

# Urlacher's prime's past while Rose is rising

A few years ago, I went on the air at The Score and proposed that the Chicago Bears trade Brian Urlacher for a quarterback—David Garrard, I believe—and a middle linebacker. My trade idea obviously was met with much disapproval from Bears fans. I took a lot of grief for that on-air suggestion. Having spent the entire day in Wrigleyville at a Cubs vs. Reds rainout, the idea seemed really good as I arrived at The Score studio later that night. Of course, the trade never happened and Urlacher led the Bears to the Super Bowl the following year and had his contract extended by the Bears earlier this season.

In the Bears' victory over the awful St. Louis Rams recently, I watched Urlacher closely. Since the game was over by the end of the first quarter, I focused on Number 54. I didn't watch the ball, I watched him, and what I saw was missed tackle after missed tackle. This was a game for the defensive players to pad their stats against an injured and bad offensive unit in St. Louis. Of other Bears defenders, Lance Briggs had two interceptions, Adewale Ogunleye and Tommie Harris each had two sacks, and Alex Brown played a solid game and recorded a sack. Charles Tillman made a great interception on the sideline, too.

Urlacher finished with four tackles and an interception courtesy of a tipped ball from Briggs. None of the Bears had more than five tackles for the game, so while Urlacher's game "stats" might not seem too bad, I am sure he missed more tackles than he made.

I'm not sure how healthy Urlacher is. Maybe the neck and back injuries are taking their toll on his NFL body. Whatever the reason, he is not the same player he was two seasons ago.

I will stand by my trade proposal of three years back and tell you right now—Urlacher's best days as an NFL linebacker are behind him.

Yeah, a win is a win and the Bears can only play the teams on their schedule. The Rams are a terrible, dumb and injured team. I hope this victory can serve as a confidence boost for a defensive unit that was struggling to believe in itself. We'll see how they respond as the season progresses.

## BIGGER THAN McNABB

The Philadelphia Eagles head coach, Andy Reid, benched Donovan McNabb at halftime recently during a game where the Eagles were trailing the Baltimore Ravens 10-7 and McNabb had thrown two interceptions, finishing with a quarterback rating under 20.

Many NFL analysts were criticizing the move. Their reason: You can't disrespect a player of McNabb's stature. After all, he had led the Eagles to four NFC Championship games and a Super Bowl. Granted, his record's 1-3 in those four games and 0-1 in the big game.

So when did "respect" for one player's resume become more important than what's best for the team? McNabb has been one of the best quarterbacks to play the position over the last 10 seasons, but he is not bigger than his team. No player is. I don't care which NFL player you can name—no single player is bigger

## ONE on ONE

with **Matt Abbatacola**  
of *WSCR 670 AM*  
*The Score*



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than the other 52 guys on the roster.

McNabb didn't complain or act like a child during his post-game press conference. I never would expect him to be anything but classy (insert Ron Burgundy joke here) and professional.

## DERRICK ROSE'S SEVEN SEASONS

The Bulls' future seems clear and promising because the Bulls' future is named Derrick Rose. He will be the third best player to wear a Bulls uniform since 1984. The two guys ahead of him on that list? Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen. Sounds amazing, right?

Well, here's the bad news. Not one of the "core" players currently on this Bulls roster will still be on the roster when Rose leads the Bulls to the NBA Finals. The current head coach will

not be the head coach, and the current general manager will not be the GM when this happens.

What does that mean for Bulls fans? You can look forward to some struggling Bulls teams and some disappointing seasons to come. Just keep in mind that it took Jordan seven seasons to win his first NBA title and Pippin would have led the Bulls to the finals in his seventh season were it not for Hue Hollins.

I'm not saying that seven is a magic number or anything, but it will take time and a lot of organizational movement to surround Rose with the right players to finally win a championship.

## AMERICA'S MOST WANTED TEAM

It's good to see that Jerry Jones, owner of the Dallas Cowboys, has officially done it. He has made America's Team into America's Most Wanted Team. I'm so glad that Adam "Pacman" Jones will be reinstated for the Dec. 7 game vs. Pittsburgh. "Pacman" is now on his final, final, final, final last straw. One more mistake and he will face a lifetime ban in the NFL. I theorize "Pacman" will be a "former NFL player" by the new year.

## A CLASSIC CUBBIE COMMENT

The Cubs resigned Ryan Dempster. Good move. I was happy to hear that bit of hot stove news. Then I heard this gem given to us by the man himself, "Maybe we underestimated how prepared you have to be, how ready you have to be, especially in a five-game series. It's like a short heavyweight bout. Ding, the bell is ringing, you've got to go."

What?!  
Luckily, the windows on the sixth floor here at The Score studio do not open. I would have jumped or most likely thrown an intern out of an open window after hearing that comment.

So a mostly veteran team—led by a crusty old veteran manager—that was swept out of the playoffs *one* season prior wasn't prepared in the 97-win season of the 2008 playoffs at home?!

Lou Piniella is contracted to manage the team through 2010. The day he was hired, I said the Cubs will not win a World Series with him at the helm. I hate being right so much of the time.

## GIVE BACK!

With the economy as bad as it is right now, start a new holiday tradition this year. Volunteer somewhere—anywhere!—and help out people less fortunate than you. Donate your time to a charity. Make it a family thing. I love the holiday season. Make it more special by changing someone's life this year.

In fact, if you need a charity to help out or donate to, check out [keeponkeepingon.org](http://keeponkeepingon.org).

*I will be hosting KOKO's 4th Annual Santa Cause Event and Singles Auction at Sluggers in Wrigleyville on Friday, Dec. 5. It's open to the public, so stop by if you'd like. Otherwise, have a happy holiday season. And see you in 2009.*

# CHICAGO SPORTS SCHEDULES\*

\*HOME GAMES ONLY

BEARS		FOOTBALL	
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)	
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)	
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	
Jan 1	Detroit	Noon	
Jan 4	Calgary	6:00	
Jan 11	Nashville	6:00	
Jan 14	Buffalo	7:30	
Jan 16	New York	7:30	
Feb 14	Dallas	7:30	
Feb 22	Minnesota	6:00	

BULLS		BASKETBALL	
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)	
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	
Jan 3	Minnesota	7:30	
Jan 6	Sacramento	7:30	
Jan 9	Washington	7:30	
Jan 10	Oklahoma City	7:30	
Jan 12	Portland	7:30	
Jan 15	Cleveland	7:00	

STORM		SOCCER	
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)	
Dec 20	Milwaukee	7:00	
Dec 27	Detroit	1:00	
Jan 4	New Jersey	1:00	
Feb 28	Milwaukee	1:00	
March 1	Detroit	3:00	



WOLVES		HOCKEY	
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)	
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	
Jan 2	Rockford	7:30	
Jan 7	San Antonio	7:00	
Jan 10	Peoria	7:00	
Jan 11	Houston	5:00	
Jan 14	Toronto	7:00	

STEEL		HOCKEY	
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (PM)	
Dec 13	Green Bay	7:30	
Dec 14	Green Bay	3:00	
Dec 19	Waterloo	7:30	
Dec 20	Sioux Falls	7:30	
Jan 2	Fargo	7:30	
Jan 3	Fargo	7:30	
Jan 11	Des Moines	3:00	
Jan 23	Cedar Rapids	7:30	
Jan 24	Indiana	7:30	