

OPINION PAGES

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Our VIEW

Presumed guilty

Policy shows no regard for accused

The news didn't hit like a ton of bricks because we are so jaded by the concept of a Cornhusker football player getting in trouble.

But it hit the Nebraska football team like a ton of bricks. And maybe it shouldn't have to.

Shevin Wiggins, who would have been NU's starting wingback, was arrested Friday after allegedly fondling a 14-year-old girl July 25 and 26. He was charged with a Class III felony along with another man, who was charged with two counts.

Now Wiggins will likely never get to play his final season, which he lobbied the NCAA so hard for last year. Mainly, this stems from a policy that says no athlete charged with a felony can represent the school. NU Coach Frank Solich said he simply is following the rules.

It's all very unfortunate that this happened. Clearly, the stigma of past crimes committed by Cornhusker football players works into this decision when it clearly should not. Spin control is one thing, and it's understandable that the program would want to separate itself from a potentially bad situation. In certain situations, coaches can decide what is best for their team. Maybe Wiggins should not be on the team, but it should be a coach's decision to make. Only the coaches should ultimately determine Wiggins' eligibility before he has his day in court.

This campus, and largely the people of this state, deem football players guilty before their trials ever arrive. Certainly, this trails back to the Lawrence Phillips incident, and many others. But it's worth noting that this is a different team, a different time and different rules are set in place. And unless Wiggins is found guilty, he is innocent, period.

What such a policy does is open up the athletic programs for unsubstantiated claims. Anybody can be the target of a lie. That alone can be difficult enough. But to be isolated by your peers and from your livelihood can be even worse. Wiggins can do nothing but wait for an answer to be passed down.

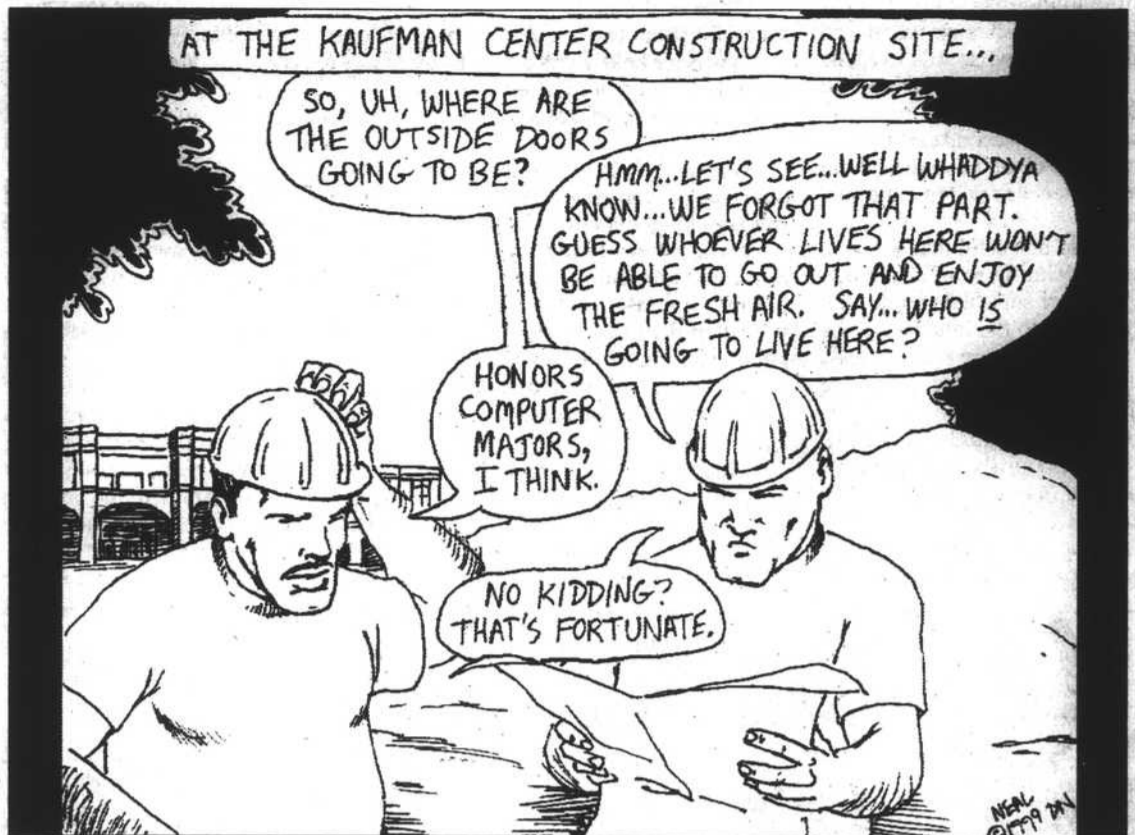
Wiggins has at least played his time. What if this had been a freshman? And what if this was the type of trial that lasted three or four years? And what if that person was eventually found not guilty? His career would be over. It would have been used up. And the lawsuits would flow.

