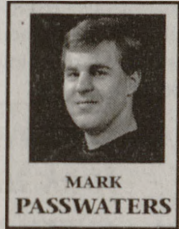


## Unnecessary roughness

### NFL arrests demand league attention

This past week, New Orleans Saints running back Ricky Williams was arrested and spent six hours in an Austin jail after refusing to sign a ticket for a traffic violation. Williams' belligerent attitude towards the arresting officer and his lack of reverence for traffic laws would usually be a source of amusement to the public and embarrassment to the National Football League (NFL). Due to recent events, however, the Williams incident passed with little fanfare.



MARK PASSWATERS

The NFL could be called the National Felon League due to the spate of crimes committed by its players in the last few months. Most notable are the allegations against former Carolina Panthers wide receiver Rae Carruth and Baltimore Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis. Carruth is accused of masterminding the murder of his pregnant girlfriend, while Lewis is one of three people accused of killing two men outside an Atlanta nightclub the night of the Super Bowl.

With the recent arrests of Leonard Little of the St. Louis Rams, Tamerick Vanover of the Kansas City Chiefs, Michael Irvin, not to mention league alums like Lawrence Taylor and a Ford Bronco owner named Simpson, the NFL has an All-Pro lineup appearing on police posters.

Some people are claiming that the NFL itself is to blame for these crimes, as the players are a product of the violent sport they play. This argument is totally ridiculous. People like Emmitt Smith, Darrell Green of the Washington Redskins and the late Walter Payton showed that there are also many quality human beings in the league. This is not to say that more could not be done to prevent crimes from being committed by NFL players. The NFL, and the public in general, could help a great deal in cutting down on these criminal actions.

Many players grew up in difficult circumstances. Their actions may have more to do with a living a violent youth than playing a violent game. Many of these players getting headlines on the Associated Press (AP) and police wires came from broken homes with little or no supervision. Gangs and athletic teams became a sort of surrogate family. Once they got to college, many of these athletes were on full athletic scholarships.

However, this does not necessarily mean they had much money to spend, as the NCAA prohibits scholarship athletes from holding other jobs. Eventually, some players make it to the NFL, and tons of money is suddenly thrown at them.

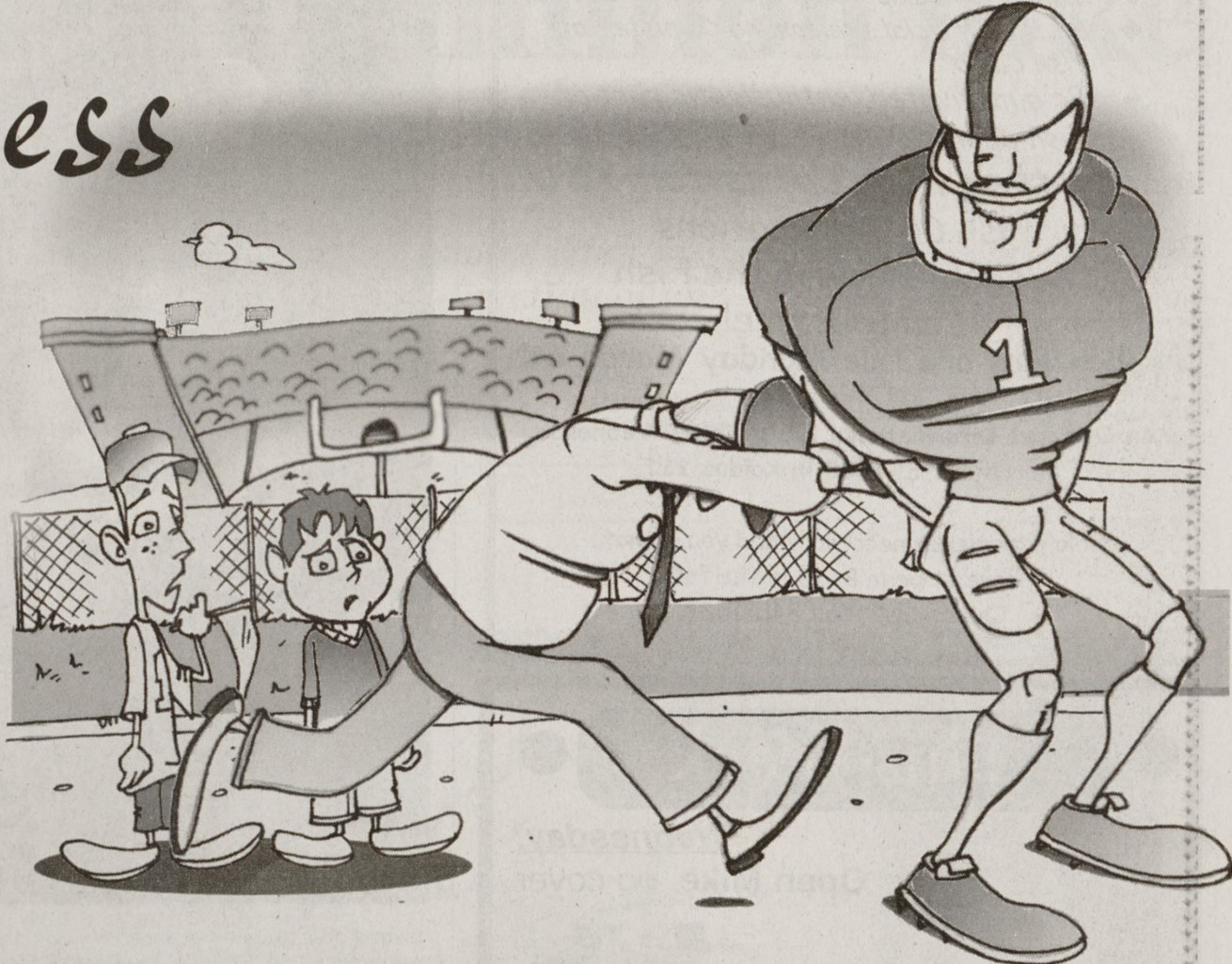
Now thrust into the national spotlight and making more money in a week than most people see in their lives, these players are then placed on a pedestal by the public. While able to enjoy more of finer things in life with their newly found riches, rookie pro athletes also become increasingly isolated from reality.

