

ITALIAN AMERICAN BOCCE CLUB WELCOMES A NEW GENERATION

Open Bocce Nights and Fall Leagues Available

by T.J. Stranova

You can still hear Italian music playing...and the occasional curse in the language of the old country, but a generational shift is definitely starting to show at the Italian American Bocce Club. As the Italian American Bocce Club heads into autumn, more and more new (and younger) players are showing up on weeknights to roll balls with the many long term members who still come to the Club on a regular basis.

After years of declining membership, the Club has used the world of social media to reach out to a new generation. A robust Facebook page continually updates the world on the Club events, while a new website (www.nolabocce.com) not only includes Club activities, but hosts an archive of print media coverage dating back almost twenty years. Additionally, members regularly turn to Instagram and Twitter to promote bocce events. This new online presence has even caught the attention of the news media – the Italian American Bocce Club was recently featured on both ABC's "News



Young, old, men, women... everyone has fun playing bocce!

with a Twist" and WYES' "New Orleans Living Television" shows.

A.J. Sercombe, 30, is typical of this new generation of players. "I played a little bit of bocce growing up," says Sercombe, "but it was the outdoor variety. Playing indoors on regulation carpeted courts is a totally different game...and much more fun. I was surprised at how much strategy is involved – you are setting up shots, playing de-

fense, and knocking your opponent's bocces around."

Will Arvin, 29, enjoys both the sport and the colorful characters at the Club. "The people at the Bocce Club are great – a real cross-section of individuals that you probably would not run into anywhere else. It is fun to compete against people in their twenties to their eighties...and the funny thing is, it is

the men and women in their sixties, seventies, and eighties are usually the ones out their whipping our butts!"

The Club is now gearing up for their Fall Leagues and they are looking for players of all ages and skills to come out and support this long-standing hub of Italian-American culture. The Fall leagues will be held on both Wednesday and Thursday nights (7pm), starting in early-mid September (the exact dates

will be listed on their website, www.nolabocce.com). Interested players can contact the Italian American Bocce Club by sending an email to nolabocce@gmail.com. Single players and groups are welcome – expert members of the Bocce Club help create balanced teams based on the skill level of the participants.

For those who are new to the game and who would like to "test the waters" before jumping into league play, the Italian-American Bocce Club also hosts several "Open Bocce Nights" each month. During these Open Nights anyone with an interest in learning the game, practicing their skills, or playing against some expert competition are welcomed at the Club for only five dollars for the entire night. Information on the Open Bocce Nights can also be found on the Club's Facebook Page and website.

The Italian American Bocce Club is located at 2340 Severn Avenue in Metairie and features three indoor, air conditioned courts, banquet space, kitchen, bar, and wonderful Italian music.