

ViewPoints

Internet gambling opposition should improve argument

The high-stakes poker game has always been a romantic notion. In fact, gambling has been a high-rolling industry for centuries. From the riverboats to the Bellagio, gambling establishments have thrived. As is the case with most industries, gambling has been riding the Internet bandwagon for some time. One can pick from roughly 2,000 Internet wagering sites to bet on anything from the Super Bowl to a couple of spins on the roulette wheel.

All that could soon come to an end if a bill proposed by House leaders becomes law. Attempts to eliminate Internet gambling have been made before, but they have always fallen short of becoming law. This time, however, House leaders are making a bolder and more comprehensive effort to eliminate most forms of cyberspace gambling.

Among the people supporting the bill are conservative religious groups who have pushed Congress for years. The groups say that gambling on the Internet could lead to the breakup of families whose members are drawn to a system of gambling with almost no controls, conducted in private from the comfort of one's home.

While this might be quaint discussion for a Sunday School, it falls desperately short of a strong argument. The list of factors that contribute to the breakup of families is a mile long. The efforts of these conservative religious groups should be redirected to a worthwhile cause. The decision to gamble is an individual one that is rarely influenced by the ease with which the decision can be implemented.

Alcoholic beverage distributors are not to blame for alcoholism and its role in family breakups. Why change the rules for Internet wagering?

The government's justification for this ban also lacks logic. The main argument presented by the government is that Internet gambling violates the Wire Act of 1961, which bans most interstate gambling transactions conducted via telephone. Technically this is true, but if one digs deeper, the bureaucratic hurdles are easily cleared.

The 1961 Act was intended to control gambling transactions done through "bookies" for one reason: Neither the bookies nor the profiting gamblers reported their income. All Internet gambling sites take the Social Security numbers of their applicants. If any legislation is to be passed, it should be the requirement of these agencies to report the income of their customers to their respective countries.

— Luke McMahan

'Son of Sam laws' effective, protect criminal and victim

In the '70s, David Berkowitz, known as the Son of Sam, went on a murder spree that attracted national headlines. After his capture and imprisonment, Berkowitz sought to sell his story to publishers, but before he could, the New York Legislature passed a law preventing convicted criminals from profiting from royalty fees associated with their crimes. Thirty years later, a similar California law is in front of that state's Supreme Court for review.

In response, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and several national book associations have chimed in with choruses of censorship and free speech. However, the criticism of California's and New York's "Son of Sam laws" overlooks the reality of the laws. Not only do the laws allow for a criminal's freedom of speech, they also protect the victim's family from knowing his loved one's injury or death will not line the assailant's pockets.

The California and New York laws do not prohibit convicted criminals from talking about their crimes, and to publishers and the press — they simply prevent them from receiving payment for the interviews. As the ACLU is quick to point out, criminals are guaranteed the same constitutional rights as free citizens. The states have recognized that concern, and with the "Son of Sam laws," even convicts get their say.

On the other hand, victim's rights are as important as the aggressor's. The law needs to protect a victim and his or her family from the insult of watching the criminal profit from their suffering.

Simply put, there is no need for the California Supreme Court to review these laws. Not only do they protect people on both sides of the crime, they also work in another, very important sphere: crime prevention. Fame and notoriety have more than once served as motivation for violent crime. The "Son of Sam laws" shine in their removal of one more reason to break the law.

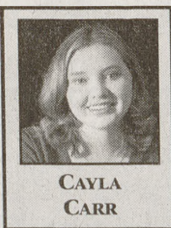
Society will always have a fascination with crime and violence. These laws ensure that the wrong person does not profit from that fascination.

— Eric Dickens

Prying eyes

Access to opponents' playbooks will not ensure victory on the field

Before being shut down by a pending lawsuit, the Website sportsplaybooks.com was offering copies of some well-known college football playbooks, including A&M's, to coaches, fans and players. Many people feared that coaches across the nation logged on and purchased playbooks, and next season, will hold the key to leading their teams to stardom. However, some people do not realize that the playbooks of successful teams like A&M and the University of Texas are not the only reason these two schools dominate their division. Skill, talent, coaching and execution of outlined plays are what really pave the road to victory. It is not the amount of time spent to perfect a system, but the resources available on game day that carve out success. Execution beats preparation every time.



