

Recreational Sports Intramural Sports Participation Survey Spring 2023

Purpose of Assessment

Recreational Sports (Rec Sports) offers dozens of intramural activities each semester for a wide range of skill levels. Each year, more than 13,000 students participate in the intramural program. Staff members with Intramural Sports wanted to assess students who participated in the intramural program during the spring 2023 semester to understand their experiences and how to improve the program for the future. While Student Affairs Strategic Planning has worked with Rec Sports in the past, this was the first year to work specifically with Intramural Sports to assess their program.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Affairs Strategic Planning identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the organization may take based on the results. However, Intramural Sports staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the participants and program.

- Students were overall positive about their experience participating in Intramural Sports with 82% rating it as excellent or good. Additionally, of the students who will be returning in the fall, 91% indicated they would likely participate in Intramural Sports in the fall semester.
- Referees seemed to be the biggest source of frustration with the Intramural Sports program. Students reported that the referees did not know the rules of the sports they were officiating, were not experienced in the sports they were officiating, and were not consistent.
 - Staff in the Intramural Sports program might consider looking at the hiring and training of the referees. Rec Sports may want to recruit students with experience playing or refereeing the sports they would officiate. Additionally, Rec Sports staff could review the training the referees currently have and how it might be improved to address some of the concerns of students.
- Games being forfeited were specifically asked about, as well as brought up by students. While nearly two-thirds (59%) of the participants said they did not forfeit a game, those who did said that not having enough players on the team was the main reason. Participants also suggested having a different process for when to have a full roster to participate in that sport.
 - Rec Sports staff may want to explore options for creating a deadline to turn in a full roster before being scheduled to play.
 - Additionally, staff could look at the process for getting individual students who want to play, but do not have a team. Could they be added to teams that are not full?
- Students provided a wide range of suggestions and feedback about the overall program and individual sports.
 - Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences and consider what ideas could be implemented to improve the overall Intramural Sports experience.

Method and Sample

A survey was developed using Qualtrics®, a survey design software used for creating web-based forms and databases. The electronic survey consisted of 32 questions; 24 were quantitative and eight were qualitative. Due to branching technology, not all respondents received all questions. The survey link was emailed on May 2, 2023, to 8,804 students who participated in one or more intramural sports during the spring 2023 semester; however, three email addresses were not valid. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before the survey closed on May 26, 2023. Of the 8,801 participants who received the survey invitation, 411 responded to at least one question, yielding a 5% response rate. The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, Tableau®, a data visualization software, and Microsoft Excel®.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviation (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are in descending order for the 2023 mean or frequency unless otherwise specified. Summary themes are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. This report is divided into five sections: General Intramural Program, Intramural Staff and Officials, Overall Experience and Satisfaction, Program Feedback, and Demographics.

General Intramural Program

Using a select all that apply formatted question, respondents were initially asked how they heard about Intramural Sports. Table 1 illustrates that friends or word of mouth were the most common way students learned about Intramural Sports. By contrast, flyers and presentations were the least selected. Those selecting the “other” response option were given the opportunity to write how they heard about Intramural Sports. Three shared various methods including working with Rec Sports or the Intramural Sports program or through student organizations. Additionally, those who selected “social media” (n=31) were asked which social media platform(s) they heard about Intramural Sports. The vast majority of the 28 respondents said Instagram (89%), 10% reported Tik Tok, and 4% each selected Facebook and Twitter.

How did you hear about Intramural Sports? (Select all that apply)	2023 Frequency [n=387]
Friend or word of mouth	56%
Played last year	46%
Rec Sports website or IMLeagues	14%
Social Media	8%
Flyer in the Rec Center	8%
Fish Camp or similar presentation	6%
Flyer around campus	5%
Other	1%

Table 1: Intramural Sports Marketing

Participants were asked to select the sport(s) they participated in during the spring 2023 semester. As seen in Table 2, on the following page, approximately one-third of the respondents participated in outdoor soccer, 5v5 basketball, and flag football. The least selected included Wheel of Sportune, disc golf, and table tennis.

