

DETERMINING WHO GOES PRO

19-year-old Ohio State running back should be allowed to play in the NFL early

Maurice Clarett is the total package. As Ohio State's star running back en route to a possible record-breaking season, he has easily led the Buckeyes to a number four national ranking in a currently undefeated season. In doing so, he has also established himself as one of the NCAA's leading rushers with an average of 141 yards a game, and a contender for the Heisman Trophy, awarded each year to the season's single best player in collegiate football. Not only does he have the ability to compete with the NFL's best, but also the physical and mental toughness. However, he is only a 19-year-old freshman. According to National Football League rules, which require a player to be three years out of high school before he is eligible for the draft, Clarett is too young to play for them. While he has yet to decide if he will challenge this ruling, he has more than earned the right to do so if he chooses.



LINDSAY AIELLO

Often times collegiate freshmen do not have the size they need to withstand the brutality of the NFL, and thus need a few years to "bulk up." This is not an issue with Maurice Clarett. At six-foot and 230 pounds, he easily matches — and even surpasses — the size of the NFL's best running back. LaDainian Tomlinson, a running back for the San Diego Chargers and the league's current rushing leader, stands two inches shorter than Clarett and weighs in at 221 pounds. Emmitt Smith is even smaller. According to the Web site for the Dallas Cowboys, his stature is measured at 5 ft. 9 in. and 212 pounds. Smith is the NFL's all-time leading rusher and arguably the best running back the game has ever seen, and his size is not an issue. Clarett, who is even more physically imposing, should be given his chance to develop in the NFL. Many also feel a 19-year-old does not possess the mentality or maturity needed to handle the pressures associated with an NFL career or the fame that comes with it. However, Clarett defies

the norm. At his age, he has had to see and endure things many people don't in a lifetime, and faced far tougher things than any defensive line. In an interview with *ESPN Magazine*, he explained what it was like to grow up in Youngstown, Ohio. Without a father, Maurice — with his two brothers and eleven cousins — basically raised himself while his mother worked long days. He easily recalled a time when, while playing football in the street, he watched as a neighbor was shot in a drive-by and "crawled in the bushes and died." And another time when the same thing happened to a neighbor's friend as Clarett played outside with a cousin. He has "already been to ten funerals of friends from the neighborhood", while his best friend is in prison for attempted murder. In high school at Harding High, while basically living off of beans and franks and often without electricity, he managed to earn himself the title of *USA Today's* National Offensive Player of the

Year before graduating a semester early. And now, from the worst possible situation and against all odds, he has managed to become one of football's brightest young stars. If you think he can't handle the pressure, just ask him. As told to interviewer Gene Wojciechowski, "I don't feel like there's anything anyone can do to me now that hasn't been done to me before. So the way I look at football is, 'All you gonna do is hit me?'" When a brilliant young 12-year-old decided to enter college at University of California-Davis last August, nobody told her she wasn't allowed to do so. Although there are many possible repercussions to a child facing the harsh reality of college life, this preteen was afforded the choice to embark on such an experience. Maurice Clarett, whose unique abilities and experiences easily prepare him for all the NFL has to offer, should be afforded the same freedom.

Lindsay Aiello is a sophomore journalism major.

GRAPHIC BY JOSH DARWIN • THE BATTALION

Nudity, vulgarity and all things 'Mature'

BMX XXX and other 'Mature' video games should be banned from stores

On Nov. 15th, Acclaim Entertainment Inc. will launch its new video game BMX XXX, an action-packed thrill ride that includes full nudity and a line of characters including pimps, prostitutes and copulating pink poodles, according to reuters.com. The video game, which is made for Sony's Playstation 2, Microsoft's Xbox and Nintendo's GameCube, features the tagline "Keep it dirty," according to Reuters. The game is so controversial the makers had to create an edited version to further the reach of the game's distribution. In the edited version, players will be unable to create topless female characters, Acclaim spokesman Alan Lewis said. BMX XXX will, however, still be available in the original, fully nude form. The video game does come with a "Mature" rating meaning you have to be at least 17 to purchase it and Acclaim says it is not marketing this game to children, but many consider this merely a front and children will likely still be able to get their hands on it. An example of this is the ease with which anyone can get into the official BMX XXX Web site. When you pull it up, instructions direct the viewer to "click here" if he or she is 17 or older. When it is clicked, it automatically goes into the site with no verification of age, so anyone can access it. Any 10, 11 or 12-year-old can log onto the Web site which contains "ads magazines didn't want you to see" of a woman in a thong on a bike, two dogs having sex and a pimp with two girls wearing bikinis.



MARK WOOD

taught how to steal cars and get away with it. But now by allowing this video game to circulate, children are learning that behavior such as pimping, prostitution and wanton profanity are okay also. Video game producers have taken explicit video game content to a whole new level with BMX XXX. The game should be taken off the shelves of every gaming store and should not be allowed to be sold. A pornographic game can lead to no good and will eventually land in the hands of children. Acclaim Entertainment Inc. is doing society an injustice by making this game. They are taking advantage of young children by capitalizing off of them. This game is a prime example of the attitude many American businesses possess of willingness to do anything to make a buck. It is sad that young children these days are faced with these decisions at such an early age just because some executive isn't satisfied with his already million-dollar salary. This video game is adding to the pile of immoral junk people are forced to deal with. However, a good thing can come out of this situation as opposition to the game is rising steadily. Several executives at some of the world's largest retail companies find it too graphic. Top retailers, including Wal-Mart, Toys "R" Us and KB Toys have said they will not sell BMX XXX because of its content. So through all this negativity, people have learned there are some companies out there that stand up for what is right no matter how much revenue they may be missing. Wal-Mart spokesman Tom Williams told Reuters, "We're not going to carry any software with any vulgarity or nudity — we're just not going to do it." The companies that have decided to not sell this pornographic game should be applauded. Finally, someone in corporate America has realized sometimes the bottom line just isn't worth the harm it will cause the youths. The only hope we have in stopping this behavior is not buying the game and by letting the retailers who have decided not to stock it know how much their integrity is appreciated. Hopefully, there will be so many protests and boycotts Acclaim will have no choice but to pull the game off the shelves and out of production forever.

