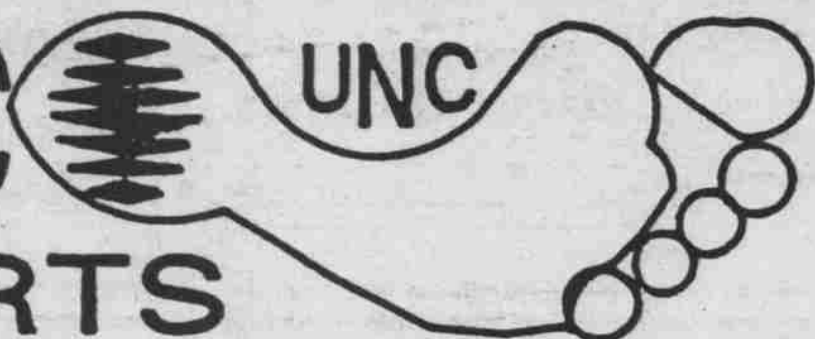


# IM-REC SPORTS



## Innertube Hoops Players' Favorite

From the intense competition, strategy and rivalry of many traditional intramural sports, there is relief. There is innertube water basketball.

An unusual dichotomy of fun and competition dominates this game.

"The game is very competitive," said sport director Geri Cato. "All of the teams are there to win when they hit the water, but it's not intense competition. It's competition just for fun.

"In a regular basketball game, you can see the frustration when a pass gets away. But in innertube basketball, the same situation is approached with laughter. Players know there are all kinds of obstacles in the game."

One major obstacle is merely staying in the tube. Even the most coordinated end-up drinking water when reaching for a loose ball or maneuvering in heavy traffic. Players, three men and three women on each team, paddle, kick, shoot and block for three eight-minute periods. There are no team time-outs and the game clock does not stop for fouls.

All of that activity can be tough.

"Water basketball is much more tiring than it looks," said Doug Smith, a long-time member of Fishers of Men. "It's a half hour of pulling yourself around the pool. It's just one of those things you've got to go and play to

understand."

With all of the paddling and such, it would seem that training is a key. With the tongue-in-cheek seriousness of the game itself, John Shields details the Fishers' training method.

"We've been working hard all summer for this tournament," he said. "First, we brought in a tough football weight coach and then developed a flawless playbook. And, of course, we never drink beer. We're model athletes... in fact, we're model citizens."

In reality, little is done to prepare for the three-game regular season. It's quite enough to learn the rules—like four points for a women's field goal—and develop strategy as the game progresses.

There are no Michael Jordans of James Worthys here. The basket is four-feet high and the court is three-feet deep. Dunking is illegal and touching the side or bottom of the pool is a technical foul.

Still, some traditional basketball skills can be helpful. In addition to good shooting skills, said Shields, long arms, good pool sense and quickness are important.

As much fun as players have with the game, fans may have even more.

"Innertube water basketball is really becoming a spectator sport. Many of the spectators said that they'd have participated if they had known how much fun it was," said Cato. "The first time I saw the game, I thought it was hilarious."



About 25 people watched Sunday's games from the balcony of Bowman Gray pool. Still others watched from the water or pool deck. Games, held on Sunday evenings from 6-9 pm, involve 24 teams in six divisions. Divisional winners, in search of the prized intramural champion t-shirts, play a single-elimination playoff to crown the champion.

Fishers of Men, dominant in water events over the last few years, took their first step toward the title by defeating The Insiders, 75-14, in the season's first game. Winners of the closely-related innertube water polo championship last year, the Fishers may become UNC's first water dynasty.

## Coming Events

Entry deadlines for six popular intramural sports are coming later this month:

**MIXED DOUBLES BOWLING.** One man and one woman on each team bowl a challenge tournament followed by single-elimination playoff. Deadline for entries is **September 19.**

**TRACK & FIELD.** The annual meet at Fetzer Field includes competition in many traditional track and field events on September 21 and 22. Divisions are offered for women, residence halls, fraternities, and graduates/independents. Entry deadline: **September 19.**

**CENTURY CLUB.** A personal fitness group earns points for jogging, swimming, cycling and performing aerobics. When a self-determined goal is met, a Century Club t-shirt is awarded. Deadline: **September 26.**

**FLOOR HOCKEY.** Six member teams compete in Carolina's version of the Yankee favorite. Team captains must attend the organizational meeting on **September 25** at 6pm to enter.

**ULTIMATE FRISBEE.** The annual one-day tournament will be held on Saturday, **September 27.** Seven-member teams play on Carmichael Fields beginning at 10am. Entry deadline is **September 26.**

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