

The good in Derek Jeter

THE FIFTY MISSION CAP

by Brian Munn
brunswickansports@gmail.com

*"Where have you gone,
Joe DiMaggio?
Our nation turns its
lonely eyes to you.
What's that you say,
Mrs. Robinson?
Joltin' Joe has left
and gone away."*

The summer of 2007, as ESPN's Bill Simmons wrote, could easily be termed "The Summer of Our Discontent." From dog fighting to point shaving scandals to a new Home Run King (*), never before has the world of professional sports been ravaged by such negative exposure.

But to blame the plight of sports fans on a few isolated incidents or characters such as Vick, Donaghy and Bonds, to name a few, is to ignore the evolving nature of the relationship between fans and players.

Blame George Steinbrenner if you'd like, but it is, without question, all about the money.

Multi-million dollar contracts and endorsements have taken emotion from the game, as reaching a bonus incentive in one's contract has become more important than laying down a sacrifice bunt to advance the runners.

Gone is the hero and the player whose jersey you would gladly lay down 100 bucks for and wear with pride, the same way they did, for their whole career.

Following the death of Joe DiMaggio in early 1999, Paul Simon explained that the reference to DiMaggio in the Simon and Garfunkel ballad "Mrs. Robinson" was meant as a tribute to his unpretentious heroic stature.

"In these days of presidential transgressions and apologies and prime-time interviews about private sexual matters, we grieve for Joe DiMaggio and mourn the loss of his grace and dignity, his fierce sense of privacy, his fidelity to the memory of his wife and the power of his silence."

As a life-long Boston Red Sox fan and hater of all things Yankee, it pains me to recognize that The Yankee Clipper (as DiMaggio was lovingly known) was a true hero. After all, anyone in pinstripes is inherently evil. Recall Alex Rodriguez, Roger Clemens, Johnny Damon... and the list goes on and on...

Perhaps Simon and Garfunkel were on to something. There are far too few characters like DiMaggio today. There are far too few heroes.

But it's not only that there aren't any heroes, it's that not many people even come close.

Alex Rodriguez (the aforementioned Devil), arguably the best baseball player on the planet and who was generally seen as an overall good guy, has been gallivanting with strippers in Toronto and who knows where else, and pulling unsportsmanlike stunts on the field (his "slap" on Bronson Arroyo in the 2004 ALCs and calling Blue Jays third baseman Howie Clark off the ball in

early 2007).

Pinstripes or not, the so-called heroic Rodriguez is not living up to his end of the bargain. And now there's talk he'll opt of his \$252 million contract in order to look for more money. Really? Come on...

So where do we turn?

What jersey can you be proud to wear for the name on the back instead of the logo on the front?

Who, to steal a line from Enrique Iglesias in 2001, "can be your hero, baby?"

Perhaps I've been misleading by implying that every pro athlete is on 'roids or tied to the mob or into dog fighting, among other things. Well, they're not. For every Mike Danton, Ron Artest and Pacman Jones, there's a Jerome Iginia, Steve Nash, or Roger Federer.

And then there's Derek Jeter, who, even though it makes me vomit in my mouth a little when I write it, might just be the heir apparent to Joltin' Joe - not in statistical terms, but as "the hero."

He's like the anti-A-Rod, after all.

Pinstripes, yes. Lifelong Yankee, yes. Would it be terrible for Derek Jeter to be considered your favorite ballplayer? Not a chance. He's a good team guy, works hard, and gives back to not only his fans, but the community.

I'm not going to rush out and buy a #2 Yankees jersey anytime soon (or ever - my Dad would disown me for wearing one), but it wouldn't be a bad choice if that's what you're into.

The heroes are there, even when unnoticed.

While Pacman Jones is trying his hand at TNA Wrestling and Michael Vick is all over the news, Peyton Manning is quietly taking snaps in training camp, and Steve Nash is playing pick-up soccer in Central Park.

But perhaps the most heroic thing about them is that they don't need the constant spotlight to grab our attention. Their dignity and silence speak louder than Ron Artest's rap.

Media's condemnation of Vick unequal compared to others

Intense coverage of Vick's dog fighting case presented differently than other similar cases

VIEW FROM THE SIDELINES

by Tony von Richter
managing@unb.ca

Well, what a summer it's been for the sports world. We've had everything from drug and gambling scandals to athletes getting arrested for dog fighting. Suffice it to say, this wasn't the easiest summer to be a sports fan. It seemed like every day would bring another horrible story that brought the integrity of sports into question.

I'm not going to get in to the full list of scandals that have rocked the sports world this summer (for more on that just look to the left and check out the excellent column by Brian Munn) but instead will concentrate on the story that has gotten the most media coverage: The indictment of Atlanta Falcons Quarterback Michael Vick.

First off, let's get things straight. Vick has pleaded guilty to conspiracy to operate a dog fighting ring across state lines. As part of the plea he acknowledged that he bankrolled the Bad Newz Kennels operation, including their gambling endeavors, although he did not place any side bets or see any profits from any bets that were made. Vick also acknowledged that he, along with two of his co-defendants, killed between six to eight dogs either by drowning or hanging this past April.

Obviously what Vick did was terrible, so, for these crimes Vick will be, and should be, punished by the court, which at the time of this writing was rumored to include a 12 to 18 month prison sentence for the quarterback.

Personally, I'm fine with Vick being sent to jail and I'm fine with him being suspended indefinitely by the National Football League (which means he's also ineligible to play in the Canadian Football League as long as his suspension lasts).

The only problem I have with Vick's punishment is how it was covered by the media.

