



Some folks got their hackles up because a Mississippi ball team will play in an integrated tournament up north. The college board of trustees gave the OK and were criticized.

No one sought my opinion about the ruckus so will have to volunteer. Somehow my blood pressure won't come up over the matter. To me the decision was not whether to play a ball game with a school using a negro player, but whether or not to stay in the big time college athletics as it is now conducted. The situation reached the point to either use the pot or get off.

The colleges in Mississippi that belong to the Southeastern Conference are members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association in good standing. Their sole purpose in belonging is for athletic contests. The Board of Trustees have no alternative but to permit the colleges to play as expected or order them out of the Association.

Since ball playing as operated in our state supported colleges is strictly big business and on a work for pay basis, it comes under the category of business and labor, and must be viewed as such, and not as a social or educational event.

An amateur is one who pursues an activity without reference to gain or pay. The entire athletic personnel in state supported colleges, from the director to the ball players, are paid and all work under written contracts. All are paid for their services under this enforceable document which spell out in detailed terms, method of payment and pertinent matters.

We are not critical, nor are we downgrading the practice. It is good for the boy, for in what other institution can an eighteen year old kid get a better deal. It is good for the school, for without pay, few boys would submit to the hard grind and discipline demanded of them. It is good for the state, as it offers many fine boys a means of getting an education, who otherwise could not attend college.

But we must place the practice in its proper setting and view the situation for what it is. Segregation is our way of life and I intend to think, act, and talk, to do my part in keeping it that way. But in a matter of this kind, it also calls for some long thoughts. Personally I intend to always analyze carefully what is going on before I get mad about it.