

BOARD EDITORIALS

RULES OF THE GAME

California legislators are playing with fire by considering a bill to provide the state's student-athletes with stipends and other "rights."

Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink. Such a thought probably floats through the minds of many college student-athletes as they take stock of the vast amount of money that surrounds them.

They see Nike swooshes on uniforms. They see famous companies' advertisements in stadiums. They see games being televised on major TV networks and ESPN. They see their respective institutions reaping the benefits of major broadcasting deals and huge endorsements.

The imprint of the almighty dollar now can be seen in most corners of the college sports arena. However, student-athletes aren't able to get in on the action. A large number of varsity student-athletes enjoy the perks of full college scholarships — but otherwise, these young people can only watch the stream of revenue flow by them.

Many critics bemoan the current state of college athletics, asserting that institutions exploit their athletes. Indeed, colleges and universities make a substantial amount of money from sports without paying student-athletes anything beyond scholarship money.

Ideally, these students would receive additional payment for participating in activities that tax their bodies as heavily as academics tax their minds. The extra time and effort they must expend balancing schoolwork and sports warrant greater compensation.

Realistically, however, the money isn't there. But because of a bill that has been passed by California's Senate and is being considered by the state's Assembly, major changes could be in order.

At best, signing this bill into law would create a major rift in the college sports landscape. At worst, the legislation would destroy college athletics as we know it. The passage of California Senate Bill 193 simply must be stopped.

The bill, dubbed the Student Athletes' Bill of Rights and sponsored by California Sen. Kevin Murray, D-Los Angeles effectively would tear California college athletic programs away from the control of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

The only way the NCAA would be able to regain that control would be if the organization revamped its rules concerning student-athlete stipends, health insurance, the hiring of agents and student-athlete transfer options.

Going against the rules

According to NCAA rules, only amateurs are eligible for participation in intercollegiate athletics, and an athlete would lose his or her amateur status by accepting "any direct or indirect salary, gratuity or comparable compensation."

If Senate Bill 193 becomes law, it effectively would eliminate the amateur status of California's student-athletes and likely would lead to one of two scenarios.

Either every collegiate athletics program in that state would leave the NCAA, or the governing body drastically would alter its rules — not to mention the very nature of college sports — to keep California under its umbrella.

The fact that this legislation has originated in California cannot be understated. Some of the nation's most powerful collegiate athletic programs make their home in the Golden State.

Stanford University has won the Sears Directors' Cup, awarded to a college athletic program for overall excellence, every year since 1995. Associated Press writers chose the University of Southern California football team as last season's national champion. The University of California-Los Angeles arguably has featured the most successful college athletic program of all time.

If any state could put pressure on the NCAA to change its ways, it would be California. But supporters of Senate Bill 193 should have looked more closely at the possible repercussions.

Unresolved, unexplained issues

Too many questions — with too few acceptable answers — arise when considering the implementation of student-athlete stipends.

To whom would these new payments go? Athletic

programs might funnel them toward revenue sports alone. But that would bring up Title IX complications, as males dominate the money-making sports.

According to supporters of the bill in California's legislature, stipends should be paid to all scholarship athletes. If this should be the case, where would the money for stipends come from? In struggling to pay these new salaries, many athletic departments would be forced either to cut funding to smaller-scale sports or to get rid of teams altogether.

UNC has one of the most successful athletic programs in the nation. As a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference, the University has access to an especially lucrative piggy bank. Sports at this University benefit from a generous alumni base.

Despite all of this, UNC's Educational Foundation is finding it difficult to fund its athletic scholarships. A stipend requirement would endanger sports such as wrestling, swimming and gymnastics.

If California enacts a law creating a bill of rights for the state's college athletes, it would further complicate the financial operations of programs that still are coming to terms with the growing big-money aspect of college sports.

Proponents of stipends for student-athletes should remember the fact that these young men and women already are receiving thousands of dollars in monetary compensation. Many students, athletes or not, would jump at the chance to receive a full college scholarship covering tuition, fees and room and board. Student-athletes are getting something much more valuable than money — a college education.

