



Talking Points With With John Meinke, ACIS Flag Football National Championships

Tips For Sustaining Long-Running Events

As vice president of university relations and programming for American Collegiate Intramural Sports (ACIS), John Meinke oversees programs on 200 member campuses, including the ACIS regional and national football and basketball championships. Since 1995, Meinke has worked with the University of New Orleans to organize and provide sponsors for the ACIS Flag Football National Championships, which will celebrate its 30th anniversary Dec. 28–31. Meinke offers some tips for sustaining long-running events.

Make existing events better. ACIS identifies existing events with built-in infrastructure and participation and makes them better for sponsors, organizers and participants. Since 1979, the University of New Orleans has hosted the event now known as the ACIS Flag Football National Championships. ACIS promotes the relationship and the event by airing a highlight show nationally on Fox College Sports and with public relations resources resulting in exposure in USA Today, SI.com and daily newspapers around the country.

Overcome challenges with creativity. Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans just four months before the annual ACIS Flag Football National Championships, so ACIS reached out to its network of more than 200 member schools to find an interim host with the University of West Florida in Pensacola, Fla., which has hosted an ACIS regional tournament for more than 20 years. Last year the event returned to New Orleans, but the event still had to be relocated because 500 FEMA trailers were occupying the UNO campus fields. UNO and ACIS worked with community officials to secure field space in a local park.

Choose an ideal city for sports events. Finding an attractive destination for hosting an event is important to ensure participants will want to attend. Good weather and plenty of entertainment options make New Orleans an ideal host city for sports events. New Orleans is also eager to show that it has recovered and is “open for business,” so local community organizations and businesses are eager to bring in events and therefore tend to be very accommodating.

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