

# St. Petersburg Times

## St. Pete's shuffle draws TV crew

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### Document Text

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ESPN2, television's sports channel, is hot for some shuffleboard action, St. Pete style.

Expected Thursday to film and play at the St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Club downtown is Jay Crawford, host of ESPN2's eclectic and not necessarily hard-core sports program, Cold Pizza.

Crawford is familiar to local viewers because he is the former sports director at WFTS-Ch. 28.

An ESPN2 official called and asked to visit, said Mary Eldridge, club president. The station has been producing in Orlando this week, she said.

Crawford, veteran shuffler Eldridge said, "wants to learn the game and then play a little bit competitively."

It might be a bit like a novice boxer taking a YMCA lesson, then stepping into the ring with a champion.

"My guess is I'll play him, and let him play and have a little fun, but not be too tough on him," Eldridge said. She has been pushing the discs since 1965.

Crawford and a film crew are expected about 1 p.m. Thursday, said Chris Kelly, who has been a leader in St. Petersburg's latter-day shuffleboard resurgence. More play is set for 7 p.m. Thursday in case the crews want to do a night shoot.

The public is welcome to attend both sessions, Kelly said. The club is at 559 Mirror Lake Drive N, near Mirror Lake and the Coliseum.

Kelly is a co-founder of Pinellas Heritage Inc., a preservationist group. A spinoff is St. Pete Shuffle, which has generated new interest in shuffleboard.

The game enjoyed a St. Petersburg heyday but faded as leaders a generation ago began playing down symbols suggesting the city might be a dreary lair for the aged.

But along came a new day, new blood and a new approach to the game.

St. Pete Shuffle sponsors play from 7 to 11 p.m. every Friday. About 150 people usually show up, Kelly said. Live music the third Friday of each month boosts the crowd to the 250 to 300 range, he said.

The revival has attracted national attention.

And now the sports channel wants to experience the St. Petersburg kind of shuffleboard, whose proponents say is not cruise ship pitty-pat.

"We're very excited," Eldridge said.

### [Illustration]

Caption: The St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Club; Jay Crawford (ran East edition); Map locating the shuffleboard club;

Photo: PHOTO, MICHAEL RONDOU; PHOTO; MAP

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**Abstract** (Document Summary)

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The St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Club; Jay Crawford (ran East edition); Map locating the shuffleboard club; Photo: PHOTO, MICHAEL RONDOU; PHOTO; MAP

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