The History and Philosophy
of Intercollegiate Athletics for Men
At Ball State University, 1968-1984

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)
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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

In 1968, Marvin Gray completed a doctoral thesis entitled The History and Philosophy of Intercollegiate Athletics for Men at Ball State University. That work examined the origin, growth and development of the intercollegiate athletic program for men at Ball State up to that time. Since then, several significant events, such as changes in administrative positions and entry into the Mid-American Conference, have occurred as the men's intercollegiate athletic program at Ball State has continued to develop. An account of this development would be a valuable addition to Gray's work.

The goal of this study is to examine the development of Ball State's men's intercollegiate athletic program from the 1968-69 school year through the 1983-84 school year. To fulfill the goal, the study will focus on three purposes:

1. To examine the events which have helped shape the direction of the men's intercollegiate athletic program;
2. To explore the philosophies and actions of men in leadership positions and the effect of these on the intercollegiate athletic program;
3. To provide a concise reference work of selected highlights and accomplishments of Ball State's men's intercollegiate athletic teams.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study dealt with the intercollegiate athletic program for men at Ball State University from the 1968-69 school year through the 1983-84 school year. This marks a logical breaking point since a new university president and director of men's intercollegiate athletics...
were named to begin serving at the outset of the 1984-85 school year.

The intercollegiate athletic program for women at Ball State, which grew rapidly during this period, was not studied. In addition, the study focused on intercollegiate athletics and did not examine intramurals, club sports, or any topic relating to the physical education curriculum.

Most of the materials necessary for this study were readily accessible, however, the work is limited in that the author was unable to conduct interviews with Robert McCall, head of physical education and athletics from 1958 to 1970, and Jerry Anderson, president of the university from 1979 until 1981.

Definition of Terms

The intercollegiate athletic program refers to the program which allows for athletic competition against students representing other institutions. This is contrasted to intramural athletics, which allows for competition within the university.

Director of intercollegiate athletics, or athletic director, refers to the person who coordinates the functioning of the intercollegiate athletic program.

Head of physical education and athletics refers to the person who oversaw the functioning of the intercollegiate athletic program, the intramural program, and the physical education curriculum.

Sources

The sources used in this study were interviews with the men closely associated with the program, news releases and other documents from the university's Office of Sports Information, and stories from the
campus newspaper, The Ball State Daily News, and the city newspapers, The Muncie Star and The Muncie Evening Press. Where possible, sources for this study were corroborated with other sources in order to present the truth as accurately as possible.
II. PHILOSOPHY OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

A university's philosophy of intercollegiate athletics is largely influenced by men in key positions of leadership at the institution. At Ball State University, the direction of the men's intercollegiate athletic program has depended largely on the men in three positions: president, head of physical education and athletics, and director of men's intercollegiate athletics.

PRESIDENTS

In exercising the powers of his office, the president plays a vital role in determining the parameters of the intercollegiate athletic program. This has been especially true since Ball State joined the Mid-American Conference in 1973. While in some conferences athletic policy is determined by personnel from the athletic programs, the school presidents set policy in the Mid-American. The MAC can truly be described as a presidents' conference. ¹

John J. Pruis (sixth president: 1968-1978) saw intercollegiate athletics as a vital part of the total program the university offered to its students. Speaking at the school's spring sports banquet in 1969, he remarked:

A good, solid athletic program is an extremely important part of a university. The athletic program makes a contribution to the university — a unique contribution toward the development of young men. ²

Pruis saw intercollegiate athletics as another activity in which students could participate. He also felt it could be a rallying point for non-participants if the teams were somewhat successful. Another benefit Pruis perceived was that the school's alumni continued to maintain loyalty

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to the institution when there were intercollegiate athletic teams to hold their interest.

While Pruis saw many benefits accruing from intercollegiate athletics, he felt the program would be good for the school only if it represented the school with integrity. At a time when serious violations of National Collegiate Athletic Association regulations were getting wide exposure across the country, Pruis made it clear that Ball State would stay within the rules. He understood that being exposed for infractions would have a negative impact on the university and he was not going to let it happen.

Pruis' philosophy in this regard was that the university should not take advantage of the student-athlete. That is, the benefit of the student-athlete must always be considered before the good of the university. He felt that the academic program of the athlete must at all times come first.

Pruis wanted Ball State's intercollegiate athletic teams to be competitive with the teams they were facing, and he felt they were during his term as president. This was especially true as Ball State entered the Mid-American Conference halfway through his term. He saw the MAC as a well-respected conference and felt that if Ball State could be competitive in the MAC, the school could consider itself a success.

Pruis was committed to keeping Ball State competitive in the Mid-American. When Ball State was being considered for entry into the league, Pruis was asked by another school's president if Ball State would increase its athletic budget to the level of the other conference schools. Pruis responded that Ball State would do whatever was necessary to remain competitive in the MAC. Pruis had no higher aspirations than that for Ball State's teams, feeling that the university and the community of
Muncie could not support a program of national prominence.

Finally, Pruis was supportive of the broad-based program which had long characterized the school's athletic philosophy. He believed the university should sponsor as many intercollegiate sports as it could possibly afford. At the same time, he felt the school had to make an effort to be respectable in every sport it sponsored. The university's commitment could not be measured in dollars, alone, however, he felt. Pruis also saw the need for moral support. That is, he believed that the coaches and athletes had to know that the university community valued what they were doing.3

Richard W. Burkhardt (acting president: 1978-1979) was highly supportive of intercollegiate athletics in his one academic year in the president's office. He thought it was highly desirable for a large university to have an intercollegiate athletic program. Burkhardt believed that in a large university, the people needed to be brought together in some way to give them identity, and this could occur through such things as student orchestra, theater, and athletics. He felt that intercollegiate athletic teams represented the university, and that through them, the public gained respect for, and recognition of, the institution. He realized that the media gave top billing to intercollegiate athletics. Overall, Burkhardt wanted the intercollegiate athletic program to be a source of pride for the university community.

