

# DODGE, DUCK, DIP, DIVE AND...DODGE

## STORY BY

MC3 (SW) Luke B. Meineke |  
Carl Vinson Staff Writer

With a flicker, then a flash, the orange lighting in Hangar Bay 2 was obliterated with bright, white lights, revealing hundreds of Sailors in all manner of uniform April 19. An excited cheer rose from the head-banded, face-painted, tie-dyed and jersey-clad ranks as the energy neared fever pitch. Vinson's second dodgeball tournament had begun.

Sixty-six teams of six, nearly 400 Sailors, signed up for the tournament, marking it as one of the most popular MWR-organized events.

"You don't have to be an all-star at throwing, running or catching," said Therese Guinane, Vinson's Fun Boss, explaining the tournament's popularity. "It's really for anyone to play. There are teams out there that feel, 'We're going to win,' but there are also teams that come down to have fun. It doesn't discourage anyone from playing."

And with 141 days into deployment that night, Vinson Sailors felt they could benefit from an evening's break.

"It's good to get the guys together and build some camaraderie, and give us a chance for people to get some aggression out," said Chief Machinist's Mate (SW/AW) Jeffrey S.

Dufrene of team 'Pretty Fly White Guys and Dan'. "I kind of felt like I wasn't on the ship for those few hours I was up in the hangar bay playing dodgeball. It kind of took me out of the deployment mindset and into the competition mindset."

Though Pretty Fly White Guys and Dan lost in the third round to the tournament's eventual champions, 'Dirty Mike and the Boys', Dufrene said he and his and teammates appreciated the tournament's spirit of competition and safe outlet for stress relief. A frenetic pace was maintained throughout the tournament with the two dodgeball courts cycling through matches in record time.

"We put a five-minute time limit on games, but I don't think any game went longer than three minutes," Guinane said. "Most games were one or two minutes long."

Chief Aviation Electronics Technician (AW/SW) Michael McQuay, MWR's leading chief petty officer, noted despite the slippery footing and the intense contest, there were no safety incidents during the event.

"We had Medical standing by for safety, but they fortunately weren't needed," McQuay said. "We were happy with everyone that participated." McQuay added he wanted to thank the Chiefs' Mess which volunteered as referee staff and Air Department for

clearing out and cleaning the hangar bay.

The tournament also featured an avenue for redemption for last tournament's runner-up, affording the members of Dirty Mike and the Boys a second chance to claim top prize, and reclaim their identity.

"They took the soul from us," said Master-at-Arms 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (EXW/SW) Shannon L. Schwartz, one of the Boys. "We actually talked about it, and none of us actually felt like we were ourselves after that tournament up until this one."

"I was emotional. I was snapping at people," added Dirty Mike and the Boys team member Master-at-Arms 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (SW/AW) James E. Mann.

From last tournament's final until the announcement of Thursday's, Dirty Mike and the Boys - somewhat obsessed at the thought of someday finding dodgeball redemption - devoted their free time to training and preparation should the opportunity present itself.

Through the practice of Tantric breathing exercises, Mann said he harnessed his otherwise chaotic adrenaline into a hyper-focus. Following the fundamental principles of training montages featured in Sylvester Stallone classics like "Rocky" and "Over the Top", Master-at-Arms 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (SW) Michael 'Dirty Mike' McDonald worked extensively with resistance bands to transform his throwing arm into a lethal weapon.

Master-at-Arms 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (SW) Tyler W. Shea, Dirty Mike and the Boys team captain, said the team was determined in its training, but feels they had an edge. "We played (Eminem's) '8 Mile' a lot in the berthing," he explained. "And we listened to '8 Mile' before the tournament."

Eventually, Dirty Mike and the Boys defeated 'Two Balls One Target' in the final match of the evening. Though MWR awarded each first-place finisher a 32-gigabyte iPod and an iLuv docking station, and each second-place team member \$100 to the ship's store, the competitors contend bragging rights - not iPods - were the order of the day.

"It's not necessarily the prize; it's the pride," Shea said. "It's definitely fun for deployment - the best thing, I'd say, on deployment for MWR events. So many people got out to see it and to play." ●





FIRST PLACE WINNERS "DIRTY MIKE AND THE BOYS," RIGHT, FROM THE SECURITY DEPARTMENT, AND SECOND PLACE WINNERS "TWO BALLS, ONE TARGET," LEFT, FROM WEAPONS DEPARTMENT'S G-3 DIVISION, POSE WITH THEIR PRIZES AFTER WINNING A DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT HOSTED BY MWR IN VINSON'S HANGAR BAY. PHOTO BY MC2 (SW) JAMES R. EVANS



FROM LEFT, ABEC TRAVIS MULL, AECS PAMELA WILLINGHAM, YNC TRAVIS YOUNG, AND QMCM JONATHAN MYERS PREPARE TO REFEREE A DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT HOSTED BY MWR IN VINSON'S HANGAR BAY. PHOTO BY MC2 (SW) JAMES R. EVANS

