

The March issue of *Athletics Administration* tackled something that has been top-of-mind for companies, organizations and institutions of higher learning for quite some time—sustainability. Technology—solar-powered vehicles and trash compactors, for instance—has allowed the bar to be raised for what can be done in terms of on-campus green initiatives in recent years. We hope you find our March feature article to be distinct and informative on what all this means for your athletics department, as we focus on some of the environmental efforts taking place on campuses across the country and how they are even generating revenue for their respective institutions.

The cover of the March 2010 issue of *Athletics Administration* features a yellow solar-powered vehicle at night. The title "ATHLETICS ADMINISTRATION" is at the top in a large, stylized font. Below it, the issue information "MARCH 2010/VOLUME 45/NUMBER 2" is displayed. A yellow banner reads "The Official Publication of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics". The central image shows a yellow solar car with various sponsor logos including Michigan Engineering, Roush, SKF, Ford, GM, Delta, and others. Below the car, a blue banner highlights the "BLUE GREEN RIVALRY" between "MICHIGAN, UCSB, CAL POLY, OHIO STATE" and other institutions. A "Scarlet, Gray & Green" logo is also present. At the bottom, a white box contains the text "Sustainability on Campus" and "Sustainable Initiatives on Campus". A large yellow recycling symbol is in the bottom right corner.

ATHLETICS
ADMINISTRATION

MARCH 2010/VOLUME 45/NUMBER 2

The Official Publication of the
National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics

2 Michigan Engineering Roush SKF Ford GM Delta

BLUE GREEN RIVALRY
UCSB-CAL POLY
Sustainability

MICHIGAN, UCSB,
CAL POLY, OHIO STATE

Scarlet, Gray & Green

and other institutions take
going GREEN to the next level.

Sustainability on Campus
Sustainable Initiatives on Campus

ATHLETICS DEPARTMENTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Efforts & Revenue Generation On Your Campus

By Michael E. Pfahl, Ph.D., Ohio University and Mike Ott, Editor

The current environmental revival is difficult to accurately read since environmental movements throughout history have risen and fallen in mainstream popularity. While the current green fervor might be another brief fad, it might also signify a substantial change in the way people in the United States view and interact with the environment. Sport, as a general entity, is an important component of the overall environmental discussion because of its prominent role in society and the impact it has on the environment. Mounting economic, social and legislative interest and pressure regarding environmental issues means sport organizations, like their civic and corporate counterparts, are beginning to examine operational practices to discover ways of becoming more environmentally friendly.

High profile examples of green sport such as the American Airlines Arena (Miami Heat), FIFA's efforts for a greener World Cup in 2006, Major League Baseball's partnership with the National Resources Defense Council, and the first National Basketball Association Green Week held in April 2009 reflect a paradigm shift at the professional sport level toward more environmentally friendly practices. Colleges and universities are also beginning to take environmental action (e.g., American University and College Presidents' Climate Commitment) including linking athletics department actions to broader university level green efforts. Athletics department personnel are more frequently required to think green in their strategic efforts. Given the expansive natural footprint of intercollegiate athletics (e.g., athletics fields and maintenance), high visibility, and constant tension between athletics and academic worlds, athletics departments need to include environmental issues into strategic planning and daily actions in order to realize potentially significant returns on investment.

Benefitting from Environmental Efforts

Of course, improved air quality, resource conservation, and other benefits of becoming more environmentally friendly are important to athletics department personnel, but the strategic and economic/financial aspects of green sport are important too. Athletics departments must balance revenue generation with the new, and sometimes high, costs of becoming more environmentally friendly. These cost increases might be realized in the short term, a time when funding for universities in general is being re-examined, and in many cases, cut. Athletics department personnel might be cautious about or even dissuaded from making fundamental changes to departmental operations and creating and implementing a comprehensive sustainability plan at this time. One way of easing the burden is to turn green initiatives into revenue generation tools. This method is gaining momentum across athletics departments. There are at least three ways to utilize green efforts to help monetize athletics department practices and create new marketing opportunities on college campuses: reduction of costs, green partners and on-campus initiatives.

