

NEWS

No quick fix for ticket distribution

By Joseph J. Wheeler
YELLIN' REBEL

When the University of Nevada, Las Vegas' Runnin' Rebels won the national championship in April, it was not without a fight. Unfortunately, most of the fighting was off the court.

The battle over tickets to the final game was a hotter contest than UNLV's romp over Duke. While the Rebels had an easy time of things in Denver, the folks back home were trading punches.

A local columnist accused UNLV, of the schools involved in the Final Four, of showing the least concern for its students.

Ticket office personnel handled an endless flood of inquiries into ticket availability, which led to bitter complaints from fans after word that no tickets were available got out.

Students at UNLV were awarded 100 tickets, but half of those went to necessary game personnel such as bandmembers and songleaders. Consolidated Students of the University of Nevada (CSUN) held a lottery to award the 50 tickets left. Three times more students than available tickets entered the drawing.

Besides availability, it was the location of seats that also caused some concern. Those who did make it to the McNichols Sports Arena in Denver expressed disappointment at their view of the game. Students remarked that the only thing higher than they were was the Goodyear blimp hovering outside the arena.

Complaints came from every quarter. The athletic department was besieged. "From faculty, staff, season-ticket holders, boosters to students, no one was pleased," Athletic Director Brad Rothermal said in an interview.

But why the problems? Why such turmoil?

Rothermal admits that there were similar problems in 1987, UNLV's previous Final Four appearance. Although students were not allocated any tickets during the 1987 tournament, that upset was primarily over the location of seats for those who went to the games.

"This time," Rothermal said, "it was over who should get tickets." He noted that his department was not totally responsible for the mess. "This was first based on the fact that we didn't get nearly enough tickets."

CSUN President Joe Bunin has his own opinion of what went wrong. "It was just such a poor system in place," he said. Bunin presided over the drawing for the tickets that were made available to students. At one point an additional 20 tickets were promised and another drawing held. The tickets, however, were never produced and Bunin, like many others, watched the game on television.

"When there is too many



Yell Photo / Robert Anderson

NOT MUCH ROOM The lucky few squeeze into available space.

people who have access to tickets, who can say 'I need them for this or for that.' It doesn't work," he said.

Bunin referred to the athletic department's distribution of available tickets and the university's apparent lack of a prepared policy to handle the increased demand.

Bunin pointed out that until now the system in place wasn't too bad. "I don't think that anyone realized it wouldn't work because it's the way it's been done in the past," he said. But UNLV's growth of both students and boosters has brought new problems into focus.

The boosters in question are scholarship donors. These scholarship donors will often donate as much as \$10,000 to sit front row center during home games. The income from these donations goes to athletic scholarships, and athletes in all sports benefit from the money.

Figuring in the equation, as well, are boxholders. There are 30 boxes in the Thomas & Mack, and the cost for a box can range from just under \$13,000 for a smaller one to \$33,000 for a large, center box.

Also in the mix are season ticket holders. A season ticket costs at least \$110 and can be as much as \$145 for seat towards the center sections. UNLV had 7,435 scholarship donors and 6,169 season ticket holders last year.

How did this add up to problems for UNLV officials?

It is these individuals and groups who are on the list for post-season tickets. Considering the student body of more than 16,000, many of whom would like to attend post-season play, the question of who gets the tickets becomes a delicate concern.

Many universities that con-

tinually face post-season play ought to come first," he said in an April 1 interview. Maxson said he would get the student government and the athletic department together and come up with a mutually acceptable policy.

To that end a committee has been formed to look into the problems encountered by students and fans alike. Maxson asked committee members to include two starting points in their study.

The first would assure a minimum of ten percent of all tickets would go to UNLV students during post-season play. The other would provide for public publication of UNLV's distribution policy.

UNLV Attorney Bradley Booke was named chairman of the committee. Other members are Thomas & Mack Executive Director Dennis Finrock, Sheila Strike-Bolla, Richard Etter, chairman of Valley Bank, Bruce Hendricks, president of the alumni association, and CSUN President Joe Bunin.

Finrock is confident that a workable solution can be found. "I think we'll come up with good recommendations that will benefit everyone," he said.

Finrock noted that it is a measure of UNLV's success that every available seat, both for donors and regular season ticket holders, is sold out and a waiting list has begun.

President Maxson promised to iron out the problems before the fall semester. "The students

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Bunin agrees that a solution will be found. The committee, according to him, is serious about solving the problem and making sure that everyone is treated fairly, both boosters and students.

He made CSUN's position quite clear. "I'm out to get what I think is fair. And what's fair is what is equitable, on a par, with other institutions that have this problem, so to speak."

What does this mean for students? "I think a bare minimum of ten percent of the allocated tickets," Bunin said.

And what about seats in the "stratosphere"?

"I don't think it's fair that Duke University should sit on the floor and look up at us in the balcony," Bunin said. "Students deserve a fair shake."

Although everyone involved would like to see the Rebel's performance as national champions repeated, few would like to see the ticket distributions problems again. Chairman Bradley Booke plans on holding the first meeting sometime during the middle of June, and ending those problems shortly thereafter.

Rothermal agreed that the 'problem' of deciding who gets Final Four tickets is not all that bad. "We would all hope to have this problem every year," he said.

Utah State students suspended

LOGAN, UTAH (cps) — Judge Clint Judkins sentenced Utah State University students Jeff Leisham and Gavin Washburn to sixth-month suspended jail terms, \$1000 fines, and 40 hours of community service each as punishment for drenching University -Las Vegas basket-

ball coach Jerry Tarkanian with bluish-green water during a March 1 UNLV Utah State game.

The two students had rigged a special water pipe under the UNLV bench before the game, and then blasted Tarkanian with the liquid just before the second half

of the contest began.

"This court appreciates a good joke and a good prank, but I think, under the circumstances, this was inappropriate," Judkins told the students, who had both served as USU student government officers in 1987-88.