

# The Procrastinator

*the sooner we fall behind, the longer we have to catch up*

## Special Friday the 13th Edition

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Please email questions or letters to the editor to [TheProcrastinatorNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:TheProcrastinatorNewsletter@gmail.com)

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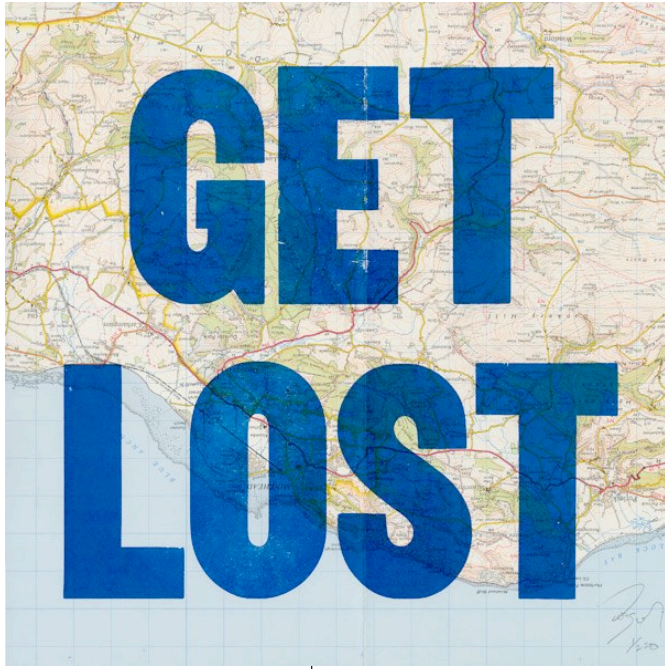
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# The Ways of the World: Ground Control to Major Tom Tom

Trey Smith



The other week my friend Chris and I flew out to Denver, Colorado to move our friend Jeff back to Charleston. The move involved the three of us driving two cars, an SUV with two dogs in the back and a 26 foot Penske truck, all the from Denver to Spartanburg, SC nonstop. Then after a night's sleep we would continue three hours down the road to our final destination, Charleston, SC. Needless to say, driving a 26 foot Penske truck is challenging and sleeping in shifts so that we could drive nonstop for 27 hours across 3/4ths of the continental US is something of an adventure. However, I think there was an entity that prevented this trip from making the leap from a normal road trip styled adventure into a full-fledged, all-out, no-holds-barred adventure. That entity was a Garmin GPS. I'd never been west of the Mississippi before this trip and I'd never had a first hand experience with a car GPS (Garmins, Tom Toms, etc). Those two facts, I believe, wrestled for the soul of our trip and the degree of adventure that we would be allowed to experience.

As a person with absolutely no sense of direction, I certainly can see, understand and appreciate the practical usefulness of a device that tells you how to get where you're going. And while driving a behemoth Penske truck it was reassuring to be forewarned about left side exits, the distance to your next turn, and everything else. However, the price of this piece of mind is that your trip is executed flawlessly.

That may sound like a good thing, but in fact I believe it actually dampens your trip experience by hampering the spirit of adventure.

There are two surefire ways to have a full-fledged adventure: 1) to have no idea where you are going or 2) to know where you're going but have no idea how to get there.

In the case of our trip, we knew that we were going to Spartanburg, then sleep, then drive to Charleston. So our destination was well established. Thus, in order to have an all-out adventure, the route to our final destination would have to be something that was more or less up in the air, something that was in flux, something that wasn't static. Thanks to the Garmin, that was impossible. The Garmin removes all doubt. It is a soulless computer concerned only with getting you from point A to point B as quickly and conveniently as possible.

But think about that for a minute. If you're the sort of person whose life is all about getting from point A to point B in as straight a line as possible, then you're probably insufferably boring. No one interesting plays by all the rules and never deviates from their course. But the Garmin negates tangents. It eliminates any potential deviations from your trip. In other words, it makes your trip less interesting.

Like I said, I'd never been west of the Mississippi before. I had a great time in Denver just taking in all the new sights with my friends. And when we set off on our voyage, even though I wasn't driving I couldn't bring myself to go to sleep because there was something I'd never seen before around every bend. There was Eastern Colorado with the Rockies in the side view mirror. Then we crossed into Kansas and endless fields, wind farms, and exits with signs saying "No Services this Exit." What a crazy place!

