800 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 BII - Graduated  
Women's III - Nationwide

Coed B - Law Engineering  
Coed III - Elder Bean  
Coed A - Shoot Sets

Men's A - Pease's  
Women's A - Escape Routines



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 Real  
and  
SC Atlanta Juniors

for qualifying for the USAV  
Nationals in San Juan, 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.
- Sizes 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 volleyball club, so speak up!

## VU Information

Phone  
(704) 583-1444

Fax  
(704) 543-7290

Email  
Vucv@aol.com

Mailing Address  
P.O. Box 470881  
Charlotte, NC 28247-9802

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 \$120 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 seasons 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

## FALL LEAGUE REGISTRATION

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

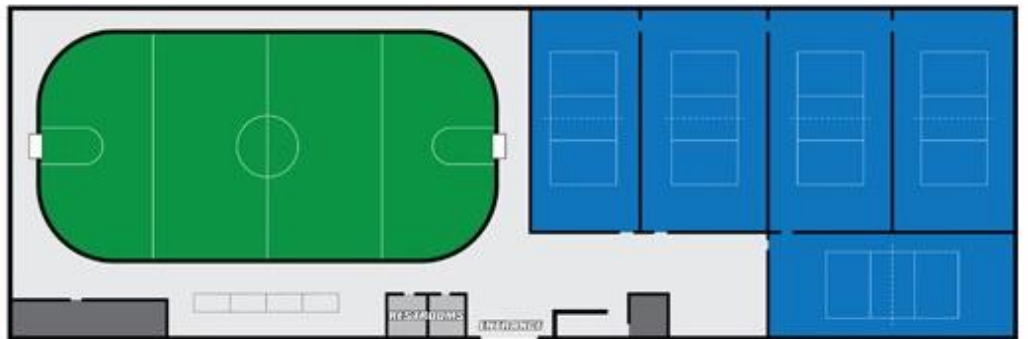
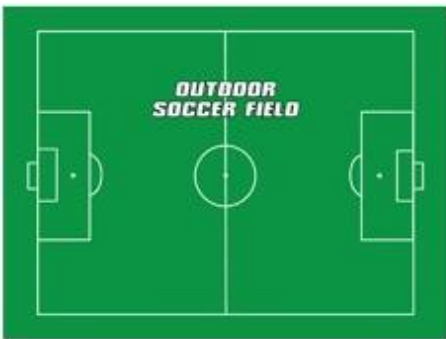
**Volleyball Unlimited Changes Name to Sports Warehouse in November of 1998 and Builds a New Facility to Offer Soccer in Addition to Volleyball.**

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 Hase-



### 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 Czaban 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."

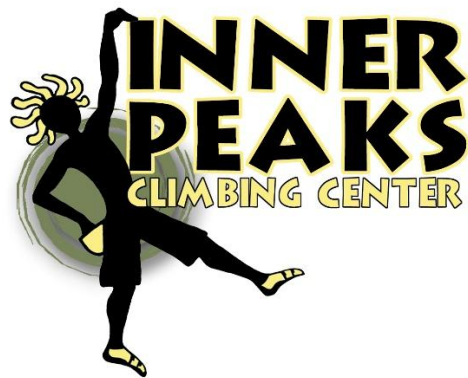
Volleyball Unlimited has been folded into Sports Warehouse. Haseley, a 36-year-old former computer specialist, expects the client base he built from the volleyball venture will help build business at Sports Warehouse quickly.

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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 sqft. 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 St.**



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



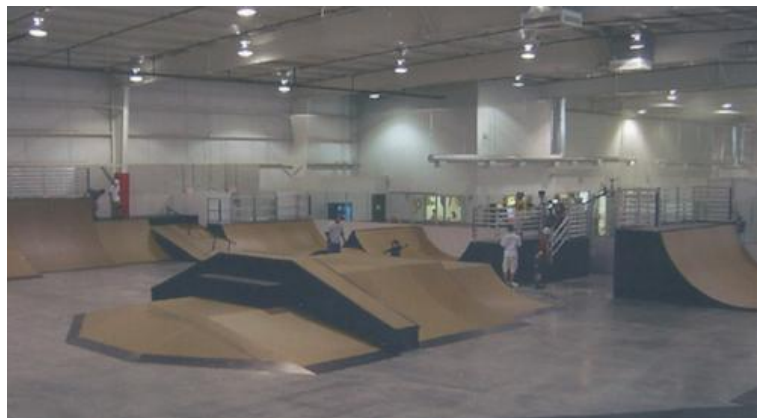
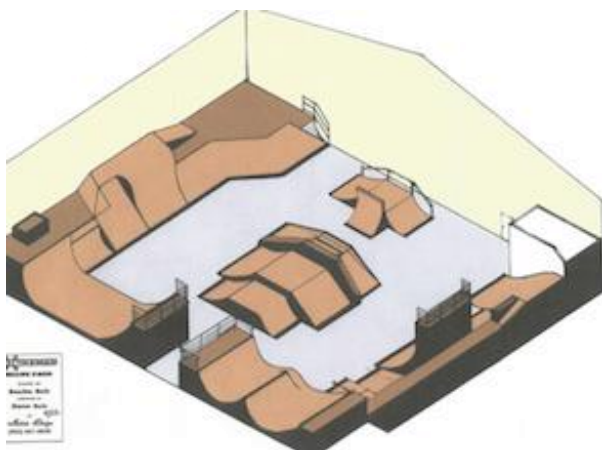
# The Skate Park was Designed by Brandon Davis, Using his Tony Hawk Video Game!

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.



Sharon Davis and her son, Brandon, used a popular video game to create Charlotte's first indoor skate park in Sports Warehouse off Westinghouse Boulevard. SCW photo by Sean O'Connell.

## Mother, son make virtual skate park a reality



**2003**

**From 2003 to 2007, Sports Warehouse Rented a 20,000 sqft. 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.

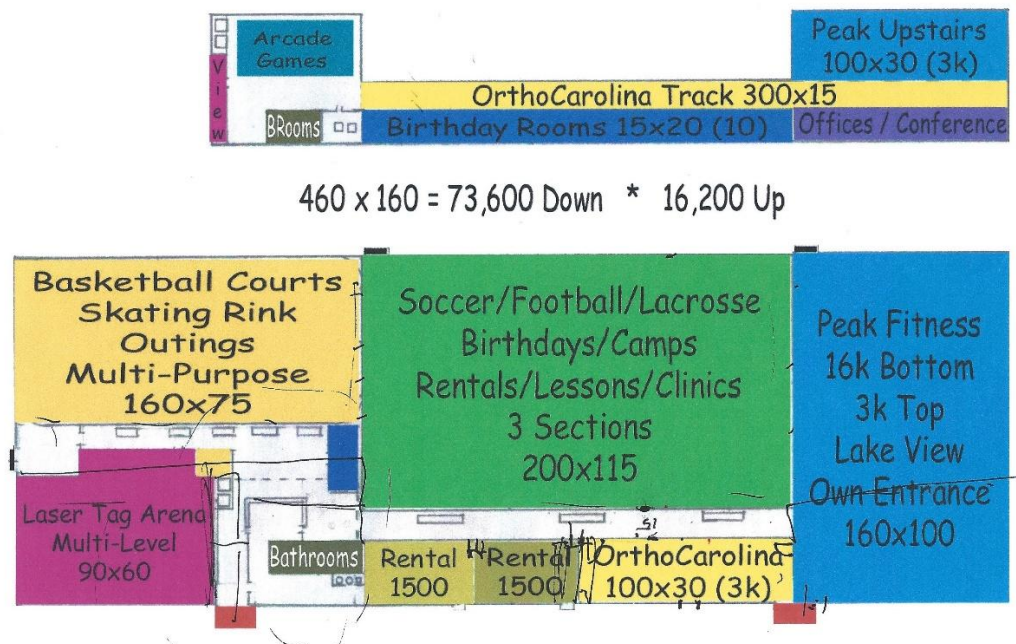


2006

# 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)



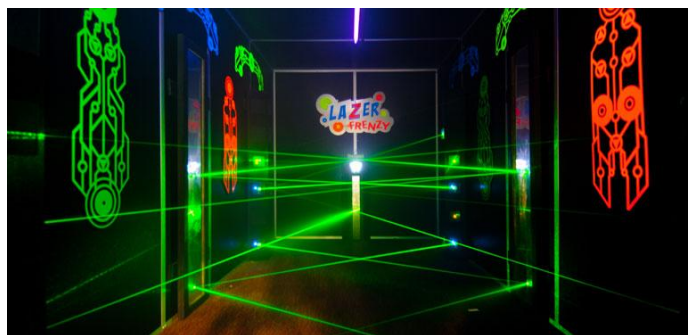
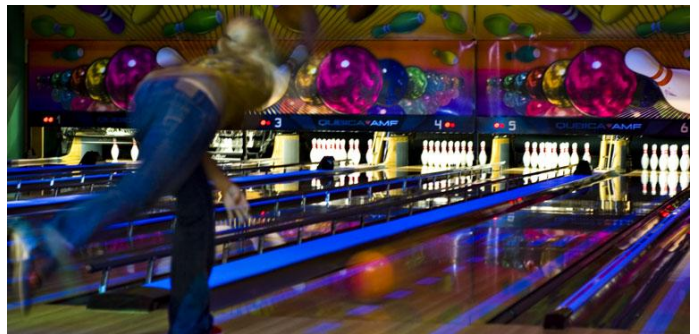
**Sports Warehouse Changes Name to Sports Connection to have a More “Sophisticated” Name than “Warehouse” in Anticipation of Opening a New Facility in Ballantyne. Adds the Tag line “Sports & FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT” to the Name/Logo.**



2007

# Sports Connection Builds a Family Entertainment and Fitness Center (versus a Sports Center) in the Ballantyne Area and Opens in December 2007.

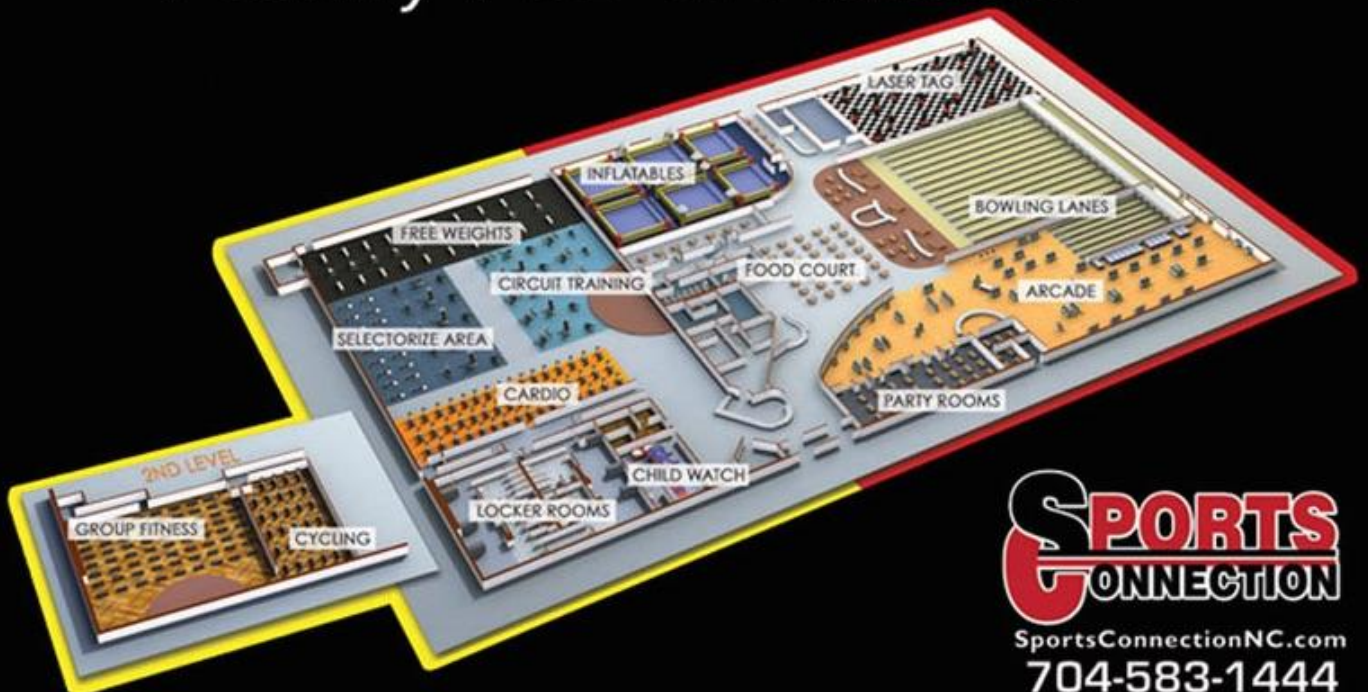
After much research (and a little luck) it was decided a Family Entertainment Center focusing on KIDS and FAMILIES and PARTIES had a better chance of success than catering to young adults just playing SPORTS. The plan was to have a number of traditional stand alone forms of family entertainment all under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



# Sports Connection Partners with Peak Fitness to Own and Operate a Fitness Center Inside the Sports Connection – Ballantyne.



