Handball team hopes for success at nationals

By Kendra Fleming
Lantern sports writer

The OSU team handball club heads to the National Tournament in Philadelphia today in hopes of winning a title in its 20th year of competition.

"We are looking forward to nationals," player and club treasurer Dwayne Hopkins said. "We have a good chance of winning the whole thing."

The club, which consists of 18 local intramural players, will be one of approximately 25 other collegiate and private clubs participating in this weekends tournament.

Other clubs likely to be there include teams from West Point, The Air Force Academy, New York, Fresno State and Philadelphia, as well as a few new clubs, said Hopkins, a junior majoring in child development.

The OSU team handball club is in Division B. This division is comprised of those who do not compete at an Olympic level of competition. Division A consists of those athletes who are considered excellent or Olympians in the sport, Hopkins said.

The club's season began in January and are entering the tournament 4-4.

"We hope to make it a memorable nationals," said Tim Petz, club president and a senior majoring in hydrogeology. "It's our 20th year. We are going to cross our fingers and do the best we've ever done."

The club must have complete concentration in the nationals to be successful, Petz said.

The club finished seventh last year, competing against 25 teams in the National Tournament, Petz said. He attributes the club's success this year to the increase in players from last year, the agility and quickness to move around larger opponents and its smart and strong defense.

Team handball is a relatively new sport to the United States. It combines skills of basketball, hockey and soccer. It calls for a great deal of upper-body strength, Petz said.

The sport was introduced here at Ohio State in 1973 by Tom Thumb, a physical education instructor, who taught it as a class. The class eventually evolved into a club sport. Thumb participated in team handball while serving in the army. Over the past 20 years the sport has grown in popularity, Petz said.