Serving only one year as president, Burkhardt felt he did not have a chance to change any of the basic philosophy of intercollegiate athletics which Ball State had followed under John Pruis. Had he stayed longer, he felt he might have been encouraged to do even more for the program in terms of support, and it was not his inclination to do any less.
Considering the success Ball State had enjoyed in the Mid-American Conference to that point, he felt the proper amount of institutional support was being given.

Burkhardt was, however, the only president in the period of this study to give serious consideration to the building of an addition to the football stadium. After visiting Central Michigan University, Burkhardt had the idea of building a mound on the east side of the stadium and placing bleachers into that. He brought in experts to consider the possibilities for such a project, but then his term was ended and the idea received no further consideration.

Burkhardt believed that Ball State had to commit itself to remaining in the Mid-American Conference. And, while he realized that Ball State was not on a level with major college football teams, he saw no reason for dropping out of Division I. He saw nothing to be gained from such a move.4

Jerry M. Anderson (seventh president: 1979-1981) served just over one academic year as president, thus his impact on the direction of the intercollegiate athletic program was minimal. The program was not a high priority of Anderson's. He was more concerned with other areas of the university and with the direction of the institution in a time of rapid growth.5

It was during Anderson's short term, however, that the first thought of scaling down Ball State's broad-based program arose. The university provost requested confidential data from the physical education department about which sports would be eliminated if the athletic budget were to be reduced by certain increments. John Reno, head of the department, refused to deal with the matter in this confidential manner, however,
and after discussing the subject with Anderson the idea was dropped and did not surface again during Anderson's term. 6

Robert P. Bell (eighth president: 1981-1984) felt intercollegiate athletics made an important contribution to the spirit of the campus. He felt it was another activity which was part of the campus environment. Bell saw the sharing of activities as an integral part of the college experience and saw intercollegiate athletics as a major means of social contact for the students. For the university community, Bell saw the entertainment of fans as the primary value derived from intercollegiate athletics.

Bell had no desire for Ball State to be a major contender in the country in any sport because he was concerned with the integrity of the program. He felt that many other schools, by putting too much emphasis on intercollegiate athletics, were breaking NCAA regulations and thus crossing the line from amateur to professional sports. He did not think it was wise to go beyond amateur sports and would not allow the university to do this in order to have successful teams.

Bell felt Ball State would be successful athletically if it was competitive in the Mid-American Conference. He had no hopes of Ball State being the best in every sport, expecting some winning seasons and some losing seasons.

He did feel it was essential to have the right men serving as coaches. Bell wanted men with character and values running the various teams, with winning games secondary. And during his tenure, he felt he did have a fine group of gentlemen as coaches.

There was some question in Bell's mind about whether Ball State needed to remain in Division I. He saw the school as standing at the
bottom of Division I, and not really wanting to compete with the nation's
top teams. He realized, however, that the Mid-American Conference was
dedicated to remaining a Division I conference, and that Ball State
had no choice but to remain in the MAC.\textsuperscript{7}

**HEADS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS**

Until the beginning of the 1981-82 school year, the head of physical
education and athletics oversaw the programs of physical education,
intramurals and intercollegiate athletics. Thus, the men who held this
position had important input into the nature of the intercollegiate
athletic program.

Robert A. McCall (second head of physical education and athletics:
1958-1970) served only the first two years of the period of this study.
McCall was a physical education teacher who saw intercollegiate athletics
as part of the total physical education program, along with general
physical education, intramurals, and preparation of physical education
teachers.\textsuperscript{8}

John E. Reno (third head of physical education and athletics:
1970-1981) viewed the intercollegiate athletic program as an indispensable
part of the university's overall educational program. He viewed it
as a program for the gifted student, allowing him a chance to compete
with other exceptional athletes from other universities. Reno also
saw intercollegiate athletics as the best way for the university to
get its name before the public. He believed it was the best advertisement
for the institution, considering the extensive media coverage given
to intercollegiate athletics.

Reno wanted Ball State to have programs of excellence in all three
of the areas under his control -- intercollegiate athletics, intramurals and instruction. He did not feel any one of those was more important than the others. In intercollegiate athletics, his goal was to have a competitive, sound program which was comparable to those of the schools in the Mid-American Conference. His means of accomplishing this began by selecting the personnel he desired to have as coaches. Then he felt it was his task to provide these coaches with all the tools they needed in order to be successful, in terms of staff, budget, and scholarships. Then he turned the programs over to the coaches.

Reno believed the university had a commitment to maintain a broad-based intercollegiate athletic program for its students, since student fees provided a majority of the intercollegiate athletic budget. He felt that as long as students were paying for this program, they should have the opportunity to compete in as many sports as possible. 9

DIRECTORS OF MEN'S INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

The director of men's intercollegiate athletics obviously has the most direct contact with the intercollegiate athletic program. While the director's actions are somewhat limited by the actions of the president (and until 1981 the head of physical education and athletics), the athletic director's philosophy is undoubtedly crucial to the direction of the intercollegiate athletic program.

Robert W. Primmer (second director of intercollegiate athletics: 1958-1970) was proud of Ball State's reputation for teaching students to teach and coach. He felt it was the university's job to provide students with an education that would be useful to them as professionals. Thus, he viewed intercollegiate athletics as another tool which prepared future
teachers and coaches for the job ahead of them. It did this by teaching them to be people-oriented and by allowing them to learn about such things as discipline, teamwork and sportsmanship. Primmer felt the purpose of athletics was to produce gentlemen who would be successful in their chosen professions. 10

Raymond A. Louthen (third director of intercollegiate athletics: 1970-1981) was a strong believer in intercollegiate athletics and in having a broad-based program. He felt that a program with several sports would be attractive to students and also would help the school get accepted into the Mid-American Conference. He considered intercollegiate athletics one of the university's greatest assets, as revealed in this comment:

If you are asking me the most important program at Ball State, I can say without qualms — intercollegiate athletics. I think it's an integral part of the school. I don't think we're taking anything away from Ball State; I think we contribute to it. To eliminate intercollegiate athletics would be a tragedy. 11

In Louthen's mind, the intercollegiate athletic program should be viewed as any other academic department on the campus — run for the benefit of the students. Whatever is of benefit to the students — the library, the student center, class offerings, athletics — should be paid for, according to Louthen. He felt the university should have the best intercollegiate athletic program that it could afford, with as many students as possible participating.