Cost Reduction

Reducing costs associated with operating an athletics department is the most common way of monetizing green efforts. In this case, systemic audits of department practices will tell athletics department personnel what they are doing, but creative collaboration between university administration officials and athletics departmental personnel (and the broader university/local community) will create a long-term plan of action. Long term, however, means perpetual because there is no end state or final goal for green initiatives. They exist as part of life rather than an objective practice imposed upon the environment. Working with the university community, and perhaps partners outside this system (e.g., environmental groups) would be the first step toward finding ways to change operations for the better and realize cost savings. While easier said than done, reducing costs is a form of fundraising.

Revenue Generation

Traditional athletics department practices raise funds through sponsorships, partnerships and supporter groups. This established system can be modified to become green as well. The first step taken has been the implementation of green-themed events, such as a recent University of Kansas' men's basketball game where the university's and athletics department's environmental initiatives were highlighted as part of the game to raise awareness about environmental issues. Raising awareness must be closely followed by the identification of sponsors and partners to help address existing environmental issues. For example, a waste management partner is identified to help plan for and remove waste at sport venues. At the same time, the athletics department — partner relationship can establish outreach programs, such as a recycling program, which can be run in conjunction with broader university efforts.

Further, since naming rights and other inventory are sold across the entire sport spectrum (e.g., stadium signage to construction site sponsorship), why not identify companies that specialize in green products or services and bring them

into the athletics department practices. In an extreme example, a university can partner with an alternative energy company to build wind turbine facilities near campus and channel the gathered energy into the local grid. The company receives naming rights to a sport facility and the university sets a precedent in green revenue generation. Other investments can include partnerships such as the one undertaken by the New Jersey Nets who work with Zebra eco, an environmentally friendly writing instrument company. In addition, the Nets recently added Toys 'R Us to their green Web page. Such a partnership can be used to create activation programs that involve the student and local community members (e.g., schools) in ways that enhance the athletics department's revenue generation and marketing/community service efforts. For more simple revenue generation ideas, special ticket prices can be arranged with a sponsor during a green week that can feature special promotions, give-a-ways and environmental messaging.

As part of the partnership, the athletics department can explore the environmentally-related practices of partners and potentially uncover useful practices, procedures and policies to implement in their departments. This might not only uncover cost saving opportunities, but might also uncover new ways to activate the existing relationship (and generate new revenues).

Finally, the environmental partnership efforts can also include the monetization of virtual spaces. Few college and professional sport organizations are effectively utilizing the virtual inventory available to them. Development of content and partnerships surrounding virtual spaces (e.g., www.teamgoesgreen.com) is a way to increase inventory, create additional revenue generation opportunities and engage fans. Micro-sites, smaller Web sites (in size and scope) are being developed in conjunction with a sport organization and sport sponsor. These sites promote the initiatives of the sport organization and its partners. At the same time, it offers a secondary platform for monetizing digital spaces. Exclusive partnerships with a college or university athletics department in an uncluttered messaging environment is a way of generating additional revenues at little to no cost outside of development and maintenance.

On-campus Initiatives

Finally, the booster and supporter organizations (official supporter organizations as well as student ones) affiliated with athletics departments can be utilized to help promote green efforts and raise additional revenues. The commitment these groups show to the student-athletes/athletics department can be harnessed as labor (e.g., volunteers for green events), idea generators (e.g., partnership ideas from their companies) and change agents (e.g., high profile recyclers, green ambassadors in the community).

On-campus initiatives include mobilizing the student body and student-athletes into action. In addition to promoting the green strategies of the athletics department, finding ways to drive students and local community members to games (i.e., ticket revenue, concessions, parking) will create new revenues. Such activities can include student-athlete and

athletics department personnel participation in charity events and on-campus green programs. Sincere commitment to environmental change must be done as a human community and the more integrated athletics department green efforts can be into the local communities around them, the more likely people are willing to believe in the efforts and offer support, including monetary support.