"A pornographic game can lead to no good and will eventually land in the hands of children."

Mark Wood is a senior journalism major.

Demand from the public and the ESRB should dictate what's acceptable

Acclaim Entertainment's newest entry into the multitude of "Mature"-rated video games, BMX XXX, is drawing needless criticism from various retailers and members of the media, which is more than a little unfair considering the game hasn't even been released yet. Critics who have neither seen nor played the game are labeling it obscene and calling for it to be banned from stores, a move that limits the control consumers have over what they can buy. But many fail to realize that BMX XXX and all other video games comply with standards set by the Electronic Software Rating Board (ESRB) which rates games, and no game can be more graphic or vulgar than an R-rated movie or album with explicit lyrics. This game's release is actually a celebration of people's rights and purchasing power as responsible consumers. One of the elements which separates BMX XXX from other games is the addition of nudity and coarse language. Though the addition of sexuality and questionable dialogue in games is hardly groundbreaking, it is enough to ignite the occasional watchdog organization, well-meaning parent or senator running for re-election.



GEORGE DEUTSCH

"BMX XXX and all other video games comply with standards set by the Electronic Software Rating Board."

A similar controversy in 1993 about Mortal Kombat coupled with a game rating campaign spearheaded by Senator Joe Lieberman resulted in the formation of the ESRB. It was the government's decision that the responsibility for rating game content lie with this organization, and the BMX XXX has met the board's approval. For retailers such as Best Buy or Wal-Mart to say they won't sell this game is hypocritical, because its content is no different from other electronic media they already sell, such as movies and CDs. There is likely nothing that will transpire in BMX XXX which has not already been seen in countless movies, nor will people hear words they've never heard before. This game in particular should not be judged differently than any other form of commercial entertainment. As Greg Fischbach, CEO of Acclaim, noted in a recent news release, "our product is being held to an entirely different

standard than other media of similar content." It also remains to be seen whether these selective retailers will carry the edited version of the game Acclaim is promising them. In either case, by not selling the unedited game they have already alienated a sizable portion of their shopping demographic. After all, no one wants to be told what they can or can't buy with their money, especially not adults who are responsible and informed consumers. As long as legality is not an issue, the buying public should dictate what is being sold through supply and demand — it should not be controlled by senseless regulation. Stripping consumers of their right to buy this game is the first step toward stripping them of more rights, a trend nobody wants to see. Besides, for stores not to carry a "Mature"-rated video game is to say they don't have faith in their own government-created regulatory board, the ESRB. It sends a bad message when retail chains cave in to the demands of the easily-offended minority and fail to recognize the means of regulation already in place. As a "Mature" game, BMX XXX cannot be sold to anyone under 17. There is no need for it to be banned on top of this. Being an "M"-rated game, BMX XXX is not being marketed toward children, which actually makes it more family-oriented, instead of less. This empowers parents to decide what is right for their children. The advertisements for BMX XXX make no attempt to hide its rating, but ads for the game are actually few and far between. Interestingly, the game has seen more attention from news agencies than from its own advertisements. There is no question that people should have some degree of protection from media with questionable content. In this case, that protection lies in a rating board agreed to by both the government and the video game industry. For retailers to ban approved games no different in content from the movies which line their shelves is both hypocritical and irresponsible. Time will tell if "Mature" consumers prove to be an unforgiving group.

George Deutsch is a senior journalism major.

Athletics vital part of A&M's Vision 2020

The actual words "football" or "sports" may not be included in the official Vision 2020 document, but Associate Professor Gary Varner is incorrect in concluding that our athletic programs are unimportant in accomplishing the goals set

out in Vision 2020. He should be reminded that schools are not just ranked by the quality of teaching and research. Success of the athletic programs indirectly influence our school ranking by furthering school spirit, new student recruiting, alumni contributions, and national exposure of the university. All these are factored into the *U.S. News* ranking, so like it or not, success in football and other sports (to a lesser extent) play a role.

The Home page for Texas A&M commits to "Creating a Culture of Excellence." This means we as a school will not accept mediocrity in any facet, but strive to make it better. Let's hope we do. Dan Vales Class of 2004 **Students must focus on OU, not Slocum** No, the world is not coming

to an end in these last few weeks of the Big 12 Conference football schedule, but for us Aggies and our "world-renowned Twelfth Man," these few weeks, and this Saturday in particular, will say a lot. This Saturday the number one team in the nation, OU, will be coming to our Kyle Field with more than its own rising confidence. Unfortunately, some of the Aggie faithful have also recently been helping out OU's ego. I

do not know how many times I have heard remarks like, "Slocum needs to step down," or "I hope we lose so that we have to get a new coach." Then there is the ever popular, "We don't stand a chance against OU." Frankly, these remarks sicken me. Dustin Long, Bethel Johnson, and company are part of possibly the most dangerous offensive unit we have ever had in Aggieland. And while our Wrecking Crew has not played up to expectations

lately, I have an enormous amount of faith in our defensive unit, and they have the talent to back it up. Furthermore, the coaching situation will be addressed AFTER three of the biggest games of the season. I have my opinions about what needs to happen here, but for now, I am just a little more interested in beating the number one and number five (t.u.) teams in America. J. Cuyler Dear Class of 2006

MAIL CALL