Student apprehends purse thief at UP

JOSE PAGLIERY
Staff Writer

Suzy Rainsberger, a sophomore who lives along the western stretch of Kendall Drive, switched her Ford Explorer for the new Scion XB when the large SUV began to guzzle gas at a rate of $100 a week. Her combined savings may total $676 just this year.

“It’s better to pay $300 a month for a new car than $400 for gas,” she said.

On Jan. 9 a student at the School of Architecture Building apprehended a purse-snatcher.

“A friend of mine said her purse was missing,” said junior Tyler Crain, who apprehended the suspect.

“The guy said it was his backpack,” said junior Alison Robbins, the student whose purse went missing.

After the suspect was caught, neither the purse or its contents were found.

“If (the thief) happened more often than we would like,” said Nathan-iel Belcher, director of the School of Architecture. “We have panic buttons and other means for students to contact Public Safety in these kinds of situations.”

Like many other buildings at UP (such as the Graham Center and the art trailers), the School of Architecture building is opened 24 hours, according to junior Felipe Aldana.

“We pull all-nighters a lot,” Aldana said. “Even glue gets stolen.”

Dropping classes: the pros and cons

BEN F. BADGER JR.
Staff Writer

It was her fifth time taking Approaches to Literature (ENG 2012), a student announced in professor Althea Silvera’s class last Fall semester. Even though the student seemed determined to pass this time, she began missing classes after the first week.

She even disappeared for some time, although according to Silvera, she saw the student many times on the passing.

“So many missed classes resulted in the student earning an F.”

She came back towards the end of the semester with make up work but she did not turn in the final paper and I had to fail her anyways,” Silvera said.

Dropping a class is not always the best solution, and advisors suggest seeking advice, tutoring and talking with professors before doing so. However, when there are little chances of passing, or work and other responsibilities interfere with the completion of course requirements, dropping a class is an option that doesn’t affect the GPA.

“When students start college they tend to work around 15 to 20 hours,” said Valeria Johnsen, director of academic advising.

“Then they start working more and more. Work tends to be the first reason why students drop classes.”

Such was the case for sophomore Paola Torres, who dropped a class once because she did not have enough time to complete the assignments.

She now works at the Panther Stop shop, which she believes is a great option because it gives them enough time to drop it, if need be, without any consequences. Students only receive full refunds for dropped classes if they drop their classes by Jan. 16. If a student misses that deadline, they can still drop classes by March 12 to receive a DR grade but no refund.

According to Johnsen, math courses are the most dropped classes at FIU.

“Then they start working the hours they need to work,” said Clara Silvera, director of academic advising.

“Then they start working more and more. Work tends to be the first reason why students drop classes.”

The obvious benefit to dropping a class is that it will not directly affect a student’s GPA. If a class is dropped after the first week of class then the student will receive a DR (standing for dropped grade). That DR grade only counts to the number of credits attempted that semester and not the overall GPA.

There are also consequences to dropping classes, including financial ramifications.

The first week of classes is meant for students to see if they like the class they selected and give them enough time to work on campus for greater flexibility when it comes to the hours she needs to work.

“I thank God that I’m good at math. I feel bad for the other students who end up dropping math classes,” Torres said. “I’ve been in a class of 50 students at the start of a semester and ended with a class of 12.”

According to Johnsen, math courses are the most dropped classes at FIU.

However, dropping classes is a double-edged sword that many students are simply unaware of.

"I would do it,” said Clara Scott, a senior who drives her Honda Civic from her home by Metrorail to FIU everyday. “[I'd] put that money towards my credit card bills.”

The analysis concludes that gas prices across 107th street are higher and matched north of NW 14th street, but show a decrease south of this street, closer to FIU. Prices then increase rapidly as the stations get closer to Doral and Kendall. Also evident is the tendency to create unorganized price control. The graph (page 2) may be able to save up to $100 a week. Her large SUV began to guzzle gas once a week for gas,” she said.

Despite the ever-existing problem of high gas prices, FIU commuters lower prices.

GAS, page 2

At the start of a semester and ended with a class of 12.

