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COMMENTARY

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Thursday, November 15, 2001

Editorial

Resolution for sports is on the right track

Go Ducks!" Well, sort of. While many students are cheering on our sports teams, they may not realize the extent of the complexities University sports programs, especially football, are embroiled in. Across the nation, university sports departments are trying desperately to compete with each other — perhaps more off the field than on. It's a contest of who can build the best stadiums and sports facilities, and who can get them the fastest.

One aspect of the "contest" worthy of concern is the academic programs that may see adverse effects because of increased funding and attention to college sports. Students who go to college planning to focus on academics rather than athletics feel they are short-changed.

A resolution approved by the University Senate last May that called for containing rapidly inflating sports department budgets is a good way to address the issue. The resolution was written by James Earl, a University English professor and former senate president, along with faculty senate presidents at each of the Pac-10 schools.

In addition to the University, the resolution has been approved at seven other Pac-10 schools. The Big-10 schools agreed to the resolution last week, and are sending the resolution to individual schools for review.

This is definitely a step in the right direction — while capping ridiculously huge athletic department budgets is an excellent idea, it won't work if universities don't more get involved. School officials around the nation need to take a serious look at the petition, rather than writing it off as a simple complaint from faculty members.

Sports programs can be good for universities. Good teams and well-funded programs may attract potential students. However, the current "arms race" between athletic departments can only lead to the erosion and eventual destruction of academic programs.

The University is planning to combat this with sports programs becoming self sufficient, but that won't happen for years. Giant budget increases need to be quelled now, and the only way to do that is if universities take a focused, serious look at their sports budgets as well as the complaints surrounding them — and the University Senate's resolution.

Editorial Policy

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

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CORRECTION

Tuesday's cover photo of students whitewater rafting ("Learning from Experience," ODE, 11/13) was incorrectly attributed. It was provided by Pacific Challenge. The Emerald regrets the error.



Steve Baggs Emerald

MATCHMAKING ON THIN ICE

Although the terrorism of two months ago is still fresh in the minds of many, at least one good thing may come of the tragedy: the demise of reality television.

Shows on CBS, such as "The Amazing Race" and Fox's "Love Cruise" were postponed from airing directly after the attacks. The reality of Sept. 11 is much more sobering than any contrived television show, but that hasn't stopped executives from trying.

The Fox Network, who has delivered such jewels as "Boot Camp," "Temptation Island" and "Murder in Small Town X," is now wowing audiences with its latest endeavor, "I Want a Wife: Alaska."

The series will follow four metropolitan women, weary of their own urban noncommittal men, as they head to Alaska in hopes of finding their perfect mates. During each episode, the women will date one man each and then decide whether to "save" any of the men or eliminate them from the dating pool. Before the men find out which one is eliminated, they'll have a chance to propose to the women, if they want to.

Apparently, the premise is that the women will fly in and a gaggle of "real

men" will be awaiting them on an iceberg — no kidding. Everybody knows that "real men" live in Alaska, and supposedly they're eager to marry city slickers from the lower 48.

The concept of the Alaska show stems from the network's success of the "Who Wants to Marry a Multimillionaire?" debacle, in which Darva Conger was chosen from a pool of 50 brides-to-be by Rick Rockwell. Fox seems content to be taking another shot at the matrimonial reality game despite the bad publicity from the very public divorce of Conger and Rockwell, who was later discovered to be a penniless fraud. That marriage didn't last, and I doubt any

union between Hollywood wannabes posing as "city girls" and "wilderness men" will be any different.

Are women so desperate for husbands in North America that they are forced to go man-hunting in the freezing tundra of the Alaskan wilderness?

Apparently, urban men don't have the desired brand of manliness, as defined by Fox. To prove manhood on the show, the men will have to endure tests of strength such as standing in freezing water for 20 minutes, killing bears with their bare hands and winning the Iditarod (just kidding about those last two).

Call me crazy, but I thought manhood had a lot more to do with non-physical attributes, such as being responsible, having maturity and respecting oneself and others. But exploring true ideals of manhood wouldn't make a very interesting "reality" TV show.

As far as Fox goes, the network will likely continue its string of reality television on a lower scale out of sensitivity to Sept. 11. Numbing viewers with empty storylines and equally void actors seems to be the trend among most shows in this time of mourning.

Perhaps this break from America's current depressing brand of "reality" is welcome, even if it's at the expense of retaining the integrity of single city dwellers and Alaskan residents.

Julie Lauderbaugh is the editorial editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. Her views do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. She can be reached at julie@dailyemerald.com.



Julie Lauderbaugh
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