

Suicide at NASCAR race raises gun control concerns

**GUN CONTROL FROM ANOTHER ANGLE:
ON APRIL 14, A NASCAR FAN SHOTS
AND KILLS HIMSELF AT THE NRA 500,
RAISING CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS**

BY SYDNEY HAWKINS
STAFF WRITER

Gun control. Everyone has an opinion. Who should have guns? What models should be available? Are they allowed at NASCAR events?

Forty-two-year-old Kirk Franklin of Saginaw, Texas, shot and killed himself on April 14 during the NRA 500 at Texas Motor Speedway. Sources say alcohol may have played a role.

The rules at Texas Motor Speedway state that bags and coolers are subject to inspection, and fireworks, illegal substances, and weapons are not allowed in the venue.

How thoroughly are fans' campers checked for weapons before going into the infield? How did Franklin get past security?

Security must properly search everyone entering the speedway.

At least it will guarantee that police officers are the only official weapon carriers.

Mistakes like Franklin's cannot happen again. Security cannot slip and let someone go under the radar to bring weapons into a public event.

Having a weapon at his disposal put himself and everyone

else at the event at risk during the event. This tragic incident could have resulted in even more injuries. Who is accountable?

"Security should be able to search campers because it is a public event, and they need to ensure the safety of the public," said junior Michael MacVane.

"They should be able to search any camper just like they would search a bag or cooler."

Sophomore Isabel Ramirez agreed there needs to be thorough searches for weapons at NASCAR events.

"Slip-ups lower the standards to which guns should be lawful," said Ramirez.

It is up to security to make sure each camper, cooler and bag gets searched to ensure the fans that don't carry weapons.

Some may argue that campers are private, temporary residences and owners can refuse the search. Texas Motor

Speedway does not state a policy of searching campers, only coolers and bags.

"I think that the right to privacy of a portable residence would be mitigated by being in a public sporting event," said Alan Mueller, assistant dean of career and community learning. "NASCAR should totally search the campers if they state a policy."

"If you have nothing to hide, then you should have no reason to be worried about a search," said sophomore Josh Weil. "As an EMT, my primary concern is the safety of others. There shouldn't have to be a policy stated about searching. Only the people who have something to hide are the ones who have an issue with an unannounced search."

There are a lot of issues this country is dealing with, and one is gun control. How many lives will be lost before the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution is reassessed? I'm not saying take them away. I'm saying control them.

"I'm all about Second Amendment rights, as many people on campus know, but if the speedway bans guns and weapons then it is a matter of public safety and security. ... Security has the right to search peoples' campers to ensure that they are not bringing any contraband into the speedway."

Josh Weil, sophomore

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