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Local gas stations sell cheaper gas

Gas, page 1 reflects some of these findings. The analysis also shows that Westar, located on Bird Road and 107th Avenue, serves the most expensive gas, beating the Chevron located at 72 NW, st. by two cents for every octane level. By comparison, the Mobil station down on the same avenue, located on NW 32nd street, which outstands from the other gas stations nearby because of its higher rates.

Mercedes Murciano, University bursar and assistant controller of student financials dies

A mass is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 11, 2007, at 11411 SW 32nd Street in Miami. The burial will take place at Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery, located at 11411 SW 32nd Street in Miami. The burial will take place Jan 29 and 30, will receive a special name badge and other special rewards.

Students who wish to enroll must attend a one hour information session Thursday Jan. 11 at 5 p.m. in the Graham Center, room 241A, at the University Park Campus. To attend the meeting, students must call Career Services at 305-348-2424 to sign up.

Muriano joined FIU in 2003 and was recognized last month by the Board of Trustees for her achievements, financials dies

She is survived by her parents, her sister and her three children.

A mass is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 11, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. at St. Brendan Catholic Church, located at 8725 S.W. 32nd Street in Miami. The burial will take place at Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery, located at 11411 N.W. 25th Street in Miami, following the Mass.

Mercedes Murciano, University bursar and assistant controller of student financials, died Jan. 8 due to complications from pneumonia.

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Creative professor takes time to write during break

JOSE MAYA  Staff Writer

This semester, history professor Rebecca Friedman is getting away from teaching for a while as she continues to write her second book and awaits the arrival of her third child, due in February. She will return in the summer to teach, Introduction to Women’s Studies.

Recently, she received a fellowship from the Natural Endowment of Humanities that will assist her with funds toward her work in progress, which is titled, Domestic Interiors and Modern Imagining: a Cultural History of the Russian Home.

The date of the book’s release is not yet known because of the complexities of the research needed to write the book.

With a New York upbringing and deep U.S. Northeastern roots, the University of Michigan alumna felt somewhat isolated when she first came to the Biscayne Bay Campus due to the majority of the humanities program

FRIEDMAN

The humanities program focuses on the insights, critiques and aesthetic visions of philosophers, poets, playwrights, fiction writers, artists, film makers and religious thinkers. This approach will be employed by the Humanities Club through its events and lectures.

The club was first started in 1993 by Maria Demos, a professor and Classicist in the history/humanities department serving as the first faculty advisor.

Demos said the club was started because students wanted a way to express their ideas. “Students who lived on campus wanted an outlet where they could share thoughts and experiences, so they decided to start the club. I was asked to be the advisor and I gladly accepted.”

Demos said.

In 2003, Demos went on a sabbatical, and a year later, so did the club due to its inability to find a permanent faculty advisor.

After its long absence, the passion for ‘great thought’ was revived at the beginning of the Fall 2006 semester. Students interested in reviving the Humanities Club were introduced to each other by Harvey.

The club is not limited to humanities students. For a fee of $5 per semester, anyone who is interested can become a member. Tentatively, the Humanities Club will hold meetings on the third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Hospitality Management building, room 175.

“Right now we are just trying to find the right meeting time that’s convenient for everyone,” said Rossie Montegenero, a junior majoring in philosophy and current president and founder of the club.

Since its revival, there have been two meetings and the club’s membership now stands at 10 members. Its officers, such as Montegenero, are hoping to attract new members through their activities.

“We want to increase membership and get members involved in campus life and arts, history and poetry through different activities,” Montegenero said.

There are plans underway for the club to partner with an honor society to do community service; films followed by discussions are going to be an almost monthly affair, and trips to the Spanish Monastery and Japanese Garden are also planned for this semester, though no dates have been set.

For further information regarding the Humanities Club, contact Montegenero at rmont006@fiu.edu, or call her office at 305-919-5839.

The [Humanities Club] would be beneficial to students in that they can have a scholastic experience that feels more cultural and this way they can basically have fun and learn something.

Barbara Watts, Humanities Club Advisor

The following positions are open: vice president, secretary, treasurer, events coordinator and marketing director.

Each club is allowed to have one representative cast a vote in the SOC elections. The elections are being held in order to fill the vacant positions in SOC’s executive board. All vacant positions are paid.

