

## My View

# Coping with football and Title IX



BY MIKE WOTTALLA

**T**he fact that Florida International University would even consider dropping its men's soccer program — it did just that, then upgraded the decision to the "re-examination" stage as we go to press — reminds us of how low on the totem

pole men's college soccer finds itself.

Coach Karl Kremser's program is the most successful sport on campus. It has sent scores of players to the pros. (Tyrone Marshall, Steve Ralston and Daoude Kante played in MLS Cup 2002; Robin Fraser was an FIU All-American.) It won two Division II titles and is the only FIU team to reach a Division I final. Kremser's teams are known for their entertaining style. And Kremser fields ethnically diverse squads that reflect the Miami population.

Kremser's program uses 4 percent of the athletic budget. But there are two enemies of men's soccer that put FIU's program on the chopping block: football and Title IX.

The federally mandated gender-equity law, for all its virtues, has not had an equalizing effect on soccer. Consider that there are about 80 more women's Division I programs than men's, which translates into almost 2,000 more opportunities for women than for men. When a college needs to drop a sport to balance the gender equation because of the 100 males on its football team, men's soccer is a likely victim. As far as adding men's soccer to accommodate the continuing growth of boys soccer? No chance. They'd be breaking the law.

What was FIU thinking when it introduced football last season? Did they not know that more than 60 percent of college football programs lose money? A recent *New York Times* article describes college football as the "SUV of the college campus: aggressively big, resource-guzzling, lots and lots of fun and potentially destructive of everything around it."

The football problem may eventually take care of itself as colleges drown in red ink. As for Title IX, it should reflect the demands of both genders. If you have women's soccer, you must have men's soccer.