

Pinellas Youth Bat the Ping-Pong Ball

Junior Athletes Train to Be Table Tennis Champions

Pockety-pock, pockety-pock...like Forrest Gump, local youth are training to become champions. Every Monday and Friday afternoon, young athletes hone their table tennis skills at the Ross Norton Recreation Complex and the Countryside Recreation Center in Clearwater. The program is provided as a free service by the Sunrise Table Tennis Club (STTC) as part of their ongoing Junior Athletes Development Program.

The junior players are taught Olympics-style table tennis. Each session, basic skills in effective strokes, footwork and game strategy are drilled. But fun and games ensue as the play heats up with fast-paced matches and round-robin competition.

The after-school youth training is part of a year-round program of youth development in the sport of table tennis by the STTC. The program emphasizes skills development, athleticism and sportsmanship. The training provides young players with a sports-level ability that will last a lifetime. Some local youth are even training for participation in the Olympics Table Tennis Team. The STTC after-school youth program is followed by a summer camp program each year, which culminates in the Annual Summer Camp Table Tennis Championship.

In this year's Championship, twenty-five junior players participated in teams from three recreation center summer camps: The Countryside Outbacks, The Morningside Coconuts and The Ross Norton Wildcats. The teams played a series of round robin matches which were evenly matched and all games were extremely close. Continuing their string of wins, The Countryside Outback's prevailed once again. Team Trophies and Player Ribbons were awarded.

The after-school youth training is available to any players ages 10-17. Times are 4:00 to 6:00 pm each Monday at Countryside Recreation Center and 4:00 to 6:00 pm each Friday at Ross Norton Recreation Complex. Other times are available by appointment. For more information, contact Margo Lindsay at (727) 669-0899, or visit www.SunriseTableTennis.com.

The STTC is the main activity of the Sunrise Sport Foundation, Inc., a 501 (C) (3) non-profit public charitable origination. The goal of the Foundation is to promote low-cost or free athletic competitions and educational clinics for all adults and juniors to promote fitness and personal excellence through planned athletic activities, educational, recreational and competitive events. The Foundation provides free activities to all youth under the age of 18 and has a program of subsidized activities for seniors. The Foundation is supported by local business sponsorships and private donations.

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