As Ball State's intercollegiate athletic program grew, a goal of Louthen's was to prepare the school's teams to meet the new Division I challenges they would be facing. One aspect of this effort was an attempt to get and keep quality coaches in all the sports.

In the area of funding, Louthen had two goals. One was to finance Ball State sports the same way they were being financed by other members
of the Mid-American Conference. He wanted Ball State to spend what
the other MAC schools spent on intercollegiate athletics, feeling this
would make the Cardinals competitive with whom they were playing. This
was his definition of success.

Secondly, Louthen wanted all of Ball State's intercollegiate athletic
teams to be competitive, without pouring money into one sport to make
a great impact on the national scene, at the expense of other sports.
For example, there was no intent on his part for the school to win a
national football or basketball championship. Certainly, he felt there
was value in giving Ball State athletes the opportunity to compete in
national tournaments and to play nationally-famous teams from time to
time, but he did not expect Ball State to be a national contender in
any sport. 12

Dwight D. Wallace (fourth director of intercollegiate athletics:
1981-1984) saw intercollegiate athletics as an essential part of the
university. He supported a broad-based program, but only as broad a
program as could be successful. He did not see value in sponsoring
a particular sport just for the sake of sponsoring it. If the university
was going to have a program and invite student-athletes to participate
in it, Wallace believed it was necessary to give those athletes a chance
to succeed, an equal chance with their competitors.

Wallace felt that Ball State should fund its program on the same
basis as those with whom it was competing, namely Mid-American Conference
schools. He believed that Ball State's intercollegiate athletic budget
had to be comparable to those of other MAC schools.

As athletic director, Wallace felt a duty to put his coaches on
equal footing with their competitors, in terms of funding and institutional
support. He wanted to make the athletic director's office be of more service to its coaches. Wallace felt that the demands being placed on coaches, such as dealing with a budget, arranging transportation to contests, dealing with alumni, and other administrative tasks, were making the coach more of an administrator and not allowing him enough time to coach. Wallace wanted to decrease this workload on his coaches by increasing the athletic staff to handle administrative details. He believed that if Ball State coaches were equal with their competitors, in terms of funding and administrative support, they could be expected to be competitive.13

In his study, Gray concluded that the men serving as president of Ball State had generally been in philosophical agreement with the men leading the intercollegiate athletic program. This commonality of ideas undoubtedly aided Ball State in building a successful intercollegiate athletic program. This conclusion appears to hold true for the first ten years of this study.

After that, however, the conclusion is difficult to draw, because of the great turnover in the president's office. When John E. Worthen became Ball State's president in July, 1984, he became the fifth man to head the university in seven years. This instability in the president's office made it extremely difficult for those involved in intercollegiate athletics to be sure of what direction the university administration wanted its program to take. There was a lot of uncertainty at Ball State during a period of great change in athletics.
III. ADMINISTRATION OF THE INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Having looked at general philosophies, it would now be helpful to examine the actions of the leaders of Ball State's intercollegiate athletic program. This chapter will also serve to provide a brief view of how Ball State's intercollegiate athletic program has been administered and funded.

In the summer of 1970, there was a change in the Ball State physical education department which "amazed and shocked Ball State followers." During the previous academic year, a committee was formed within the department, with the purpose of making suggestions for reorganization. Among those recommendations was a call for department head Robert McCall and athletic director Robert Primmer to vacate their positions with the chance to return after reorganization. Those recommendations were withdrawn, however, at the request of the women's physical education department, whose own committee had not made suggestions for reorganization as it had been asked.

That spring, the department faculty voted to ask for a review of McCall's performance. They were then interviewed by university administrators, after which McCall was asked to resign. McCall's resignation was announced on April 19. John Reno was then elected by the faculty to be the new head of the department, effective at the beginning of the second summer session.

As part of a restructuring plan presented by the vice president for academic affairs and the dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts, Reno was given the power to select the athletic director. Previously, the athletic director had been chosen by the president. President John Pruis accepted the change, feeling the department's instructional program
should be tied to the intercollegiate athletic program in this manner.  

On August 4, Ray Louthen was announced as Ball State's new athletic director, replacing Robert Primmer. Among the reasons Reno cited for selecting Louthen were his success as a football and baseball coach at Ball State and his reputation for working effectively with people.  

With the appointment of Reno and Louthen, The Ball State Daily News predicted that "in years to come, Ball Staters may look back at 1970 as the year Cardinal athletics turned the corner." 

Reno and Louthen remained in their positions for 11 years before they both resigned in the summer of 1981. The resignations came as a result of both men's displeasure with the budget with which they would be forced to work in the upcoming school year. They had requested an increase of nearly $400,000 from the previous year's budget, feeling this was necessary to maintain a "program of excellence." The budget, however, was not increased at all from 1980-81 to 1981-82. With escalating expenses and inflation, the result was a reduction in buying power. Louthen felt it was out of the question to cut back further, believing that Ball State was breaking its promise to the Mid-American Conference that it would do whatever was necessary to remain competitive.  

Reno and Louthen, who had spent 11 years building the status and prestige of the Ball State intercollegiate athletic program, "wanted no part in the demise of the program." They felt there was no way they could operate a quality program with the proposed budget. They analyzed the budget to see if they could operate with it and decided they did not want any part of it. Their resignations were announced on July 13, 1981. Among the many compliments paid the two was this by The Muncie Evening Press sports editor Warren Collier:
Those two guys have worked 11 years moving Ball State's sports program from the depths of mediocrity to a position of respect among outstanding schools in the nation.

The resignations of Reno and Louthen took new president Robert Bell completely by surprise. He felt the university was spending all the money it could afford to on intercollegiate athletics. Bell did not wish to take money from other areas, nor did he feel it right to increase student fees a great deal to support the program. Following the resignations, there were many predictions of gloom for the future of Ball State athletics. Collier commented, "I have talked to many folks around campus... and can find no one who thinks it is heading in any direction other than downhill." A week later, The Ball State Daily News editorialized that Ball State's "athletic prestige has been irreparably harmed." It was the perception of many that Ball State had destroyed itself from within.

