

Funding Big-Time Intercollegiate Athletics: Fifty Years of the Clemson Iptay Club

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Founded in 1934 with 1,620 members and \$17,203 in contributions, the Clemson IPTAY Club (from “I Pay Ten A Year”) has grown to over 18,000 paid members who contribute over \$5 million annually, despite the fact that South Carolina is a relatively small state with a poor economy and that Clemson itself still has less than 10,000 full-time undergraduate students.

This success on IPTAY’s part, paralleled in recent years by increased attendance at athletic events (football in particular) and by better team performance, seems to be the product of the skills and personalities of men who built the organization, of extensive publicity, including the effective use of the Tiger Paw logo, and of the demand among the growing population in upstate South Carolina for quality entertainment and a sense of identity with a visible and successful institution.

Of course, the size and power of IPTAY has caused some resentment and suspicion, and individuals connected to IPTAY, though not the organization itself, have at times behaved in ways detrimental to the university. How to control IPTAY, while maintaining its contributions to athletic scholarships and related “educational” programs, remains a dilemma for the Clemson administration.