

Legislation just might help overzealous fans

The inquiry to follow Great Britain's worst sports disaster is likely to bring legislation that could drastically alter the face of the nation's most popular sport. Last Saturday evening, 94 people died and 200 were injured when thousands of fans were crushed against a steel safety fence in an overpacked soccer stadium in Sheffield, England. Poor crowd control by police, the design of the stadium and inadequate emergency medical facilities are being blamed for the disaster.

Perhaps the stadium's design and the medical facilities played a part in the calamity, but it was the police, the soccer officials and the over-excited fans who played the major roles. Unaware of the consequences of letting more people into the already full 54,000-seat stadium, police and soccer officials opened the gates to late arrivals who fanatically rushed into the standing-room-only area.

That these officials could be unaware of the consequences rings all too loudly of irony, and conceivably, stupidity.

Just last week, the Union of European Football Associations — the ruling body of European soccer — agreed to lift a ban that prevented British clubs from participating in European competition. The sanction was imposed after British fans attacked their Italian rivals during a 1985 match at Heysel Stadium in Brussels, Belgium, which caused the deaths of 39 people. The lifted ban was conditional on the continued good conduct of British fans.

It seems likely now that the ban will be imposed again, but that would not strike at the source of the disaster. Blaming the unruly fans at the soccer game does not remove the mark of culpability that the police must assume because of their poor crowd control efforts.

True, it's important for American fans — who at least remain in their seats for most events — to understand the passions that soccer arouses in its European and Latin American followers.

For one, teams such as Liverpool (involved in last week's and 1985's tragedies) date their existence back more than a century. They have played in the same city, and most often on the same field for that long.

Another reason for such fanatical behavior is an economic one. Liverpool, specifically, is a depressed, blue-collar port city, with its inhabitants having little else to be excited about than the 90 minutes of raucous fun on the soccer field on Saturday afternoons.

But while these reasons may help us better understand the behavior behind such mindless tragedies, it doesn't excuse the crowd's behavior, or the ineptitude of the police and soccer officials.



"Quit your blubbering! - At least they gave us a dental plan!"

Namibia's independence still uncertain

The United Nations-sponsored plan for an independent Namibia has stalled again, as U.N. peacekeeping forces, South African security troops, and armed insurgents of the South-West Africa People's Organization are locked in a standoff.

The trouble began April 1, when the U.N.-supervised plan went into effect. For the next seven months, Namibia will be in transition until free elections are held in November. Shortly after the beginning of the month, the leftist SWAPO guerrillas crossed the northern border of the country, from their bases in Angola.

The ill-timed incursion was in violation of the U.N. agreement, and has caused a backlash in the South African government. The SWAPO forces apparently entered the country not to fight, but to set up bases in advance of the election.

Regardless of the insurgents' intentions, fighting did break out between SWAPO and South African forces. A ceasefire was called to allow the SWAPO forces to withdraw back to Angola, but their departure has been slow, and it is estimated that 900 guerrillas remain in the country. In response, South Africa has announced that it will leave some security forces in the country.

The South African government is ex-

tremely sensitive about the possibility of Namibia becoming a Marxist nation. Namibia is an economically well-off trading partner of South Africa, with a small, educated population. If Namibia swings to the far left, then South Africa loses a precious market.

The SWAPO incursion also fueled doubts about whether Namibia will be able to survive as an independent nation. Most observers already expect SWAPO-backed candidates to win the major November elections. The foolish invasion and immediate subsequent withdrawal demonstrates that the SWAPO leadership is not yet coherent or mature enough to lead the country through a difficult birth.

While SWAPO stumbles and South Africa hems and haws, most regional leaders still hope that the U.N. and outside nations such as the United States and Cuba will stay out of the conflict. Even with the best of intentions, these outsiders have a sorry history of fouling up countries in the area. An infamous example: Zimbabwe's first \$1 million of foreign debt was incurred in hosting a U.N. development conference, where harbor experts were invited to discuss the country's maritime future. They found that the future was pretty dim, as Zimbabwe is a landlocked nation.

Letters

Sarcastic

Last Saturday night at a fraternity/sorority function, Tim Hughes and Maureen Kirk were inside making slanderous, sarcastic comments about the party and the Greek system. I, along with several other people at the function, heard this and feel it is our duty, as part of the Greek system which Hughes and Kirk allegedly support, to bring this out in the open.

Seeking our support, they spent hours with the Greek Endorsement Committee. Thank goodness they didn't receive the endorsement. If they are already slandering what they allegedly support, what else are they going to back out of? Can anyone really trust their political words?

As people directly affected by these elections, we need to open our eyes beyond our perceptions and look at the actions of the candidates running.

Stacy Kitch
Journalism

Expansion

I urge everyone to vote in favor of the Westmoreland Child Care expansion on the upcoming ballot. The need for the expansion is great, and the benefits are everyone's.

As a parent, quality and affordable child care is of major concern to me. There are more and more students with children, and many on waiting lists for the existing programs. To be effective at work or school, parents need to know their children are well cared for. The child care on this campus is of the highest quality; the kids are challenged and encouraged to be creative by staff that are well educated, patient and compassionate.

These programs also enrich the lives of the many student employees who help staff them, and both students and kids have an opportunity to learn.

Parents are thankful for the great programs, kids are well cared for and happy, and the student body as a whole is proud to know that they help make it possible for many peo-

ple to be in school. There's something for everybody! Let's continue to send the message to government and community that first rate child care is important to us all, important for our future, and vote yes for the Westmoreland expansion.

Kristen Brandt
Eugene

For Haven

I would like to express my support for Kathy Haven, running for SPA Student Senate seat no. 17. As an experienced and highly motivated candidate, she will accomplish many much needed tasks and services in office. Active participation in NARAL and OSPARG are some of her experiences, and she intends to emphasize and initiate programs such as computerized registration, foreign student representation, women's issues, rape security workshops for campus security, and securing ample professors for mandatory, overcrowded classes. I am excited to see a dedicated candidate like Kathy

Haven. She would be a positive and influential member of the SPA platform.

Nancy Kelley
Senior, international studies

Cherished right

Re: Michael Cross's letter (ODE, April 14):

The issue is the right of every woman to have a choice. I do not have a right to impose my values on others, nor do others have that right. Each woman should have the right to choose according to her own values and beliefs.

Therefore, the decisions that Michael asks readers to make regarding four scenarios would have us, as readers, adopt his position, that is, usurping the right of choice of the women involved.

Pro-choice upholds women's decisions to choose to not have an abortion as well as to have an abortion. For me, this right to choose is analogous to the right of free speech protected by the First Amendment: I do

not like or agree with everything that is said but I uphold the principle that underlies that right. Thus, regardless of my personal views on abortion, I cherish the right of each woman to choose.

Connie Burns
Counseling psychology

Update

The Emerald's "Education" editorial (ODE, April 19) included enrollment figures released before the chancellor's press conference Wednesday.

The editorial stated cutbacks in state enrollment would reach 5,000 annually over the next two years, but new figures show the actual enrollment cuts are projected at 2,000 to 4,000 over the biennium, depending upon funding from the Legislature.