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Athletics tackles booster shortfall

BADDOUR: UNIVERSITY GEAR REVENUE COULD BE TAPPED

BY BROOK R. CORWIN
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

Students aren't the only ones at UNC feeling the pinch of tuition increases.

Nor are they the only ones looking for alternate sources of revenue to cover the costs.

The UNC Department of

Athletics, unable for the first time in years to cover fully the rising costs of athletic scholarships through its booster club, is investigating new funding sources to discuss at this month's UNC Board of Trustees meeting.

The Educational Foundation, the department's booster club

responsible for funding all athletic scholarships, is facing a several hundred thousand dollar shortfall this year, which is being filled temporarily by a contingency fund from the athletic department.

Most important on the list of permanent funding alternatives up for discussion, said Director of Athletics Dick Baddour, is corporate signage in Kenan Stadium and the Smith Center.

But with a lack of easily viable funding sources, Baddour said, he

isn't ruling out any other revenue possibilities, including a controversial proposal — first introduced last fall — to modify the percentage of revenue the department receives from UNC merchandise sales.

"You look at new sources) every day," Baddour said. "There really aren't any significant or new ways of funding. There just aren't many of those out there."

The issue of merchandising revenue first was raised last fall in the Faculty Committee on

Scholarships and Student Aid.

Committee members said a proposal was introduced to increase the percentage of merchandising revenue allocated to the athletic department. The Office of Scholarships and Student Aid now receives 75 percent of those revenues, with the athletic department getting the remaining 25 percent.

The proposal was rejected soundly, committee members said.

"The committee feels strongly that the current situation is the



Provost Robert Shelton expects the BOT to take a long look at the department's financial woes.

way they'd like it to be," said Jerry Lucido, director of undergraduate admissions and an ex officio mem-

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A GLIMMER OF HOPE

New act could boost state's ailing tobacco industry, but farmers still wary

BY STEPHANIE JORDAN
STAFF WRITER

North Carolina's tobacco industry could receive a significant portion of a proposed \$13 billion government buyout, but some critics say the vast majority of working tobacco farmers won't benefit at all.

The Tobacco Equity Elimination Act, being considered in the U.S. House, is gaining support from congressmen, including both of North Carolina's U.S. senators.

The state, home to three of the largest tobacco companies in the nation, has a large stake in the tobacco industry.

Sara Lang, press secretary for U.S. Rep. Bob Etheridge, D-N.C., said his office hopes the bill will be in a committee hearing by early October. She said the bill would inject almost \$6 billion into North Carolina's rural industry.

"(Tobacco is) the biggest part of the North Carolina economy," said Mike Briggs, press secretary for U.S. Sen. John Edwards, D-N.C.

But Thomas Payne, executive vice president of external relations for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., said most of that money will not go to working farmers.

There are 75,000 people who will benefit from the \$13 billion, Payne said. About 63,000 of those people don't grow tobacco at all.

In fact, Payne added, only about 7,000 state tobacco growers will benefit. The top 1 percent of quota holders will get 26 percent of the \$13 billion, he said.

Orange County tobacco growers David Pope and L.S. Holloway are two of the 7,000 N.C. tobacco farmers who stand to benefit. But, they say, no matter what the results of the pending legislation, their way of life probably is going to change.

Pope's family has a tobacco quota holding, and Holloway personally owns one.

