

EDITORIAL

Are championships worth convictions?

Recruiting is the lifeline of a good athletic program, but how important is keeping bad blood out of the system?

Last week, former Illinois linebacker Erique Robertson was sentenced to 43 days in jail after unlawfully firing a .32 caliber revolver outside a Champaign bar. This comes just a few months after several players were suspended for a game for their alleged involvement in a bar fight and a year after Jody Ellis and Derrick McPhearson were charged with felony theft. Both are serving significant jail time.

All this negative attention for our

football team has put the Illini in the running for their second straight Fulmer Cup. Created in 2006 by EveryDayShouldBeSaturday.com — a site well known on college football fans' message boards — the Fulmer Cup has been awarded to the college whose "exemplary efforts to recruit the most capable football players results in the most frequent embarrassing and illegal mishaps off or on the field." Currently, the Fighting Illini are seventh in the standings, making a strong push to be the first ever repeat champions. Oskee-wow-wow!

But football isn't the only culprit. Jamar Smith will return to the bas-

ketball team this season after "sitting out" last year with a redshirt. He spent 15 days in jail for a felony conviction stemming from a drunk driving incident that severely injured then team-mate Brian Carlwell. Several other former basketball players had notable run-ins with the law, including Shaun Pruitt, Rich McBride and Luther Head.

There's no doubt Illinois coach Ron Zook's recruiting ability has turned Illini football into a national contender. Basketball coach Bruce Weber also has an impressive class of 2009 that has quieted his critics. It seems Illinois is poised to succeed on the

hardwood and gridiron in the near future. But what is that success worth?

Millions in booster money? Sure. National notoriety? Of course. Increased ticket sales, more postseason earnings and upgraded facilities? Yes, yes, double yes. A growing reputation for producing criminal-athletes instead of student-athletes? Unfortunately.

Before we sell our soul to recruit a player with a troubled past or red flags, remember the reputation of the University is at stake. It's not that we don't love Final Four appearances and Rose Bowl berths, we just don't want to win the Fulmer Cup too.

EDITORIAL CARTOON

JOHN DARKOW, COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE, MISSOURI



Dunkin' death to America!

America may run on Dunkin', but maybe it should be running away from Rachael.

Last week, the nation's threat level was elevated to orange and pink when celebrity-chef Rachael Ray, better known for making a mean couscous than fighting jihads, executed phase one of her plot to wage psychological warfare on the American people.

Dunkin' Donuts dumped an online ad for iced coffee when right wing bloggers led by Michelle Malkin accused Ray of wearing a traditional Arab headdress called a keffiyeh to symbolically show support for Islamic extremism and terrorism.

In the ad, Ray is ominously seen wearing a black and white paisley scarf and holding an iced coffee in front of a tree with pink flowers, while a building that may be a target for terrorists looms in the background.

While many only saw an innocent fringed scarf that looks like a traditional Muslim garment, Malkin knew there was something more sinister at hand.

She saw a red flag signaling anti-American propaganda. Malkin revealed that Ray's scarf was not only a keffiyeh, but also a silent nod of solidarity to the current fashion appearing in popular videos of Islamic extremist hostage demands, terror threats, and beheadings.

After the ad's cancellation, Malkin praised Dunkin' Donuts for showing sensitivity to the concerns of Americans "opposed to Islamic jihad and its apologists" and for not bending "over backward in the direction of anti-American political correctness."

Dunkin' Donuts released a statement essentially saying that Rachael Ray was not a terrorist and that the ad was removed because the "possibility of misperception detracted from its original intention to promote iced coffee."

While common sense tells us how outrageous this view of terrorism and Islam is, it may be



SUJAY KUMAR

Sujay can be reached at opinions@dailyillini.com.

in our best interest to safeguard what America stands for and look at some others who may be flying under the radar while secretly plotting a holy war against America.

Time and time again, Tyra Banks has showed us her ability as a field operative to go undercover and shape shift. Over the course of The Tyra Banks show, she has been a fat man, ugly person, white person, and stripper named Chanel. On America's Next Top Model, Tyra has brainwashed unsuspecting young girls and trained them to talk with their eyes and march across the runway, all in the name of being "fierce."

It would be wrong to smear Oprah Winfrey, at least until evidence links her to a keffiyeh. In light of this, we turn a watchful eye to Stedman. Using chameleon tactics to float behind the scenes, Stedman's access to Oprah's fortune gives him the ability to fund virtually anything. If you add a beard and turban to Stedman's picture, the resemblance to Osama bin Laden is uncanny.

Foolish as it may be to ignore these warning signs, they don't make Tyra and Stedman terrorists. And while Rachael Ray has infiltrated our homes with her annoying voice and over zealotry, that's not a crime. Even under the Patriot Act.

Sujay is a senior in biochemistry. He would like to take a LeVar Burton-moment and suggest that you see the movie "King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters."

Our Opinion

Editorials represent the majority opinion of The Daily Illini Editorial Board, whose members are Steve Contorno, editor in chief; Kathleen Foody, assignment editor; Andrew Mason, opinions editor; Meghan Montemurro, assistant assignment editor; Wes Anderson, copy chief.

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The Daily Illini reserves the right to edit or reject any contributions. Summer letters must be limited to 200 words. Contributions must be typed and include the author's name, address and phone number.

University students must include their year in school and college.

Inquiries about possible guest columns should be submitted to opinions editor Andrew Mason via e-mail or by calling 217.337.8366.

E-mail: opinions@dailyillini.com with the subject "Letter to the Editor."