

Opinion

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It's hard to worship sports heroes

HERO WORSHIPERS are in for a rough time — especially those who idolize sports performers.

For years these heroes were held in high esteem. You never heard anything but superlatives concerning their ability to run on an open field in a football stadium or smack a baseball out of a major league park.

But times have changed, and the athletes have changed them. All that appears in the newsprints these days are stories dealing with salary and contract battles.

Many athletes have become money hungry and now are trying to break contracts in an effort to get paid in the millions.

YOU NEVER heard of such things



the stroller
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when such heroes as Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Mickey Cochrane, Ted Williams and a host of others dominated the sports pages.

For instance, it came to light the other day that Lou Gehrig, the New York Yankees' legendary first baseman, accepted a \$3,000 cut in salary after a poor season and then received only \$30,000 for the year.

The recent case in contrast is that of Billy Sims, the Detroit Lions running back

who signed two contracts in two different leagues and then demanded he be paid \$1 million a year for running up and down the field. This is nothing more than a holdup.

Then there is Bob Hebert, the quarterback of the Michigan Panthers who guided the team to a title last year. He still has a year left on his contract, but walked out of camp because a demand to negate his current contract.

ANOTHER CASE is that of the Tigers' Kirk Gibson. Although he was paid \$220,000 and had had a poor season, he planned to go to arbitration with a demand for \$280,000. He settled for \$250,000 — a raise of \$30,000. Another holdup. He will have to come a long way to be-

come the hero of the bleacher fans. You don't worship contract breakers who are dissatisfied with salaries higher than that of the president of the United States.

What these fellows should do is copy the trait of Hank Greenberg, the old-time Tiger star who never wanted more than a one-year contract. Greenberg worked on the theory that he wanted to get paid each season for the work of that season and not have the salary prolonged.

Few if any players in either major league would do what Al Kaline did. If you recall, he refused a one-year salary of \$100,000 until it was forced on him. And he went to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

That's why hero worshipers are going to have a tough time of it during the coming season.

oral quarrel

Opinions on snuff warning

Today's Oral Quarrel asked Farmington and Farmington Hills residents if snuff and chewing tobacco should carry health warnings similar to those required for cigarettes?

Following are responses to the question:

I don't think there should be any ban on advertising or any warnings published. Let people use their own intelligence.

I really don't think it would do much good because the nasty slobs that smoke or snuff don't know how to read anyway.

This is a white collar and tie question. What does oxidation from aluminum welding do as well as paint, grime, dust, cutting oils. Maybe there is a reason for chewing in these conditions. Is tobacco a herb?

Chewing tobacco is more dangerous than any other use of tobacco. I personally knew several men who chewed and every one of them developed stomach cancer and died.

What's in a title? Director needs help

REMEMBER THE OLD army joke about the best advice being "never volunteer"? Well, it wasn't always that way.

Once upon a time, when someone needed something important done they'd tell the neighbors and that's all it took.

Need a barn? Why they'd gather every one for miles around, pool their labor and raise that barn in no time. The reward was the communal meal and the nice feeling of neighborliness.

Traditionally, a lot of work, both the physical barn-raising kind and the social caring about people kind, was done voluntarily in this society.

BEFORE THE feminist movement caught on, women gave their time, talent and energy to every shade of charity imaginable. I remember two decades ago, I headed a state-wide organization with hundreds of members before I ever earned paycheck No. 1.

It's like that for Iris Mickel. A Southfield homemaker, her cause was and is scoliosis, curvature of the spine that begins in childhood.



Shirlee
Rose Iden

She underwent surgery at age 13 and lay for nine months in a body cast. So when her own daughter, Shari, was discovered to have a 35-percent curvature, Mickel went to work.

She called a meeting to be held on Dec. 2, 1976 to discuss scoliosis.

Pediatrician Dr. George Blum was the speaker and with little type 40 people came to listen. It was the first step in an effective education and support program that continues today.

A first goal, to provide screening for the disorder in public schools, was accomplished. The Oakland County Health Department continues this program, vital because the disorder causes no pain and must be caught early for effective treatment.

According to Mickel, one in 10 teens has some degree of scoliosis; 5,500,000 are affected nationwide.

The Scoliosis Association of Michigan (SAM) was formed in 1977 affiliating with the association. Mickel is executive director, but as she says "What's in a title? I'm a volunteer executive director holding down another fulltime job."

"We applied for United Way funding and that didn't work out, yet we have three Michigan chapters now, in Ann Arbor, Flint and here in Oakland County."

MICKEL SAYS SAM has been part of

Health-O-Rama, but will have to bow out of that.

"There are 70 sites you can be at, and I couldn't get anyone to help me for awhile at our one site at Tel-Twelve Mall."

"We can get 70-80 people to a meeting," she says. "They listen OK. But if you ask for some help, they don't react."

Harold and Iris Mickel's daughter is nearly 18 now and is out of the neck-high brace she's worn for seven years. Her curvature was contained without surgery, and Shari's parents are grateful for that. SAM's immediate goals are to get students to create Scoliosis projects for an upcoming Science Fair March 7-11 and to promote a March 18 Skate for Scoliosis fund-raiser.

SAM doesn't need a barn raising, just consciousness raising and help. Call her at 557-5542.

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