

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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For the love of the game

Rec Sports Clubs offer students stress-free fun and fitness activities

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THE BATTALION



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"The level of stress and pressure commonly associated with varsity sports programs is non-existent in club sports," he said.

While some students are attracted to the club teams because of the camaraderie and friendship, others want to be part of a top team in the nation.

Keith Sewell, assistant coach for the men's volleyball team, said he first tried out for the team when he was a student because he had heard positive things about the A&M volleyball team.

"I heard A&M had a good team, so I wanted to try out," he said. "I played in high school and I was excited about getting to travel with the team."

Sewell said one of the positive aspects of club sports is that they never turn away students who may not possess the skills necessary to be competitive.

"We always encourage people to stay and practice with the team so that they can improve and eventually contribute to the team," he said.

Upon arriving at college, many students who were involved in high school sports forgo participation in athletics altogether. Some find it hard to fit a strict workout regimen into their already loaded class and work schedules.

A lack of exercise combined with unhealthy eating habits can quickly result in gaining weight, health experts say.

Club teams provide a structured workout schedule through regular practices and competitions, which help students stay active and healthy.

Playing on a club team can be a way to stay in shape, have fun or participate in an activity that students are passionate about.

While some students may dread working out, others have figured out that exercising doesn't have to be a daunting task.

Joining sport clubs is one way people can enjoy staying healthy and fit.

"I recommend it to people looking for an extracurricular activity," Sewell said. "It's also a good way to make new friends. It's you stay in shape and get to have fun while you're at it."

Gunthrop said students can visit recsports.tamu.edu for information about a particular club or to find one that suits their particular needs.

Members of the Texas A&M women's lacrosse team put their sticks together before practice at Penberthy Field.

lacrosse require little else than a lacrosse stick and a set of cleats.

Financial assistance to each club is made available from funds received from student service fees. To help cover additional expenses, individual club members pay between \$25 and \$50 in club dues every semester.

Brian DeSpain, a junior business management major, said the benefits of a club sport membership far outweigh the cost.

DeSpain said participating on a club team is an important part of developing as a college student. He recommends every student try a club team.

"Having an extracurricular activity like club sports gives you a break from the daily grind of college classes. It's a real help for the mind as well as the body," DeSpain said.

DeSpain has been playing lacrosse since high school and joined the A&M club team for the opportunity to test his skills on a broader scope.

"(The lacrosse club team) gives me the opportunity to compete nationally and being affiliated with the school still lets me keep my academics as my top priority," he said.

DeSpain said one of the greatest elements of the A&M Sport Club Association is the many different options it has for students.

"The Rec Sports program is great because of the variety of sports offered," he said. "No matter what your level (of fitness) is, there's something for everyone."

Being able to compete and have fun without worrying about their performance will have a positive effect on the club member's future, DeSpain said.

When Michael Roberson, got a new bicycle his freshman year, he decided to put it to good use. He went to an informational meeting for the Cycling Club, where he found other people he could compete with on his bike. He has been a member ever since.

"It's nice to ride with a group of people because we all load up in one van, go to a race and we get to have a good time as well as compete," said Roberson, a junior engineering technology major.

Many students similar to Roberson find sports clubs such as the Cycling Club a means to pursue their passion to compete and an outlet to escape from the stress of college life.

The Department of Recreational Sports supports and sponsors various programs for A&M students, such as outdoor programs and intramurals.

Courtney Gunthrop, a senior mechanical engineering major and Rec Center employee, said some of the most popular programs are the 29 student organizations that make up the Texas A&M Sport Club Association it is best if students join early in the school year since most teams begin competing within the first three weeks of school.

Gunthrop said although the clubs are primarily meant for recreation, many clubs have enjoyed national success.

"A lot of the clubs compete in national competitions. In the past, we have had some olympians play on teams as well, such as silver-medalist Vic Wunderle who was a part of the A&M Archery Club," Gunthrop said.

Ashley Grulich, a junior ocean engineering major, said joining the A&M lacrosse team was the next logical step for her after playing lacrosse in high school. Grulich said although some students think they may not have time to play on a club team, flexible time schedules help avoid conflicts.

"The coach is really lenient about scheduling," Grulich said. "He knows school comes first for us and tries to work around it."

Although most sports require the players to provide their own equipment, some sports such as

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