Mike Alden

A new contract well deserved

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

You can make the case that University of Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden ought to make a higher salary than any of the coaches he hires, but that's not the way it works in big-time college sports these days. Coaches make millions. Even the most successful athletic directors often make half as much.

Still, an initial guarantee of $537,375, a contract extension until 2017, a way to make hundreds of thousands more in performance bonuses, a nice golden handcuffs arrangement that puts more hundreds of thousands in escrow for him to collect if he stays on the job through 2014 and other goodies I surely have overlooked make Alden's new deal sweet enough to put a grin on his face and give his detractors something else to whine about.

The detractors should get over it. Since his nadir during the Ricky Clemons/Quin Snyder days, Alden has come out on top, amassing probably the best overall MU sports record in history, not only on the field, court, mat and pool, but in the classroom as well. When teams win conference championships and academic sweepstakes as well, the boss has his flock headed in the right direction.

Alden has fulfilled the promise MU Chancellor Brady Deaton saw when he stuck with the athletic director through those dark days. Alden came out of that woodshed determined to make amends with the community, and he did so personally with serious detractors and professionally by developing an estimable array of popular, ethical, competent coaches, not only in the highest-profile "major" sports but in others so consistently overlooked in the past.

Who would have thought we'd be cheering ladies' softball and soccer, men's baseball and men's wrestling to national prominence? Under Alden's wing we have high hopes for all the other sports as well, many of which already do us proud, such as ladies' volleyball. One thing we know: They will be run with integrity and attention to scholarship in the classroom as well as physical prowess where the teams meet.

So, we can be glad Mike Alden wants to stick around. He's young and energetic. He has his department on a nice roll. Looks good for the future.

HJW III
Don’t put Norm out to pasture

By Joe Walljasper

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

The University of Missouri’s relationship with Norm Stewart shouldn’t be this complicated.

Stewart is MU’s resident living legend. He should be an asset to the university. This isn’t a revolutionary theory of mine, but rather the consensus of every other university in America with a resident living legend.

If you’re lucky enough to have a hall-of-fame coach right down the street, why not use him? Whatever title you want to give him, he is a goodwill ambassador. Ask him to spin his yarns to large groups, point him toward the nearest cameras and microphones, have him use his powers of persuasion to seal deals with donors. Let him make people feel good about themselves and feel good about the University of Missouri. And if that spurs them to donate a few bucks, so much the better.

That’s the advantage of having a good relationship with Norm Stewart. The disadvantage is ... well ... what exactly? Why would you alienate Stewart — and his fans — by severing ties with him when he wants to continue working?

Stewart said MU Chancellor Brady Deaton informed him last fall that his services as special assistant to the chancellor were no longer needed, effective June 30. This wasn’t the first time relations between MU and Stewart have been awkward. In the first four years after he retired as coach, Stewart was honored once during a game at the Hearnes Center — the same number of times he was honored at Allen Fieldhouse — and that was when the floor was named for him in 2001. When MU officials accepted a $25 million gift from Bill and Nancy Laurie to build another basketball arena, they agreed to the Lauries’ request that the new facility’s floor would not bear Stewart’s name. The Lauries had a change of heart, but that doesn’t alter the fact that MU was willing to kick the old coach to the curb for cash.

Even when you factor in Stewart’s chilly relationship with Athletic Director Mike Alden, it’s odd that Stewart’s alma mater is reluctant to use him as a resource, much less wrap him in a big institutional hug. He said the only time the athletic department has asked for his help was to serve as a color commentator on some basketball TV broadcasts, which he will no longer do. Now the university administration doesn’t have much use for him either.
"It's almost comical," Stewart said yesterday. "If you're in business, you take care of your assets. So I guess to whoever's in charge of their business, I'm not considered an asset."

After retiring from coaching, the 74-year-old Stewart helped raise funds for the university for 10 years, most recently serving on the "For All We Call Mizzou" campaign. He said he didn't recall if Deaton gave him a specific reason for parting company, other than the campaign ended after $1 billion was raised. Despite his job title, Stewart characterized his relationship with Deaton as "very limited."

He described his role in the "For All We Call Mizzou" campaign as follows:

"A person gives several million dollars. The person who might have been directly responsible for that generous donation being made would not have the notoriety — I'm trying to state this in the best possible manner for both parties — or whatever you want to call it that I possess. So, consequently, when it came time to take pictures, it's a good time to employ me — sometimes before the money is given. Now, some people handle that well and some people don't handle that well — I'm talking about employees. It's the same reason that you can sell a ticket to go watch a basketball game, but you'd have a tough time selling one for geology class. I'm not talking about the importance of either, but that's the way it is."

MU spokesperson Mary Jo Banken said yesterday that Deaton would not comment on the matter beyond a statement posted on the university's Web site.

It said: "The University of Missouri remains extremely grateful to retired coach Norm Stewart for his outstanding leadership of Mizzou Tiger Basketball and his continued service to the university during the For All We Call Mizzou campaign, which met its $1 billion goal in 2008. MU is fortunate to have thousands of loyal retirees and alumni across the state and around the world who support the university in so many valuable ways, and certainly Norm Stewart has been among the most prominent. Following his retirement from the university, MU compensated Norm annually for his services, specifically $130,000 in fiscal year 2004 and 2005 and $132,600 in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. The university concluded the financial relationship at the end of the campaign and in the face of major budget challenges."

