

Tournament Games

Playing for water safety? How's that for a fun way to save lives? Think for a moment, haven't you heard media outlets playing this or that for charity? That's an idea. The Corps of Engineers can easily do the same. And, 99 percent of the games are played at night or on Saturday. Here's one game you do not have to win to be successful.

Here's how. Check your resources, first. If your lake has basketball players, that's your game. If they play touch or flag football, golf, volleyball, slow-pitch softball, you're on the way. Remember, because of the seasons your office might play sports - indoor or outdoor - for charity or a worthy cause ... like the lake's safe boating council. (Note: Let the council or charity personnel handle the money.) It is possible to merge with another Corps of Engineers lake, some state game and fish officials or even council folks if you are short of players.

Once you have a team name and a tentative roster telephone the media. Television seems to be big in some areas of the country, while radio stations "get with it" in others. Newspapers, for some reason, do not usually participate as much. Play for the media's charity first, or if they ask, tell them about your lake council. Set up a meeting after you find the "team" to play against.

Try to schedule it far enough in advance to get a lot of coverage for your "water safety team."

Let's say the Corps of Engineers is playing television station KWIN. As "team captain" you could appear on talk shows, be interviewed for the newscast, work with the station for PSAs, and the list goes on and on. Remember, this is fun.

Here's a time to poke fun at the TV folks. A time to challenge others to do the same. A time to have fun and enjoy members of the Corps of Engineers family.

A joint news release to the newspaper might get the word out even if you are playing a TV team. The newspaper editor might be solicited to keep score or referee. This way, the sports editor might come and cover the event.

Showing the Corps of Engineers is "for the people" is an important concept that is overlooked many times. The Corps is a member of the community and concerned about the welfare of the people and the lake.

If the TV folks shoot some footage for the nightly news, make sure you or a member of the Corps of Engineers team appears and somehow get in the water safety message. Could this be a good time to ask the District Engineer or the Deputy to come out and participate? They are always looking for events such as these to get involved in. Remember, they are family, too.

The possibilities are endless. Radio stations might even send a remote crew out to broadcast the game if they are co-sponsors.

Joining with the media for water safety will help you in so many, many ways. For example, when you want some coverage from the TV station, you have a personal point of contact. It will be so much easier to call the person who played first base and say, "Hey Judy, I was safe the second time during the water safety game in Smithville." Use the game as an icebreaker.

After conversational chitchat, tell her about the water safety "news" you want the station to cover.

Could this be the start of something new at the lake? The schedule might look like this:

Winter - Play basketball against radio station WDOG at the high school gym for the lake's water safety council.

Spring — Play volleyball against *The News* newspaper at the middle school gym for the American Cancer Society.

Summer - Play slow-pitch softball against television station Channel 22 at the university's ball diamond for the American Heart Association.

Fall - Play touch/flag football against cable TV, Channel 43, at community center for the Four Seasons Senior Citizens Center.

Yes, this could very well be the start of a happy marriage with the media... if you work at it Good luck at the "Goodwill Games."