The university's administration made it a priority to hire a new athletic director quickly from within the university. With the school year and football season approaching, Bell felt there was no time for a long search to fill the position. In addition, with the budget woes of the time, money could be saved by hiring someone already at the university. On August 4, head football coach Dwight Wallace was chosen from among seven candidates as the director of men's intercollegiate athletics at Ball State.

The appointment of Wallace as athletic director brought even more negative reaction. The Ball State Daily News called it "a major leap backward" after editorializing:

The position of athletic director becomes almost meaningless, a sideline. Indeed, it makes the entire athletic program a sideline... It looks as if athletics,
one of the few selling points Ball State has left, are going down the drain. 31

Bob Barnet of The Muncie Star commented that the requirements of the job "have made the position of athletic director of a major college or university a full-time job with no time left for coaching." 32

With the change from Louthen and Reno to Wallace, there were two major changes in the way Ball State's intercollegiate athletic program was administered. One concerned the reporting structure and the other dealt with finances. At this time, the program of intercollegiate athletics was moved directly under the control of the president's office. As athletic director, Louthen reported to Reno. Under the new structure, the athletic director reported directly to the president, while the head of physical education and athletics no longer had input into the intercollegiate athletic program. Bell cited two reasons for making this change. One was to avoid a possible conflict between the head of physical education and athletics and the athletic director. He felt there was always the possibility that the department head might not be oriented toward intercollegiate athletics, and this could lead to an undesirable conflict with the athletic director. 33

Secondly, Bell wanted to know first-hand what was going on within Ball State's intercollegiate athletic program. According to NCAA rules, the president of the institution is responsible for the way the program is conducted, and Bell wanted to be closely informed of what was being done. 34

That structural change was somewhat of a factor in bringing about the second change, which concerned the financing of intercollegiate athletics. Under the previous system, the head of physical education and athletics had three budgets with which to work — physical education,
intramurals and intercollegiate athletics — allowing for some flexibility in case of overruns. With the new structure, the intercollegiate athletic program had an entirely separate budget overseen by the athletic director.

As previously indicated, Bell was opposed to increasing institutional financial support for intercollegiate athletics. Thus, the task of raising money was given to the program itself.

Wallace made several initiatives in fund raising. One of the first was to create a new position in the athletic director's office, that of promotions director, whose job it is to solicit support for Ball State athletics and find new sources of revenue. "Priority seating and parking" were instituted, with fans required to make financial gifts to reserve special seating and parking privileges at football and basketball games. Other fund raisers initiated under Wallace included the Jog-A-Thon, an event which saw Ball State athletes raise money by collecting pledges for running, a celebrity golf outing, and the Cardinal Varsity Club Classic basketball tournament.

Still, Bell felt that Ball State could not continue to support the broad-based program which it had built. A major factor in this decision was the growth of the women's intercollegiate athletic program at the university. This is outside the realm of this study, but suffice it to say that a combination of factors caused the women's program, beginning in the mid-1970s, to get a larger portion of the intercollegiate athletic budget than it had in the past. Bell believed the school could not support what was at that time a 26-sport program (13 each for men and women).

Bell went to the men's and women's athletic directors and asked
them for recommendations on which sports to drop. In making this decision, the directors conducted studies to determine the national and regional trends in the sports being offered by other schools. At this time, many other institutions across the country were also ending sports programs. A major factor in choosing which sports to terminate at Ball State was the amount of competition which could be lined up without excessive travel expense.

Wallace was opposed to the dropping of any sports. He felt the school did not save any money by terminating an intercollegiate sport, and that it could, in fact, lose money. He observed that in most sports, a majority of athletes receive little or no athletic scholarship money, and are forced to pay all or most of their fees. By dropping sports, the university could lose potential student-athletes because they would not choose to attend Ball State if their particular sport were not offered. Thus, the university would lose the potential income of these students' fees. Wallace believed in keeping the programs intact as a way of attracting student-athletes.

Wallace knew when he became athletic director, however, that sports would soon be dropped. On March 2, 1982, it was announced that wrestling, indoor track, gymnastics and soccer would be discontinued as men's intercollegiate sports at Ball State. Four women's sports were also dropped. In making the announcement, Bell commented:

When one faces a situation like this there are two possible options. One is to reduce support across the board to all programs and have a weakened overall effort. The other is to have quality programs by concentrating the resources in fewer sports and be competitive.

In this case, Bell believed the latter option to be the correct one. Ball State's men's intercollegiate athletic program, which had grown
to 13 sports since beginning with basketball in 1918, was reduced to nine sports.

On November 3, 1983, it was announced that Wallace had resigned as athletic director effective July 1, 1984. Wallace cited two major reasons for his decision. One was that he felt the football program was beginning to suffer as he spent a great deal of time fulfilling his duties as athletic director. He desired to spend more time with football in hopes of improving the team's success. 42

Also, Wallace felt frustrated in not being able to run the type of program he wanted to run. He felt that generally, the athletic director at Ball State was not involved enough in the policy-making concerning the program he was running. 43
IV. CONFERENCE AFFILIATION

The schools with which an institution associates itself provide an excellent indication of its philosophy regarding intercollegiate athletics. During the period of this study, Ball State's conference affiliations give much insight into the philosophy and direction of the school's intercollegiate athletic program.

At the conclusion of the 1967-68 school year, Ball State and Indiana State ended their association with the Indiana Collegiate Conference (ICC). The privately-supported institutions in the conference felt that competition with these two state-supported universities would no longer be possible because of their growth in enrollment and financial support. Thus, during the 1968-69 school year, Ball State was not a member of an athletic conference for the first time since 1950.

During its last year in the ICC, Ball State had inquired about the possibility of joining the Mid-American Conference, but the conference took no action. At that time, the Mid-American Conference was seeking to become one of the top conferences in the country, and representatives of the MAC felt that Ball State had not established itself athletically to a point of being able to compete at that level. In addition, the conference did not want to make unreasonable demands on any incoming members in terms of money for scholarships and facilities.