The only people they can actually talk to person to person, as opposed to person to icon, are their old friends, many of whom have criminal backgrounds. These individuals, with the assistance of a hard-knock youth, can convince the athlete that violence is an acceptable option. This is exactly what happened in the Lewis episode. The Baltimore linebacker was arrested along with two of his long-time friends, who had extensive criminal backgrounds.

While there can be no excuse for such actions, the NFL could do a great deal more to monitor its players' activities. When rookies come into the league, they undergo a couple of days of "orientation," which will supposedly adjust them to the ways of the league. Then they are cut loose to do as they will. The league really does not get involved again until it is time to discipline a player for his actions.

The NFL has more than enough money to hire some sort of player oversight director — preferably a former player. The league's players' association would probably not object to such a person, as they could be someone the players could rely upon for advice and counsel.

Former Cowboy Thomas "Hollywood" Henderson acts a counselor for NFL players, and former Redskin Earnest Byner has such a position with the Ravens. However, such influences are too little and, in the case of Ray Lewis, too late.



RICHARD HORNE/THE BATTALION

The public also can contribute to bettering this situation by having a reality check. While these athletes may be able to do tremendous things on the field of play, they are still mortal. Treating them any differently helps add to their mistaken aura of invincibility.

Just because these players are "public figures" does not mean they should not be held every bit as accountable for their actions as someone who is not. Little served less than a year for killing a woman while driving drunk, while Irvin and LT escaped prison time. That certain Ford Bronco driver was acquitted on charges of slaughtering two people.

With these players getting off with a slap on the wrist and the public willing to quickly embrace them again, the fear of

serious punishment is often ignored until it is too late.

The NFL is faced with a serious situation, as their players have their pictures showing up on post office walls as often as Sports Illustrated covers. While this problem can never be totally defeated, there is something that can be done. The league can increase its efforts to ensure that its players act in a more responsible fashion, and the public can hold the players more accountable for their actions.

It can only be hoped that something is done before "Court TV" gives NFL players as much coverage as ESPN.

Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.

## KINE 199 requirement beneficial for students

Unfortunately, the trend toward obesity has not passed by the Texas A&M campus. Now it seems that with the elimination of kinesiology classes, overweight students could become a more common sight as the required KINE 199 courses often are the only physical activity students participate in while attending A&M.



SUMMER HICKS

Members of the Core Curriculum Review Committee (CCRC) have recently decided there is no place for kinesiology classes at A&M. The existing requirement of four semesters of KINE 199 would be discarded in favor of classes that are deemed to be more in the student's academic interest. The CCRC has evidently decided that allowing an extra scholastic course to be added to the core curriculum would greatly enhance the worth of a degree from A&M.

The remaining health and fitness class would consist of two-thirds scholastic work and only one-third physical activity. The designed purpose of these health and fitness classes is to teach the students the value of athletic participation, rather than mandate the courses to fill University requirements.

One justification for this desired change is that other prestigious universities do not require any kinesiology classes. After all, if peer universities do not require physical activity, then A&M students should not have to participate either. If Ivy League students can be smart and overweight, Aggies can be, too.

Administrators need to avoid the path of scholastic conventionality and do what is in the best interests of the students at this institution. If students desire to retain the right to participate in kinesiology courses, they should be allowed to instead of being forced to take another humanities or upper-level classes in their major.



