Strike Three: Why sports are non-existent at Metro State

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The Football Foundation states that there was close to 2 million viewers who watched the college football games aired during 2015. In a little more than a month, March Madness, a college basketball tournament considered to be one of the biggest sporting events in the US, will dominate public conversations and social media sites. Thousands of fans will put together their brackets and watch the games. Even with all this popularity, there are a small number of colleges that refuse to participate in the mayhem. Metropolitan State is one of them.

“The reason we don’t have sports at Metro has to do with the genesis of the university,” said Phil Fuehrer, the director of Student Life and Leadership Development. Metro State is unique from other universities because it appeals to a non-traditional student group. It is comprised largely of adults between 24 and 35 years old. These students usually lead busy lives and have commitments to their families and careers. This is very different from most universities where students attend full-time and have the freedom to participate in sports.

“Most sports are not money makers,” Fuehrer said. When looking at sports, a university has to purchase and maintain a facility, a staff of coaches, a director, team uniforms, and observe different regulations, such as Title 9. This title states that with each male team there must also be a respective female team. This absence of sports at Metro State definitely denies students a sense of unified culture and comradery outside of the classroom. However, the admission of sports would cause major financial problems to the infrastructure of the university.

The key difference in what makes a “club” versus a sport’s “organization” all comes down to the competitive league and funding aspects. For instance, Metro State’s Soccer Club is just that. They host tournaments featuring Metro Students, but they don’t reach beyond that. It’s purely for the aesthetic of sport versus any sort of intercollegiate alliance. Even if the club existing is a somewhat gray area, its existence ultimately reflects a demand for its inception. But, again, it’s purely intracollegiate (within the bounds of Metro State), removed from any sort of NCAA status, as that is not the university’s priority.

“The demographics are going to have to change,” Fueher said. “Otherwise we are just not built for sports.” Traditional sports may be unlikely for a university like Metro, but what about something more unconventional? Fuehrer cites the cybersecurity and computer forensic club, which has taken second place in the Minnesota Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition the last two years, as a “sport” that fits within Metro State’s culture. In the end, a sport is simply a competitive game between two teams. Individual sports like chess, bowling, and golf have a better chance of succeeding in an atmosphere like Metro State. The only way that something like this can start is through students who are willing to get involved. Students who have the patience to keep their eye on the ball, and the power to smash it out of the park.