

Rowdy crowd causes restriction

Soccer fans' behavior at first home game forces changes

Julie Williams
Staff Reporter

A group of soccer fans are responsible for leaving a permanent mark on the soccer field at Truman in the form of a restraining rope.

As a result of an unruly crowd that attracted the attention of a referee at the men's soccer game against Rockhurst University on Aug. 25, a restraining rope was put up along the side of the soccer field to keep fans away from the action on the playing ground.

Athletics Director Jerry Wollmering said he did not attend the game because he was out of town and did not know the names of the students involved in the disturbance.

He said he thought there was a great atmosphere at the game but that some students just got a little rowdy.

He said nothing major will come of it.

"We've put up some stakes and a rope in front of the bleachers," Wollmering said. "[It's] kind of a restraining line to keep the crowd back from the field."

Wollmering said the rope will stay up for the remainder of the season.

Senior Melissa Rhomberg, who attended the game against Rockhurst, said she doesn't remember a specific event in the game that caused the crowd to get unruly but said she thinks it was because fans thought the referee made a bad call.

Rhomberg said a group of men in the crowd were cheering, and some began yelling obscenities.

When one referee told them



Chris Tharp/Index

Fans at the Truman vs. Rockhurst game Aug. 25 stand and cheer the Bulldogs. The fans' rambunctious behavior at the game caused the athletic department to put up stakes and a rope in front of the bleachers at the Truman Soccer Park. The game ended in a 1-1 tie between the Bulldogs and Hawks.

to stop or they would be thrown out, one of the guys directed an obscenity at the referee, who then asked him to leave.

"In the beginning, they weren't really yelling at the refs, they were just heckling the players that were on the field for the opposing [team]," Rhomberg said.

A former member of the women's soccer team at Truman,

Rhomberg said she thought the referee took the whole thing too seriously.

She said compared to "true" soccer games, what happened at Truman was nothing.

Rhomberg also said she thinks the rope that was put up as a result of the events is unnecessary.

"If you ask me, it just obstructs the view of the field," she

said.

Even though the fans got out of control, Rhomberg said she thought it was cool to see the crowd get excited about the game. She said the game against Rockhurst had the biggest crowd she has ever seen at a Truman soccer game.

"The whole bleachers were packed, and people were stand-

ing on the grass side of the field," she said.

Rhomberg said she thinks having vocal fans is not all bad.

"I think when fans get really into the game and they start shouting and stuff, it excites the players," she said.

Men's soccer coach Duke Cochran echoed that idea but said there is a line that fans should

not cross when it comes to being in the stands.

"It's one thing to be passionate and strong and shout and cheer for your team," he said. "It's another to kind of cross that line. The line was very blurred that day."

Cochran said more than 500 people attended the soccer game Aug. 25, which resulted in a 1-1 tie.

He said he thinks the commotion started because of the sheer number of fans.

He said Rockhurst is a big rival because Truman beat them to get into the NCAA playoffs last year and then beat them again in the first round.

Many of the fans who attended the game were former players, and Cochran said he thinks they brought a lot of intensity.

"Maybe it's because it was a Friday night, it was freshman week, there weren't any other games going on," he said. "It's a rivalry because of what's gone on in the past with Rockhurst."

Larger and more enthusiastic crowds are something Cochran said he would like to see more of as long as fans do not get too close to the field or use obscenities.

He said he thought the excitement on Aug. 25 affected his players positively as far as energy on the field.

"I think it's great," Cochran said. "I want an environment that gives us a little bit of a home-field advantage."

He said the rope at the soccer field is not a bad idea.

"I think it's healthy," Cochran said. "I think if you let the fans know what the parameters are, they'll follow them. I think some kind of separation between the bleachers and the field on that side is needed."

Sick students can be quarantined

University prepares to meet a wide range of illnesses with new isolation policy

Sarah Shebek
for the Index

Chicken pox might not be a big deal for the average 5-year-old, but it can easily throw the average college student out of commission for weeks and send a college campus into chaos.

Earlier this year, an international student on the 4th floor of Dobson Hall was diagnosed with the chicken pox.

However, Truman is prepared to deal with everything from meningitis to bird flu with a plan focused on containing both the outbreak and caring for the ill.

Cases of severe contagious diseases are relatively rare, but when they do surface, workers from the Student Health Center, Disability Services and even the Office of Residence Life all react quickly to help the sick individual.

"We utilize public health standards when necessary," health center director Brenda Higgins said. "First, we contact the health department, saying we've identified a reportable communicable disease, then either make arrangements to send the person home or put them in a private room. We're very sensitive to issues of privacy and confidentiality."

