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Perspectives

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Emerald

Trophies and TRIALS

While this University is moving leaps and bounds toward better recruiting classes, athletes all over America are becoming more violent, and we need to make an effort to make sure our players are good citizens.

There are a lot of professional athletes being charged with violent crimes recently, raising the question of whether it isn't partly society's adoration and willingness to trade victory in the arena for less civilized behavior. And the problem is probably being started at universities who make athletics a big business.

Athletes haven't had a positive reputation for quite some time, but in the present there are a disturbingly high number of incidents in a very short period of time. The NFL has been particularly hit by violent crimes. Directly after the Super Bowl, NFL All-Pro line-backer Ray Lewis of the Baltimore Ravens was charged with the stabbings of two men at a party following the

game. This comes within 10 weeks of Carolina Panthers receiver Rae Carruth's charges of masterminding the murder of his girlfriend.

Those are just two of the most violent and recent incidents of football player violence, but there are plenty of smaller incidents that could be easy to forget yet important to take notice of. Jets linemen Jumbo Elliott and Jason Fabini were in a bar-room brawl in July, and during the season, Steve Muhammad of the Colts was charged with beating his wife, who died days later from labor complications attributed to a car accident.

It's hard to prove that today's players are indeed more violent than their predecessors, but whether they are or not, perception is reality. The appearance is that our sports heroes are more violent than ever, a notion attributed to the pedestal our victorious

gladiators are raised upon.

The process of glorifying athletes as societal heroes begins from the time they are in high school and are recruited to college, where sports are a huge business. The occasions of wrongdoing by coaches to get players, such as Washington's Rick Neuheisel's infamous breach of a recruiting quiet period, offer the idea to incoming athletes that it's acceptable to circumvent rules if the end goal is victory.

One wonders what kind of practices this University uses to get recruits here.

Right now there are a lot of excited Duck football fans buzzing about the signing, and all that such an event portends for the future, of junior college running back Maurice Morris. In the past, Oregon hasn't been able to obtain such notable and talented players, leaving cynics to wonder if the athletic program had to make any offers beyond a good education and good education facilities to land such a talented athlete.

While the Ducks haven't had any big-time recruiting scandals, Eugene loves its football so much that one can see the high reverence football players receive from the community. And a lot of reverence can lead to very little discipline.

While discipline and antisocial problems can start at the college level, the signs of trou-

bled individuals show themselves constantly but receive little attention or are dismissed in the name of success. Former Rams, Dolphins and 49ers running back Lawrence Phillips showed violent and irresponsible tendencies from his days at Nebraska, but teams kept taking the risk — and getting disappointed — just because they were looking for any competitive edge and they saw a bit of talent.

Because many athletes, though of course the minority, are showing more and more tendencies to act out their aggressions and violent tendencies, it is important to make sure they keep level heads and their feet firmly on the ground. While the desire to elevate sports heroes to an ever-higher stratosphere grows, the best way our University can help prevent athletes from becoming violent is to take seriously the signs they show early on and deal with those issues through discipline and counseling.

So while we all cheer for our ever-improving teams, we should all expect our athletes to be responsible and safe citizens.

This editorial represents the view of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

Letters to the editor

LGBT should be more inclusive

Molly McClure's letter (ODE, Jan. 31) indicates a desire to "... create new ways to make our community even more inclusive." By "our community," she's referring to the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered) community.

In general, the way to make any community more inclusive is to include those who have been previously excluded. Thus, the best and most thorough way to make the LGBT community more inclusive is to include those who have been excluded: heterosexuals and asexuals. Who else is there to include?

One may argue that the LGBT already welcomes these groups. But if that's the case, then why are their first initials not included in the LGBT acronym? Aren't they likely to feel marginalized and excluded by this omission? By discriminating

against heterosexuals and asexuals, isn't the LGBT community engaging in a form of the very practice it tries to eradicate from society?

Inclusive communities include everyone. Thus, it would make more sense to create an organization that explicitly includes all sexual orientations not just the non-heterosexual. Perhaps we could call some generic name and open it to everyone who does or doesn't have sex, independent of their genders or the genders of their partners, whether real or imaginary.

Common sense dictates that the more divisions created in our society, the more divisive it will become. A group that states a desire to be inclusive but that engages in exclusionary activities and policies is being counterproductive to its stated desires and to the fostering of peaceful, inclusive communities.

Mark Stevens
graduate in community and regional planning

Art misrepresents life

I am outraged and sickened by the artwork that was used for the perspectives article entitled "Dorm Defenders" (ODE, Feb. 1). It was a very racist depiction that only continues to perpetuate stereotypical images of native peoples and is not reality. This type of imagery is harmful and unnecessary. The artwork used had nothing to do with the story, and I question why the Emerald found it acceptable for print. When this mostly white University and state continuously tell everyone that we are accepting of diversity, here is just another example that "we" do not practice what "we" preach. It may seem like just a way to catch the readers eye or have a little fun, but why is it being done at the expense of people of color? I have to say I'm graduating in June, and it makes me ashamed to know that I'm getting my degree from such an intolerant and racist institution.

Julie Love
ethnic studies

THE WEEK IN THUMBS



To underdogging it

Both major party front-running candidates faced serious competition from their underdog opponents in Tuesday's New Hampshire primary, with Senator Bill Bradley posting a very close showing against Vice President Al Gore and Sen. John McCain, destroying the front-runner George W. Bush by a margin of 18 percent.

To handling a crisis the best they could

Alaska Airlines faced a human tragedy with excellent public relations and a sincere attempt to explain the crash of Flight 261's crash into the Pacific Ocean on Monday. The attempt to gather information and console the victims' families was more helpful than the delayed reactions of some other recent crashes.



To the judge with poor judgment

Judge Albin Norblad was arrested for drunken driving. The Marion County Circuit Court judge will be arraigned in his own courthouse and cannot hear DUI cases until his own is concluded.

To bad water for workers

Inspectors found that three out of five water systems that serve nearly 10,000 migrant workers in Washington fail to meet public health standards. Nearly 20 percent of tested camps found dangerous levels of a dangerous chemical.