



INTRAMURAL SPORTS are a large and important part of many students' lives here at Texas A&M. Above, an infielder charges hard for the ball during softball competition, the most popular of all intramural sports. Below, three cyclists take a sharp corner during the bicycle racing competition.

Anyone can be an athlete

By Rhonda Watters

Battalion Reporter

How many times have you sat in front of the television watching your favorite team play, and though how great it would be to be out there playing instead of just watching? Well, not everyone can be professional or college athletes, but if you really like the sport, there is another way you can play and have just as much fun. It's called intramural sports.

Jim Jeter, associate director of intramural sports at Texas A&M University, said that because of the increase in American leisure time, recreation has become the biggest business in America, and as a result, intramural sports programs are growing all over the nation. In the seven years he has been at Texas A&M, he has seen the intramural program budget grow to be the largest on campus, being allocated \$290,000 last year. According to Jeter, Texas A&M "probably has the largest intramural program in the country" among major universities. In a survey conducted two years ago among 50 major universities, the Texas A&M program ranked sixth in size, and since then Jeter said it has more than doubled.

Jeter said the intramural program offers about 48 different sports each year that students and faculty members can participate in. He said the sport with the most teams participating is slow pitch softball. He said that last year 620 teams entered the competition. Other sports in the program range from the traditional sports such as football and basketball to individual competition in frisbee throwing and billiards to a type of water polo in played in inertubes.

To enter, Jeter said, one just has to sign up. All entries are free, since most of the program's budget

comes from student service fees. He added that often the participants can come to the intramural office in DeWare Field House and sign up for the times most convenient for them to play.

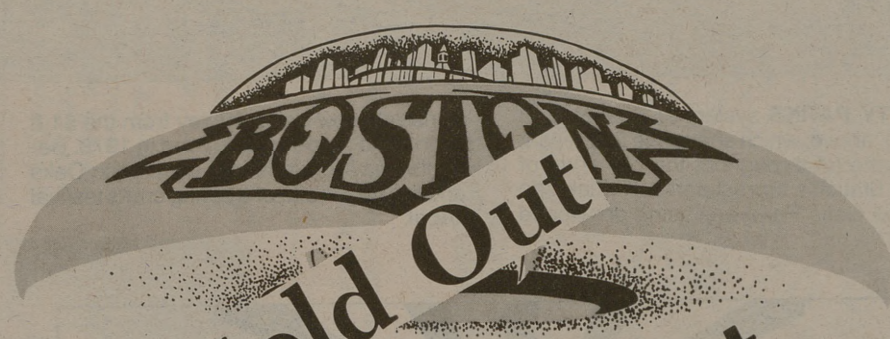
Different sports are offered at different times during the year, and each sport has a deadline for signing up. Usually a sport is offered only during one semester.

Several levels of competition are offered. There are usually three classes of skill in each sport, ranging from highly skilled participants to those that just play for fun. Some sports are offered with separate divisions for men and women, and others have divisions where they play on the same team.

For those who like sports but do not want to participate in set competition, there are other opportunities to play. The intramural program operates numerous facilities such as raquetball and tennis courts that can be reserved for personal use. All courts must be reserved for one hour at least 24 hours in advance by calling the intramural office.

Facilities are an important part of any sports program, and Jeter said that Texas A&M is in the process of improving theirs. He said that two years ago Texas A&M ranked 38th among major universities in facilities, but since then has improved.

"You have to have a program before you can get better facilities," he said. Jeter said that future improvements for the intramural program will include a space in the Kyle Field expansion, and also six new basketball courts, 14 handball courts and some new dressing rooms. He added that recently a one-mile all-weather jogging trail with six different exercise stations had been built. He also said bids have been awarded to move the lights from Kyle Field to the intramural field where people will be able to play till midnight.



**MSC TOWN HALL
SPECIAL ATTRACTION**

**Sunday, February 11,
G. Rollie White Coliseum**

Sold Out

**Reserved 7.50 & 8.00
General Admission 6.00
tickets & info. 845-2916**