What sport(s) did you participate in for the spring 2023 semester? (Select all that apply)	2023 Frequency [n=387]
Soccer (outdoor)	37%
Basketball 5v5	35%
Flag Football	32%
Volleyball (indoor)	30%
Volleyball (sand)	30%
Soccer (indoor)	17%
Kickball	16%
Softball	16%
Basketball 3v3	15%
Ultimate	9%
Dodgeball	6%
Pickleball	6%
Tennis	6%
March Madness	5%
Battleship	4%
Cricket	4%
Action Ball	4%
Badminton	3%
Soccer Tennis	3%
Racquetball	2%
Cornhole	2%
Spikeball	2%
Wheel of Sportune	1%
Disc Golf	1%
Table Tennis	1%

Table 2: Intramural Sports Participation

Students indicating that they participated in specific sports were asked a few follow-up questions about those sports. First, those playing cricket (n=15) were asked three follow-up questions. They were initially asked about the days/times they would consider registering for a Cricket League in the future. Table 3 illustrates that the weekend options were most popular, with at least two-thirds of respondents selecting each option: Sunday afternoon, Sunday evening, and Saturday afternoon. Note that one respondent represents eight percent.

Generally, which days/times would you consider registering for a Cricket League in the future? (Select all that apply)	2023 Frequency [n=12]
Sunday afternoons	83%
Sunday evenings	67%
Saturday afternoons	67%
Thursday evenings	42%
Wednesday evenings	33%
Tuesday evenings	25%
Monday evenings	17%
None of these options	8%
Other	--

Table 3: Cricket League Scheduling

Cricket players were also asked about the playing location at Penberthy. Of the 13 responses, 15% reported Penberthy was extremely favorable, 31% said somewhat favorable, 15% stated it was neither favorable nor unfavorable, and 39% felt it was somewhat unfavorable (mean=3.23; sd=1.17; n=13). Nobody selected the extremely unfavorable option. Lastly, those who participated in cricket were asked to share any suggestions they had to improve intramural cricket, and three responses were shared. Two talked about the field and improving the field lighting and drainage or moving the field. One suggested utilizing an app for scoring in real-time.

Students who played flag football (n=124) were asked two follow-up questions. They were first asked if they played on a coed flag football team this semester. Just over half (56%) of the 121 respondents reported not being on a coed team and 44% indicated they were on a coed team. Students who were on a coed team (n=53) were asked their opinion on two topics about the sport

	Favorable (3)	No Opinion (2)	Unfavorable (1)
Female touchdowns in coed flag football are worth 9 points, and male touchdowns are worth 6. My opinion of this rule is:	69%	14%	17%
In coed flag football, my opinion of open/closed play is:	58%	12%	31%

Table 4: Coed Flag Football Rules (n=52)

The last question for everyone who participated in flag football asked the opinion of an onside kick being implemented in intramural flag football. Students were told that a national flag football editorial board is considering an “onside kick” rule being implemented in intramural flag football. While no kick would actually be attempted, the general idea would be that the new rule would allow a team an opportunity to take some sort of risk to potentially get the ball back late in the game, similar to tackle football. Almost three-fourths (73%) of the 120 respondents were favorable regarding this potential new rule, 17% had no opinion on the rule, and 11% said they were unfavorable regarding the rule.

Finally, those selecting pickleball (n=23) were asked two follow-up questions. They were first asked to share any suggestions they had to improve the league structure or the rules of intramural pickleball. Several suggestions were provided by the 13 respondents including having a longer season, ensuring that the quiz rules and the game rules are the same, enforcing game time, having stricter rules on player substitution, playing outside, and selecting game times week by week. A couple of students commented on the officials not knowing the correct lines and different referees being inconsistent in what lines were being used. Pickleball players were also asked to share any additional suggestions they had to improve intramural pickleball. The ideas shared by 10 students were similar to the response to the previous question. Students expressed that pickleball should be played outside, use regulation nets, and have a longer season. Additionally, having rules for player substitutions, especially during playoffs, making leagues by skill levels, and ensuring officials know the rules were also suggested.

Using a select all that apply question, participants were asked about the reason for forfeiting games during the semester, if they forfeited a game. Table 5, on the following page, shows that almost two-thirds of the respondents reported not forfeiting any games. For those who did forfeit a game, not having enough players was the most common reason. Those selecting the “other” option could write a comment to explain why they forfeited and six shared a reason. Half talked about rescheduling not working, another team refusing to reschedule, or a team that rescheduled without telling the other team. Other reasons included not having enough players, weather cancellations, having a disproportionate number of men to women, and receiving two red cards in soccer.