## *Family Fun & Fitness*





**2009**

## **Sports & Fitness is Created to Take Over the Fitness Centers when Peak Fitness files for Bankruptcy.**

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.



+



=



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 sqft. 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.



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.





# 2011

## **Sports Connection Purchases all of Charlotte Sports Center and CSC Real Estate and Renames CSC, Sports Connection–Northlake.**

All Charlotte Sports Center original investors decide to sell their shares to Sports Connection. Evan Miller's shares are contributed to Sports Connection in exchange for additional ownerships of Sports Connection. Allan & Evan strongly feel a Sports & Family Entertainment Center and New Fitness Center inside the old Charlotte Sports Center will be more profitable than the Hockey, Soccer and Basketball.



## **Sports Connection Sells SportsLink to Partner, Christian Crute.**

With the purchase of Charlotte Sports Center, Sports Connection decides to focus on Family Entertainment and Fitness Centers, and either own 100% of SportsLink or sell it. Sports Connection offers to buy Christian's 49% ownership, but after securing a loan from a friend and actually "flipping a coin", he decides to buy instead of sell. The decision turns out to be in the best long-term interest of Sports Connection and allows the business to focus on the more profitable programs and activities and locations, instead of adult leagues at remote locations on Parks & Recreation fields

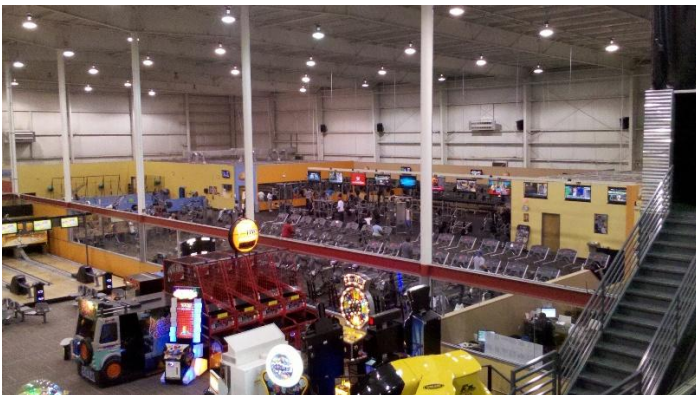
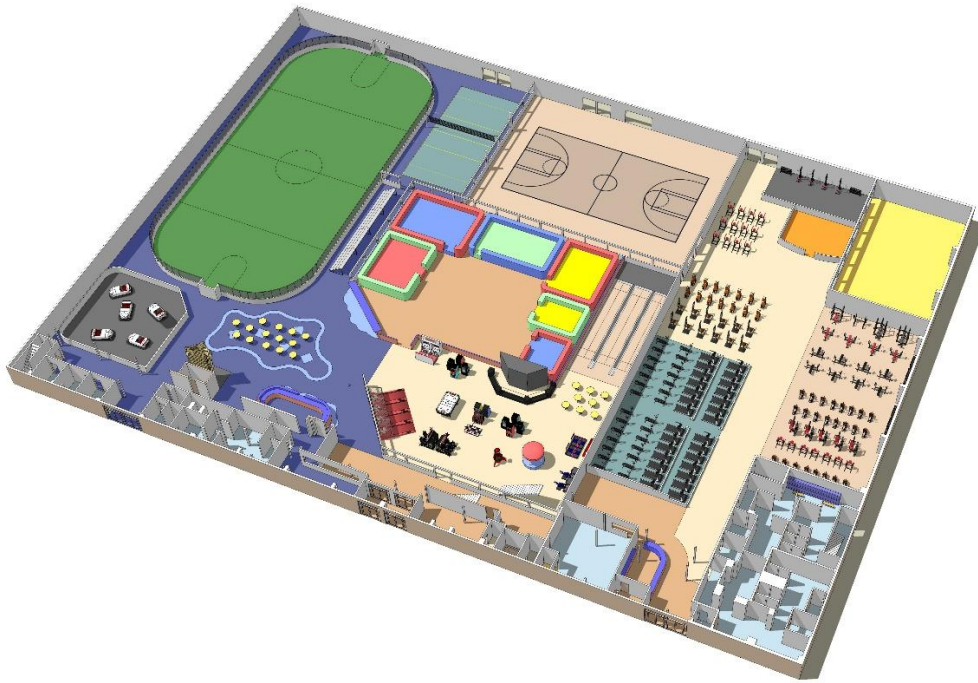
**Sports Connection and Evan Miller  
Purchases an old Bi-Lo in Indian Trail and  
Opens the Seventh and Final Sports & Fitness  
Location in Charlotte.**



**2012**

## **Northlake is Renovated from a Sports Center to a Sports & Family Entertainment Center.**

Renovations included removing the Hockey Rink, adding a state-of-the-art Sports & Fitness location with separate entry and all new equipment, locker rooms, etc., as well as adding a Family Entertainment Center with a Game Room, Laser Tag, Bouncers, Mini Bowling, Party Rooms, and basketball courts.



# **Sports Connection, Sports & Fitness, Carolina Juniors and InnerPeaks Team Together to Build a Habitat House in Charlotte.**

Family, Friends and Staff worked together for 12 days to build and pay for a complete Habitat House. Habitat is one of the many charitable organizations the Sports Connection family has supported over the past 30 years.



# **Sports Connection and Sports & Fitness Sell All Seven Sports & Fitness Locations to Titan Fitness.**

Titan Fitness, based primarily in Raleigh and Texas, purchases all seven locations and renames them Fitness Connection. Fitness Connection hired Evan as a consultant for one year to help with the transition.

Sports Connection becomes a landlord to Fitness Connection at Ballantyne, Northlake, and Indian Trail, and Evan becomes a landlord at the University and Lake Norman locations.

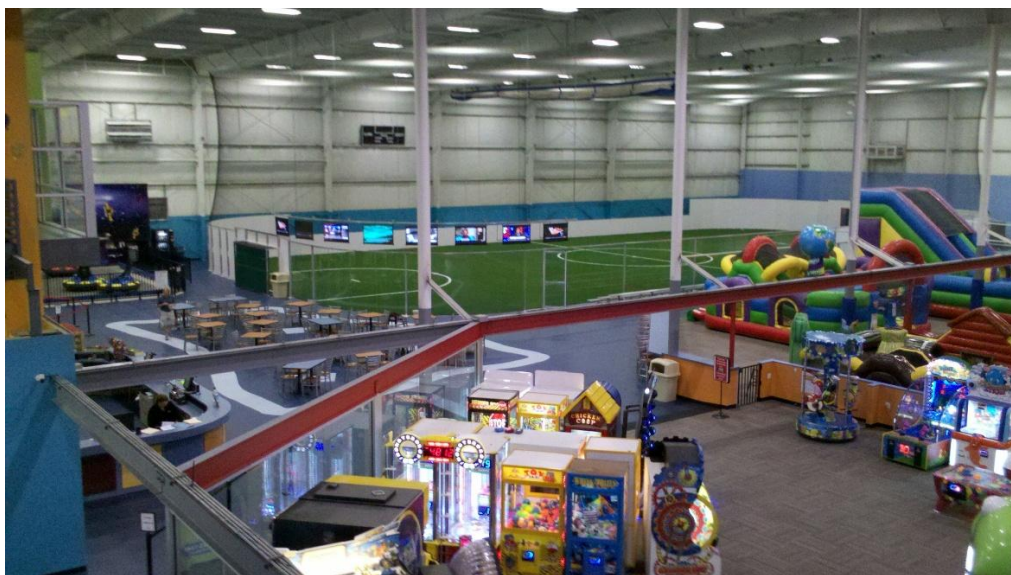
Allan and Kelly Haseley are now 60% owners and Evan Miller 40% owners of all remaining Sports Connection entities.



***FITNESS***  
**CONNECTION**

# Sports Connection-Northlake is Renovated Again in September.

The 13-year old large indoor turf field was removed and replaced with a smaller, boarded 12,000 sqft. soccer field with new turf. With the extra space, Sports Connection added a new Café Area, Kitchen, more Bouncers, Bumper Cars, a Climbing Wall, and an additional Volleyball Court.



# **Sports Connection-Granite Street is Renovated by Adding a Fifth Volleyball Court and Installing New Turf on the Soccer Field and Resizing the Soccer Field to Match Northlake.**



# 2013

## Allan & Kelly Partner with John Lytton & Performance Unlimited to Take Over the Carmel Road Location.

Performance Unlimited offers Adult Fitness and Speed & Agility Programs for Youth with a focus on Soccer and Lacrosse Players. Performance Unlimited became the official Fitness Trainers for CJV. The Haseley family and friends continue to work out at the Carmel location with Performance Unlimited.



# **Allan and Kelly Purchase Evan's Ownership Shares of ALL Jointly Owned Entities.**

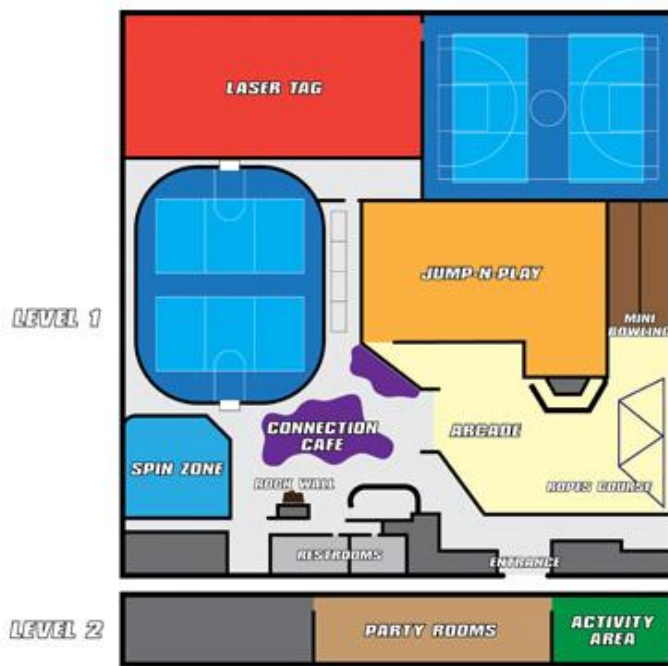
With the seven Fitness Centers sold a year ago and Evan's consultant role coming to an end, a change in roles, responsibilities, and the future as partners was needed. Evan and Allan agreed on the value of all holdings, and since Evan had no real interest in taking over the day-to-day management of Sports Connection, Evan chose to sell. The buy out was a win-win for all involved. Allan and Evan continue to communicate on business and personal issues and play Pickleball together each week.



