

Athletics takes a turn for the worst

Recently athletics has been given a bad name only because of a few careless actions by a few careless athletes and coaches.

Because of steroids, Ben Johnson, once thought to be the world's fastest man, had every one of his titles taken away, and Carl Lewis was given the Olympic Gold Medal, with his name replacing Johnson's in the world record books. Although he strongly denies steroid use, Tony Mandarich, defensive end for the Green Bay Packers, has also been accused of using them because of his rapid weight and strength increase.

Student athletes have definite opinions about the use of steroids. Senior champion Gryphon wrestler Dewayne Smith replied, "Steroids are for the weak individual. People who use them need a drug in order to compete, while I rely on my natural ability." Football player Russell Hicks, senior defensive specialist, says, "I personally feel that people are born with certain talents, and if they're willing to work hard to increase that talent, then that's fine. When people start using illegal substances to better themselves, then I think they should be punished. There is no place for steroid use in sports."

Steroids are a cop out for people who have carelessly based their lives on athletics, with no intellectual base, and



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when they feel inferior to their peers, or their bodies are about to give out, they have nothing to fall back on, so they turn to these worthless drugs to supposedly improve physically. It is about time that officials are leveling harsh punishments on these few scourges who are not worthy of being called athletes.

Another thing that has plagued athletics is the athletes themselves participating in gambling. Of course the spotlight has fallen on baseball great Pete Rose, who holds the record for most career hits. Rose strongly denies ever betting on baseball, but did accept late commissioner Bart Giomatti's decision to expel him from the sport for life. Rose admits to betting on other sports such as horse racing, but says he never once bet on a single baseball game.

The more fact that Rose is a known compulsive gambler let most people to believe he bet on baseball. He has the right to do what he wants to with his money, but not to break any rules like the basic one that most people be-

lieve he broke — that of betting on baseball while still participating in the sport. I still do not have sympathy for him since gambling of any form is a waste of effort, talent, time, and, obviously, money. When one makes as much as a baseball player does, why risk losing a lot of it on something as empty as a bet? Greed, I guess — common greed.

I also believe that people who do gamble could definitely spend their money more wisely, or give it to someone who truly needs it. What is money anyway? Just green paper with numbers on it as far as I am concerned. It loses any fulfilling qualities it may have when the possessor begins to try anything to get more. When are people going to start being content? Has this word lost its meaning? While many people need money in order to survive, many others, especially professional athletes, are blowing the thousands they have just because there is a possibility to gain thousands more. Pretty stupid, huh?

On the college level, athletics has also taken a turn for the worse. Jim Valvano, basketball coach and athletic director at N.C. State University, has been ordered to relinquish his position as athletic director. This mandate came from the president of the UNC System following allegations that Valvano and others at N.C. State had given certain ath-

letes scholarships even though their high school records and scores on standardized tests showed that the prospective athletes were not worthy of being accepted as non-scholarship students. Officials at the university were also accused of fabricating athletes grades so they could remain eligible to play. Valvano admits there are problems in the system, and says strongly that he wants to be part of the solution.

I have heard many people say things like this happen everywhere. I do not think that a generalization such as this has much validity at all. Especially at colleges and universities that are respected for their academic successes instead of their athletic successes. I really do not believe they would allow sub-par students to be admitted regardless of any superior athletic talent. Universities such as Harvard, Yale, or Brown have virtually no name when it comes to athletics, but they have reputations of superior academics that they would

not be ignorant enough to jeopardize. No matter how talented an athlete may be, if he does not meet university standards academically, he will not be accepted.

I commend Coach Valvano for realizing what was going on and for his strong desire to take part in resolving the situation. I believe he has learned from his mistakes and believe other coaches should also learn from his mistakes so that the college sports arena can be disinfected permanently.

1989

Girls' Tennis

Oct. 3	Greenville Rose	A
Oct. 5	Northeastern	H
Oct. 10	Wilson Fike	H
Oct. 12	Open	
Oct. 17	Northern Nash	H
Oct. 19	Kinston	A

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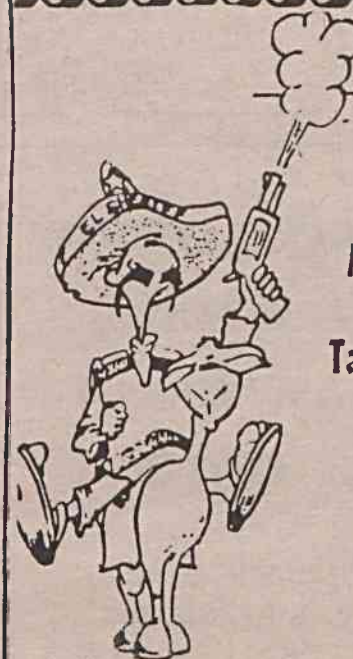
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