Can we all get along? Those infamous words, uttered by Rodney King in May of 1992 after the third day of rioting in the wake of the police brutality trial and subsequent acquittal, resonate loud and clear even in today’s world. Since the beginning of the fair practice lawsuit initiated in 2008 by the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) against the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), I’ve often caught myself thinking “can we all get along?” My answer each time is a resounding YES!

I was delighted to see the recent settlement (9/22/09) in this case and NATA President Marje Albohm quoted as saying “We look forward to a spirit of mutual cooperation with the APTA.” I have known all along that athletic trainers and physical therapists (or, if you prefer, physical therapists and athletic trainers) are uniquely qualified health care providers, each with a niche to serve the patients they treat. Sure, there are elements in our practices that crossover into one another’s area, but the bottom line is that there must be a mutual respect for one another and the attributes each brings toward providing the best in patient care. I have many former athletic training students who went on to receive degrees in physical therapy as well. These individuals have become terrific ambassadors for athletic training and educating the physical therapy community as to the rigors of athletic training educational preparation and clinical experience. Increasing the awareness of the quality of the education athletic training students receive in highly structured and carefully monitored Commission on the Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE)-accredited academic programs is the key to future cooperation between the two professions. Athletic trainers do not profess to be all things to all people, but we are highly trained and qualified sports health care providers. I’m confident as the level of understanding as to what we do and how we do it is effectively communicated across the disciplines that an increased level of cooperation will take place. It won’t be easy, but I’m confident that those of us who dedicate ourselves to the betterment of our patients will be successful in our quest. We can—and will—get along!

The author has no financial or proprietary interest in the materials presented herein.

doi:10.3928/19425864-20091221-01