

SPORTS

UNLV Coach Roy Shivers Tells

'Inner City Schools Are Cheated'

By JOE CROSS
Sentinel Writer

Youngsters growing up in the so-called inner-city schools have long been found to be getting a lower quality education than their suburban counterparts.

It's also been believed that those same inner-city kids have had at least one thing going for a lucky few — athletics.

The inner-city kid, it has been reasoned, who wants to escape and make a better life, turns to athletics — if, that is, there are skills in that line — and goes from high school stardom to a high-paying professional career.

True, it has happened. No one can deny that. Remember, though, the same thing has happened in other fields —

where youngsters happen to get good teachers who are as concerned about people as they are about teaching a subject.

More good teachers, therefore, would mean more youngsters getting "turned on" to education. Same should hold true in sports — and that, according to a coach who knows, is far more of a problem than most people think.

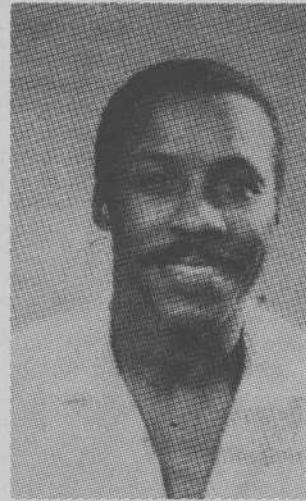
"In the city school systems (in large cities)," said Roy Shivers, the extremely successful offensive back coach for the UNLV football Rebels, "where the majority of the kids are black, they often have one football coach for the entire team. But in the suburban schools, it is not at all unusual if

they have six or seven coaches."

One high school in Cincinnati — a suburban one at that — which has been ranked the No. 1 high school football team in the past "four or five years," has, Shivers said, "18 coaches. Can you believe that?"

"Inner city schools," Shivers said, "are getting cheated."

That situation, therefore, he feels, carries over when a potentially good athlete enters college. Like others who have tremendous academic problems because they weren't prepared for college studying, the athlete can get lost in the shuffle as well in sports, because of inadequate coaching in high school.



SHIVERS

On the other hand, Shivers is similarly concerned about student-athletes who figure once they get a college scholarship to play ball, their lives will be all fun and games.

"College sports are a whole new ball game," said Shivers who played seven years with the St. Louis Cardinals of the National Football League. "And the pro level is too. It becomes more specialized in the pros while college is more team oriented."

Shivers noted "there are only 'X' number of jobs in the pros and the jobs we're talking about certainly are not long term. Education should be used to secure a future."

"After high school," said the 1965 graduate of Utah State, "sports stop being fun and become business.

Coaches are hired on the won-lost column."

That attitude has hurt a lot of youngsters coming into college with wrong attitudes, he said.

"A lot of kids don't realize they even have to go to school," he said, "despite the fact education has become an important 'tool' in helping bring about changes.

During the '60s there was a big revolution toward education," he said. "The (Vietnam) war brought out a lot of thinking."

Black youngsters "coming out of the South," Shivers said, "had a better understanding and feeling for education since they've had black colleges for over a hundred years."

It has been different in the North, he said, where young people often get "in the main stream and gobbled up."

"But we're seeing a change now," he said of the country outside the South. "And I think it will be even more so in the near future."

Shivers, a native of Oakland, Calif., feels that when the Oakland Raiders move in the near future out of town, it will benefit high school sports.

"I'm glad to see 'em go," he said. "Now maybe a lot of those

people who were paying \$300 and \$400 for season tickets will put that money back into the athletic programs. Not only athletics but things like art and music, too. Why for that kind of money you could see every high school football game played in an entire season in northern California."

Shivers was a member of the 1966 all-pro rookie team in the NFL and has been with UNLV head coach Tony Knap for four seasons now. He first came to know Knap at Utah State where his current boss was then his head coach.

"I like working with kids," Shivers said. "I try to get them to grasp what I didn't at an earlier age. I don't b.s. them and I don't sugar coat what the world is all about. I tell them flat-out what it's going to be like."

And, oh yes, about this year's version of the Rebel football team which goes into this weekend (Sept. 20) with a 1-0 record, thanks to last Saturday's 35-6 win over Fresno State.

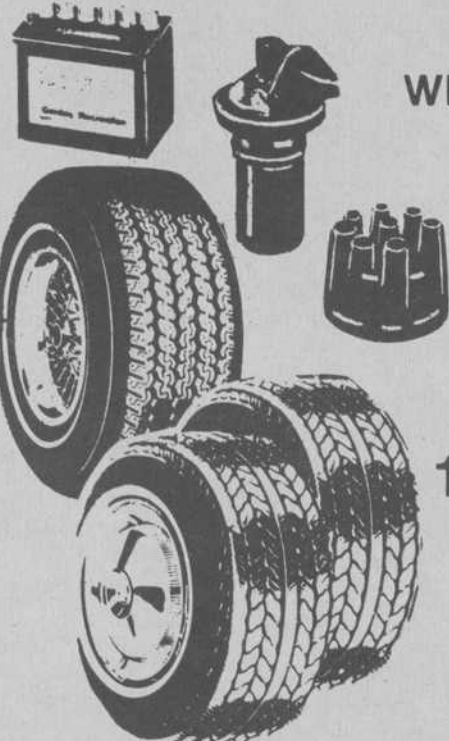
As a team, it appears he wasn't kidding when he said that defensively, "we are much further ahead. The quality of people, especially at linebacker, is much better."

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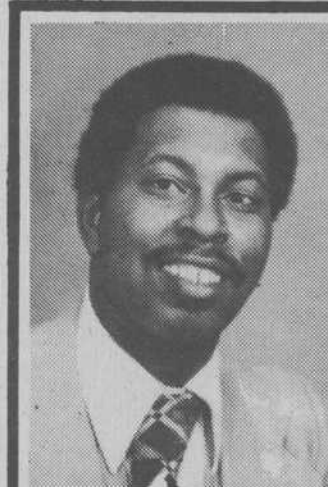
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