This was a very difficult time for Ball State, as there was some question about the direction the institution and the intercollegiate athletic program should take. Ball State was in a period of transition as it stepped out of the small college atmosphere of the Indiana Collegiate Conference and attempted to identify with larger and more prestigious universities. The school's leaders felt that conference affiliation
was important, and were looking around for institutions similar academically
and athletically. 47

On September 22, 1969, a new athletic and academic conference was
formed, comprising Ball State University, Indiana State University,
Northern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University and Illinois
State University. Later to be named the Conference of Midwestern Universi-
ties (CMU), the conference was headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana,
with Jack McClelland serving as commissioner.

Like Ball State, the other schools in the CMU were going through
trying times as they grew and tried to discern the direction their inter-
collegiate athletic programs would follow. 48 The five schools felt
a common bond, not only in athletics, but in other areas of their universi-
ties. The conference facilitated meetings concerning academic affairs
as well as meetings on the athletic field.

Competition in the Conference of Midwestern Universities began
in the fall of 1970. The conference sponsored championships in basketball,
wrestling, gymnastics, swimming, cross country, track, tennis, golf
and baseball. It had planned to crown a football champion in 1974 because
advance scheduling commitments prevented a round-robin schedule from
taking place before then.

The Conference of Midwestern Universities, however, lasted only
two years. On May 26, 1972, the conference's board of governors announced
the disbanding of the league. The primary reason for the termination
of the conference was the withdrawal of Southern Illinois in April,
1972. 49 All along, the conference had hoped to expand to six, seven
or eight members. 50 A major reason for this was that the school wanted
their league to achieve Division I status, and the NCAA required a conference
to comprise at least six members to be so recognized. The CMU never was able to expand, and the withdrawal of Southern Illinois would have made expansion even more difficult.

Ball State's athletic and central administrators were not pleased with the school's association with the Conference of Midwestern Universities. Always priding themselves on Ball State's academic reputation, its leaders felt uncomfortable being associated with schools which had lower academic and admission standards than Ball State. During the two years of conference competition, the schools could not agree on common admission and academic standards for their athletes, number and distribution of athletic scholarships, or emphasis to be placed on particular sports.

After the breakup of the CMU, Ball State's leaders once again set their sights on the Mid-American Conference. For several years, the school had wished to become a member of the MAC. It was a very high priority of Robert Primmer, who laid the groundwork for acceptance into the MAC by scheduling the Cardinals to compete with Mid-American schools. Ray Louthen continued this practice when he became athletic director. In the four years before beginning MAC play, Ball State played between seven and ten MAC members per year in basketball and between two and four Mid-American schools per season in football.

Entry into the MAC was a major goal of both Louthen and President Pruis. Both men were familiar with the conference as a result of their background at Western Michigan University, Louthen as an undergraduate student and Pruis as a professor and vice president for administration.

Northern Illinois University was admitted as the ninth member of the Mid-American Conference on March 5, 1973, after which Ball State
made a concerted effort to market itself as the conference's tenth member. 53

On May 22, 1973, Ball State University was accepted as the tenth member of the Mid-American Conference, joining Bowling Green State University, Central Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Kent State University, Miami University, Northern Illinois University, Ohio University, the University of Toledo and Western Michigan University. Louthen called it "probably the greatest moment in Ball State University history." 54 Pruis said it was a "significant and proud moment in Ball State's history." 55 The school's first faculty representative to the conference, Warren Vander Hill, described it as "one of the most incredible things to happen, academically and athletically, in Ball State history." 56 Ball State Alumnus summarized the event thusly:

... the sudden shock the MAC created in announcing the selection was a sweet one to every Cardinal fan, coach, student and faculty member. It was the genesis of renewed success. 57

Several factors made the Mid-American Conference so attractive to Ball State. Perhaps foremost was the prestige, especially academically, that the conference enjoyed. The long and proud academic reputations of schools such as Miami and Ohio were much respected by Ball State administrators, who very much desired to be associated with such institutions. 58

The academic reputation of the Mid-American Conference also extended to its athletic programs. No MAC school has ever been investigated by the NCAA for any kind of rules violations in the recruiting of or academic policy regarding athletes.

There were other advantages to Ball State joining the MAC. All ten schools have similar enrollments. The relative proximity of the other MAC schools also worked to Ball State's advantage, since travel
expenses were relatively small. The ideals and goals of Ball State seemed to match those of the other MAC schools, and conference representatives saw Ball State as the type of school they wanted to join them. The Muncie school was also comparable to the other conference schools in programs offered and the type of students attracted.

There were no discernible disadvantages to joining the Mid-American Conference. The only question in the early years was whether Ball State could compete athletically, especially in football. There were many people, including even head football coach Dave McClain, who did not believe Ball State was comparable to the other MAC schools in the level of football played. But the school gained credibility quickly when the football team won the conference title in 1976 in its second year of conference competition.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC TEAMS

In this study, reference has been made to the general success or competitiveness of Ball State's intercollegiate athletic teams. This chapter will attempt to specifically chart the relative success of Ball State's men's intercollegiate athletic teams as well as provide a view of the events which have been highlights of that success. While success may be defined in several ways, in this study it will be judged in terms of winning and losing contests.

BASEBALL

In 1969, the Ball State baseball team advanced to the NCAA District Four Play-Offs at Minneapolis, Minnesota, where it was two games away
from making the school's first-ever trip to the College World Series. After defeating Big Ten champion Minnesota and Mid-American Conference winner Ohio University in the tournament, Ball State finished second after losing to Southern Illinois, 4-3.

The Cardinals then suffered four consecutive losing seasons while finishing fourth and fifth in the two years of competition in the CMU. The baseball team became eligible for the Mid-American Conference championship in 1974 and finished ninth, although it did record its first winning season since 1969.

In 1976, the team enjoyed the school's best-ever baseball season in terms of both victories and winning percentage. The 1976 squad won 34 games and lost 14 for a .708 winning percentage. That team also recorded Ball State's only .500 season in MAC baseball to date, winning nine and losing nine in league play.

