

Fan Behavior Taskforce Recommendations

Mission Statement:

This 16-member student committee was formulated upon the university contacting the State Assistant Attorney General John Anderson regarding fan behavior at Maryland athletic events. Our aim is to encourage positive fan behavior, uphold proud traditions and start new traditions in an effort to discourage the increasing trend of both inappropriate and disruptive crowd behavior.

Committee members:

The committee consisted of members representing a wide array of constituencies relevant to our task at hand. All members were contacted in early March by committee chairman and Student Government Liaison to Athletics David Krieger asking for their participation.

David Krieger, Chairman (Senior, Student Government Association Liaison to Athletics)
 Lauren Spates (Sophomore, Competitive Cheer, Student Athlete Advisory Committee member)
 Aimee Huddleston (Junior, Volleyball, Student Athlete Advisory Committee member)
 Kyle Schmitt (Senior, Football, Student Athlete Advisory Committee member)
 Toni Jefferson (Senior, Women's Track and Field, Student Athlete Advisory Committee member)
 Andres Kwasinski (Graduate student, Athletic Council Graduate Student Representative)
 Tim Daly (Senior, Student Government Association President)
 Drew Vetter (Junior, Student Government Association Vice President—Campus Affairs)
 Kelaine Conochan (Junior, Student Government Association Legislator)
 Jennifer Sigwart (Senior, Student Terrapin Club President)
 Michele Sternberger (Junior, Student Terrapin Club Vice-President)
 Toni-Marie Calabrese (Junior, Student Terrapin Club Vice-President)
 Ben Maggin (Sophomore, Sixth Man President)
 Evan Doyle (Freshman, The Crew member)
 Pat Wu (Senior, former member of Sportsmanship Committee)
 Ben Dooling (Sophomore, Student-at-Large)

Findings:

Over the course of twelve meetings we met with many appropriate authorities relevant to this situation. Our committee also conducted a survey that garnered over 200 responses and held a well attended fan forum. In the “findings” section are synopses of our various meetings with Mr. Terry Roach, Coach Gary Williams, Mr. Gary Pavela and members of the University System of Maryland Board of Regents Chairman Clifford Kendall, Mr. Bill Wood and Mr. David Nevins. Also listed is a brief summary of our fan forum, “Chat with the Champs” as well as findings from our survey. The end results of our discussions in meetings solely consisted of committee members can be found under the “reasons” section.

Meeting with Mr. Terry Roach, Executive Assistant to the President for Legal Affairs

Our hour long meeting with Mr. Roach was called for to discuss and better educated ourselves about the nature and legal implications of Mr. Anderson's memo. We were informed that this is a new approach to the First Amendment and should approach any potential policy-writing motion with caution. Mr. Roach concurred with our committee that legally any potential policy had to be equally applied to not just the student body, but any potential seat-holder at a Terrapin athletic event. He also called to question the difficulty in differentiating a modern-day standard in either a chant, t-shirt or banner that would be deemed profane.

Meeting with Coach Gary Williams, Coach of Terrapins Men's Basketball

Coach Williams met with our committee for 90-minutes in the Comcast Center on Wednesday April 28th. In this very productive meeting, Coach Williams pledged his support of any measures our committee recommended and asked for a list of measures that he could help with. Coach Williams pitched the idea of an open fan practice for students to interact with the team and players and would ensure his assistance in carrying out such an event. While Mr. Williams stated that addressing fans disrupts his pre-game routine, he vowed his willingness to do so in the hopes of ending this persisting problem. He validated our suspicions that the student body at the University of Maryland is not the nation's only example of profanity in intercollegiate athletes. Coach Williams provided us with several anecdotes relating to other institutions that also cast a poor reputation upon themselves based upon their fans' behavior. Coach Williams called the instigators of this problem "one small group of students". He stated that they are problematic for reasons two-fold: 1.They incite the opposition to perform better and initiate a negative connotation of Maryland to referees. 2. These students blemish the reputation of our fan-base, which Mr. Williams still calls the best in the country.

Meeting with Gary Pavela, Director of Judicial Programs

At the time of our meeting with Mr. Pavela, our committee was well into the process of drafting a policy. Mr. Pavela expressed his opinion that a regulatory policy as a deterrent measure in addition to educational, pro-active measures would best address this problem. Mr. Pavela believes for practicality, that it is rather difficult to write a policy preventing profane chants. He agrees with our committee's train of thought that a policy that dealt with fans donning profane clothing or profane signage can both be acknowledged and addressed. He suggested either immediate implementation of a policy or waiting to see how our fans react to some pro-active means before enacting a policy.

