

# Mike 'Heisman' routine needless syntactics

Well, it worked. A season-long campaign of semantic hammering has turned Mike Rozier into Mike Heisman Rozier, then into simply Mike Heisman, and finally into shoo-in Heisman Trophy winner Mike Rozier. Even Brent Musberger conceded that Rozier is the obvious pick while chatting with Ara Parseghian at CBS Sports Central Saturday, during the Georgia-Florida game.



Pat Clark

Sure, it would be easy to contend that the Mike Heisman routine was not part of a concerted campaign, but rather a phenomenon that occurred of its own accord. That might even be true. Nevertheless, it smacks of the same mentality that splices pictures of popcorn and soft drinks onto movie reels to suggest trips to the snack bar to unsuspecting movie patrons.

There's no denying that Rozier has been a leading

Heisman candidate from the onset of the season, and has made himself the obvious choice by virtue of his on-field performance during the course of the year. Unfortunately, the fans and press have not been content to let Rozier win the Heisman on his own merits. So, we get the Mike Heisman routine.

With the success of the Mike Heisman non-campaign, we are likely to see more of this kind of syntactic hijinks in the future. This very season, there may yet be time to get the Dean "Outland" Steinkuhler and Tom "Coach of the Year" Osborne non-campaigns underway.

Promotion being the highly imitative business it is, there's no reason to believe Mike Heismanlike hypes will be limited to Husker football. The possibilities are limitless: Matt "ASUN" Wallace, Meryl "Oscar" Streep, John "President of the United States" Glenn.

The larger issue here is not whether some die-hard Husker fans should be allowed to do their bit to help attract attention to Mike Rozier; but rather the tendency, not limited to sports events, not to let something of value or exception stand on its own merit. The Mike Heisman non-campaign is a very modest example.

The aforementioned Brent Musberger has made a whole career out of oooing and aahing about the athletes who appear on events televised by CBS. If you have watched CBS' coverage of pro basketball, you know the problem.

It is never enough, for example, for Julius Erving to drive down the lane, flying past another bewildered dupe in the opponent's uniform, spin in midair and slam home another dunk. CBS must quickly flash to Brent Musberger at the studio, who will inform us that Erving just made a great play. They do it just in case everybody in the United States was out getting a sandwich, I guess.

What eventually happens is that we come to look for the hype instead of the substance, and the people who promote sports events are all too willing to deliver. Every play becomes great, every athlete is one of the best at his position in the conference, every game is a showdown that could decide (circle one: the conference championship, the national championship, who goes to a bowl game). Just for once, it might be nice to let athletic excellence stand as self-evidence.



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## Rating protest may force second look at system

By Ward W. Triplett III

Sportsmanship ratings for UNL intramurals have been used for two years, but their purpose and intent has helped the sports involved, the director of campus recreation said.

Stan Campbell said he hopes some purpose to the rules will emerge during the current protests about Sigma Chi's ejection from the flag football tournament playoffs because of a low sportsmanship rating.

"The goals are to keep people conducting themselves in a mature manner and to make the game more enjoyable for officials, the team's players and the opposing players," Campbell said.

In the ratings, which are compiled at the conclusion of each game, a 5 rating is given for excellent sportsmanship, a 4 rating for above average, a 3 rating for average, a 2 rating for below average, which would include arguing with a referee, and a 1 rating for extremely poor sportsmanship, which includes actions that cause a player to be thrown out of a game. The officials, the opposing team captain and a department official rate the team.

A team must maintain a 2.5 rating throughout the season to be eligible for the playoffs. Once into the playoffs, a team must meet the 2.5 each game in order to continue.

Questions about the ratings arise because of this rule. Tom Shires, a player for Tau Kappa Epsilon, said a team has no way of knowing what its rating is throughout the season, and could find themselves thrown out of a playoff game while doing the same things they had done all season. That, he thought, was part of the Sigma Chi case.

Campbell said the sportsmanship ratings are posted in the recreation office after each game.

"We try to get those out the day after the game is played," Campbell said. "In a few cases, we've been a week behind, but we were all caught up (before the playoffs)."

The purpose of the current system is to balance an overall score, but it has worked the other way, some participants say.

It's become a weapon to get back at the other team," said Bob Cummings, team manager of Girth Vadors, the independent champions and one of three rated teams remaining in the flag football playoffs.

"It almost happened to a basketball team I played on last year. We came real close to not getting a 2.5 average because the opposing team captain was mad at us for beating them and gave us a zero."

Cummings, whose team beat the Sigma Chi team in a tournament before the official flag football season began, said the decision was not fair.

"I saw that game, and I didn't agree at all with the rating the

Sigma Chi's got," Cummings said. "I was told that someone gave them a one or a zero, but nothing happened in that game that would get them a rating that low. It was totally inconsistent to what (intramural director) Kenda (Scheele) told us about giving those ratings at the start of the year."

An increase in poor sportsmanship has made the ratings necessary, Campbell said.

"I don't know why," he said, "but in the past few years we've seen increasingly poor sportsmanship. I'm not sure what the rationale is, but I have to believe it's tied to role models."

"People are looking at professional athletes complain about calls, and think, 'Hey, they're doing it, why shouldn't I?' I'm not totally convinced it's appropriate for the college and professional athlete to do that. I am absolutely convinced it's not appropriate for intramural athletes to do it."

The problem is magnified now since the officials aren't strangers the players won't see again, as in collegiate athletics. In intramural sports, with the referees being peers with the players, Campbell said it is crucial for that referee to have the respect of the athletes.

Campbell said he has heard about the ratings.

"We've had a lot of players comment that it's nice to play a game without having to worry about the other team griping with the officials," he said.

Cummings, a fifth-year senior who played four years with Sigma Alpha Epsilon, said he also had noticed an improvement.

"You don't see outbursts anymore," he said. "When I started, you even had a couple of fisticuffs and real late crotchshots."

"But there should have to be a big fight to throw a team out of a tournament. The purpose of intramurals is to see who the best athletes are, and you can't do that when you have to worry about pleasing the referee and pleasing the other team while trying to beat them at the same time."

Still, Campbell said the sportsmanship rule has worked, and officials are not playing favorites with their ratings.

"I don't think any of our officials care who wins or loses," Campbell said. "If they did, I would be disappointed since we would have failed in getting across to them that we're not here for people to win or lose, but for people to participate."

Campbell said the Sigma Chi problem will encourage another look at the system, which is modified from sportsmanship systems from other schools.

But we're not ever going to back off it," he said. "This does suggest that some modifications might be needed."