

Dunk it, spike it, kick it at Playground USA

So you say you have no place to go and nothing to do? Not anymore. Playground USA, a first-of-its-kind recreational facility, is now open.

With 20 activities ranging

from sand volleyball to basketball and roller hockey to indoor soccer all under the same roof, the Playground is sure to be a hit in Oregon's climate.

One frequent shopper of the

"supermarket of fun" compared it to Disneyland, and although there are no rides, no long lines and no human-sized mice running around, there are certainly a number of attractions to

keep one busy.

The Playground is the brain child of Doc Titus, who ran the Playground Dance Club in Salem. Two years ago, he and his partners began the planning stages. At first, the project was to be housed in a 5,000 square foot building. But after coming up with more ideas, the group decided on the 50,000 square foot building on 82nd Avenue near Foster.

"As we talked about it, it just grew and grew and grew," said part-owner Ty Hanlon. "We wanted to give the community and families a place to go. We wanted to give 20 things to do, with everything under one roof. We set it up for whole families to be here at once. There's something for everybody to do here."

Besides basketball, volleyball, hockey and soccer, the Playground has a batting cage, pitching area, pool tables, table tennis and video games for the competitive side of people. Other features for everyone include a home video theater, a dance floor for use on the weekends, karaoke machine and snack bar. And according to Hanlon, the Playground may never be completely finished since new ideas are always flowing.

Even without any added attractions, the Playground can very well be a success with the equipment they have now. "We made it real," Hanlon said. "Our motto is 'We play for real.'"

Hanlon noted the maple-wood floor with the NBA-style breakaway rims on the basketball court. And the volleyball courts, with 208 yards of sand, have equipment that can be seen at the major beach tournaments on TV.

The roller hockey rink is the first in Oregon for the public's use. Most people play on the street, Hanlon said, and in the winter, the Playground's rink should see a lot of action.

With all the sports-related activities everyday and the dancing on the weekends, it is an ideal setting for Clackamas students, Hanlon said. In fact, on Friday and Saturday nights, the Playground is open only to those 18 and older. "This is a place for

college-age people who want to play sports or dance. It's something out of the fast lane."

Clackamas student Mike Chadwick goes to the Playground for the volleyball and camaraderie.

"In the wintertime, there's no place to go and it's warm in here," he said. "Also, I can meet a lot of new people."

Another feature is the "family atmosphere." Staff members are roaming all over the Playground to maintain a safe feeling for everyone.

"Security is one of our biggest concerns because we want to focus on a family environment," Hanlon said.

He noted that a person wearing anything that can be perceived as gang colors is asked to take it off. "We make it neutral. We keep it really tight. We don't want anybody to feel afraid to be here."

And for the most part, youngsters won't have to worry about fights or bad language from the older, more competitive crowd. "We make sure we're on top of everything," Hanlon said. "Temper can flare and we make sure people are organized and play by the rules." Any fighting at the Playground will be grounds for a ban from the premises for a year.

In the future, the owners would like to expand and have Playgrounds throughout the country. Right now, however, Portland is the big test.

If big crowds are any indication, Playground USA is passing the test with a slam dunk, spike and goal for the winning score.

Club membership

To become a card-carrying member of Playground USA, the cost is \$2 for the remainder of 1993, plus \$3 each time you use the facilities.

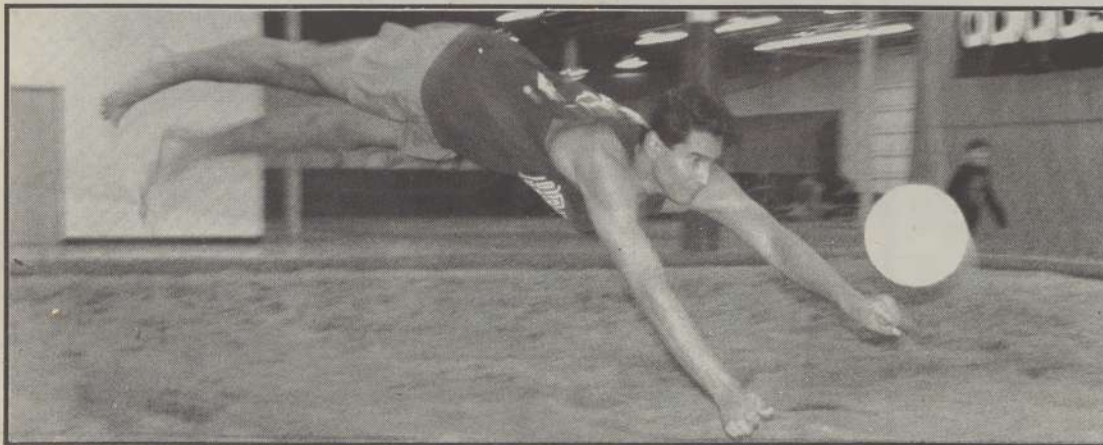
On Friday and Saturday dance nights after 10 p.m., the cost is \$5.

Beginning in 1994, the annual membership will cost \$5, plus the \$3 fee every time you go.

Playground USA is open everyday. Hours are: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Thursday, to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday nights and midnight Sunday.



The competition, whether it's basketball or volleyball, can be intense at Playground USA, but with 20 different activities under one roof, it can be a lot of fun.



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