

## Racial taunts mar basketball game

Members of the Hawks girls basketball squad had to endure an ugly display by the fans of the New Prague team

By ERIN CHUNN  
Quill staff writer

Cooper's girls basketball team played New Prague on February 15. Sadly, the events of this basketball game would have you thinking it happened during the Jim Crow era. During the game, New Prague students and families we're making monkey noises (!) at our precious athletes. The fact that Cooper lost and was still harassed shows the New Prague fans didn't care about watching the actual game; they came with racist intentions. Dismissing this hate act as "no big deal" is completely unacceptable because New Prague parents were present and allowed their kids to provoke the athletes. Of course, this is not surprising because hate is taught; no one is born racist.

In order to better understand the impact of this racist incident, I spoke with basketball player Pauline McCarthy (11), who gave me an account of what happened: "We were playing a regular game until the second quarter, when things got rowdy. That's when the monkey noises started. Once the game was over, things got even more chaotic to the point where our coaches had to go to the bleachers to quiet things down. The players went into the locker room to talk about what just happened. Everyone was angry and disappointed. Most of our players are black, but all of us were disgusted," she said

Unfortunately, this wasn't the only racist incident that night to involve New Prague. During a boy's hockey game against St. Louis Park, the New Prague



Photo by ERIN CHUNN

Cooper students created and displayed signs supporting the team in the days after the incident.

team and fans were also racially taunting them. St. Louis Park responded by sending out a formal letter detailing the events of the game and proclaiming the end of their conference relationship with New Prague. Robbinsdale Area Schools soon followed in their footsteps by taking a similar stance. It's amazing to see the districts rally around their athletes. It promotes the importance of student athletes feeling comfortable enough to compete.

The reputation New Prague has gained in recent weeks is only the tip of the iceberg. While we worry about the experience of our athletes competing against their school, we also need to worry about the experience people of color have in New Prague. In fact, local news coverage of these incidents featured an interview with a Black New Prague student, Rowan Griffin (10), who said it is time for their school board to "take accountability" for the district's

problem with racism.

Ultimately, it's a blessing as a Black student to be part of a diverse community at Cooper. It's hard to imagine being in a place that hates my skin eight hours a day, five days a week. You can't even really depend on the adults because they are enabling the kids' racist mindsets. While we should judge the New Prague students for this terrible behavior, it is also clear that their whole community needs to be checked.

## Hiring biases in pro football must be stopped

The NFL has a clear, long-standing issue with not hiring head coaches of color

By NAIMA HUSSEN  
Quill staff writer

The 102nd NFL season came to an end with record television ratings and profits. The season, however, also ended with ongoing, unresolved conflicts about the league's continued resistance to hiring and retaining African-Americans as head coaches and executives.

In a 58-page-long lawsuit filed on February 1, former Miami Dolphins head coach Brian Flores alleged that "the NFL remains rife with racism, particularly when it comes to the hiring and retention of Black head coaches, coordinators and general managers."

Flores, who had back-to-back winning seasons as a head coach of the Miami Dolphins, was fired in early January. Hearing this news was surprising to me because Flores is a great defensive mind in the NFL and took the Dolphins from a record of 1-7 to a 9-8 record at the end of the season.

As part of the lawsuit, Flores alleges that he was subject to a sham interview by the New York Giants in late January. New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick, Flores' former boss, sent Flores a text congratulating him on being hired by the Giants. The problem, however, was that Flores hadn't even interviewed with the team yet. Flores said the interviews were only meant to satisfy the league's Rooney Rule, which requires teams to interview candidates of color. Unfortunately, most teams do so before ultimately hiring white men.

The Rooney Rule is named after the Pittsburgh Steelers' Dan Rooney, the former owner of the team. This rule, which took effect in 2003, sought to correct inequities at the top of pro football's hierarchy by requiring teams to interview minority candidates for head coaching vacancies. Although it is nearly 20 years later, there are only two African-American head coaches in the league. Keep in mind that there were also only two when the rule was first adopted.

I think it's unacceptable that the NFL even needs a rule to interview Black people for jobs. The problem is that the white owners of these football teams time and time again abuse their power by hiring people who look like them. However, I don't believe Black ownership of teams would help the hiring problem because Black owners hiring Black coaches isn't going to solve a league-wide issue.

This statement from Flores perfectly describes the NFL: "In certain critical ways, the NFL is racially segregated and is managed much like a plantation. Its 32 owners, none of whom are Black, profit substantially from the labor of NFL players, 70 percent of whom are Black. The owners watch the games from atop NFL stadiums in their luxury boxes, while their majority-Black workforce put their bodies on the line every Sunday, taking vicious hits and suffering debilitating injuries to their bodies and their brains while the NFL and its owners reap billions of dollars."

