

## Hiding injuries gives gamblers edge

It comes up again and again. You read about some player on a college or professional sports team who's out or misses practice because of some "undisclosed injury."

It happened this fall with University of Kansas football players. Though one was widely known to have some bruised ribs, the team would not admit it.

Why? Sometimes the team even tries to claim that it can't reveal the injury because of the player's "privacy rights" under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, sometimes known as HIPPA.

This is all hogwash. What sports teams are doing, especially college and high school teams, is setting themselves up for corruption by gambling interests. Some will scoff at this, but remember a pro basketball referee lost his job a few years back in a gambling scandal.

Race tracks, professional sports of all kinds, have been touched now and then by gamblers. Gamblers will go to any length to get information that might give them an edge, especially on injuries.

That is why teams have an obligation to their sport and the public to make information known to everyone when a player is injured. That way, there should be no question about who might or might not play, who might or might not be up to full speed.

Coaches sometimes like to hide this information from an opponent, but honesty and openness are the best policy. That gives gamblers little opening to corrupt insiders. And once someone is corrupted, there's no telling what damage they might do.

Players in college and professional sports become public figures, and as such, give up any privacy interest they might have in their health, at least as far as it affects their ability to play.

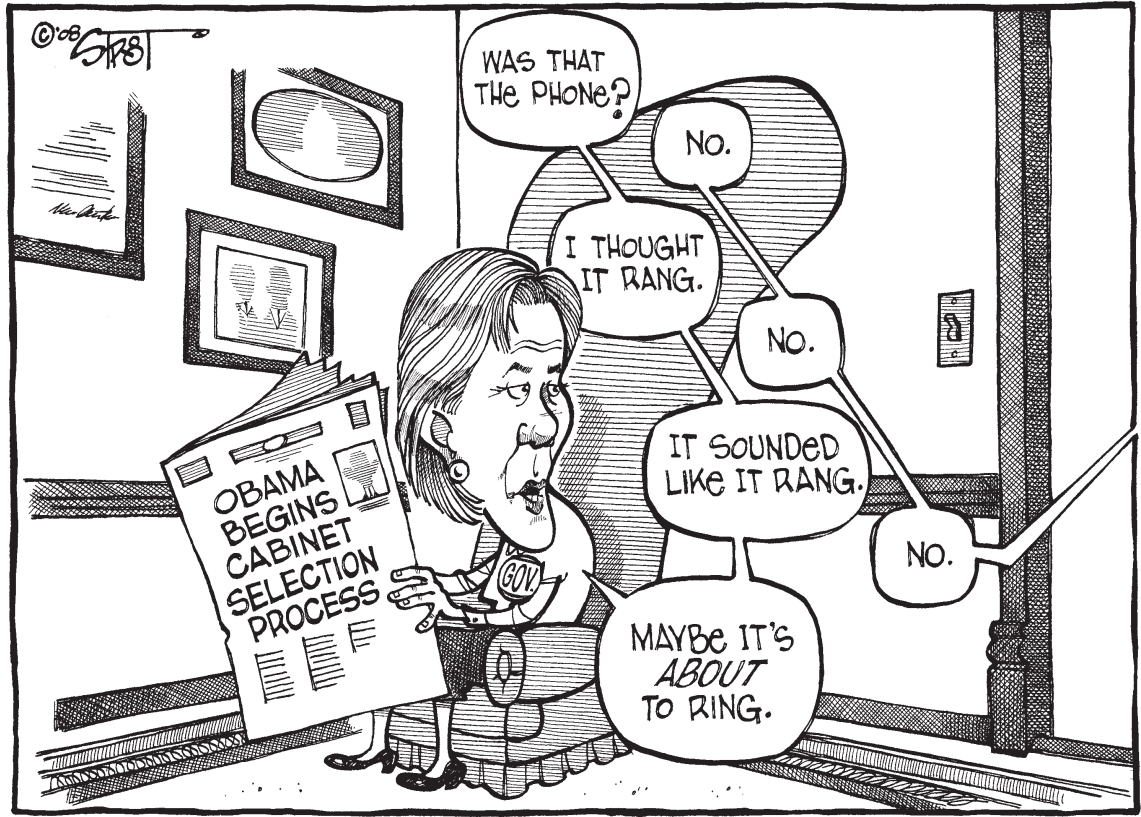
The league or governing body of each major sport needs to make this pretty clear. To play, an athlete needs to agree to waive any privacy right he may claim. Teams need to make public any pertinent information on who will or won't play, so the playing field is level and gamblers have no reason to pry.

Federal law?

The HIPPA statute applies only to entities that bill Medicare or Medicaid electronically. It certainly does not apply to schools or professional sports teams. It was never meant to apply to sports, yet some professional leagues allowed themselves to be out maneuvered by players who supposedly refused to waive rights they never had.

A waiver needs to be required before anyone steps onto the field of play. It's that simple and that important.