All of this information should spur more ideas than it presents because creativity and commitment are two key words in the quest to better integrate our environment into our daily actions as we become more aware of our relationship with and within the natural environment. Breaking free from the perspective that the environment is something humans can control, and embracing the concept of the environment as something we are, will help drive changes in athletics department actions. New opportunities will emerge from this shift in relation to creative monetization and fundraising for athletics departments.

A few bumps in the road are inevitable with any new initiative or departmental shift in focus. With the implementation of green initiatives, administrators have acknowledged that dollars must be fronted for many of them to get underway. Also, the worry is that while the transition to greener philosophies looks good to the public eye, it will not prompt them to donate more money or attend more games. But, when you look deeper into the opportunity, as stated before, the adaptation of green as a third school color may be just what the doctor ordered — for the environment and the athletics department.

Bad Blood ... Good Cause

Even the most bitter of on-field rivals acknowledge the need to go green in order to preserve the planet. The never-friendly Ohio State Buckeyes and Michigan Wolverines, as well as numerous other rival colleges and universities, have programs and green efforts in place, beginning with, but not limited to the recycling of trash on gamedays.

Many consider tailgating for a big football game an art form. Unfortunately for the environment, a tailgating masterpiece comes complete with plastic cups, aluminum cans, hot dog wrappers and many other harmful materials that rarely find the bottom of a trash can, not to mention a recycling bin.

The Ohio State University began its Scarlet, Gray & Green sustainability campaign in 2007 and collected nearly 151 tons of recyclable materials during 14 home dates its first two seasons. By receiving white plastic recycling bags for bottles, cans, paper and cardboard, 35 tons of that material was collected by tailgaters. Adding another component to the recycling effort for the 2009 season, the Scarlet, Gray & Green program placed 12 solar-powered recyclable-compacting receptacles around the north side of Ohio Stadium, the heart of Buckeye tailgating.

"These units are a great way to demonstrate the concept of sustainability," said Christina





Redman, sustainability coordinator at OSU. “By using sunlight — a free source of energy — to compact the waste fans throw away, the units will not need to be emptied as often, which will also save on labor costs.”

The buck doesn't stop with recycling in terms of sustainability at Ohio State, as several other efforts are being executed to ensure that students, alumni and fans alike “go green” when they root on the scarlet and gray. The “Pedal Instead” program provides free valet service to all bicycles during home football games. Bicyclists are provided with a claim check and can retrieve their bikes after the game at a bike corral on the south side of Woody Hayes Drive. In addition, the university has established, or is working toward the following green initiatives: campus bio-diesel conversion, green office supplies, energy-saving lights, green building design construction, building energy audits and the implementation of energy conserving projects.

The University of Michigan's inaugural “Zero Waste Tailgate,” instituted and organized by the UM Alumni Association and a team of Student Sustainability Initiative (SSI) volunteers, also recognizes the need for sustainability and took measures to combat waste at the Wolverines' homecoming game vs. Indiana this past fall. Going a step further than just providing recycling bags and bins for tailgaters across campus, all of the materials used for the Go Blue Tailgate — which annually welcomes more than 3,000 alumni, students and friends — were entirely compostable. Plates, cups, napkins, utensils and trash liners were all transported to a local composting farm to eliminate the need for trash to be taken to landfills.

By encouraging fans to “Go Green” while they cheered “Go Blue” during an exciting 36-33 homecoming victory in 2009, the university hopes that this first step toward sustainability can lead to season-long “Zero Waste Tailgates” in the near future.

Michigan College of Engineering's Solar Car Team has been at the forefront of sustainability and energy efficiency since 1989 through its participation in the North American Solar Challenge — a 2,400-mile race from Dallas to Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and the World Solar Challenge — an 1,800-mile race across Australia. Founded in 1989, Michigan's Solar Car Team is one of the largest and most successful student projects at the university, and is also one of the most successful solar car teams in North America.

The team's 10th edition, Infinium, was unveiled June 5, 2009 and is the Maize and Blue's most remarkably energy-efficient vehicle to date. According to the university, Infinium is five



Photo courtesy of Scott Galvin, U-M Photo Services

times more aerodynamic than a corvette and employs space-grade gallium arsenide solar panels that convert sunshine into power that is stored in highly efficient lithium batteries. These batteries are capable of carrying the car 300 miles in the pitch dark. Their efficiency helps the car recharge on sunny days even while being driven. Infinium has a top speed of 87 miles per hour and weighs only 400 pounds.

