

Fork Union Gets a Salute

To the Sports Editor:

I am disturbed by Peter Alfano's suggestion in "When the Alternative Route Is the Way to Go" (*The Times*, March 8) that at Fork Union Military Academy academics may be secondary to athletics.

As a postgraduate at Fork Union during the 1980-81 school year, I received financial aid because of my abilities as a football player. I, along with the entire varsity football team, was required to meet the same academic standards as the rest of the student body, and at no time was any varsity athlete given special treatment because of his athletic talents.

Weekend leave was a function of one's academic, not athletic, performance. An "A" allowed a cadet to go home almost every weekend, while a cadet earning a "D" could only hope to go home once a month. This was great incentive to earn high marks.

I have been much more successful as a student than as an athlete. After a brief football career at the University of Connecticut, I graduated in 1985, with honors, from New Jersey Institute of Technology as an engineer. I am a member of Tau Beta Pi, and will receive an M.S. in operations research from the University of Maryland this spring. I could not have achieved any of this had I not attended Fork Union Military Academy. Fork Union does not just develop great athletes, it also develops great student-athletes.

WILLIAM P. MURNANE
Owings Mills, Md.

Watercolor Is an Art Form

To the Sports Editor:

Who can quarrel with Dave Anderson when he suggests ("How About an Academic Media Guide," *The New York Times*, March 19) that college athletes need a better education? But then, maybe so do sports columnists.

Anderson got exercised because

Iowa football player Ronnie Harmon took a course in watercolor painting. This is where, Anderson wrote, "All you need to do is splash the colors around."

That would come as a pretty big surprise to the art world, where watercolors have a long and special tradition. Some watercolor paintings are worth as much as even today's star athletes earn in a year.

MICHAEL SPIELMAN
The Bronx

McCumber Has Class in Duress

To the Sports Editor:

In these days when sports are

High School

To the Sports Editor:

As school boards across the country to reverse the declining quality of education, the disturbing trend toward commercialization of high school sports on unabated ("Arena of Big-Time Showcasing a Younger Act," *The Times*, March 5). As I read the article, I felt as though I were witnessing a ritual system in the process of being post-mortem.

The most repugnant aspect of this increasing commercialization is the lack of concern for those who profit from it have for the well-being of the student-athletes. Rather than a reaction against scandal-ridden college athletics, this new impetus seems to illustrate our society's obsession with being entertained, even at the expense of the participants.

Proponents of expanding commercialization may argue that commercializing high school sports through TV contracts, interstate and national tournaments, and corporate sponsorship of high school athletes is helping talented high school athletes prepare for the intense exposure of big college, and ultimately professional, sports. This rationale is as flawed as it is common.

Only 1 out of every 50 high school athletes goes on to perform in college, and that includes the thousands who play for Division II, Division III, and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics colleges and