If your team forfeited any of your games this semester, what was the reasoning for forfeiting? (Select all that apply)	2023 Frequency [n=380]
My team did not forfeit any games this semester	59%
Not enough players	29%
Reschedule times were unavailable	13%
Missed the default deadline	5%
Was not aware I had a game scheduled	5%
Other	2%
Illness related	1%

Table 5: Reasons for Forfeited Games

Participants who forfeited a game for any reason (n=155) were told that defaulting a game or match meant that they informed the Intramural Office that their team would not be making it to the game. Additionally, they were told that defaulting prevents your team from being charged a forfeit fee, plus improves your sportsmanship rating. When asked if they knew that they could default a game or match, 89% reported that they did know, and 11% shared that they did not know they could default.

Students were asked to share suggestions for how the program could decrease the number of games that are forfeited. A wide range of responses were provided by the 80 respondents. Suggestions that were mentioned the most included having a deadline for teams to have enough players on their roster before the league begins, creating more time slots to select from when rescheduling, making the process easier to reschedule, increasing the penalty for forfeiting a game, and communicating more efficiently with team captains.

Intramural Staff and Officials

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about the student officials. Table 6 illustrates that participants were mostly in agreement about all three statements.

Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following questions about student officials during your games or matches this season.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]
The student officials put forward a good effort.	32%	46%	12%	6%	4%	3.94 (1.04) [n=373]
The student officials generally knew the rules.	25%	43%	15%	12%	6%	3.70 (1.14) [n=373]
The student officials improved throughout the season.	20%	31%	31%	11%	7%	3.46 (1.13) [n=373]

Table 6: Student Officials

When asked how they would rate their experience working with the supervisors or site managers, the staff members in the blue or lime green polos, 38% described their experience as excellent. Additionally, 41% rated their experience as good, 15% said it was average, 3% felt it was fair, and 4% reported it as poor (mean=4.06; sd=1.00; n=376). Students rating their experience with the supervisors or site managers as fair or poor (n=25) were asked to provide comments about their rating. Almost half of the 16 comments stated that the referees and supervisors did not know the sport. Others said that the supervisors were not helpful, did not hold referees accountable, and did not communicate well with their team.

Overall Experience and Satisfaction

Students were asked about the pass they purchased using a select all that apply question. Almost all students (98%) said they purchased the unlimited play pass for \$25. Two percent reported getting a tournament pass for \$10 and 1% each indicated purchasing a single-game (24-hour) pass for \$5 and not getting a pass because it was not required, or they were a member of the Corps of Cadets.

Those who stated they purchased the single-game (24-hour) pass (n=4) were asked why they purchased this specific pass. Two people (50%) said they only wanted to play the one time and the other two people (50%) said they wanted to try it before purchasing the unlimited play pass.

Everyone who purchased a pass of any type (n=373) was asked about the process for purchasing their pass. Almost two-thirds of the respondents (63%) reported that the process was extremely clear, 28% said it was somewhat clear, 8% shared that the process was somewhat unclear, 1% felt that it was extremely unclear (mean=3.53; sd=.69; n=372).

When asked about their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the value they received for the price they paid for their pass this spring semester, just over three-fourths (77%) shared that they were satisfied (39% were extremely satisfied and 38% were somewhat satisfied). Furthermore, 11% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 10% said they were somewhat dissatisfied, and 3% reported being extremely dissatisfied (mean=3.99; sd=1.09; n=370).

Participants were asked to rate their overall experience with Intramural Sports. Just over one-third (37%) described their experience as excellent, 45% said it was good, 12% reported it as average, 3% felt that it was poor, and 2% shared that it was terrible (mean=4.12; sd=.90; n=372).

When asked if they would physically be on Texas A&M's College Station campus for the fall 2023 semester, the majority (87%) of the 374 respondents said yes. Additionally, 10% said they would not be on campus in the fall and 2% were unsure. Those who indicated they would be on campus next fall (n=327) were asked about their plans for participating in in-person Intramural Sports in the fall semester. Nearly two-thirds (64%) said they definitely would be participating in the fall and 27% said they probably would participate in the fall. Additionally, 6% were unsure if they would or would not participate, 2% shared that they probably would not participate, and 2% reported that they definitely would not participate in the fall (mean=4.48; sd=.83; n=326).

