Sports editorial

Column on a column

By CHUCK YOUNG
Thresher Sports Editor

The violent reaction in many quarters to the Freshmen week Owlook column strikes me as both regrettable and thought-provoking.

I say regrettable because I feel the editorial was taken far too seriously by a great many people, in spite of the warning against such which was implicit in the article. At the risk of appearing to be talking down to people, I make two points.

To say that a thing is "ultimately unimportant" is not (necessarily) to say that it is unimportant; "ultimately" is an important word. Also, to laugh at a thing or a person is not (necessarily) to imply that the thing or person is either ridiculous or stupid. 'Nuff said.

Young Hung

At any rate, as a result of that editorial, I have in the past week been subjected to insults and curses, hung in effigy for a Rice student, I believe), and even, some of my friends tell me, threatened with murder.

That such controversy should be produced at Rice University by that column rather than by some of the other, basically less important and uninteresting events of Freshmen week (such as the success or failure of the University dialogues) is, as I indicated earlier, extremely thought-provoking.

Problem Produce

The reaction reflects, I feel, certain images people have of athletics and athletes at Rice and hints rather strongly at several problems which ought to be further identified, researched and discussed.

Among these issues are such general topics as the place of semi-professional athletics at a university (in particular, at Rice University), and such more specific subjects as the position of the athlete within Rice's college system, the reasons for the University's continuation of major college football, the reasons why student tickets for football games are not located between the forty-yard-lines, and rumors that athletes receive favored treatment with respect to assignment of rooms on campus.

Sports Recognized

In order to provide for the discussion of these issues, the Thresher Sports Department will be organized differently this year. In particular, there will be new stories about Rice's intercollegiate teams, because these are covered more than adequately by the Houston dailies. Instead, interested people are being recruited to write Owlook columns on each sport in season. Strictly campus sports, such as Intramurals and Sports Clubs, will be covered extensively.

Such an arrangement should provide time and space for investigation in a broader context of the type of issue indicated earlier. Although many of these topics have been and are being discussed, the answers given seem to me to be inadequate and incomplete. In view of the unfortunate reaction to last week's Owlook, it is perhaps necessary for me to point out that investigation of these topics does not imply condemnation of the subject or of the persons already working in these areas.