

[Intramural Action]

Sinking your battleship

JMU intramural activities offer something for everyone

By PAULA POLGLASE ('92, '96M)

Marc Lonett estimates that he played on more than 80 intramural teams in his four years at JMU. Although floor hockey is his favorite, he's tried basketball, flag football, field hockey, volleyball and others. "Inner tube water polo — that was an experience," says Lonett ('11).

Like many JMU students, Lonett says he was used to being very active in high-school sports. He started playing JMU intramurals his freshman year when he joined a flag football team organized by his hall-mates. "It was a great way to get to know them," he recalls.

Nearly 30 percent of JMU students participate in intramurals, according to Aaron Combs, University Recreation's coordinator of intramural sports and special events. Intramurals are a great choice for students who crave the fun and competitive nature of high-school sports, but not the time commitment that a varsity or a club sport requires. "Intramurals promote activity, a social lifestyle and wellness," says Combs. "Plus, you meet a ton of people."

Casey Zeiders ('11) got involved when Lonett invited him to play during freshman year. "I heard about intramurals but wasn't positive how to get involved. After Marc took me to one game I was hooked," says Zeiders. "I immediately started playing on as many teams as possible. I would even show up to the fields without a team and just ask people if they needed an extra player."

According to Combs, this past academic year 171 teams registered for basketball, 150 for



Canoes full of JMU students fight to sink each others' "battleships" in the UREC pool during one of many UREC-sponsored intramural events in 2010-11.

outdoor soccer and 135 for flag football. Each sport is played for five to six weeks. Teams can be single gender or coed and are often formed by groups of friends, hallmates or members of student academic and social clubs. Three JMU intramural

leagues offer beginner, intermediate and high levels of competition, although students are quick to point out that all intramurals are competitive. "Everybody wants to win on every single night, so students really leave it all out there," says Zeiders.

Combs says he is always eager to introduce new sports. Dodgeball, field hockey, whiffle ball and street hockey are popular new offerings. With the addition of University Park on Port Republic Road in March 2012, UREC will expand its field capacity and be able to offer more students the opportunity to participate in activities like intramurals.

UREC special events like Big Pink Volleyball, a tournament to support breast cancer awareness; a cornhole tournament; and the Dukes 5K are also rising in popularity. One of the most successful events of the year was Battleship, a game played in the UREC pool by teams of students in canoes trying to sink each others' "battleships."

When it comes to intramurals, Lonett advises students to "try them all. In my four years at JMU, I have played almost every intramural available. Even if I didn't have much experience with the sport, I still had a lot of fun trying something new." ❧

* Learn more at www.jmu.edu/recreation/Programs/IntramuralSports/

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An aerial view of University Park on June 14. Located on Neff Avenue and Port Republic Road, the site expands JMU athletics venues.