

June 19, 2008

## Calgary teen brawl hits Net

Cellphone video captures city's schoolyard beating and is uploaded for all to see

By [MICHAEL PLATT](#)

It's a shameful display, as playground fights go.

Three girls attacking another, with at least two of them attempting to hold the outnumbered girl down on her back as she thrashes around and kicks at her assailants.

A fifth girl attempts to join in, but she is tackled to the ground by yet another female scrapper, both of them landing on the grass as a growing crowd of students whoop and holler.

Quickly, the second hair-pulling, on-the-ground wrestling match becomes the main event, and the original fight dissolves, with some of those combatants running over to join the new scrap.

On it goes, with a few students trying to pull the cat-fighting girls apart, and others joining in.

Most of the kids, apparently in junior high, just crowd around and watch.

Thanks to lousy camera work and the sheer clutter of people, it's hard to say how the fight ultimately ends -- it's also unclear what first compelled a group of female students to gang up on a classmate.

But it looks cowardly.

Worse, the fight -- allegedly filmed at Bob Edwards junior high in Calgary -- looked cowardly to a mass audience, at least until the Sun pointed it out to the school board.

About three hours later, the clip was removed from YouTube.com.

The clip, apparently taken by cellphone, appeared under title bob edwards jr. high cat fight.

The person who posted the video described it as follows: "lol lots of girls fighting each other this is cool plz comment...bob edwards junior high fight girls cat sex porn grade nine calgary alberta canada white girl."

The sex terms are false lures to attract a wider audience, and a second video from the same person showed a playground squabble between two boys, allegedly at the same school, filmed in November 2007.

Bob Edwards, located in the community of Marlborough, isn't the first school shamed on the Internet this way.

The junior high joins a long and dubious list of schools around the world where student violence has been glorified online.

And it's not the first time footage of a group of girls attacking another has been posted -- a brutal video made international headlines in March, when a 16-year-old Florida female was badly beaten by six attackers.

Bob Edwards principal Cathy Oberg was unaware of the clip until contacted by the Sun, but she says the fight in question was likely a conflict that took place at her school last week, which ended without injury.

"It was just girls pushing each other around," said Oberg.

But the video appears to show punching, kicking, clawing and hair-pulling -- as well as a pack of girls attacking one victim.

Oberg said she will be working with the Calgary Board of Education to investigate the videos, but she admits there is little an educator can do to block what students post online.

"I don't know what we can do," said Oberg.

Schools in the U.S. have responded to such videos -- as well as unflattering images of teachers -- by banning cellphones during classroom hours.

The phone stays in the locker, or else.

There is no similar policy in the Calgary public system, and students are allowed to carry phones at all times.

In any case, keeping phones out of student hands after class and away from school is nearly impossible, and video bullying has become distressingly frequent online, with recent notorious examples being posted from Ontario, New York and Australia.

Ted Flitton, spokesman for the Calgary Board of Education, said the school board will investigate the video, and an attempt will be made to identify the students involved.

"In these cases we attempt to meet and speak with both the victims and the victimizers," said Flitton.

Flitton said police will be called in to investigate and potentially lay charges if it can be determined a criminal assault took place.

"Absolutely -- it could mean suspension, expulsion and charges, if they are warranted," he said.

Until then, all school officials can do is look on with disgust.

"This is reprehensible," said Flitton.