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Why can't Oregon athletes get state

Tuition Aid

There are two routes to follow if you want to be competitive in the Pacific-10 Conference.

There is the route USC or UCLA have followed, which is to use a long-established tradition of winning to generate high gate receipts and heavy alumni donations, says Rick Bay, Oregon athletic

Or there is the route of the University of Arizona, which received \$2.5 million in aid last year from its state legislature, Bay adds.

Arizona is not unique. Every state in the western United States supplies at least some form of aid to the athletic departments at its major universities.

Every state, except Oregon.

And because the University doesn't have a large population base to draw gate receipts and donations from, Bay believes the state of Oregon must join the rest of the west and provide some sort of aid to the athletic departments at its two major state universities

Without it, Oregon may be consigned to being a perpetual Pac-10 also-ran, believes Bay.

"We don't have the money commitment from the state and the instituiton that we need," says Bay. "Pres. (Paul) Olum is philosophically committed, but he can't give us the financial commitment we need to be competitive

Bay points to the University of Arizona as the "most glaring" example of the type of state aid needed by the University athletic department. In Arizona, the state

legislature has granted the University of Arizona up to 315 tuition waivers per year to athletes who receive tuition aid as part of their scholarship. In Oregon, however, the University athletic department

has to pay the University every

time it awards tuition aid to an athlete as part of their scholarship. "If the legislature paid the tuition of all the kids that we have on scholarship, we could save as much as \$1 million per

year," Bay says. And if the University were given 315 tuition waivers, all of the sports that were cut could be brought back and many of the athletes put on scholar-

ships, says Bay. The money that would be freed could go toward better salaries for coaches, improvement of facilities and their maintenance, and even more scholarship aid to minor sports according to Bay.

"One reason we don't have competitive teams in many of the minor sports is that we simply can't finance enough scholarships for those sports," he says.

"If we had their tuition waived, we could have a lot more Oregon's state legislature is the only one west of the Rocky Mountains that hasn't depth in terms of talented voted in a bill allowing tuition waivers for scholarship athletes.

Because of tuition waivers, the University of Arizona can virtually go to the limit with every sport on scholarships.

"The state simply absorbs the cost," says Bay. Bay is not thrilled by the proposition of trying to guide a tuition waiver bill through the difficult waters of the State Board of Higher Education and the state legislature.

But he says it is his last hope if he is to turn the University into a competitive force in Pac-10 "We can't cut anymore," Bay says. "We're at

the minimum number of sports to stay in the conference, our salaries are at rock bottom, and our facilities are not what they should be.

"Ticket sales and contributions fluctuate up and down so much that it is hard to plan using them as a base. We need a substantial, solid base of money, and we won't be consistently competitive unless we get help.

Dan Williams, University vice president for administration and finance, couldn't agree more with Bay's assessment.

"What Rick sees is a reflection of what I believe," says Williams, who sees the current problem as a recent phenomenon.

"We have to stabilize our intercollegiate pro-

"That means we have to find a way to be competitive in terms of facilities, coaching, recruiting and scholarship aid."

The options are cutting expenses or increasing

Williams believes Bay is doing a good job of "cash management" of the athletic department. If you have your costs in hand, you have to turn to revenue, and there we are not as big as we would want to be.'

There are two major avenues to increasing the athletic department's revenues, he says. One is through donations, which Williams believes Bay has moved to increase by the hiring of Bill Byrne, associate athletic director.

That option leaves Williams a bit leery, because he sees a state with scarce resources and fears the possibility of money for the athletic department coming from funds already allocated to an academic program.

The needs of the athletic department are great, but not greater than the needs of our academic enterprise," Williams asserts. Both Williams and Bay agree that lobbying the

state board and then the legislature would have to be done jointly by the University and Oregon State.

"We wouldn't do it alone." Williams says.

Bay says there is still background research to be done, but that once it is completed the University will try to convince the state board of the merits of tuition waivers.

Although Bay is sure objections will be raised to the plan, he thinks that the pluses outweigh the minuses.

"I think it is an important investment to make," Bay says, referring to intercollegiate sport's impact on the state and

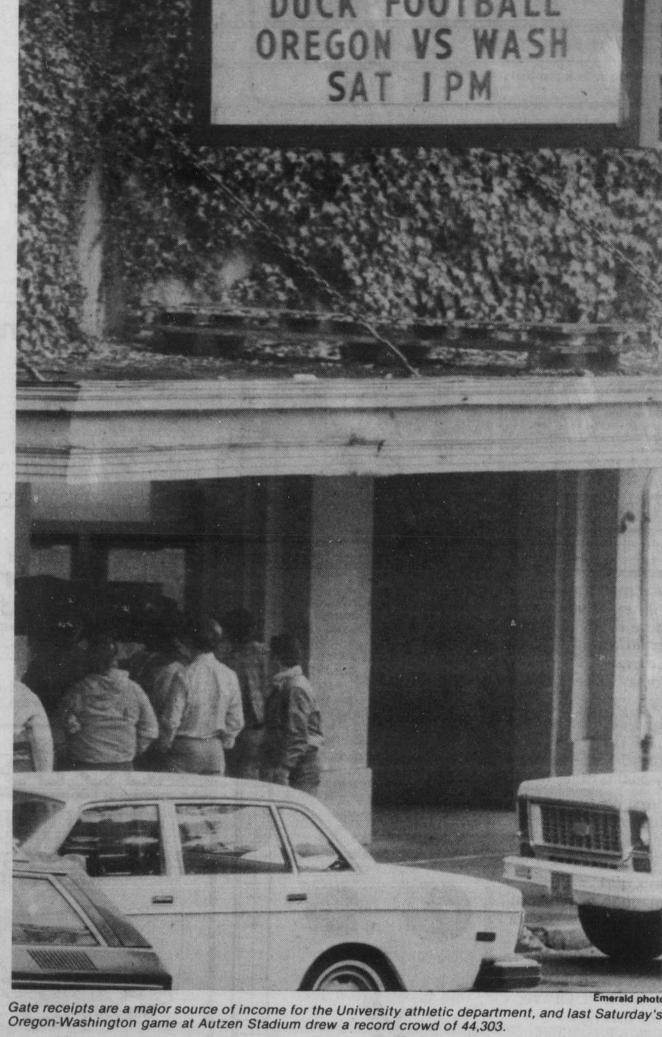
He bases his argument on two points - that intercollegiate athletics is a priceless form of advertising for the University and its community, and that it generates revenue for the local economy.

"You would have to spend millions of dollars on radio. TV and newspaper ads to get the publicity our athletic teams generate for the University," he

As an example of intergenerate revenue for the community, Bay points to last weeks Oregon-Washington game at Autzen Stadium, which set a stadium attendance record of 44,303.

brought into the community the

weekend of that game.



Bays says \$3 million was sports to know that is good for the economy," he happen eventually." 'It has to, because we need help."

Bay sees a long road ahead in trying to get "You don't have to like some form of state aid, yet he believes it "has to By John Healy

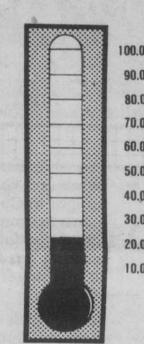
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