Meeting with Chairman Clifford Kendall, Mr. Bill Wood, Mr. David Nevins, USM Board of Regents

Several members of our committee met with members of the USM Board of Regents on May 19th. The Board of Regents expressed its satisfaction that this issue is being dealt with by students and said it looks forward to see how certain educational measures work to remedy this problem. There was a lengthy discussion regarding what to consider as a profanity.

Survey Results

Surveys were conducted for several weeks. Those surveyed were chosen at random outside of the South Campus Dining Hall, Stamp Student Union, North Campus Diner, Byrd Stadium and at our open forum.

- Total: 217**
Freshmen: 46 (21.2%)
Sophomores: 49 (22.6%)
Juniors: 70 (32.2%)
Seniors: 36 (16.6%)
Other: 16 (7.4%)

- How many sporting events do you attend per year (Averages)?**

Freshmen

Football: 4.5
 Soccer: 3.6
 Basketball: 10.0
 Lacrosse: 1.2
 Other: .4

Juniors

Football: 3.8
 Soccer: 1.9
 Basketball: 7.5
 Lacrosse: .6
 Other: 1.0

Other

Football: 4.6
 Soccer: 2.4
 Basketball: 4.4
 Lacrosse: .6
 Other: .4

Sophomores

Football: 4.6
 Soccer: 1.7
 Basketball: 10.7
 Lacrosse: .9
 Other: .5

Seniors

Football: 3.6
 Soccer: 1.1
 Basketball: 6.7
 Lacrosse: .4
 Other: .8

Total

Football: 4.2
 Soccer: 2.1
 Basketball: 8.5
 Lacrosse: .8
 Other: .7

- How concerned are you with fan behavior at Maryland athletic events?**

Freshmen (46)

Not Concerned: 18 (39.1%)
 Slightly Concerned: 21 (45.7%)
 Very Concerned: 6 (13.0%)
 Did Not Answer: 1 (2.2%)

Juniors (70)

Not Concerned: 30 (42.8%)
 Slightly Concerned: 27 (38.6%)
 Very Concerned: 13 (18.6%)

Sophomores (49)

Not Concerned: 18 (36.7%)
 Slightly Concerned: 22 (44.9%)
 Very Concerned: 9 (18.4%)

Seniors (36)

Not Concerned: 10 (27.8%)
 Slightly Concerned: 16 (44.4%)
 Very Concerned: 10 (27.8%)

Other (16)
 Not Concerned: 3 (18.8%)
 Slightly Concerned: 9 (56.2%)
 Very Concerned: 4 (25.0%)

Total (217)
 Not Concerned: 79 (36.4%)
 Slightly Concerned: 95 (43.7%)
 Very Concerned: 42 (19.4%)
 Did Not Answer: 1 (.5%)

4. Do you think UM has a right to regulate fan behavior at UM athletic events?

Freshmen (46)
 Yes: 23 (50.0%)
 No: 22 (47.8%)
 Did Not Answer: 1 (2.2%)

Sophomores (49)
 Yes: 21 (42.9%)
 No: 26 (53.1%)
 Did Not Answer: 2 (4.0%)

Juniors (70)
 Yes: 33 (47.1%)
 No: 35 (50.0%)
 Did Not Answer: 2 (2.9%)

Seniors (36)
 Yes: 21 (58.3%)
 No: 13 (36.1%)
 Did Not Answer: 2 (5.6%)

Other (16)
 Yes: 10 (62.5%)
 No: 2 (12.5%)
 Did Not Answer: 4 (25.0%)

Total (217)
 Yes: 108 (49.8%)
 No: 98 (45.2%)
 Did Not Answer: 11 (5.0%)

5. Are you disturbed by the possibility of a policy regarding behavior?

Freshmen (46)
 Not Disturbed: 10 (21.7%)
 Slightly Disturbed: 24 (52.2%)
 Very Disturbed: 12 (26.1%)

Sophomores (49)
 Not Disturbed: 11 (22.5%)
 Slightly Disturbed: 25 (51.0%)
 Very Disturbed: 12 (24.5%)
 Did Not Answer: 1 (2.0%)

Juniors (70)
 Not Disturbed: 19 (27.1%)
 Slightly Disturbed: 31 (44.3%)
 Very Disturbed: 20 (28.6%)

