

# Have our sports changed or is it just me?

Maybe I'm just getting old. Maybe sports have become too big. I'm not sure what it is about my relationship with sports, but it has changed. The way I view sports and the way I feel about sports are different now.

I know that getting older plays apart of it. I have other things that I have to do or would rather do than invest all of my time into watching sports like I used to. I never missed a minute of any Bulls game. My week would revolve around when and who the Bears played. Summer days were given over to WGN-TV to listen to Harry and Stoney broadcast Cubs games.

I started to believe that working as a member of the sports media played a major factor in losing my enthusiasm and passion for sports as a fan. My escape from the real world had suddenly become my job. Over the last eight years, I had to find an escape from watching sports. I did by the way discover that I can and do really enjoy cooking.

This 2008 Cubs season made me realize that I still have that passion and excitement for sports. I learned this year that I can work in sports media and still be a fan. I had to learn to separate the two in order to still be fair in my analysis of what I would watch.

I have never viewed a professional athlete as a role model. An individual cannot be a role model to another person with whom they do not have a relationship. An athlete can use their celebrity status to influence society in a positive way, but that's not what they are paid to do. It's not their job! With that in mind, sports haven't changed for me because of all the "mistakes" that athletes make in their lives. I'm not turned off by the drugs, alcohol, extramarital affairs, womanizing, violence, bad parenting and all the other "wrongdoings" we hear about athletes on a daily basis because I never viewed athletes as perfect people.

So why have sports changed for me?

I believe the answer can partly be found within the industry in which I work — the media.

Sports and athletes are too accessible now. The way in which games and sports can be consumed is so vast. As a kid, I either went to the game, listened to the radio or watched TV. Today, a person can view every football game in a highlight package form in 30 minutes thanks to the NFL Network. Major League Baseball provides every game on the Internet. Athletes even blog daily on their websites. My basic cable package comes with four ESPN channels. Sports have become

## ONE on ONE

with **Matt Abbatacola**  
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oversaturated within society.

Don't get me wrong — I still love my sports. I am officially old though. When a person starts to reminisce about the good old days...

### OTHER RANDOM THOUGHTS

The Bulls have begun the 2008-09 season, kicking things off against former head coach Scott Skiles and the Milwaukee Bucks. I really love how a team's schedule is developed randomly through the use of a computer program .

I have been asked by many people what the Bulls will do this year. Allow me to defer to new Bulls assistant coach Del Harris who has 556 career coaching wins

and ranks 22nd all-time in NBA history. Columnist Mike Downey of the Chicago *Tribune* sought out Harris and asked him about the Bulls. Harris replied, "My impression of this team is that we're obviously young and without an established star at this point."

Upon reading this, I was shocked.

My first thought was how quickly Bulls General Manager John Paxson called Harris after reading his comments. This is a very sharp indictment of what Paxson has done in Chicago in his role.

Year after year, Paxson has filled this roster with first round draft picks that haven't reached their potential as NBA professionals that he and his staff had envisioned. I have been saying this about Paxson for three years now. I'm glad that Harris agrees with me.

Paxson got lucky this year with Derrick Rose. Now let's see how he builds around his first legitimate NBA star.

So when is the Cubs' Game Four against the Los Angeles Dodgers? I can't find it anywhere on my channel guide.

It's good to see that San Francisco 49ers interim coach Mike Singletary stole a page out of Mike Ditka's coaching book. Hey Samurai, yell all you want, but it's talent that wins in the NFL these days. Good luck, Mike.

So when exactly did hell freeze over? Bears fans are complaining about the defense and a Kyle Orton led offense is averaging 28 points per game.

Matt Forte = first half MVP.

Let me congratulate the Blackhawks on season ticket sales. According to their front office, they had almost 14,000 full-season tickets purchased by opening night this year. Last year, they began the season with 3,400 season ticket holders. Hmm, see what happens when you actually draft talented players and allow the fans to watch the games on television. The team has set a single-game record for home attendance already this season in a game against the hated Detroit Red Wings.

This is why reality television is awful for America. If you are a regular reader of this column, you know about my love of women's Olympic sand volleyball. Misty May-Treanor, one-half of the gold-medal team in Beijing, ruptured her left Achilles tendon while rehearsing for an episode of *Dancing with the Stars*. Seriously, it seems if you watch this program, you may be considered anti-American.

Final thought — next time you think athletes are role models because they are paid professionals, say the name Adam "Pacman" Jones out loud.

## CHICAGO SPORTS SCHEDULES\*

\*HOME GAMES ONLY

BEARS		FOOTBALL
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
Nov 2	Detroit Lions	Noon
Nov 9	Tennessee Titans	Noon
Dec 7	Jacksonville Jaguars	Noon
Dec 11	New Orleans Saints	7:15
Dec 22	Green Bay Packers	7:30

BLACKHAWKS		HOCKEY
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
Nov 3	Colorado Avalanche	7:30
Nov 9	Calgary Flames	6:00
Nov 12	Boston Bruins	7:30
Nov 14	St. Louis Blues	7:30
Nov 16	San Jose Sharks	6:00
Dec 3	Anaheim	7:30
Dec 7	Phoenix	6:00
Dec 10	Washington	7:30
Dec 14	Columbus	6:00
Dec 26	Philadelphia	7:30

BULLS		BASKETBALL
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
Nov 1	Memphis	7:30
Nov 7	Phoenix	7:30
Nov 8	Cleveland	7:30
Nov 11	Atlanta	7:30
Nov 13	Dallas	8:30
Nov 15	Indiana	7:30
Dec 2	Philadelphia	7:30
Dec 6	Washington	7:30
Dec 9	New York	7:30
Dec 13	New Jersey	7:30
Dec 17	Los Angeles Clippers	7:30
Dec 20	Utah	7:30
Dec 31	Orlando	1:00



WOLVES		HOCKEY
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
Nov 2	Syracuse Crunch	5:00
Nov 22	Grand Rapid Griffins	7:00
Nov 25	Manitoba Moose	7:00
Nov 29	Quad City	7:00
Nov 30	Grand Rapids	3:00
Dec 3	Peoria	7:00
Dec 6	Rockford	7:00
Dec 14	San Antonio	5:00
Dec 21	Rockford	3:00
Dec 27	Milwaukee	7:00

STEEL		HOCKEY
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)
Nov 12	Waterloo	7:30
Nov 21	Omaha	7:30
Nov 22	Sioux City	7:30
Nov 28	Des Moines	7:30
Nov 29	Indiana	7:30
Dec 13	Green Bay	7:30
Dec 14	Green Bay	3:00
Dec 19	Waterloo	7:30
Dec 20	Sioux Falls	7:30