But that was followed by four straight eighth-place league finishes and then a last-place standing in 1981. For the 1982 season, the Mid-American was split into two five-team divisions, and Ball State went winless in 12 conference games to finish last in the Western Division. Within two years, however, the Cardinals had returned to respectability with a 28-26-1 record in 1984. That season, the MAC eliminated its division format and the Cardinals finished fifth, their best-ever finish in the league.

BASKETBALL

Ball State's basketball team made little progress during the first decade of this study, with just winning season, 1973-74, in that span. The team recorded fourth- and fifth-place finishes in the CMU.

Prior to the 1971-72 season, Ball State's basketball program was
designated "major" by the NCAA. This classification is known today as Division I and it meant that Ball State was a member of the NCAA's most prestigious group of basketball teams. Ball State earned the classification by playing at least half of its games against other "major" teams for two straight years.

The Cardinal basketball team entered MAC competition in the 1975-76 season and finished eighth. Three years later, the program showed marked improvement with a fourth-place league finish and the best record since 1963-64.

The 1980-81 season was a year of firsts for the basketball team. With a 10-6 record, it earned a share of the MAC championship, the school's first basketball league crown in 25 years of conference competition. An overall record of 20-10 made the team the school's first 20-game winner, and the Cardinals also won the MAC Tournament to earn their first visit to the NCAA Tournament. In its opening game in the Mideast Regional at Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Ball State lost to Boston College, 93-90.

The next season, the Cardinals won the Mid-American title with a 12-4 record, but lost in the finals of the conference tournament and were thus denied another NCAA appearance. Ball State extended its streak of first-division conference finishes to five in 1982-83, but fell to ninth place the next season.

CROSS COUNTRY

Cross country was one of Ball State's most successful sports during the first half of the 1970s. Beginning in 1969, the Cardinals enjoyed
eight consecutive winning seasons. In both 1969 and 1970, the team finished second in the Big State Meet behind Indiana University, with the 1970 squad taking second place in the CMU.

In 1971, the Ball State cross country team became the school's first champion in the CMU, winning the conference meet with 36 points while second-place Illinois State totaled 54. That team also won the Big State Meet for the first time. With its success in those two meets plus its 8-2 dual-meet record, Ball State qualified for its first NCAA Championship Meet, on November 22 at Knoxville, Tennessee.

The team finished 18th in a field of 30 teams, as reported by The Ball State Daily News:

The first Ball State representatives to compete in an NCAA meet viewed the results with mixed emotions. They had hoped to be in the top fifteen teams, possibly in the top twelve.

The Ball State runners did have the satisfaction of beating some big name schools. The University of Kentucky, Colorado, Texas, Air Force and North Carolina were among the many schools that trailed the Cards.62

The 1974 team won the Indiana Intercollegiate (formerly the Big State Meet) and finished third in the MAC, after being ranked 15th in the country in the November 6 issue of The Harrier, a national cross country magazine.

The next fall, Ball State placed five runners in the top 14 to win the MAC title. In 1976, the MAC cross country meet became the first Mid-American championship event to be hosted by Ball State.

Between 1971 and 1976, Ball State's cross country team won 34 dual meets while losing eight, earned two conference championships and won two state meets. But beginning in 1977, the team went seven straight seasons losing more meets than it won, while finishing no higher than seventh in the MAC. The Cardinals also faltered in state meets in those
seven years, finishing no higher than third and falling to sixth twice.

FOOTBALL

Ball State's football team was mediocre for the first seven years of this study, with a 6-4 record in 1974 marking the most it was ever above or below the .500 mark. That 1974 season was the team's first in the Mid-American Conference. The Cardinals began permanently playing an 11-game schedule in 1975, a season which marked the beginning of a highly successful four-year period for Ball State football.

The 1975 Cardinals compiled a 9-2 record and finished third in the conference. "The Ball State football team has brought the community much pleasure and built much pride," wrote sports editor Bob Barnet of The Muncie Star. "The bright deeds of 1975 will not soon be forgotten."63

But 1976 was even better, as Ball State, in only its second year of MAC play, became the first school outside the state of Ohio to win the football title outright. The Cardinals compiled an 8-3 record, including four victories at season's start which had them tied with Rutgers University for the nation's longest winning streak at 11 games.

Ball State finished third in the MAC the next year and won nine and lost two overall, while setting school and conference records with 377 points. The team continued its success in 1978, winning its second MAC title in three years with an 8-0 record and going 10-1 overall. The 1978 Cardinals led the nation in scoring defense, giving up 7.5 points per game.

At that point, Ball State had a four-year record of 36-8 and was 21-4 in its first four years of MAC play. Summing up the state of the Ball State football program at that time, sports editor Warren Collier of The Muncie Evening Press wrote:
There are few unbiased followers of football who would deny the Cardinals over the last few seasons would have given many schools with more nationally famous names a run for their money on the gridiron.

In June, 1980, the success of the Ball State football program was recognized when Purdue University agreed to schedule the Cardinals in the 1985 and 1986 seasons. Purdue would be the first Big Ten Conference team to ever play Ball State in football. "George (King, Purdue's athletic director) has always told me he would play us when he thought we were ready, and I have great respect for his judgment," said Ray Louthen in announcing the agreement.

But between 1979 and 1983, the Ball State football program slipped back to mediocrity. In five seasons the Cardinals won 27 games and lost 28, with no more than six victories in any season. They were 19-22 in MAC action, finishing no higher than fourth and sinking to back-to-back eighth-place finishes in 1981 and 1982.

In 1975, Ball State's football program received Division I status from the NCAA on the basis of its schedule. Since then, however, the criteria for remaining Division I have changed and are concerned with facilities and attendance. By itself, Ball State does not qualify as a Division I football program. However, since more than half of the MAC members (six of ten at the present time) do qualify, all the teams in the conference are designated Division I.

GOLF

The golf program at Ball State has become one of national recognition. Since 1968, Ball State's golfers have made seven trips to the NCAA Tournament, including five straight years, 1971 through 1975. The team's highest finish in the national tourney was a tie for 14th in 1972, and the Cardinals also recorded top twenty finishes in 1973 and 1975. After
a six year absence, Ball State returned to the NCAA Tournament in 1982 and finished 20th, and came back in 1983 to take 18th place.

