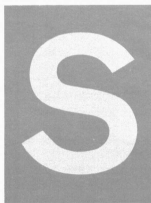


AN A.D. FOR ALL SEASONS

By Steve Shinn



SOME persons believe that the job of athletic director has become — like the positions of governors, city managers, university presidents and chancellors — virtually no-win. With so many constituencies to please and with such a high degree of visibility, an athletic director's reservoir of good will ultimately is used up. With each decision, he loses a little more skin until some-

day, maybe in five or six years, he has to move on. Time was that the athletic directorship was given to a head football or basketball coach to administer in his spare time. The job just didn't seem to be all that tough. Today, major university athletics is big business. The budgeting and fiscal requirements, affirmative action, women's sports, and the increased interest of the general public have combined to make the A.D.'s job increasingly complex and demanding.

As Mizzou began seeking a replacement for resigned athletic director Mel Sheehan, this complexity was spelled out in the notices of the position vacancy sent throughout the country: "The University of Missouri-Columbia conducts a varsity intercollegiate athletic program consisting of eight men's sports and eight women's sports. The director shall be responsible under the general supervision of the Chancellor for policy development and program review in the general areas of planning, directing, coordinating and supervising all administrative and business functions of the department and all athletic activities participated in by men and women student-athletes.

"The director must possess a thorough knowledge of intercollegiate athletics including NCAA and AIAW rules and practices, applicable federal regulations, and the procedures required for developing schedules for intercollegiate competition. The person must have experienced and demonstrated competence in organizational skills and administrative ability including fiscal and personnel management, as well as in promotional and public relations techniques. . . ."

If those qualifications seem hard to come by, here's an informal laundry list of possible qualifications that staff members of the athletic department were asked to rank as either very important or desirable, or not important: academic achievement (MA or PhD degree), proven administrative ability, administrative experience, alumnus of the University of Missouri, athletic background (former coach or player), success as a coach, business ability, business management skills, personnel management skills, knowledge of academic requirements and practices, knowledge of NCAA, AIAW and conference rules and regulations, flair for public relations (with alumni and fans, students, faculty, staff), prior experience as athletic director, prior employment by the University of Missouri, reputation for honesty and good character, interest in a broad and well-rounded program, interest in maintaining high competitive excellence for all sports, ability to delegate responsibility and communicative skills.

While there is some overlap in the list and while some appear to be more important than others, a case could be made for all 19 qualifications. It may be that the person who meets all the criteria simply doesn't exist.

Be that as it may, a new athletic director will be named no later than July 1, probably sooner, maybe by the time this story is published. The selection procedure is relatively complicated. An eight-member search committee reviews applications and resumes, chooses 10 or so applicants to interview and picks three or four from that group to visit the full 13-member Intercollegiate Athletic Committee and the Chancellor and his senior staff. The Chancellor makes the final choice.

Regardless of how well he meets the criteria described earlier, the new A.D. must successfully cope with two overriding problems: people and funding.

People problems involve the A.D.'s relationship with a great many different levels and constituencies. First of all, there are the members of the Board of Curators. They're charged by the state constitution with running the University. Many of them have a fan's interest in athletics as well. Therefore, they sometimes get involved in athletics, even though they normally do not take an active role in the operation of other Campus departments.

Then there's the Athletic Committee. Officially an advisory body to the Chancellor, the IAC makes recom-

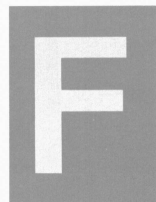
mendations on policy and traditionally has been extremely active in athletic personnel matters. The current organizational chart shows the A.D. reporting to the Chancellor through the IAC.

However, Chancellor Herbert W. Schooling says that the new A.D. will have a closer relationship with the Office of Chancellor than formerly. At one time the athletic department was almost autonomous. It pretty well ran its own show, but now the Chancellor can no longer say, "Don't bother me with athletics" even if he—or she—wanted to. The Al Onofrio dismissal and the Sheehan resignation proved that.

"Therefore," says Schooling, "if the Chancellor is in the middle of athletic controversies and if the Chancellor must be the ultimate referee, then the Chancellor's Office needs to maintain a closer relationship with the athletic director than in the past. When the new A.D. is appointed, it will be made clear that the person will have a very direct responsibility to the Chancellor's Office."

Then there are special relationships with other administrators on Campus and in the Central Administration. There are the alumni and general public — interested, watching, and sometimes asking. There are the students. There are the media people.

And there are the members of the athletic department staff. Control can be exercised over coaches of nonrevenue sports through the budget. But how does an A.D. supervise successful football and basketball coaches? They have built their own constituencies, can pretty well get what they want — as long as they win, of course. Technically, these coaches work for the A.D. Actually, special understandings and relationships must be developed.



FUNDING problems will occupy much of the new athletic director's efforts. Except for part of the Hearnes facilities and part of the women's program, the athletic department is entirely self-supporting. No financial support comes from the general operating funds of the Campus — tax dollars or student activity fees. This fiscal year expenses will total more than \$4 million, more than double 10 years ago. Yet, in that decade income has exceeded expenses each year.

But there are increasing pressures on the athletic department budget. This year for the first time, the department paid \$50,000 to help operate Hearnes. That figure may increase next year. The women's program began in 1973 with a \$15,000 special allotment from the Chancellor. In 1978-79 the women's budget will total more than \$500,000

with the athletic department paying more than half, Campus operating funds furnishing the rest. The women's budget is expected to climb to more than \$600,000 in 1979-80. Ultimately, all funds for women's sports will come from the athletic department. When budget cutbacks are forcing faculty and program cutbacks across Campus, the continued use of general operating funds to finance women's sports cannot be justified. Add to the Hearnes and women's requirements the ever present pressures of inflation.



NEW track facilities are sorely needed. Coach Bob Teel has been explaining the need for a new track, outside Faurot Field, for years. His reasons appear logical and persuasive (See *Missouri Alumnus*, November-December 1976). Ultimately, a new track will have to be added if Missouri is to have a major track program. This and other new facilities, — some for women's athletics —

will add to the budget problems.

Athletic revenues primarily come from three sources: ticket sales to football and basketball games, contributions to the Development Fund for athletics and distributions from the Big Eight Conference from television and bowl game revenues. In the past five years, football ticket sales have averaged \$2.3 million annually; basketball, \$227,000; contributions, \$324,000; and the conference distributions, \$267,000.

New sources of revenue seem unlikely, although many other universities give their athletic departments more help than Mizzou. At the other three campuses in the University of Missouri system, student fees are collected for intercollegiate athletics. On this Campus, not only are there no student fees for this purpose, but students, faculty and staff from all four campuses can buy football and basketball tickets to Tiger games at reduced rates. And the athletic department also is proud of the fact that Mizzou students get priority seating, as well.

Some major institutions provide salary subsidies and/or waiver of tuition and fees for athletes. Not so at Missouri. All grants-in-aid are paid for by the department. This year, about \$750,000 will be transferred to other Campus accounts to pay for fees and tuition, the Hearnes assessment, supplies and other services.

With the sources of revenue apparently set, the need for a successful football program to generate more ticket sales and more contributions is obvious. The best way for the new A.D. to avoid having a no-win job is for the football Tigers to be winners. □