Seniors (36)
 Not Disturbed: 9 (25.0%)
 Slightly Disturbed: 18 (50.0%)
 Very Disturbed: 9 (25.0%)

Other (16)
 Not Disturbed: 6 (37.5%)
 Slightly Disturbed: 5 (31.2%)
 Very Disturbed: 4 (25.0%)
 Did Not Answer: 1 (6.3%)

Total (217)
 Not Disturbed: 55 (25.3%)
 Slightly Disturbed: 103 (47.5%)
 Very Disturbed: 57 (26.3%)
 Did Not Answer: 2 (.9%)

6. Do you partake in profanity at UM athletic events?

Freshmen (46)
 Yes: 21 (45.7%)
 No: 25 (54.3%)

Sophomores (49)
 Yes: 18 (36.7%)
 No: 31 (62.3%)

Juniors (70)
Yes: 23 (32.9%)
No: 47 (67.1%)

Seniors (36)
Yes: 10 (27.8%)
No: 25 (69.4%)
Did Not Answer: 1 (2.8%)

Other (16)
Yes: 4 (25.0%)
No: 12 (75.0%)

Total (217)
Yes: 76 (35.0%)
No: 140 (64.5%)
Did Not Answer: 1 (.5%)

7. Do you own a profane t-shirt?

Freshmen (46)
Yes: 10 (21.7%)
No: 36 (78.3%)

Sophomores (49)
Yes: 10 (20.4%)
No: 39 (79.6%)

Juniors (70)
Yes: 20 (28.6%)
No: 50 (71.4%)

Seniors (36)
Yes: 2 (5.6%)
No: 34 (94.4%)

Other (16)
Yes: 1 (6.3%)
No: 15 (93.7%)

Total (217)
Yes: 43 (19.8%)
No: 174 (80.2.0%)

8. If yes, would you be willing to trade it for a free UM t-shirt?

Freshmen (10)
Yes: 4 (40.0%)
No: 6 (60.0%)

Sophomores (10)
Yes: 4 (40.0 %)
No: 6 (60.0%)

Juniors (20)
Yes: 8 (40.0%)
No: 12 (60.0%)

Seniors (2)
Yes: 1 (50.0%)
No: 1 (50.0%)

Other (1)
Yes: 1 (100.0%)
No: 0 (0%)

Total (43)
Yes: 18 (41.9%)
No: 25 (58.1%)

9. If you were a parent, would you hesitate to bring young children to UM sporting events?

Freshmen (46)
Yes: 18 (39.1%)
No: 27 (58.7%)
Did Not Answer: 1 (2.2%)

Sophomores (49)
Yes: 17 (34.7%)
No: 31 (63.3%)
Did Not Answer: 1 (2.0%)

Juniors (70)
Yes: 26 (37.1%)
No: 44 (62.9%)

Seniors (36)
Yes: 15 (41.6%)
No: 20 (55.6%)
Did Not Answer: 1 (2.8%)

<u>Other</u> (16)	<u>Total</u> (217)
Yes: 6 (37.5%)	Yes: 82 (37.8%)
No: 10 (62.5%)	No: 132 (60.8%)
	Did Not Answer: 3 (1.4%)

10. Do you think any policy that changes the behavior of fans will affect our home court/home field advantage?

<u>Freshmen</u> (46)	<u>Sophomores</u> (49)
Yes: 29 (63.0%)	Yes: 27 (55.1%)
No: 17 (37.0%)	No: 20 (40.8%)
	Did Not Answer: 2 (4.1%)
<u>Juniors</u> (70)	<u>Seniors</u> (36)
Yes: 38 (54.3%)	Yes: 18 (50.0%)
No: 29 (41.4%)	No: 16 (44.4%)
Did Not Answer: 3 (4.3%)	Did Not Answer: 2 (5.6%)
<u>Other</u> (16)	<u>Total</u> (217)
Yes: 5 (31.3%)	Yes: 117 (53.9%)
No: 11 (68.7%)	No: 83 (42.9%)
	Did Not Answer: 7 (3.2%)

11. If students' behavior were to affect national broadcasting opportunity and money for recruitment, would you change your behavior?