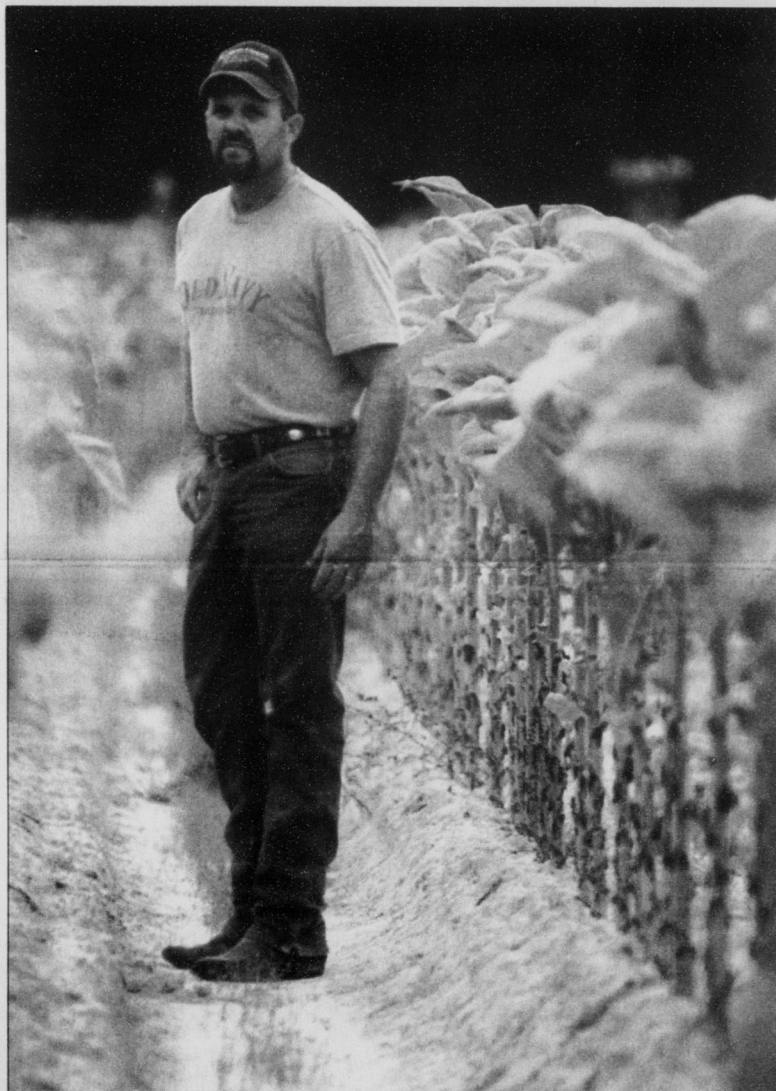
Holloway said it has been hard for tobacco farmers to make a living since the industry became a pariah in the late 1990s.

The industry came under fire in 1998 when the health hazards of cigarette smoking were publicized highly.

One year later, the industry was forced to funnel \$5 billion to quota holders, including N.C. tobacco farmers. The industry also instituted limits, saying tobacco farmers could sell only a certain amount of their crop to manufacturers.

"They've cut so much since the 1997 quota," Holloway said. "Everyone's against cigarettes and smoking."

Pope added that tobacco is expensive to raise since farmers have to pay for laborers, equipment and land. "We can't compete with foreign countries like Brazil, where



DTH PHOTOS/ALLISON MONEY

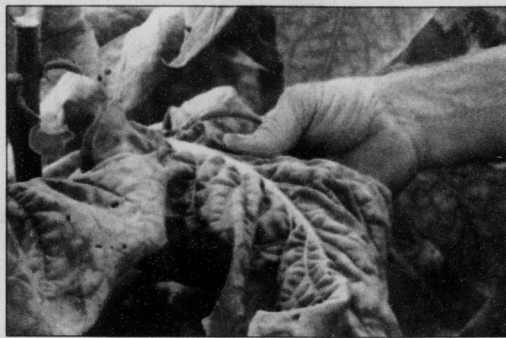
Above: David Pope tours his tobacco field in northern Orange County on Wednesday evening. Below: Farmers are uncertain whether they will be able to meet their quotas this year due to the rain this summer.

labor is cheaper and they can grow tobacco almost year-round."

Despite the hardships, Pope, who has been tending land for most of his life, said he does not know if he will support a federal tobacco buyout. "It depends on whether they're going to pay enough," he said. "It's a labor-intensive crop, and we still do it by hand."

Tobacco is one of North Carolina's oldest and most important industries. But the economy is changing, and the state must find a way to cope with this flux, Briggs

SEE TOBACCO, PAGE 4



Student pushes on with lawsuit

BY JENNIFER IMMEL
ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITOR

Despite losing an injunction request Aug. 21 that would have forced UNC officials to allow him to start classes on time, Mark Edmonson is continuing his lawsuit against the University.

Edmonson, who was admitted to UNC in April, filed a lawsuit against the University on Aug. 15 after his admission was rescinded.

Barbara Edmonson, his mother, said she and her son are going forward with the breach of contract lawsuit and are appealing his admission decision.