CAYLA CARR

Football is more than just a bunch of X's and O's drawn in a formation. It is a game in which knowledge, ingenuity and ability are required to execute a play. More importantly, football is a game played on impulse. In one play, a team can make a crucial interception and score a touchdown, or carelessly fumble the ball and lose the game. In these instances, the playbook is irrelevant. Recovering a fumble or intercepting a pass really has nothing to do with a football playbook. The real test is to be ready, to adapt and to react.

A playbook is only a basic foundation of the offense and defense formations the coach chooses to run. The type of formation is not as important to real game situations, as the caliber of players and the strengths of a team. Playbooks themselves will not produce winning programs. It all depends on the type of offense the coach plans to use, based on the skills of the players. Obviously, a team's offense must be able to adapt to different defensive formations and vice versa. Coaches constantly scout upcoming

teams and teach their players how to execute plays according to an opposing team's strengths. But in a real game situation, players have to fall back on basic knowledge to gain yards. Every team that plays Nebraska knows the Cornhuskers are going to run the option, but for years, defenses have failed to stop it. The talent and ability of Nebraska's players have consistently beaten teams, even when the opponents are lined up to defeat the option.

R.C. Slocum helped A&M become the most successful team in Texas in the 1990s. He has proven that no matter how much research coaches and their teams can do, they still may not be able to defeat an opposing team's strength, such as A&M's Wrecking Crew defense. Coaches are aware of opposing teams' basic plays and usually even adapt their lineups accordingly. They focus on the strongest players and plan how to render them useless. Coaches spend

hours watching films of their own and other teams in hopes of surprising their opponents on game day. Then an underestimated Cinderella team wins, and everyone is caught off guard, because it is not the film and the scouting that wins the game; it is the ability of the players and the coaches to focus and perform under pressure.

Most coaches know that even if they have a team's playbook, it does not mean they can stop a team's offense or

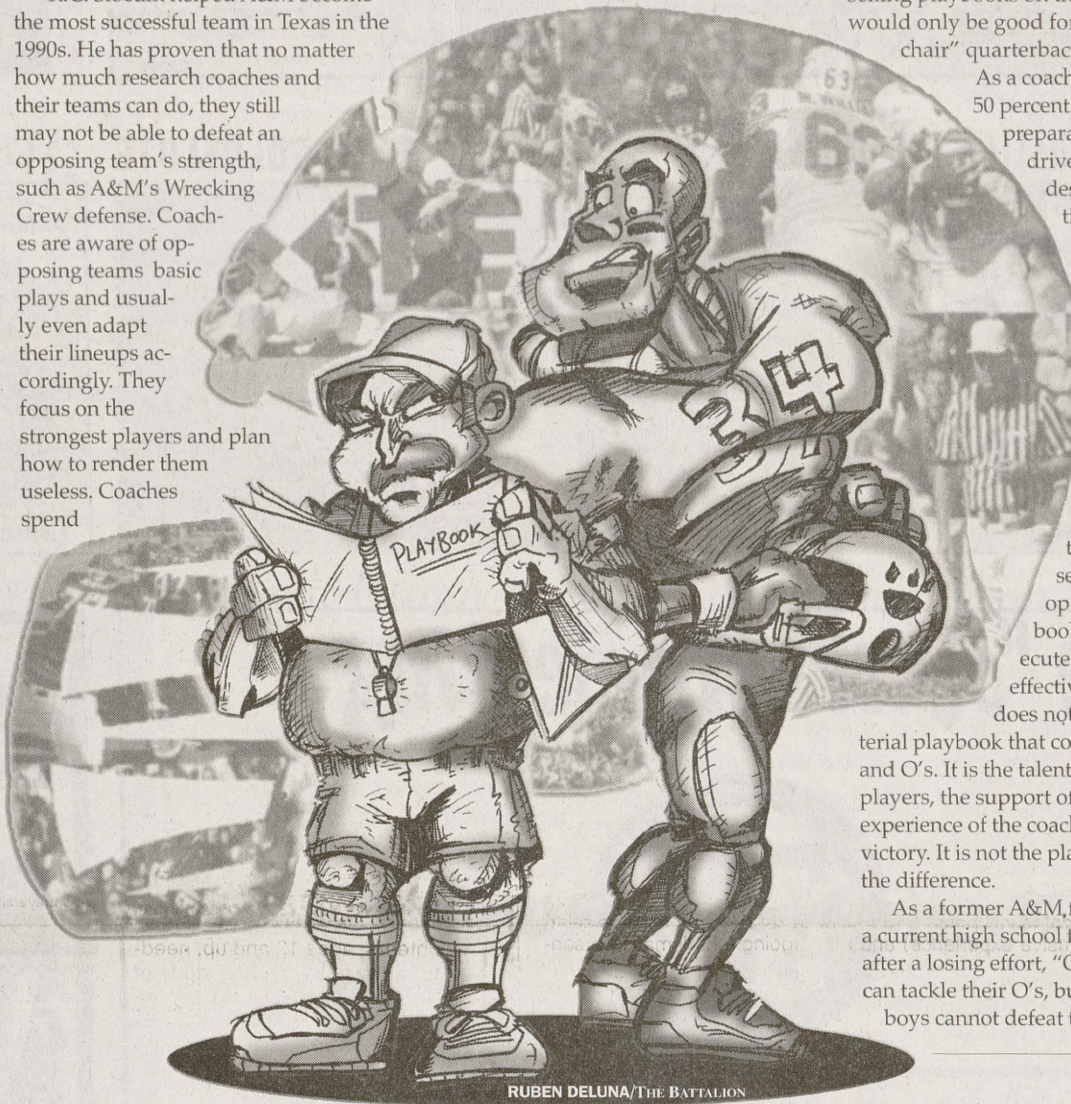
defense with any success. Victory depends on the experience of the coach, the talent of the offense and defense, and the heart of the players.

