

# Dozo Students Play Squash

Contributed by Mr. Leatherman  
Cardozo Athletic Director

When you hear the word "squash", what comes to mind? One may think of a vegetable that grows in your garden, or others may have an image of a bug that is being stepped on. But did you know that "squash" is also a game? And further, we have six or seven students here at Cardozo that are playing it on a regular basis.

This all began a few weeks ago when Coach Jackson, Ms. Melton and I, arranged for Connie Barnes, an Australian, and the COO of Aussie Nick Squash, to make a presentation to the combined 3rd period P.E. classes. She, along with two world-class players that accompanied her, explained how squash, an indoor game very similar to racquetball and somewhat similar to tennis, is one of the fastest growing sports in the U.S., and was recently named by Forbes magazine as the top ranked healthiest sport because of its cardio benefits.

All of the students had a chance to play a little bit during the class period, and had a great time. Ms. Barnes came back about a week later for another demonstration during a lunch period so that additional students could participate. As a result of these demonstrations, and with the help of counselors Mr. Popol and Ms. Scheer, we had five boys and two girls sign up for the SquashEmpower program. Every Monday and Wednesday immediately after school,

they are picked up by Ms. Barnes and taken to the University Club on 16th Street, for an hour and a half of squash instruction and games. In time, there will be a tutoring program as part of it as well. Then they are delivered back to Cardozo around 5:45.

The program will continue throughout the summer and right on into next fall, and Ms. Barnes would like to get many more Cardozo students involved. Currently Wil-

son and Cardozo are the only two schools participating, but more will be joining next year.

When I asked Ms. Barnes if she enjoyed working with the Cardozo students, she replied, "Very much—we enjoy how respectful they are—they are tenacious and fun, show great sportsmanlike skills and are very enthusiastic!" Two of the students she referenced are Ying Chieh and Yeykin Valenzuela, both 11th graders. When asked why they decided to give squash a try, Yeykin said, "The first time I tried it, I had a lot of fun, and hitting that ball is a good way to get my frustrations out." Ying added, "I really enjoy playing also. You can be a very good player even if

you're not very fast or big or strong. My dad used to play when I was very young, and he was really glad that I was getting the opportunity to play."

If you would like to give squash a try, just let Mr. Popol or Ms. Scheer know.



Photo by Mr. Leatherman

Cardozo students Yeykin Valenzuela (left) and Ying Chieh play Squash.