Muddy pit brings out clubs’ best

BY JESSE GREENSPAN
Staff Writer

The group on the right side of the rope pulled its hard-earned, but was unable to hold on. In one instant, all eight members fell into the ankle-deep mud, clothes and all, in the mud tug-of-war yesterday on the UA Mall.

Slinging and slipping in mud was the most popular of the events in which clubs competed for a $400 prize.

This was the second year of the competition, inspired by the movie “Revenge of the Nerds,” which was filmed on the UA campus. It was dreamed up by executive vice student body president Jennifer Reece.

After watching the film a few years ago, Reece began to wonder how she could bring an event to campus that would be similar to the fraternity competition at the end of the movie.

While it was doubtful the university would help pay for tricycle races that involved beer chugging, Reece hoped there were other things she could organize that would still generate student interest.

“Once a day I was sitting around talking with my friends,” Reece said. “I remembered watching movies like “Revenge of the Nerds” and thought that would be fun.”

Eight clubs participated in such events as mud tug-of-war, crazy tricycle races, obstacle course races and a pie-eating contest, among others, at the second-annual Club Olympics.

Through a few students rode tricycles and ran through the inflatable obstacle course, mud tug-of-war was probably the highlight of the event, as people covered in mud from head to toe jumped around in the mud pits east of Old Main.

A crowd of students gathered around the pits, unaccustomed to seeing a bunch of college kids roll around in the mud for fun.

The mudfest also inspired a bunch of trash-talk between the different clubs, as they vied for the $400 prize.

“Our goal today is to kick everyone’s butt in mud tug-of-war,” said Chau Gung Junior Honorary member Alexs County, whose group does philanthropic work in the Tucson community.

Robarts Senior Honorary member Aaron Lemke said his team ruled supreme.

“It is a quality, challenge to see if any of the other clubs can take it,” he said.

The club who wins the competition will be announced at the Homecoming banquet tonight. They will receive a $400 prize from the Associated Students of the University of Arizona.

“We’ve had a really good turnout and it seems like everyone’s having a lot of fun,” said ASUA club events coordinator Melissa Davis, who organized this year’s event.

“It’s nice to have it during Homecoming week,” said ASUA club events coordinator Melissa Davis, who organized this year’s event.

We’ve been firing people,” he said. “We’re going to be shutting down programs. We’re going to severely diminish the quality of the work we do.”

State funding has played a smaller and smaller role in the UA’s budget, Likins said, falling from 45 percent of the budget in 1986 to 34 percent last year.

“But the cuts haven’t hit all sides of campus equally. The programs that stand to lose the most because of the current budget situation are those that can’t support themselves through research dollars and don’t draw a lot of contributions — arts, humanities and social sciences.

The UA draws about one-third of its budget from research grants. The cutbacks in state funding have been coupled with stagnant low tuition rates, making Arizona’s universities and the UA ranked as the least expensive of all U.S. senior public universities, Likins said.

“Follow, we must increase tuition,” Likins told the audience.

The crowd of about 600 applauded.

Likins said he wants to increase tuition by about $1,300 in-state and make other increases for non-resident students. It is unclear at this point whether Likins will pitch the whole $1,100 increase to the Arizona Board of Regents next spring for the 2003-2004 academic year.

Arizona families currently pay only about 4 percent to 5 percent of the UA’s 15 percent revenue generated from tuition.

The tuition increase is only a small part of a plan to merge and cut some programs, the administration dubbed Focused Excellence.

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