The Student Organizations Council will be holding special elections Jan. 25 from 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. in room 159 of the Wolfe University Center.

The elections are being held in order to fill the vacant positions in SOC’s executive board. All vacant positions are paid.

The following positions are open: vice president, secretary, treasurer, events coordinator and marketing director.

Each club is allowed to have one representative cast a vote in the SOC elections. Students who are interested in applying for an SOC position should pick up an application at the Campus Life office in WUC, room 141.

The deadline to submit applications is Jan. 23.

-Courtesy of Nicole Acosta
Smog to smother South Florida skies

DENZEL D. BURNSIDE III  Contributing Writer

"Wow," is what I say every time I take in the beauty of Los Angeles. Community activists and everyone who travel to Southern California, you may ask yourself: is the smog as thick as portrayed in movies, and the air as bad, according to recent studies?

The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp., cautioned in an interview with the Los Angeles Times that additional regulations could drive more movies and TV productions elsewhere. "There would be a risk because you have other states out there quite anxious to get a piece of the film industry," he said.

The TV and film production industry employs 252,000 people in the Greater Los Angeles area and generating $29 billion in annual revenue, economic benefits that would be welcomed by any city with a struggling economy.

Several business owners in Miami would welcome the entertainment industry such as Franco Carcetti, who owns ABC Costume Shop in Miami’s Design District. “Every commercial that’s shot in town, they come here to take something.” Carcetti said in an interview with The Miami Herald.

Miami already has been flagged as the premiere music video location and been the setting of movies like Bad Boys II, and Miami Vice, and film festivals like the American Black Film Festival and the International Film Festival. If this is the trend, we will definitely see more productions in Miami.

Economically, the city may welcome the opportunities, but it must remain vigilant over the industry to avoid the pollution it may bring.

Video games not responsible for nation’s ills

RICKY DOMINGUEZ  Contributing Writer

Video game censorship is a major issue being discussed by schools, community activists, and the 110th Congress. Is the violence committed by children inspired by the amount of violence contained in the video games they play? Some think so.

Late last year, the ill-fated 109th congress passed C.A.M.R.A., the Children and Media Research Act, a new law that would create a $90 million commission to investigate the negative impact of video games on the children of America. Senator Joe Lieberman, one of the sponsors of C.A.M.R.A., has often complained that video games are much too violent and should be censored for the benefit of the people. The first amendment of the Constitution states that as citizens of the United States we have both the freedom of speech and of the press, meaning that you can put anything on whatever medium and distribute it to the public.

Video games can influence the behavior of an individual, but it’s been done by the companies which they may lead to a heinous crime. Any person with a grasp of reality can control their actions, however influenced or influenced by interactive media. If someone wants to go to the streets and shoot a bunch of people, then it’s their prerogative to do so.

Video games have different ratings and a reason, ranging from E (All Ages) to AO (Adults Only). Player discretion has always been advised by the companies who make video games, it’s just up to the buyer to follow these guidelines.

Store clerks are supposed to be selling M-Rated (Mature themed) games to underage kids or face losing their job. The companies that make and market these games do not have to make sure that the proper audience uses their products. Some game developers have even gone as far as to post warnings of violence and gore, but other issues which appear whenever the game is played on its corresponding gaming console.

Once a game is out on the streets then it’s all in the consumer’s hand. Parents should be involved in what their children purchase to make sure that they’re not playing something too violent for their age.

While things such as racism, drugs, sex, violence and vulgar language exist in video games, there is no reason why they would force someone to go out into the street and commit a similar act to mimic the villains.

Parents should start taking responsibility for their actions, and stop blaming video games for these mistakes.
Anxiously awaiting the professor’s arrival, the class slowly started to fill with students. The professor entered and wrote four names on the board: John, Paul, George and Ringo, collectively known as The Beatles, a band that changed not only the face of popular music, but the collective minds and attitudes of an entire generation and all those who followed.

Professor Armando Tranquilino set out to bring the history of The Beatles class to FIU and, in doing so, became the first teacher in all of South Florida to teach the course, which is taught at several other universities nationwide.