The golf team was Ball State's only two-time champion in the CMU, edging Illinois State by 13 strokes for the 1971 title and by nine shots for the 1972 crown. The golfers were also the first Cardinals to win a Mid-American Conference championship, taking the title in 1975 and repeating that feat in 1982.

From 1969 through 1974, Ball State's golf team compiled a record of 79 wins and 11 losses in dual meets, including an 11-0 mark in 1971 and a 10-0 record in 1973. After that, the golf schedule's emphasis switched from dual meets to tournaments, with Ball State playing between zero and four dual meets each season from that point forward.

This change from dual meets to tournaments was a national trend in college golf. Throughout the 1960s, schools moved away from dual meets versus one team, toward double- or triple-dual meets, and as the size of these meets grew the tournament format became more convenient.

In addition, Ball State found itself having to travel farther to meet equal competition as the scope of its program outgrew that of nearby schools. In traveling to tournaments, Ball State was able to compete against teams of its caliber at the least expense.

Ball State's golf team won at least two tournament titles every year from 1971 through 1984, claiming seven championships in 1978 and 1983 and four in 1982 and 1984. Its own tournament, the Ball State Invitational, was initiated in 1975, and the Cardinals have been champions of their own tournament six times.

GYMNASTICS

The only winning record for Ball State's gymnastics team during
the period of this study was a 6-5 mark in the 1981-82 season. The gymnastics team finished last in the CMU both years, winning just five of 28 meets in those two seasons. The gymnasts' record gradually improved after that, until back-to-back .500 seasons in 1975-76 and 1976-77, but then dropped off again with four straight losing seasons. The 1980-81 season was Ball State's worst in a decade, but the next season, the 6-5 record was the school's first winning gymnastics record since 1965-66.

Gymnastics is not a sport sponsored by the Mid-American Conference, and a minimal number of schools in the country support a team. This lack of competition was a major factor in Ball State terminating gymnastics as an intercollegiate sport on March 2, 1982.

SOCCER

Ball State's soccer team suffered five consecutive losing seasons from 1968 through 1972, winning just eight games while losing 37 and tying five. The team then put together four straight winning records, the only time in school history the soccer team accomplished that feat. The soccer team put three more winning records together in the next four years.

In July, 1981, President Bell suggested that the university drop soccer as an intercollegiate sport, but the university's Athletics Committee recommended that this not be done.

Many persons around the university thought Bell's recommendation was as good as gold and that soccer was doomed. But the committee wasted no time in rejecting Bell's recommendation, the members agreeing that dropping soccer would not save enough money to make much difference and more harm than good would occur by such action. The committee's action was somewhat unexpected; its conclusions tough and to the point.
The school did field a soccer team for the 1981 season, but then soccer was discontinued as an intercollegiate sport at Ball State on March 2, 1982. Soccer was similar to gymnastics in that a championship was not sponsored by the Mid-American Conference and the sport was not tremendously popular across the country.

SWIMMING

University Pool, located on McKinley Avenue adjacent to University Gym, was opened in September, 1968. Plans for the natatorium were developed by Dr. John O. Lewellen, longtime swimming coach and instructor at the university. In honor of Lewellen's contributions, the natatorium was named Lewellen Aquatics Center in 1981.

During the first ten years of this study, Ball State's swimming team recorded seven winning seasons, although the swimmers finished fourth in the CMU both years and never finished higher than sixth in the MAC in that span. They then fell to four straight losing seasons before returning to a 9-3 record in 1982-83, their best mark since 1971-72. The following year, the Cardinals equaled their best finish in the MAC with a sixth-place standing after two consecutive last-place finishes.

TENNIS

Only once in the last 12 years has Ball State's tennis team endured a losing season, and even in that 1977 season the team finished third in the Mid-American Conference. The Cardinals have consistently been in the top division of the MAC since beginning conference play in 1975.

The 1980 season saw Ball State climb to second in the MAC behind Miami University. For the next three years, the Cardinals finished fourth in the conference. In 1984, they broke through and claimed the
school's first MAC tennis title, scoring 27 points to second-place Western Michigan's 26. The team also won all eight of its conference matches and recorded its seventh consecutive winning season.

In 1978, the Cardinal Creek Tennis Center was completed and became the home of the Ball State tennis team. Located between McKinley and Bethel avenues adjacent to the campus' north parking lot, it features 12 lighted courts and permanent seating for 600 spectators.

**TRACK AND FIELD**

Ball State has had some fine athletes in track and field, but the Cardinals have not been successful as a team in the Mid-American Conference. Ball State has never been among the top five schools in the MAC Meet. In 11 years of competition, the team has finished tenth three times and ninth five other times, with the highest finish being sixth in 1978. In dual meets, the team compiled seven winning seasons between 1971 and 1979, but has not had a winning record since then.

An all-weather rubberized asphalt track was completed just north of the football stadium in the spring of 1969. The eight-lane University Track replaced the track located southwest of Ball Gymnasium as the site for Ball State's home meets.

**VOLLEYBALL**

On a national level, Ball State's volleyball team has been the school's most successful. The Cardinals made seven appearances in the NCAA Final Four from the tournament's inception in 1970 until 1984. In fact, head coach Don Shondell was selected to serve on the national committee whose task it was to initiate the tournament. That first
tourney was held April 24 and 25, 1970, at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), and Ball State, following a 19-0 regular season, was one of four invited teams. The Cardinals finished fourth.

In 1971, Ball State had another perfect volleyball season, and the team's 17-0 record earned it another NCAA trip. This time the Cardinals finished third. In the fall of 1971, Ball State was given the honor of hosting the 1972 tournament. The Cardinals again made the field, and hosted Santa Barbara, San Diego State and UCLA at University Gym on April 28 and 29, 1972. Ball State finished third. The Cardinals went to the NCAA Final Four the next two seasons also, thus becoming the only team to participate in the tourney in each of its first five years. The team finished third again in both 1973 and 1974.

