

## POINT OF VIEW

## Our View

## Goodman punts on appointments

It's fourth down and long with about five minutes left and you're trailing. Whatcha gonna do?

If you're coached by Mayor Oscar Goodman, you'll likely see the punting unit take the field.

After all, that's presumably what took place Wednesday morning, when his honor pulled a fast one and alleviated the appointment of two new council members by placing agenda item No. 3 in abeyance for 30 days.

His reasoning was — publicly — to do what's right for city government and its constituents. Privately, however, it's a whole other ball game.

Roughly five months into the job, Goodman finally appears to have lined himself up across from Michael J. McDonald, the councilman commonly referred to as "The Shadow Mayor," and Gary Reese, the one's who on Wednesday resembled a high powered backfield with all the steam.

"There are some agendas out there for some people," Ward 6 hopeful Michael Mack said. "It's unfortunate, though, because I hate to see the council get fractured in any way."

Well, on the rough-and-tough gridiron at City Hall, fractures don't necessarily put people on the injured reserve list, but they can turn you into a free agent pretty quickly.

After receiving an "anonymous" call on the eve of the big game — how convenient — Goodman cited section 2.51.060 of the city's code that says "no public officer or employee shall appear on behalf of any person, other than himself or herself or persons related within the third degree or consanguinity or affinity before any board, commission, committee or agency of the City, or any individual member of the City Council, in relation to any case, proceeding, application, or contract for a period of two years from the date of termination of his or her employment with the City."

In layman's terms — Goodman said there is a chance city employees could be kept from serving on the council for two years after resigning from the city.

In competitive terms, it seems Goodman is attempting to borrow the term "power play" from hockey, with hopes he can withhold the reign of power McDonald would gain from the appointments.

Lawrence Weekly and Orlando Sanchez are both city employees, both the frontrunners for the Ward 5 and 6 seats and both McDonald's guys. And, with his motion to abey, Goodman is calling for encroachment.

If McDonald attaches the two to his regime, he seemingly would have four votes (add on Gary Reese) and could be in control of the board heading into the millennium.

For Goodman, he is looking to recruit his own blockers to run behind, with Michael Mack and Uri Clinton as his choices.

Councilman Larry Brown and Councilwoman Lynette Boggs McDonald both sided with Goodman to abey the issue, which isn't strange since they are staunch believers in following through with city policy.

What is strange, however, is they opted to do so after City Attorney Brad Jerbic was plain as day in saying there was no conflict.

"It does not in my opinion apply to this provision," Jerbic told the board. "You can move forward today."

Later, Jerbic said, technically, the ethics board can consult his office for an opinion — "they can ask for our assistance in reaching a conclusion, that's up to them, though" — but that his opinion had already been stated at the meeting. No conflict, no encroachment.

Yet Brown and Boggs McDonald shunned his opinion and went with the mayor.

Additionally strange, or maybe not, is this whole appointment thing has gotten away from the real issue at hand — who is best for the community and each ward.

"The candidates are just objects at this point," Mack said. Objects, as in tackling dummies.



## Improving athletes' graduation rate team effort

Patrick D. McGee

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The focus of this article is not to peruse the problems of substance abuse or athlete exploitation but to assist student-athletes in graduating.

National graduation rates for student-athletes is 43 percent, while the general student body graduates at a 34 percent clip. Forty percent of UNLV athletes graduate, with the number falling to 35 percent for the student body — these are conservative representations.

The student-athlete system can work and does work. But student-athletes have to have their priorities straight: It's academics first, then athletics.

In most cases when a freshman class of athletes goes in to an institution, they are on a five-year scholarship, not a four-year scholarship. If you schedule your classes correctly you can make a go of the toughest majors and still have time for a social life.

In an interview, Athletic Director Charles Cavagnaro said: "The NCAA only allows athletes 20 hours a week of practice. No more no less. An the NCAA is checking on this on a constant basis." "They have more time than they have had before to get it done."

Cavagnaro thinks UNLV Athletics gets a bad rap.

"For the simple fact that every time we have a new freshman class of athletes that comes to the athletic program

and one leaves for one reason or another it is counted against the athletic program so heavily it is ridiculous."

Cavagnaro said the answer is to get quality programs here at UNLV going so that a freshman coming in to the athletic program will have a sense of commitment to stick with it the entire five years of their scholarship.

"This is the way only way our numbers will pick up," he said.

Now there are racial differences in the numbers of graduation rates of Div. I male basketball players in particular.

The NCAA reported graduation rates for white male basketball players are at 53 percent, 6 percent higher than the previous class.

However, black male basketball players are graduating at a rate of 33 percent, down from 37 percent the previous year, according to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the governing body for college sports.

Div. I female basketball players showed a decline for the third straight year.

The graduation rate was 62 percent for those entering school in 1992.

Fewer Div. I black female student-athletes overall, and black female basketball players in particular, graduated for the year the NCAA studied.

The drop for black female basketball players puts the graduation rate at 49 percent, the lowest since the 1985

freshman class, which had a graduation rate of 47 percent.

I think one solution to this problem is offering student-athletes an attentive hands-on academic support staff. UNLV is making major strides in this direction. But it takes two to tango — student-athletes must want to excel in the classroom.

My dad, a master plumber, talked with me awhile back and told me he could not give much more after my 18th birthday.

"Boy, I'm going to give you a book of rules and a bag of tools and a rock that you can either make a stepping stone or a stumbling block," he said.

That's how student-athletes must pursue their careers. No one can make things better for you, but you.

I've noticed here at UNLV that all the doors are open — from the weight room to Room 78 in the Thomas & Mack Center. All that's needed is more initiative on the part of our student-athletes to go through the doors.

With such an initiative on the part of the student-athlete, the hand-on approach of the athletic department and the help of the academic support staff there could create a united front that will help every student-athlete graduate.

This is not the University of Duke where they graduate 100 percent of their athletes. But if we can start with our UNLV freshman class of this year of 1999 - 2000 it will be a start in the right direction.

It's the only conceivable direction. Lets take pride in our university.

The opportunity is here for the taking.

If student-athletes show the same discipline in the classroom as they do on the field or the court, then they can help ensure their success.

By using every resource at this university, they could be unstoppable.

Such a commitment would make for a better athletic program as well as a more marketable and well-rounded student-athlete.

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