As exciting as it was, it was all just watching the world through the windshield (I'm very proud of this turn of phrase by the way). We had no inclination to stop to see the six legged cow or the largest prairie dog in the world or Roscoe the smallest donkey in the world because the Garmin had meticulously planned our trip sans adventurous digressions. Highway 70 straight for x number of miles was all it cared about and we slavishly followed its artificial intelligence. I regret this. I regret it because the fact of the matter is that the Garmin's artificial intelligence is just that, artificial. The moral of every Isaac Asimov book is that computers/robots/machines just don't get it. They don't get that there is more to life than the right or proper answer. There is more to life than just getting from point A to point B in the most efficient way. Only when you are truly lost and out of sorts can you have the most high fidelity, deepest, and most meaningful adventures. But the Garmin objects to that. The Garmin insists that at no point are you lost. Even if you make a wrong turn on purpose it just says, "Recalculating" and quickly spews out new directions based on your changed position. You are always en route, your location is always definitive, there is no grey area and hence, there is no adventurous spirit beyond seeing the world through the windshield (I told you I liked that turn of phrase).

The bottom line is that I had a great time with two of my best friends hanging out in Denver and then driving through

a part of the country I'd never seen before. However, truly great adventure is not about scratching things off a list once you've seen them, it's about experiencing things that are new and exciting. And the excitement comes from uncertainty, an uncertainty that the Garmin rejects. I consider myself to be an unrelenting and avid pursuer of adventure, but when confronted with the apple from the tree of knowledge that is the Garmin, even I succumb to temptation. I found myself making our pit stops at gas stations as short as possible because I knew it would cause the Garmin to recalculate and push back our arrival time as if it was disappointed that we had failed to keep our previous pace by stopping and was now punishing us for our dalliance. God presented Adam and Eve with the choice to either have paradise or knowledge, they picked knowledge and I probably would've done the same. Now, however, computers, the absolute manifestation of knowledge, offer humankind the choice between certainty and uncertainty.

America, I strongly advise you to choose uncertainty. Throw out your car GPS and get good and lost; for the sake of excitement, for the sake of your soul and for the sake of adventure. *P*

*Trey is perpetually lost but can occasionally be found at dantzlsmith@gmail.com*

## The Ways of the World: Reefer Madness

Brad Wright

There is a picture of me smoking pot. It is a picture of a very content, perfectly at ease 20 year old. The events that followed that picture are hardly scandalous. I marveled at the softness of the hotel robe I was wearing, watched some weird Dutch television and stared at myself in the mirror for a while before going to sleep. And now Michael Phelps is being crucified for a very similar picture, and it really pisses me off.

*But Brad, he's a role model.*

This attitude has to be the biggest load of shit I have ever heard. To attack someone for a perceived immoral action on the basis of their status as a role model is grossly unfair. First of all, I don't think Michael Phelps ever signed anything confirming his status as a role model. The fact of the matter is, even if he is a role model, he's still human, he's still only 23 years old, and his life for at least the last decade has consisted of almost nothing but the honing of his craft. I think the guy's earned a toke or two.

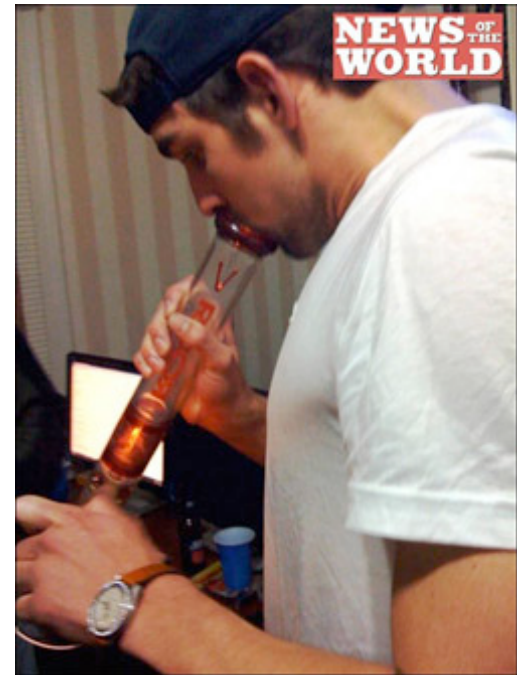
Second, so what? You know who else is a role model? Barack Obama. And he admitted to doing cocaine! Granted, he later did the shrewdly political thing and cited those decisions as his greatest moral failure (though my Catholic family would beg to differ). The role model argument is untenable because it expects perfection from someone who lives under intense public scrutiny, so any whining about the failure of a role model is completely ludicrous.

Third, as Saturday Night Live so brilliantly pointed out, if a kid says "if Michael Phelps can smoke pot why can't I?" a smart parent would respond with "Sure you can smoke pot, right after you win 14 gold medals for your country."