The tournament returned to Ball State in 1976, although the Cardinals did not compete. Their sixth trip to the finals came in 1979, when they finished fourth. In 1980, Ball State hosted its third Final Four on May 9 and 10. Ball State has received national attention in hosting the Final Four as ABC-TV has filmed all three of the tournaments for broadcast on its "Wide World of Sports." The Cardinals returned to UCLA in 1984 for their seventh Final Four appearance, again claiming fourth place.

Volleyball is not a sport sponsored by the MAC, but the Cardinals are members of the Midwest Intercollegiate Volleyball Association. It is by winning the MIVA championship that the team qualifies for the NCAA Tournament.

WRESTLING

Ball State's wrestling team enjoyed just two winning seasons between
1969 and 1982 and finished last in both years of CMU competition, but it was somewhat successful in the Mid-American Conference. In 1974-75, the team recorded its first winning season since 1964-65, and finished third in its second year in the MAC. Although the wrestlers then endured four consecutive losing seasons, they finished second in the conference meets of 1978 and 1979. In 1978, they scored 54 points while victorious Kent State totaled 73 1/4. The next year, the Cardinals closed the gap to seven points, taking 50 1/4 points to Kent State's 57 1/4. The next year, Ball State fell to fourth in the MAC and then went to sixth for two straight years. Wrestling was ended as an intercollegiate sport at Ball State on March 2, 1982.
CONCLUSION

As a result of the information compiled in this study, the following conclusions may be drawn concerning the men's intercollegiate athletic program at Ball State University from the 1968-69 through the 1983-84 school years:

1. The men who have served as president of Ball State have been very interested in the school's intercollegiate athletic program. Accordingly, they have exercised a considerable amount of control over the policies which have guided the program.

2. The placing of the intercollegiate athletic program under the control of the president's office gave the president even more of a voice in the way the program was administered.

3. The rapid turnover rate in the president's office from 1978 until 1984 had a detrimental effect on the intercollegiate athletic program. Ball State fell behind other MAC schools in areas such as funding and facilities, largely because no long-range goals could be set.

4. The philosophy of maintaining a broad-based program has continued to be espoused by men in leadership positions; however, the program was cut from thirteen to nine sports in 1982. This dropping of sports indicated a severe financial problem, which was also displayed in the failure to upgrade facilities and the relative lack of competitiveness in the Mid-American Conference. Over the past five years, Ball State finished seventh twice, eighth once and ninth twice in the conference all-sports trophy standings. The dropping of sports may have also indicated a shift away from the philosophy of maintaining a broad-based program.
5. The completion of a football stadium, swimming pool and track by 1969 culminated a period of much improvement in athletic facilities. At that time, Ball State's athletic facilities ranked among the finest in the Midwest for a school of its size. With little improvement since that time, however, the school has fallen behind its competition and this has had a negative effect on the program.

6. Membership in the Mid-American Conference has been very beneficial in achieving the aims of the men in leadership positions. That is, being a MAC member is consistent with the philosophy and goals of the leaders of Ball State's intercollegiate athletic program. Being associated with such a prestigious group of schools has improved the status of the university both athletically and academically.

In summary, the period covered by this study has been both a challenging and a trying one for Ball State's intercollegiate athletic program for men. The future will be no different. The program will begin a very important period with a new president and athletic director taking office at the start of the 1984-85 academic year. The decisions of these two men will greatly influence the future growth and success of Ball State's intercollegiate athletic program. On the basis of this study, the author would like to make two recommendations concerning the future of men's intercollegiate athletics at Ball State:

1. The men who will guide the program should be knowledgeable with the history of intercollegiate athletics at Ball State, perhaps using Gray's study and this work as a basis for understanding. They must be aware of the decisions that have been made in the past and how these decisions have affected the program.
2. These men must decide clearly the goals and philosophies of Ball State's men's intercollegiate athletic program. They must also realize the effect of the women's intercollegiate athletic program. Specifically, they must decide which of two paths Ball State will follow: a greater commitment to intercollegiate athletics, a commitment that will be needed to remain in Division I and in the Mid-American Conference, or a de-emphasis and a return to the level on which Ball State competed prior to joining the MAC. The author is not advocating either path; only stressing that the decision must be made.
NOTES


3. All information from John Pruis in interview of Jan. 14, 1985


5. George Swafford, Ball State's faculty representative to the Mid-American Conference and NCAA, in interview of Dec. 18, 1984


7. All information from Robert Bell in interview of Jan. 15, 1985

8. Marvin Gray, *The History and Philosophy of Intercollegiate Athletics for Men at Ball State University*

9. All information from John Reno in interview of Dec. 13, 1984

10. All information from Robert Primmer in interview of Dec. 19, 1984


12. All information from Ray Louthen in interview of Jan. 10, 1985

13. All information from Dwight Wallace in interview of Dec. 18, 1984


34. Robert Bell in interview of Jan. 15, 1985
35. Dwight Wallace in interview of Dec. 18, 1984
36. Dwight Wallace in interview of Dec. 18, 1984
37. Robert Bell in interview of Jan. 15, 1985
38. Dwight Wallace in interview of Dec. 18, 1984
39. Dwight Wallace in interview of Dec. 18, 1984
40. Dwight Wallace in interview of Dec. 18, 1984
41. News release from Ball State Office of Sports Information, March 2, 1982
42. Dwight Wallace in interview of Dec. 18, 1984
43. Dwight Wallace in interview of Dec. 18, 1984
44. Ray Louthen in interview of Jan. 10, 1985
45. Letter from MAC Commissioner Robert James to Ball State President John Emens, Feb. 20, 1968
47. Warren Vander Hill, Ball State faculty representative to the Conference of Midwestern Universities and first faculty representative to the MAC, in interview of Dec. 12, 1984
52. Warren Vander Hill in interview of Dec. 12, 1984
55. Ibid.
57. Ball State Alumnus, Sept. 7, 1973
63. The Muncie Star, Nov. 17, 1975
64. The Muncie Evening Press, Aug. 7, 1979
65. News release from Ball State Office of Sports Information, June 24, 1980
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