

A Message from BFS Editor Kim Goss, MS



Adrian Peterson appeared on our Nov/Dec 2006 issue, long before his behavior off the field caught the attention of the media.

More Than a Game

BFS has a special affection for the Friday night lights of the high school game, but we love the game at all levels. Unfortunately, football has been suffering a public relations crisis over the past few months.

It started in September with the release of video footage showing Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice punching his future wife and knocking her unconscious in a casino elevator. Rice was fired.

Less than two weeks later Adrian Peterson of the Minnesota Vikings became the next player to incur public outrage. Peterson appeared on our November/December 2006 cover as a potential Heisman candidate. A lower leg injury took him out of contention

for that award, but he got back on track in the NFL. In his rookie season Peterson set the NFL single-game rushing record (296 yards), and the records kept coming, including his becoming the third-fastest player to reach 10,000 rushing yards. Then came the horrific incident with Peterson's four-year-old son, who suffered cuts and bruises in an alleged beating by Peterson. Peterson was indicted for child abuse, and his playing future is uncertain.

One NFL player in trouble with the law could be considered an anomaly, but we continue to hear about other NFL players with character issues. As for college players, stories have surfaced about players being disciplined "for breaking team rules," a label often applied euphemistically to far more serious problems. In fact, a few months ago a coach for one Division I school told me that a third of the football players on his school's team had been arrested at least once!

At the high school level discipline issues are common as well. One high school superintendent recently canceled the football season among allegations of harassment, intimidation, and bullying among several players on the team. Another school canceled their junior varsity season due to bullying allegations.

Acting quickly to remove players who break the law or bully their teammates is the right thing to do, of course. What is urgently needed as well is a proactive

approach, such as the character education program developed by BFS Founder Dr. Greg Shepard.

When Coach Shepard started giving training seminars nearly four decades ago, his focus was on teaching athletes and their coaches the essentials of athletic fitness training. He called this system the BFS Total Program for Athletes. He soon discovered that athletes needed more – they needed to be taught how to become role models.

He called this teaching system the Be an 11 program, with a mission of inspiring athletes to set goals to achieve physical superiority and to become role models for others. Coaches and other educators embrace the Be an 11 program because of its trickle-down effect on the entire school student body – the behavior of athletes tends to influence the behavior of their peers.

We hope the recent public exposure of a small percentage of players' unacceptable actions will encourage coaches at all levels to promote character education. Let's make football more than a game.

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