Eric R. Fleming  
**College athletics and amateur sports**

Editor's note: This is the first in a series of columns on issues in college sports.

Herschel Walker's recent jump to the newly formed United States Football League after completing only his junior year in college raises a number of questions concerning college sports. Most important of these questions are, are college athletes, who go under the guise of amateur status, really amateurs?

The answer to this question depends on where you stand. At MIT, where student-athletes receive no scholarships or aid based on athletic ability, the answer is clear 'yes.' This story is true at most of the nation's colleges and universities. But it is the select few, the schools where football and basketball are huge money-making operations, that the term 'amateur' comes into serious question.

At schools such as Alabama and Michigan, football is an A.B. business. Think about it for a moment. Michigan Stadium seats a little over 103,000. The going rate for tickets is $12, which means the average gross ticket sale per game (discounting for approximately 30,000 student tickets at $6 apiece) is in excess of one million dollars. Michigan traditionally plays a six-game home schedule, so yearly ticket revenues are in the neighborhood of six million dollars, not including concessions, parking, television and radio rights, which add much more to that number.

As the above example illustrates, college football is a lucrative operation. This isn't bad in itself, if the young men involved in it and other college sports are getting their undergraduate degrees, which is ostensibly why they are in school. A sizable majority of these students, however, don't earn degrees, and if they do, they are in majors such as "communications" and "physical education." This isn't to say that these fields can't turn out productive graduates, but for college athletes, they are the exception rather than the rule. These 'student-athletes' are usually given the best of everything: plush living facilities isolated from the rest of the campus; first-class hotel accommodations while on the road; and of course, scholarships to defray the costs of attending school. The catch with having an athletic scholarship, however, is that an athlete doesn't perform up to expectations, then the 'scholarship' is thrown out in the window. It is equivalent to saying, "O.K., your body doesn't mean anything to us anymore, so we're going to have to cut you off.'

In many cases, that's what is going on: the exploitation of bodies for the entertainment of the fans, alumni, and bolstering of "school pride." Sounds a lot like the pros, doesn't it?

Is removing the facade from these athletes, who think of them professionals, the answer? A number of administrators, former athletes, and sportswriters think so. On face value, the idea sounds very good to me. College is a place where one is supposed to develop your mind, in order to contribute to society upon departure. Changing the status of college athletes to professional, or even semi-pro, will make a mockery of what higher education is supposed to be. Only a commitment by faculty, administrators, and coaches to develop these athletes' minds as well as their bodies will legitimize college athletics.

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**Women fencers**

N.E. champions

By Martin Dickau

The women's fencing team showed that recruiting does not always guarantee success, as the squad captured the New England Fencing Championships and captain Ya-Pei Chang '83 defeated Yale's Diana Mendley to take the foil title. The Elis' 37. Harvard was always a good bet, and this year's quartet was no exception. The Blues defeated the Crimson 25-20, while finishing fourth of forty-four behind Vivian Fuchs of Harvard. Like Chang, Vanowitz began her fencing career as a freshman at MIT.

The women are now looking ahead to the United States Fencing Association Foil Championships in June.

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**Women fencers**

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