

PRESS REVIEW

The American correspondent of the 'Tribune de Lausanne'
writes a

Severe criticism about American University Football

College football, originally a game incorporating the finest characteristics of the American way of life, has become a national, indeed an international, scandal. A large proportion of our young people today are exposed during their most formative years to an enterprise that is neither fair nor honest. The fact that this sport is sponsored by educational institutions: entrusted with the training of the youth of the land, makes it that much worse. When a group of universities, institutions of higher learning, finds it necessary to discipline, to censure, and even to fine themselves, hundreds of thousands of dollars for violating their own freely adopted codes, one can hardly expect the public and the players not to be confused.

The abuses overlooked or tolerated in football are fast spreading to other sports and games, and poisoning the entire amateur programme. Every fan and every player is fully aware of the commercialization of college football called an amateur sport. The proselyting and subsidizing which have been carried on more or less openly in football in every section of the country are gradually being extended to other sports and are even being applied to foreign students. Educated people in Europe, in Latin America, and in the Orient cannot understand why the American colleges should be football factories and farms for professional football leagues.

The enemies we have made with our shifting foreign policies are now saying that we cannot even play without being paid; that even in sport we are guilty of double dealing; that we are a nation of dollar chasers, where god is God.

It is not that the actual playing of the game is not correct and ethical. Generally, there is a high standard of sportsmanship in the public manifestation of the game itself. The evils of college football lie in other directions. One cannot blame the players for the scandalous conditions that exist nor is it fair to blame the coaches and athletic directors. The pressures placed upon them are tremendous. They are hired to produce winning teams in order to fill the stadia. To have a winning team one must have star players. Inducements to the players, clandestine and surreptitious, increase. Hundreds of institutions participate in this mad whirl. Instead of a sport, it has become big business, and as a gauge of how big, consider the millions of dollars

that are derived from gate receipts and television rights.

I said that all this was not fair nor honest. The present situation cheats the players by diverting too much of their time and energy from their studies and by making hard work of a game that should be recreation, fun and amusement. It also deprives subsidized players of their amateur standing. The institution which takes advantage of the loyalty of its students by exploiting them to pile up gate receipts is engaged in a swindle. The present situation is dishonest because they pretend that it is amateur sport. Under today's conditions, to be fair, the players should be paid, openly and liberally.

What to do? There are two alternatives. 1. Let the colleges abandon all pretense that the present programme is amateur, which it is not; admit they are in the entertainment business, and pay the players, above the table and not below, the salaries they earn. 2. Return to amateurism; operate the athletic department for the benefit of the players and not for gate receipts, with the same standards as the academic departments. Emphasize the social, ethical and cultural values of the game, remembering it is supposed to be a sport and not a business.

It is not necessary to abandon football as some colleges have done; that is throwing out the baby with the bath water. Washington University, of St. Louis; for one, has been operating an honest amateur programme, incorporating the principles outlined above, for ten years. There is no proselyting and no athletic scholarships or grants of any kind. Its teams are composed of *bona fide* students who are attracted to the university by its educational programme. The budget for the conduct of the athletic programme comes from general university funds and the revenue is a by-product and not an end.

Spring training, games off the college campus, and post season games should be forbidden. There should be no inducements or special awards offered to prospective student athletes, thus eliminating all football mercenaries.

Washington mink coats, bribery of basketball players, crooked boxing bouts, and under-the-table payments to amateur athletes are symptoms of the same disease. Headlines in one single newspaper recently were 'Warrants out for five ex-commis-

sioners charging misuse of toll bridge funds'; 'Oust head of Chicago tax office'; 'State official steals more than \$1,000,000.00'. It may be a debatable question whether the examples in public life are responsible

for the irregularities in college sport, or whether the irregularities in college sport have led to the laxity in other quarters, but it is certain that both situations undermine the moral standards of our country.