

Athletic Growth

The future depends on us now

Since Tripp Satterwhite took over as Athletic Director last May, he has been a breath of fresh air into our athletic department.

One of Satterwhite's main goals, game attendance, saw an increase during both the football and basketball seasons, not only because of each team's success, but because of the Black Hole pass. The Black Hole pass truly personifies our athletic department's dedication to game attendance and overall student body engagement.

"We simply lose money on the Black Hole passes," Satterwhite said. "But if we can look in the stands and see them filled every game, it is more than worth it."

Approximately 400 Black Hole passes were purchased so far for \$25 a pass. A pass allows admittance into every home game for each sport during the school year.

The total revenue generated was about \$10,000. If those same 400 people who bought Black Hole passes paid the \$7 at the gate, the total revenue collected would be \$14,000 for the five home games during the football season alone. If you add in the eight basketball games and the 11 home basketball games and the 11 home baseball games, a total of \$53,200 is potentially lost in game revenue.

Even though every person who bought a Black Hole pass before the football season this past year will not go to every single home game, it is still a big financial risk by our athletic department to show how much it cares about attendance and student body engagement.

"That \$7 to get into the game, while it may seem small, goes a long way into the growth of all of our athletic programs," Satterwhite said.

He cautions athletes about misusing the pass.

"When an athlete buys a pass, uses it for the sports seasons they do not play in, and then gives it to a friend or family member while they are playing their sport, it hurts the same athlete in the long run," he said.

Although it may seem like the thing to do to save money, when we look at the big picture, we are losing money when this happens. That same \$7 that may seem like so much to watch one of your friends play is the backbone of the athletic department's budget and ultimately determines how much gets done for not only the sport you are paying to see, but all 36 sports.

This is more important than ever because of our school's youth compared to other schools in our region. We do not have the number of boosters like Myrtle Beach or Conway has that have graduated, made something of themselves and now donate large sums to see their children or grandchildren succeed like they did in high school. Athletic Director Satterwhite is not blind to this obstacle we must overcome.

"We simply do not have that attachment yet. Many people have moved into our area, but still donate to their alma mater because that school is a piece of them and who they have become," he said.

We must be patient when it comes to this issue. It is not completely out of the realm of possibility that a few of the 2,000 students who call Carolina Forest home for four years could become millionaires, celebrities, politicians, or technology moguls. One thing that our athletic department needs and asks is that we

all remember this great place that has and will continue to shape us throughout these four years into the human beings we will ultimately become. It does not have to be a lot, but we need to give back to the place that gave so much to us once we go out into the world and become successful.

But giving back does not have to wait, nor does it have to be out of your wallet. You can give back every single day, by supporting our school's athletics and supporting our school overall. We can use our Black Hole pass responsibly, maybe not to the benefit of our wallet temporarily, but to the benefit of the place that has given so much to us, even if we don't realize it.

editor's note

The staff editorial is the consensus of the entire staff and therefore is never bylined.

In the event that there is no clear agreement, a staff vote will be printed.