

Higher Education Recreation Initiatives Provide Opportunities to Serve the Community, Give Students High Value Experiences, and Integrate Cross Campus Collaborations.

Key words: Co-curricular, Collaboration, High Impact Practices, Accessibility, Student Recognition, Recreation

by Ken Harrison

Although generally not considered academic, Recreational Sports at the University of North Georgia offers co-curricular opportunities for student leaders, employees, and participants to gain experiences and competencies that will make them well rounded and better prepared to enter the workforce. Three initiatives the UNG Recreational Sports Department is working on; respond to the needs of today's students, enrich their learning through practical experiences, and put its resources to work on the problems faced by the community it serves. These efforts especially complement two of UNG's strategic goals. Goal 2 - *Enhance leadership and the development of the whole person* through co-curricular activities that support personal and professional development and individual well-being. Goal 3 - *Expand engagement and educational opportunity* through collaborations with local, regional, national, and global partners. UNG's Department of Recreational Sports has aligned its curriculum in an effort to support the university's visions of enhanced engagement and student development.

I. Rec Sports and the Communication, Media & Journalism Department collaborate to provide students hands on experience through arranging for students to:

- Video intramural sports games for student-officials to review their performance and learn from
- Video demonstrations of the exercises that make up the fitness workouts we offer
- Video the intramural sports championship games to make highlights reels giving students their "15 minutes of fame"
- Compile some video across all sports of great plays and bloopers to use for entertainment and recruitment
- Improve the overall publicity, student recognition, marketing and communication of Rec Sports through journalism and other social media
- Add information and news to our recreational sports social media twitter, facebook, website, youtube, Instagram
- Develop a Recreation News Network

II. UNG Rec Sports "Golf Lite" is a modified golf game using limited distance golf balls (*Almost Golf Balls*). This ball travels about one third the distance of a traditional golf ball but maintains a lot of the same characteristics with regard to spin, trajectory and accuracy. The special core construction makes it soft landing so it will not cause damage or injury. Recreational Sports has teamed up with the college Facilities and Grounds Department to assist with the course layout. Also, UNG's Institute of Environmental & Spatial Analysis (IESA) is recruiting students to take on the tasks of mapping the course, and plotting the yardages of the course holes. A version of the course map will be printed on scorecards and course markers.

III. Making recreation accessible: UNG Recreational Sports puts its resources to work for the needs of the community. The Hall County School system regional site for students with special needs is teaming up with UNG to provide recreational, fitness and sport based programming opportunities for their elementary students. This initiative involves UNG education majors from the special education and physical education tracks along with recreational staff and student workers. The current curriculum includes aquatics, indoor, outdoor recreational, sport and fitness based activities. The curriculum and resources will be enhanced in accordance with funding.

