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# EAST SIDE

## At the Yard, swingers stay cool

By Kevin Smith

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Tucson, Arizona | Published: 06.17.2005

*Editor's note: This story ran previously in Thursday's Star EAST section.*

There are no peanuts or Cracker Jack. Yet.

The Yard, which opened in late May, provides professional training for baseball and softball enthusiasts, and a casual atmosphere for the novice at its air-conditioned East Side facility.

"We've come every day since it opened," said East Side resident Gail Masek, 47.

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Masek was watching her two sons - Jake, 9, and Jared, 12 - play catch with neighbor Nick Condra, 11.

Masek said her sons play baseball every day. Instead of leaving them unattended at a park or frying in the summer heat, the Yard is the perfect fit, she said.

"We get to practice more often," said Jared, whose favorite pro baseball player is New York Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez.

Participants can get hands-on instruction from those with experience at the game's highest level, such as Tom Waddell, co-

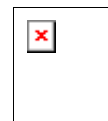
owner and former pitcher for the Cleveland Indians.



Tom Waddell, co-owner of the Yard, he year-old Kyle, with his pitching form at opened indoor baseball and softball co Side.

James S. Wood / Arizona Dail

More Photos (1):



### Quick profile

- Tom Waddell, 47
- Co-owner of the Yard.
- Former Cleveland Indians p
- Born in Scotland.
- Thinks the St. Louis Cardin the 2005 World Series.
- Favorite modern player: De the New York Yankees.
- Toughest batter he ever fac Boggs.

Those looking to just swing a bat can try their luck against one of the Yard's six pitching machines.

The Yard also features the Hack Attack, a machine that Waddell said can "throw any pitch by a human hand," including knuckleballs, curves and sliders.

Molly Johnson, a Sabino High School softball shortstop, works at the Yard's desk and will eventually help aspiring softballers in clinics this summer.

"It gives kids a chance to play as much as they want without getting heat exhaustion," she said.

Paula MacCarone, 52, said she and her son, Nick, 13, found out about the Yard after watching a player in Nick's baseball league manage a bunch of hits after formerly struggling at the plate. His secret was the Yard.

"We're really excited about it," said Paula MacCarone, whose husband used to watch Waddell pitch in the big leagues.

"It's a tremendous help to this side of town," she said.

Waddell, 47, said he opened the Yard with co-owners John Casadei and Mark Pernu, with the goal of creating a baseball culture on the East Side.

The game extends through generations, Waddell said as he watched a couple of younger patrons practice their swing.

"This is exactly why I have this place," he said.

● *Contact reporter Kevin Smith at 434-4079 or [ksmith@azstarnet.com](mailto:ksmith@azstarnet.com).*



**0 Comments on this story**

● Does he celebrate the Scottish tradition of Robert Burns Night?: No.

### How to get there

- What: The Yard
- Where: 1671 S. Research Loop
- Hours: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- For more information: 731-9273.

### Prices

#### Monthly memberships:

- Hitters only: \$99 with unlimited use of batting cages.
- Hitter and pitcher: \$129 with unlimited use of batting cages and pitcher's tunnels.
- Complete player: \$139 with unlimited use of the batting cages and pitcher's tunnels plus two hours with "Hack Attack," the versatile curveball machine, in the team cage per month.

#### Family packages

- Three hours of hitting or pitching: \$99.
- Five hours of hitting or pitching: \$150.
- 10 hours of hitting or pitching: \$250.

#### Team pack:

One hour of use: \$115.  
Three sessions: \$250.

Includes use of the Hack Attack, Track Attack vision trainer, one pitching tunnel and one batting cage.

#### Rentals

- Batting cage: \$11 for 15 minutes or \$20 for a half-hour. Also coin-operated, 12 pitches for \$1.
- Pitching tunnel: \$15 for a half-hour or \$25 for an hour.
- Pro cage: \$25 for a half-hour, \$45 for an hour. Hack Attack added for \$10 per half-hour.

#### Instruction

● Call and ask about private, s  
camps and clinics, as the Yard  
feel out the demand.

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