

Seniors battle for bragging rights in Wii tournament

The Heritage at Brentwood event has all the fun of bowling, minus the funny shoes

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Jonathan Smith, a member of the Heritage team, reacts after bowling a perfect game during a Wii bowling tournament against seniors with the Longview Rec Center last week at The Heritage at Brentwood.
Sanford Myers / The Tennessean

BRENTWOOD — The Heritage at Brentwood’s parlor was turned into a bowling alley last week, but the lanes, pins and balls were all in the virtual world.

The retirement community’s bowling league played host to its sporting peers from Longview Recreation Center’s senior group during a first-ever Wii bowling tournament.

Although video gaming systems tend to trend toward a younger demographic, these seniors were cheering on their team members with each flick of the wrist as players used a white wireless remote control to toss electronic bowling balls down a make-believe lane on the television screen.

“(Wii bowling) is becoming really popular here. We’re thinking of starting up another league on Saturdays,” said Heritage Wii bowling league member Sonnie Kreiger.

The games started about three years ago when Heritage employee Jenny Jackson bought a Wii, a video game console marketed by Nintendo, for the seniors’ use. Now, the video bowling league is made up of eight teams with 32 senior members and 10 substitutes who play September through April.

The story is very similar with the seniors from Longview, a Williamson County Parks and Recreation Department center in Spring Hill. Their senior Wii bowling league also started about three years ago. The 10-week league is made up of seven or eight teams with four people on each team.

“It’s a wonderful way to meet new people in the community and to foster some friendly competition,” said Amanda Umphres, senior and therapeutics coordinator at Longview.

Kreiger said she’s heard that Wii bowling is a good fit for seniors because it improves balance and coordination. But the benefits go beyond health-centered. She and her husband joined the games to interact with their neighbors rather than just bumping into them in the dining room.

“I think there’s a social part of it. We’re always laughing and having a good time over how well we do or how bad we do,” she said.



Senior citizens practice Wii bowling at Longview Recreation Center in Spring Hill. The Wii bowling team members at Longview recently took on members at The Heritage in Brentwood.
Jeanne Reasonover / The Tennessean

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