

Rutgers to shoot for bigtime on gridiron

By WILLIAM P. BARRETT

Rutgers is planning a move to big-time football.

"We hope by the 1980's to have a program somewhat of the level of Penn State," Les Unger, director of sports information, said yesterday.

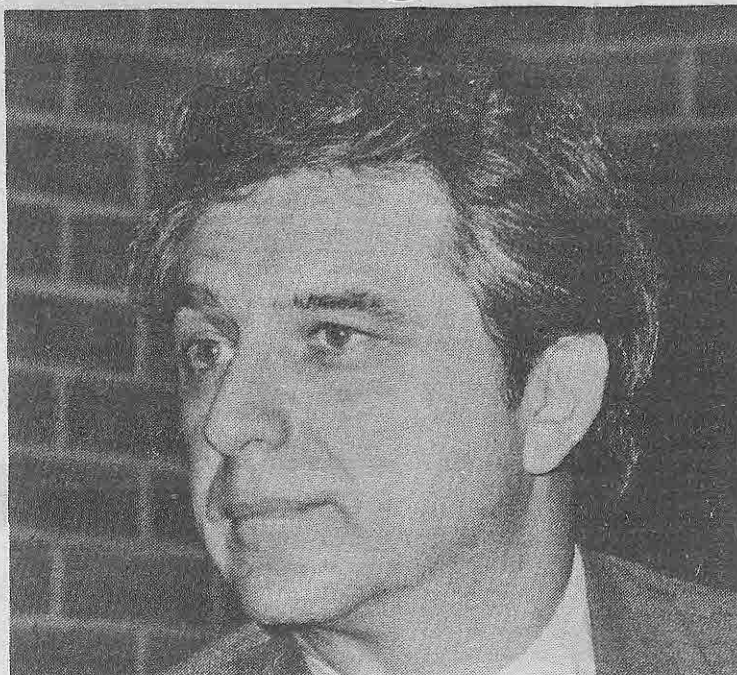
University President Edward Bloustein said he hoped a better program in all sports, including football, would help upgrade the University athletically and academically in the eyes of New Jersey residents.

"It is my conviction that our intercollegiate athletic program should enjoy more interest from throughout New Jersey than currently is the case," he said.

"I believe such a program would boost state pride, alumni spirit and student morale, thereby increasing support for all University programs. We feel strongly about the educational value of athletics and the enjoyment which such competition can give to participants and spectators alike."

The immediate reasons for the proposed rise in status appear to be alumni pressure and the hope that a big-time football program could bail out a deficit-ridden athletic department.

Unger pointed out that many schools, such as Alabama, Penn State, and Nebraska, fund virtually the entire athletic programs out of football revenues. "While we're not expecting the level of a Nebraska," he said, "I think we're looking for another Penn State," a large Eastern independent which has gone to several



EDWARD BLOUSTEIN
...big time football

bowl games in recent years.

Athletic Director Albert Twitchell, who has led the planning for a more ambitious football schedule for the 1980's said he was hopeful that Rutgers could raise the "level of competition to bring New Jersey a team that will represent the state adequately."

Coupled with an increase in the caliber of teams played will be an increase in the number of grant-in-aids, or scholarships based solely on athletic ability, Unger said.

A new fund-raising program, the Scarlet R Club, has been formed to provide funds for scholarships and the cost of running the intercollegiate athletic department. That program has come under attack from some faculty members fearful that sources of academic scholarships might dry up if contributions are earmarked for only athletics.

However, Bloustein said little risk was being run.

"This drive will in no way detract from our efforts to expand non-financial aid and other University needs," he said.

Unger said the status of football here would improve in much the same method of basketball. "In several years we have upgraded the basketball

schedule to such a point where if we won most of our games we would be nationally ranked," he said.

Currently, all of Rutgers' basketball opponents are major college teams. This is not true of football, where several teams are small colleges.

Games are sometimes booked 10 and 15 years into the future, Unger said. He wouldn't reveal any of the teams scheduled but indicated an attempt would be made to schedule major Eastern independents.

Unger pointed out that Rutgers will play Air Force and Hawaii in the next few years, but said the key for the program might hinge on the proposed 75,000 stadium in the Hackensack meadowlands.

"We brought home \$75,000 playing Army away several years ago," he said, "but when we played a smaller school we made only \$7,500, with exactly the same expenses. To schedule big teams in a 23,000 seat stadium is difficult, but not in the proposed Hackensack stadium."

He envisioned Rutgers playing one or two games a year there, including perhaps, the Rutgers-Princeton game, the nation's oldest football rivalry, in 1976, the year of the nation's 200th birthday.