*But Brad, smoking marijuana is illegal.*

This statement is true and I won't deny it. Michael Phelps did break the law, case closed. But the fact that marijuana is illegal is perhaps the single most hypocritical aspect of our judicial system. I have many issues with the criminality of marijuana, but the most infuriating part of the whole situation is that the government is dictating what citizens can and can't do in the privacy of their own homes. Who is the victim when someone sits on their couch and smokes a joint? Save for anything edible in the pantry that will surely be sacrificed to "the munchies," there is no victim.

It's high time (pun not originally intended but upon further review deemed appropriate) that America starts to re-evaluate its relationship with marijuana. Let's stop with the scare tactics (e.g. if your kid is high and shoots another kid with the gun you keep in your desk drawer, the problem isn't that the kid was high, it's that your stupid ass kept a loaded gun in a fucking desk drawer). Numerous studies have shown that marijuana is substantially less harmful than alcohol and tobacco. I can tell you from experience that my actions under the influence of alcohol are infinitely more stupid than those under the influence of pot.



I believe the real problem is that Americans always want to have it both ways. We complain and complain about the high levels of crime in this country, and yet we never stop to think about why that crime exists. One needs to look no further than the Prohibition era to see the problem. You can get on your moral high horse all you want, but people are going to get their vices one way or the other, and if you completely deny them legal access, they will find extralegal means.

*But Brad, wouldn't a world full of potheads be terrible?*

The U.S. government spends tens of billions of dollars on the "War on Drugs." I don't know how much of that money goes to combat marijuana, but as the photo of Michael Phelps shows, their efforts aren't that effective. In fact, all the criminality of marijuana really does is put money in the hands of the drug cartels, whose increasing violence in Mexico is now spilling over into Texas, and has even touched Atlanta. In addition to the money spent combating the illegal drug trade you have to consider the cost of housing the multitude of inmates who are in prison for marijuana-related offenses.

I think Americans seem to fear that if marijuana were made legal, then everyone would become potheads, just watch cartoons and the country grinds to a halt. But which would you rather have - a country with a substantial number of lazy people, or a country racked by violent crime as a result of the illegal drug trade?

*But Brad, only stoners and Ron Paul support the legalization of marijuana, how can I take you seriously when you're probably staring at a ceiling fan right now?*

I am not, nor have I ever been, what I would consider to be a pot smoker. I have smoked on many occasions, but never with any great regularity. Nonetheless, I find this country's treatment of marijuana to be utterly absurd. We are bombarded by advertisements for far more insidious substances all the time. You can't turn on a television without seeing a beer commercial, and you can't drive down the interstate without seeing a billboard promoting cigarettes. Yet the mere mention of marijuana offends our sensibilities? This is hypocrisy of the highest sort. The solution, to me, seems very simple. Legalize marijuana and tax it just the same, maybe more, than other vices like cigarettes and alcohol.

This tax would have the simultaneous effect of generating revenue, freeing inmates convicted of marijuana related offenses that, in turn, saves countless taxpayer dollars, save billions in the war on drugs and at least partially reduce the threat of violent drug cartels. The money generated and saved by the legalization of marijuana could then be put to good use, such as education and community building, which could well serve to reduce the appeal of marijuana in the first place.

Phelps actually serves as an interesting case study in America's inconsistent attitude towards drugs. If you remember, shortly after his excellent performance in the 2004 Olympic Games, Phelps was arrested for DUI, at age 19 (which is essentially just as illegal as marijuana possession). While there was some outrage, the incident seemed to be cast aside as the indiscretions of a young kid new to fame. Contrast that with the uproar over a photo of him smoking pot, and you have the completely irrational American view on drugs.

