

THE STATE OF INTRAMURAL SPORTS – PROGRAM SURVEY

2023 Survey Notes and Comparison to 2009 & 2014 Survey Responses

A total of 156 IM programs provided responses to an Intramural Sports program policy and procedure survey conducted in June and July 2023. For enhanced analysis and comparison, programs were categorized by size (49 large, 51 mid-size, 56 small) and by cost to participate (89 free, 67 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 2023 was 6.75. That is nearly steady from 2014's 6.74 and is less competitive than 2009 when the rating was 7.50. Free programs tended to be less competitive than pay programs in all survey years. Mid-size programs tended to be the most competitive, followed by large programs, then small programs; again, consistent in all survey years. 80% of all programs indicated a desire for more recreational participants in their programs, as opposed to the 20% who are seeking more competitive participants.

Pay-to-play IM programs are more likely to be found in larger institutions. About three-fifths of large schools reported having pay-to-play programs. Three-fourths of small schools offered free IMs. Slightly more than half of mid-size programs were offered free to participants in 2023. All three data points are similar to 2014 results.

Online registration is utilized by nearly all programs in 2023 (99%). As expected, this trend is up from 84% in 2014 and just 30% in 2009. To combat **forfeits**, 54% of programs assessed a fine when a team forfeits during the season, up from 40% in 2014. Just 8% required a refundable forfeit deposit in 2023, down from 21% in 2014. While the method of financial penalty has changed, another 38% reported having no financial penalty, the same as 2014.

The ability for **team captains** to complete preseason requirements online has increased since 2014. 56% of all respondents offered an online quiz for captains to replace an in-person captains meeting. Online quiz availability is up from 38% in 2014 and 6% in 2009. 24% of programs required an in-person meeting in 2023, down from 65% in 2014 and 91% in 2009. About 15% of schools in 2023 do not require attendance at a captains meeting nor a captains quiz, which is up from 6% in both 2014 and 2009.

Fewer schools require a **team roster** at the time of registration. Just 28% required a roster in 2023, down from 32% in 2014 and 63% 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 65% locking rosters at or before the end of the regular season in 2023, versus 76% in 2014 and 83% in 2009. 81% of all respondents permit roster additions at the game or match site, including online changes.

With regard to **team roster limitations** (maximums), approximately 40% of schools permit unlimited roster sizes while 60% have a maximum, on par with 2014 data. Half of large schools reported having no roster maximum, while over two-thirds of small and mid-size 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 both 2014 and 2009. 90% had rules prohibiting or restricting participation by current or former professional athletes and 97% had rules for current varsity athletes. 88% of programs have restrictions on participation by current sport club athletes, either by number on a team or to a specific league.

Nearly all programs (96%) reported **requiring photo ID** to check-in for an IM game or match in 2023, up slightly from 90% in 2014. The largest change was in the type of ID accepted. Just 49% required school ID in 2023 while 47% accepted any photo identification. School ID was largely the preferred method for check-in in previous years at 77% in 2009 and 70% in 2014.



The question of whether **IDs were matched to a roster** at the check-in was problematic in 2023 as the question noted using a printed roster and many schools commented they now compare IDs to a digital roster. Electronic verification of IDs at the game site is notably unchanged, 13% in 2023 versus 12% in 2014.

The number of schools that **checkout jerseys** for IM participants to use increased to 90% in 2023 from 82% in 2014 and 80% in 2009. Just 10% of schools noted that they required teams to provide their own similar colored jerseys and only 4% required teams to provide their own numbered jerseys in 2023.

Playoff qualification related to regular season win-loss performance has remained relatively steady since 2009. 52% of programs indicated wins and losses were a factor in postseason qualification, even with 2009 numbers. Playoff qualification based on regular season record was more likely in pay leagues 63% versus free leagues 44%. This comparison remains consistent across all survey years.

Good sporting behavior was promoted through the use of a rating system in 83% of all programs in 2023, up slightly from 2014. Mid-size, small, and pay schools each saw increases of 15% in usage of a sporting behavior rating system. 89% of programs indicated that a minimum behavior standard was required to advance in the playoffs. 73% of programs instructed **staff to review sporting behavior** as part of a pregame captains meeting for each game, up from 58% in 2014. And 9% of schools have an **award** for teams or individuals who consistently display good sportsmanship, more common in large and mid-size programs.

New questions in 2023 included an overview of officials training methods, gender & league offerings, format of sport offerings, and the length of the IM experience (seasons and/or tournaments).

All programs (100%) continue to use in-person sessions led by IM program staff for the majority of their **officials trainings**. 39% have implemented a hybrid model of in-person and online trainings for rules & mechanics content. 12% indicated they utilize online training resources (free or paid) to supplement training. And, 13% call on local experts outside of the department to assist with select training sessions.

With regard to league offerings, 82% of respondents offer **gender-specific leagues** such as men's or women's. Pay programs were slightly more likely to offer gender-specific leagues (87%) than free programs (79%). 91% of all schools offered an **open or mixed league option** in select sports (no gender requirements).

Co-rec leagues that have a required number of players based on gender are offered in 81% of programs. 96% of large programs offered co-rec, compared to 63% of small programs. 19% of schools reported offering mixed or open leagues and not offering co-rec. 46% of programs noted having policies that expand opportunities for transgender participants while 14% indicated that their ability to adopt such policies was restricted by local law.

To provide an IM experience that best meets the demands of today's student population, 58% noted offering more one-day, weekend, or **limited time tournaments** than in recent years. The percentage was consistent across program sizes, but more prevalent for free programs (65%) than paid programs (49%). And, 42% of all programs indicated that they were offering more sports with **fewer numbers of required players** (3v3 versus 7v7).

Overall, Intramural Sports administrators remain **optimistic about the future** with 70% anticipating strong growth or some growth in participation and involvement in the near future.

Additional Survey Information

Survey responses were solicited online in June 2023 via the NIRSA Connect Intramural Sports Community & 2023 NIRSA Annual Conference Message Boards and via direct email to leaders of select programs. In all, 42 U.S. states and 1 Canadian province were represented in the survey results. All NIRSA regions are represented.

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