Stewart said he told a friend in MU's administration that he would be willing to donate his salary back to the university — essentially working for free — but that offer "never came to fruition." If the budget was the problem, let him work for free. Problem solved.

Deaton isn't a bad guy, but I think he made a bad decision. Norm Stewart is more than just another of MU's thousands of loyal retirees and alumni.

Reach Joe Walljasper at 573-815-1783 or e-mail jwalljasper@columbiatribune.com.
MU says ex-coach Stewart has made $790,400 as a fundraiser since 2004

By MIKE DeARMOND
The Kansas City Star

The University of Missouri, through a statement released Monday night by the MU News Bureau, has done two things.

First, it expressed appreciation for all that former coach Norm Stewart has done over the years for Missouri basketball and the school itself.

And detailed how much money, in the face of harsh economic times, that the university has paid Stewart in his capacity as fundraiser and goodwill ambassador. A sum of $790,400 since 2004, according to the news bureau.

"MU is fortunate to have thousands of loyal retirees and alumni across the state and around the world who support the university in so many valuable ways, and certainly Norm Stewart has been among the most prominent," the statement said.

"Following his retirement from the university, MU compensated Norm annually for his services, specifically $130,000 in (fiscal year) '04 and '05 and $132,600 in FY '06, FY '07, FY '08 and FY '09. The university concluded the financial relationship at the end of the campaign and in the face of major budget challenges."

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State board scrutinizes vet’s actions

Man complains after calves die.

By Janese Heavin

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

A University of Missouri veterinarian is under investigation by a state medical board after he vaccinated 16 calves that later died.

Gary Morrison of Hallsville said nine of his cross-breed black Angus calves died four days after veterinarian Loren Schultz administered two vaccines to them. Another seven calves became sick and died later in the month, Morrison said.

Morrison filed a complaint against Schultz with the Missouri Veterinary Medical Board. Board members reviewed the complaint at their July 22 meeting and have extended the investigation through October, board Director Dana Hoelscher said in a letter to Morrison.

Hoelscher would not discuss the investigation.

The Missouri Veterinary Medical Board can dismiss the complaint or file formal charges with the Administrative Hearing Commission, which has the power to restrict or suspend veterinary licenses.

Schultz and four veterinary medicine students vaccinated about 70 calves for Morrison in December. Morrison said he originally just wanted a routine disease vaccination but agreed to let Schultz also vaccinate them for shipping fever, a type of pneumonia. Schultz also offered to use a deworming medicine on the calves, but Morrison declined, saying he’d had bad luck with dewormers in the past, with animals dying as a result.

In his complaint to the state board, Morrison said he thinks Schultz used the deworming product even though he’d asked him not to.

MU College of Veterinary Medicine administrators would not discuss Morrison’s situation on advice of legal counsel. In general, though, department Chairman John Dodam said the hospital does not use treatments without “explicit permission from the owner.”

Morrison said he has had a tough time getting answers from the MU veterinary hospital. Schultz performed a necropsy, or animal autopsy, on four of the first calves that died, but Morrison said
MU did not provide him with the lab reports. He said Schultz told him the diagnosis was that the calves died of "inherited stress syndrome."

Experts at the American Angus Association said they have never heard of inherited stress syndrome in cattle.

A type of inherited stress has been found in pigs, but Lily Edwards, an assistant professor of animal behavior at Kansas State University, said she hasn't heard of it happening in cattle. "There are a lot of studies about heat stress and transport stress and, in calves, weaning stress," she said. "I've heard of a lot of cattle stress, but I've never heard of inherited stress syndrome."

Morrison had an outside group perform necropsies on three other calves. The results showed they died of pneumonia, but Morrison said he believes the respiratory illness was a secondary condition.

"None had typical signs of pneumonia," he said. "They were sickened, wouldn't eat, had a crazy gait and weren't acting right. They eventually just died."

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LETTER: Greek students give big to United Way agencies
By Marcia Walker and Amy Byergo
August 11, 2009 | 3:00 p.m. CDT

The Greeks are back!

This means the MU students rushing and living in fraternities and sororities are back on campus already. And as we drive down Providence Road and through campus, seeing groups of students singing and shouting, we need to realize how much good these students are doing for our community.

Every April, Greek Week is celebrated with skits and games on campus. Students purchase T-shirts and get sponsorships from businesses and families. They compete to be the best on campus, but they do so much more for our community. This year, they donated $114,000 to eight local not-for-profit agencies and to two scholarships for MU students. This was $13,500 for each of us!

As United Way agencies, we saw our allocations drop this year and our needs grow greater than ever. These funds from Greek students are so appreciated and kept Meals on Wheels on budget.

Each year, agencies apply, and student leaders select which agencies will receive the funds. Often the students have a previous relationship with the agency either as a volunteer or through a family member who used the services of the agency. Meals on Wheels had 12 student volunteers last year, and the Adult Day Connection had more than 50 students.

Over the past five years, more than $500,000 has flowed into our community from these students. If you are a member of a local Greek chapter, please let your collegiate members know how grateful you and this community are for all their hard work.

Marcia Walker is the executive director for Meals on Wheels. Amy Byergo is the director for Adult Day Connection.