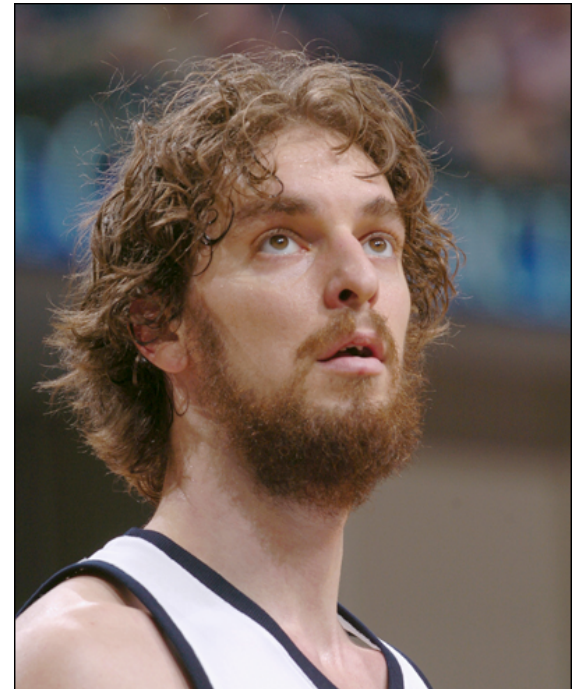
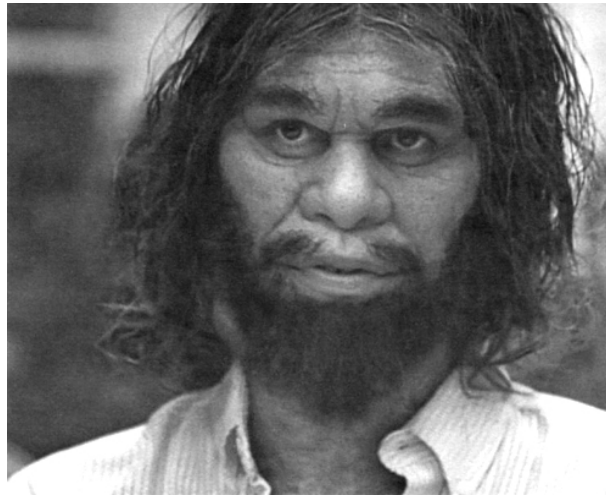
How can we look the other way when someone does something grossly irresponsible under the influence of a dangerous legal drug, yet become so indignant when someone uses an illegal drug that causes no harm to anyone? The only answer that I can come up with is, quite simply, hypocrisy. *D*

*Brad, with apologies to his Mom for swearing so much in this essay, thinks that if the people who are so against marijuana would actually try it and mellow the fuck out, the world would be a much less infuriating place. Invite him to light up with you at [bwright08@gmail.com](mailto:bwright08@gmail.com)*

# Bonfire of Inanities: H-O-R-S-E-S-H-I-T

Michael Orr

With the economic recession wreaking havoc on non-essential items, the NBA decided this week to add a corporate sponsor to its new H-O-R-S-E competition as part of its All-Star weekend. Rather than a normal sponsorship where the corporate name is listed as part of the name, for example the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl or the FedEx Orange Bowl in college football, the NBA moved to incorporate the sponsorship directly into the game.



Instead of spelling out H-O-R-S-E, the league had insurance companies compete for the rights to spell out their own names within the game. “We really wanted to make our corporate sponsors feel like they are part of the action on the court, not just as some ambiguous name preceding or following the name of an event,” said NBA Director of Marketing Joseph Stetson. “The competition for naming rights of the H-O-R-S-E event was fierce and in the end raised several million dollars for a worthy cause, the NBA.”

Stetson announced the top five finishers in the sweepstakes, which reads as follows:

Fourth runner-up: **S-T-A-T-E-F-A-R-M**

State Farm had a strong bid and also offered LeBron James, a State Farm spokesperson, as the sole entrant in the competition. This offer was enticing but H-O-R-S-E with a single player was not a viable option.

Third runner-up: **U-S-A-A**

USAA was also a strong consideration with their military background and competitive bid. But with veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan coming home to rusted toilets and moldy hospitals, the league thought military money could be better spent elsewhere.

Second runner-up: **P-R-U-D-E-N-T-I-A-L**

Prudential has a long history of sports sponsorships including NBC's NBA pre-game shows in the early-mid 1990s. Additionally ‘the rock’ slogan could’ve been used to some degree like, ‘the NBA rocks!’ But because ‘the rock’ logo is of the Rock of Gibraltar, clearly not American, the league could not sanction Prudential as a title sponsor.

Runner-up: **K-A-I-S-E-R-P-E-R-M-A-N-E-N-T-E**

Two problems arose with Kaiser. The first being that technically it's a healthcare organization and not exactly insurance. Secondly, the name is just too damn long.

Winner: **G-E-I-C-O**

GEICO has the exact number of letters that the traditional game of H-O-R-S-E does and has a really cute gecko for a ‘spokesperson.’ Also, the fact that Pau Gasol looks so much like the GEICO caveman means that the league will not have to pay extra to have the caveman present, with Gasol already being an All-Star. *P*

# Bonfire of Inanities: Sith Achieve Hostile Takeover of MLB

Brad Wright



In a stunning turn of events, the Sith, long thought to have been eradicated from the universe, have managed to completely take over Major League Baseball. Though rumors of their resurgence had become widespread, their existence wasn't completely revealed until recently, when it was announced that Alex Rodriguez, the Chosen One, had turned to the Dark Side.

Rodriguez, identified as the Chosen One at an early age, had shown great promise as the player who would restore all of baseball's cherished records to respectability. Despite the suspicion revolving around slugger Barry Bonds, now revealed to be Sith Lord Darth Pompous, people held hope that Rodriguez would purify baseball's most hallowed marks.

