

Jim Donlevy — the Veil of Secrecy



Dean Bennett

The past couple of days have been tumultuous ones for the football Golden Bears. Two days ago, linebacker Russell Schoeppe was suspended indefinitely, apparently because his new haircut, an outrageous mohawk job, was an embarrassment to the team, not befitting a representative of the University of Alberta.

Now, I say apparently because this information had to come from various Bear players and personnel. Head coach Jim Donlevy refused to

discuss the issue with me, stating it was an internal matter and none of my, or the public's, business.

This incident is now over. Yesterday, Schoeppe, with his mohawk now reduced to a strip of black fuzz

Commentary

on the top of his head, reported to Donlevy and has been reinstated.

But some of the questions raised in conjunction with this incident still linger.

First of all, a look at the media. What right does the media have in reporting this issue? Is it any of our business? I say it is.

As a Golden Bear, Russell Schoeppe is a public figure and therefore his actions are newsworthy. The fact that his hairstyle had potentially curtailed his football career is news.

Secondly, what right does Jim Donlevy have to suspend a player because he feels that person's haircut is detrimental to the overall goals of the team? Well, for right or wrong, he has every right. And that situation is certainly not limited to the Golden Bears football team.

This "dictatorship within a democracy" (as Donlevy calls it) exists all through organized sport. Whether that is good or bad, and if it is bad, will not be addressed here.

What has been particularly disturbing is that Donlevy feels he can

make career decisions for players, be they based on talent, hairstyle or whatever, in a total vacuum. Nobody has to know why he did something.

And we're not talking about grilling the man on how he does his job. He has made a coaching decision regarding one player in particular, but also the team as a whole, and we simply want to know why.

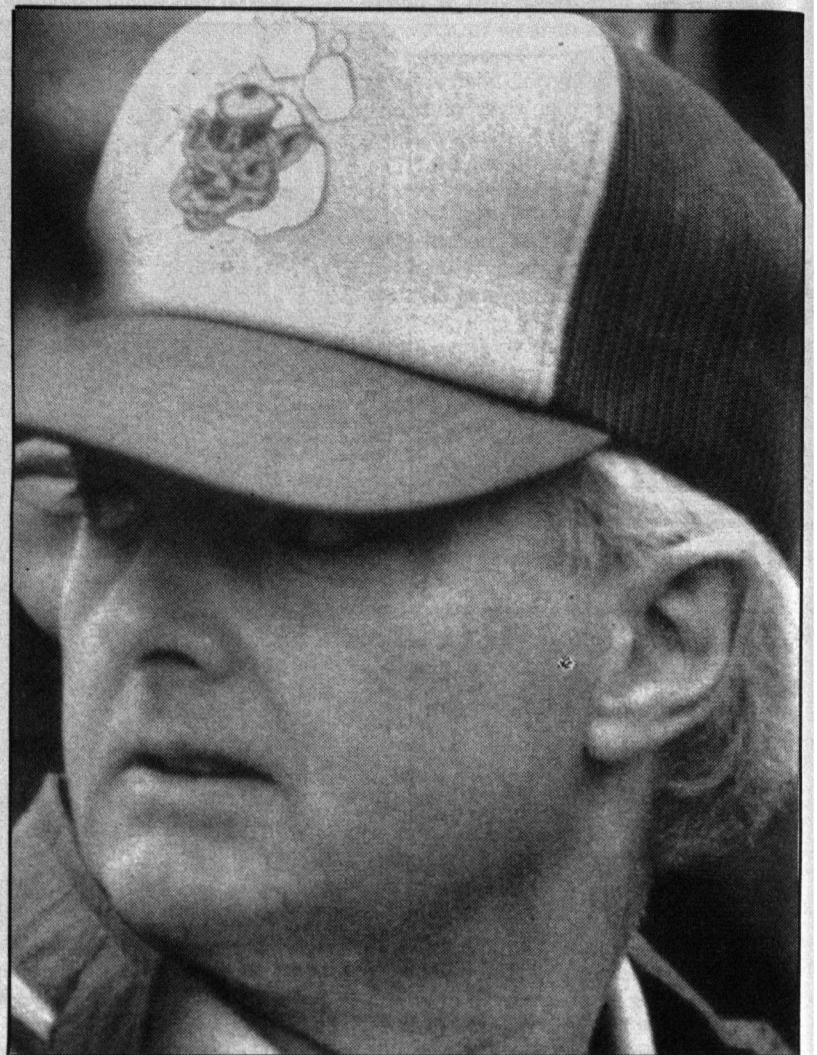
And do the people who fund the football program not have some implied right to know how their money is being spent? Student athletic fees help fund athletic programs. A lot of money has been invested to train and equip Russell Schoeppe to play ball for this university. If that career is somehow curtailed, do we not have the right to at least know why? I say yes.

If you're spending my money, you bet I have a right to know.

Also, the problem of what constitutes a detrimental haircut seems blurred on this team. A number of players have haircuts that would not be deemed conventional. One player even had his uniform number shaved into the side of his head.

This incident seems to reflect an attitude of "if it's good news by all means print it, but if it's bad news or news that might be controversial, hey, that's nobody's business but our own."

Where's Pravda when you need it?



Jim Donlevy

photo Alex Miller

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