

# Southpaws say 'lefties' should keep their uniqueness

Left-handed people should not feel the need to change their writing skills or sporting habits to the right side, although 93 percent of the world's population is right-handed, according to an assistant professor of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation.

James Crabbe said being left-handed may be an advantage in the sports world.

"Depending on the sport, I believe that left-handers have an advantage because there are so few and the right-handed athlete must adapt a new strategy to face the lefty."

"There are many left-handers at the professional level of sports. Many baseball coaches feel that their team must have a certain amount of left-handed pitchers to confuse the hitter who is able to hit off a right-handed pitcher. There are also successful left-handed tennis players, such as Jimmy Connors."

"Because the left-hander has an advantage to playing sports left-handed, he should not change hands while learning a new sport," Crabbe said.

### Writing woes

Crabbe, a lefty, said the only thing that irritated him about being left-handed is that his teachers never taught him proper penmanship. Crabbe said he now writes with his hand in a hook position in order to get a right-handed slant.

"In grade school my teachers always gave me a bad time about the way I wrote because my slant was wrong. Being left-handed got me bad handwriting grades," said Kim Harling, a UNL freshman.

Noting that left-handers usually have a tendency to place their hand in a hook position, Gordon Greene, professor of elementary education, said the hook has several causes including the position of the paper and also the need to slant letters to the right while writing longhand.

Writing is not the only problem facing left-handers. Harling said that using scissors can also cause problems.

"I once bought a pair of left-handed scissors but because I was so used to using right-handed scissors I could not get the left-handed scissors to cut," Harling said.

"There are only two things that I do right-handed," Crabbe said. I shoot weapons right-handed because that's the way my father taught me and I fly a plane right-handed because it's impossible to fly most planes left-handed."

Crabbe explained that the "joy stick," (the stick used to steer the plane) is located on the right and the power controls are located on the left of most airplanes, so the pilot must fly the plane right-handed.

### Big deal

Harling said "people always notice right

away if you're left-handed, especially right-handed people. The right-handers usually make a big deal out of it because it seems backwards to them.

"When I was little I was ambidextrous. My mom would hold out my spoon in front of me to give me a choice of using my right or left hand. I usually grabbed the spoon with my left hand," she said.

"By the time a child reaches kindergarten age it's easy to determine if he will be left- or right-handed. If the child is more comfortable using his left hand, teachers today usually let him continue to write left-handed. If a child is ambidextrous, the teacher may encourage use of the right hand," according to Greene.

Greene said today's younger children rarely pay any attention if one of their classmates is left-handed.

### Wrong desks

Greg Graff, a left-handed UNL freshman from Wahoo, said he is used to writing on desks for right-handers in classrooms.

"The only problem I have is I have to juggle my books so that there's room to write at an angle," he said. Graff also said he sometimes uses a left-handed desk in his chemistry class. Using the left-handed desk makes it easier to take notes," he said.

"In some of my classes there are left-handed desks that are not hard to miss because they're usually in front. But,

there are usually right-handers sitting in the left-handed desks, so I don't use them," Graff said.

"You never really think about it if it's easier to sit in a left-handed desk or a right-handed desk because most left-handers are used to sitting in right-handed desks," Harling said. She said she has yet to sit in a left-handed desk at UNL because she can't find one.

Although Harling has not seen a left-handed desk, Ray Coffey, business manager of Business and Finance, said it is a general rule that 10 percent of the desks the university purchases be made for left-handers.

"There are two types of chairs we buy," he said. "One type is a table chair with a desk top that can be used either way. The other desk has an arm on the left or right side," Coffey said.

"It's hard to keep the left-handed chairs in specific rooms because desks are shuffled around so much. It's especially hard to keep left-handed desks in classrooms found in buildings like Hamilton, Burnett and Andrews Halls because the rooms have so many desks and desks are shuffled around more," Coffey said.

He added that left-handed desks are kept by the university. So, if you are a lefty and are tired of using desks for right-handers, tell your instructor. He may be able to get you a "lefty desk."

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