

Parafencing, Karate and Badminton club sports added at OU



The Badminton club just formed this semester and is seeking more participants.

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Oakland University's [Recreation and Well-Being](#) department has expanded its offerings for [club sports](#) to 28 with the addition of parafencing and karate this fall and the newly formed badminton club.

"We always try to meet the needs of our students in developing new clubs," said Jordan Leslie, intramural & club sports coordinator at OU. "If there's student interest and we can match them with good coaches and advisers, we will support them by finding time and space at the Recreation Center. With the addition of these new clubs, we have some unique opportunities to grow our club sports lineup and reach more students to participate in our programming."

Parafencing Club

The parafencing club is a new branch of the already established Fencing Society at OU and is the first accessible club sport at OU. It began this fall.

During a parafencing match, opponents have their wheelchairs locked into place at a fixed angle an arms-length away from each other and use their upper body movement to attack and defend.

Team captain Alissa Bandalene says her hope is to continue competing in a sport she loves while sharing with others that fencing can be a lifetime sport at all ability levels. In October, Bandalene competed at the North American Cup National Parafencing tournament in Kansas City and brought home two bronze medals. She medaled in both the foil and sabre parts of the competition.

Patrick Webster has been involved with the fencing community for over 20 years. He's currently a referee on the national circuit and head coach of the Fencing Society at Oakland University. Alex Gioiella is another coach for FSOU and is also a senior referee for the United States Fencing Association.

FSOU meets on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 5-7 p.m. in the Recreation Center's Activity Room. More information on the Fencing Society at Oakland University can be found at fsou.weebly.com.

Karate Club

Another new club at Oakland this fall is the Karate club. It is affiliated with the International Shotokan Karate Federation (ISKF) Karate Club, one of the most popular forms of karate.

OU's Karate club is led by its sensei, and faculty adviser from the School of Engineering and Computer Science, professor Mohammed Mahmoud. He ran a similar chapter at his prior university and is excited about the opportunity of building the same type of club here at Oakland since he joined the faculty earlier this year.

The sport of karate consists of sharp, counteractive movements of punches and kicks in order to block an opponent. Karate is an [art of self-defense](#). Professor Mahmoud says that karate is an art form that not only can aid in self-defense, it is a good form of exercise that can help with physical and mental health. Karate improves flexibility and muscle strength while decreasing stress and improving mental focus.

The club plans to compete in tournaments this winter. Along with regular practice, dojo members will have the opportunity to work with other trainers from the International Shotokan Karate Federation.

Karate club meetings take place at 7 p.m. on Thursdays and 11 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays and are open to anyone 18 years and older with a [membership or guest-pass](#) to the Oakland University Recreation Center.

Badminton Club

The newest program is the Badminton club and they are actively seeking participants. The Badminton club meets on Sundays at 3 p.m. at the Recreation Center, court 3. For more information on this club, those interested can email club president Steven Razzouk at srazzouk@oakland.edu.