Program Feedback

Participants were asked for one change they would make or suggestion they have to the Intramural Sports program and 207 wrote a range of comments. The most common suggestion regarded the referees. Students would like referees to have some experience with the sports they are officiating, know the rules of the game, have better training, and be more consistent. Students also talked about wanting more: they would like more teams to be able to play each sport, more time slots for games, more time to reschedule games, more sports offered, and more time between games. The one item students did not want to see increased was the cost to play Intramural Sports. Communication was another topic mentioned by several students. They would like an app and website that are easier to use, receive reminders about games, and have more specifics when emails are sent out about games. Several students talked about the captain quiz, and the quiz being connected with registering a team. They would like to take the quiz earlier or later but not have it associated with registering a team. A few students talked about having a process to make it easier for individual students to join a team and have more marketing about how individual students can do this. This could be beneficial for the overall Intramural Sports program since students also commented that there should be a deadline for teams to have a full roster. This was mentioned by decreasing the number of games that are forfeited and defaulted. Some students commented that they only played a couple of games for the season because so many games were either forfeited or defaulted.

A variety of sports were mentioned by 117 students when they were asked about the sports, competitions, or activities they would like to see offered that is currently not being offered. Pickleball was mentioned the most, but several specified that it be outside and be for the entire season. Other sports that were mentioned several times included golf, 4v4 football, track and field, 2v2 sand volleyball, water polo, and swimming.

The last question asked participants to share any other general feedback or comments on the Intramural Sports program. Of the 82 comments, half of them were positive comments expressing appreciation and describing Intramural Sports as fun, great, and amazing! Many of the other comments were similar to a previous question, especially about the referees; however, there were two positive comments about the referees. One new suggestion was to post the winning teams on Instagram.

Students were given the option to be entered in a drawing for one of three unlimited play passes for the fall semester. The email addresses of students who wanted to be entered in the drawing can be found in a separate document.

Demographics

When asked if they were the captain of any of their teams during the spring 2023 semester, 60% said they were not a captain, and 40% reported that they had been a captain.

Student demographics were gathered from the university's student information system using students' Universal Identification Numbers (UIN) for all students who participated in Intramural Sports in the spring semester and those who responded to the survey. The results are displayed in Table 6, on the following page in descending order by each category for the survey respondent column. Additionally, respondents were largely male students, undergraduates, and not first-generation students.

	Survey Respondents [n=404]	Intramural Participants [n=8,605]	TAMU Student Body [n=62,556]
Sex			
Male	66%	74%	53%
Female	34%	26%	47%
Ethnicity			
White	57%	59%	53%
Hispanic or Latino	18%	22%	22%
Asian	16%	11%	10%
Multi-Racial (excluding Black)	2%	3%	3%
International	3%	2%	8%
Black or Multi-Racial (including Black)	3%	2%	3%
Unknown or Not Reported	<1%	<1%	1%
American Indian	--	<1%	<1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	--	<1%	<1%
First Generation			
Not First Generation	82%	83%	68%
First Generation	11%	13%	19%
Unknown	7%	4%	13%
Classification			
Senior	30%	33%	32%
Sophomore	25%	25%	19%
Junior	24%	25%	21%
Freshman	11%	12%	9%
Masters	8%	4%	10%
Doctoral	1%	1%	7%
Medical School	<1%	<1%	<1%
Pharmacy	<1%	<1%	<1%
Other	<1%	<1%	<1%
Vet School	--	<1%	1%
College/School			
Engineering	37%	36%	32%
Arts and Sciences	21%	24%	29%
Business	16%	14%	9%
Agriculture	9%	9%	11%
Education	6%	6%	7%
Architecture	3%	4%	4%
Bush School of Government	3%	3%	3%
Public Health	2%	1%	1%
Other	2%	2%	2%
Medicine	<1%	<1%	<1%
Performance and Visualization	<1%	<1%	1%
Exchange	<1%	<1%	<1%
Pharmacy	<1%	<1%	<1%
Veterinary Medicine	--	<1%	1%
Nursing	--	<1%	<1%

Table 7: Demographics

Department Background

According to its website (<https://recsports.tamu.edu/>), Rec Sports' mission is to "promote activity, wellness, and development by providing high quality, inclusive experiences, and facilities for the students and community of Texas A&M University." The Rec Center consists of four indoor facilities with more than 500,000 square feet of recreation space, approximately 50 acres of outdoor space, and five swimming pools. Intramural Sports is one programmatic area within the department offering dozens of intramural activities every semester.

Project Details

The Department of Student Affairs Strategic Planning provides quality assessment services, resources, and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Affairs Strategic Planning are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through the department can be found at <https://dsasp.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, anyone can follow Student Affairs Strategic Planning on Facebook.

To work with Student Affairs Strategic Planning for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Request form at <https://dsasp.tamu.edu/aqform/>.

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