# 2014

## Northlake Is Renovated Again.

The new soccer field was removed because of its lack of growth potential and was replaced with 2 new volleyball courts, a new downstairs Laser Tag Arena, a Ropes Course, an upstairs Turf Sports Area, and a larger kitchen and oven.



**NORTHLAKE FLOORPLAN**



# **Sports Connection Creates Granite Residential, LLC to Buy and Manage Local Rental Properties for Sports Connection Managers to Live.**

Many Sports Connection managers and staff are young people who typically rent (versus owning) and do not often want to sign a long-term conventional rental lease. They often also have challenges raising the deposits required to rent a house or apartment and deposits or guarantees for the utilities and other start up expenses. Sports Connection / Granite Residential has owned many rental houses, condos and town homes and currently rents them on a month to month basis to employees at a fair market rent rate, but no deposits or personal guarantees are required.



**2015**

**Sports Connection Reunites with Guillermo Uribe, Ten Years Later, to Create Carolina Futsal and Renovates Granite Street to Accommodate More Volleyball Courts AND Futsal Courts for Training and Leagues.**

Futsal is the only indoor "soccer" game sanctioned by FIFA and is proven to develop better skills and promotes quality touches. Since Futsal is played without walls, on a Sport Court surface, the partnership between Carolina Futsal and Carolina Juniors Volleyball was a perfect match to maximize the many Sport Court courts at Granite Street and Northlake.

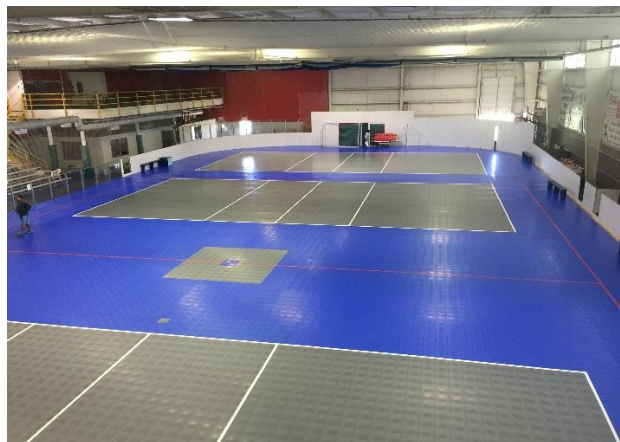


# Granite Street is Renovated once again and adds 4 MORE Volleyball Courts for the Growing Carolina Juniors Volleyball Program. The CJV Club now has 9 Indoor Volleyball Courts in South Charlotte and 4 in North Charlotte.

The artificial field-turf was covered with 400 sheets of plywood and then with new Sport Court for the new Volleyball Courts. Sports Connection was not convinced the CJV Club would need all the new volleyball courts, so was not ready to remove the turf....just yet.



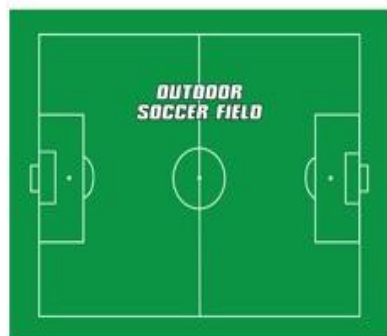
*Turf*



*Sport Court*

**Click or Paste Link Below In Browser To View Time Lapse Video Of Plywood & Sport Court Installation**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rU5RSsURWg>



*9 Volleyball Courts (4/2/3), 2 Futsal Courts, 1 Turf Field*

# **Carolina Juniors has Largest Number of Players for Tryouts ever in 2015 and Forms the Most Teams in the Club's 20-Year History.**

CJV has over 4000 different players on 28 National & Regional Teams, 123 Gold & Silver Teams and hundreds of others participating in Camps, Clinics, Lessons and Other Programs. A master plan for the long-term future of CJV Club is developed and new full time directors, coaches and staff are hired to develop CJV into the top Volleyball Club in the Southeast.

## **CJV Leadership**

*Savannah Linduff - Director*

*Zoe Bell - Director National & Regional Teams*

*Brian Rosen - National & Regional Teams-South; Player Development*

*Wade Pearce - National & Regional Teams-North; Strength & Conditioning*

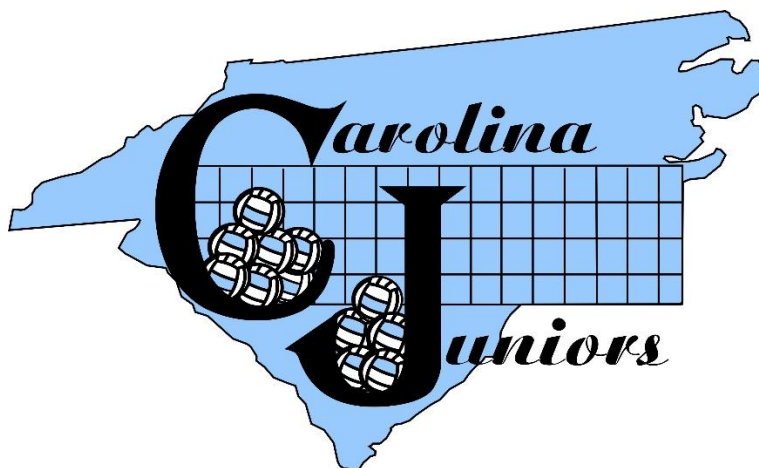
*Tim Leary - Gold, Silver Bronze Teams, Camps; Assistant Director*

*Alexandra Fleagle - Gold, Silver Bronze Teams, Camps; Assistant Director*

*Carrie Christian - Retired, Current Board Member*

*Suzie Pignetti - Retired, Current Board Member*

*Allan & Kelly Haseley - Sports Connection Owners*



# Sports Connection Celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. 1995 - 2015

150 Friends, Family and Staff help celebrate Sports Connection's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in June 2015. Karen (who designed all the company's early logos), creates a quilt from T-shirts from the past 20 years! The party was held at Sports Connection-Ballantyne Family Entertainment Center.



**2016**

**Sports Connection and Carolina Juniors  
Volleyball Build 4 New Sand Volleyball Courts  
and Continue to Offer More Beach Programs  
and Tournaments.**

Youth and Adults enjoy learning and playing Doubles, Triples  
and Quads from April-September.

**Paste Link Below In Browser To View Time Lapse Video  
Of Plywood & Sport Court Installation**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QH4E2fTgowg>



# **Carolina Juniors Volleyball Needs more Volleyball Courts. Sports Connection Decides to say Goodbye to Indoor Soccer and No Longer be a Soccer AND Volleyball Facility.**

Sports Connection removes the Indoor Turf Field and no longer offers Indoor Soccer for the first time in 17 years! The 9 New Volleyball Courts are configured in groups of 3 Courts each to allow for better organization of practices and more Player and Spectator space for locally hosted Tournaments to be offered by CJV and Sports Connection in the future.



***Courts 1-3***



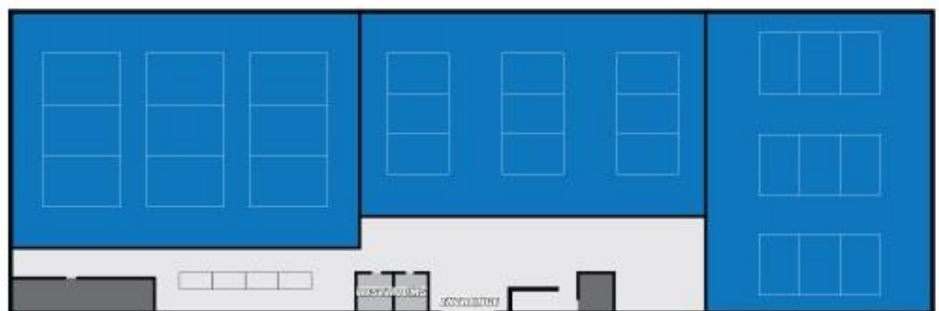
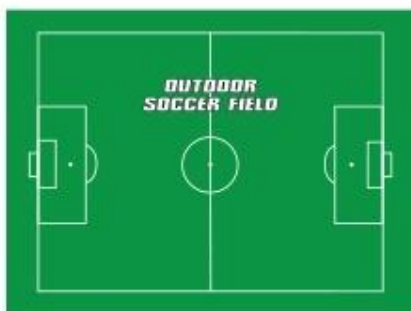
***Courts 4-6***



***Courts 7-9***

**Click or Paste Link Below In Browser To View Time Lapse Video Of Removal of Turf and Wood and Installation of Sport Court**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tqS\\_PcEZhk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tqS_PcEZhk)

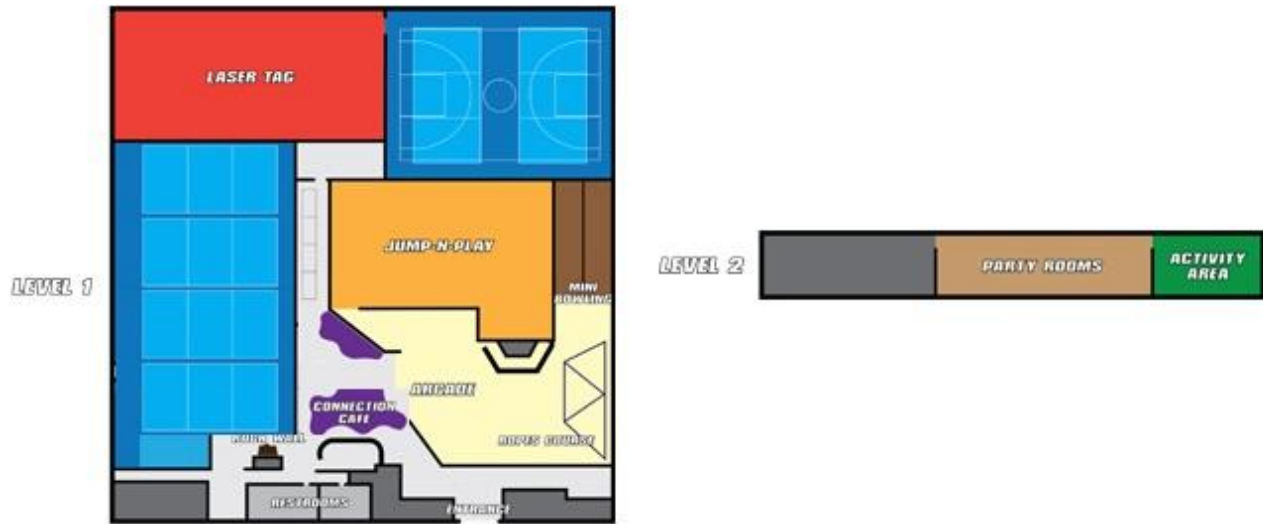


***9 PERMANENT Volleyball Courts, 1 Outdoor Turf Field***

2017

**CJV Continues to Grow in South Charlotte and North Charlotte. Northlake Expands from 4 Volleyball Courts to 6 Courts and a VW Bug is Purchased to help Advertise the Growing Volleyball Club.**

Northlake



# The CJV Beach Volleyball Courts are Moved to Behind the Granite Street Building and the Dark Ride XD Theater is Installed at the Ballantyne Family Entertainments Center.



