

The time is now to fund college athletics

By Paul Morgan
Emerald Reporter

The debate on whether to fund intercollegiate athletics with taxpayers money will again be a subject in the state Legislature this year, and you can bet it will be hotly contested as it has been in the past.

There is no telling what may come out of this year's session, but hopefully it will be better than what has happened in the past.

Commentary

A proposal to fund women's athletics went down in 1979, as did a one cent beer and cigarette tax to help support the same cause.

The decision to start Sports Action, a lottery game using the outcomes of NFL and NBA games, was like putting a bike patch on a broken dam, and may not even last through the year.

On top of the fact that none of the University's athletic departments actually saw any money, there is a proposal in Congress that may ban all sports related state-run lottery games. (Word has it the leagues may be threatening congressional delegates who want teams in their region with no

franchise if they do not vote to ban Sports Action.)

This spring The Oregon State Board of Higher Education decided to raise the enrollment caps at Oregon universities to help give relief to the ailing athletic departments - a solution that is temporary at best.

It is time for the Legislature to take action. In other words, move it or lose it.

The University's Athletic Department is in bad shape financially. Athletic Director Bill Byrne has balanced the budget for the department this year in response to a demand by the OSBHE, but only with some very precarious moves. It is up to the football and men's basketball teams to support 12 other non-revenue sports, and as Byrne said, "somebody has to make the point that we can't continue to have football patrons subsidize track and field. The success of the volleyball team should not rest completely on how the men's basketball team does."

He is right. If the 1990 football team does not have the kind of year that can attract a lot of fans, the Athletic Department will be in dire straits.

If the legislature decides it is not going to help Oregon Athletics this year, I think it will be missing the boat.

Strong athletic programs mean big business and big money for the region. A good football team will bring fans to the Eugene-Springfield area from around the state, not to mention fans of the opposing teams. Hotels fill up, restaurants are packed, and the local economy gets a boost. We will see it this year if the Ducks live up to their potential.

Let's face it. We do need more money for education, but as Byrne has said, people do not rally around a chemistry class the way they rally around a football team. And when they rally around a football team, they spend money.

The athletic departments at Washington, and the California and Arizona schools are succeeding. They get financial aid from the state, which frees the money made by the football and men's basketball teams to make better facilities, buy better equipment, and recruit better players. Those better players fill the stands, and the whole community benefits.

With the timber industry dwindling in the area, Eugene-Springfield does need a new source of income. If the football team can bring in \$1 million worth of revenue to the area in one weekend, why not try to help support it?

Student tickets available for football games

By Paul Morgan
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Student tickets for Oregon football games will be available at the University Athletic Ticket Office five working days before each home game as part of an ASUO/Athletic Department subsidized ticket agreement.

The agreement sets aside 6,048 tickets for students for

each home game, which can be picked up at the McArthur Court ticket office. Students can acquire one ticket per game with a summer or fall student identification card (depending on the game), and another piece of photo identification, said ASUO Co-president Sheila Stichel. A letter of admission or a fee card can also be used to get tickets, she added.

ASUO has also made available 50 child tickets for dependents of students, and special equivalency stamps for the spouses of students who want to attend games. Child and special equivalency tickets can be obtained at the ASUO office with proof of age and relation.

The tickets are subsidized by student incidental fees which are allotted to the Athletic Department. Under the guidance of the ASUO, the Athletic Department uses the funds to help support women's, men's and coed's sports - not including football and basketball. Stichel explained.

The student section will remain in sections five through nine in Autzen Stadium.



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Monday, September 17, 1990