

Dodge ball challenge grows into international rivalry

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Students, staff and faculty at the University of Alberta set a dodge ball Guinness World Record last February.

Photograph by: Rick Macwilliam , The Journal , File

What started off as an idea to break the Guinness record for a dodge ball game has quickly turned into another fierce Canada-United States rivalry.

"It's become a source of national pride," said Rory Tighe, U of A vice-president of student life. "I didn't think it would lead to international competition, but we want to show Americans what we Canadians can do."

University of Alberta students, staff and alumni converged last February on the Butterdome and set the dodge ball record with 1,198 players. Seven months later, the University of California, Irvine, set a record with 1,745 players.

At 12:05 p.m. Friday, in an event known to students as Break the Record: U of A Strikes Back, students, staff and alumni will look to set a new benchmark.

The event will get underway after the national anthem.

"It's not all about the dodge ball, but about generating community spirit and campus pride," Tighe said.

The Students' Union has red dodge balls from Sweden.

There will be 1,006 in play. When asked why the balls were brought in from Sweden, Tighe said they "have the perfect consistency. They're hard enough to generate lots of speed, but soft enough that they will not seriously hurt anyone."

It's unclear whether this will become an annual event.

"After we break the record, which we will, I'm curious to see what some of the American universities do."

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