



New York Times: Forget Softball, Let's Talk About Abortion

When Patty Gasso, the women's softball coach at the University of Oklahoma, sat down at a College World Series post-game press conference on Monday, she no doubt expected questions about softball. After all, Gasso has won five national championships at OU, and the number-one ranked Sooners are the heavy favorites to win her a sixth.

But Billy Witz, a sports reporter for *The New York Times*, had something else on his mind: abortion. The Oklahoma Legislature recently passed what is considered the most restrictive abortion law in the United States, and instead of asking Coach Gasso about softball, he insinuated that the new law might hurt Gasso's recruiting — especially in California.

Witz prefaced his question by saying unnamed "parents" had raised the issue with him, in light of the "impending repeal of *Roe v. Wade*." One might note that Witz called it a "repeal," which is a legislative term, rather than a reversal or an overturning of the 1973 decision. Unfortunately, this misconception is not unique with Witz, as many have come to view the Supreme Court as some sort of super-legislative body, passing and repealing laws.

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Witz asserted that some parents "may not be comfortable sending their daughters to places where anti-abortion bills" have been passed, such as Oklahoma. "What would your message be? And I ask that, too, because you recruit so heavily in California, where it might be viewed differently than it might be in Oklahoma."

Gasso appeared to be choosing her words carefully when she replied, "I really don't feel equipped to answer that because it's never come across and I don't even know how I would go about it and I just don't feel comfortable on this stage to be talking on those subjects."

One would think that response would have stopped Witz from pursuing the matter further, but no. He asked, "Would you be happy to talk to me afterwards?"

Gasso responded, "I've got a team to take care of. I'm not ready for that. It's not the right place. It's not where my mind set is right now. I don't want to say anything that might make me regret anything."



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on June 7, 2022

When Witz appeared to be ready to persist, the NCAA moderator interrupted that Gasso had answered the question.

Later, Witz brought the issue up again at a press conference with the softball coach of OU's in-state rival, Oklahoma State, which was also in the College World Series. Witz asked OSU player Chyenne Factor about the state's anti-abortion legislation, and one could tell by the look on her face that she was not expecting a political question at a softball press conference.

Coach Kenny Gajewski interjected that this press conference was "not the time and place" for such questions, adding "kids are here to play softball. I think that is as big a thing as we need to be talking about here in this press conference," not "what you're trying to get these kids into."

Again, Witz was persistent. "It sounds like you're suggesting that she can't play softball and have thoughts on these issues."

Coach Gajewski shot back, "I think you're wrong on that. I think you're assumption is wrong on that."

Witz, who was a sociology major at Tulane University, where he failed to make the baseball team, is apparently typical of the modern progressive movement, which sees all areas of life as a place to advance progressive causes. For example, the Academy Awards has become little more than a stage to advance progressivism. Actors spout some leftist view on the stage at the awards ceremony, and they are applauded as "courageous." Of course, "courageous" would be if an actor, writer, director, or someone else in the movie industry denounced abortion on demand.

Sports, which used to be a diversion from the stresses of everyday life and something those of whatever political party could come together and enjoy, is seen by the Left as just another tool to re-make society into its progressive image.

In the past few years, we have seen college and professional sports used to advance certain narratives. And players and coaches who choose to either not get involved in politics, or get involved by taking positions that differ from those of the progressives, are ostracized. One might recall that the football coach at OSU, Mike Gundy, was roundly criticized for wearing a T-shirt that carried a conservative message. Apparently, thinking about football and politics is not good, if one is a conservative.

Witz's assertions that parents might not want their daughters to come to OU or OSU because they might not be able to get an abortion when they get there is incredible. Are we really to believe that, in the recruiting process, a parent would actually ask the coach of OU or OSU about the availability of abortion if their daughter chose to play softball in Oklahoma?

And just because someone is from California does not mean that she is for abortion on demand, any more than just because someone is from Oklahoma means he values the lives of the unborn.

Certainly, college athletes and coaches should be able to hold and express political views, or, for that matter, keep their views to themselves. But to progressives such as Witz, for all their talk about "diversity," they really mean "conformity." Their idea of diversity is a progressive man, a progressive woman, a progressive black person, a progressive Hispanic, and in this case, a progressive softball coach or player.



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