“I wanted to not only teach the musical aspect of the band, but also why they’ve endured as such a cultural force into the 21st century as well,” Tranquilino said.

The class, taught chronologically, touches upon not only The Beatles but their musical ancestors as well, tackling the blues and early R&B and segueing into the early rock ‘n’ roll era of Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Buddy Holly and Elvis Presley.

From that point, however, the class is completely dedicated to dissecting and understanding each Beatle release: singles, albums, album covers as well as concert tours.

The course covers the group’s background and impact on political and social attitudes; the group changed the way people wore their hair, what clothes they wore and were pioneers in speaking out for anti-war movements and social equality. They also urged the public to open and expand their minds through meditation, Eastern philosophy and psychedelic drug use.

University Park campus’ Student Government Council President Alfi e Leon, who took the course this past Fall, particularly enjoyed the feedback and knowledge that Tranquilino provided about the band.

“It’s a great class to open up a chapter of music to students who didn’t live through it,” Leon said. “The music is timeless and, in that way, the class itself is timeless.”

Much of the learning in the class takes place in the form of classroom discussions but is supplemented by listening to Beatles songs, which is intended to showcase the group’s musical evolution from deceptively simple love ballads to musically and lyrically complex pieces of art.

Students registered for the class also get to watch rare footage of The Beatles in concert and several of their films, which have been out of print for years. For one learning exercise last semester, Tranquilino brought a session drummer to perform for the class to demonstrate some of the originality and innovation the Beatles displayed in their drumming, while Tranquilino played piano and bass guitar.

The two musicians took song requests from the class and gave background information about each tune, ranging from the songs’ difficulty to how the songs were still original and fresh after 40 years.

Senior Shaan Dhbolakia, another student who took the class in its experimental stage, was impressed by the professor’s passion for the music.

“A class like this reminds people what music really is and shows that bands today are only emulating what The Beatles did before,” Dhbolakia said.

Due to the popularity and success of last year’s experimental course, the class has become a permanent addition to the roster starting Spring 2007 and has become an online course in order to eliminate problems that arose from classroom availability.

Tranquilino stresses, however, that the class will not just have only assigned readings now that it has moved to an online format. According to Tranquilino, there will be “listening portions, video clips, as well as personal recordings from myself to highlight certain key elements to The Beatles’ sound.”

Although the class has only been around for a semester, it has received promotion on radio airwaves, including the weekly Beatles talk show “Beatle Brunch” on Majic 102.7 and its website brunchradio.com.

Anyone interested in registering for the class can look for MUH 2993 on PantherSoft. In the words of Tranquilino, if you’re “ready to rock and learn about The Beatles, then sign up.”
**WEEKend**

**THURSDAY • JANUARY 11**

**WHAT:** The Cover Thursdays  
**WHERE:** The Cove, 10730 NW 25 St.  
**WHEN:** 11 p.m.  
**HOW MUCH:** Open Bar until 12:30 a.m.

**FRIDAY • JANUARY 12**

**WHAT:** SPC Films presents Snakes on a Plane  
**WHERE:** GC 140  
**WHEN:** 7 p.m., 10 p.m.  
**HOW MUCH:** Free

**WHAT:** Comedian Dave Attell performs  
**WHERE:** The Miami Improv, 3390 Mary St.  
**WHEN:** 8:30 p.m., 10:45 p.m.  
**HOW MUCH:** $26.75

**WHAT:** Club Nocturnal Local Celebrity Nights  
**WHERE:** Club Nocturnal, 50 NE 11 St.  
**WHEN:** 10 p.m.  
**HOW MUCH:** $20

**SATURDAY • JANUARY 13**

**WHAT:** Pato Banton & the Mystic Roots Band; Fourth Dimension  
**WHERE:** The Culture Room, 3045 N Federal Hwy., Ft. Lauderdale  
**WHEN:** 8 p.m.  
**HOW MUCH:** $15

**WHAT:** MuG and Jacuzzi Fuzz perform  
**WHERE:** Corbett’s Sports Bar and Grill, 12721 S Dixie Hwy.  
**WHEN:** 10 p.m.  
**HOW MUCH:** $5, free for 21 and up

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**STARTING TO GET OLD:** (Clockwise from left) Junior Nicholas Giambiani and freshman Maria Garcia search for their textbooks; students brave long lines; and empty shelves still common during the first week of classes.

