

The Legacy of Co-Rec Football

In 1971, Bob Giomi set out to make a game that would include both men and women on an equal playing field and satisfy the desire for an athletic recreational activity that would bring the community together. Over thirty years later, that sport, known as Co-Rec football, continues to go strong not only in its birthplace of Hinman College, but in the rest of the residential colleges of Binghamton University and on college and university campuses across the country. That, in and of itself, is truly an astonishing accomplishment.

In 2007, Eric Kurs-Lasky gave this as the legacy of Co-Rec football:

It satisfies the competitiveness that people are looking for. Yet it also has an element of fun and of community. You play with the people you live with...you play the game with your friends. You go back to the building all dirty together...that's what creates bonds between people. There's a certain level of competitiveness to it, but in the end it brings people together.¹

In the end that is what Co-Rec is all about. At first glance it is a sport that appears to be about nothing except winning over one's opponent. However, when one looks at the meaning behind Co-Rec and the history of the game, one quickly realizes that it is not about this at all. Co-Rec is a sport not about divisiveness, but about bringing people together to play a game where in the end it doesn't really matter who wins and who loses, but that everyone had fun.

Even thirty years later, alumni still cling to their torn and faded Co-Rec shirts as mementos from the time they caught that game-winning pass, or blocked the extra point, or threw the game-saving pass to the wide-open receiver. For some it was the only time in their life that they played competitive sports and for others the Hinman Super Bowl was the closest that they ever got to the real Super Bowl. In the end that is what Co-Rec is about. It's about dreams. Not just the dreams of gridiron glory, but the dreams of bonding upon the fields of friendly strife, and the lifelong friendships that they forge.

Today Hinman Co-Rec continues on as one of the most revered and time-honored of the Hinman institutions. There may no longer be four or five teams per building (some only have one) and there may no longer be the large, elaborate floats in the Hinman Quad during Co-Rec Weekends, but the spirit of those days lives on every time a Hinmanite laces up and steps onto the sacred earth of Sterling Field. Some places may have bigger, more involved Co-Rec seasons, but Hinman is still the place where Co-Rec was born. As long as there are students living in Hinman College, the sport of Co-Rec will continue to be played.

The purpose behind Co-Rec was to bring young men and young women together and create a better community by playing a sport that included everyone. While this original mission may have been overlooked during some seasons, it has never been forgotten for long. Like every institution in Hinman history, Co-Rec may have had its ups and downs but it has continually had a positive presence in the community. More so than anything else, Co-Rec is Hinman's claim to fame and the sport has provided much-needed recreation to quite literally thousands of Hinmanites over its nearly forty-year history. It doesn't matter whose name is engraved on the Robert F. Giomi Plaque. That in the long run does not matter. The people who played and took pride in the game are true testaments to Bob Giomi's original vision of the sport and of the spirit of Hinman College.

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¹ Ibid.