**2018**

## **CJV offers Volleyball Tournaments at Granite Street and Northlake and Purchase a Food Truck to Provide Food for Tournament Guests at the Granite Street Location**

Sports Connection hosted volleyball tournaments during the first few years of operations in 1995-2000, but because of space limitations, focused more on local youth leagues versus tournaments for the next 17 years. In 2018, CJV hosted 8 tournaments and the goal for the future is to host 10-12 tournaments per year.



**CJV Partners with Beach South to offer  
Seasonal and Year-Round Beach Volleyball.  
The Beach South Partnership paves the way to  
Start Carolina Beach Volleyball Academy.**



# 2019

## Sports Connection Replaces the 24-year-old Sport Court Flooring at the Granite Street Volleyball Center.

Sports Connection purchased Sport Court flooring in 1995 and then again during the expansion of the Granite Street location in 2016. Unfortunately, the new flooring purchased in 2016 was defective, so a search was begun to find the best flooring solution for the next 25 years. During the search, Allan & Kelly Haseley came across a number of players playing a game with a “small yellow ball and a paddle”. After playing **Pickleball** once, the decision was made to make sure the new flooring would be compatible for Volleyball AND Pickleball.

In May 2019, the new Tarkett Flooring was installed to provide CJV with 9 volleyball courts. The courts also easily convert to 14 indoor Pickleball courts.



# According to Sports & Fitness Industry Association, Pickleball is the Fastest Growing Sport with over 2.8 million Players.

Pickleball Charlotte is created to offer Charlotte area players with Open Play, Clinics, Tournaments, Lessons and Other Programs. Leesa Walker is hired as the Pickleball Charlotte full time director. In the first 6 months, Pickleball Charlotte has over 1,000 different players play on the new courts.



# The Charlotte Dilly News *November 2019*

All Things Pickleball in  
the Greater Charlotte Area  
...and Beyond



Our Most Valuable Picklers  
this month are the fine folks  
responsible for Pickleball  
Charlotte at The Sports  
Connection: Owners **Allan  
and Kelly Haseley** and  
Director of Pickleball **Leesa  
Walker**.



By the end of 2019, Pickleball Charlotte has over 100 players playing each weekday on INDOOR Volleyball Courts from 10 AM - 1 PM. Pickleball was gaining popularity around the country and since it was not possible to dedicate any more INDOOR space for Pickleball, a goal for 2020 was to build some OUTDOOR Pickleball Courts.

**2020**

**Inner Peaks Purchases the former Grand Slam Baseball Building and Moves into a NEW Home after 21 years in the same Rented warehouse.**

21 years of rock-climbing dust created a huge mess to clean up.

The Sports Connection staff did a great cleaning up the old facility to make room for new volleyball courts. The new Inner Peaks location roof is expanded to accommodate a 55' high speed wall.



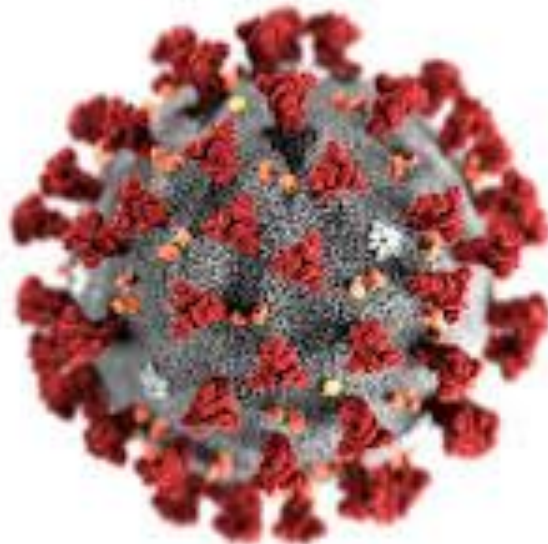
# **CJV Continues to Grow and adds a NEW Volleyball Center in Matthews, NC and Partners with Union Select Volleyball Club.**

CJV has 9 Indoor Volleyball Courts and 3 Outdoor Beach Courts at the Granite Street (**SOUTH**) location, 6 Indoor Volleyball Courts at the Northlake (**NORTH**) location, and now 3 NEW courts at the CJV-East (**EAST**) location. The CJV-East building had been the original location of the Inner Peaks Climbing Center for the past 21 years.



# **Sports Connection closes all 4 CJV Volleyball Locations and Family Entertainment Centers and both Inner Peaks Climbing Facilities due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).**

On March 16, 2020, all Sports Connection locations are forced to close and lay off over 300 employees as government mandated orders are given for businesses to close and everyone to remain in their homes.



What happened during and after the COVID Epidemic, no one could have ever imagined. Everyone was ordered to stay inside or maintain a 6 feet social distance when out in public. People wore face masks, plastic gloves and only businesses deemed “essential” were allowed to open. Most Sports Connection locations were closed for 18 months. It was a dark and depressing time for many people, businesses, and the world. Sports Connection was very fortunate compared to many other small businesses.

# **Mike And Bre Rhem Move to Charlotte to help Allan and Kelly Maintain all Sports Connection Locations and Rebuild During and After COVID.**

Mike Rhem, Allan's nephew, and his wife (Bre) made the big decision at the end of 2019 to relocate to Charlotte, NC to help learn and manage the Sports Connection buildings and operations. Their first day at their new job was April 15, 2020, one month after all the locations and most of the world had shut down due to COVID.

“When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade.” With no employees to manage, no customers to wait on and no buildings to open, the decision was made to use the down time to learn the business from the ground up and start to renovate all locations and rethink the future for Sports Connection.



# **Sports Connection uses the Unfortunate Down Time to Renovate Facilities and Operations.**

With all Fitness Centers, Bowling Facilities, Arcades, Recreation Centers, Café's etc being forced to remain closed by the US and NC Government, Sports Connection decides to use this time to renovate all 3 locations. With all staff on unemployment, and many looking for something to do in their spare time, the decision is made to do something other than sit at home all day and watch "Tiger King" on Netflix and listen to the depressing news!

On the following pages is a recap of the projects done in the next 18 months. You can also view a full-time lapse video of all projects by clicking on the link below.

[Click To View The Sports Connection Project Video During Covid \(March - December 2020\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULOVNbB1vrQ)

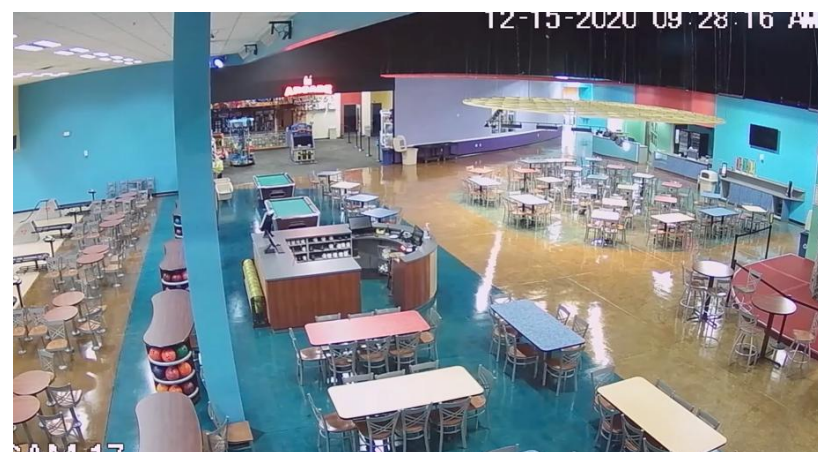
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULOVNbB1vrQ>

## **List of Major Projects Accomplished During COVID**

- Renovation of the Ballantyne Family Entertainment Center Floors.
  - Removal of the Outdoor Soccer Field at Granite Street.
- New Outdoor Pickleball and Beach Volleyball Courts built.
- Removal of all Rides, Bouncers, Games, Ropes Course and other Family Entertainment Center things at Northlake and transform the 80,000 sqft building back to a "Sports Center" with Volleyball, Basketball, Futsal and Pickleball.

# Ballantyne's FEC Floors are Refinished, and Overall Facility is Cleaned Up.

When does a business that is open 7 days a week, 360 days a year find three straight weeks to refinish their concrete floors, replace their old carpet and repaint the entire interior of their business? During the COVID shut down. Hope that never happens again!



# Outdoor Artificial Soccer Field at Granite Street is Removed to make room for Pickleball Courts and Beach Volleyball Courts.

Sports Connection was one of the first private Sports Centers to install an Artificial Activity Field almost 20 years ago. Having sold SportsLink a few years earlier and with the growth of Pickleball and Beach Volleyball (and the mandate to social distance or stay outdoors), the decision was made to remove the Soccer Field and Build 4 Pickleball and 3 Beach Volleyball Courts.



## **4 Outdoor Pickleball Courts are well Received and have lots of Players Playing, especially weeknights and weekends.**

Since most public Pickleball courts are locked in fear of spreading COVID and private clubs and indoor gyms must adhere to government mandates that “Basketball Facilities, Bowling Alleys, etc” must remain closed, the private Outdoor Pickleball courts are packed. If you have ever been to North Carolina in the summer, it is VERY HOT and players really wanted to play indoors with the AC.

After checking all government documents, no one could find where it specifically prohibited “Indoor Pickleball or Volleyball Facilities” from being open....so the back door was left unlocked, players let themselves in, brought their own balls, wore masks and gloves at their own discretion, and of course “stayed out of the kitchen” to remain 14 feet apart from each other and DID NOT tap paddles at the end of the game.

Since there were no organized Volleyball programs, Pickleball players were able to play INDOORS all day and night and on weekends and get out of the house. It was a terrible summer for the world, but many local Pickleball players played a lot of Pickleball at Pickleball Charlotte since most were out of work and nothing else to do.



# Sports Connection Converts Northlake “Family Entertainment Center” to a “Sports Center”.

In 2012, Sports Connection added Arcade Games, Rides, Ropes Course, Bumper Cars, Moon Bouncers, etc. to the Northlake “Sports Center” to create Sports **AND** Family Entertainment.

After 8 great years of hosting Birthday Parties and lots of Family Fun, the decision was made to use the downtime caused by COVID to renovate the facility back to a “Sports Center”.

The new changes included adding 11 Volleyball Courts that could convert to 6 Basketball Courts, 4 Futsal or Field Hockey Courts or 4 Pickleball Courts. With all the recreation centers and church gyms closed due to COVID, the change back to SPORTS was well received by the community.