"He was the Chosen One," lamented Jedi Master Ron Santo, "he was supposed to destroy the Sith, not join them!" Santo, one of the few survivors of the takeover, said that he would retreat into exile, to watch over the next generation of ball players.

Jedi Grand Master Greg Maddux, known as the wisest Jedi in the game, stoically mused "he's more chemicals now than man."

This victory for the Sith confirmed the growing belief that the Dark Side had begun to infiltrate the sanctity of the MLB. From beneath his ominous cloak, Darth Pompous explained how his diabolical plan had come to fruition.


"We Sith had been dormant since the Black Sox scandal. We knew it was just a matter of time before the public's faith in the game would be restored, and we could begin to erode its purity from within." Pausing to cackle maniacally, Pompous continued, "After the strike of '94 we knew the league would do anything to increase viewership. That's when I dispatched Darth Bulgeous (Mark McGwire) and Darth Acne (Sammy Sosa) to hypnotize the public with their homerun hitting prowess."

Pompous revealed that the scheme was not without snags, however, and that as a result of increasing suspicion, he had to sacrifice some of his most promising apprentices.

"The loss of Darth Moronus (Jason Giambi) and Darth Mentiroso (Raphael Palmeiro) was a setback, but I needed a distraction to achieve my ambition," the Dark Lord explained. "Plus, I would've had to kill them eventually lest they threaten my power. I am a Sith, after all."

Pompous was confident that his turning of Rodriguez, now known by his Sith name, Darth Fraud, would plunge MLB into darkness for years to come.

When asked why he turned to the Dark Side, betraying everything and everyone he claimed to respect, Darth Fraud said simply, "I underestimated the power of the Dark Side. I was naïve and felt a tremendous amount of pressure, and knew that the powers the Dark Side could give me were the only way I could become the best player in the world."

Despite the looming age of evil, all hope has not been lost. As his body faded into the netherworld of the force Hank Aaron, Jedi legend and de facto homerun king, could be heard whispering, "there...is...another...slugger." 

*Brad is well aware of the fact that he is a HUGE nerd; feel free to make fun of him at [bwright08@gmail.com](mailto:bwright08@gmail.com)*

## The Fifth Column: Boom

Jim Hunt

Here's what the Chief saw first: that morning, breakfast, hurried, running out the door. His wife's face upset but not surprised that he was running late, again. "Want your coffee?" she asked from kitchen counter, pouring in cream and sugar. Thanks, he'd said, and run out the house without kissing her goodbye, the first time he hadn't kissed her goodbye in weeks.

Here's what the Chief saw next: The one and only time he cheated on his wife, lying on a hardwood floor, grit from his son's shoes digging into his back. His son's best friend's wife was awful, awful looking, awful sounding, but it happened. He couldn't remember what he'd been mad at Kerry about, but it happened, and he told her, and they stayed together,

and he kissed her goodbye every morning in thankfulness.

Here's what the Chief saw next: His son being born. Big surprise there. Tears of joy and panic, though no one knew about the last set. Held him tight, wondered what to name him, handed him back to Kerry, who looked perfect.

Here's what the Chief saw next: The time he almost cheated on his wife, then his fiancée. At his brother's bachelor party, in Vegas (big surprise there), dancing on the floor of some club, all over a beautiful black girl (I'm white he thought suddenly, looking at the white hand holding the wire cutters over the red, blinking diode numbers). She had kissed him on the cheek and sent him on his way. Some sort of angel didn't let him ruin the best thing he had going for him.

Here's what the Chief saw next: The time he pushed his older brother in front of the swing set so his brother kicked hard in the chest by their father, who was showboating on the swings for the pretty women at the park. No one saw him, and he said nothing, Michael was always playing chicken with the swings. He and Michael had been getting along so well, so much better. It's like he didn't want it to last.

Here's what the Chief did next: He said, "Maddox. Leave." Maddox said, "Chief?" He said again, "Leave." Maddox left, because everyone did what the Chief said. His eyes lost focus, looking at the two wires, green and red, and he thought about Christmas, and he missed his wife and son, and he cut the red wire.

Here's what happened next: Boom. *P*

*Jim never cuts the wrong wire. More incendiary suppressing advice can be attained at [jim.d.hunt@gmail.com](mailto:jim.d.hunt@gmail.com)*

## Sports: The End of Baseball

Trey Smith



*Mickey Mantle: natural strength, power, speed and grace*

Baseball was once *the* American pastime. It was the sport you watched with your dad who told you about the rules, the records and the way his father explained all that to him. Then you'd go into the yard for a game of catch with the old man. It's the purest thing in sports, it's a quintessential piece of Americana and, unfortunately, it's a thing of the past.