Sport — a multi-billion-dollar industry in this country — should not be compromised by foolish whims. — Steve Haynes



## Trips just take much longer

After 13 hours on the road on our return from Dallas, we have about decided to make it a two-day event.

In the not-too-recent past, we never took more than 10 hours to make the trek. Now, we take longer and more frequent breaks.

The drive down and back — a couple hundred dollars; a few days with our kids and grandkids — priceless.

It never fails. My kids and grandkids can make me laugh so hard, I cry. Someone was always saying, "Breathe, Grandma. Breathe." We play board games into the wee hours.

To say they are "spirited" is a gross understatement. It's a wonder the neighbors didn't call police. We played "Taboo," "Boggle" and "Whonoo." Each one tons of fun.

Remember last week when I told you I had prepared some things ahead for Thanksgiving dinner? Let's just say I'm really prepared for Christmas, because we walked out the door without packing two of the items in the car. The ground and sugared cranberries are still in the freezer, along with a bread braid I had wanted to take. Nobody noticed, though. My daughter, Kara, had frozen cranberries and I ground them using her mini-food processor.

Kara and her husband Adam had invited a young couple and their little boy, Parker, to join us for dinner. Stephanie brought a spiral-cut ham, cheesy potatoes and a corn-cornbread casserole. If anyone left hungry, it was their own fault.

Except for a difference of opinion between Jim and I about whether or not to put the turkey's liver in the gravy, everything went off without a hitch.

He insisted that his mother and



### Out Back

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grandmother ALWAYS put the liver in the gravy and I contend that nobody in their right mind would put liver in gravy.

Gizzards, heart and neck meat — yes. But, liver in turkey gravy? You've got to be kidding.

The kids introduced me to YouTube. I had heard of it. In fact, people have even sent me YouTube clips. But, I had never "surfed" through the thousands, maybe millions, of YouTube offerings.

Kara showed me one that we played over and over and made everyone else watch. If you have ever had a manicure done in a major city mall, you must see the one titled "Nail Salon."

Now, be careful, because there are some objectionable sites, and never, I repeat never, let your children surf YouTube without supervision. The Internet is a wonderful piece of technology, but it is loaded with "land mines."

Jim was incubating a cough and chest congestion before we left for Texas. It became full-blown while we were there and he spent his nights upright in a recliner. If he laid down, the coughing would start. But, he did manage to rest some and slept a lot on the trip home. He's back at work today and, hopefully, feeling better.

On the way home, we stopped at

a nationally known discount store to print off the pictures we had taken during the week. I plugged the "stick" from my digital camera into the store's do-it-yourself printer and hit "print all" without previewing. When they emerged from the printer, who do you think was the featured subject? Two-year old Ani was in almost every shot.

Jim would look at me and ask, "Isn't she absolutely the cutest thing you've ever seen?"

And, I would agree, she is. Although I have to add that all our grandchildren are adorable. But, the "baby" always gets the attention. She knows how old she is, and how to say "Please" and "Thank you," "Mommy" and "Sissy," plus dozens of other words her mother has to translate for us. We taught Ani how to say she is "So big."

Our oldest granddaughter, Angelia, was able to be with us. She has joined Job Corps and is well on her way to becoming a licensed practical nurse. We are proud of her.

It was a great holiday. We were happy to be there and happy to be home, too. We're beginning to think that a month or so in Texas during the winter might not be such a bad idea. That's a few years away, but something we want the kids to start thinking about. It might take them that long to get used to it.

## When a child hurts, so do you

A little boy was hurt last week, far from a hospital or medical care.

Steve and I listened as the ambulance sped to the scene, followed by a doctor and nurse in a private car. Then there was the long wait for the helicopter.

I could imagine the worry, agony and self-recriminations of those who loved and cared for him.

I know because I've been there, and those were some of the longest hours of my life.

You don't need to have taken drugs to have flashbacks.

Our son was 6 when we took a picnic to the mountains. While the children played outside and Steve went fishing, I sat in the car reading.

I looked up as one of the girls screamed to see my son lying motionless on the ground beside a canyon wall. He must have been climbing and fallen. My heart nearly stopped. Was he dead? Was he breathing? Would I be strong enough to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation if I had to?

I was a licensed emergency medical technician and had unsuccessfully performed the life-saving technique three times, but always on adults, always on strangers.

He had fallen and hit his head. He was breathing but unconscious.

I sent one of the girls up the road to find their father, who luckily was on the way back to the car.

That was in the days before cell phones, and the only way to get help was to go to town and get it. So, Steve took the car and girls into



### Open Season

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town while I stayed with our son, who had not regained consciousness.

I braced myself for a long wait. We were several miles from town, and the ambulance service is all volunteer. It would take time for Steve to get there, a crew to be summoned and the ambulance manned.