Probably the only people who would benefit from this Internet playbook sale are fans who sit in the stands with their teams' playbooks and criticize the coaches' every move, instead of just every other move. Most fans do not realize that there are other factors that influence a coach's actions. Ultimately, selling playbooks on the Internet would only be good for those "arm-chair" quarterbacks.

As a coach would say, only 50 percent of football is preparation. The rest is driven by reaction, desire and execution. Experience and execution during the game give one team an edge on the field. The playbook is simply the first building block in the game of football.

The object of the game is not to see who can develop the best playbook, but who can execute those plays most effectively. Winning does not depend on a material playbook that consists only of X's and O's. It is the talent and heart of the players, the support of the fans and the experience of the coaches that leads to victory. It is not the playbook that makes the difference.

As a former A&M football player and a current high school football coach said after a losing effort, "On paper, our X's can tackle their O's, but on the field, our boys cannot defeat their men!"



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Cayla Carr is junior journalism major.

E-government gets disconnected

Bureaucracy takes toll on President Clinton's interactive Website

For years the federal government has been searching for avenues by which to regulate the burgeoning Internet. Finally, seems to have struck upon the solution: let the bureaucracy at it.

A few people have caught President Clinton's new Saturday Web addresses, his "Website chats." For the past three weekends he has heralded the arrival of the government, and particularly his administration, on the Internet.

On June 24, in his inaugural address, he announced the impending creation of firstgov.gov, an interactive Website designed to consolidate government information and services. The new site will, above all else, supposedly do away with the legacy of a difficult bureaucracy where limbo is a standard operating atmosphere. Welcome to the e-llusion.

"In the spirit of cutting through red tape," Clinton said, "this new Website will be created in 90 days or less." The idea behind this is to prove how the government is advancing side-by-side with business in its pioneering technological adventures. That a site of such magnitude might be created in 90 days or less would be, when accomplished, quite the show of a new federal efficiency. That is, if it were true.

The firstgov.gov domain name as well as the .com, .net and .org suffixes were all registered by a federal employee nearly a year ago, on July 15, 1999. The claim of a 3-month incubation time is then nothing but smoke and mirrors.