Of course, things like this don't usually happen. It's highly unlikely such a situation would ever arise. But what if it did? How would the university respond? It'd be easy to pander to the angry populace and let one person twist in the wind.

But is that fair? Is that what Shevin Wiggins should have to go through? And should Nebraska football have to take a hit to its image that might be unwarranted?

It might be time to look at all those things and put all of the past transgressions where they belong — in the past.

Obermeyer's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Free Wheeling

Today's article concerning parking woes breaks my heart. Really, it does. I've been in a car trying to get to a class, and I know it's a painfully boring, tedious, angering way to spend half an hour.

But throughout all the testimonials about car-pooling and bussing and (gasp!) walking to school, no one mentioned the numerous parking spaces vacant all over campus: the spaces that are custom-fit for bicycles.

Save the money for your parking permits, get some exercise, put that North Face parka to use and park right at the door. RIDE YOUR BIKE.

Don't have a bike? For about the price of your permit you can pick up some nice piece of crap bicycle, and you're all set.

Though I've never actively participated in the cyclist vs. pedestrian debate that rages annually in these pages, I've enjoyed the banter from afar. This year, having in the last two days almost run over someone while riding and having been run over while walking, I thought I'd pre-empt the battle.

PEDESTRIANS: Walk in relatively straight lines, and look where you're headed. Pay attention to what goes on around you. When you see a bike heading your way, keep moving. As a cyclist, I know that no biker wants to hit you.

When you are startled by a bike, try not to do that little running back fake-out dance. That just throws both you and the bike off path and will cause more of a problem.

CYCLISTS: Slow down. I know how fun the pedestrian slalom is, I'm quite good at it, but these are not downhill flags or orange cones. These are people.

I've been to campuses where you can't ride on the sidewalks, and it's lame. Give pedestrians a wide berth, and if you do clip someone or have to

grind to a halt to prevent an accident, or do anything else that freaks someone out, look them in the eye and apologize, and mean it.

They say one bad apple ... Did I mention to slow down?

P.S. You cyclists who throw your front wheel over the tops of the racks are wasting your frames and ruining some fairly crucial componentry, not to mention taking up way too much space on the rack. Quit it.

Scott Fuglei
senior
history

The Play's the Thing

I hate to disappoint Samuel McKewon, but I am a male who enjoys watching female athletes not because of anything sexual, but because of what they do on the field, the court, etc.

If you watch the volleyball team or the women's basketball team, just to

mention a couple, you see hard work, persistence, courage, teamwork and a commitment to excellence.

The same was true of the women's World Cup. I followed the team because they represented our country on an international stage.

The memorable moment for me: when the winning goal went into the net, not when the jersey came off.

Mr. McKewon may have his own reasons for watching women's sports, but he doesn't speak for all of us.

Brad Pardee
staff
Love Library

Bugs Me

There will be no freshman class next year, according to Chancellor James Moeser.

At the New Student Convocation on Sunday, Moeser stated that the class of 2003 is "the last class to be admitted to the university this millennium."

There is a new Y2K glitch: the beginning of the Y2K (year 2000) is being confused with the beginning of a new millennium.

The next millennium begins Jan. 1, 2001. Trust me. If you don't believe me, just start counting at 1 A.D.

1000 years later (a millennium), you will reach 1001, the beginning of this millennium. Add 1000 years to that, and you will get 2001.

It seems simple; it seems insignificant. But after waiting 999 years, couldn't we wait one more before celebrating the culmination of all this time?

My class and I do not deserve the distinction Chancellor Moeser tried to place on us. There will be a class admitted next year.

Maybe I should just give up on this pseudo-crusade. Maybe I should just face up to the fact that it's just a number, it's just a calendar, it's just one year.

But I can't give up. I guess it's just my own millennium bug.

Andrew S. Taylor
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MELANIE FALK/DN