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**LONG LINES**

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**INSPIRED BY THE TRUE STORY OF THE MOST PROLIFIC SERIAL KILLER IN HISTORY.**

**PRIMEVAL**

IN THEATRES JANUARY 12

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**HILARY SWANK**

ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER

FREEDOM WRITERS

their story their words

IN THEATRES JANUARY 5
HEAD FIRST

GOOD FORM: Sophomore swimmer Meredith Tisch dives in head first against swimmers from the University of Maryland, Iowa, and division III schools Carnegie-Mellon, American University and Baldwin-Wallace College. FIU finished third at the FIU Invitational at the Bay Vista Aquatics Center on Jan. 6.

CLASSIFIEDS

JOBS

Sitters Wanted. Average $10 per hour. Register free for jobs near campus or home. www.student-sitters.com

Wealth 101 Entrepreneurs only! The law of least effort business model. www.thewealththeory.com/wecan 800-263-2563 x6843

Athletics needs students’ support to be successful

GONZALEZ-RUA, page 8

pay almost $185 a semester on student fees (times two on the calculator for the full year) don’t even want to see if their investment is pulling its weight? If you bought a house would you not live in it?

It could be that Miami, by nature, roots for teams that win (if anyone disagrees with that statement, feel free to write me a letter, postcard, email, text message or MySpace comment as soon as possible, so that I can inform you of your need for professional help).


Just last season, the Miami Heat felt this fan euphoria when everyone claimed to support the team and cheered just as loudly as they did in that fabulous 2002-2003 season.

The list goes on and on.

So it is no surprise that FIU sees horrific attendance numbers; the quality is not on par with the average Miamian’s standards.

Fine. I can live with that, except Athletics needs students’ support to be successful for the little fact we talked about above: FIU students are paying up front for the product on the field, court, diamond, trampoline, etc.

I can understand not wanting to shell out $60-$200 to take your lady friend to a Heat or Dolphins game. She won’t enjoy it the same way you or I might. But at FIU you already paid, so why not go out to one game?

Just try it out. If you like it, come back for more.

After all, you get in for free. The students voted in favor of the increase in money because they want to see their school on a map, so stop complaining about it and come out and watch a game.

Without the support of the student-fans and donations from alumni, the athletic program will never reach a high level.

Worst of all, students will continue to pay outrageous amounts of money every semester for teams that have no one cheering for them.

It’s hard to win when no one’s in the stands. After all, it’s not like some big time boosters fronted all the monies – you did.

JOIN OUR STAFF!

The BEACON is always looking for talented and reliable individuals to join the staff. If you have an interest in writing, photography or even grammar, don’t be shy. Stop by one of our offices located in GC 210 and WUC 124.
Men's basketball fails to halt losing streak

RENAUD SMITH
Staff Writer

After dropping its first game of the New Year, the men's basketball team was eager to win against Louisiana-Lafayette Jan. 6.

However, the young team seemed anything but desperate to win as a mediocre first half performance resulted in a slim 74-71 loss on the road to its Sun Belt Conference foe. With the win, the Ragin’ Cajuns improved to 4-12 overall and are 3-2 in Sun Belt play.

Even in disappointment, there were a few bright spots for the Golden Panthers as senior guard Joohven Villegas had a game-high 25 points, while Alex Galindo gave arguably his best performance of the year, picking up his third double-double with 23 points and 13 rebounds.

The Golden Panthers opened the game shooting a dismal 8-for-25 from the field and were out rebounded 23-14 in the first half.

“You can’t score 20-points in a half of a college basketball game on the road and expect to win,” coach Sergio Rouco said. Heading into the second half, the Golden Panthers knew that things had to get better because, despite their poor play, they trailed the Raging Cajuns by eleven, 31-20.

The scoring punch for the Ragin’ Cajuns was coming from a familiar name, Ross Mouton. The senior, who has been on an offensive tear of late, had 12 first half points, while connecting on 4-of-6 attempts from beyond the arc.

