

New director hired to upgrade, gain support for Athletic Fund

By Michael Rivers

Of the Emerald

It is known nationwide that the University is struggling to fund athletics, Ken Winstead says.

But he's here to change that.

Winstead is the newly hired executive director of the Duck Athletic Fund, the fund-raising arm of the University Athletic Department. He wants to see people rally around the University — they'll have to if they want it to remain a member of the Pacific 10 Conference, he says.

The University has a quality coaching staff — they receive a smaller amount of money than coaches at other schools and use it more fully, Winstead says. But they could do a lot more, he says.

"If we can provide the coaches with what they need, they can go even further," he says.

Recruiting budgets and staff salaries are two particularly important areas that need funding, Winstead says. Recruiting budgets provide coaches with the resources and ability to stay on the road recruiting and evaluating talent, he says.

Additional money for salaries enables an athletic department to hire and retain high-quality coaches and other staff, Winstead says. Money also can be used to provide scholarships, and to upgrade sports equipment and playing facilities, he says.

Raising money to upgrade McArthur Court and less well-funded sports at the University are some of Winstead's goals as the new director, he says.

"My main emphasis is to upgrade and increase the annual operating budget for the overall Athletic Department," Winstead says. The current budget is about \$1.5 million, he says.

He currently is gearing up for the Athletic Department's annual fund-raising campaign that runs from mid-January to mid-March. The campaign uses volunteers from Eugene, Portland and Medford, who work on teams to call possible donors, he says.

The teams compete with each other to see who can sign up the most donors and bring in the most money, Winstead says. Winning teams are given prizes,



Ken Winstead

he says.

"We try to make it fun," he says.

Donors are given Fund memberships that carry various benefits depending on how much they donate, Winstead says. Donations range anywhere from \$25 to more than \$10,000, he says, and benefits include priority parking, seating at games and special invitations to pre-game events.

Fund-raising efforts for the proposed dome over Autzen Stadium are currently on hold, Winstead says. The Athletic Department is waiting on Internal Revenue Service legislation that will determine whether the purchase of a skybox in the dome can be written off as a tax-deductible contribution, he says.

Chris Voelz, associate athletic director, says the Athletic Department is waiting for the IRS decision because it wouldn't be fair to sell skyboxes to their clients while the question is unresolved.

The Athletic Department is looking at skyboxes as its main source of revenue for the dome, Winstead says.

But even if the IRS decides against granting tax-deductible status for skybox purchases, other options remain, Voelz says.

"We would not be dead in the water," she says.

Winstead came to the University from Georgia Southern, where he spent the last four years as assistant athletic direc-

tor and director of fund raising. At Georgia Southern, Winstead started a booster club to provide coaches of the newly established football program with the resources they needed to compete, he says.

Starting from scratch, he developed a fund-raising operation that raised more than \$500,000 in four years and also raised more than \$5.5 million in private donations in two years to completely finance Georgia Southern's new stadium.

Winstead filled a vacancy left open by Sam Baker, who "got one of those proverbial offers you can't refuse from Vanderbilt," Voelz says.



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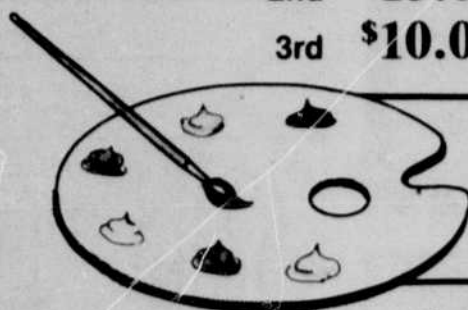
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