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Beer pong goes dry

Liquidless version debuts at Brookfield Square

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Charles Auer/Freeman Staff

The puck that makes Rooster and Kahn's Skill Pong the game it is sits before a set of their game Monday at Brookfield Square Mall.



Charles Auer/Freeman Staff

Rick "Rooster" Bergmann, left, and Kris Kahn hold up the two colors of Rooster and Kahn's Skill Pong near their kiosk at Brookfield Square Mall.

BROOKFIELD – A ping-pong ball soaring into a plastic cup is a sight common to parties, not shopping malls. However, if you visit Brookfield Square on Moorland Road, you'll find just that at the Rooster and Kahn Skill Pong booth next to the Food Court.

Kris Kahn and Rick "Rooster" Bergmann quit their day jobs and opened a stand at the mall on June 25, selling their own patented version of the classic party game of beer pong in the mall. Their system is liquidless, using thermal plastic rubber pucks at the bottom of the cups which hold the pingpong ball inside.

Both said many are shocked they're selling something for what looks like classic beer pong in the mall. Kahn said they've sold about a dozen sets with a base price of \$44.95 apiece, adding that they're currently running a \$5-off promotion through the end of July.

The two entrepreneurs said they wanted to make Skill Pong a family-friendly game and ultimately a sport, not just a drinking game. Kahn said he is passionate about pulling kids away from video games and from binge drinking because "nothing good comes of it [drinking]."

"It's rewarding to see families engage in something they normally would-

n't because of our new design," said Bergmann.

Bergmann brought the idea to Kahn after getting inspired by his father, Michael Bergmann. Kahn said they went through around 30 foam-based prototypes, which drained them of funds. But Kris' father, Dennis Kahn, decided to invest in the idea, becoming the third partner and CEO of the company.

After near two years of prototyping, Kahn came up with the idea to use a liquid-filled bag. Following their new design direction, they eventually created a working and reproducible insert, which they patented.

Kahn said Skill Pong is played with classic rules but also has a few unique variants he and Bergmann created, including Close Quarters Pong and Tower

Pong. Kahn added that they hope to eventually allow players to post their own game ideas on their website.

According to Kahn, the game will be available to order from their website (www.skillpong.com) in July. Currently, they are running a Fourth of July color scheme of red and blue, but Kahn mentioned they will come out with more color options and hope to introduce their own line of tables and dry-erase boards for scoring.

"We're the Callahan brake pads of beer pong products," said Bergmann smiling. The two said they are passionate about creating a quality product, and they hope to eventually partner with a larger company to bring their design into the international sport arena.