

March Madness

Big win excuse for lateness



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What do you get when you add unproductivity, subtract concentration and multiply it by 67 basketball games?

The answer is a simple case of March Madness. According to a recent study, it's becoming more dangerous than any other illness.

Chicago consulting firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. released a study last week concluding the NCAA Men's Basketball tournament costs employers \$1.8 billion in the first week alone because of lost productivity.

The tournament began on March 15 when UNC Asheville defeated University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and will not end until April 4.

Employees all over the country are going online, or to the closest bar, and are checking updates on scores five to 10 times a day, and students caught up in the madness are doomed to lose motivation to finish that midterm paper.

Millions of people spend this 20-day period filling out brackets, rooting for their favorite schools and avoiding all forms of work.

Even our president is caught up in the madness.

According to ESPN, not only did President Barack Obama fill out a bracket this year for the ESPN Tournament Challenge, his accurate predictions have placed him better than 99.9 percent of the nation.

If our president, who is currently dealing with foreign crises can't spend a year without feeding his addiction to college basketball, then what hope is there for the millions of others who suffer from March Madness?

It's obvious that the city of Asheville was hooked on the tournament as thousands watched their UNCA Bulldogs make it to the second round. While the business was great for places that hosted viewings of the games, students were left victimized.

Students were going to class on Thursday morning, and instead of paying attention to their professor's lecture, were figuring out how many classes they were going to skip so they could watch UNCA Bulldogs play the Pittsburgh Panthers.

"It's a once in a lifetime opportunity," said **Jesse Scudder-Cotherman, a UNCA junior and international studies student**, in reference to the opportunity of seeing the team play on a national stage.

Unfortunately, the game was played in the afternoon and students such as Scudder-Cotherman found themselves choosing between school and the tournament.

"When it came down to it, I had to miss class," Scudder-Cotherman said. There's no way I could sit in a lecture while my team had the chance to make history."

Unfortunately the team didn't, and a 23-point blowout doomed the Bulldogs' run at a national title.

That means March Madness can die down for a little bit, right?

Wrong.

Once you start watching the basketball games, it gets increasingly difficult to stop.

"It wouldn't be called 'madness' if you could put the remote down and get back to your everyday life," said **Jim Stanton, a UNCA freshman and biology student**.

It seems most of the U.S. has the same problem as Stanton, which will continue to plague the motivation of this country.

So, there seems to be two options that could alleviate the March Madness pandemic among students.

One could be an alleviation from arduous work for the 20-day period, or an increased flexibility from professors.

Unfortunately, the first option seems highly unlikely.

Usually the month of April is filled with cramming and long nights in preparation for finals, the last thing

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Fans should balance time



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March Madness spreads faster than Bieber Fever, but a 17-year-old heartthrob

won't get our professors to excuse late work.

Neither should a basketball game, no matter how mad it is.

Our participation in the NCAA for the first time in eight years was a big deal.

Out of the kindness of their hearts and a love for UNC Asheville basketball, many professors cut classes short or canceled them altogether.

Students flocked to viewing parties in the Highsmith Student Union and Pack's Tavern.

Festivities raged into the night after our big win and many students shed tears in their beers when we lost.

But, when students come into class and beg the teachers for mercy on their hung-over souls, it's hard not to snicker.

Why should Bulldog mania take precedence over any other extracurricular interests the rest of us have?

There is almost always something more interesting going on than homework, whether it be Ice Cube at the Orange Peel or an ice cold beer.

Most of us aren't doing our homework out of boredom. We're setting priorities and managing our time to get our work taken care of before indulging in our hobbies.

Prioritizing is one of those little skills we learn in college that is supposed to carry through to the professional world.

Editors don't take assignments late. Tardiness is not accepted at business meetings. A deadline is a deadline. When it is set, no matter the location, it must get be met.

We understand school spirit is important.

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Without a crowd in the stands, the basketball games look more like scrimmages.

The Bulldogs' season made history. They depend on the fans to build morale as much as fans depend on the Bulldogs to give them a break from classes.

Unfortunately, it cannot be so much of a break that coursework is forgotten.

When we put anything ahead of our classes, whether it's school related or not, we have to manage our time to get it all done.

If not, no whining.

Without a legitimate excuse, we must accept the consequences.

Watching basketball is not an acceptable excuse.

When we turn in work late, we accept whatever penalty professors outline in their syllabi.

When we serially skip classes, we have to expect our professors to represent it in our grades.

We have a saying at the Banner office, "We're failing all our classes, but the Banner looks good."

Student athletes probably feel the same way about the commitment they've made to the game, and basketball fans should too.

We understand the UNCA community rallying together to support the Bulldogs, but we have to uphold our commitments.

Professors have to have standards. Otherwise, no one would ever do anything.

Giving NCAA fans preferential treatment over everyone else is unfair.

When the new "Jersey Shore" season comes out and MTV airs an all-day, every-episode-ever marathon, should teachers forgive its fans, too?

Probably not.