"I really can't believe that he's not in college at this point," she said.

Before hearing of the rescission from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions on Aug. 1, Mark Edmonson had paid his tuition, received a roommate assignment and registered for classes.

According to a memorandum filed by the N.C. Attorney General's Office on Aug. 19, Mark Edmonson, who scored a 1600 on his SAT, failed to complete his senior year with the same level of achievement he had reached during his first three years of high school.

Mark Edmonson's unweighted grade point average fell from 3.22 to 2.75 after his senior year. That year he earned three C's, two D's

and one F.

As stated in the admissions letter from Jerry Lucido, director of undergraduate admissions, admission to the University is contingent on a student's senior year performance.

It is a University policy not to comment on pending litigation.

The Edmonson family met with admissions officials in July after Mark Edmonson's admission was suspended and again in August after the rescission.

"I don't know if they really thought we'd take it to court," Barbara Edmonson said.

Mark Edmonson has been volunteering at a rock-wall climbing center and working on his own computer and Web design business, which he started when he was 15, rather than attending classes.

His mother added that he will begin looking at other universities for next semester contingent upon the court's decision regarding his admission to UNC.

"He'll definitely be some place (next semester)," she said, but added that UNC remains his No. 1 choice. "After all this, Mark is still just absolutely enthralled with going (to UNC)."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Graduation rates down for athletes

UNC football rate ACC's worst

BY BRIAN MACPHERSON
SPORTS EDITOR

Six-year graduation rates for student athletes across the nation increased to their highest levels since 1984, but an NCAA report released Tuesday told a different story about the situation at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Among the student athletes nationwide entering school in 1996, a record 62 percent graduated within six years, according to the report.

Football players graduated at a rate of 54 percent, while the rate for men's basketball was 42 percent. Both numbers indicate encouraging upward trends.

At UNC-CH, though, rates moved in the opposite direction. A total of 64 percent of student ath-

letes entering in 1996 graduated within six years, but that number includes a disappointing rate of 35 percent for football players — the worst in the ACC.

The drop did not take UNC-CH Director of Athletics Dick Baddour by surprise.

"We reported this information to the (UNC-system) Board of Governors a year ago," he said. "This is information about a class that we've known about and analyzed."

He indicated that the low rate can be attributed in part to players lost as transfers or to the professional ranks, and he expressed confidence that future classes will reverse the trend.

A constant goal of school and NCAA officials is for student athletes to graduate at a rate equal to or better than that of the student body. On a national level, 63 percent

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ACC's growth leaves finances in limbo

Lucrative championship likely lost

BY BRANDON PARKER
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

It was hard for many fans to understand why North Carolina and Duke officials were against an ACC expansion that seemed destined for success.

The conference stood to gain a financial windfall from a football conference championship, not to

mention revenue generated by increased TV exposure in new media markets.

The dollar signs surely influenced ACC Commissioner John Swofford's decision to pursue expansion.

But he forgot one thing: the conference's 12th school.

Two schools — not three —



were added to the ACC. Miami and Virginia Tech brought the total number of teams in the conference to 11, leaving the ACC one short of a lucrative football title game.

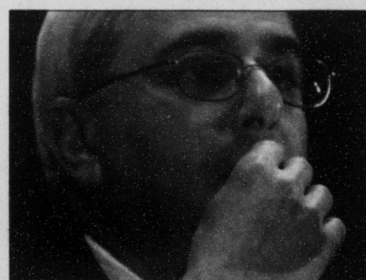
"Right now, a football conference championship is not in the mix," said Martina Ballen, North Carolina's senior associate athlet-

ic director for business and finance. "If that could become a reality again, that should boost the overall revenues."

Conferences such as the SEC and Big 12 bring in an average of \$12 million each year from their conference championship games.

But for now, many financial questions remain unanswered in the soap opera that marred the

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DTH FILE PHOTO/BRIAN CASSELLA

UNC Director of Athletics Dick Baddour doesn't know how ACC expansion will affect finances.

"We're optimistic and we're a partner in it, so we are going to go forward."

DICK BADDOUR, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

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This year's budget cuts spelled the end for Arts Carolina, which integrated campus arts PAGE 5

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Freshman Rachel Dawson had a stellar debut performance this weekend in field hockey PAGE 9

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