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OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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Serving sports on a silver platter

Because sports attract big money, many athletes are able to enjoy privileges that the average student can't enjoy.

Last week, I found myself incapacitated with that fun virus that's going around. As I laid pathetically on my couch moronically watching MTV, something caught my eye. MTV News, the fine piece of journalism that it is, flashed a graphic of the state of Oregon next to Kurt Loder's head.

Sure enough, the shiny red dot on the state was accompanied by the word "Eugene." Loder unenthusiastically announced that the Rolling Stones chose to honor the city of Eugene by scheduling the kickoff concert of their summer tour at Autzen Stadium.

However, the offer was declined by the University, citing scheduling conflicts with football practice. I don't know about you guys, but I think that the football team would have been willing to take a few days off.

When this story was first publicized earlier this month, I didn't think it would become national news in any form. Now Eugene has been nationally embarrassed for placing an athletic team's needs over a legendary rock band that has not played in Oregon since July 21, 1966.

The importance of the football team's practice has been valued at over \$150,000 — the estimated revenue the concert would have drawn. But for students who attend the University, this is not the first time they've witnessed the needs of the football team and the athletic department prioritized above themselves and other University programs.

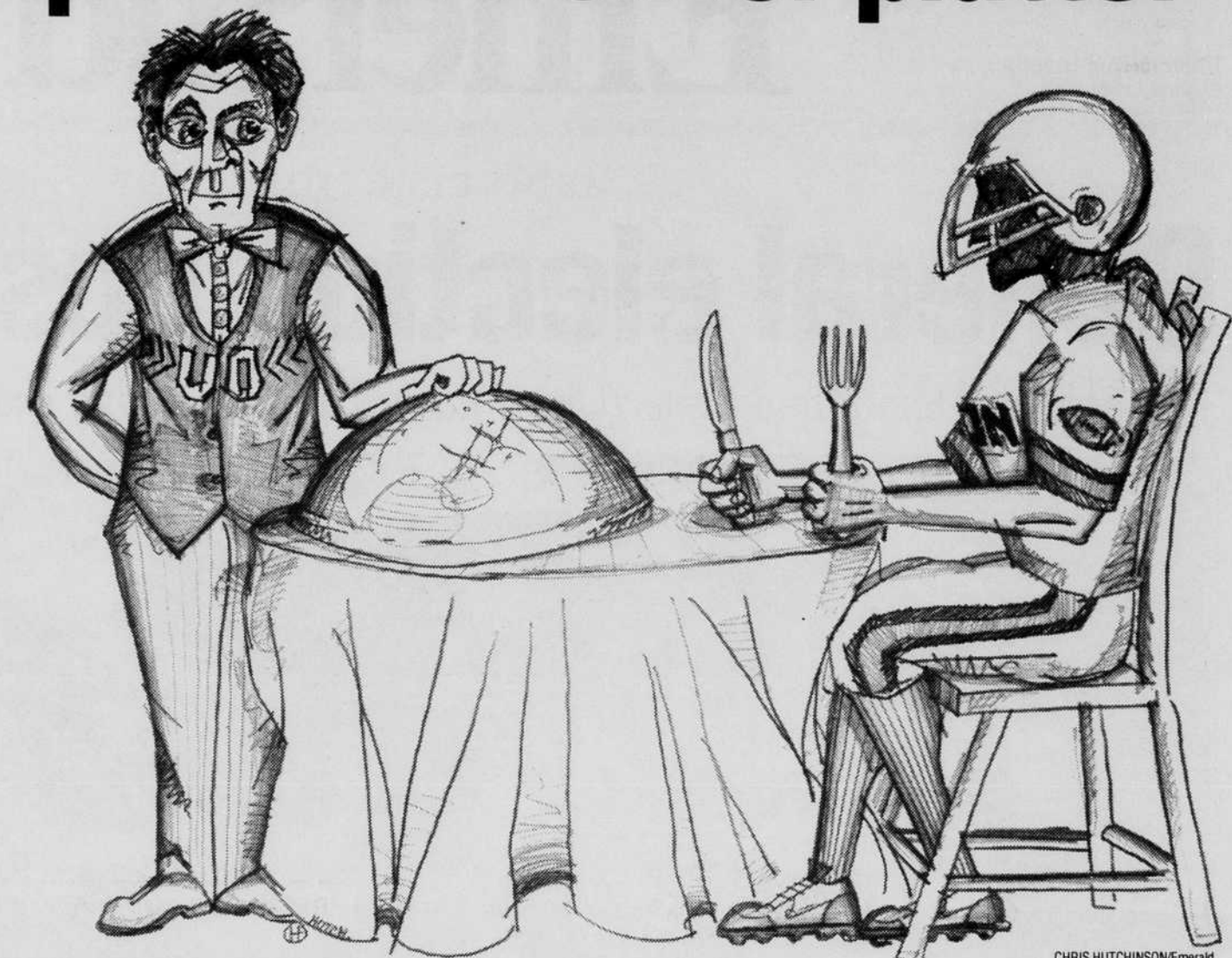
Athletes receive free tutoring from the Center for Student Athletes Academic Advising located in Mac Court. Ordinary students pay.