Medical coverage, however, is another thing. Student-athletes undergo vastly increased risks to their health as a result of their participation in sports. It's only fair that athletic programs foot the bill for health insurance. However, programs already pay medical costs related to injuries sustained by athletes in their respective sports, and requiring full medical coverage might be excessive.

Meanwhile, forcing athletic programs to pay athletes' extra living expenses by way of stipends is another thing entirely.

The nature of the games

The argument that colleges and universities exploit student-athletes to some extent is valid. The athletes are the ones who push their bodies to the limit in practices.

It is their high-flying dunks, one-handed catches, bicycle kicks, hat tricks and home runs that attract and inspire nationwide audiences. They are the ones who risk breaking bones, pulling muscles and rupturing tendons in the name of competition.

Athletic departments supply facilities and hire coaches. The NCAA provides an organizational structure and sets rules and standards for athletes to follow. But the players themselves are at the center of it all.

The California Senate, however, overstepped its bounds by approving the bill. This particular piece of legislation is a threat to college sports as they now exist. Creating salaries for student-athletes — and to a lesser extent, allowing them to hire agents and giving them too much leeway in terms of transfer options — would compromise the integrity of varsity athletic competition and treat it more like a business.

For most of the young men and women who compete in college athletics, it isn't about money. This was made all the more clear when former UNC cornerback Dré Bly recently donated \$150,000 to the University to fund a football scholarship in his name and trumpeted the education he received here.

It's true that some student-athletes see a college career as the launchpad to professional stardom and multimillion dollar contracts. But a majority of them see an athletic scholarship as an unequivocal chance to compete and learn at the same time.

Murray, the other California senators who supported the bill and the lobbyists behind it are being noble in their efforts to ensure that the state's student-athletes get a bigger piece of the pie.

But being noble doesn't always mean being rational, and California Senate Bill 193 represents an affront to reason. It has the potential to send college athletics spiraling downward.

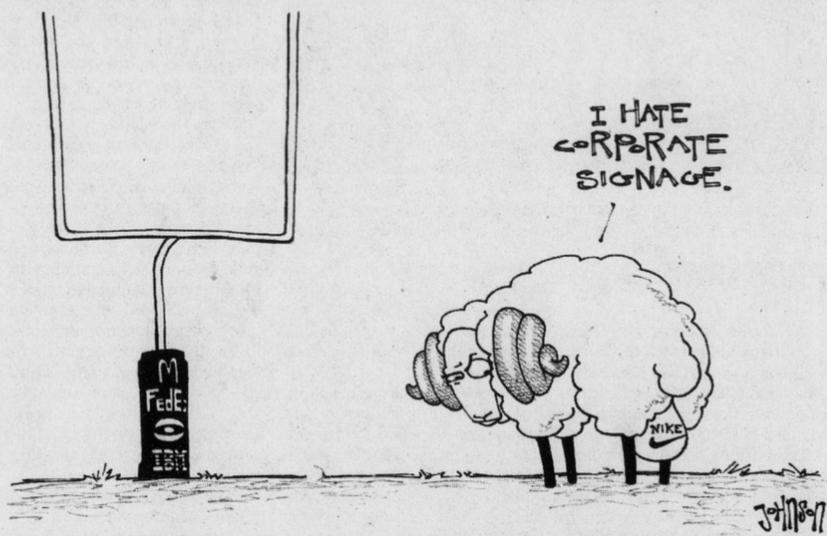
ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"We have turned sports into a religion. ... We have to put a harness on it."

WILLIAM FRIDAY, UNC PRESIDENT EMERITUS

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Andrew Johnson, johnso40@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

We all have crutches — mine was a grade school fat kid

I used to carry a fat kid with me. Most people carry something with them that makes them feel better about themselves. I carried a fat kid.

I remember it well. Elementary days in the schoolyard. That girl I had a crush on. She was oblivious, as crushes often are.

