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Can you come out and play?

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When you were a kid and wanted to play kick the can or hide-and-seek, it was easy. You trudged over to a buddy's house and knocked on the door.

Now that you're grown up, what do you do if you have an inkling for a little dodgeball or double Dutch?

That's where GameSnake.com comes in.

The Web site is the online version of the neighborhood basketball court but for 86 sports.

GameSnake.com is free. It helps amateur athletes find players with similar interests and lets them set up or join pickup games in their area. It's also a great way for runners and cyclists to find local workout partners.

Sports range from the traditional (basketball, softball) to the less common (bocce, roller derby) to the just plain unusual (bouldering, unicycle hockey). And, yes, one of the sports is rope skipping.

The site, the brainchild of three Akron-area Web designers, has almost 6,000 members, more than 1,300 of whom live in Ohio.

Co-founder Andrew Holland of Fairlawn envisions the site becoming the eBay of amateur sports, a clearinghouse for every pickup game in America.

After signing up, users either can see if a game is forming in their area or take the initiative and organize their own games. Like eBay, users are rated by other members. So if you don't show up or give someone a cheap elbow under the hoop, your online reputation will suffer.

Holland, who uses GameSnake to set up Ultimate Frisbee games and find fellow road cyclists, says the people who go through the process of signing up and joining a game are unique.

"They're different," he says. "It's a filter for people, and it's cool."

John Campanelli

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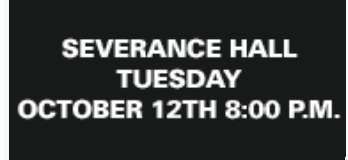
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