Sooner than I dared hope, however, he was back, and then the ambulance arrived. Our son was stabilized and loaded for the long trip — more than 40 miles — to the hospital. When we finally got there, we had to wait for the helicopter which would take him to Children's Hospital in Denver. He had a depressed skull fracture and would require immediate surgery.

Steve took off for Denver, an endless five-hour drive, and I stayed at the hospital in the mistaken belief that I could go with our son.

Not only couldn't I go with him, the aircraft he was to use had to detour to Colorado Springs to pick up a State Patrol officer who had been hit by a car.

That meant more delays, more lost time, more worry. At least now he was in the hands of the doctors and nurses and not lying motionless

on the side of the road.

Steve had said he would stop halfway to Denver at some friends' home and call to see how son was doing. I was able to catch him and make him stay there while I got my car and drove to meet him. The doctors at Children's were already looking for us to get permission to operate.

The drive by myself was excruciating. I was a terrible mother, I told myself. How could I let this happen? Oh Lord, why?

Being with Steve helped a lot. He assured me, reassured me, and we held on to each other. But it was a long trip and I always recall arriving in the city and getting stopped at a railroad crossing by the world's longest, slowest coal train.

Our son came out of the incident with some fancy scars on his face and scalp. He was one lucky young man, and I pray that the boy hurt last weekend will be as lucky.



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170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243

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Published each Wednesday by Haynes Publishing Co., 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Periodicals postage paid at Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers  
Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcat, Dresden and Decatur County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association, Nebraska Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year, \$33 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$38 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$42 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$50-\$250 (in US dollars only) extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243.

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

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## Soldier speaks out on Iraq

To the Editor:

I am a specialist in the U.S. Army, stationed on a small military base in the city of Baqubah, Diyala Province, Iraq. I am not a ground-pounder. I have not left the base since I got here.

I have never been shot at, I haven't seen any of my buddies dead or wounded, and I have never once feared for my life. What I do sit in a room behind a bank of monitors and work for the people who run the show. I am an intelligence analyst, and while I don't have much first-hand experience with the war, I get a unique look at the big picture without the filter of the media that I had to contend with back in the States.

What I have seen shows me that popular opinion is dead wrong. The U.S. military is exactly where it should be right now.

On television and in the papers, you see the body counts. You hear dry, fact-filled accounts of what you none-the-less understand to be horrific attacks against all manner of people.

You have heard these accounts dozens of times over the last five years. They stir no emotion in you. I have been fortunate enough to see things from a different perspective.

The news tells you that a 13-year-old female suicide bomber detonated in front of an Iraqi security checkpoint. What you haven't seen is the forensics picture of her blood sprayed on the curb, on the sidewalk and on the side of a building.

The newspaper says that "young men" are being drawn into the insurgency to fight for their religious beliefs. I have seen their pictures. There are many who look to be 15 or 16 years old. They have been involved in executions and planting bombs on the side of roads. They do it because they are brainwashed. There are widows who become

### Letter to the Editor

suicide bombers because of their grief, to avenge their husbands. In short, people of all ages and from all walks of life are exploited to do horrible things.

These people are tricked into thinking that their leaders want them to do what they do for God. In reality, they are all the pawns of foreign governments and power brokers positioning themselves to be in charge of Iraq when the Americans leave. The true insurgents will use anyone, no matter how young or innocent, no matter how peaceful or religious, to get the power they desire. They have found a place where they can take advantage of the people's love of God and the importance they place in family against them in a cycle that is very hard to escape in a country where there seems to be no hope and where the every-day quality of life is low.

If these insurgents are left unchecked, there are only two possible outcomes. The cycle of death and killing will continue and feed on itself. Children will continue to be used in whatever way those seeking power see fit. Any attempts at improving the country will be thwarted with explosions so one side can discredit the other.

If one power does emerge, the second possible outcome will happen. There will be another dictator, who may be better or worse than the last one. In either case, they have supported terrorism in their own country, so there is no reason to think they won't continue to support it in others. An entire nation will lead a miserable existence, and an entire world will have a new breeding ground for terrorists.

The only way to break this cycle is with an outside power that wants to build a democratic government that

supports religious freedom and the improvement of people's quality of life. That's what we have to do.

Iraq is no Darfur. What I mean by that is that movie stars don't want us to be here like they want us to be in Darfur. Americans don't seem to care much about the suffering of the Iraqis like they do the people in Darfur. They also don't seem to care much about the fact that the whole country is just a few combat brigades away from turning into the next breeding ground for international terrorists.

They don't care about exploding markets and cars and houses, or little girls strapped to remote-controlled bombs walking through streets filled with garbage to be used to kill people they don't even know. Many Americans just want to make a statement, to "bring home the troops," and to make America a country that is liked by the rest of the world.

We need to finish what we started, and stay here until Iraq is whole again.

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### From the Bible

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.

Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

Psalm, 119:33,34