After making good on just 1-of-11 3-point attempts in the first half, Villegas caught fire as he poured in 5-of-7 3-pointers, which led the way to a 20-point half.

Following Villegas’ lead, Galindo had 16 points and 10 rebounds in the second half.

Despite the offensive display from Villegas and Galindo, the Ragin’ Cajuns still held a 61-50 edge, with 3:50 remaining.

Sensing their chances for a comeback slipping away, the Golden Panthers turned up their defensive intensity and a series of long bombs from Villegas and Galindo pulled the Golden Panthers within a single point 72-71 with just 6.8 seconds remaining.

On the other end, defensive specialist Chris Fuller committed a foul on ULL junior David Dees, who calmly sank two free throws to secure the 74-71 win. After Mouton carried the bulk of the offensive load in the opening half, it was Dees who went off in the second. The feisty guard put up 14 points on 5-of-9 shooting from the field to help his team win. Mouton finished with a team-high 22 points. Dees added a double-double with 18 points and 12 rebounds.

Despite a costly turnover in the waning moments of the game, Fuller was instrumental in the comeback attempt for the Golden Panthers as he scored all of his 11 points in the second half.

“We came back and Chris [Fuller] gave us a great spark in the second half coming off the bench,” coach Rouco said.

For the Golden Panthers, the loss was just another in a series of tough contests. It all started with a heartbreaking 68-66 loss to Sun Belt foes Florida Atlantic Dec. 28.

In that game FAU’s Deandre Rice swished a 3-pointer with just 5.9 seconds left to lock up a 68-66 win.

Following that loss, a big Middle Tennessee squad had their way with the Golden Panthers on New Year’s Eve as the Blue Raider duo of Kevin Kamaskie and Desmond Yakes put up 13 points each on FIU.

“I’m not happy with the loss. We’ve got to do a better job of making the easy baskets,” coach Rouco said.

In FIU’s first game of 2007, South Alabama also jumped out to a 20-point lead on the Golden Panthers and ran away with a 69-52 win Jan. 4.

With the results of that tough road trip still weighing in their minds, the Golden Panthers will look to turn it all around with some much needed home cooking.

Their three-game home stand against Sun Belt opponents will begin Jan. 11 when the Golden Panthers face Denver Jan. 13 and North Texas Jan. 18. Tip off for all three games is set for 7:30 p.m.

Winning comes at an expensive price for students

JULIE MASON / THE BEACON

2007 brings on a new year and greater expenses...I mean expectations, sorry.

Welcome to your new home, Mario Cristobal, and good luck.

You are inheriting the youngest program in all of Division I-A football—a team that made the fastest change have had to heavily rely on student fees.

According to the Miami Herald, the Gators spend 78.2 million dollars a year on sports; it’s brought them two major national championships in less than a year, in football and basketball. Yet the students only supply about $2.5 million into the winning budget, a hair past 3%.

Impressive.

At FIU, the struggling new boys are feeding the Gators, not the football program, the constructors of its new stadium.

Stadiums don’t come cheap—$54 million is the estimate on that piece of real estate. Hopefully the Carnival Center folks aren’t doing the math.

The Golden Panthers’ budget for 2007 will be close to $16 million...81.25% comes directly from student fees.

Tradition may have a lot to do with it—after all it’s the alumni that are feeding the Gators, not the students.

Any math majors out there? I’m terrible at math but my phone’s calculator is quite good and it says that’s $16 million, an unbelievable 81.25% comes directly from student fees.

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The one price you pay for school pride.

So why is it that no one cares about this football program? Or women’s basketball coach Cindy Russo and her 600 plus wins and the money that we supply her and her staff, for that matter? Who uses our hard earned cash?

Why is it that whenever I find myself at any of these events, I look around and see the same faces and the same small crowds?

Let’s not be misled. If you check the stats on fiusports.com on a regular basis, and who doesn’t, football is bringing in almost 17,000 people a game. Lucky, I have a media pass or I’d never get in.

Anyone that reads this column, if anyone really does, knows that even half that number (get out your calculator) are winding up way too far fetched. Take away the number of fans that travel with the opposing team and the figure shrinks even more.

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