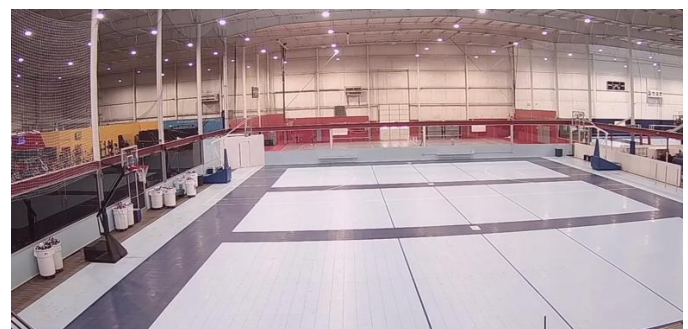
Before



After



Before



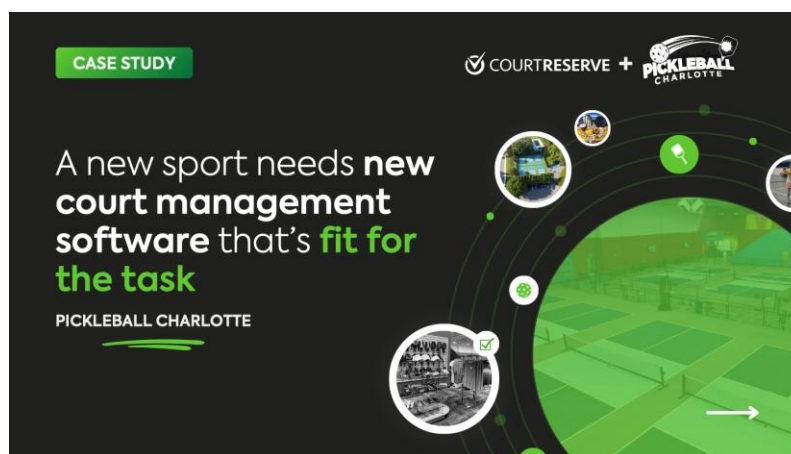
After

# 2021

## **Pickleball Charlotte Chooses the COURTRESERVE System to Manage all Pickleball Courts, Customers and Programs.**

Pickleball Clinics, Lessons, Group Outings and Open Play continue to be in high demand on the Indoor and Outdoor courts. Pickleball is turning out to be a REAL potential business, and not just a part time thing with taped lines on Volleyball courts. One of the first needs to grow is to change to a Pickleball specific software system.

Tim and Ashley Owens, the owners of CourtReserve, were regular players at Pickleball Charlotte and the decision was made to switch to their system. Switching to CourtReserve was a great choice and now it was time to start seriously considering opening a dedicated INDOOR Pickleball facility with OUTDOOR Courts.



[Click To View The Complete Case Study With Pickleball Charlotte.](https://pickleballcharlotte.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/CR-Case-Study-Pickleball-Charlotte.pdf)

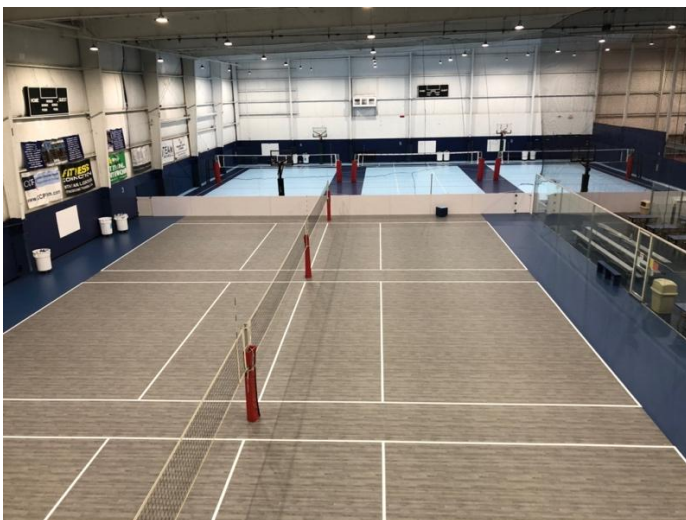
<https://pickleballcharlotte.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/CR-Case-Study-Pickleball-Charlotte.pdf>

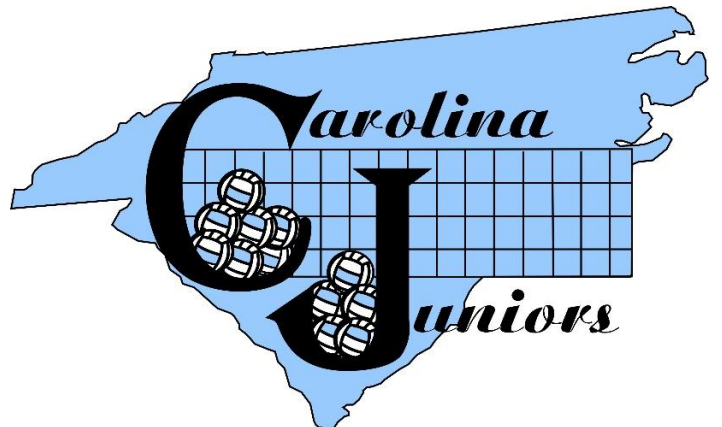
# **CJV Slowly starts to get back to Normal and Begins to Recover from COVID.**



## **New Sports, Partnerships and Relationships are created at Northlake and Granite Street with the Focus on being a SPORTS CENTER.**

With many rec centers and gyms still closed from COVID, Sports Connection becomes the new home for many local Sports Groups looking for a place to host their practices, games, leagues, and tournaments. With the new multi-sport Tarkett flooring and the new configuration of the courts, the SC facilities are able to accommodate a variety of new Sports.





# Jon Brady Joins the FEC Team to Help get the Ballantyne Location Re-Opened after being Closed for more than a Year due to COVID.

Sports Connection Family Entertainment Center is finally allowed to re-open, with lots of safety protocols in place regarding number of people in the building at a time and social distancing, etc. Jon Brady and Michelle Stern are brought in to work with Mike and Bre to formulate a plan on how to navigate the new world AC (After Covid).

With limited days and hours and very few customers, the team chooses to use the slow time to to upgrade the Game Software to *Amusement Connect* and replace many of the aging games, bouncers, laser tag and other activities. A new kid's area is added, and employees slowly start to come back to work.



**2022**

## **Pickleball Charlotte Reaches Deal to MERGE with Indoor Tennis Center to Build First Dedicated INDOOR Pickleball Facility.**

A deal is made at the end of 2021 to partner with the Charlotte Indoor Tennis Center to convert their Indoor Tennis courts to build some dedicated Indoor Pickleball courts. Unfortunately, after already converting and merging the customer data and starting to operate as a joint venture, the partnership never officially was finalized and Pickleball Charlotte and Charlotte Indoor Tennis went their separate ways.



# **Pickleball Charlotte is Convinced that a DEDICATED INDOOR Pickleball Facility in South Charlotte would be Successful. Search is on to Open by End of 2022.**

An extensive search and business plan is created to lease, build or renovate a new Indoor Pickleball location. After the Tennis Center partnership did not work out, a few other lease options looked promising, but each one was met with their own challenges and obstacles...until the summer of 2022.

## **Fitness Connection Gives Notice they will be Moving out of the Ballantyne (South Charlotte) Building the End of 2022.**

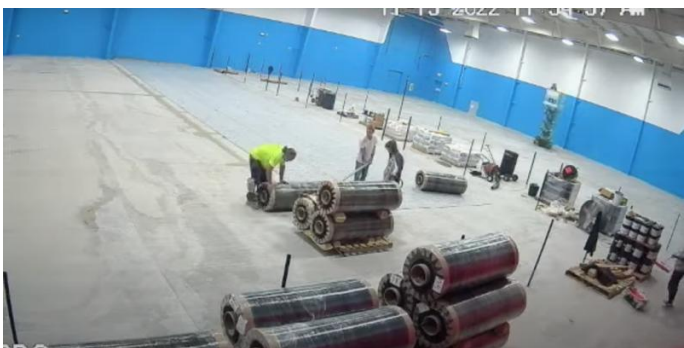
Fitness Connection occupied 25,000 sqft of Sports Connection's 65,000 sqft building. After a 10-year lease, and not fully recovering from COVID, they elected to give notice to vacate their space. The prime real estate space could have easily been leased to many potential businesses, but with the growth of Pickleball, and the new love of Pickleball, it was decided this space would be the ideal place for Pickleball Charlotte's FIRST Dedicated Indoor Pickleball Facility.



# Pickleball Charlotte Researches to Find the Best Courts, Nets, Software, Coaches, Programs, etc to Build the Best Indoor Facility.

The old fitness space had high ceilings, good lighting, free span floor plan, locker rooms, plenty of parking and room for 7 courts downstairs and 2 upstairs. What kind of courts to build? After extensive research, it appeared that most Pickleball courts were either built on Asphalt, Concrete or a Synthetic Gym Type Floor. Having received positive feedback from customers of how great their joints and bodies felt after playing on the “Volleyball” courts, the search was on for something different than the normal Asphalt and Concrete that everyone else were playing on around the country.

Wanting the comfortable cushioned feeling of a Volleyball floor and the playability of the gritty hard surface of a traditional Pickleball court, experts from Tarkett (volleyball court manufacture) and SportMaster (pickleball supplier) were consulted to help develop a solution for Pickleball Charlotte. After testing the SportMaster product on the 7 millimeter Tarkett rubber product, the best of both worlds was discovered. ***“Real Pickleball Courts With A Soft Underlayment.”*** Although most customers may not SEE the difference, they would all FEEL the difference.



Unable to find a court contractor with available time and willing to apply the SportMaster product to the Tarkett Rubber, SportMaster was hired to train Sports Connection staff to become certified installers of their product. Over 60 Indoor and Outdoor Pickleball Courts later...Sports Connection staff are now experts!



The next step was to find the best Pickleball Nets at an affordable price. Unable to find high quality Pickleball Net Systems that could easily be moved and did not require core drilling and permanently anchoring the polls, Sports Connection staff learned how to weld and created the **Premier Net Systems**. The Premier Net System is used by Pickleball Charlotte and many clubs and local courts in the Carolinas.



A **Deluxe Net System** for volleyball and basketball courts was also developed to be lightweight with wheels and not sag in the middle and be easy to store when not being used.



Metal fencing for court dividers, like most Pickleball locations used, were originally installed. Shortly after opening, it was discovered the fencing was a mistake and all “fencing” was switched to “netting”. Netting allowed for more flexibility and provided a much safer playing environment for customers.



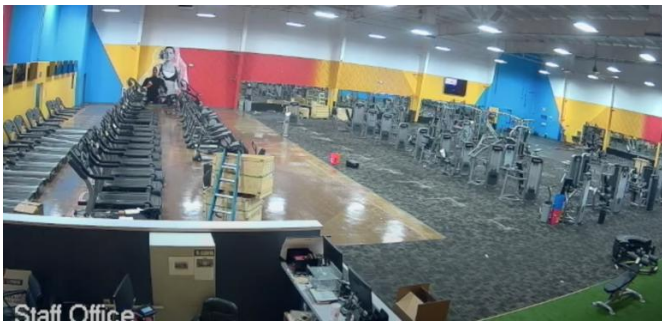
## **The FIRST dedicated Indoor Pickleball Facility in Charlotte Opens in November 2022.**

View pictures of the Ballantyne Project on the next page.  
To view a Time Lapse Video of the project:

[Click Here](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rC-woucwp3I>





## Local News Paper Article Announcing Opening Of Pickleball Charlotte.

Pickleball Charlotte, the area's first dedicated indoor pickleball facility, is scheduled to open in south Charlotte at the end of 2022 with 7 courts for full-time play. The sports center's owners, Allan and Kelly Haseley, plan to open a dedicated indoor pickleball facility called Pickleball Charlotte in the Ballantyne area at the end of 2022.

You have to laugh when you consider this headline The Ledger published in January 2020: Now, not even three years later, the sport has exploded. Tennis clubs have carved up courts to make way for pickleball play, local recreation centers are installing nets and people of all generations are learning the proper way to use terms like "dink" and "kitchen."

