

FUTSAL

Futsal putting best foot forward in Humboldt County

By JOHN MAGERS
THE EUREKA REPORTER

A variation of one of the world's most popular sports has found a home in Humboldt County thanks to the efforts of some local sponsors.

Futsal, similar to indoor soccer, is played on a basketball court with a ball heavier than a typical soccer ball. It is currently played year-round at the Samoa Gym, and is sponsored by local organization Inside Sports. There are two teams of five players each, and two 20-minute halves are played per game.

Candy Illing, the public relations director for Inside Sports, said the sport has grown a lot in the past six years in Humboldt County.

"We started with 225 people six years ago, and now there are almost 500 people in our program," she said.

Illing added her organization started futsal at the Samoa Gym because there were a lot of people who wanted to play indoor soccer, and because the organization wanted people in Humboldt County to have another way to exercise and participate in healthy living.

A family-oriented environment is promoted at the games, so things like profanity are discouraged and treat-

ed accordingly with red and yellow cards.

"We want everyone to come and have a good time, and if you have someone that's being a poor sport, that's not going to work," Illing said.

Also, futsal allows people of all ages to compete. Children can learn the game of futsal beginning with fundamentals like passing, kicking and playing as a team through Inside Sport's KinderFutsal program.

For the more experienced players, leagues from the age of 6 all the way through adulthood are offered to local residents.

Overall, Illing said futsal is about having a good time while promoting a fit environment in Humboldt County.

"The sport is intimidating at first because it's fast-paced, but once you get started, you just go and it's a lot of fun," Illing said.

The winter session for futsal at the Samoa Gym starts Dec. 1. The registration fees are \$65 each for KinderFutsal and Adult Men's League participants, and \$60 each for the regular leagues like Junior-Futsal, Adult Women's League and Adult Co-Ed League.

For more information, visit <http://www.insidesports.ws/> or phone 707-839-6554.