

## Should the varsity football program cut the fat?

In the last issue of the Cat's Print, there was an article entitled "Who's to blame coaches or players?" In that article it was stressed that the high school athletics are competitive and the best players have to play. In response to this article I would like to address the issue of the coach taking the blame for a player who doesn't play that much. It is really quite simple. Quit packing the sidelines with senior bench warmers. The underclassmen can elect to go to JV if they do not get play time, but the seniors are stuck on the varsity and far too proud to quit.

The athletic department needs to rethink the "no-cut" policy and have some compassion on the senior sideliners. If they are not going to get any play time or just a few minutes for the entire season, cut them. Do not tease them with a clean uniform to simply stand on the side lines and watch a game they cannot contribute to. They are seniors and should be dealt with honestly and in a manner that will keep their pride intact.

We should have try-outs with tests for the varsity football candidate. They should know ahead of time what it takes to pass each test. The coaches already have tests they put their players through and can easily post the minimum performance. This way the incoming players can be aware of what a passing performance is as well as making the decision on whom to cut more automatic and less painful.

We should put a limit on the number of players we have on varsity. This makes sense financially and will take a load off of the coaching staff as well. Imagine the problem when you have 24 players in a scrimmage and you have another 34 players standing around not being coached. This would also free up the money that would have been spent on the additional football equipment and staffing.

We have already seen from last season that the starters rarely get pulled out of play. This indicates that having all the extra sideliners serves no purpose. Regardless how tired the starters got, they rarely got rotated out. The bulging sidelines are simply for show and a reason for employing more coaches to baby sit players who will not play.

Do not misunderstand my position. I believe in the power of senior pride and the motivation you can get from a group that are in their last year. It is my belief that had the coaches concentrated on the 33 seniors and given to them the task of winning games; we would have done as well if not better than we did this last year. After junior varsity comes senior varsity. I see nothing wrong in putting the senior back into senior varsity!

I **do not** believe that all the senior sideliners were inferior to the underclassmen starters. I **cannot** believe that out of the 33 seniors only a few were good enough to start. Any coach would be thrilled to have 100% returning starters and attempting this explains why we were considered to be in a rebuilding year with 33 seniors on the roster. In other words I believe last year's starting line up had more to do with who would be playing next year than who was the better player. Remember, the decision and the credit/blame on who to play and what play to run is the coaches' and not the players.