Talk to serious players around the region and they'll tell you that demand for pickleball courts far exceeds supply. Allan Haseley is trying to change that.

Haseley plans to open a 30,000 s.f. Pickleball Charlotte facility in the Ballantyne area at the end of 2022, next door to the Sports Connection bowling and family entertainment center that he and his wife, Kelly, own. The facility will offer one game — pickleball — and it will have seven indoor courts with more outdoor courts planned in the future.

The Haseleys also own the Granite Street Sports Center, home to the Carolina Juniors Volleyball program in southwest Charlotte, and they currently operate Pickleball Charlotte from that location. Since spring 2019, they've offered pickleball on the volleyball courts at Granite Street during times of the day when kids are at school and the volleyball courts are empty. They also offer pickleball at the third facility they own: Northlake Indoor Sports Center, which includes basketball and volleyball courts.

Haseley has grown the Pickleball Charlotte program to include four full-time pickleball instructors, who not only run the pickleball program at the Granite Street volleyball facility but are often hired out to teach pickleball to staff at places like Myers Park Country Club and Olde Providence Racquet Club, Haseley said.

The Carolina Panthers hired Pickleball Charlotte staff to create a pickleball experience at a team party earlier this year, and "Coach Rhule was the last one off the court," Haseley said, referring to Panthers head coach Matt Rhule.

Haseley's vision for Pickleball Charlotte in Ballantyne is to make it a place where people can show up seven days a week rain or shine for open play, lessons, or to rent a court for group matches or events. Court rentals will range from \$15 to \$30 per hour and open play will range from free to \$12, depending on whether the players are members and the time of day they want to play.

Memberships will be offered but won't be required to use the facility, he said.

"Pickleball is exploding and there's a severe lack of pickleball courts everywhere, because of the growth of the sport," he said. "We believe that there's a big demand for more indoor pickleball courts because there are not very many places to play indoors."

Charlotte resident Dick Osman, who with his wife, Desiré are "pickleball ambassadors" through the USA Pickleball Association, said Pickleball Charlotte is highly anticipated, because it will be the first dedicated indoor pickleball facility of its kind in Mecklenburg County. The Osmans publish a monthly pickleball newsletter called "The Charlotte Dilly News," which currently has 1,800 people on its distribution list.

Indoor facilities that offer pickleball usually do so in combination with youth sports like volleyball or basketball, so pickleball gets scheduled in during the school days when kids are in classrooms, Dick Osman said.

"People have always said (pickleball) was an old-people's sport, but that was because only old people were available to play when the facilities were available," he said.

Mecklenburg County opened an outdoor pickleball facility, the John Stevens Pickleball Center at Clarks Creek Community Park in the northern part of the county in 2019, but there aren't enough parks that offer pickleball in other parts of the county, Osman said.

Country clubs are quickly growing their player rosters, and a Queen City Pickleball League that started in the fall of 2021 with 13 teams grew to about 30 teams by spring 2021, Osman said.

*Cristina Bolling is managing editor of The Ledger: [cristina@cltledger.com](mailto:cristina@cltledger.com)*

**2023**

## **Thousands of Players Playing Pickleball at all hours of the day and night at the Ballantyne and Granite Street Indoor Pickleball Locations.**

Pickleball Charlotte hires more Staff, Pros and Instructors to keep up with the growing demand for Training and Programs. Clinics, Lessons and Instructional Leagues quickly becomes the number one revenue source. There are lot of Pickleball Courts, but not many places, or people, focusing on teaching and helping players get better. Pickleball continues to gain in popularity. Group Outing business and demand for Beginner Clinics and Open Play skyrockets.

The Ballantyne parking lot is converted to 6 Outdoor Pickleball Courts to help with the growing demand for court space.

There is a need to group players by some sort of Playing Level or Player Rating. Pickleball Charlotte Pros and Staff develop the *SOAR Player Rating System*. Over 10,000 players have been rated using the SOAR System.



**SOAR**

Business 101....If you have more Demand than Supply, maybe you should consider expanding...

...So the search for another INDOOR Location was on again!

# **Pickleball Charlotte / Sports Connection Purchases The Charlotte Indoor Tennis Center To Expand Indoor Pickleball in Charlotte.**

In the summer of 2023, the owners of the Charlotte Indoor Tennis Center agree to sell their building. The building was built in the early 70's and had 6 indoor Tennis courts on concrete and 10 outdoor clay Tennis courts. With no idea on what to do with the outdoor tennis courts, the building was bought to build a state-of-the-art Indoor Pickleball facility.

Like many old tennis centers, the building needed a lot of renovations. The biggest expense was to add HVAC (which the building did not have in 20+ years). With no HVAC, there was a lot of mold and leaks and general cleaning up that was needed.

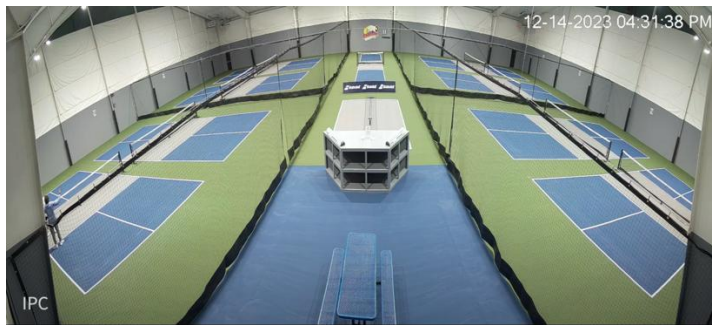
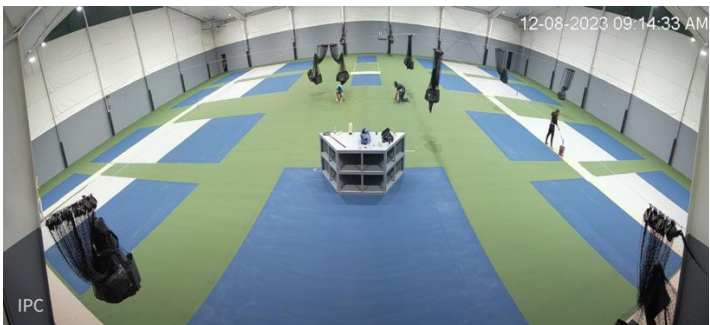
After playing on the concrete floors a few times, it was quickly decided that the rubber-based floors like at the Ballantyne location were needed. Although adding the rubber doubled the cost of court construction, the goal was to invest for the long term not just the least expensive solution for the short term.

## **Pickleball Charlotte – Sharon Lakes Opens December 2024 with 16 Dedicated INDOOR Pickleball Courts.**

View pictures of the Sharon Lakes Project on the next page.  
To view a Time Lapse Video of the project:

[Click Here](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5\\_krqspssik](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_krqspssik)



# 2024

## **Pickleball Charlotte has over 800 Players Playing PER DAY, Primarily at the Ballantyne and Sharon Lakes Dedicated Indoor Centers.**

Pickleball Charlotte, after only a few years, is on pace to do over 3 million in sales and has over 3,000 members with 40% of all players and sales coming from “non-members”. Court Rentals and Open Play continue to be the most popular programs. Court Rentals make up 30% of Sales, Open Play 27%, Memberships 20%, Training 10%, Group Outings, Leagues and Other Programs 7% and Pro Shop, Snacks and Drinks 4%.

Sports Connection has fully recovered from COVID and now has over 200 active employees, with more than 20 of them focusing on just Pickleball. Pickleball Charlotte is the number one place to play Pickleball in the greater Charlotte area.



Pickleball Charlotte continues to be the leader in providing fun and creative programs and events for players of all levels and the number one location in the Charlotte area for training, lessons, clinics and instructional leagues.



Pickleball Charlotte Master Teaching Professionals, Touring Pros, Local Pros and many Instructors host many training opportunities for Players, Instructors and Referees. Many of them you can see on various Pickleball In Paradise adventure trips.

**INTERNATIONAL PICKLEBALL TEACHING PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION**

**TEACH THE TEACHER PICKLEBALL WORKSHOP**

**JOIN MASTER TEACHING PROFESSIONALS JOHN AND LEESA WALKER**

**MARCH 8th 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**  
**PICKLEBALL CHARLOTTE BALLANTYNE**

Participants of this 8 hour event will learn how to effectively teach Pickleball to new/beginner level players. Those participants that meet the standards, and pay the annual dues, will be sent an access code to take the written exam. Upon passing you will be awarded the title **CERTIFIED LEVEL I INSTRUCTOR**. This also entitles you to IPTPA's Benefit Package. IPTPA is the world leader in developing teaching/instructional standards in the sport of Pickleball.

**Session 1 - Classroom - 8:00 - 12:00**  
**LUNCH BREAK**  
**Session 2 - Implementing methodology on the court**

**TO REGISTER:**  
[www.members.iptpa.com](http://www.members.iptpa.com)  
**Fee - \$200**

**For more info:**  
[leesa@pickleballcharlotte.com](mailto:leesa@pickleballcharlotte.com)

**Pickleball<sup>®</sup> in Paradise**

**WITH MASTER COACHES JOHN & LEESA WALKER**

Join IPTPA Master Coaches John and Leesa Walker on a Pickleball in Paradise camp in the gorgeous Caribbean in 2025. Many spectacular locations to choose from: Curacao, Mexico, Jamaica and Turks and Caicos!

**AVAILABLE TRIPS**

<b>Sandals South Coast</b> March 12, 2025	<b>Sandals Royal Curacao</b> October 1, 2025
<b>Sandals Montego Bay</b> June 28, 2025	<b>Beaches Turks and Caicos</b> November 9, 2025
<b>Jola Paraiso</b> 12/8/25 - 12/14/25	

**CONTACT ME FOR MORE DETAILS**

**ELIZABETH HIGGINBOTTOM** 843-331-6955

[eliz@straightawaytravel.com](mailto:eliz@straightawaytravel.com) [www.pickleballinparadise.com](http://www.pickleballinparadise.com)

# Pickleball Charlotte Opens 4<sup>th</sup> Indoor Pickleball Location at Northlake.

Not really needing 11 Indoor Volleyball Courts at the Sports Connection - Northlake location, the decision is made to switch out some Volleyball Courts for more Indoor Pickleball Courts.

