

Racism in sports reflection of society

Al Campanis, vice president in charge of player personnel for the Los Angeles Dodgers, was fired yesterday for racial remarks he made during ABC's "Nightline." In doing so he confirmed the subtle discrimination occurring in sports today.

Answering Ted Koppel's question regarding the number of blacks managing or owning baseball teams, Campanis said he truly believes "that they (blacks) may not have some of the necessities to be, let's say, a field manager, or perhaps a general manager."

This remark brings the issue of racism in sports to the surface. Harry Edwards, a sociology professor at the University of California Berkeley noted that this racism is symbolic of society. It is ingrained in the system, and therefore, not as apparent.

Edwards also emphasized that athletics still operate on the "plantation system." Blacks do the production while whites hold the managerial reins. Looking at the proportions of blacks holding manager or owner positions in professional sports proves this theory.

According to "Nightline," 25 percent of the players in baseball are black yet there are no black managers. In football, 55 percent of the players are black compared to 4 percent being black head coaches. The largest percentage comes in basketball. Seventy five percent of the players are black and 11 percent of the head coaches are black. There are no black owners in the sport.

Peter O'Malley, owner of the Dodgers, said Campanis was fired because his comments "... were so far removed and so distant from what I believe and what the organization believes..."

But the statistics prove that there is organizational prejudice within the system. Campanis said they do not have the "necessities" to hold higher positions. But they do have the experience.

Clearly black athletes are as qualified to coach, manage or own a team of their specialized sport as a white player. The white hierarchy and "plantation system," however, is preventing them from achieving these positions.

We can not let this discrimination continue. Firing Campanis was a start. But if people do not follow through, and put meaning behind the action, the firing will become a symbolic gesture with no impact.

This subtle form of discrimination is hard to overcome simply because it is so hard to prove. Only when officials make statements like Campanis' do their true colors show.

Jackie Robinson, the first black professional major league baseball player, had to confront and overcome many blatant forms of prejudice. Like Martin Luther King in the '60s, his actions and determination paved the way for other blacks and minorities to excel in all levels of society.

We cannot let their dreams die. Hank Aaron realizes this will be difficult. The attitudes of people and perceptions of the situation have changed.

"I've been hoping that things would change for the last 10 years," Aaron said. But his hope has dimmed in the light of Campanis' comments. "... you still have people like Campanis with his beliefs. When you have that, blacks aren't ever going to get anyplace," he said.

Campanis, and people like him, will continue to practice their beliefs if we allow them. These comments should not be taken lightly.



Letters

Irony

Thursday, April 3rd, this paper ran a short article on the fall of a student from third floor Tingle. The article was brief, but important, and the Emerald's inclusion of it was appreciated by many, including myself.

However, the urgency of its message was blunted by an accidental slip-up by the layout department, which wound up creating a sick, sick joke.

Directly beneath the article was an advertisement for a cable program that evening, and the headline in large black letters was "DEATH — A CERTAIN APPOINTMENT."

At first, I found the paradox funny. Then I realized how sad it really was, and became angry.

As most of us by now know, the boy is dead. Although I did not know him, I still am saddened by the loss, and furious that the Emerald, a paper I greatly respected, should be so careless as to let those two articles be run in the same column.

Accident though it may be, the grotesqueness of the irony is a slap in the face to all who know Peter Frangos, and the Emerald owes an apology to his friends and those who mourn

him. My respect for your paper has plummeted.

Dean Backus
Student

Not so fast

The ASUO Constitution Court will soon be ruling on the constitutionality of giving mandatory student incidental fees to OSPIRG — the student group, that is, not the state PIRG. Before the flood of "OSPIRG is wonderful" letters comes in, I would like to make a few observations.

At its Incidental Fee Committee hearing this year, OSPIRG requested a \$2 "membership" fee from each student as its mechanism for funding.

This membership fee is not optional and you cannot get a refund. If you are a student at this school, you are a member of OSPIRG — whether or not you agree with the group's legislative agenda or its methods.

OSPIRG, by the way, is not at all affiliated with the University as is the ASUO. It is an entirely independent activist organization. It no longer even elects members of its board of directors on the ASUO ballot.

Last year on this campus, by a 170-vote margin, OSPIRG passed a ballot measure doubling the University's contribution from \$45,000 to \$90,000 a year in mandatory student fees — your membership fees. (Last year, OSPIRG also ceased receiving any money from OSU

student fees.)

Allegedly, all of this money "returns" to campus in the form of services, but I would like to see a break-down of how OSPIRG spends our fees. Some of it does go to purely campus-related activities such as the consumer hotline, but how much goes to fund the staff of the state PIRG, or the formation of non-campus related causes such as a regional PIRG office in Oregon?

And there remain nagging constitutional questions about using mandatory fees to support definitive political positions in the Legislature. Freedom of speech is trampled when students are forced to pay for lobbying that competes with the positions they speak out on.

Rob Young
Senior

Killer brew

A few words on education, students, and alcohol: It's obvious the three do not mix. Peter Frangos, a University freshman, lost his life because of alcohol abuse. It was reported that his BAC (Blood Alcohol Content) was over .20. Beyond .08 is considered legally intoxicated.

If Frangos had been sober, he probably would not have gone out on the ledge in the attempt to enter his room. If Frangos was sober, his better judgment would have taken over. But Frangos was intoxicated. When intoxicated, the ability to judge things is one of many body functions impaired because of too much alcohol.

Students are here for an education. Wake up and get the facts on alcohol abuse. What happened to young Peter Frangos can happen to you. Is alcohol really necessary for a good time? Think about it. Alcohol abuse can and will cost you your life.

Suzie Hunter
Eugene

Friday, April 10, 1987

Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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