

Sports for couples can help Cupid hit his mark

From page 16.

with wife Angie, are sold on sports as a romantic elixir.

Mr. Agar recalled he didn't meet Angie through fishing, but since they each had an affinity for the sport, it was a common vehicle that enhanced their relationship when they began dating.

"I've been into fishing all of my life and she has, too," Mr. Agar said.

Married for four years, the Newmarket couple has competed in the Top Bass and Bassmania circuits for the past six years.

One of the first husband-and-wife teams entered in the provincial bass tournament circuit, the couple says more spousal teams are getting into the competitive aspect of angling.

When the two aren't fishing in a big bucks event, they spend a lot of

time pursuing the sport on a recreational level.

As for who catches more fish, Mr. Agar takes a "politically correct" approach, conceding his wife is the far superior piscator.

Now in their 25th year of wedded bliss, Errol Timol and his wife, Pam, say their participation in sports has enabled them to maintain a healthy relationship.

"I think playing sports helps a relationship because you should be doing some things together. And it's also a good way to keep fit," said Mr. Timbol, who, along with his wife, is an avid tennis player.

Taking up the sport after his daughter Jade apprenticed as a youngster in their native England, Mr. Timbol encouraged Pam to grab a tennis racquet.

After moving to Unionville, the couple joined the Unionville Tennis Club and have been members for

the past 11 years and have taken to the courts for organized mixed club events.

Mr. Timbol is quick to acknowledge his competitive nature can get the better of him. But it's quickly forgotten once the couple vacates the court. The trick, Mr. Timbol said, is to make each outing enjoyable.

Not only do the Timbols take to the courts during the summer, during the winter they play tennis at an indoor facility in Scarborough or shuttle off to play badminton at Unionville High School through a Town of Markham Parks and Recreation program.

"(Playing tennis or badminton with Pam) is purely fun," Mr. Timbol said.

For some couples, sports entered into the picture through the "If you can't beat them, you might as well join them" adage.

In the case of Leslie Booth, her decision to take up golf after her spouse Ray Tsukada began it has enhanced their relationship.

"Leslie took up the game because I did," Mr. Tsukada recalled.

"I'd be going out (on the links) with people from work so she wanted to be a part of that."

When the Richmond Hill couple isn't on the links for a business function, they engage in a best ball format against other couples.

When the pair is on holidays, they take to the links at various courses throughout the province.

"It's enjoyable. I don't mind playing golf with Leslie at all," said Mr. Tsukada, who highly recommends golf as a sport for couples.

"Let's face it, to play golf at least takes about four hours and you're outside so it's a good game to play.

"It's not competitive at all. It's a

social thing. That's the main thing."

While sports can enhance relationships, it can also act as Cupid's arrow.

John DeFinney feels running is an ideal activity for couples because they can be on the road or trails simultaneously.

"It's something that both can do through training and competing," said Mr. DeFinney, president of the Markham Centaurs Running Club.

"And at the recreational level more so, you see more husband and wives run. It works out well because, when you're in a race, you both line up at the start and, when you finish, she might win the female category, while the husband might win the male division. The different categories brings out a balancing."

A runner for more than 30 years, Mr. DeFinney enticed his wife, Sonya, into running a few years ago.

Rules of game complex

From page 16.

of bocce and its down-to-earth practitioners.

Plump, beautiful Italian-Canadian women delivered skillful shots, then laughed among one another, conjuring up all the joie de vivre of a Roman piazza. Skinny, rough Italian-Canadian men watched games and argued with one another, somehow recalling the simple ruggedness of the Italian countryside.

On this day, Woodbridge Bocciofila Club president Vince Infusino would impart the basics.

Imparting only a few basic rules to avoid the confusion that would inevitably arise from trying to fully teach the game in a two-hour session, Mr. Infusino started by placing the boccino (a tiny ball) over a red dot on the court.

Resembling lawn bowling and curling, the object of the game is to attain as many punto (points) as possible.

Yours truly started by trying to throw a heavy bocce

ball next to the boccino without hitting the side or end boards of the court. The first shot was pitiful, landing metres from its target.

Mr. Infusino suggested some adjustments, instructing his student to softly roll the ball with a straightened arm parallel to the side of the ball.

The next shot landed less than two inches from the boccino. A shot that ends up four inches or less from the target, Mr. Infusino explained, is called bersaglio.

"You can't get any better than that," he said. "Maybe we can make a player out of him," Mr. Infusino announced.

Nearly 50 students at nearby Father Bressani Catholic High School, Mr. Infusino noted, are learning bocce. Its most high-profile proponents, he added, are trying to make it an Olympic sport.

Been There, Done That is a regular column where staff try to keep up with experts in a wide variety of recreational activities.

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