Athletes on scholarship receive the best housing on campus — the University Inn.

Football players stay at the Red Lion on the nights before football games — in Eugene.

And football players used to eat for free at Hammy's until they began abusing the privilege by bringing in their friends for free food.

The average student like myself sees these privileges and feels unimportant and undervalued. I don't attend basketball or football



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

games, yet my incidental fee gives other students the opportunity to attend the games for "free."

I cannot control how the University spends my tuition money. And until I did research for this story, I assumed a ton of my tuition money went to the sports program, especially football.

However, I made a false assumption. You can't blame me. After all, I certainly didn't see my money fixing the parking problem, so it must be going to sports. Wrong.

Surprisingly enough, I only unintentionally donate \$66 through my incidental fee to every non-revenue sport per year. (Men's basketball and football are excluded from this category because they are revenue sports.)

Therefore, I could be paying for a softball player's uniform or a golfer's books — but

not a football player's helmet. I definitely do not pay for the nights the football team spends in the Red Lion.

According to Jamie Klund, sports information director, the University sports program is self-sufficient. The sports program pays for these luxuries and privileges. Given the value society places on sports, the athletic department would be the only self-sufficient program on campus.

A successful sports program is equated with prestige. A better sports team equals a better school. Or at least, this is the myth. Thus, a winning sports program attracts students to the University and large monetary donations.

After the Ducks played in the Rose Bowl in 1994, donations skyrocketed. (Until Phil Knight donated \$1 million for the University President's salary, the salary of Jerry

Green, the former men's basketball coach, was \$20,000 more than President Frohn-mayer's salary.)

The University definitely has its priorities. Unfortunately, the University cannot afford to prioritize my education. In my computer science class, the University has licensed so few copies of Windows '95 and Adobe Photoshop that a class of 20 students cannot all simultaneously use the same application to learn the program. Maybe someday the donations the University receives for its successful sports teams will actually be used to satisfy long-standing student demands.

Nicole Kristal, a sophomore majoring in journalism, is a columnist for the Emerald. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the paper.

WINNERS

Ellen DeGeneres
The newly outed actress and comedienne is the new focus of Hollywood buzz and pop culture.



Newt Gingrich
The Republican Speaker of the House slithered his way out of another scandal by accepting a \$300,000 loan last week from Bob Dole.

Jermaine O'Neal
The 18-year-old rookie forward for the Blazers was the subject of a gigantic three-part series in The Oregonian this week.

Timothy Leary
The cremated remains of the recently deceased LSD advocate were launched into space according to his wishes on Monday.

LOSERS

Benjamin Netanyahu
The Israeli Prime Minister narrowly escaped indictment for influence-peddling but is still under intense scrutiny.



U.S. Air Force
The wreckage of a missing A-10 jet has reportedly been found in Colorado but the question still remains: How could this ever happen?

London
Residents of the British capital are under siege after a series of bomb threats and scares by Irish terrorists.

North Dakota & Minnesota
Record flooding is causing thousands of residents of the two states to evacuate.

LETTERS

Irrelevant rhetoric

Mr. Johnson's displeasure with the Emerald presidential endorsement (April 17, ODE), while mildly satisfying to the rest of us, is irrelevant to this election. Your sole duty as a student and a leader is to vote the way you feel and not to sway the voters one way or another.

This attempt at retribution is not only too late, it's too bad. If for once, Mr. Johnson, you would fess up your position as a member of student government who is not exactly known for intellectual prowess, you might give students a fair view of what your letter really means.

Contrary to popular belief, the Commentator does not serve any function other than an outlet for ideas that are not expressed in any other form of campus media. The idea that we plant writers in student government or the mainstream media is absurd, albeit flattering.

The members of the Emerald editorial

board expressed an opinion that was clearly not unanimous, nor was it a happy one. The editorial containing the endorsement was littered with sentiments that might keep the most forthright student away from the polls.

The idea that the Commentator is a waste of student money is a particularly repugnant sentiment, given that the Senate voted to approve more money than they were asked to approve for the now infamous amphitheater.

Your cute use of punctuation in an attempt to delegitimize the editorials fell short of its goal, as did the idea that they end in juvenile allusions to drinking or bad sex. For your information, at the Commentator there are only two kinds of sex, the really good kind and the kind you don't remember.

Farrah L. Bostic
Oregon Commentator
Publisher