Choosing to spend her idle moments on the monkey bars. Curse the luck, I was never given the best of upper body strength, and the monkey bars were just a humiliation.

But I made it up on the swings. I was a swinger, the very highest. The very best pumper in the playground. All the while watching her response from the monkey bars. This is where the fat kid comes in.

He was never very proficient on either the monkey bars or the swing set.

I could always count on him not to be counted on. His winded attempts to get higher. Wheezing and falling after only two monkey bars. There I was, swinging higher breathlessly and doubling his monkey bar output.

Racing him to the swing set. Eyeing my crush nervously, punching the fat kid in the stomach, and dashing away laughing. Hoping she had seen. Swelling with lust for this warrior who could beat up fat kids and laugh about it.

Of course, I was irresistible in the way that hermit crabs are pleasant.

People have different ways of consoling themselves, and beating up fat kids just happened to be mine. Why would I need consolation? We don't really need a reason. All I know is that consolation is good, until the fat kid realizes that he can deck you if he'd



BILLY BALL
FOR KIDS WHO CAN'T READ GOOD

just stand up for himself.

Recently, I ventured into a fitness magazine. A bikini-clad woman on the front beamed for all to see. She was proud of herself. Were you?

The inside was mostly advertisements, pictures of women exercising with wonderful bodies and looking ridiculously pleased with themselves.

Exercise routines. Miracle pills. Dieting tips.

A tip on how to eat less. Halfway through the meal, put your silverware on the plate with the handles actually touching the food.

Now that there is food on the handles, you won't want to pick up your fork and eat some more. That's productive. Good tip. How about if I tell you where you can put that silverware instead?

It's forced on women that they need to buy these magazines.

If you read it, you'll feel better about yourself. If you force yourself to give up things that you love, you'll feel better about yourself.

Put this magazine in the check-out line, right where you're buying all of your food. Carry this with you.

Maybe you should roll it up and put it in your back pocket so it will always be present. Put it in the bathroom, in a little basket by the toilet. That'll make you feel

better.

Let's stick with the bathroom. The bathroom, more than our bedroom, is really the place where we dream. People carry a lot of things with them, and they store them in the bathroom.

My mother is an avid reader, not necessarily of fantasy, but of books that fantasize. Romance books with half-naked Indian men on the cover.

Middle-aged American women seem secretly to fantasize about Native American men, although if you visit the romance section of a book store, it's not such a secret after all.

Some people look for realism in their books. But when you live in a sobering small town, reality is all the reality that you're ever going to need.

So let's have some sultry forbidden romances instead. Let's have some impromptu heroes that rise above the obstacles that you're never going to rise above. Let's have some new fiction and some old nonfiction.

It's funny the way people try to compensate, and it's funny the strange things that people keep in their pockets, whether they are people or hobbies or songs.

It doesn't really matter whether it's a romance novel or an exercise routine or a fat kid or a cigarette or a football game or a milkshake — they're all pretty important.

They're our personal therapists. They make us feel better about our own limitations.

You can make up your mind about the Indian men.

But I, for one, know I can't do without fat kids or milkshakes.

Contact Billy Ball
at wkbll@email.unc.edu.

READERS' FORUM

Illegal immigrants represent serious threat to state

TO THE EDITOR:

In response to Emily Vasquez's article "Immigrants Facing New License Obstacles," Vasquez sorely misses the point in her "unbiased" reporting of this issue.

One of the largest problems facing the state of North Carolina is the fact that illegal, undocumented aliens can come here and receive a driver's license, and that Gov. Mike Easley is doing nothing about it.

The New York Times reported a massive flood of out-of-state illegals driving to North Carolina just to obtain a license — that's right, you don't even have to prove any form of residency. Other reports of N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles officers "making up" social security numbers for applicants are a serious threat to our state and nation.

Driver's licenses are the closest to a form of national identification that it is possible to obtain.

Vasquez then chronicles Damián Cortes and his family's struggle with impatient and disrespectful staff members at the DMV.

