

The Student Body

SPORTS • HEALTH • FITNESS

College baseball's popularity hits a grand slam

By DAN ZEIGER

The State Press, Arizona State U.

Buoyed by increased television coverage, improved facilities and clever marketing campaigns, college baseball has evolved from near anonymity to a nationally recognizable sport. But despite its popularity, the game still faces questions about its future.

"The current state of the game is excellent — as good as it's ever been," said Dick Bergquist, executive director of the American Baseball Coaches Association. "In the past 20 years, not only has television helped greatly, but the parks have also improved in that time."

But while the sport's appeal has increased, its decreases — from the number of scholarships to the size of coaching staffs to practice time — have been cause for concern.

"College baseball is obviously something that is in massive change," said Arizona State U. coach Jim Brock. "Because of all the things that are being reduced, it is going to make even the teams that have done well for many years not as good as they used to be."

The goal of each team is to hear the ringing of aluminum bats at the College World Series, the NCAA's second most profitable championship event, behind only basketball.

In 1991, the CWS and the regional playoffs that precede it brought in more than \$2 million in gate receipts and



COURTESY U. OF TEXAS SPORTS INFORMATION

Take me out to the ball game — the college game, as NCAA competition gains popularity.

television rights fees, with part of the money distributed to the competing teams.

One of the biggest reasons for that success has been ESPN, the all-sports cable network that gave the college game its first national TV exposure on a regular basis. The network broadcast its first game, a CWS contest, on June 3, 1980 — and collegiate baseball hasn't been the same since.

In the '80s, ESPN televised 191 college

games. Due to its heavy schedule of major league contests, the network now does only one regular-season collegiate game a year. But that doesn't tarnish its reputation as the medium that put college baseball on the map.

"We've done stuff on college baseball ever since we went on the air (in 1979), and it's been nice helping it grow as we've grown," said ESPN publicist Curtis Pires.

While ESPN has continued its coverage of

CWS games, for the last four seasons the national championship game has gotten even better exposure — on free TV via CBS.

But success comes with nagging questions.

At an NCAA convention in Nashville early last year, the Presidents Commission approved a number of sweeping reforms.

As of August, a baseball coach can have only one assistant and one restricted earnings coach who can earn a maximum of \$12,000 annually, instead of two assistants.

Also, the number of scholarships a school can offer each year will decrease from 13 to 11, practice time will be cut and the number of games per season reduced, eliminating fall competition at many warm-weather schools.

Perhaps the most controversial proposal is the new rule that allows major league teams to draft a player right out of high school and retain his rights until he finishes college.

Until this year, if a team drafted a player who decided to attend college, the club lost rights to him. But now, some high school graduates might opt to sign a contract immediately instead of risking that their value might diminish in college.

While some coaches are taking await-and-see attitude toward the rule, Bergquist thinks it will hurt the college game.

"With the financial frenzy that pro baseball is in right now, I think you could see a lot more kids signing out of high school."

Hang ups: Getting over the morning after

By ANN CLINGERMAN

College Heights Herald, Western Kentucky U.

Looking in the mirror one Sunday morning, John Phelps was not greeted by a pretty sight. After a party the night before, the junior from Western Kentucky U. woke up with a pierced ear, a pierced nose and a partially shaved head.

"I woke up on Sunday and I just didn't recognize myself," Phelps said. "I saw things that weren't there and that should have been there, like my hair."

"You wonder how drunk a person can get, and the next day you know you went too far."

Phelps was a victim of the infamous sickness defined by many college students as an aching, pulsating feeling that makes it impossible to even think of rolling out of bed and trudging to class.

Phelps had a hangover.

While not quite as serious as some other ailments, hangovers offer their own brand of misery. However, there are ways to survive the "not so fresh" feeling of Friday morning.

For Craig Hopp, a junior at James Madison U. in Harrisonburg, Va., the best cure for a hangover is to order a pizza.

"The next day, you usually feel horrible. Your head's pounding and the muscles in your stomach are churning and gurgling," Hopp said. "You know if you eat something, you'll feel better."

For the hung over, handiness is a priority when it comes to food.

"The whole point of the pizza man is convenience," Hopp said. "You don't have to get up, or move or go outside."

Some students find comfort from their ailments by diving right back into what got them into their miserable condition.

Deb Wesslink, a sophomore at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has another beer to cure her sick stomach.

"The best thing to do is have another beer when you get up," Wesslink said. "Your body is coming down from the alcohol, so if



MARK NYSTROM, THE COLLEGIATE TIMES, VIRGINIA TECH

Just hanging around: The perils of perpetual partying are painful, but a little prevention may help.

you give it a little more it'll calm down a little bit. It works."

For Curt Phillips, a junior at Vanderbilt U., the best thing is to do something that works up a lot of sweat. He advises not sleeping the day away, but getting a good night's sleep and then starting the morning with a 20-minute run.

"I usually go three miles or so," Phillips said. "I know it sounds crazy, but it makes you feel better."

Perhaps the most practical advice comes from Nancy Givens, coordinator of health information for Student Health Services at Western Kentucky U., who recommends lots of rest and a little prevention.

"Drink slowly and limit the number of drinks you have," Givens said. "The best you can do for one is not to get one."

Post-game party leads to rioting at U. of Michigan

Crowding city streets to scream or celebrate on after major sports victories is a tradition for U. of Michigan students, but Ann Arbor police quickly curtailed the festivities following Michigan's 20-point loss to Duke in the NCAA basketball championship by dispersing the crowd with tear gas.

Despite the Wolverines' loss, an estimated 5,000 fans still flooded the center of campus as planned. Police already had stationed the entire force on South University Avenue to redirect traffic and control crowds.

No violence occurred during earlier celebrations after Michigan's quarter-final and Final Four victories, despite crowds as large as 6,000. But Ann Arbor police Sgt. Sherry Woods said there was "fighting in the streets among students" after the final, prompting police to disperse the crowd with tear gas, a move students saw as overreacting.

"I think it was totally unnecessary," said junior James Radgens. "It was a little pep rally." ■ Erin Einhorn, *The Michigan Daily*, U. of Michigan