

Bureaucracy dooms sports at OCC

It is, indeed, surprising that anything gets accomplished at all. The foe is formidable — the bureaucracy, all-powerful enemy of any individual trying to get something done.

Every organization has one. The more power involved, the more money at stake, the bigger the bureaucracy. Oakland Community College is no different. Its bureaucracy is as inept, stumbling and uncaring as any other. These OCC bureaucrats have also cost the school a basketball coach.

A very good basketball coach. For the past 10 years, Tom McPhillips has guided OCC's cage team. He has directed the Raiders to five Eastern Conference championships in the Michigan Community College Athletic Association in that span.

McPhillips will resign after the 1980-81 season. Why? Because OCC officials really care nothing about the sports program or its future. They have made no commitment, financially or verbally, that is in support of OCC's athletics.

AFTER SO MANY years, McPhillips knows he will get no backing from school administrators. He played his final trump card two months ago when he threatened to quit on the spot unless some changes were made.

The move worked — partially. The OCC coach got some of what he wanted in return for his agreement to come back for one final season. It was the best he could hope for, a compromise, a part of what was needed.

When dealing with a bureaucracy, a compromise victory is the most that can be hoped for.

OCC has a lot going for it. It's sports program could be among the best in the nation. But it isn't. Lacking is the commitment, the desire to be good. There is no support.

WHAT OCC HAS: Oakland County — the richest county in Michigan. OCC, therefore, should have access to as much or more money than any other community college in the state.

It seems logical to assume that some of that money should go towards athletics — especially when the basketball team is among the best in the state.

WHAT OCC DOESN'T HAVE: Despite available funds, OCC fails to give financial support to its athletes. There are no scholarships, which is the key to any successful college-level recruiting program.

There is little food money for road games. Other community colleges eat at decent restaurants when traveling to away games. OCC's team eats at fast-food hamburger places.

Until recently, there wasn't even an assistant coach. Leonard Cole will fill that role this season. He was supposed to be McPhillips' assistant last year, but he worked nights at another campus. OCC's administration couldn't see fit to rearrange his schedule to allow him to attend all the team's games.

So McPhillips was stuck without an assistant — a commodity most high school teams have. McPhillips' agreed to return this year if Cole could work full-time as his assistant this season and be hired as his replacement next year. Administration accepted the deal.

WHAT OCC HAS: OCC does have a new \$3 million athletic building. And yet, with one of the best junior college cage teams in the state for students to watch, there were no bleachers to sit in until late last season.

The school also has an athletic director, who's office is on the Highland Lakes campus. To help administrate things, the AD has three assistants, one on each campus.

One AD and three assistants, but no assistant basketball coach.



C.J. Risak

OCC also has an athletic building administrator. There is no one to promote the new facility in its first year. The reason for the building's non-promotion was to wait and see how often students would use it.

The athletic building wasn't even open on weekends last year. The big promotion for this fall is that now it will be open weekends — a drastic change in policy.

OCC has a provost, one who reportedly told a student reporter that nine out of 10 students on campus didn't care anything about OCC sports. The provost didn't attend any of OCC's basketball games last season.

Like other bureaucracies, OCC is equipped with non-communication functions. When the school's sports information director wanted to sell advertising wall space in the new gym to

businesses in an attempt to make the school some money and develop local interest, he was given the OK by the building director.

After the SID sold several ads, the administrator changed its mind and the whole ad program was cancelled. The building administrator's reason: "I envisioned some program advertising or a banner (in front of the scorer's table), not posters all over the wall. Next I could see our players running down the court with ads on their backs."

Part of McPhillips' problem is that he cares about the students. His goal as a basketball coach is for a player, when he leaves OCC, to be able to go on and contribute at another school. McPhillips' aim is to provide that player with

direction. He has helped players, oftentimes filling in as counselor. Troublemakers became playmakers. Scholastic slouches became scholastic standouts. Misfits became contributors.

BUT THE SYSTEM can't be bucked, not for long. Apathy is a disease; when bureaucrats stop caring, support founders. Needed funds that would help a program progress and keep pace with the competition are diverted elsewhere.

McPhillips knows this. He quoted a "Sports Illustrated" article to me that said junior college sports are an endangered species. That may be true, he said. He doesn't want to see it happen, but one person can carry the fight for only so long.

Lynch batsmen drop 1st game

Birmingham Lynch and Sons had a tough weekend, but still managed to hang onto first place in the Pontiac A Baseball League. The Birmingham squad nipped Clarkston Coach's Corner 5-4 on Friday, beat Berkley 13-4 in a game shortened to six innings because of the mercy rule on Saturday, and lost to Oakland Community College 5-4 on Sunday.

OCC jumped out to an early lead Sunday because of some sloppy Lynch work in the field. Errors, three of them, plus a ball misplayed in the outfield, staked OCC to a 3-0 cushion.

Lynch and Sons got two back in the bottom of the inning when Jim Price singled in Joe Maloney and Jeff Maher.

In the third inning, Chuck Wagner singled and scored ahead of Maloney's long home run to left-center, putting Lynch ahead 4-3. That lead didn't last long. A wild throw on a double play in the fourth inning allowed one OCC run to score, then successive singles by Steve Shuck, Andy Little and Tom Godwin scored the winning run.

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