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## Women should wait outside locker room

When I first heard about the New England Patriots locker room incident, I thought, "Here goes the press again, making a big deal out of nothing."

So what if some woman reporter was upset about something she allegedly heard in a men's locker room. I mean these kinds of actions happen in men's locker rooms all the time. Only women usually aren't around.

Then I started thinking maybe for the simple reason that it does happen all the time this incident might be of more importance than I first thought. Important, if for no other reason than it poses a fundamental question: How do we stop these stupid incidents from taking up our time on the airwaves or space in the sports pages?



**Scott Stempson**

Oh sure, Paul Tagliabue can fine the multi-millionaires in question and tell them they are bad, an should be nicer and watch what they say in their locker rooms. Will this eliminate the problem?

There will be another incident a couple of months down the road and it will be met with the same response by the commissioner, and a couple of months later another, and so on.

A simple answer: How about banning women from locker rooms entirely? OK, OK so it's not a novel idea, and I'm sure I'll be attacked

from every women's group known to man...oops...humankind, (I don't want to get into more trouble than I already am).

Since the rest of the media doesn't have the guts to propose this "sexist," and "chauvinist" solution, I will.

Before any women readers rip up the paper and go out and buy a gun, I want to emphasize that I am not against women sports reporters. I think most women reporters do their jobs just as well, if not better, than many of the men.

Interviewing a male athlete when he's in the locker room or a few minutes after he's stepped out isn't going to make any difference on the kind of story she'll get.

But a locker room, I believe, is different. It's almost sacred ground, if you will. Any guy who has ever been in a locker room situation knows exactly what I'm talking about. There are chauvinistic statements, there are profane statements and yes, there are statements that could be construed as sexually harassing. I'm not defending this behavior, I'm just saying that's the way it is and if women can't handle that (and it seems obvious many of them can't) then stay out.

There's more to the argument. Are female athletes willing to let male reporters in their locker rooms? Are females willing to offer the same courtesy to male reporters? Probably not.

Monday night after his team lost to Seattle, Sam Wyche wouldn't let a woman reporter into his team's locker

room. Perhaps Wyche was a little upset and took it out on the reporter (God knows getting beat by Seattle is reason enough for a coach to be incensed) but it's sad when a coach can't exercise any control over who can and cannot come into his locker room.

Why can't players be allowed some time to have the privacy to shower and dress before they're hit with a barrage of reporters (male and female). I can't imagine Vince Lombardi or Papa Bear Halas not having any control over their locker room.

My feeling is that more people than just Sam Wyche agree with my position, but are clamming up. Wyche is one of the few willing to openly challenge this rule. An example of modern society being so conscious of saying something because others will proclaim it offensive and oppressive. The result, few speak out with candor.

Well, Wyche spoke his mind, and it wasn't the first time. Last year he banned all reporters from his locker room after a game.

My first thought was to ban all reporters from the locker room. But not until a male reporter claims "sexual harassment" or "mind rape," as the female reporter in the New England case claimed, will I be for the complete ban solution.

Until then, I'll stick with the "no women" plan.

Stempson is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan sports reporter and columnist.

## Women in the locker room still steamy issue

NEW YORK (AP) - The justice of gender in the locker room was supposed to be settled 12 years ago. Courts gave women sportswriters equal access to dressing rooms so they would have the same chance as men to do their jobs.

Yet the issue of women in the clubhouse keeps making headlines. Denise Tom of USA Today was barred Monday night from the Cincinnati Bengals' dressing room hours after the National Football League named an investigator to look into charges of harassment of Boston Herald reporter Lisa Olson.

"We go into locker rooms not because we want to, but because we have to," wrote Christine Brennan, a sportswriter with The Washington Post and one of pioneers who fought for equal access.

"It's not exciting or sexy or tantalizing. It's cramped and steamy and messy," she said. "But most stadiums are too old to have a room big enough for all reporters and all players to meet for interviews. So the only place we can do our jobs is the locker room."

About 500 women work as sports journalists, according to the Association for Women in Sports Media. They have the same right to do their jobs as women who drive trucks, mine coal, doctor the sick or practice law.

Precedent was established in 1978 when a federal judge ruled Melissa Ludtke, a reporter for Sports Illustrated, could go into the New York Yankees' clubhouse. Barring her violated her constitutional right to equal protection under the law, Judge Constance Baker Motley ruled.

In 1985, Commissioner Pete Rozelle ordered all NFL teams to treat reporters equally in interview areas, regardless of sex. Some teams like the Dallas Cowboys set up rooms where players could be interviewed; others handed out bathrobes or towels to players.

Major league baseball provided equal access that year, too. Basketball and hockey already had set open policies. The National Basketball Association schools rookies on how to deal with the media -- male and female.

Former Watergate investigator Philip Heymann has been named to look into charges that New England Patriots' players exposed themselves and made suggestive remarks to Olson on Sept. 17. The Herald reported it "nothing less than mind rape."

Tight end Zeke Mowatt was fined \$2,000 and apologized, but denied making lewd gestures or comments. He said the only thing he told her was: "You are not writing; you are looking."

Patriots owner Victor Kiam at first called the locker room incident "a flyspeck in the ocean," then told the paper it was "asking for trouble" by sending a female reporter into a football dressing room. He also was quoted as calling her "a classic bitch."

After the National Organization for Women called for a boycott of Remington Products Inc., which Kiam owns, he took out full-page ads in The New York Times, the Boston Herald and The Boston Globe.

Kiam apologized and said "there's no excuse for what happened." He also denied calling her a name.

She was booted at Sunday's game. In Seattle, Bengals coach Sam Wyche kept USA Today's Tom from the locker room because "our guys don't want a woman to walk into a situation like that." In the past, Wyche has closed the locker room to all reporters in violation of NFL policy and was fined last year.

Commissioner Paul Tagliabue said Wyche faces another fine for not letting a woman into the locker room.

"If he wants to make a stand on the issue, he can make a stand on the issue," Tagliabue said. "He will be fined very heavily for it. If he wants to quit, he can quit, because he has been warned twice already."

Tuesday's edition of USA Today contained a column by sportswriter Rachel Shuster aimed at NFL brass. She concluded: "We've earned our place in the locker room. Now, just give us some respect, and we'll do our jobs and let you do yours."

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