

## Roughriders cutting Cox the right move, says anti-violence crusader

Tracy Porteous worked with CFL to create policy on violence against women

By Danny Kerlake, [CBC](#) Posted: Apr 20, 2017 12:48 PM CT Last Updated: Apr 20, 2017 12:48 PM CT

A woman who helped the Canadian Football League develop a domestic violence policy thinks the Saskatchewan Roughriders have done the right thing in sacking a star player after he was charged with assault.

Tracy Porteous, with the Ending Violence Association of B.C., said the Riders appear to have followed key tenets of the CFL policy when they learned that 24-year-old Justin Cox had been apprehended by police after a Regina woman was allegedly assaulted over the weekend.

- ['I did not beat up anyone': Tweet from former Roughrider Justin Cox's account denies assault](#)

Soon after police charged Cox, he was cut from the Riders. The CFL warned that if any team tries to sign Cox, the league will not recognize the agreement.

"Anybody who is hurt by violence against women should get immediate help," said Porteous. "And anybody who is doing the hurting should get help."

It appears, Porteous said, that the Roughriders took both of those steps.

For his part, Cox has taken to social media to declare his innocence.

## Riders' risk did not pay off: reporter

The CFL's policy on violence against women is in its infancy, born of the outrage over a high profile case in the National Football League.

The Ray Rice controversy is what led the Ending Violence Association and other groups to begin pushing the CFL for change, and Porteous said they found no resistance from the league.

- [Ray Rice cut by Ravens, banned by NFL after new assault video surfaces](#)
- [CFL seeks to combat violence against women](#)

TSN's Dave Naylor believes the policy is taken seriously by all teams in the league. At the same time, he said most teams are still willing to take a risk when it comes to their players' backgrounds.

"They will give guys second chances and they think that not only is that morally OK, but they could even make the argument that it's not morally right to say that because somebody did something when they were 21 years old that when they are 24 or 25 you are not going to allow them to earn a living."

That's exactly what the Roughriders did with Cox.

- [Reporter says Riders have 'some tolerance' for players accused of domestic abuse](#)

When the hopeful arrived in Regina to compete for a spot on the team, he came with a history of alleged violence. Still, he was signed.

The team took a risk that did not pay off, said Naylor.

"I would expect it would make the Roughriders a lot more cautious."

## CFL policy needs tweaking, says Porteous

Porteous does not take issue with the idea of second chances for players with a checkered past. She said, however, that football teams may not actually be qualified to assess the risk when dealing with a player who has a history of violence against women.

Porteous would like to see that change in the CFL policy — that teams weigh that risk with the help of "people with expertise in working with men who use violence against their partners."

One area she is pleased with is the cultural change in CFL locker rooms. Porteous said that there are signs domestic violence is no longer acceptable.

"One of the things that we are seeing ... are men speaking up, and men breaking the silence that has surrounded this issue for so many decades."

*With files from CBC Radio's Morning Edition and Saskatoon Morning*

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