

Recreation notebook

Villages Fencing Club holding 1st Club Championships March 31

By **MATT COTE**
DAILY SUN STAFF WRITER

THE VILLAGES – In just less than a week, the Villages Fencing Club will celebrate a new milestone.

The club has been in existence for nearly a year, and will be holding its first Club Championships at noon March 31 at La Hacienda Recreation Center.

“Everyone, those competing and those not, are excited and anxious about doing this in front of so many people,” club founder Doreen Lowther said. “Awards are at stake, and when that happens things change; it becomes serious business while you are fencing.”

The tournament will be held in all three weapons: Foil, epee and sabre.

The club is using the tournament as a demonstration for the 2016 Villages Senior Games. This year’s competition will be open for club members only, but during next year’s Senior Games it will be open for all residents.

“We were overwhelmed when our vice president, Dick Bigelow, told us that fencing was going to be in the Senior Games, starting next year,” Lowther said. “It will be a lot of work getting this together, and we are so happy for the support and enthusiasm we have received from The Villages Recreation Department. A huge thank you to them.”

The foil competition will be held first, followed by epee and then sabre. Each competition will take approximately

one hour.

All competition will be direct-elimination based on seedings that have been determined at Villages Fencing Club meetings through March. An award ceremony will be held at the completion of the event.

The club meets Mondays at Odell Recreation Center and Thursdays at Big Cypress Recreation Center. Membership is open to all Villages residents who have previous fencing experience or have completed the Fencing 101 class at The Villages Lifelong Learning College.

The event is free to the public and Lowther hopes it will help bring more Villagers to the sport.

“We think new members will come from the new people coming in. Many may have

fenced in college, then life comes along, no fencing clubs to continue in and had to give it up,” she said. “When they get here they find a fencing club and are thrilled.”

Men’s Advanced Pickleball League

Division winners were crowned last week, with Paul Cash and Dave Dunlop winning titles in the Pickle Division and Ball Division, respectively.

Cash went 6-0 to leapfrog Jim Welch for first place. Welch went 3-3 and missed his opportunity to lock up the top spot. Greg George and Jim Kurtz round out the playoff field for the Pickle Division. Kurtz tied with Darren Brady for the final spot, but won a tiebreaker to move on to the

league tournament.

In the Ball Division, Dunlop went 4-2 to hold on to his top spot. Dan Cooper went 5-1 to comfortably take second place, and Peter Shianna and Mike Lehman took third and fourth, respectively, to round out the playoff picture. Jeff Rankins tied Shianna and Lehman, but fell to fifth place thanks to tiebreakers.

The league’s tournament begins at noon Thursday. The league will not be holding a spring session this year.

Villages Championship Pickleball Tournament

The Villages Championship Pickleball Tournament was held last week, with a record turnout of entered teams.

In the mixed-doubles competition, Lydia Willis and Don

Piper defeated Gary Miller and Vivian Knieper to take first place.

Willis showed up again in ladies doubles finals, where she and partner Nancy Balne defeated Deb Harrison and Nancy Nowak to take the crown.

The men’s competition had all new faces, as Marc Boudreau and Ted Meyer defeated Tom O’Neil and Stu Hastings to take first place.

There will be no recreation department-run pickleball tournament in April, as the Senior Games will take its place.

If you have an item you’d like to include in our recreation sports notebook, including news about leagues, tournaments or players, please contact staff writer Matt Cote at 753-1119, ext. 9060, or matt.cote@thevillagesmedia.com.