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

for Aggies as they remain stationary in their desks for four, five, six or more years. The health of student's bodies, as well as their minds, needs to be taken into consideration. If KINE 199 classes are eradicated from the core curriculum, students will be at a disadvantage. Any outlet for physical improvement will merely become an extravagance, something students can only participate in if they have the extra time and finances. Why should the administration make staying fit more difficult than it already is? Elimination of kinesiology classes will inevitably result in a different atmosphere in Aggie land. Desks will be uncomfortably small, Hullabaloo will experience dizzying lines of ravenous students, and incoming freshmen will begin to refer to themselves as the Fighting Texas Fatty Class of 2004.

to do so within the core requirements. During the middle of a hectic week full of term papers and exams, students often relish the chance to take an hour to go play volleyball or swing a golf club. KINE 199 courses are something students can look forward to as a change of pace from a core curriculum that often seems dry and relatively pointless. The busy schedules of many Aggies do not allow much spare time to work out at the Student Recreation Center or anywhere else. Kinesiology classes provide students with the opportunity to improve their health without feeling guilty for not spending the extra time at the library.

The Surgeon General recommends exercise at least three times per week. Admittedly, most students do not participate in voluntary athletics this often. Aggies often have too many other commitments or simply lack the motivation to visit the Rec Center on a regular basis. However, kinesiology classes provide the opportunity for students to better their health and well-being. For whatever reason, participating in beginning tennis or even bowling may be the only workout many students get.

If the administration allows the core curriculum to be tampered with, the "freshmen 15" could become a thing of the past. The "University 50" could be the newly coined phrase

for Aggies as they remain stationary in their desks for four, five, six or more years. The health of student's bodies, as well as their minds, needs to be taken into consideration. If KINE 199 classes are eradicated from the core curriculum, students will be at a disadvantage. Any outlet for physical improvement will merely become an extravagance, something students can only participate in if they have the extra time and finances. Why should the administration make staying fit more difficult than it already is? Elimination of kinesiology classes will inevitably result in a different atmosphere in Aggie land. Desks will be uncomfortably small, Hullabaloo will experience dizzying lines of ravenous students, and incoming freshmen will begin to refer to themselves as the Fighting Texas Fatty Class of 2004.

Summer Hicks is a senior English major.

### EDITORIAL

## THE BATTALION

Editorials appearing in *The Battalion* reflect the majority view of the editorial board members. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff. Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors.

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## A CALL FOR CHANGE

### Racial disharmony needs to be addressed by all at A&M

"Typical nigger" — that was the message someone wrote across Rasheda James' car her freshman year at Texas A&M. It was not just a message of hate and ignorance, it was a message to James that A&M is not the close-knit Aggie family it appeared to be at the summer orientation she attended and the recruiting weekends she was invited to.

While it is easy to agree this is a racist act to be condemned, would all agree this type of incident is uncommon at A&M?

Through a recent round table discussion with several African-American student leaders, *The Battalion* heard first-hand accounts of a divisive racial atmosphere at A&M. While this may merely reflect existing racial tension in society, it should be acknowledged that

A&M's all-white, all-male history makes the racial tension on campus more difficult to overcome.

In the last 80 years, A&M has made many positive steps toward the ultimate goal of being a world-class university. This progress began when A&M opened its doors to women and minorities, and continues through the administration's efforts to recruit minorities.

But it is now time for A&M to progress to the next step. A&M is well-known for its traditions and conservatism. However, these characteristics cannot be used as an excuse for the racially tense environment many minority students encounter.

The discrimination minorities experience on campus is appalling. If A&M

wants to be on par with other universities, and if Vision 2020 is to become a reality, students and the administration need to demand further change.

Texas A&M is in need of such improvements as a greater number of minority students and faculty, a multiculturalism requirement in the core curriculum and a truly desegregated community that sees intolerance as unacceptable.

It may be hard to admit, but as much as A&M appears to be a campus united in its traditions, it is divided by a lack of racial diversity.

While a solution to racism will not appear overnight, it is the responsibility of the University, from students to faculty, to work to eliminate it on our campus.

### MAIL CALL

## College of Liberal Arts deserving of campus-wide recognition

In response to Brienne Porter's Feb. 28 column.

I am a junior speech communication major and would like to thank Porter for drawing attention to the efforts of the College of Liberal Arts (CLA). We have long deserved attention from the school, which was originally mechanically and agriculturally based. I have many friends who simply feel the CLA is full of unnecessary required courses and think I should have attended the "other" school in the state to get the degree I desire.

I am here to say that my department alone is ranked among the top schools in the nation for speech communication. I am proud of my department and my professors. I am proud to be an Aggie, and I am proud of the degree I will soon possess. We are not just those classes engineers have to take.

This brings me to another point. I am frustrated with the department for not promoting its strengths throughout the

school. As the article mentioned, the CLA has little recognition, but we need to do more to promote what we stand for. Two weeks ago the CLA held our annual Liberal Arts Career Week, and turn-out within the college was great, however we wanted to hit other colleges as well. Publicity is a huge factor the CLA should investigate.

I would like the University to know what great efforts liberal arts students go to in earning our degrees and that the CLA is not composed of blow-off classes with easy professors.

Clara Kruljac  
Class of '01

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:  
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