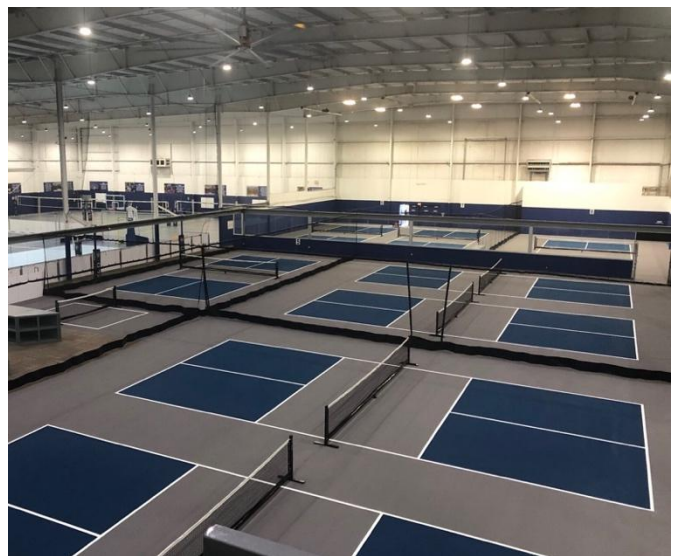
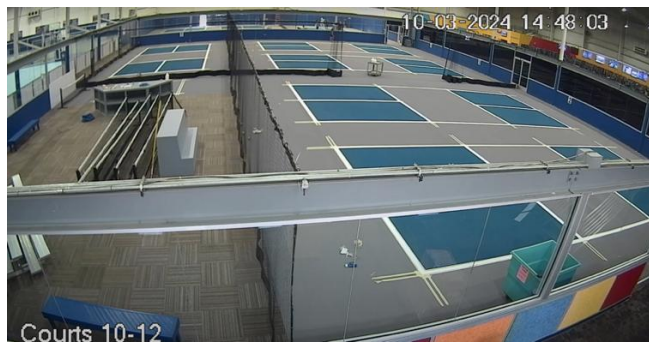
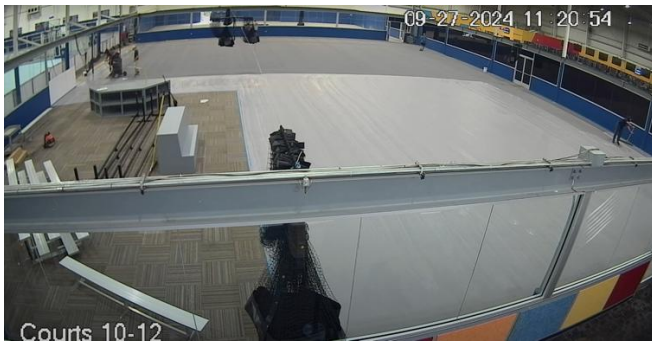
Renovations to Northlake are made to build 7 Indoor Volleyball Courts, 8 Indoor Pickleball Courts, 1 Indoor Pickleball Training Court as well as the existing Fitness Connection Fitness Center.

View pictures of the Northlake Project on the next page.  
To view a Time Lapse Video of the project.

[Click Here](#)

<https://youtu.be/CVSKY8ad5h4>





# Pickleball Charlotte develops the NETSKIRT and sets out to get ALL Nets OFF THE GROUND!

Most Pickleball Courts have Pickleball Nets that touch the ground or sag in the middle, preventing a Pickleball Ball and Debris to freely pass under the net. Pickleball Charlotte develops the NetSkirt. The NetSkirt easily attaches to ANY existing Pickleball Net to raise it off the ground and allow balls to roll freely under the net. The NetSkirt also provides great marketing and branding opportunities.

**PICKLEBALL**  
**NetSkirt**

*BRAND YOUR CLUB  
RAISE YOUR NET  
ROLL YOUR BALLS*

**TRADITIONAL NETS**  
*Drag on the ground  
Stop ALL of your balls!*

**NEW NETS**  
*Sag in the middle  
Stop MANY of your balls!*

**RAISE YOUR NETS  
AND LET YOUR BALLS  
ROLL FREELY!**

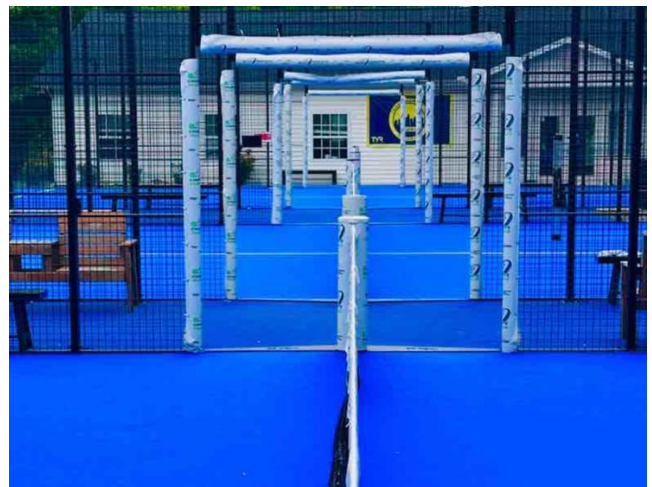
[www.TheNetSkirt.com](http://www.TheNetSkirt.com)

The advertisement features several images: a traditional net touching the ground with balls stopped, a new net sagging in the middle with balls stopped, a net with a black skirt attached and a ball rolling through, a close-up of the skirt with the text 'NETSKIRT', and a net with a yellow ball on the court. The website 'PICKLEBALLCHARLOTTE.COM' is visible on the net skirt in one of the images.

# 2025

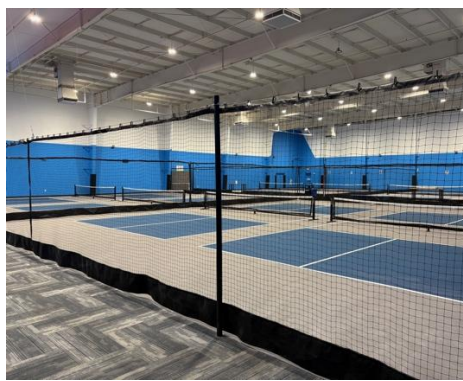
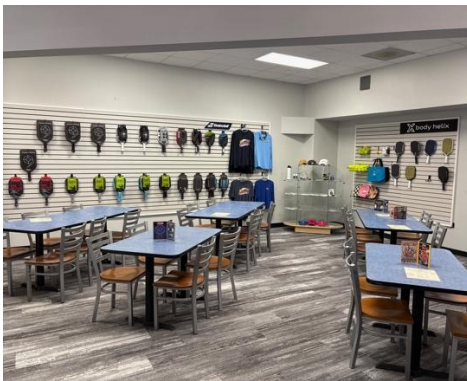
## **Sports Connection Partners with Charlotte Padel and Adds Two Indoor Padel Courts at Sharon Lakes.**

Pickleball still continues to be the fastest growing sport in the country, but Padel is also growing and gaining huge popularity in the US. Padel, like Pickleball, has been around since the late 1960's but much more well known outside the United States. In addition to the 2 new INDOOR Padel Courts, the Charlotte Padel Club also operates 6 OUTDOOR Padel Courts in Matthews NC. Players now have the option to play Tennis, Pickleball and now Padel!



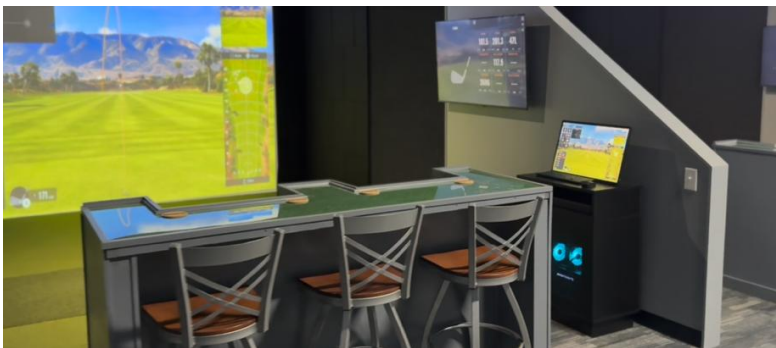
# Sports Connection Renovates Pickleball Charlotte – Ballantyne and Adds Golf Simulators.

Having learned a lot in the three years since opening the first dedicated Pickleball Facility, the Ballantyne original location is renovated to add New Pickleball Courts, New Lobby, New Social Area, New Pro Shop, and New Court Colors.



Indoor Golf Simulators are the new “thing” around the country.

With some extra space at the Ballantyne FEC and many customers (and staff) really liking golf, Sports Connection adds 3 Trackman Golf Simulators and removes the aging Spin Zone Bumper Cars.



# Pickleball Charlotte Featured in Magazine.

Pickleball Charlotte honored to be featured on the cover of Pickleball Club Magazine to discuss the history of Pickleball Charlotte and the trends in the Pickleball industry.



**Allan & Leesa's Full Interview On YouTube.**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tm7UZlhh2o&t=1s>

# Ground Up Greatness



THE OPERATIONAL PLAYBOOK BEHIND  
PICKLEBALL CHARLOTTE

In 2019, a game with a funny name and a growing following changed the course of a Charlotte-based sports business. Allan and Kelly Haseley had been running Volleyball Unlimited, later rebranded as Sports Connection, for nearly 25 years when they first allowed players to try a new paddle sport on their volleyball courts. Taping a few lines and setting up temporary nets was a casual decision, but one that sparked what would become [Pickleball Charlotte](#), now a multi-million dollar operation and one of the most innovative pickleball programs in the country.

The early approach was simple. Pickleball was offered during low-traffic daytime hours when the volleyball courts were unused. It was not a revenue driver, but it quickly became clear that demand was strong. Even with limited availability and minimal promotion, hundreds of players began showing up. The growth trajectory was unlike anything the Haseleys had experienced in decades of operating sports and entertainment facilities. As participation climbed, so did the realization that pickleball could be much more than a side project.

What makes the Pickleball Charlotte model so impactful is that it was built on responsiveness rather than assumption. During the pandemic, many businesses paused or pulled back. Pickleball Charlotte leaned in. With their facilities closed and operations disrupted, the Haseleys used the downtime to renovate, repurpose space, and even add outdoor courts. These calculated decisions helped build goodwill and kept players engaged during a period when most outlets for recreation were shut down.

As the environment began to normalize, Pickleball

Charlotte continued evolving. They expanded the number of playable courts across multiple locations and began investing in long-term infrastructure. Instead of continuing to tape lines on volleyball floors, they installed a specialized surface made of Tarkett rubber with a SportMaster coating to strike a balance between hard-court playability and joint-friendly comfort. When they could not find contractors willing to apply the unique surface combination, they learned to install it themselves. This resourcefulness gave them control over quality and reduced dependence on outside vendors.

They also tackled the equipment side of operations by building their own net systems when the available products did not meet their standards. Their custom-designed tapered nets eliminated common issues like sagging and dead space at the bottom, allowing balls to roll under more easily. Later, they launched the NetSkirt, an accessory that attaches to any net to lift it off the ground, addressing a frustration shared by players across the country. These details may seem minor, but collectively they improve playability, safety, and customer satisfaction.

One of the clearest values underpinning the Pickleball Charlotte model is accessibility without exclusivity. While many facilities have leaned into membership-only models with tiered benefits, Pickleball Charlotte opted for openness. Memberships are optional and framed as simple discount programs, not access barriers. Nearly 40 percent of their revenue still comes from non-members. The pricing structure is straightforward, and the atmosphere is intentionally welcoming to players of all ages and experience levels. By lowering the friction to entry and focusing on enjoyment over prestige, the club has cultivated a diverse and loyal community that grows primarily

through word of mouth.

They also made an early and intentional decision to prioritize education as a pillar of their operation. While court rentals and open play remain core offerings, training has become their largest and fastest-growing revenue stream. At the center of this effort is Leesa Walker, Director at Pickleball Charlotte and the driving force behind its instructional programming. A Master

Teaching Professional and Level I and II IPTPA certified instructor, Leesa brings more than 30 years of experience in education to her role. She has helped design and lead clinics, lessons, rating sessions, and competitive programs that serve players across all skill levels. Her passion for teaching and deep knowledge of the game have made her one of the most respected figures in the regional pickleball community.



