

Police want student help in snowball fight control

Planning a snowball fight? Chances are Campus Police will find out about it before it starts.

According to Gail Gade, director of Campus Police, he usually hears about organized snowball fights. Police procedure is to talk to the organizers, if they know who they are, and warn them about the possibilities of property damage and injuries. Gade said if a fraternity is involved, he asks the officers of the fraternity to assist campus police in calming things down.

"Use the PE fields if you have to have a fight," Gade said.

Too late

"Ordinarily, we'll hear about it. We've been successful in the past at stopping them. Last time it was too late. We found out about it at 8:30 and we started looking into it. 11:30 rolled around before we got going and by that time it had already started," Gade said.

Campus Police won't arrest anyone unless there is property damage or personal injury. If the snowball fight is on a city street, Lincoln police are called in. Campus security and Lincoln police coordinate their efforts, Gade said.

Captain John Miller of the Lincoln police department's traffic division

said, "Even though 16th Street is a city street, we won't go in unless we're called by a guy whose car window's been busted. Then we would investigate."

In last week's snowball fight, only university property was damaged and police received no other complaints. In such cases, Lincoln police will divert traffic around the snow fighters.

'Only if it snows'

Miller said police expect snowball fights in the winter, "only if it snows."

"We allow university students to have their snowball fights. It'd be the same if it happened at Northeast, or anywhere else in the city, as long as there's no property damage. We don't hesitate to investigate a property damage offense."

Arrests at last week's snowball fight occurred because individuals failed to cooperate with police requests, not because of any offenses related to the fight.

"Anytime police become involved with a crowd in a situation when laws aren't being broken," Miller said, "police tend to antagonize a small per cent of the crowd. Say 5 per cent. If this small 5 per cent throw snowballs at the police, well, it's a follow the leader type thing."



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