

# Chaney challenges NCAA

The trouble with reality is that it's complicated. It can ruin a perfectly good news story. Take the conflict between the Black Coaches Association and NCAA. During the last three months, sports-writers have had an opportunity to write about subjects like racial tensions and social issues. These topics make for juicy copy.

So do phrases like "racially biased," "the image and integrity of college athletics" and "discrimination." Unfortunately, juicy copy doesn't necessarily make a complicated story easy to understand. Plenty of fans don't seem to know what the problem is between the BCA and the NCAA. Plenty of sports-writers don't seem to know either.

John Chaney knows. John Chaney is a black coach, the head coach at Temple University. He is capable of the kind of tirades that the sports world normally associates with Bobby Knight. During a game in January, he thought an opposing coach was trying to intimidate the officials. Chaney stormed in on the opposing coach's postgame press conference and threatened to kill him.

John Chaney is an excellent basketball coach. Temple University has been one of the nation's top basketball programs during the past six years. He has won more than 500 games in his career.

For a coach that threatened to kill one of his colleagues earlier this season, Chaney does strange things. He represents much of what is right in college athletics. His players graduate. He preaches discipline. He teaches lessons about life.

As one former player said in a *Sports Illustrated* article Feb. 28, "He equips you more for manhood than for the NBA." Some of his players make it to the pros. Many become something better. They become just what Chaney wants them to be.

His players become the subject of cliches like, "a credit to his school," "somebody who gives something back to his community" and "a better per-



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son than a basketball player." Chaney describes his job as "developing character" in his athletes. When he's not attacking opposing coaches, he frequently succeeds.

Chaney is concerned with academics, also. The NCAA allows 13 scholarships for a men's basketball team. Before last year, 14 scholarships were allowed. Chaney and the BCA want the 14th scholarship back.

Chaney and the BCA also are fighting Proposition 16. Proposition 16 would raise the academic standards that a college freshman must meet before being allowed to play college sports and receiving an athletic scholarship.

John Chaney went to college in 1951. He went to play basketball. He had to beat 35 other guys for a spot on the team. If today's NCAA academic regulations had been in effect then, he never would have made it through the door. He probably wouldn't be where he is today.

He grew up in Philadelphia. After moving from Louisiana, he says he found mistrust and fear and evil there. He found poverty and ignorance. Basketball gave him a way out. Basketball took him to college, and college opened his mind.

After being surrounded by negativity, Chaney found possibility. Education — how better to change the life of a young person? How better to break the cycle of poverty in a family that has never sent anyone to college? How many other escape routes are there?

When Chaney argues for extra scholarships and against minimum SAT scores for freshman basketball players, he is remembering his past. If basketball is the only way a poor young person may get to college, so be it.

Do we deny a player that opportunity because he scores too low on a standardized test? What can a standardized test measure? What can't a standardized test measure? Even the people that design the SATs have admitted the tests have been racially biased.

On ESPN's *Up Close* last Friday, host Roy Firestone interviewed Chaney. Firestone used the counter-argument that others have employed against Chaney: we can't raise the standards for student-athletes by lowering expectations. We can't raise the ceiling without raising the floor, Chaney countered.

Both points are valid. John Chaney has a problem, though. College athletics doesn't have many coaches like him.

Not many coaches say that their job is "to develop character." They're not supposed to. A coach's job is to win. A coach also must ensure that his or her athletes meet their societal and academic obligations.

Coaches must follow NCAA rules. The NCAA doesn't have rules for what Chaney does. The NCAA doesn't tell coaches to use scholarships on kids who are looking for a way out of poverty but may not be the best players available. The NCAA doesn't tell coaches that since they will get to know a group of college students more closely than most professors will, they should use the opportunity to serve as a mentor to the athletes.

The NCAA is concerned with preserving the image and integrity of college sports. It wants scholar-athletes to be both scholars and athletes. John Chaney wants to develop character. He tries to improve lives. He introduces possibility where before there was only negativity.

The NCAA looks at numbers and sets limits — thirteen scholarships and a minimum SAT score. Chaney looks at the limits and shakes his head. For him, those limits mean more kids with lost chances. The dilemma persists. It remains to be seen if ever the twain shall meet.

*Scott Simonson is a sports reporter for the Emerald*

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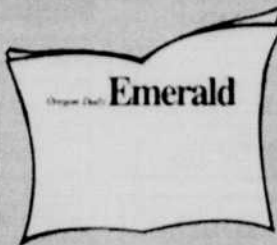
## Miller leaves UO to get closer to home

Freshman guard Debbie Miller has announced her intentions not to return to the Oregon women's basketball program next year, according to the Ducks' head coach Jody Runge.

The former Tacoma, Wash. high school standout saw action in 19 of the Ducks' 29 games in her first collegiate season, averaging 1.8 points a game and shooting 41 percent from the field.

The 5-foot-8 Miller indicated she would complete the current academic term at Oregon before looking to transfer to another school and resuming her basketball career closer to home.

The Ducks completed their first season under Runge in third place in the Pacific-10 Conference with a 20-9 record and advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament.



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