

Developing Fixtures

How to develop fixtures and Intra Mural Sport (IMS) programmes

Developing a programme of fixtures, whether competitive or friendly or between your own teams or those from other institutions, is an integral part of sports strategies in many students' union. This guide will support you to execute a well-run and well managed fixture programme.

Introduction

With the growing expectation from students that their institution should provide an excellent student experience and the increasing focus on sport as a way to lead active lifestyles, and the associated health benefits, there is a need for institutions and students' union to provide more opportunities for sport to take place.

For many playing sport, whether representing their institution at the British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) finals, to playing with a group of friends against others from their halls of residence, competitive elements can be a great way to encourage long term engagement in sport.

Before you start developing opportunities for student sport, find out what activity currently exists. Consider opportunities offered by other parts of the institution as well as wider community settings. It is important to work with these areas of your institution so that you are not confusing students or investing time unnecessarily.

This guide will take you through how to develop and support fixtures for BUCS competitions, between other universities as a development opportunity and within your institution through IMS programmes.

BUCS fixtures

Any University that is a member of BUCS (you can check if your institution is a member on the BUCS website www.BUCS.org.uk) will have access to BUCScore –the software used to coordinate BUCS fixtures.

Each institution will have a master user – normally the sports administrator or a member of the athletic union. Before using BUCScore it is recommended that you have an understanding of which staff members at your university already have access to the system – as the master user will need to provide you with permission to access BUCScore.

The BUCScore User Guide for Institution administration can be found here:

<http://www.bucs.org.uk/page.asp?section=16217§ionTitle=BUCScore%3A+Help>

The guide covers managing users, adding venues, team entries, managing fixtures, submitting scores and advanced scores, making an appeal, your payments and entering BUCS individual entries. Please note that all entries, changes, appeals and payments need to be

verified by a master user before they are accepted by BUCS.



We know that staff leave throughout the

year so it's important to make sure that you build in handover training between staff to ensure consistency and that information isn't lost in changeover.

As with a master user for BUCScore it's likely that they'll be a main staff member within either the institution or students' union who is responsible for organising BUCS fixtures. Developing a good relationship with them and agreeing protocols in managing fixtures is important to ensure the smooth running of your fixture programme.

If you do not have access to BUCScore and are unsure on any protocol around arranging BUCS fixtures the following link will take you to the Fixtures Administration section (Reg 12.), under the 'Rules and Regulations' page on the BUCS website.

<https://www.bucs.org.uk/page.asp?section=17295§ionTitle=REG+12+Fixture+Administration+%26+Forfeitures+%28Walkovers%29>

Arranging friendlies between universities

You may well have teams that aren't in a BUCS league or in sports that BUCS don't have leagues for and so organising competitive fixtures between other universities can be a great development opportunity for your students.

Friendlies can be a beneficial way for students to test their level of skills and team work against other universities. You will need to check universities within your local area to see which sports they currently cater for and to what level.

For example: they could have a number of BUCS teams as well as teams who compete at a local level or even students new to a team who are looking for their first friendly match. Make

sure you select the opposition within a university that is at the level you want to be competing at.

Look at whether the university have an intra-mural programme? This may mean that there are a number of additional teams that are looking for matches to play.

Friendly opportunities may also be available with local community clubs as well as other universities. Look at what support your local County Sport Partnership can provide you with in terms of identifying suitable teams or clubs to approach.

If you do arrange a friendly, make sure you consider the likely availability of the opposition – if you want a competition against a BUCS team avoid choosing Wednesday afternoons within the BUCS fixture season.

The best way to get in touch with other colleges is through the main user listed on the BUCScore system. Using this will save you having to trawl through student's union and/or university websites. If you do not have access to BUCScore it is likely to be someone within your Athletic Union (AU) that does, so make sure you check with them.

You can also use the BUCS website to see what sports clubs each university has and how many teams they have within each sport. You can search by university on the homepage of the website: www.bucs.org.uk

Arranging fixtures within institution

The focus on developing activity within institutions has focused for many years now on intra-mural sports (IMS) competitions. Whether that be between different halls of residence, faculties, departments or colleges.



Why develop a IMS programme

IMS programmes can be a great way of developing sports engagement programmes that a much wider number of students can access. They provide the opportunity for students who don't want to, or aren't able to, compete at University level with the opportunity to keep playing regular sport.

IMS programmes have the potential to engage huge numbers, but if you don't have a lot of resource to be able to commit to them you can start off small, encouraging students to self-organise.

Developing a student led element to the programme will ensure that as well as providing leadership opportunities for students you're also increasing your capacity and creating student ambassadors for the programme.

What to include in a IMS programme

Deciding what sports you should include can be hard work. We'd suggest the first thing to look at is what clubs are currently oversubscribed? Is there a big demand for more space in the badminton club or for more rugby teams? Are there sports where more student's trialling for a places than are available on a team?

Working with students to ascertain what they'd like to include is also important. You could do this through surveys to your students, or utilising student ambassadors, course reps or hall committees to gather student feedback.

There are a number of National Governing Body of Sports (NGBs) that have created specific IMS programmes. One of these examples being England Basketball who have developed 'IM Basketball'.

IM Basketball provides a simple way to create regular opportunities for students to play basketball, indoors or outdoors, incorporating

both traditional and modified versions of the game. The free IM Basketball resource includes everything needed to run weekly games or leagues for young people. In the 2012/13 academic year 21 universities received funding from England Basketball to develop and deliver IM Basketball sessions and leagues – providing new and additional playing opportunities for students across the country.

Watch the video below to find out exactly how this works:

<http://www.imbasketball.co.uk/videopromo>

More information on this can be found via the following link:

<http://www.bucs.org.uk/page.asp?section=17057§ionTitle=Basketball>

Another sport promoting intramural opportunities is football. Examples of how this could look and for Models of Good Practice view the following link

<https://www.bucs.org.uk/page.asp?section=18562&search=>

Support in developing your IMS programme

BUCS will be happy to provide guidance for any university that would like to develop an IMS programme. IMS programmes are a great way of providing a friendly competitive outlet for students who may not be at the standard to make a BUCS team or for those that want to play against other halls, friendship groups or against students from different departments.

If you want to start a new programme of sports opportunities then a good place to start will be with the Sport Development team at BUCS. They will be able to provide help and guidance for universities that are looking to develop opportunities for students that are not already engaged in sport.

If you're looking at developing a programme across a number of different sport leagues then



SportsPAD's software may be of interest to you. BUCS have signed a two year deal (up until 2015) with SportsPAD who provide sports fixtures management software. The BUCS intra-mural package will allow all BUCS' members the opportunity to build their own intra university leagues, administer them with cutting edge software and bolt on packages that suit individual university needs at a discounted price. For more information on what the software involves and to read feedback from universities that are already using the software, visit the SportsPAD website:

<http://www.sportpad.net/>

Conclusion

Sport can take many different forms and be delivered across many different platforms. Ensuring that you have a strong mix of delivery mechanisms will enable you to maximise the reach of your programme and therefore the number of students engaged in activity.

Getting the balance right between competitive sport and sport for the fun of being active can be a delicate balance to get right. Involving students in the decision making processes and design of services will enable you to be more responsive to the demands and interests of students.

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to suggest any amends please contact studentopportunities@nus.org.uk

