

MESQUITE MONTHLY

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Rice always ready for a pickleball match

By Kirk Kern
Mesquite Monthly

Shawn Rice isn't your normal Sun City retiree. In fact, she's not retired at all. She works full time as the Sun City Pioneer Center, coordinating the resident's events and activities. When she's not doing that, however, you can probably find her on the pickleball courts.

"I love pickleball," she said. "I play at least four times a week."

Rice moved to Mesquite in 2016 with her partner, Lee Hartman. Before that, she had never even picked up a pickleball paddle. The sport worked for her in two ways: as a competitive outlet for the former college swimmer but also as a social setting.

Those two aspects don't seem to match, but Rice finds a way to make it work. Competing in pickleball in tournaments such as Mesquite Senior Games and other events in St. George and Las Vegas get her competitive juices flowing, but she's just as likely to have a friendly game with other friends during the week as well.

"I played against a 90-year-old woman once and it was fantastic," she said.

When you play as much as Rice does, it's easy to find partners that can either challenge her game or

just provide a couple hours of laughter. She likes to play against those with higher skill levels in an effort to improve but still finds time to go out with friends and play for fun. She also doesn't mind taking a new player under her wings and teaching them the ropes.

"I just tell people to go out and try it," she said. "You'll know your comfort level, to say 'I can do that or I can't do that.' If you're playing socially, it doesn't matter. Just laugh and have fun and enjoy life."

The hardest part about picking up the game might just be the availability of courts as the sport has enjoyed a boom among the senior set. Sun City is working on that though. The community currently has six courts, but are currently adding 10 more. The City of Mesquite also has plans to build more courts as well to accommodate demand.

"Right now, there's usually about 40 people trying to get on the six courts here (in Sun City)," Rice said.

Rice and Hartman initially moved to Mesquite for a different reason. They are both avid hikers and can be found on most weekends on desert trails.

"If we're not pickleballing, we're hiking," she said.



Mesquite Senior Games Celebrates 20 Years! 2001-2021 WATCH FOR UPCOMING FUN EVENTS!

Watch for Healthy and Fun Spring and Fall Events! And wait until you hear about our 20 Year Celebration Kickoff!
New Events Coming in 2021 - Horseshoes and Corn Hole!

Sign up at www.MesquiteSeniorGames.org and click on "Want to Join Our Mailing List?" or call 702-345-3347 and we'll send you all the event information!
Coming soon: Our new website redesign!

**Please note that event plans are conditioned on local/state/national public health guidelines in place at that time.*