

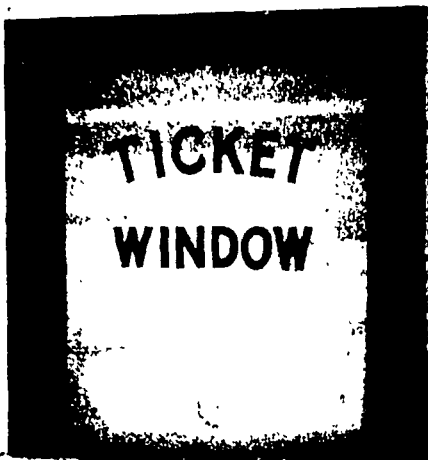
# Big-time athletics in the un



## How do you justify its existence?

by Rick Starr

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In television paydays alone in 1973, the Penn State football program collected \$200,000 for a nationally televised loss to Tennessee, \$145,000 for clobbering Iowa in a regionally televised fray, and a cool quarter million for branding the Texas Longhorns in the Cotton Bowl. That was only extra revenue.

Every time the gates open at Beaver Stadium this fall, the gross receipts will be close to \$300,000. The gates will open six times.

There will also be alumni contributions, program sales and refreshment concessions.

In all, it adds up to enough money to run the entire men's and women's athletic

programs, involving hundreds of athletes, hundreds of road trips, and mountains of expensive athletic equipment. You could fill an employment agency with the bureaucrats and coaches in Rec Hall.

Things are big at Penn State and athletics are no exception. But as a branch of the university, the big-time athletic program must justify its existence within the community. Penn State football coach Joe Paterno points to goals as a justification.

"The goals of intercollegiate football have to be consistent with the goals of the university or football will die," he said.

His words make a fitting epitaph on the grave of college football at the University of Chicago.

Robert Maynard Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago in 1929, didn't let the sport die, however. He killed it. For exactly the reasons Paterno cites above.

Nowhere in the university is there a less understood relationship than that of big-time, professionalized athletics to the university community.

Athletics and education have not always been partners. In ancient Greek education the emphasis was placed on developing the entire man, mentally and physically, mind in harmony with body.

In spite of the rise in mass spectator sports and professional athletics in ancient Rome, intellectual and athletic pursuits remained close. But when the church assumed the duties of education throughout the middle ages, the concepts of physical man and intellectual man polarized.

It was not until the mid 1800's that athletic activity again was afforded a substantive place in formal education.

Today athletics have grown to such proportions that they seem to dominate some universities. To most Americans, Penn State means little more than a winning football program.

Even the people who attend college here knew who Joe Paterno was long before they ever heard of University President John W. Oswald. Yet Oswald's stature within the University, his responsibilities to the students, his duties to the community far overshadow a football coach.

To accurately assess big-time athletics, all of its assets and liabilities to the university must be examined.

It has been argued that big-time athletics are eminently justifiable