<u>Freshmen</u> (46)	<u>Sophomores</u> (49)
Yes: 36 (78.2%)	Yes: 38 (77.6%)
No: 9 (19.6%)	No: 10 (20.4%)
Did Not Answer: 1 (2.2%)	Did Not Answer: 1 (2.0%)
<u>Juniors</u> (70)	<u>Seniors</u> (36)
Yes: 50 (71.4%)	Yes: 26 (72.2%)
No: 18 (25.7%)	No: 9 (25.0%)
Did Not Answer: 2 (2.9%)	Did Not Answer: 1 (2.8%)
<u>Other</u> (16)	<u>Total</u> (217)
Yes: 11 (68.7%)	Yes: 161 (74.2%)
No: 5 (31.3%)	No: 51 (23.5%)
	Did Not Answer: 5 (2.3%)

Open Forum

Monday May 3rd, our taskforce sponsored an open forum to allow others to express their opinions on profanity, sportsmanship and Terrapin pride. Alumni Len Elmore moderated the forum. Coaches Ralph Friedgen, Gary Williams and Sasho Cirovski addressed an audience of about 250. Regents Clifford Kendall, Bill Wood and Phil Shockley also made comments. The majority of comments expressed sentiments that coach's participation is integral to solve this problem. A large discussion regarding how fans in attendance at sporting events, in particular students, could go about self-policing themselves. This methodology was believed to be the best way to put an end to profanity, as demonstrated by other schools nationwide. Both students and alumni alike expressed their disapproval of inappropriate fan behavior. Some, such as members of our campus ACLU warned any potential policy would violate students rights and asked our panel to allow students to learn from coach's rebukes.

Recommendation

Our committee asks that a standing committee of 12-members be formed to constantly monitor our progress at Terrapin athletic events. We recommend for the administration to allow students to voluntarily comply not to wear and scream profanities. We also recommend several student initiatives, listed below, that we believe will encourage self-regulation. However, if this standing committee finds that inappropriate conduct persists, we recommend the following policy be implemented.

Wearing of attire or displaying signage deemed profane may result in discipline upon refusal to comply with the appropriate game management authority.

This committee will first convene before the kickoff to the 2004 Football season. The committee will be chaired by the SGA Liaison to Athletics and will have many charges.. It will be comprised of the SGA President, a student athlete representative, the Student Terrapin Club President, a member of the Tradition Commission, a graduate student representative, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Athletic Director, the Associate Athletic Director for Administration, a representative from the Legal Office, a men's varsity coach and a women's varsity coach.

1. Create a "Code of Conduct" to be posted on student ticketing webpage before students are able to claim tickets for basketball and football games. Students will have to "X" a box after reading the code of conduct every time they log onto www.tickets.umd.edu with the understanding that they understand and will comply with the code. This "Code of Conduct" will consist of tasks as simple as wear red and be loud at games to avoid obscenities.
2. Define the continuous use of what profanities would constitute enacting this policy.

3. Devise a punishment for potential violators of any policy (i.e. loss of tickets rights)
4. Decide what games are necessary for a certain coach to address the audience, and will subsequently request that the coach to do so.
5. Monitor effectiveness of the implementation of pro-active measures
6. Draft a budget for all annual costs of this project

Our taskforce also recommends that event staff have readily available t-shirts (for exchange) for any fan that is wearing a profane shirt. Such fans will be approached and offered to trade in their profane shirt for a free, desirable Maryland shirt.

We also recommend a large student undertaking, the creation of a student run newspaper to be distributed to all students before Men's Basketball games. This newspaper will keep in with the tradition of shakings newspapers at the opposing team. It will be supervised by the Student Government Association Liaison to Athletics, a member of the *Maryland Cow Nipple* (our humor magazine on-campus) and a selected sports editor. This newspaper will consist of lighthearted articles, features of our players, statistics and creative, witty and appropriate cheers. For certain games, this newspaper will aim to have supplements of signs such as "Good Call/Bad Call" and "Beat Duke" that will be visibly appealing when looking at the student wall. To ensure that students do not throw their newspapers, but rather hold onto them to use the chants during the game all editions will consist of a number (i.e. 123456). In the second half of games, we hope to find a sponsor to provide a prize to the lucky number of the game.

More recommendations

1. A prominent head coach address incoming freshmen every year at convocation.
2. Incoming freshmen receive a voucher on their bed at check-in for a free t-shirt to remind them of sportsmanship, to be picked up at convocation. (our taskforce would use the \$15,000 we have received from the Athletic Department for this project and the t-shirt exchange at athletic events)
3. Host an open practice with the Men's Basketball team and Coach Gary Williams prior to a big game.
4. During a stop in play at Byrd Stadium and Comcast Center have a "Best Sign" competition displayed on the scoreboard. This will encourage, creative appropriate banners and the crowd will vote by audience response as to which sign will win a pre-determined prize.

