

Are sports important at CCC?

# Students, faculty debate athletics

By Harry Bielskis  
News Editor

In a panel discussion last week entitled "The Role of Athletics in the Community College," two faculty members and two students debated the importance of athletics at Clackamas Community College and in the community.

The discussion, second in a series of forums, was interesting and many significant questions arose, but the representation was slightly lopsided, with Chuck Hudson, athletic director; Michael Ayers, student body president; and Brad Boyer, student government's business manager, opposing John Hooley, chairman of the Division of Humanities and Social Science. Hooley is against athletics in the community college.

"We've reached the time in our school's history where our growth has slowed down and in fact has been reduced," said Hooley. "Now is a good time to look at some of the programs that have gotten out of control, and I think the athletic program is a prime example," he said.

Hooley then listed some objectives he felt were necessary to correct that situation. One was to stop misleading the public about the sports program. Another was to stop the athletic abuses at CCC. A proposed 1.2 million dollar wrestling-gymnastics gymnasium, a bleacher addition next year and a scheduled basketball team trip to Hawaii are factors Hooley believes will produce many irate taxpayers.

"What chance do you think we'll have of passing a building-bond levy if it's known we're planning to build a \$1.2 million gymnasium," Hooley said. Of the basketball trip to Hawaii, Hooley remarked, "I don't care if it doesn't cost the taxpayer a cent. They aren't going to believe that and by the time we get that rumor stamped out, we could lose our budget election."

"In the number of years I have been with this college, there has always been a number of rumors connecting the athletic program with budget cuts," said Hudson. "These rumors are constant. Just because our basketball team chooses to pay their own way to Hawaii, the budget is supposed to fail, but the budget has never gone down due to the athletic program, and will not now."

Hudson then explained how an athletic program benefits an individual. "These people have a skill they can use to their advantage in the professional world," said

Hudson, "and if we can help them succeed and give them a sense of value, then we have succeeded in our roles as educators."

Boyer believes a competitive sports program is necessary in order for the college to continue. "The first thing many high school students consider when looking at a college is its sports program," said Boyer. "There are a lot of students that wouldn't be going here if it wasn't for the athletic program. I know I wouldn't."

Another argument Hooley had against the athletic department, and the football program in particular, was the lack of in-district players as a result of poor recruiting practices. "We should drop the football program," Hooley said, "because we can't get in-district players. Looking at a 1976 football schedule, I found only six out of sixty athletes from this area."

"We try our darndest to get in-district students when we recruit," said Hudson, "but when our supply of in-district recruits runs out we'll look for out of district players. In most cases we never have to look further than the Portland metropolitan area, but because the area is out of Clackamas County, a lot of people have the misconception that we're ignoring this district and giving out of district recruits first consideration. This is false."

Ayers also defended the athletic program. "Why should the coaches at this college, or any college, have to defend their position," said Ayers. "No emphasis is put on the athletic program but the pressure is surely felt by these people. Everybody is ready to tear down the walls but nobody wants to support or improve them."

The forum itself did not provide a lot of answers but did bring a long-controversial subject to light. Much of the audience was divided in its views, as a large number of the faculty and some administrators came to the forum to state their views.

Perhaps Len Monroe, dean of student services, summed up the forum best with a statement he made at the end of the meeting.

"The very fact that we had such a large turnout here indicates the importance of this topic. There are other studies going on in regard to athletics and the results of these studies will give us an idea of what the athletic program is doing on campus. This is a comprehensive community college that is supposed to be doing many, many things for students, and athletics is just a part of it. We have had a little bit too much division in our thinking about 'what I like, what I like, and the hell with the other program.' This attitude is something which can separate us here at this institution, from department to division. I would like to see the day when we could always talk constructively about every program on this campus."

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