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ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT
HAS NO BUDGET PLAN

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MISSOULA--

University of Montana athletic department and administration officials have been meeting this week, but so far have not come up with a plan to repair UM's athletic budget that has been reduced about 22 per cent since it was approved last January.

The estimated \$30,000 cut resulting from Friday's federal ruling against UM ticket price increases would have been manageable, according to Swarthout, had that been the only cut. But a series of circumstances last year had already lopped \$45,700 off his budget.

"We're down \$76,000 from our original budget (\$353,700)," Swarthout said, "and we're in real trouble. People say we can cut somewhere, but we've already cut to the bone and now we have \$30,000 more to take out."

Swarthout says he and his department considered the original budget a conservative one, because it was only a slight increase over the previous year. The \$45,700 loss resulted from a series of incidents -- UM students decided to reduce their support of athletics, the state cut 10 per cent of a portion of the budget, and the University increased its board and room and fees, which increased the department's scholarship costs.

The federal ruling from the Office of Emergency Preparedness said that the University could not increase its ticket prices, nor could it begin charging students \$1 admission to games because both actions violate the wage price freeze. The \$30,000 estimate by athletic department business manager Earl Martell, was based on revenues from past games and is down from the original estimate of \$36,000.

"We handled the \$45,700 loss by making cuts throughout the program," Swarthout explained. Cuts were made in recruiting and travel. For instance, instead of staying overnight for last week's game against Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, the football team left Missoula Saturday afternoon, played Saturday night, left after the game and arrived back in Missoula about 3 a.m. Sunday.

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Swarthout's major problem is that most of the department's expenditures have already been made. New football equipment and uniforms are already slightly used and uniforms and equipment for the other sports are already either here or on their way.

Contracts have been signed for football and basketball games and because of guarantees to visiting teams (\$3,500 for each football game and \$1,500 for basketball) it would be more expensive not to play the games.

Scholarships are already handed out, and it would violate NCAA rules to revoke them for other than academic or disciplinary reasons.

"In short," Swarthout says, "our backs are against the wall. We can't survive the cut. We'll have to get the money somewhere, but I'll have to admit we don't have a plan yet."

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