In another example, rival institutions UC Santa Barbara (UCSB) and Cal Poly State University have taken green awareness to a new level in creating a “Series for Sustainability” competition between the two athletics programs, also known as the Blue-Green rivalry. This regional rivalry is now putting sustainability efforts on a pedestal, and the two institutions are hoping to turn Gaucho and Mustang fans into fans of the environment as well.

“The idea for this rivalry series and the opportunity to use it to shine a light on environmental and sustainability issues is very unique,” said Mark Massari, UCSB’s director of athletics. “On behalf of the entire campus, we are excited to use our games against our Central Coast partner, Cal Poly, to communicate the tremendous strides UCSB is achieving as a green and sustainable campus.”



The athletics competition side of the Blue-Green rivalry has each institution competing in 16 sports, with the winner receiving one point per regular season victory, and two points being awarded to the series winner in baseball and softball. The thousands of students, faculty/staff and fans reached through athletics by UCSC and Cal Poly in the Central Coast region make the marketing possibilities such as recycling challenges and promotions endless for this first-of-its-kind “Series for Sustainability.”

ESPN Green Game

The University of Kansas (KU) and the city of Lawrence have long been leaders in the field of sustainability, and as touched on previously, the worldwide leader of sports took notice and put KU’s sustainability efforts on display for a national audience to take heed. ESPN’s inaugural “Green Game” was played between Kansas and Michigan, Dec. 19, 2009, and the telecast was “littered” with highlights of KU’s sustainability efforts.

Maybe one of the most impressive energy efficient buildings in the nation resides on the Lawrence campus. The crown jewels of the Jayhawks’ David A. Ambler Student Recreation

Fitness Center are its 15 elliptical machines that convert kinetic energy created through workouts and feed it back into the building’s electrical grid. Other facilities joining in the effort include campus dining halls, which are used in correlation with KU’s Biodiesel Initiative. Maybe more remarkably innovative than what’s going on in the student recreation center, used cooking oil is collected from these dining halls, converted into biodiesel fuel, recycled and used to power campus lawn mowers. Not stopping there, the fuel is also being put to use at home football games by powering generators in the HyVee Kids’ Fun Zone, allowing an avenue for future Jayhawks to enjoy game days in an eco-friendly manner.

Not lost in all the high-tech sustainability initiatives is KU’s effort to promote on- and off-campus recycling. A 30-second promotional video featuring Jayhawk student-athletes was aired during the Green Game, and 30 additional recycling bins were brought into Allen Fieldhouse for the contest. Attempting to make every facet of the afternoon as green as possible, both teams even sported warm-up shirts made from 100 percent recycled material, donning the Green Game logo on the back. Doing its part, ESPN used LED lights for lighting the on-air personalities and provided hybrid rental cars for its production staff.

The College Sustainability Report Card

These are just a few cases in which institutions are answering the environmental bell on their respective campuses, but according to the 2010 College Sustainability Report Card — which can be found at www.greenreportcard.org, with full results and analysis — more than half of the 332 institutions across all divisions in both the United States and Canada received superb grades of B- or higher. Some of the findings from the most recent study, which examines nine different categories (Administration, Climate Change and Energy, Food and Recycling, Green Building, Student Involvement, Transportation, Endowment Transparency, Investment Priorities, Shareholder Engagement) include: institutions performed the best in the Administration and Food and Recycling categories; more than two-thirds of the 332 institutions have full-time staff dedicated to sustainability; and hybrid or other alternative-energy vehicles are used in 77 percent of the institution fleets.

It’s no secret that colleges and universities are less green in terms of what’s in the bank; however, when comparing their overall report card from the previous year to 2010, that hasn’t stopped them from making continued strides toward sustainability. That said, the pride being taken in green investments on college campuses around the globe is outstanding, and those investments are not only providing an instant positive impact for the respective campuses, but they are also ensuring the long-term sustainability of the communities that surround them.