With the confirmation that A-Rod was on the juice in 2003 when he won the MVP it is now official, anyone in the past decade who achieved any level of success was on steroids. But lost in the A-Rod hoopla is the fact that the rest of the guys outed range from All-Stars to career journeymen. Sure topnotch players like A-Rod, Clemens, McGwire and Bonds were using, but so were middle of the road players like Kevin Brown, Denny Neagle, Todd Pratt and Fernando Vina (who ESPN inexplicably retains as a baseball analyst). And among minor leaguers steroid use is even greater because those guys feel that they need to take every advantage they can in order to make it to "the show." What this means is that if you find a ballplayer who has never used illegal supplements, then that guy is the exception to the rule because just about everyone in baseball should be presumed guilty.

Baseball is a sport that used to produce American heroes. Now it's impossible to lionize a baseball player because whether he performs well or poorly he is suspect for steroid

use. Readers of my blog and my friends (given my readership those are one in the same) know that I am a huge fan of Jeff Francoeur. But after a great start to his career, Frenchy stunk it up this past year. I've never heard any rumor about him using steroids and since I'm a fan of his I wouldn't assume the worst, but it would make sense to theorize that his bad year was a result of him no longer using illegal supplements. Another Atlanta favorite, Andruw Jones, hit 51 home runs in 2005 for the Braves. He left for the Dodgers in 2008 and his weight ballooned up while his numbers sank. For LA last season the fat centerfielder hit just 3 homeruns, compiled a batting average of .158 and spent much of the season on the injured reserve list. Again there is no proof that Andruw was using steroids, but his dramatic fall would suggest that his earlier numbers were inflated by steroid use and his subsequent collapse was the result of no longer using. Of course this is all nothing but speculation, but given the mountain of evidence that just about everyone is cheating or has cheated, suspicion and speculation are obvious antecedents.

Now this isn't meant to be my eulogy for baseball. In fact, baseball has had its most profitable years in this current

steroids era and this year will likely be no different. The mythical fan strike will never come to fruition, the media will pretend to be outraged until the next big story comes along, and hell, even I'll wind up going to Turner Field to take in a couple of games this season. So baseball certainly isn't over in the strictest sense. However, I'd argue that the key to baseball remaining entrenched in the American sports psyche despite the rise of football and basketball lies in the moral superiority it garners from its rich sense of history and tradition.

Baseball fans feel superior to other sports fans because in baseball the stats, the history and the tradition are paramount. You can compare a guy who played in the 50s to a guy who plays now because the numbers don't lie. But now the numbers do lie and they lie right to your face. Sosa is up there with Aaron. Bonds supplanted Maris. Therefore, there can be no present to past connection. The tie is severed because the factors separating the different eras go beyond debatable points like the size of ballparks, the quality of pitching, or better equipment.

I don't know why, but most people don't care that NFL players do steroids. Jeff and I have many theories about this including one that argues that because the helmet obscures the player's face, the fan is disconnected from the player and able to dehumanize him (we got this from the fact that in WW1 soldiers who could see the enemy in the trench opposite them would fire over their heads because with a face associated with their target, they couldn't bring themselves to kill it). Hence, NFL players are just cogs in a machine that produces an exciting sport and therein an NFL player using steroids is akin to just putting higher quality oil into the machine (this would be like how in WW2 longer range weapons meant that you weren't actually face to face with your target and therefore couldn't humanize it as easily so firing a lethal round at it was not as big a deal). The point is that the NFL is excitement based, the numbers don't matter much and players are readily discarded.

The problem for baseball is that the modern sports age is one that thrives on excitement. The NFL and NBA have that inherently; baseball does not. It takes work to appreciate baseball. It is completely situational, it is drawn out and the best parts are found in the minutia of the game. As I said a moment ago, what helped baseball hang in with the NFL and NBA was the sense of history. With the historical context removed, baseball is just a two and half hour long game that is sporadically exciting, at best. Surely MLB will recognize this and end up artificially pumping excitement into their product. It will most likely make FOX's promotions for their NFL games look subtle and understated. It will seek to dehumanize the sport the way the NFL does so that the product is more important than the producers. In doing so, MLB will be transformed from a sport that once preserved the notion of higher level sports appreciation into yet another sport seeking the most basic form of entertainment. In that sense, baseball as we knew it, the great American pastime steeped in history and heroes, is at an end. ♪

*Trey will always consider Hank Aaron to be the REAL homerun king and can be pitched inside to at [dantzlsmith@gmail.com](mailto:dantzlsmith@gmail.com)*

## The Ways of the World: Any Given Tuesday: A Guide to Bar Trivia

Rusty Lee



### *The Location*

The trendy bar trivia game in your area will likely be held at an establishment with a hokey faux-Irish name, like Finn McCool's or the Paddy Wagon. They'll certainly offer Guinness on draft – for a meager \$8 a pint. And the bartenders might even wear happy green (Irish!) shirts covered in shamrocks... even though they're all either dark-haired Protestant women who can't locate Ireland on a map, or crazy Canadian macho men who swore they almost made it in semi-pro hockey.