Pickleball Charlotte offers everything from beginner clinics and private lessons to structured leagues and referee education. "... What we learned early on is that athletes are not just naturally good [at pickleball]. They have to be trained," Haseley said. They even developed their own internal player rating system to supplement national systems like DUPR, allowing for more tailored matchmaking and skill development. Players are observed by staff, given feedback, and provided with a rating that matches their performance and style

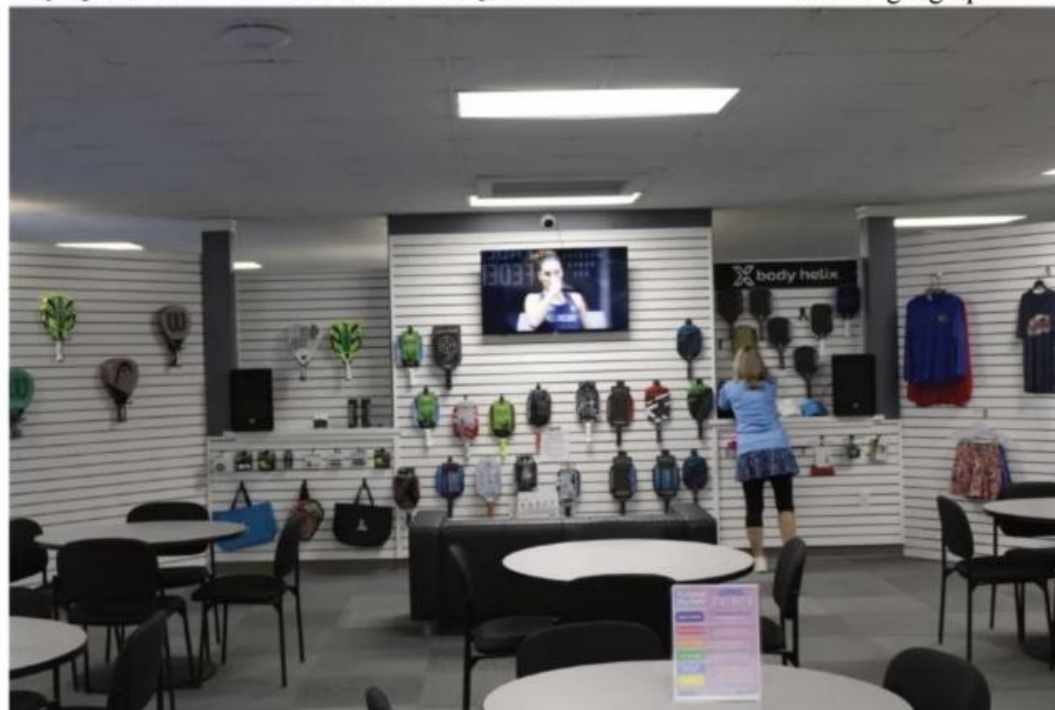
rather than just a win-loss record. This educational approach is integrated into nearly every program they offer, positioning the club as not just a place to play, but a place to improve.

That emphasis on growth extends beyond skill. It is deeply rooted in social connection. Pickleball Charlotte understands that the game is just as much about community as it is about competition. Whether through open play, team leagues, or group outings, the experience is structured to help players meet others, build friendships, and feel part of something larger. Staff are trained to help new players feel welcome, and events are designed with interaction in mind. This relational focus has transformed the club into more than a sports venue. It is a gathering place where people come to belong. In an increasingly digital world, this return to real human connection has proven to be one of their strongest differentiators.

As demand increased, so did their footprint. In 2022, they opened their first dedicated indoor pickleball



center in the Ballantyne area, featuring nine courts with custom surfaces and professional-grade amenities. The next year, they launched a second facility at Sharon Lakes featuring sixteen indoor courts, and by the end of 2024, a third location opened in Northlake, each situated within the greater Charlotte area. Each expansion was driven not by speculation but by measured demand. They tracked waitlists, court usage, and customer feedback to determine where and when to grow. Every location was carefully chosen to serve distinct geographic markets while maintaining high operational standards.



Throughout this growth, software became a critical backbone. Early in their expansion, Pickleball Charlotte transitioned to CourtReserve, a platform designed specifically for racquet sports. It allowed them to manage court reservations, program registration, player ratings, and more, all in one system. With tens of thousands of players in their database, the ability to automate, organize, and communicate efficiently became a competitive advantage. The software also supports one of their core strategies: offering many program options for players to browse and purchase online.



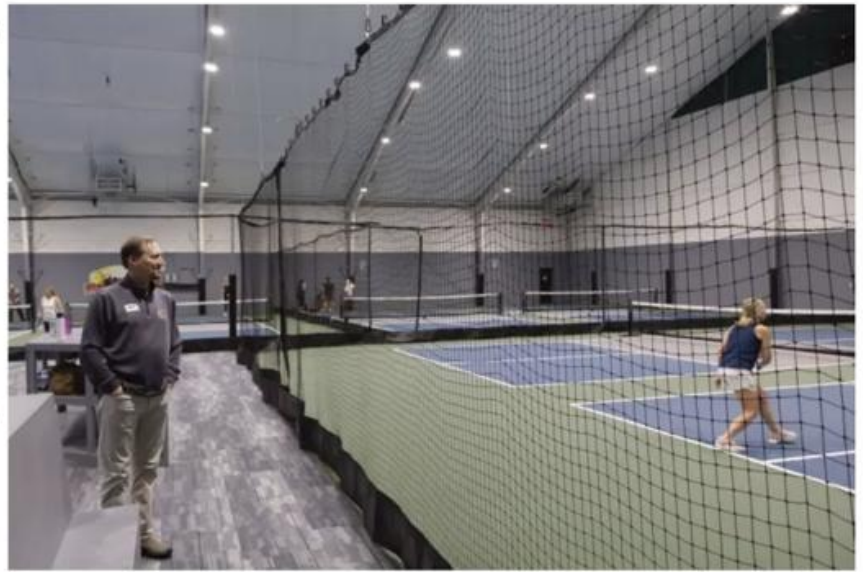
balanced and diversified. Revenue streams are spread across court rentals, open play, memberships, and training programs, with additional income from group events, leagues, merchandise, and refreshments. Their budgeting approach is straightforward yet effective, with each indoor court expected to contribute meaningfully to overall sales. With clear revenue goals and a focus on sustainable growth, they continue to scale efficiently while maintaining a high-quality experience.

Perhaps most impressively, Pickleball Charlotte has achieved all this with minimal traditional marketing. Their philosophy is simple: build a great experience, and people will come. So far, it has worked. Customer referrals and community buzz have fueled consistent growth even as other clubs enter

They compare it to Amazon. Customers want to search, click, and book on their own time without calling or emailing.

Staffing is another area where the club's philosophy shines. The team emphasizes flexibility, collaboration, and a culture of trust. Schedules are built around staff availability rather than the other way around, reducing burnout and improving retention. They actively recruit what they call triple threat employees, individuals who can manage the facility, teach on court, and handle administrative duties. This approach creates operational agility and a better customer experience, as staff are empowered and cross-trained to adapt to different roles throughout the day.

Financially, their business model is both



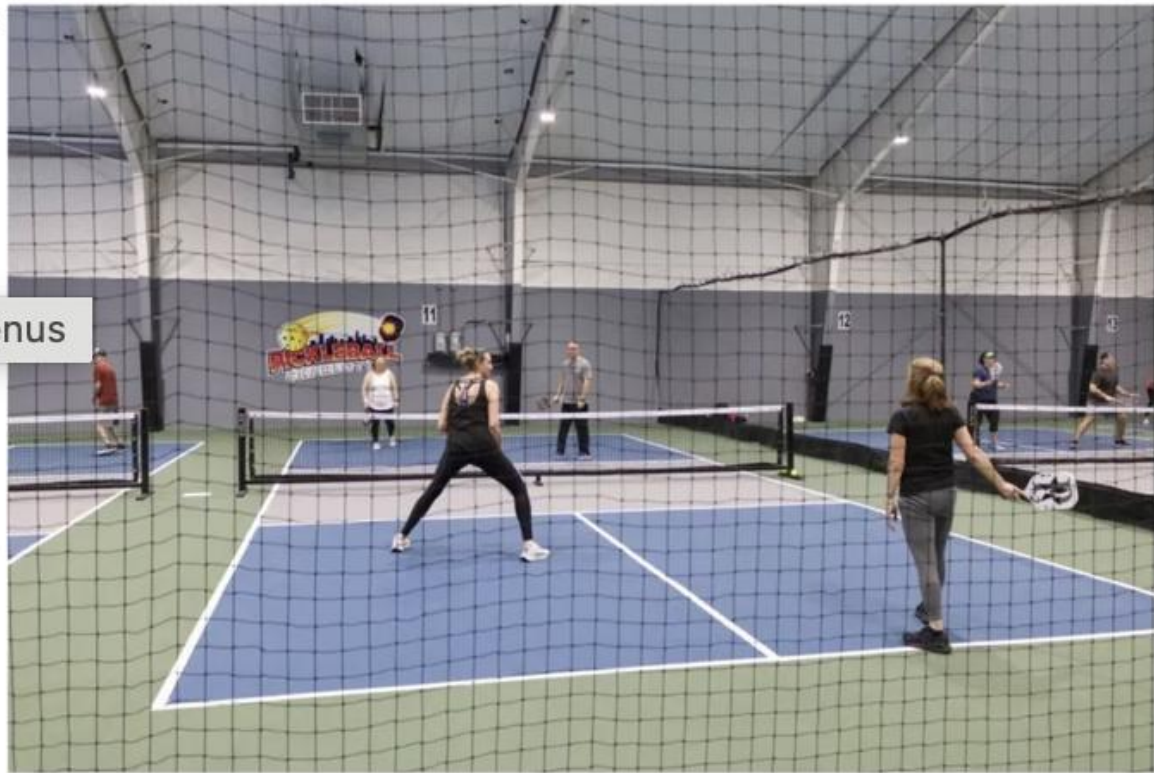
the market. They know the competitive landscape is evolving, but they trust that their foundation built on fun, fairness, and community will continue to attract and retain loyal players.



When asked about the future of pickleball, Haseley mentions a clear shift in the trajectory of pickleball from its origins on borrowed tennis courts to a future that is increasingly rooted indoors. "Pickleball started on a tennis court," he says. "Somebody lowered a net, grabbed a few balls, and it evolved from there. But now it is starting to develop its own identity, its own nets, paddles, and following." As the sport matures, so does its infrastructure, and Allan believes that indoor facilities offer the control and reliability needed for long-term success. "The indoor is a controlled environment," he

explains. “Sponsors do not want rainouts. They want a place where they can charge admission, play music, resurface courts, and deliver a consistent experience.” While public parks and neighborhoods will continue to offer outdoor options, he predicts private investment will lean heavily into indoor growth. “It is hard to make money on outdoor courts when tax-funded facilities are offering free access,” he says. “We only built outdoor courts because our indoor model was already working.”

menus



For facility owners, Pickleball Charlotte offers more than just a case study. It is a roadmap. Their story proves that success comes not from chasing trends but from serving people. By prioritizing inclusivity, education, and authentic connection, they have built a business that feels as much like a community as it does a club. Whether you are starting small or scaling big, the

lessons are the same: listen closely, innovate intentionally, and always put players first. That is how you turn a few taped lines on a volleyball court into one of the most admired pickleball operations in the country.

# Sports Connection Expands to Matthews NC and Partners with other Local Groups to Grow PICKLEBALL, TENNIS, PADEL & FIELD HOCKEY.



## Sports Connection Celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

December 1995, Volleyball Unlimited (Sports Connection) opened in a small, rented warehouse with 4 Volleyball Courts. Over the next 30 years, Sports Connection and its affiliates and partners have provided hundreds of thousands of Adults, Kids, Families, Teams, Players, Coaches and Groups the opportunity to have lots of FUN!

