



Crime & Punishment

James Alan Fox on criminal behavior and the justice system

Murder and sport don't mix

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I like sports just as much as the next guy. I confess to reading the sports page first--actually, only when there's something important about the Pats. Still, I question whenever sport is promoted within the context of life and death.

In a Tuesday morning national news story on the suspicious death of University of Virginia senior Yeardley Love, allegedly at the hands of her former boyfriend George Huguely, the reporter noted that the men's lacrosse team is the top-ranked nationally. The correspondent went on to detail the accused's stats--although not a starter, Huguely had played in every game and had tallied four goals during the season.

I understand why it may be newsworthy that both the victim and the alleged perpetrator both played on the school's lacrosse teams. After all, the sport was likely a common bond that brought the couple together in the first place. But speaking of the first place, what possible significance does the team's ranking or the accused accomplishments on the field have to the story of a student's death and her ex-boyfriend's arrest?

Of course, members of both squads are shocked and saddened by the news. And members of the press covering the story were quick to wonder what impact this tragedy would have on the school's chances in the upcoming playoffs? I can just about hear Coach Mora's legendary rant: "Playoffs?! Don't talk about playoffs! You kidding me? Playoffs?"

Despite our nation's passion for sports and our keen interest in everything murder-related, we should always strive to keep the two in proper perspective. Life or death trumps win or lose any day of the week.