

Ga-ga record shattered at camp

BY KIRK GREENWOOD

STAFF WRITER

Briarwood Day Camp celebrated its 25th anniversary by staging the world's largest game of ga-ga ball.

Nearly 500 campers and staff members took part Monday in what they hoped would be a record-breaking event.

The camp even registered with Guinness World Records officials to have its achievement formally recognized once the game took place.

Buckingham

"The record right now is 250 (players); we're killin' it!" said Mike Green, camp co-owner and event coordinator.

Ga-ga is like dodgeball, which is popular with elementary-aged schoolchildren and campers all over the world. Players score outs by hitting their opponents with a rubber kickball on or below the knees. Shots to the head and upper body don't count and are discouraged for safety reasons.

"This is like 21st-century dodgeball. Our kids absolutely love it!" said Green.

Briarwood staff transformed a large, multipurpose athletic court into an octagonal ga-ga arena of giant proportions.

At the sound of a whistle, hundreds of campers and staff members filled the blacktop, volleying kickballs at one another from every direction.

"One of the interesting things about



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Camp-goers at Briarwood Day Camp in Buckingham play what turned out to be a Guinness World Record-breaking game of ga-ga ball on Monday.

this game is that it is self-governing," said Green, as campers who had been eliminated scurried off without complaint to have cupcakes and create time capsules honoring the camp's anniversary.

"This has been a great way to commemorate 25 years," said Green.

Green and Matt Frankel, two friends

who met at summer camp as kids, took over operation of Briarwood from the original owners in 2009.

"We bought a great camp," said Green. "We're trying to keep the quality of the programming up and still keep it

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Going for it



A large group of children at Briarwood Day Camp in Furlong plays what they hope will be a Guinness World Record-breaking game of ga-ga — a form of dodgeball — at the camp on Monday morning. Here camper Ian Maurer of Doylestown, 12, winds up to hit the ball below waist level, one of the rules of the game. **Story Page B1**

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Dodge

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fun." The camp runs for eight weeks in June, July and August. Campers are shuttled to and from the 30 acre facility in Buckingham each weekday.

They spend mornings and afternoons at Briarwood playing ga-ga and participating in other activities, including archery, basketball, BMX biking, boating, mini golf, rock climbing, soccer, ceramics making and twice-daily swimming in one of Briarwood's three pools.

"The goal is to send 'em home happy, healthy, sweaty and tired," said Green.

The new owners built an additional ga-ga court to keep up with the growing demand for the game.

Frankel said he installed rubber padding in all three of Briarwood's regulation ga-ga courts to prevent campers from

skinning their knuckles — an injury common to the sport.

"We gave special instructions to make sure the younger kids are taken care of," said Frankel.

On Monday, when all but a handful of players had been eliminated, the competition was transferred to one of the smaller ga-ga courts.

Jake Chipper and Micah Katz, two 9-year-olds from Yardley, battled it out in the championship round.

After a few minutes of intense play, Jake emerged victorious. Going into the event he had no idea he was going to win. "It feels good," he said.

Green said his campers were excited for the bragging rights that come from setting a world record.

"It's a neat thing to say you were part of a Guinness record!" he said.

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