

### 'Two' Late

East Forsyth's Bay Shaw surges past an unidentified Reynolds defender as Gary. Wadell (10) watches. Unfortunately for Shaw and the Eagles, Reynolds won the game, 58-46, and Shaw later injured his ankle and will not play in this week's Central Piedmont tournament (photo by Chris Mackie).

#### **Inside Stuff**

### Is it cheating -- or humanitarianism?

By DICK DeVENZIO Syndicated Columnist

I'm getting tired of reading so much all the time about the "cheating" that colleges do.

Clemson has been in the news a lot, now that its NCAA punishment period is coming to an end, and, of course, the Florida football team -- one of the top two or three in the nation last season -- was not called the SEC champion even though the Gators won the championship on the field. The Gators also were deprived of going to a bowl game -- because of cheating.

Have you ever read the fine print and considered what Florida and Clemson and all the other schools 'have done to get these penalties? Have you evenlooked carefully at the so-called "107 NCAA violations" of Florida or those of any other school?

The issue is important because, to some degree, every ACC school does what Florida has done.

Let me go even one step further. I think they should re-name this thing reporters like to call "cheating." I think they should call it humanitarianism.

Let's look at the violations, so you can see why I'm willing to make such a statement. In Florida's case (and Florida is among the most flagrant violators in recent years) the cheating involves the selling of tickets (often at prices higher than face value), a \$4,000 "slush fund" for players and some alumni gifts of plane tickets to the parents of

It is incredible to me that any of these things are illegal. It is easy for a group of well-fed, threepiece-suited men to sit around a table in Kansas City and decide that the players aren't supposed to get anything. Of course, they can sit back smugly and say "a rule is a rule."

But that doesn't tell the whole story.

Almost anybody who has extra tickets to a big game asks and gets the going rate. The going rate for ACC Tournament tickets, for example, isn't' \$20, as everyone knows. To get those tickets, people make big donations to the ACC schools.

Players with two or four extras would be foolish to ask for \$20. They ask the going rate and they get it -- \$500 or \$1,000 -- and why shouldn't they?

What about that "slush fund?" You can call it what you like, but \$4,000 wouldn't even buy each Florida football player a round-trip flight home for Christmas. So, before you get all excited about a word like "cheating," please let me know why a player shouldn't get a flight home for Christmas. Did you know it is even against NCAA rules for a player to be flown home at Christmas?

You have to remember, money is all over the place. There's enough of it to pay the track coach, and for volleyball scholarships -- in many cases for the entire minor sports program -- and for all sorts of extra, superfluous coaches who have time on their hands to write Chris Washburn 200 letters (as reported in Sports Illustrated).

Why should the NCAA officials be paid so well, and have so many staff members, and why should so many coaches earn such a good living, while the players get nothing?

Don't fool yourself into buying the idea that a scholarship is such a wonderful gift. It is a tiny, tiny, totally inadequate remuneration in view of the money the players are bringing in.

College athletes are like migrant workers: badly exploited, but too transient and too poorly organized to do anything about the injustice.

Their parents should all get plane tickets to see them play, the players should all get plane tickets to visit home occasionally, and the little spending money they get from scalping tickets is necessary, because many of them would have no money at all otherwise.

You can sit back and make a passionate plea for amateurism. But if you knew an athlete personally who worked hard and did his best and practiced many hours a day and studied many hours a day -and who didn't have any money (as a lot of them don't) -- you would give him money too.

And you would likely consider it, if not humanitarian, then at least mere kindness. Certainly you would hardly think of yourself as cheating.



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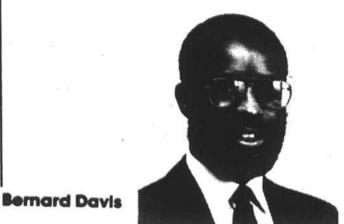
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