

Platform Tennis is a Popular Winter Game at Wayzata CC

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Platform tennis/Paddleball was developed in the eastern United States in the 1920s as an outdoor sport intended to be played in the winter months. Paddleball is played on a lighted, 60' x 30' raised aluminum platform with a wire mesh enclosure 12 feet high. A 44' x 20' area (1/4 the size of a tennis court) makes up the in-bounds portion of the court. The game is scored and played like tennis with a couple exceptions. Balls can be played off the enclosure, similar to racquetball, and serves that touch the net are played. The equipment used also varies slightly from traditional tennis. A paddle made from wood or composite materials is used instead of a string racket, and a solid, spongy, foam ball replaces a tennis ball. Local platform expert Scott Turtinen claims "the ball bounces best when the temp is between 5-10 degrees above." It is necessary to play the game on a raised platform because the playing surface is heated from below and for snow removal.

Heaters are used to melt small amounts of snow (<2") and ice off the platform providing a safe and dry surface. Each court is equipped with three gas-fired furnaces capable of producing a million BTUs of heat! The heat is trapped and forced straight up by a skirting/enclosure that surrounds the base of the platform. The resulting water can then drain through the slatted aluminum planks that make up the platform.

The other reason for raised courts is



snow removal. Snowfalls greater than two inches need to be shoveled and pushed off the deck, allowing snow to pile up around the skirting. At the base of the enclosure there are doors that swing open to allow for easier snow removal, yet will keep balls on the playing surface.

On the downside, platform tennis can require a fair amount of maintenance not to mention a substantial up front cost for the construction of the courts. The removal of snow is probably the most tedious of any maintenance. A 6-8" snowfall can take an hour and a half to two

hours for three people to clear from two paddleball courts. Now there is also the cost to heat the courts. The million BTUs of heat being cranked out for each court is not without significant expense. It cost \$1,300 dollars to heat the two courts at Wayzata Country Club during the month of December.

The costs to keep the courts is worth it to the members of WCC seeing that it is in use nearly every night of the week. Paddle ball provides a healthy, outdoor, recreational activity in the winter months, anytime day or night.

