

Football awaits board's decision

Football at Clackamas Community College is an issue waiting for the school board's final judgment.

The controversy over organized athletics -- especially football -- began last year with a proposal to build "permanent spectator seating" on campus.

This proposal was made prior to the budget elections and was questioned because of the lack of large attendance at athletic events taking place on campus.

"It (the controversy) evolved throughout the year," said Howard Fryett, assistant to the president of CCC. "Internally, externally and in the press it was a concern with some people and so the board felt that it might be a good thing to study and analyze."

By Happie Thacker
Of The Print

The controversy came to a head at the June 8 board meeting when Dr. John Hakanson, president of CCC, recommended that the board drop the football program at the end of the 1977-78 season.

Chuck Hudson, director of athletics, pointed out that the college already had made commitments to students and staff who were expecting to play football at CCC. Hudson felt that abrupt termination of the program would have a negative impact on the college.

Roger Rook, a CCC board member, was against continuing football because he had the impression that neither the community nor the college was ready for or interested in football. He said that he knew that the community felt very strongly against the program, and he had the impression that the student body was not supportive.

Ralph Groener, another CCC board member, said that if the football program was a rallying point of negative voters as far as the Aug. 9 budget election was concerned, that he would have no choice but to vote to terminate it. He was also concerned about out-of-state recruiting and tuition scholarships in football.

At the July 13 board meeting the subject was again broached with Len Monroe, dean of student services, speaking in favor of the program and asking that if the board voted to discontinue football they do it immediately instead of waiting until the end of the 1977-78 season, as had been originally proposed.

Monroe spoke in defense of the football program stating that he disagreed with Hakanson's philosophy about the desirability of having a competitive football program at

CCC. He also felt that football was not much of a factor in the coming budget election but that the public is misinformed and uninformed on the subject.

Monroe also referred to the potential loss of reimbursible funds should the board discontinue football. He said that each football player represents about \$1,100 of budgetary support from state reimbursement and tuition.

According to Monroe the college would lose all out-of-district football players, most in-district players and the friends of these players if the program is dropped.

Monroe said that he felt that college staff had not supported football, and that this negative attitude had done much to "create a monster" from the public's point of view, where none exists.

Hudson agreed that the football program should be dropped immediately if it were going to be dropped at all because of low team morale resulting from the knowledge that this would be the last season.

CCC board member Anne Nickel remarked that the comments she had heard in the community led her to believe that the objections were against the total athletic program, not merely football. She also said that for those students planning to transfer to four-year institutions and planning to become football coaches, CCC's football program is a curriculum offering, not merely a sport.

Larry Wright, CCC board member, said that he felt football was not meeting local needs in that there are few local athletes taking part. The only way any athletics should be "sold" to the district is as a legitimate curriculum primarily for Clackamas County students, he said.

Groener agreed, suggesting that football be retained, with emphasis made on local recruiting and being sure that everyone gets a chance to participate, no matter how many games are won or lost.

Groener then proposed the formation of a Blue Ribbon Citizens' Committee to study the entire athletic program at the college and report back to the board with recommendations.

Rook ended the discussion by saying that he would continue to be consistent in voting against retention of football at Clackamas because he thinks it is a recurring irritant to the voters. As a competitor, and a sports fan, he enjoys football, but thinks it will continue to be a problem with local voters in the district he was elected to represent.

The board then agreed to elect Groener's

citizens' committee to study the problem.

The committee would be a balanced presentation of attitudes toward organized athletics and a balanced representation of age, sex and occupations. Board members, faculty and staff would not be allowed to serve on the committee in other advisory positions.

The purpose of the committee will be to study "all aspects of the existing college athletic program, its benefits to the college district, students and the community to compare the program with that of other community colleges and to make recommendations to the board about the future of CCC athletic programs," according to the board agenda.

Fryett has been appointed liaison between the college and the committee.

"My position," he said, "is to make sure that the committee meets and functions in a way that it addresses the problem. I also want to make sure that the results are placed on paper for the board."

However, Fryett declined to comment on the future of the football program.

"It's really my opinion that my comments about athletics should not be reflected on the board."

As far as the recommendations of the committee, Hakanson said that the emphasis be on recruiting local players, there are only seven out of 61 players on the 1977-78 roster from the CCC district.

Hakanson said that the most talented players are recruited by the places with the most to offer, with CCC among those at the bottom of the desirability list.

"This is not to say that Clackamas is a second-rate football team," he said, "but I'm saying is that if you're going to have football, you have to expect a sizable out-of-district contingent on the team."

"It's virtually impossible to recruit 60 to 70 football players in our district. There are just not that many football players in the district," Hakanson said.

"I feel certain that our coaches recruit the best they can of what's left (after the major schools take their pick)," he said, "and if they have to go out-of-district."

The first meeting of the Citizens' Athletic Study Committee was held Sept. 28, but meetings will be held on a weekly basis for those who are interested in attending.

The committee hopes to have final recommendations before the board at the January board meeting.

Football team experiences new outlook

The Clackamas Community College football team begins the 1977 season with fresh optimism. For the first time in its brief history there is a new outlook surrounding the football program.

The first new look is the Cougars' new head coach, Gery Gehrman.

Gehrman, whose 20 years in football include experience from high school to the Portland Storm, brings to the Cougars a new type of offensive strategy based on the quickness of this year's squad.

Another new look will be the fact that for the first time, the squad will be playing its home games at the college.

Clackamas returns 14 lettermen, including four starters on offense and five on defense, from last year's 5-5 squad.

Leading returnees are running backs Don

Miller and Lucky Richardson; quarterback Rex Schade; defensive tackle Dan Clark; wide receiver Steve Humphrey, and defensive backs Tom Connell, Steve Maynard, and all-American candidate, Mark Leroy.

Among the freshman who should stand out for the Cougars are AAA Shrine game stars Don Fox and Marty Pinz at linebacker, running back Dan Hatcher, who Gehrman figures to break the school rushing record, and wide receiver Kevin Scheehan.

Scheehan "is a credit to the game he plays because not only is he a great athlete but he is also a great person," said Gehrman.

Scheehan, while he was at Gladstone High School, was a three-sport letterman. He was co-captain in basketball in addition to being voted to the state AA all-star football team.

Yet, despite the apparent optimism, there remains several questions still to be answered.

A lack of depth in the offensive and defensive lines and a large group of freshman, combined with a new head coach, present problems which may make Gehrman's initial campaign a difficult one.

"The school's problems hurt us in that we weren't able to recruit as would have liked to, and as a result we lost 10 good ball players who might have otherwise come to Clackamas, most of which were linemen," Gehrman said.

"Yet despite all this, we're still going to have a highly competitive team that could win a good share of its games. It all depends on how consistent a brand of football we play during each game. I guess we'll just have to wait and see," he said.

Clackamas Community College

