

## Should athletes really be considered role-models?

shannon meyer

Athletes have always seemed so elevated and untouchable. They're the all-American good boys, but they're also the rapists, the bullies, the drinkers and the partyers. Recent events at Enloe High School in Raleigh have reinforced this particular fact, one that most adults of every community chose to ignore, though they dealt with it when they were in high school, and every student knows it. Two separate incidents occurred, one involving consensual sex between one female and ten male students in a locker room, the other concerning the hazing of new members of the soccer team by older members. Though the preferential treatment of athletes hasn't been a major concern for parents, administrators, or the media, it is for me.

In the locker room sex scandal, an assistant principal walked in on the girl and one boy engaging in sexual relations. The participation of the other nine boys was discovered later. Those nine males, including six football players, were only suspended for ten days and have already returned to school. The girl, as well as the boy she was actually found with, were suspended for the rest of the year.

This judgment is seriously flawed. Granted, the two suspended the longest were actually caught in the act, but the others admitted to the same misconduct, so they deserve the same punishment. A murderer found guilty by the use of evidence or confession does not receive any less punishment than one witnessed murdering.

It seems more than circumstantial to me that the six football play-

ers just happened to be among those not caught and given the short suspension, especially during the height of football season. School administrators claim that they have good reasons for the two longer suspensions, which they conveniently could not give, but to me, sexual relations on school grounds are simply sexual relations on school grounds. How many variations could there be that would warrant such a severe punishment in comparison to the others?

The principle also claims that the incident with the football players differs from the one involving soccer players because it was not a team action like that of the soccer team. But the majority of those involved in the sex scandal were football players, and no doubt they assumed that they would get away with it because of their status as athletes. That's funny—they may as well have, considering what the other two involved received as punishment.

Furthermore, the tradition of hazing has been debated in response to the actions of the soccer team. Many defend it, saying that it is a tradition and no one bothered to do anything about it before. That argument is ridiculous. Slavery went on for a long time; women did not have the right to vote—should those things never have been stopped simply because they existed for a long time?

The problem is that no one wants to call athletes—the stars, the role models—into question. No one wants to criticize an institution so integral to American culture. But perhaps it's time we started. After all, and I say this from experience

at more than one school (including this one), that the athletes are as bad, if not worse, than the general populous. In most cases, they really don't deserve recognition as model citizens of the school community.

On the surface, slight favoritism towards athletes should not make that much of a difference in the long run, but it can have serious social consequences. Consider for a moment the Colorado school shootings. Those boys started shooting athletes first, primarily because they had been picked on by all the self-important, egotistical jocks, who, of course, have been bullying the less "manly" male students since Moses was a Boy-Scout. Besides those students who choose to take their pent-up aggression out on others, countless male teenagers commit suicide each year because they have been socially ostracized. Often, they are intelligent, sensitive people who just couldn't run fast enough or be aggressive enough to consider giving themselves concussions on a football field fun.

Luckily, Science and Math does not show partiality towards athletes. But traces of the athlete-worshiper mentality remain. Some athletes here still believe that they should be exempt from harsher punishments simply because of their athletic ability; one recent, well-publicized example proves that fact.

I'm afraid that even though we are free from such favoritism, most other high schools, as well as colleges, are not. We've dealt with it before, and we'll be forced to deal with it again. But we shouldn't have to, and neither should anyone else.

## Computer...p8

the problem. Dr. Barber has already said that starting in December, we will be getting the wiring for computers in the dorms. I know that doesn't help everyone, but it will free a few computers up here and there. Until then, tough-nuggies.

The best way to fix

the problem is tolerance. For me personally, a little free computer time isn't a waste of time, but a great way to relax. Doing homework all the time makes it very hard for me to stay focused on the important stuff, you know the learning. So, give it a try. Instead of getting angry, see what makes everyone

else stay on the computer when you want it. You'll soon see that it isn't that big of a deal, and you might just find out some neat things about yourself. And if that still doesn't convince you, then just be happy that you helped out a few classmates, by letting them have their fun.

staff editorial

## New Grading System for S&M Pro Con

A's, B's, seven-point grading scale, ten-point grading scale. What do these letters mean? Compare the standards of grading "back home" to Science and Math.

Take a closer look at the school. In the following scenario, you make a 78 on your most recent test. In most classes it would be a C, on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Bryan you just made a B, and if it was a killer Miller, an A. Grades no longer have clear standards. A system created to give an honest, across-the-board assessment of a student's knowledge of a subject no longer has a basis founded on consistency.

Therefore the grading system direly needs an overhaul, especially at a school notoriously harder than any other high school in North Carolina. Our proposal involves moving towards a pass/fail system with honest teacher comments. The level to which students would need to perform in order to pass must be raised above where a C- is in every class. By raising the bare minimum, even the students who do just enough to get by must have a decent understanding of the materials.

The teacher comments will be used to distinguish the better students in a class. They would also give a more accurate account of a student's performance in class. If the student slacks off, it will show up in the teacher evaluation. If the student goes the extra mile, that will also show up in the comments. There fore effort in a class will also be acknowledged.

This pass/fail system shows students, parents, and colleges exactly how the student approaches their education. As the leading high school in North Carolina, we have a responsibility to demonstrate to the state a new approach towards grading, a better approach towards learning.

We agree. The pass/fail system with comments is a good idea. That is, if we lived in an ideal world where everyone tried their hardest, where objectivity ruled, and where means but not results mattered.

In the ideal situation, people would want to learn and be motivated to do so to the greatest extent. In reality, however, people are inclined to do the minimal amount of work required to get by. With the pass/fail system, those who actually worked hard and put a great deal of effort into their work would receive the same amount of credit as those who did only the minimum. Fair? We don't think so. Even at Science and Math, the attitude that prevails is to do whatever it takes to pass—or get a B.

Furthermore, pass/fail does not accurately show the level of mastery that a student gains over a subject because more than two levels of mastery exist. An A result is much better than a C- result even though both would receive a pass mark in the pass/fail system. Though effort is important and is worth commendation, in the real world, results matter. Who would you rather hire, someone who works really hard but never manages to produce anything, or someone who may only work a moderate amount but gets the job done in a satisfactory manner?

Another aspect of the pass/fail system that we disagree with is the teacher comments portion. Once again, in an ideal world, teachers would be purely objective and evaluate with only the student's effort in mind. Instead, teachers are subject to the same tendency to judge unfairly.

We're not saying that effort should be completely out of the system. It should count as a percentage of the grade where class commitment is noted but mastery is also seen.

## the stentorian

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