I've got some breaking news: it's called bureaucracy. If she can find a DMV where you're met with a smiling face and a cup of coffee, please let me know. I'd like to go there.

We should be doing everything possible to foster diversity and the American dream, but encouraging lawbreaking isn't the solution.

It's a threat to our economic system and our national security. Hats off to the Department of Homeland Security for enforcing our country's immigration laws — obviously the Easley administration and N.C. Democrats care nothing for them.

Tripp Costas
Sophomore
Political science

Give the girls credit — they definitely know their sports

TO THE EDITOR:

In a Feb. 2 column by Brandon Parker, the asinine comment was made that girls would only be supporting a team because the players were "good-looking."

Why can't we like a team because "that team was playing when we first watched the sport?"

Why is it that guys are the only ones allowed to be true fans, but a girl's loyalty to a team is reduced to mere superficiality?

Most of the girls we know have football knowledge that far exceeds how "good-looking" a guy is. We keep up with team standings, know where each player competed in college, and even know about the family background of the players.

For example, we are Buccaneers and Colts supporters. The Bucs fan has been a fan since they were orange and knows they still hold the worst record in NFL history.

She was very upset when Tony

Dungy was fired only to beat the Bucs in overtime during Monday Night Football against the Colts.

The Colts fan has loved them since she moved to Indianapolis 12 years ago, when they were one of the worst teams in the NFL, and has been a loyal fan ever since.

So we like the team because Warren Sapp is so hot and Edgerrin James' gold teeth turn us on? It is appalling that in this day in age there still exists a stigma that girls can't like sports just for the sport.

Our knowledge is not limited to how "good-looking" the players are. This should serve as a reminder to you who still live by this bias — we're living in the 21st century.

Girls know their sports.

Susie Ball
Senior
Business

Rika Chihara
Senior
Biology

Stalking presents serious threat to UNC students

TO THE EDITOR:

Every breath you take
And every move you make
Every bond you break
Every step you take
I'll be watching you.

You probably recognize these words; they have played over the airwaves of pop radio for more

than 20 years. The lyric of the 1983 hit by The Police is so familiar that many of us no longer pay attention to its meaning. Perhaps we should.

This ballad, crooned by a jilted lover, actually is about stalking.

Stalking is repeated contact between a person and an unwilling victim that directly or indirectly communicates a threat or places the victim in fear. Making harassing phone calls, damaging or destroying property and threatening or harming pets or loved ones are all forms of stalking, a crime in all 50 states.

To draw attention to this problem, the National Center for Victims of Crime declared January 2004 the first National Stalking Awareness Month.

While most people think of stalkers as fanatics convinced their favorite celebrity is in love with them, those cases are relatively rare. Stalking of strangers accounts for less than a quarter of the cases in the U.S., as reported by the NCVC. The rest are more like the song by The Police — cases of men who stalk their former wives or lovers.

The NCVC also stated that more than 1.4 million people, mostly women, will be stalked this year. Nearly all their stalkers — 87 percent — will be men. This is a huge problem: more than 8 percent of women will be stalked at some point in their lives. Stalking victims suffer markedly increased rates of anxiety, depression and even post-traumatic stress disorder. In the most severe

cases, the stalker will stop only when his victim is dead.

Help is available. The Family Violence Prevention Center of Orange County and the Orange County Rape Crisis Center can offer free assistance to stalking victims, including counseling, legal advocacy and tips on developing a safety plan. Each has a 24-hour hotline and offers services in Spanish.

FVPC's 24-hour hotline number is (919) 929-7122 or toll-free (866) 929-7122. OCRCC's 24-hour hotline can be reached at 866-WE LISTEN (935-4783).

Amy Holloway
Executive Director
FVPC

Margaret Barrett
Executive Director
OCRCC

The length rule was waived.

TO SUBMIT A LETTER: The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 300 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity. Publication is not guaranteed. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 104, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail them to editdesk@unc.edu.

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