



Greetings again from West Point! By the time this article is printed, we'll all have recovered from a hectic fall/winter football season and begun to celebrate the holidays so popular with Cadets. In addition, SANDHURST preparation will have started in earnest, planning for summer changes to the Military Program will be continuing, and many of our Cadets will be off enjoying semesters abroad or as Exchange Cadets at one of our sister Service Academies.

In reviewing the mission of USCC to “develop commissioned leaders of character that possess the will to win, personal courage, adaptability, physical fitness, and mental toughness essential to the profession of arms” I thought it appropriate to focus this month on our competitive sports program so vital to Cadet development. As most of you know, competing in sports is not an option at West Point—it is *required* for all Cadets. The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics has responsibility for the varsity sports program, in which about 25% of the Corps participates. USCC has responsibilities for the sports program for the other 75% of the Corps, administered through the Department of Physical Education (DPE) Office of Competitive Sports and financed by the Directorate of Cadet Activities (DCA). Competitive *Club Sports* comprise about 15% of the Cadet sports participation, and *Company Athletics* comprise the remaining 60%.

Two famous quotes from then-Superintendent GEN Douglas MacArthur, Class of 1903, form the philosophical underpinning for sport participation at West Point. GEN MacArthur said, “Upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that on other fields, on other days, will bear the fruits of victory.”

He also demanded “every cadet an athlete and every athlete challenged.” Our goal is to achieve GEN MacArthur’s vision and the USCC mission by developing Cadets as warrior-athletes, possessing the physical fitness, will to win, and mental toughness so essential to leading effectively in combat.

In 2007, the International Institute for Sport named DPE’s Office of Competitive Sports one

of the Top 15 Sport Education Teams in America. To put this recognition in context, the Institute also recognized the Top 100 Sport Education Individuals, which included such notables as Coach Mike Krzyzewski '69 (Duke Men’s Basketball), Coach Joe Paterno (Penn State Football), and Coach Pat Summitt (University of Tennessee Women’s Basketball), all known for building character through sport.

Sport participation in itself doesn’t inherently build sound character, but rather, in the hands of good coaches and sport educators, sports become the mechanism by which sound character is developed. To this end, in 2006, we established the Mike Krzyzewski Teaching Character through Sport Award. Coach “K” visited West Point each May for the past two years to speak to the Corps of Cadets about character development through sport and to present personally the award named in his honor. At those presentations, he presented awards in two categories: Sport Educator and Cadet, given to winners in both the Competitive Club and Company Athletics programs. The award is given annually to the individual in each category who best exemplifies the five tenets of *integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and servant leadership*. Beginning in 2009, USCC is partnering with DIA in order to incorporate Corps Squad athletics in the award, as well.

Company Athletics has expanded this year to include full participation by all 32 Companies of Cadets in three seasons of competitive sports:

Fall 2008 sports (August–November) include; basketball, biathlon, football (8-man tackle), soccer (7x7), ultimate Frisbee and wrestling.

Winter 2008/2009 (November–March) requires all Company Athletic Cadets to participate in at least two offerings of their choosing from a wide variety of options: volleyball, racquetball, indoor soccer, tennis, wrestling, basketball, flag football, dodge ball, cross-fit, badminton, to name just a few. On days when Cadets aren’t participating in DPE sports, they are involved in unit PT administered by the BTD (taking the place of drill).

Spring 2009 sports (March–May) include: area hockey, combat grappling, flickerball, orienteering, rugby (7x7), swimming, and SANDHURST (DMI’s program, but Cadet participants receive Company Athletic participation credit).

Cadet Competitive Club Sports have been performing incredibly well over the past two

years but often do not get the publicity of the Intercollegiate Sports Program. In 2007 we had six National Championship Teams, totaling 24 National Championships attained since 2000. Already in 2008 we are on par to exceed last year’s performance, with National Championships in Women’s Pistol, Men’s Team Handball (2nd year), Combat Weapons (3rd straight), Boxing, and Orienteering (6th straight).

As encouraging, we continue near-dominance of our inter-service rivals, winning 84% of the time we compete against Air Force and Navy in competitive club sporting events. During “Air Force” week in early November, our Cadets competed in a host of club events, winning Women’s Lacrosse (13–5), Martial Arts (7–0), Judo (50–5), Men’s Team Handball (42–30), Boxing (11–1), Paintball (7–1), and Rugby (16–3), while only failing to “sweep USAFA” by losing a close 3rd set in Men’s Volleyball (15–11).

This season against Navy, we’re again off to a great start, with Men’s Rugby winning the fall rugby competition 40–7 during a cold night in late November at the Anderson Rugby Complex. We’re hopeful of duplicating the Boxing Team’s effort against USAFA by beating Navy on 5 December—the evening prior to the Army/Navy football classic in Philadelphia. Next year, we’re trying to get the Boxing competition moved to Philadelphia so more Army and Navy fans can watch the competition the evening prior to the big game.

Women’s Rugby, Fencing, Crew, Powerlifting, Team Handball, Orienteering, Sports Parachute, Cycling, Marathon, and dozens of other club sports are looking forward to defending their titles again in the spring, and I encourage everyone to visit our Cadet Activities website at <<http://www.usma.edu/uscc/dca/>> for a full accounting of how all our Cadet Clubs are performing.

In closing, I’d like to again thank all of our Alumni for their support for Cadet Activities in general (*All for the Corps*), and for our Competitive Club Programs in particular. Developing leaders of character is the essence of what we do at West Point, and as GEN MacArthur so aptly noted, nothing better prepares cadets for the challenges they’ll face after graduation than a tough, physically and mentally challenging competitive sports program. **Beat Navy!**

