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Chris McCosky

All the world loves a loser

LOSING. IS THERE anything more depressing? Of course not. But, let's face it, what would sports be without losers? Just a bunch of cocky winners walking around with big grins on their faces.

Boring.

Losers comprise at least 50 percent of all sports. (Now that's a profound statement, isn't it?) In fact, I'd venture to say that losers are in the majority. Take a golf tournament or a tennis tournament. What do you have, 100-150 competitors? How many winners are there? One. The rest are losers.

WHAT'S THE point of all this? Losers, a majority faction in sports and perhaps in life, haven't received their proper due. Winners make the headlines. To the winners go the spoils. To the losers go the spoils. It's time we recognize losers for what they are.

Author Philip Roth summed up the difference between winners and losers better than anyone ever has through his character Word Smith in the novel, "The Great American Novel."

Winning is tops. Winning is the name of the game. Winning is what it's all about. Winning is the be-all and the end-all, and don't let anybody tell you otherwise. All the world loves a winner. Show me a good loser, said Leo Durocher, and I'll show you a loser. Name one thing that losing has to recommend it. You can't. Losing is tedious. Losing is exhausting. Losing is uninteresting. Losing is depressing. Losing is boring. Losing is debilitating. Losing is compromising. Losing is shameful. Losing is humiliating. Losing is infuriating. Losing is disappointing. Losing is incomprehensible. Losing makes for headaches, muscle tension, skin eruptions, ulcers, indignation and for mental disorders of every kind. Losing is bad for confidence, pride, business, peace of mind, family, love, sexual potency, concentration and much, much more. Losing is bad for people of all ages, races, and religions; it is as bad for infants as for the elderly, for women as for men. Losing makes people cry, howl, scream, hide, lie, smolder, envy, hate and quit. Losing is probably the single biggest cause of suicide in the world, and of murder. Losing makes the benign malicious, the generous stingy, the brave fearful, the healthy ill, and the kindly bitter. Losing is universally despised, as well it should be. The sooner we get rid of losing, the happier everyone will be.

OK MISTER hot-shot author, try to get rid of all the losers. You won't be able to do it. As long as there is competition there will be losers. It's a universal plague that will never go away.

Losers come in all forms. I ought to know. I don't claim expertise in many areas. When it comes to losing, however, I am indeed an expert.

An expert loser is not, let me stress, a bad person. A loser is not someone who strolls along outside Tiger Stadium with a bottle in one hand moaning quarters. That is a bum. A loser is not a bum. Nor is a loser a criminal, lecher, pervert, plunderer, jerk, slyman or schmuck.

Losers, in this context anyway, are those of us who don't happen to win much.

Here's what expert losers lose. They lose their baseball games, their card games, their wallet, their comb at least twice a week, their girl friend, their boy friend, their mind, their belt and their pick-up basketball games. The teams they root for lose. The teams they play for lose. If they don't care who wins the game they are watching, I'll end in a lie. If there is something they want real bad, they won't get it. If there is something they absolutely don't want, they'll get it.

Such is the plight of the expert loser.

EXPERT LOSERS are forced to make sacrifices. For example, it is tough for the expert loser to hang on to any feelings of self-respect or self-confidence. The expert loser has no ego. It has long since been deflated beyond vision.

The expert loser tends to become terribly paranoid and insecure.

Here's what I mean: A friend calls to tell you the Tigers are on TV. "The Tigers are up 3-4 and they have the bases loaded and one out," says the friend. You rush to the TV. The first thing you see is a Tiger hitting into an inning-ending double play. Immediate reaction: The double play was your fault. It wouldn't have happened if you weren't watching. You don't watch and the guy hits a grand slam. You keep watching and the Tigers lose 4-3.

An expert loser has to expect to feel frustrated and depressed a lot of the time.

You know you're an expert loser when you find yourself leading throughout the contest, only to lose in the waning moments. You know you're an expert loser when you master the technique of matching defeat from the jaws of victory. When it dawns on you that you are entering contests without the slightest hope of winning, you are fast approaching expertise.

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Roush Trans-Ams go 1-2-3



Three Trans-Am cars built by the Livonia-based Team Roush took the top three places in the Trans-Am race in Detroit prior to the Formula 1 Grand Prix.

By C.J. Rusk
staff writer

All three drivers, still garbed in their red, fireproof racing suits, smiled broadly.

Each had good reasons. On the right sat Greg Pickett, who stepped into a car he'd never raced before and sped to a third-place finish in Saturday's SCCA Pontiac Trans Am 100 at the Detroit Grand Prix.

On the left was Willy T. Ribbe, who stepped into a car he'd never raced before and, after a month-long hiatus from driving, powered his car to a second-place finish in the Trans Am race.

In the middle was Tom Gloy, who plunked a new engine into his car and, after two straight second-place finishes, finally cracked the win column, a victory that also gave him the points leadership in the drivers' standings.

Not appearing with the Saturday's champions was Jack Roush. All Roush did was build the three cars.

