

COMMENTARY

Athlete jobs allowed

By Eric Gruzon
Staff Sports Writer

Last Wednesday, the NCAA finally approved a new rule for college athletes on scholarship, allowing them to hold part-time jobs. This may not be considered a good thing, especially for athletes at UNLV.

The rule is somewhat complex. Although athletes are allowed to hold jobs, they are only allowed to make \$2,000 per school year, a change from the previous rule where the student was only allowed to hold a job in the summer and winter breaks.

However, I for one think that this rule was better left unpassed. With the questionable intentions of school boosters and the shady jobs that are out there, especially in Las Vegas, who is going to stop potential employers from making "donations" to players?

In theory, say Steve Wynn, owner of the Mirage properties, wants to help out the basketball team with jobs. He gets them all jobs as bellboys, making \$2,000 a week. They work for a week, and they are \$2,000 richer and don't have to work for the rest of the year. It may not be likely, but it is possible.

Worse yet, this town is full of gamblers, with those gamblers looking for any edge they can find. If they were to "employ" a football or basketball player for an odd job. They could influence the player with the easy money to effect a game that they are in. Although people can't bet on UNLV events here in Las Vegas, overseas accounts are becoming very popular.

More realistically, schools in large cities will hold a big ad-

vantage when it comes to recruiting. The diversity of jobs that are available certainly would influence a student's decision to attend a certain school. The possibility of having a part-time job at a luxurious Las Vegas hotel compared to a part-time job diving a tractor in eastern Nebraska would be a distinct advantage to a school in a large metropolitan city.

UNLV has been notorious for being in trouble with the NCAA over the past decade, but has worked very hard in trying to change that image. This ruling by the NCAA could set the school back a few steps due simply to the fact that UNLV is on the NCAA's hit-list, and the very wide range of jobs that are now available to student-athletes here in Las Vegas could raise some eyebrows on the faces of NCAA officials.

Allowing them to have jobs is better than the alternative idea of just giving athletes money for playing sports at a University. That idea was discussed, but the thought of paying a student, who is already on scholarship, for their "services" is a little ridiculous. These people are here to play sports and go to school, not to earn a living, at least not yet. What they do in college may or may not translate into a future in a professional sport, where the money should be earned.

The new job rule goes into effect in August, and the results of the passage of the rule will be interesting to watch. Will we see Jon Denton working at McDonald's? Probably not. How about pulling into Caesar's and having Kaspars Kambala valet park your car? That could happen. Just be sure to tip well.

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