

# Why Not Put Players on the Payroll?

**N**OT everybody objects to paying university athletes for their talents, physical strength and hard work in arenas of combat.

A lot of people would prefer having them put on payrolls, instead of pretending that they are not paid.

After all, others who participate in intercollegiate sports get a share of the take. In football, especially, this has become big business and big money.

Athletic directors, coaches, their assistants and recruiters, sports publicists, game officials, ticket takers, concessionaires, broadcasters and commercial announcers all are on payrolls somewhere.

Why not pay the players, too? After all, they are the stars of these big social and sports extravaganzas that command such a dominant role in our modern way of life.

The truth is that, in spite of the NCAA and the punishment it doles out in the form of probation, taboos on bowl games and TV appearances, ways are found to reward outstanding athletes. Often the guilty escape and others suffer under the present system for preservation of amateur standing.

It is asking too much for us to believe that these muscular young men travel long distances from their homes primarily in search of exceptional educational opportunities. Some of them barely made enough credits to graduate from high school.

At the start of the season, a majority of the football squads at both the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University were from out of state. No doubt, similar evidence of widespread recruiting might be found at other major universities.

But what university provides its departments of science, agriculture or literature with a squad of recruiters to scour high schools from coast to coast in search of brilliant graduates?

The NCAA approves giving athletes just a little bit of pay. They are allowed to receive board, room, tuition, books and spending money without losing their amateur status.

That is about like saying a workman who receives only the minimum legal wage, paid vacation and hospital insurance is not an employee, but one who makes \$200 a week would be.

The question of professionalism

may be a matter of degree rather than a matter of principle.

It may be worth noting that most of the publicized violations of NCAA amateur standing and recruiting rules relate to sports involving big money. You hardly ever hear of a violation connected with a collegiate golfer or chess player.

Don't blame the youngsters. High school heroes are wooed, courted and entertained by recruiters in a manner that could endanger any-

one's poise, making him forget that he must be a simon-pure, unpaid amateur. Athletics enable many to get an education and open the door to big-time sports for others.

About the only people not paid around university football these days are the band members, and they get into games free. As good as some of the bands are, maybe they ought to be given "amateur benefits" and let the football players in free to hear the music.