962-57-982   **Jeff Johannes*** (`Johannes@member.ams.org`), Department of Mathematical Sciences, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 454020, Las Vegas, NV 89154-4020. *Colored Unlinking.* Preliminary report.

An old question in knot theory is the minimal number of crossing changes needed to transform a knot into the unknot. Similar work has been done to determine the minimal number of crossing changes needed to transform a link to the unlink with the same number of components. In the case of links, we can refine this question by accounting for the which components in an ordered link are involved in the crossing changes. This talk will offer some preliminary thoughts regarding questions that arise from refined notions and unlinking. We will examine a few examples and potential methods to be applied to these problems. (Received September 29, 2000)