

Forming a Racquetball Club at Your College

Before you can focus on your interest, in our case racquetball, the official standing of the group must be created/maintained through the required policies of your collegiate Sports Clubs.

Sports Club Requirements

Those leading the group, officers, will need to learn and understand these policies in order to maintain their standing as a Sports Club. There are certain requirements from attendance, fundraising, leadership series attendance, volunteering, etc, which must be kept up with in order to maintain their status and continue to receive funding from their Campus Recreation Group and possibly move up into another bracket of funding if possible in your college's Sport Club Organization.

Sponsor

Most all clubs require a sponsor so find a faculty member who has interest in racquetball and get them on board. They usually don't need to do much outside of yearly forms needing completed. Ideally they would have good racquetball experience and can play along with the club, instruct, and be involved in club activities.

Officers

Those leading the group must distinguish their duties and roles and be sure they invest in those roles so the club can thrive. There must be a group of members who are interested and invested in the club to take time out of their schedule to do the necessary work to maintain the club. The standard breakdown is below.

- - President: The main leader (shouldn't just be the best player; should be most invested and active of the members) is responsible for knowing the requirements for the sports club, having a vision of activities for the club throughout the year, ability to encourage and motivate the members of the club to continue to participate and be active with the club, and have the ability to properly delegate necessary duties to those able to accomplish them.
- - Vice President: "Next man up"; "right hand man"; etc. They should have their hands more in all the pieces but not leading the duties of them all. Takes on special projects and able to do any of the officers' duties.
- - Secretary: Usually the one who takes care of attendance records, needed forms for members (waivers, etc), takes care of any paperwork required for the club. If it's a small club, this function can be done by President or Vice President. The Secretary may also act as a club historian, preserving any photos or documentation of club activities. These can be mailed out in letter writing campaigns, submitted to college yearbooks, framed and placed around the courts at the gym, and more.

- - Treasurer: It's all about the money. Many clubs have separate accounts off campus to easily take care of buying materials for the club (shirts, medals, food, etc) and collecting money from fundraisers. I've found the best method is to have the account held primarily by the club sponsor or an advisor who is in town for an extended period of time and switch out treasurers as signees on the account when needed. If it's a small club, this function can be done by President or Vice President.

Other Officers

If you have more than three club members, it's a good idea to put the extra members to work on smaller tasks. Junior members can be quite helpful in managing certain aspects of club business. There are many different aspects of the club that can be spun out into an additional officer role. Just two examples:

- Requisitions Officer is responsible for managing purchase orders for club members. Many clubs have large discounts on gear purchases through certain vendors. The requisitions officers primary role is to submit orders, collect money, and hand out purchased gear. Additionally, it's a good idea to have your Requisitions officer work on additional discounts and sponsorships with vendors since they work closely with them. Look for club members with experience working with vendors or purchasing to fill this role.
- Recruitment Officer is responsible for bringing new members into the club. Frequently clubs fall apart due to lack of members. Recruitment should be a year long process as members are constantly graduating and moving away. The Recruitment officer will develop and lead a coordinated plan to bring in new players to the sport and club. Look for club members with Fraternity or Sorority recruitment experience to fill this critical role.

It will be important to streamline the officer selection process in order to maintain the organization of the club from year to year. Ensure the next year's officers are selected or volunteered for prior to Spring Finals so papers and plans are prepped for completion going into Summer.

Make notes of all club contacts and required forms within your college/university so upcoming officers know who to contact for what and what forms are required and when they're needed. Clubs fall apart easily if leadership isn't taken up to continue the club standing and schedule.

Court Reservations/Club Times

Figure out when your best practice times are and inquire on whether you can reserve certain courts for a period of time each week for the club. During this time you can have regular social play, practice time, schedule clinics, etc.

Funding

While most Campus Recreation Departments will supply funding to their clubs to be active, very few clubs get all of the money they will need for the year's activity from their schools. If this money is insufficient or unavailable, fundraising becomes a critical task that must be preformed throughout the year.

There are several ways to fundraiser for your club and most of those ideas will be up to your officers, but some of the standard ways to fundraise are:

- Run a tournament.
- Forge sponsorships or partnerships with businesses.
- Sell shirts/equipment.
- Ask for donations.

The Game

This is what we're all here to do. Go play! However, for a club to be successful and grow there needs to be a goal. The entire point of a club is to gather those who have the same interest, explore that interest, and get better at it. Just getting together for social play allows only a small growth rate in one's game. There needs to be a point to these games.

Schedule times when the club meets

Ideally you are able to reserve courts with the Sports Club to call "Club Time," but just setting up a schedule where all can meet to play and socialize is what's needed.

Seek out a "coach" or just the most experienced player with access to the club to advise your club on proper mechanics, strategies, good drills, and keep them around to help the club players get better.

Provide competition

- **- Challenge Ladders**

Challenge those above you and win to move up. Continuous challenges throughout the semester or year keep the spirit of the sport alive in all members. Wins, losses, and the drama of competition will become the stuff of legends, so it's important to foster a healthy amount in any club. Many clubs use the challenge ladder to determine which players get to travel for given

- **- Leagues**

Scheduled games with points allotted for games played and won.

- **- "Seasons"**

Like NFL, play scheduled matches for a few months and then seed a playoff (possibly multiple divisions) based on the win percentage of the season.

- **- Compete in Tournaments**

Travel in tournaments around the state or your area to compete against others, watch better players, and connect with other players. Tournaments can easily light a spark in players which invigorates them to advance their skills and play more often.

- **- Connect with the local Community**

Playing with the same group of players continuously can become monotonous and limits the growth of ones skills by focusing on competing with a narrow scope of skills and styles. Find ways to compete with the locals in order to broaden your club's skills and styles and strengthen the local racquetball community.