

INSIDE

Walter Williams,  
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# FORUM

# SECTION E

Editor: David Wells, dwells@enquirer.com, (513) 768-8310 ♦ SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2005

## Hot Corner

Nipping at the heels of the newsmakers



### There oughta be a law

Ohio Democrats have charged that Gov. Bob Taft wants the state Supreme Court to "legislate from the bench" by ruling the governor can claim "executive privilege" to control the release of his office's records. On Wednesday, the normally prudent Chief Justice Thomas Moyer, Taft's fellow Republican, helped make their point for them. During oral arguments Wednesday in a lawsuit against Taft, justices and attorneys agonized over whether the state constitution explicitly prescribes (it doesn't) or implies (well, it just might) such a right for the governor. "This case is important," Moyer said, noting it would bind future governors. "Hopefully, we can write a law" (emphasis incredulously ours) "that is clear enough." Whoa. He must have spent too much time listening to Justice Alice Robie Resnick tell the legislature how to draft school funding bills. Faster than you could say "separation of powers," Democrats were flagging Moyer's slip and gleefully reserving him a spot in the Home for Wayward Strict Constructionists.

### It's so over for Dover

We hate wasting even an inch of space on this piffle, but the Rev. Pat Robertson whipped himself into another Sinners-In-the-Hands-of-An-Angry-God frenzy last week. After Tuesday's election, he scolded Dover, Pa., where voters ousted eight school board members who had ordered teachers to tell students about intelligent design. Evidently punching the wrong chad at the polls can get you into a heap of trouble with Robertson's version of the Almighty. "If there is a disaster in your area, don't turn to God, you just rejected him from your city," proclaimed Robertson, perhaps confusing the supreme being with a former FEMA director. Maybe someone could bottle up Robertson's bluster and sell it as a disaster movie - "Category Pat: The End of the World."

## Let's Talk

The spike in fuel costs this year, followed by congressional hearings with oil executives, prompted strong reactions from readers. One is below; more letters are on Page E2.

### Governments are the real gougers

Regarding the article "Oil company bosses defend huge profits" (Nov. 10): Now that the spotlight is on the oil companies, who are in the business to make profits, we must ask ourselves, "Who are the ones doing the true gouging?" The total tax on a gallon of gasoline in Ohio, federal and state, is about 48 cents. The government takes 100 percent profit, compared with ConocoPhillips' 7.7 percent profit, and does no work in exploring, drilling, refining or transporting the gasoline we use. And now politicians want to add another tax onto the gasoline taxes we already pay. Who are they trying to kid? They are the ones gouging us.

— Matt Schaefer  
Green Township

## SPECIAL REPORT: THE COST TO COMPETE



The Enquirer/Gary Landers

Sycamore High School volleyball player Brittani Gray's parents, Angela and Michael, spent \$6,360 last year on her training. She went to 11 tournaments from Baltimore to Las Vegas. It all paid off with an athletic scholarship to Northwestern University.

# PAYING FOR THAT EDGE

## No guarantees come with pressure to spend

By Shannon Russell  
Enquirer staff writer

Janet and Dave Drachman recently counted up all the money they've spent since last fall for daughter Jaclyn to play basketball - outside of her Wyoming High School team.

There was one club team that didn't work out, another that required practices 90 minutes away. There were out-of-state tournaments and individual instruction with an ex-college star. Workouts at a rec center. Equipment and Gatorade.

### Inside, E4-5

- 12 kids, expenses
- Who's at fault?
- Costs and clubs

**Online:** Go to Cincinnati.com to hear teens tell what it takes to be competitive today. Also, tell us your thoughts by answering our questionnaire. **Key word:** amateur

**Monday:** Paying the pros to find colleges for kids

**Tuesday:** Are soaring costs leaving the poor behind?

high school athletics has reached stunning heights, according to most of the 175 parents, athletes, coaches, administrators and experts interviewed for this series of stories.

No one keeps an official count, so the Enquirer asked 30 local families to calculate every fee they paid last year for club teams, personalized training,

camp, clinics, tours and other year-round athletic services for their kids.

The average bill: \$6,100 per child.

Most parents in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky say they're thankful they can give their children every advantage that money can buy. But as costs mount, so do concerns.

Parents also feel pressured to spend more and more, even though there are no guarantees of athletic success now or college scholarships or financial aid later.

More kids are specializing in one sport to stand out or keep up, leading to burnout and injuries from too much of one thing.

Some parents and coaches warn that money is creating an elite sports society for the rich that shuts out the poor.

And many wonder: Is all this costly training helping or hurting high school athletes?

### Commitments cost

The National Federation of State High School Associations reports that a record 7 million kids played prep sports last school year. Consequently, many athletes are searching for ways to stand out.

Take Fairfield junior Shaun Alexander. He spent \$2,200 last year playing on a basketball team of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), one of the country's largest youth sports organizations. Shaun received individual instruction and hired a recruiting service to sell him to college coaches. He practiced six hours on most summer days. He says it wasn't enough.

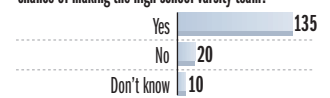
"To get to the top, you've got to be committed," he says. "If not, the game will pass you by."

See **COSTS**, Page E4

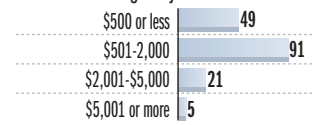
### Readers say: Extra training pays off

Some 168\* adults answering an online questionnaire at Cincinnati.com said extra spending on sports training for kids makes a difference:

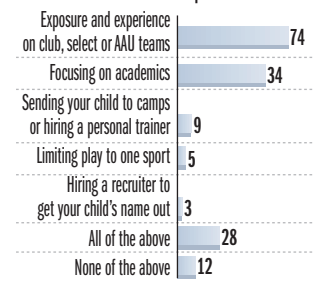
Do kids who play on club or travel teams have a better chance of making the high school varsity team?



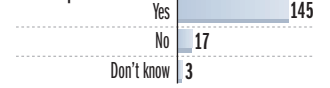
What is a reasonable amount of money to pay for your child's athletics through one year?



What do you think is the best way to further your child's chances for an athletic scholarship?



Have individual sports' demands contributed to the end of three-sport athletes?



\* Every respondent did not answer every question. Source: Cincinnati.com online questionnaire, Aug. 24-Oct. 19

## Borgman's World | For a clue, press 1



Find Jim Borgman's cartoons at Cincinnati.com. Keyword: Borgman

## Sound bites

### No pinch at pumps for them ...

"Your sacrifice appears to be nothing."  
— Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., citing multimillion-dollar bonuses oil executives received amid soaring prices at gasoline pumps.

### But that can be fixed

"Talk is cheap. The price of energy is not. Congress needs to act."  
— Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., who advocates a windfall profits tax on oil companies.

### He is ageless in cyberspace

"It's too easy to sit in your own cave and let the world go by, eh?"  
— Ray Sutton, 73, on launching a Web log under the moniker of Oldest Living Blogger.

### The real old-time religion

"My kids believe in God. I believe in God. But I don't think it belongs in the science curriculum the way the school district is presenting it."  
— Jill Reiter of Dover, Pa., where voters ousted school board members who backed a statement on intelligent design being read in biology class.

### What the elections mean

Voters "don't like the abuse of power, they don't like the culture of corruption. They want the nation to go in a different way."  
— Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean after Tuesday's elections.