WILL COLLEGE ATHLETICS 'PAY THE PRICE'

College administrators have long expounded on the philosophy that the best athlete, the one who is most rewarding to bring along, are the ones who will compensate for the extra costs the university incurs by charging higher fees for examples by trimming budgets and writting more out of their athletic program dollars instead of following the national policy of involuntary waste. At this moment, despite nationwide and regional conferences to find ways of cutting costs, the net result has been a lot of meaningless dialogue. For every thrust suggestion you'll find two more alternate proposals dodging past the initial one to offer an economic remedy aimed in an opposite direction.

TOO MANY DOUGING THE ISSUES

For example, someone willing to limit scholar- ship aid to very high grade students, and that idea who recommends, instead, the trimming of recruiting costs on limiting the size of travelling squads. Others, as in football, lobby in favor of the status quo while cutting out or cancelling minor sports. And then there's the trend toward budget cuts on any one or several economy-bust measures to make any single department more 

The result, therefore, only a blend of suggestions aimed at the same cutting in major sports will prove workable and, once there, the same small group will be the only college leadership to start paying the price and making some cuts.

Consider, for instance, the proposals for reducing the size of coaching staffs. Those are two areas in which some real, economizing progress can be made. If some agreement were reached here, the possible result could be another dollar-saving in related areas.

TIGHTER, BETTER SCOUTING NEEDED

For a starter, cut the number of grants but don't trim the talent, instead, let's trim the coaching staff. Probably a bigger reduction of scholarships in favor of an added coach might be more practicable. At the same time, a big cut would be needed to find better, more dedicated athletes to whom the dollars are actually going.

Keeping that in mind, the expenses of recruitment could be lessened by screening athletes more intensively or, for a start, by analyzing the chances of overlooking fine prospects who might be just as good or better of the "higher" category. By, for instance, more intense scouting of territory closer to the big schools, even half-grants might land better prospects.

Maintaining, of course, the cut of talk of halves or three-quarter grants, but I wonder how many would admit that full scholarships are wasted among the innumerable thre-quarters. Many college officials?

Most trace such losses to academic failure or injuries, yet why is it they can't make up those "lost"s through more effective use of your dollars.

RECRUITING NOT THOROUGH ENOUGH

No one can believe that a few college administrators, because they've scouted badly or why as thoroughly as necessary—and so have made their contribution to the "national" economy of "waste." In other words, they can do better— as they should have been doing all along—and now must meet the stronger demands that they should more out of their recruiting dollar.

Also, many coaches ought to "work" the blue-chip discount. Many fine football teams in the land claim few blue-chippers and yet hold their heads high. In fact, too many have had the bad habit of putting the blue status label on athletes who are not, and it costs them a full- ride scholarship later but, in many cases, when these grants might have landed two full-ride performers—ever so many years in the future.

Just as every young person in this land does not need a college education to make his (or her) way in the world, so do not need hands on the billboards or worthy of full grants. That, as we see it, is the biggest cut of all in college athletics today—and has been for a long time.

In summary, the hour has struck for college athletics management to get back to doing the things they do more expertly (with steadier application and hard work), because that is the only way to cut the spending dollars. In the end, if they are, they'd be the one most grateful because that is the only way to get better results from more wholesome young men.

How wonderful that would be—having fewer bummy pro athletes scandalizing the country.