With a little more than 14 months to prepare the site, even the bureaucrats would have to put forth a special effort to fail in meeting the promised operational deadline.

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Alternately, of course, the government might have truly been sitting on the domain names and the entire project for the past year, a tribute to the sluggish paper trail of their forebearers.

One look at whitehouse.com will show why the administration is anxious to erase any possibility of oversights in its new endeavor. A porn site, while perhaps a fitting tribute to the president, is not his idea.

But making sure that someone who wants to check on their Social Security does not end up with a choice

of sultry "First Ladies" is still the least of its concerns.

On the day Clinton announced his new era of e-government, immutable forces of nature were active at work against him. Web browsers sent to firstgov.gov automatically defaulted to the .com site. Not a catastrophe by any means, but precisely the opposite of what had been intended, the classic bureaucratic foible.

This after nearly a year to prepare for that one moment. What promise lies ahead.

When questioned about the slip-up, the official media rep for firstgov.gov first expressed ignorance (the error was quickly fixed) and then concurrence as to the irony of the mistake.

Even top e-government officials agree that any online services are at least five years from comparing in ability with those of e-business today. For all not keeping track, that is the same e-business of server delays, lost information and sites vulnerable to intrusion by 13-year-old children.

Of course, the real circus is still over two months away, when the site premieres and its claims are put to the test. While it is nice to know that there are still humans with the ability to make mistakes behind the impersonal electronic networks, the frightening part is that they are branching out.

James Stockstill is a columnist for the Daily Mississippian at the U. of Mississippi.

News in Brief

Protesting protesters

3 companies

FRANCISCO (AP) — "utterly" Hill, who lives for more than two protest the logging of redwoods, is going over a magazine ad says mocks her. resembles widely photos taken as Hill lived form in the 1,000-year-old, according to a lawsuit filed last Thursday AT&T Corp., OmniSky and advertising agency at/Day.

oman in the ad, however, a small OmniSky Internet device. A man base of the tree holds buckets and is looking e ladder. A logo on his ads sponge-bath.com.

she, who had endured physical, mental and spiritual challenges and risked her support of her efforts to growth forests, would wireless Internet and evice to call a man to er and would endorse nts' products in a com-advertisement was way comprehension," Hill's ina J. Risman of Sar 26, was traveling and was unavailable ment.

IT

Continued from Page 1

front, at least, Clinton said Israel was a \$250 million sale of an airborne radar system to the administration and members of Congress had ing security concerns.

spokesperson Gadi y said the decision was to improve prospects for access. Israel, he said, need-erve its "intimate relations" United States.

e the news blackout at vid, outside the Maryland retreat representatives from os were speaking freely. nian spokesperson Hama said Wednesday on CNN was ignoring the plight of n refugees.

ing responsibility is not y to start (the summit).

Cabinet minister Yuli eated Israel's rejection n demands to establish e traditionally Arab east of Jerusalem.

will be no division of s-over Jerusalem," Tamir, of of immigration and absorp on CNN. "Jerusalem will divided."

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Sex-a-thon part of Internet's diversity, idea marketplace

In response to Amber Rasco's July 12 ViewPoint.

Rasco argues that this Webcast degrades the Internet because she disagrees with its educational value as well as finding its subject matter immoral. The Internet is too large and diverse a medium for anyone thing to diminish. And because it is this diverse medium everything has a place on it.

While admittedly the Webcast's taste is questionable it is, however, not "immoral."

Sex between consenting adults is their choice regardless of who they decide to do it with and whether or not they decide to broadcast it. Morality is a relative thing and no one has any right to tell anyone else what to do.

Rasco also suggests that this Webcast will harm children. It will not — if their parents are any good at parenting they will know what their kids are watching and restrict it as they, the parents and not anyone else, sees fit.

Mail Call

People were having sex for fun long before they linked it to reproduction. We also cannot hide sex from the young; they will one day participate in it themselves, and we must prepare them with the proper knowledge so that they will do it responsibly.

So if in the future they decide to practice in such an exhibition they will know that while a condom is not perfect protection it is better than none when they engage in sex with many different partners.

Terrell Rabb Class of '02

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

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