5. Propose to the ACC Commissioner the concept of the “ACC Fans of the Year”. This award would be voted on by the Athletic Directors of each institution of the ACC. This will indicate that the University of Maryland has a commitment to resolve this problem to the entire conference and will give our fans something to strive towards.
6. Continue to display on signs on the exterior of high-profile athletic venues containing something similar to the following phrase, in addition to any previous existing rules/regulations “The University of Maryland community does not condone the use of profanity”

Reasons

We recognize that the issue of profanity at Terrapin athletic events has received extensive coverage over the past several months. We believe, by bringing the issue to the forefront with addresses from Coach Williams courtside, through media outlets and at our fan forum will factor in ceasing this problem. Therefore, our initial recommendation to give our fans a last chance to prove profanity is not intertwined with enjoyment at athletic events is the most amicable solution we have arrived at.

This approach fits within the parameters Assistant State Attorney General John Anderson advised the university to deal with this problem. Anderson wrote, “Given the practical problems, the University might well conclude that a policy prohibiting offensive language should not be adopted, at least until other efforts prove to be ineffective.” As expected, we received many pleas from our on campus chapter of the ACLU to ensure that students rights are kept intact. Lauren Katz, the current president of the university’s ACLU was quoted in the May 4th edition of the *Baltimore Sun* saying, “Give the university a chance to show that we have learned from the rebukes.” Our solution aims at the heart of this request, as we have given students the benefit of the doubt to clean up their act. If a newly formed 12-member committee rules our “other efforts” ineffective, this recommendation meets the qualifications Anderson calls for in his memo. The committee will work to create a policy that will ensure widely publicized regulations, and we have come to the conclusion that unlike profane chants, which are difficult to detect the culprits of such behavior, those donning profane clothing would have evidence of their wrong-doing.

We also understand the importance of enacting a policy, if this behavior continues at sporting events here at the University of Maryland. We have chosen to recommend that if the use of broad-based profanity persists, then the university should ban defined profane clothing and banners. Written profanity is most easy to detect and deter. Those who choose to wrongly represent this fine university by wearing such attire, make the decision to do so in a pre-meditated fashion. By offering these fans the chance to freely exchange such inappropriate shirts for a desirable, readily available appropriate equivalent, fans are rewarded for changing their prior poor self and school reputation. There have been past attempts to offer t-shirt exchanges by a program known as Terp Red-Out. This program was not as successful as hoped for because these shirts were not made available at athletic events, but rather on random dates at our student union. We hope there is a formal launching of this t-shirt exchange that makes the option to trade in profane shirt a possibility a widely known fact. Such an event, along with the easy access

to trade in a shirt at all football and basketball games will undoubtedly increase the success of this program.

In much of our research and discussions with students on campus we have come to the realization that freshman are likely to be influenced early in their college careers. We believe that by ingraining a sense of pride and sportsmanship to incoming freshmen as soon as they hit campus at convocation with a free shirt talk from a prominent coach, our committee will notice enormous payoffs come game-time.

We are very eager to begin publication of our game-day newspaper. The proud tradition of shaking newspapers at the opposing team has slightly decreased since our move to the Comcast Center from Cole Field House, slightly in part to the building's location. Chant sheets have not worked in years past because often time the chants were not catchy and there was criticism that we were trying to emulate other schools with such chant sheets. The inclusion of the *Cow Nipple* staff, a newspaper with a large readership, will aim to make sure chants are witty, yet acceptable. Students often show their dedication by getting to basketball games hours before tip-off. This newspaper will lessen the burden of anxiously waiting by occupying students with game previews and a few laughs.

The concept of the ACC Fans of the Year will show our peers in the ACC that we are serious about tackling this problem and will always us to compete to be formally recognized as some of the best fans in the nation. Our teams on the playing field often win ACC championships; our fans need to strive for such a noble distinction.

Our committee has worked long and hard to generate this proposal. Like any change in social environment, change takes time. We hope the administration exercises some sort of patience before enacting a policy by fully endorsing our aforementioned recommendations. Through the guidance of our coaches, administrators, alumni and our fellow students, our taskforce looks forward to turning on the television and seeing close-ups of our student section: being loud, proud and cheering on our beloved Terps.

Respectfully submitted,

David Krieger
Chairman, Fan Behavior Taskforce