

Womens' athletic dept. formed

By CLIFFORD SMITH

Rita Kay Thomas, former assistant athletic director in charge of women's athletics, will assume her new role as women's athletic director next fall.

The move, made by Athletic Director Fred Gruninger, relinquishes himself of the duties of women's athletics and established two separate departments.

"It's about time," said Thomas. "I knew five years ago when the University made the move to go big time in athletics the women will get lost in the shuffle. Now they have a shot to grow like the men's division."

Gruninger said it hit him "like a ton of bricks."

"I finally realized how good the women's sports were here," he said. "We presently have an undefeated softball team who has a pitcher (Hallie Cohen) who throws harder than any guy on the baseball team.

"We have a basketball team that just needs a little more money for scholarships and then the sport will be on top like the other women's teams around the country. They played more than 10 ranked teams and three of the AIAW final four teams (Maryland, UCLA, Montclair State.)

"And who could forget the women's swimming and track teams. The swimming team has lost one meet in four years and the

women's tracksters are comparable to the great men's team here. The gymnastics team is top in the states. It's ridiculous to stifle them anymore, which is what happened," he said.

Gruninger also announced that Bob Smith, sports information director, will just be in charge of the men's division. He said a women's SID and staff will be hired over the summer.

Some of the people, he said, under consideration were former Targum sports editors, Tom Luicci, John Ruchinskus and Alan Venook.

"I want to get someone close to the University operations," Gruninger said. The most recent sports editor, John Wooding, would have been perfect but he thinks women's basketball is too slow."

At the press conference, yesterday, Thomas reminded Gruninger it would be his decision now to decide the women's SID and that she wanted a woman to take the position.

Thomas used to coach women's tennis here but had to give it up last fall because her assistant

(Continued on Page 14)

Womens' sports gain identity

(Continued from Page 16)

athletic position was too much to handle in itself, let alone coach tennis.

"It's got to help," said women's basketball coach Theresa grentz. "Fred was good but I could never understand him. Rita should make a big difference."

Gruninger said the reason this wasn't done in the past was because of money.

"It cost a lot to create two divisions," Gruninger said. "We'll still feel a crunch. Like the students being tripled the offices may have to be doubled. I hope Tom Young likes sharing an office with Theresa Grentz."

Still mulling over Bailey turning pro, Young was unavailable for comment.

"I'm happy to see it," said Denise Kenney, a first team All-State basketball selection. "It will give the women's program a

chance to grow as a women's program, not as a part of the men's. Women are different than men. They shouldn't play like men or dress like men. They have their own identity (socially) and this should help it athletically."

"Now maybe we'll be able to get an Olympic size pool that a team of my squad's caliber can be proud of," said swimming coach Frank Elm. "Not like the bathtub in the Barn. Thomas will see to it that the money is saved, I hope."

"I think we should all remember the good job Fred did," said University President Edward Bloustein. "But Rita is a fine man, I mean woman. I think with Fred channelling his energy toward the men's division, its effort to go bigger time will be greatly enhanced. What we have are two capable departments striving separately

and together to reach the same goal."

"Each division can help itself more now," said Cohen, who received a scholarship to play field hockey here three years ago. "One wont have to suffer for the other."

"I'm psyched," said Kathy Glutz, another first-team All-State basketball selection. "This has got to help recruiting. The women's sports should get more money."

"Financially it may hurt a little," Thomas said. "But not enough to damage the already existing programs. It will be just like when the University tried to big time. But we have a head start. The women's programs here are comparable to any around the country. They deserve a separate department and we'll get the support. I know that for sure."