



Kiand Chetty and Khenso Makelana.



Owen Mbatha, Kian Chetty, and Brian Nel.

XP is new in the field

Ditiro Masuku
 ditrom@caxton.co.za

The XP Arena opened its doors in March 2022, but already the facility's making major strides both on the sports field and in the community.

Alexander Stothard from XP Arena said they are a five aside football facility based in Magaliessig. They chose to open the facility in the area because they wanted the facility to be

central, as the surrounding areas are Fourways, Bryanston, Lonehill and Paulshof.

"Five aside football is football on a smaller scale. It was developed for the fitness side of things and adapted by another game called futsal. The field is surrounded by netting so the ball never goes out for the duration of the 40 minute game."

Stothard said they have a kids football programme that has over 100 kids in it. The programme is

run by Nicholas Stothard who is a UEFA A licenced coach.

Nicholas is also the head coach of the University of Pretoria Varsity Cup team. Alexander said Nicholas does not coach the kids, the director of football who instructs the coaches on how to coach the kids.

The arena also has social adults leagues that run during the week.

"The adult league starts from 16 years old, we have a wide variety of different ages for different teams, whoever wants to play will apply on our website and will get entered into the league. You come with you team so most of the time it is guys who are playing with friends against other teams. This creates a fun environment for them to stay active, play the sport they love and also have that competitive edge," said Alexandra.

"We run tournaments often as well which see winners usually walk away with over R10 000. We recently had a semi professional league running for 15 weeks which saw the winners grab R26 500. We will be adding two more five aside fields to the facility before middle of the year as well as replacing the old Astro turf with new Astro turf."

Alexander is a former player for SuperSport United and Amatuks. He said he wanted to provide a facility to help develop football in South Africa whether it is only for football lovers who want social aspect or for children to develop their skills to one day become professionals.

He credits himself, Nicholas Stothard and Rory Bloy for coming up with the concept and putting words into action, "We have a dream of opening another three of these facilities around South Africa."



Back: Dante De Gouviea, Adrian Kotze, Luke Steyl, Ross Peddar. Middle: Richard Faasen, Shakeel Kidd, Michael Faasen. Front: Craig Rapson

Exciting karate hub launched

The Fourways area has exploded in recent years with lovers of karate joining established and newly opened dojos.

In the words of Sadashige Kato, founder of the International Japan Karate-do Association, 'To train in karate is to create and be part of an ideal society where discrimination against poverty, race, religion, and beliefs is eliminated'.

Kato wished for the community to strive towards this noble goal and work towards building a better world for everyone.

It is on the back of these words that in 2021, IJKA South Africa was launched, by its chief instructor sensei Bernard Buys with the hope of establishing a new platform for martial arts enthusiasts across the African continent.

Despite being in operation for less than three years, the association has already gained significant growth, boasting an impressive 3 000 students spread across 27 dojos throughout South Africa and five other African nations namely, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe.

And the growth continues - particularly in the Fourways area, with two new dojos recently opened at Heronbridge College and Dainfern College Junior Prep.

This is in addition to established dojos at Blair Atholl, Copperleaf Estate, Dainfern Estate, and Pinnacle College Copperleaf, said the head of commercial affairs at IJKA South Africa, Leon Greyling.

"These are dojos where the

chief instructor Buys teaches more than 150 students every day of the week, except Sundays," he added.

Karate is a Japanese martial art that has been developed and refined over centuries as a system of self-defence. It involves using various parts of the human body, including the hands, feet, elbows, and knees, to strike, block, and counterattack scientifically and effectively.

"Karate is not only a physical discipline but also a mental one, requiring practitioners to cultivate focus, discipline, and mindfulness. Through rigorous training, karate practitioners develop strength, speed, agility, balance, coordination, and self-confidence, all of which can be applied not only in self-defence situations but also in everyday life.

"Physically it is excellent for the heart, builds strong bones and bigger muscles, creates resilience, and makes the body less susceptible to sickness and injury. In all these ways, karate is profoundly helpful to young people in dealing with the many challenges facing them today. It brings them balance and perspective at an age when these are needed most. It adds a strong foundation to their character," said Greyling.

This week, IJKA SA will be launching its new website that contains a wealth of information on karate, from its benefits to loads of other interesting facts - including a photo gallery, and a calendar of events. The recent event was a family Padel Ball Challenge and a merchandise store. Please visit www.ijka.co.za for more details.



Bernard Buys in his element.