IT WAS A HAPPY day for Ford people. GM cars had dominated the Trans Am series in recent years after Ford had reduced its sponsorship. Ford decided to get involved anew, but only with partial sponsorship through the private sector.

That's when Roush entered the picture. He built the Mercury Capri Gloy raced last season in the Trans Am series, a ride that never finished higher than third.

So Roush was prompted to completely re-design the Capri for this season.

"We took the chance this year to hop right in and design our own car, with the hopes that it would be competitive," said the Livonia-based auto designer.

Now it's the opponents that are hoping. Hoping something happens to these three Roush-built Capris. They have dominated the last three Trans-Am races, with Pickett winning twice (Gloy finishing second both times) and Gloy capturing Saturday's event.

Now Ribbe, who finished second in the Trans Am drivers' points standings last season behind DeAtley Racing teammate David Hobbs, has been add-

ed to the Roush team.

The domination of GM-style cars, at least for this season, has diminished.

IF SATURDAY'S race proved anything, it was a tribute to the durability of Roush's cars. "We were determined to put the Roush cars 1-2-3 here," said Roush.

That didn't happen, partially because Pickett lost control of his Capri during warm-ups Friday and crashed. Realizing the car couldn't be repaired in time for Saturday's race, Roush rented Gloy's back-up car — last year's Capri in which Gloy never finished higher than third.

Pickett didn't break the streak. He, too, placed third in the unfamiliar ride.

Ribbe was also an unfamiliar wheel. After being dropped by Neil DeAtley, hours before the start of the Trans Am season, Ribbe signed a one-race deal with the Roush team, which built a second car for him.

It wasn't finished until the Wednesday before race day, allowing Ribbe little time to get adjusted. But he qualified fifth and finished fourth, overcoming brake problems early and driving the last part of the race without a clutch.

"I don't know how the car withstood it," Ribbe said. "There was absolutely no clutch whatsoever. I mis-shifted more than a dozen times."

"That car's a tank and a missile. By that I mean it stood up to a lot of punishment."

GLOY'S VICTORY not only ended nearly two years of frustration, but it came in perhaps the biggest race of the year, considering the large number of Ford executives watching.

"This was definitely the one to win if you had to pick a town to win in," Gloy agreed.

The DeAtley team, which dominated the circuit last season, knew the importance of putting on a good show in Detroit, too. They gambled and brought in Indy-style car driver Michael Andretti, son of Mario Andretti, to drive a third entry.

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FLiP Rowdies get to nationals

By Brad Emons
staff writer

The FLiP Rowdies set a familiar pattern in winning the Midwest Regional soccer tournament for girls 19 and under last weekend at Schoolcraft College.

"We'd got off to a shaky start, but we got stronger each game," said the team's coach, Dave Lusier. "We met the challenges all the way through."

The Rowdies, comprised of players from Farmington, Livonia and Plymouth, advanced to next month's National Youth Challenge Cup in St. Louis, Mo.

Sue Ferguson scored twice, both from Kim Paterson, to give the Rowdies a 3-0 win over the Westside Renegades of Forest Park, Ohio in Sunday's championship game.

"It was a very defensive game, but that's the way we designed it," Lusier said. "Ohio was very physical. I think our defense deserves recognition — Cheryl Galindo, Chris Lusier, Colleen O'Connor, Margie Wangbichler and Kim Reeves. They put in the time."



Sue Ferguson, a Farmington Harrison grad, led the Rowdies to victory Saturday.

soccer

IN THE SEMIFINALS on Sunday morning, Forest Park eliminated defending champion Tammam Crow of St. Louis, 5-1, while the Rowdies ousted a team from Wisconsin, 2-0, as Annette Ruggiero scored twice.

In the first round, the Michigan champs struggled to beat an aggressive Illinois contingent, 3-2, as Dorene Dudek scored twice. Ferguson, meanwhile, had the other goal.

Ferguson scored two more with Galindo and Dudek notching one each as the Rowdies turned back Indiana in the second round, 4-0.

"At no time did I think we'd win after the way we played our first game. We had a tough time getting started."

Not only did the Rowdies play solid defense, they also received solid goal-tending from Dorene Beagle, who posted three shutouts and made 68 saves in four games.

"THE BOTTOM line is that we made it to the final four in the country," Lusier said. "To be in this competition is a real plus. People don't usually recognize soccer in the Midwest, except Missouri, as being strong."

"This says a lot for our area." What does Lusier think his team's chances are of winning in St. Louis?

"I feel if the team continues to work hard and they can reach their peak, we've got a shot at a national title," he said. "But it's got to be a team effort."

"But just getting there is something for these girls. It's been the culmination of five years of playing together."

Rounding out the FLiP Rowdie contingent are Pam Craigie, Lori Engel, Terri Groat, Andrea Bokos, Lisa Russell, Jennifer Hoegl, Danielle Mootroy and Shelly Staszek.

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