### *The Emcee*

The ringleader of the trivia spectacle will probably be a ruddy-faced white male who, regardless of his actual heritage, boasts an impressively convincing Irish accent. The specifics of his personality may vary, but there are several attributes he's sure to have:

- 1) Despite being a trivia emcee, he knows absolutely nothing about... well, anything. He's like a poor man's James Lipton ("Inside the Actor's Studio," anyone?). Without his written notes, he'll suffer a brief panic attack and become irrevocably comatose. And don't bother trying to make small talk about a particular question between rounds;



between gulps of double gin on the rocks, he'll let you know (via an expletive-laden rant) that he has "no fookin' cloo" about anything.

- 2) He will never – ever – own up to a mistake. He'll insist that Rudyard Kipling was an American... even though he was British. He'll swear that Dan Quayle was right to add that 'e' on the end of 'potato.' And even if you coax him into admitting that his information was wrong, he'll stubbornly defend the notion that his precious and holy points system is far too delicate an institution to be soiled with corrections, negations, or recalculations.
- 3) Despite his allegiance to the System – and his unquestioned mastery of the trivia process – the emcee will, on countless occasions, award your team one (or two) too many points. While these seemingly divine occurrences are completely random and unpredictable, bar trivia etiquette requires that they be savored... because they freakin' rock.
- 4) Lastly, the emcee will most certainly allude to, reminisce about, and boast of his multitudinous female conquests. And you, faithful contestant, will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that he's full of shit.

### *The Team Name*

Without question, the team name represents the vital cornerstone of the trivia experience. A team's name is its soul, its identity – those whispered words that conjure images of grand celebration, bone-deep hatred, and cutthroat rivalry. "What's in a name?," Shakespeare famously asked. When it comes to bar trivia, the answer is "everything."

You see, there is very little cross-team interaction during a legitimate bar trivia session. Akin to "sleeping with the enemy," lighthearted cajoling simply isn't tolerated. If someone is acting particularly nice (especially if it's a decent-looking female), it's not because she's interested in your sports camp tee shirt or your curious pink cocktail; she wants your answers! Thus, the only way to develop clear-cut judgments about another player or team – aside from dissecting their wardrobe and beverage choices – is to carefully analyze the nuanced complexities of their team's name.

In general, trivia team names can be categorized according to a rather inflexible hierarchy (with the following being listed from least noble to most impressive):

**Random Humor:** These names generally involve the meaningless pairing or obscure juxtaposition of seemingly disparate words/ideas; they sometimes consist simply of random phrases. Examples: 6-Foot-9 with Afro, Cheesesteak Grandma, Purple Cream

**Potty Humor:** These monikers involve childlike and/or illicit words, generally of a sexual or genital nature. Examples: Riding the Cotton Pony, The Rusty Trombones

**Obscure Sports References:** These names are meant to demonstrate the team members' stallion-like sports knowledge. Even though 95% of people in the bar won't understand their significance, these names are worth the effort. Examples: I Am Rico Brogna, Your Mother Is a Dykstra

**Potty Sports:** Rarely witnessed in the natural world, these one-of-a-kind creations do something rare, combining adolescent obscenity and sports geekdom with alarming ease. If you're lucky enough to meet a team using one of these tags, pay careful attention – because you're likely in the midst of greatness. Examples: The Sid Bream Sex Machine, The Randy Johnsons

**A League of Their Own:** Some team names are so funny, or so clever, or so simplistically amazing, that they defy categorization. Not only do these names forge an image for your team – they may, in specific instances, help you hit on the hot blonde waitress, tout your best-endowed regions, or even echo your particular political views. Examples: Breakfast at Tiffany's, The Well-Hung Jury, The Terry Schiavo Experience



### *The Players*

Each team has its own constituent parts. Some are egalitarian machines, in which each individual contributes roughly the same amount of input on roughly the same kinds of material. Others are autocracies – groupings that essentially

consist of Ken Jennings and four jocks, wherein one person answers 98% of the questions and the others drink cheap American beer until the emcee randomly wants to know which fraternity a given football player belongs to.

