

Tickets 1: home

In the land of Big Red Capitalism, it shouldn't surprise many that the Big Red Ticket Office itself is among one of the biggest capitalists around. In fact, it appears Ticket Manager Jim Pittenger and his crew may just be on the way to being all-time greats in the sports for profit business.

In an interview Wednesday with editorial assistant Vickie Horton, Pittenger pretty well explained the entire rationale behind the operations of the Ticket Office—make money any way possible.

Admittedly, 19,374 students are given tickets to home football games. And at a reduced cost—a 2/3 discount according to Pittenger. And most of the time there are enough student-reserved tickets to go around.

Those tickets, however, are not transferable, which means that only a student can use the ticket.

But why should it matter if the student sells or gives his ticket to someone else? What difference does it make who sits in the student-purchased seat? The difference begins with a big green dollar sign. Those parents and friends who sit in students' seats aren't buying tickets. And that violates the "Big Red Bucks" law: the maximum amount of money must be obtained for the maximum number of tickets. And if students don't like it "they don't have to buy tickets," Pittenger said.

But enough of the students' plight at home games.

After all, students don't really fare that badly at home games. But then, neither do some special interest groups.

One of those groups is the press. The members of the bonafide press, actually covering the game, receive from 250 to 400 passes per home game, according to Sports Information Director Don Bryant.

While some would argue that members of the press should pay for admittance to the games like everyone else, we won't take issue with this doling out of tickets. There can be little doubt that Husker football is a bonafide news event, and as such the members of the press deserve admittance.

One wonders, however, how many of these newsmen would be bothering to cover Nebraska's season if the team's seven wins had been seven losses this year.

Another group of tickets is allotted to the Public Relations Department each game, according to its director George Round. Approximately 150 complimentary tickets are distributed through the department to what are evidently the members of the non-working press, radio and television as well as state senators.

The logic here is obvious. We all know who appropriates money to the University from state funds. And, perhaps more importantly, who puts the University in a good or bad light in the great state of Nebraska.

Members of the football team receive complimentary tickets also. The 50 certified squad members all receive two tickets to each

home game, and an additional ticket for each year they have lettered.

Naturally, we can't begrudge our boys in uniform tickets for Mom and Dad. One wonders, however if a senior three-year letterman is shipping his five to the folks back home of if, in fact, it's netting him a cool \$100-plus per game.

The big winners in the ticket jumble are heavy contributors to the Athletic Department's till. According to Pittenger, the contributions from Big Red boosters make ends meet in athletic finances. "Large contributors have always received priority on tickets," he said. "It's our way of saying 'thank you' for a better program."

The athletic department gets no tax support and is operated solely on gate receipts and contributions. "The public is paying for the football team, not the students," Pittenger said. For this reason, the large contributors get prime tickets assured early.

A glass-and-concrete example of purchasing University favors is to be seen in the plush, heated press box which was financed to a great extent by these contributions.

Within the press box are two separate areas—Sections 200 and 300—which may be purchased at will. To sit in Section 200, 241 patrons must make an initial donation of \$2,500, which assures them of a 10-year

option to buy four seats at regular cost plus twenty per cent. In the more exclusive Section 300, however, the initial donation is up to \$5,000, which secures 315 donors a 10-year option on four seats at only regular cost plus fifty per cent.

This is not to say that seats are not available to the general public. They are, to the tune of 40,000 per year. But ticket orders are stacked up well in advance and one must be extremely luck to obtain seats within the viewing range of an electron telescope.

Despite all the blatant favoritism of the rich and powerful in the rationing of stadium seats, it is hard to pin all the blame for the muck on the Ticket Office. The ticket sales and distribution staff is just part of a larger machine that has taken over the University—an athletics-above-all-except-money coalition.

In this realm, University athletics have become more spectacle than sport, more clamor than competition. The student has become just another penny in the pocket of big sports promotion and has been lost in the interceding shuffle. And that's about as far from the true purpose of intercollegiate competition as it could be.

The Green Machine has all but destroyed the spirit of college football.

Jim Gray

On Friday: the ticket office and away games.



Trying to beat the system

michele
coyle
mind
games

Early in 1972, with much ado, hoopla and patting on the back, the UNL administration announced that the Lincoln campus was the recipient of a \$250,000 Ford Foundation grant. This grant was awarded with the understanding that it would be used to better the quality of undergraduate education at this University.

Well, you know, it's the funniest thing. Since that time a program has been developed which would allow students to approach their education in an inter-disciplinary fashion—instead of getting a piecemeal education with an unrelated smattering of this and an obscurely related smattering of that (after all, requirements are requirements) students would be allowed to put together their own majors.

This is hardly a radical innovation. Other universities have been doing things like this for a long time. With a name usually like 'general studies', a program of this type has been instrumental in bridging the gap between narrow disciplines and less specialized interests.

Of course, to some persons, innovation and flexibility are nasty words. As a result, the UNL 'University Studies' program (as it is called), is still hung up in the University committee system and will only be undergoing its first public scrutiny at the Nov. 16 Arts and Sciences faculty meeting. If you're concerned, please attend.

The only other major attempt at curriculum expansion in the last several years has been the introduction of the American Studies program. Ever heard of it? It wouldn't be too surprising if you haven't. Student interest in this

program—a program which would allow an imaginative and interdisciplinary approach to the study of America, its problems, past and future, its rich cultural and social heritage—has been termed low. Therefore, it has been given probationary approval on a yearly basis.

It's difficult to support a program you've never heard of, or one which is only given half-hearted administrative assistance. Given half a chance, the American Studies program could be one of the best things to hit this campus in a long while.

For as long as I can remember, students and some faculty have complained about the insensitivity and inflexibility of large group lecture sections and introductory courses. Some have resigned themselves to learning little or nothing, others have learned to beat the University at its own game. Still others have justified the existence of such courses because their large numbers insure more money for the department involved. How nice.

The learning experience of the student is outweighed by the economic gain involved. Keep some of this in mind if and when the demand comes for students to make up the \$1.4 million deficit the University system has incurred during the past year. UNL students may be asked to pay \$927,000 extra for an unimproved education of questionable quality.

Not only does the present University administration seem to be marginally interested in improving undergraduate education campus-wide, in many ways, it actually hinders any such change.

There comes a point when even the "most reasonable of men and women" have got to say no.