Although Truman has no official quarantine policy and deals with specific cases on an individual basis, contagious diseases usually warrant isolation. This might

involve a trip back home to recover, a temporary stay in a private dorm room or, if the disease is serious enough, a visit to the emergency room.

Whatever the case might be, Vicky Wehner, disability services coordinator, usually helps organize the matter, managing everything from contacting professors about missed classes to obtaining laptops for isolated students who need to stay connected.

"What we try to do is make the process a little less scary," she said. "Primarily what I take on is that I can be a liaison between Residence Life and the Health Center. I also help with medical withdrawals. We just reassure the student that this is not the end of the world and that things will get back to normal."

If a student has a contagious disease that requires isolation, he or she is usually sent home until well enough to resume classes. However, some students, especially international students, live too far away for that to be a possibility. In this case, the aforementioned international student was relocated to a private room in Ryle Hall.

"We work with that student to try to find an appropriate place on campus that would lend to more seclusion," said Residence Life Director Andrea O'Brien. "We have a couple rooms on campus that we hold off-line. They're empty rooms because they have private bathrooms. We need to have students completely separated."

Sometimes a trip to the emergency

room is unavoidable, especially in the case of serious, extremely contagious conditions. Dan Holte, Northeast Regional Medical Center's Emergency Room Department Director, said he has seen students with diseases as rare as rabies.

However, he also said that these cases were very infrequent and that treatment focused on the probability of the disease spreading to the general public.

Higgins said the most common contagious diseases among college students aren't very serious. Furthermore, some of the more serious diseases, such as chicken pox or meningitis, have vaccines.

Besides vaccinations, there are practical steps everyone can take toward disease prevention.

"We always start out with basics," said Gail McCurdy, epidemiologist for the Adair County Health Department. "Start with the principles of handwashing and covering your cough. So many of us have gotten lax about protecting others from our sneezing and coughing."

Whatever the illness and the precautions taken, some students agree that the University's methods aren't too extreme for the sake of protecting the public.

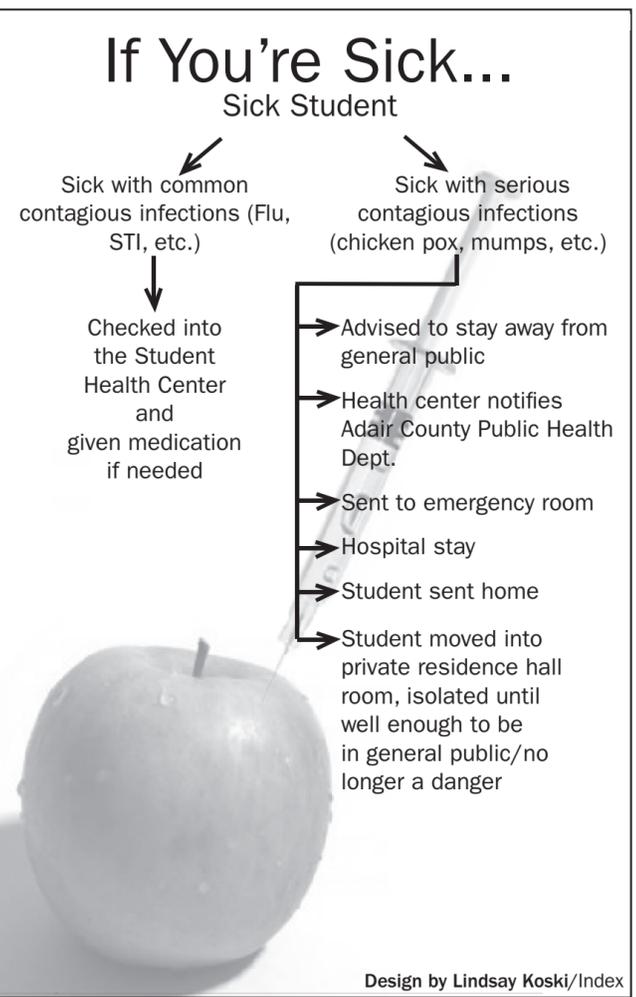
"It's a good idea because if it's something I could catch, I wouldn't want to catch it," junior Ashley Richards said.

Junior Nehemiah Rosell also said he thought the isolation policy was fair but that it still can be improved.

"I think it's unfair to the rest of the students to put them at risk," he said. "But they should at least make them comfortable and not make them feel like outcasts, like lepers or something. Let them know that it is for their good."

"If it's something I could catch, I wouldn't want to catch it."

Ashley Richards
Junior



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