

College sports fight battle for dollars

By RON HINGST

The institutions of higher learning are faced with the monumental task of feeding a monster in athletic programs and the nourishment is money.

"Most of the changes in collegiate sports are problems and the biggest problem is finance," said Don Canham, University of Michigan athletic director.

Canham made his remarks to the "Men's Night" audience of the UM Alumnae Club of Birmingham last Tuesday night at the Village Women's Club in Bloomfield Hills.

"THE COST of operation in the business of collegiate sports is astronomical," he said.

While the UM athletic program has managed to stay in the black financially, college sports on a national basis are fighting a battle for dollars.

Although some persons feel the future of big-time sports lies with a "Super Conference" which would involve only an elite number of schools, Canham readily admitted he was not looking forward to such a development.

"I'm opposed to a 'Super Conference' because it will be based on the ruination of sports — I am scared to death of a super conference," he said.

Canham, who joined the UM staff in 1948 as an assistant track coach, told the Men's Night group that it would be impractical for UM to send a track or golf team across the country for a meet.

BECAUSE UM's athletic department is a self supporting body within the institution, gate receipts account for a sizable amount of the incoming cash.

"The biggest problem we have in drawing customers is television," Canham said. "not professional games on TV, but college games. We still need TV though, for the money."

UM, which is a member of the Big 10 conference, splits television dollars with each member of the league, and while a weaker football team might not draw the viewers on the tube, Canham emphasized that's the way it has to be.

The Wolverine football team, which finished second to Ohio State last season, drew an average of 94,000 fans for each home game, but Canham pointed out that large crowds have created still another problem.

THE UM OFFICIAL cited recent examples of college football crowds getting out of hand and he noted an example of Chicago-area prep football. There, he said, a coach steps on the team bus and receives instructions where the game will be played without crowds.

"HOW DO you control a crowd of 100,000 people?" he asked.

The UM athletic department administrator indicated some disappointment with current legislation on collegiate programs for female athletes.

"How do you finance women's athletics?" he said.

Canham emphasized that he was not against female sports programs, but he likened the situation of providing nursing schools for men.

Volleyball anyone?

A clinic for volleyball coaches and officials will be held Saturday, February 15 and Tuesday, February 18 at Farmington Our Lady of Mercy High School, 11 Mile and Middlebelt Roads.

There is no charge for the clinics and all interested parties are invited.

For additional information call Rose Swidzinski at Mercy.

Groves takes third at meet

Birmingham Groves wrestling team scored 7 1/2 points in the East Detroit Quad wrestling meet for a third place finish.

East Detroit won the tournament with 113 points followed by Ulica Ford, 80; Groves and Roseville Brabec at 44.

The Groves finishes included: 98 pound division, Dan Bronson, fourth; 110 pounds, Brian Covey, third; 112 pounds, John Mitchell, first; 119 pounds, Doug Fierberg, first; 128 pounds, Dan Fisher, first; 132 pounds, Dave Wood, fourth; 145 pounds, Mark Schuette, third; 155 pounds, John Samura, second; 167 pounds, Art Albin, fourth; 185 pounds, Brian Priebe, second and heavyweights, Kip Haggerty, third.

PROVIDE THE programs when there is a need for them, he said.

Canham took over the UM athletic directorship in 1968 and since that time UM has installed the Michigan stadium with artificial turf; constructed a sports servicebuilding for football and physical education classes; installed a new outdoor tartan running track and twin electric scoreboards at the football stadium.

Two weeks ago, the UM official surprised gridiron traditionalists by suggesting that the Big 10 seriously consider playing a second post-season game in addition to the Rose Bowl.

Canham and University of Wisconsin athletic director Elroy Hirsch are jointly looking into the possibility of the Big 10's second-place team playing in Hawaii after the Rose Bowl has been completed.

"THE OUTLOOK right now is pretty good," Canham said on Tuesday. "Hirsch has been talking to the people in Hawaii and he has another call lined up this week."

Canham predicted a blue ribbon year for UM recruiting of prep football players and he added that many good athletes have come from this area, although it does vary from year to year.

On recruiting, the UM sports director thought the NCAA would "be more diligent about enforcement of rules."

According to Canham, seven more men have been added to the NCAA enforcement team.

"I think it will be tougher," he said.



University of Michigan athletic director Don Canham, left, updated the audience at the UM Alumnae of Birmingham "Men's Night" on the

changes taking place in college sports. Standing next to Canham is Rich Waterlow. (Photo by Tom Greenwood).



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