The NFL's response to Flores' lawsuit was fierce: "We will defend against these claims, which are without merit." However, the league soon changed its tune and Commissioner

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## Students need to be smarter with valuables at school

While it is probably better to leave expensive items at home, there are some ways to safeguard the ones you bring to Cooper

By DAMARIUS HAMILTON  
Quill staff writer

Students always bring personal items to school. Although students really shouldn't have to worry about these personal items getting stolen at school, the unfortunate truth is that some people see valuable things unattended and decide to take them. That is why it is important to find safe spots to put these personal items so you can spend the day in the building without those items being stolen.

One really good spot for students to keep valuables is a school locker. If you use a locker, no one knows the combination except you, as long as you are not giving it out to anyone else. The lockers are also secure because there are cameras in the hallways, so if someone tries to steal from your locker, they will be seen on the camera. While it is best to keep things you really care about at home so they're safe, keeping them in a locker is the next best thing.

Another good place to keep stuff you want safe is with a student or a staff

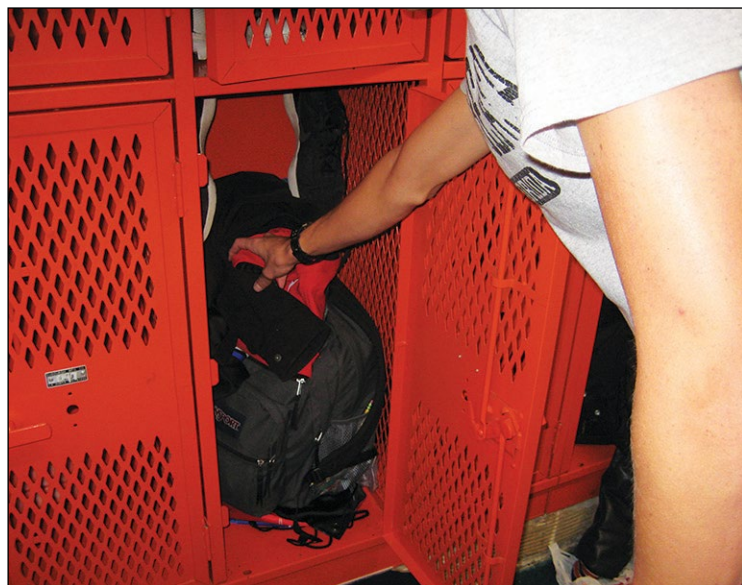


Photo by DAMARIUS HAMILTON

Making sure you properly close your locker is important.

member you trust. Giving your valuables to a student you trust can sometimes go wrong, but when it comes to a staff member, you never really have to worry. A trusted adult will definitely make sure your items are locked up or

placed somewhere safe.

Of course, there are situations when you may not trust anyone. In this case, it may be a better idea to keep your valuables in your backpack. However, if you decide to go this route, you will need

to make sure that you always have your backpack with you throughout the day. If you leave the bag unattended to go to the restroom during class time, there is always a chance someone might be able to get at your belongings.

My last suggestion for a good place to keep your possessions is in the front office. There is no way your items will be messed with in this location because there are always adults nearby and there are always cameras recording. Asking your grade-level principal or an office worker to safeguard your valuables may be a good option if you have something with you at school that you are nervous about.

If you are going to take the chance of bringing valuables to school, then it is a good idea to make use of one of these locations to keep your personal items safe. The option you pick will depend on what makes you the most or least comfortable, but any of these options are better than leaving your items out on your desk unsupervised during the school day.

## Open lunch should be treated as a privilege, not a right

Some students are abusing the freedoms of open lunch, which could result in that opportunity being taken away

### From the Editors

Upperclassmen at Cooper who are on track to graduate get the privilege of leaving school for open lunch. While it is great that students get this freedom to leave the building for an hour, sometimes students don't make the right decisions when they go out for lunch. Some examples of the way open lunch is abused is when students don't come back for sixth hour, they leave early for lunch during fourth period or they

drive recklessly to their lunch destination. It is important to be smart during lunch, not only for your safety, but also so you don't get into any trouble that could jeopardize your privilege to leave school grounds.

One potentially dangerous decision that students make when they go out for lunch relates to how they drive. Some students at Cooper have a tendency to drive recklessly as they are pulling out of the parking lot and into public. Reckless driving can cause a lot of problems, like getting pulled over or getting into a

car accident. A way to prevent these problems is easy: all you have to do is drive carefully and safely.

Another bad decision that students might make when it comes to open lunch is skipping all or part of their fourth- or sixth-period class in order to extend their fifth period lunch. This can be a problem for these students because they will miss class work. It also becomes a problem for other people when these students disrupt class upon their late arrival or add to hallway traffic during class time. A simple

way to avoid all this is to just leave and come back to school at the required times surrounding open lunch.

Open lunch is a privilege that can easily be taken away if students are not staying safe and responsible. In order to avoid problems during open lunch, remember to always be smart while driving, leave for lunch only when it is allowed and come back to school on time. If you do these things, you will make life a lot easier and safer for you and the people around you.

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