

COMPETING FOR PARTICIPANTS: ATTRACTING TODAY'S STUDENTS TO YOUR IM PROGRAM 2014 Survey Notes & Comparison to 2009 Survey Responses

A total of 159 IM programs provided responses to an IM policy and procedure survey administered in April-June 2014. For enhanced analysis and comparison, programs were categorized by size (40 large, 45 mid-size, 74 small) and by cost to participate (87 free, 72 pay). A complete breakdown of results by question and a listing of survey respondents by school/program size are available online at campusrec.fsu.edu/nirsa.

On a scale of 1 to 10 in which 1 is recreational and 10 is competitive, the **average competitiveness rating** among all programs in 2014 was 6.74. That is less competitive than 2009 when the rating was 7.50. Free programs tended to be less competitive than pay programs in both survey years. Mid-size programs tended to be the most competitive, followed by large programs, then small programs; again, consistent in both survey years.

Pay-to-play IM programs are more likely to be found as in larger institutions. Two-thirds of large schools reported having pay-to-play programs. Two-thirds of small schools offered free IMs. Slightly more than half of mid-size programs were offered free to participants in 2014.

Online registration has soared for all groups, up 54% since 2009. 83.6% of all respondents in 2014 reported using online registration. Only 29.6% of 2009 respondents used online registration.

More mid-size schools are utilizing **instant scheduling** rather than preferred scheduling methods. 56.3% reported using instant scheduling in 2014 versus just 23.8% of mid-size schools in 2009.

The **availability of captains meeting videos** and handouts in an online format more than tripled since 2009. 22.8% of respondents indicated having specific captains materials online in 2014 versus just 6.2% in 2009.

Additionally, 31.5% of 2014 respondents noted that an **online captains quiz** was available as a replacement for attending a captains meeting, up nearly 25% from the 6.2% of respondents in 2009. Over half (53.8%) of large schools offered an online captains exam in 2014, up from just 7.4% in 2009.

65.1% of schools in 2014 held **in-person captains meetings**, a 25% drop from the 91.4% that held them in 2009. About 6.0% of schools in 2014 do not require attendance at a captains meeting nor a captains quiz, which is unchanged since 2009.

Over 90% of schools in all categories (large, mid-size, small, free, pay) post **team schedules online**. Similarly, only 20.9% of 2014 schools physically post schedules on a bulletin board, down from 59.8% in 2009.

For large schools, 100% of respondents had online team schedules in 2014 and just 5% posted physically on a board. For small schools, utilizing online resources for posting schedules has significantly increased since 2009, up over 30% to 91.8% in 2014.

Fewer schools are requiring a **team roster** at the time of registration. Just 32.2% required a roster in 2014, down from 62.5% in 2009. The decrease is most significant for large schools (down 28.1%) and small schools (down 45.3%).

Slightly more schools are permitting **roster changes** during the playoffs with 75.8% locking rosters at or before the end of the regular season in 2014, versus 82.5% in 2009. 24.2% permit changes during a portion or all of the playoffs in 2014, versus 17.5% in 2009.



The question of where roster additions or deletions are allowed may be problematic in the 2014 as only two options (office or game site) were provided. Many programs allow roster changes through an online resource which can be accessed from anywhere.

A new question in 2014 asked about **roster limitations** (maximums). Approximately 40% of schools have unlimited roster sizes while 60% have a maximum. Over half of large schools reported having no roster maximum. Over two-thirds of small schools indicated they do have a roster maximum in most sports.

Participant restrictions for professional, varsity, and sport club athletes were largely unchanged among all groups since 2009. In 2014, 63.4% of all schools prohibited professional athletes in similar IM sports; 53.6% prohibited varsity athletes in their sport; 51.6% restricted former varsity athletes to a maximum number per IM team; 68.0% also restricted sport club members to a maximum number per team. The findings were mainly consistent across each subcategory.

Relatively little change has occurred in **ID requirements** at the game site. Over 90% of schools reported requiring IDs to check-in for an IM game or match in 2014. 67.9% of 2014 respondents indicated the IDs were checked against a roster, up from 51.2% in 2009. However, electronic verification of IDs at the game site is notably unchanged.

The number of schools that **checkout jerseys** for IM participants to use inched up to 82.2% of all respondents in 2014 from 79.7% in 2009. However, the number of large schools providing jerseys for use at the game site dropped by 20.2%, while small schools increased its percentage 18.0% in the last five years.

The number of schools requiring **personal safety equipment** increased in all categories. 43.3% of all 2014 respondents indicated participants were required to provide their own safety equipment in select sports, up from 26.6% in 2009. 56.6% of all 2014 respondents check-out personal safety equipment in select sports, up from 35.4% in 2009.

Playoff qualification related to regular season win-loss performance has declined slightly. Less than half of respondents in 2014 indicated wins and losses were a factor in postseason qualification, down 5% from 2009. Playoff qualification based on regular season record was more likely in pay leagues 61.1% versus free leagues 38.1%. This comparison was consistent with 2009.

Good sportsmanship was promoted through the use of a sportsmanship rating system in 80.8% of all 2014 schools, up 10% since 2009. Mid-size, small, and pay schools each saw increases of 15% in usage of a sportsmanship rating system.

New questions in 2014 noted that 57.7% of respondents instructed **staff to review sportsmanship** as part of a pregame captains meeting for each game. And 10.3% of schools have an **award** for teams or individuals who consistently display good sportsmanship.

Additional Survey Information

Responses were solicited from attendees of the *Competing for Participants* educational session at the 2014 NIRSA Annual Conference in Nashville (April 2014) and of the *Tech Talk* educational session at the 2014 NIRSA Intramural Institute in Oklahoma City (June 2014). Additional responses were solicited online via the NIRSA Intramural Sports Discussion Board (May 2014).

Survey data was compiled and analyzed by members of the Florida State University Campus Recreation Department. Contact David Peters, Associate Director for Campus Recreation, at 850-644-7698 or ddpeters@fsu.edu with questions or for additional information.