Despite these extremes, most teams fall into a mold that has been vociferously studied and verified. In bars across the world, a randomly selected trivia team will likely consist of:

**Duke:** Duke was that kid who always went to sports camp and started on his high-school football team, yet consistently maintained a certain level of romanticism for such things as journalism and classic literature. In short, he's a geek posing as a jock – but he's just good enough at both sports and school to keep everyone wondering. He may want you to think that intramural sports are the most important part of life... but in reality, he's more concerned with his blog. Areas of Expertise: Sports, History, Geography

**Jets:** Jets, who can marginally be considered a collegiate athlete in that he ran cross-country, is the perpetually injured, overly awkward brains of the operation. His romantic history is dubious – he may be a virgin, or he may have slept with scores and scores of (probably underage) girls. While he is incapable of carrying out a single normal conversation with a human being he's never met before, he has a freakish memory, especially for historical facts. He knows where Earvin (not "Magic") Johnson went to college, and he's a Jedi of Yahoo chat. He may also be Aryan. Areas of Expertise: Everything.

**Derby:** She's likely from the South, the offspring of wealthy parents who always looked out for her. She's never heard of an athlete unless he happened to play for her state university's college basketball team, and she has no clue what "play action" is. She does, however, exude class; she also has an uncanny knack for predicting Kentucky Derby winners. And – by some dint of karma – she's always good for one crucial answer that manages to elude the collective male brain trust. In short, she's the Robert Horry of bar trivia: her occasional clutch performance justifies her otherwise mediocre contribution. Areas of Expertise: Shopping, Upper-Class Living

**Head:** Head is an odd one. His memory is damn near elephantine. The guy simply doesn't forget anything – no matter how minute it may be. He knows that Ceausescu was a Romanian dictator, a fact that he remembered from a random "Seinfeld" episode. He is also absolutely certain that "hijinks" is the only word in the English language featuring three consecutive dotted letters (since "Fiji" is a proper noun). Head's wide-ranging knowledge can be a detriment at times, as he tends to be rather inflexible when compromise is called for. He is confident, obstinate and frequently correct. He also entirely lacks that wide body of knowledge referred to by the masses as "common sense." Areas of Expertise: Letters, Hodgepodge, Minutiae

### *Summary*

These bar trivia truisms may sound outrageous – but I rest assured that they represent the culmination of years and years of in-depth research. Their verity can be witnessed on any given Tuesday at your city's cheesiest Irish pub.

Enjoy!

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*Rusty may or may not have based this account on a certain summer. To verify, he can be reached at russellclee@gmail.com*

## Sports: Sports Today

Michael Orr

American sports just aren't what they were  
Back when players wore stirrups and Namath wore furs.  
When the pay wasn't perfect and guys still sold cars  
So they could make ends meet, not just putting for pars.

Agents and TV rights are the name of the game  
They're the only solution if your goal is just fame.  
College sports are the minors and command the same money  
That companies pay for ads that aren't funny.

Steroids are used more than reefers and rocks  
So that athletes get biceps and tinier cocks.  
The long ball, the dunk and 300 yard drives  
Are more popular now than were 80's high fives.

LeBron says he wants be sports' billionaire  
But if he never wins a title will anyone care?  
At least he'll still have ads where he plays for the Browns  
With that kind of money we'll never see frowns.

Everyone's friends now from AAU  
It used to be teammates were the chosen few.  
Instead of a handshake now it's a bump and some dap  
And after the game they'll get together and rap.

This isn't to make me sound tired and old  
I still like to see who's on SI's centerfold.  
But the point is that business is ruling the world  
Somewhere I think that John Wooden just hurled.

What happened to Topp's cards along with the gum?  
We don't even care that the refs gave the Steelers one for the thumb.  
Soon we'll see ads all across our teams' shirts  
Like in England with betting sites and fat-filled deserts.

Our kids won't play outside or learn how to ski  
Because they'll want to be inside and play on a Wii.  
I long for the days of World Series day games  
Or even a football game from Manhattan or Ames.

No more recruiting in eighth grade or earlier still  
No more sports cars so we don't get another Bobby Phills.  
Just play ball and earn what you're going to get paid  
And don't tell me how many times last night you got laid.

Sports are obviously fun to play  
But there should be rights for those who pay  
To see these athletes so pompous and fake  
Cashing in paychecks from money we make.

I know that these cries will fall on deaf ears  
As our news is so full of the creams and the clears.  
But for anyone out there who is of the same frame of mind  
We can always remember our sports in rewind.

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*Michael actually rhymes in regular conversation. If you think that's weird he can be reached at [mikeaorr@gmail.com](mailto:mikeaorr@gmail.com)*