When the news broke that Vick was actively involved with the dog fighting ring and not just the innocent owner of the property like he had previously claimed, he was tried and convicted in the media and the court of public opinion within a week.

While it has slowed down since he plead guilty last week, for the past month Vick was basically portrayed as the worst football criminal since OJ Simpson, and was seen as the culmination of a recent string of NFL players getting in trouble with the law.

Again, I don't have a problem with Vick being blasted by the media (although portraying him as the worst football criminal since OJ is a little much - do the names Rac Carruth or Leonard Little ring a bell?) except for the fact that athletes who have committed worse crimes than he did this summer weren't hammered as badly as Vick has been.

In late June it was announced by authorities that WWE wrestler Chris Benoit had killed his wife Nancy and seven-year-old son Daniel before hanging himself in their suburban Atlanta home.

In the days that followed the media coverage shifted towards steroids and if they played a part in the tragedy or if there is a steroid problem in wrestling. This lasted for about two weeks before everyone forgot about the story.

Okay, so let me get this straight. Mike Vick commits a heinous crime and is harshly criticized for a month, with people calling for a lifetime ban and talking about the epidemic of a dog fighting subculture in professional sports.

On the other hand, we have someone commit an even more heinous crime where drugs may have affected his state of mind and where there is a history of his peers dying before the age of 50, many allegedly because of these same drugs, and after a few weeks the story disappears with only the United States Congress still interested in why dozens of wrestlers have died so young.

Huh? Does that make any sense?

I could be mistaken, but I think the reasoning is simple: ratings.

I'm not trying to say that Vick is a victim and that he doesn't deserve this treatment, because I believe that he does.

I just think that it is wrong that the length and intensity of this coverage seems partly caused by selfish reasons since similar cases weren't covered with the same length or intensity that this one was.

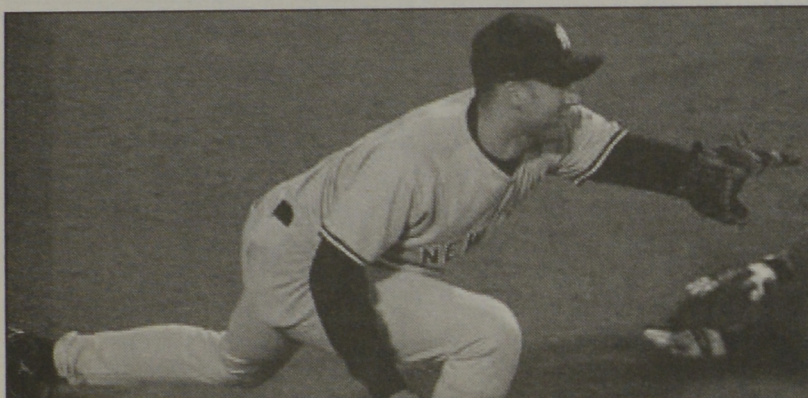
Yes, it could be argued that the public, not the media, determines what stories are important and most people thought Vick's was the most important of the summer, but I believe that the media has a responsibility to present all the important stories, not just the ones that garner the biggest ratings or most website hits.

This point is illustrated whenever provincial and federal budget announcements are covered live. Although they may not be watched by as many people as a hockey or football game, their coverage is important to ensure the public be as educated as possible.

The goal of all media entities should be to inform the public, to keep authority figures in check and to give people a voice that they otherwise might not have.

If that becomes corrupted and ratings become a primary factor in what stories get covered, that's not news. It's entertainment.

We already have enough entertainment options. We do not need the news to be one of them.



He may not be the Yankee Clipper, but Derek Jeter is the cream of a very thin crop.



EXPECT MORE COMPANY.

GET HIGH SPEED INTERNET, CABLE TV AND HOME PHONE SERVICES AND SAVE UP TO 33%.
AND DON'T BE SURPRISED WHEN FRIENDS DROP BY.

ROGERS™ YAHOO!®
HI-SPEED INTERNET
EXPRESS

Only
\$38.99
/mo¹

for 8 months²

- Download at speeds of up to 7 Mbps³
- Get an all-in-one security suite featuring Norton AntiVirus™ included at no extra cost⁴
- Unlimited e-mail storage
- Ask about our Portable option starting from \$19.95/mo⁵

PERSONALTV™
DIGITAL STARTER
PACKAGE

Only
\$28.99
/mo¹

for 8 months⁶

- Access over 170 channels with 100% digital quality
- Start thousands of movies and shows whenever you want with On Demand
- Enjoy 40 commercial-free digital music channels

ROGERS
HOME PHONE™

From
\$19.95
/mo¹

- Choose the Calling Features and Long Distance plan that suit your needs
- No charge for installation⁷

VISIT ROGERS.COM/STUDENTS
OR CALL 1 866-279-2289

ROGERS™

ROGERS™
authorized dealer

ROGERS™
plus

ROGERS VIDEO

Offers subject to change at any time without notice. Certain conditions/restrictions and other charges apply. ¹Offers available until October 31, 2007 to new customers in serviceable areas. Regular monthly rates apply after promotional periods. Taxes are extra. ²Rogers Yahoo! Hi-Speed Internet Express is available for \$35.99/month for the first 12 months, plus a monthly modem rental fee of \$3.00. Regular price for Rogers Yahoo! Hi-Speed Internet Express is \$44.95/month, plus a monthly modem rental fee of \$3.00. A \$4.95 one-time Activation Fee applies. ³Modem set-up: 7 Mbps for download, 512 Kbps for upload. System is configured for maximum modem speeds with Rogers own network. Actual speeds online can vary with Internet traffic, server or other factors. ⁴No service can provide absolute protection against all possible threats. ⁵Portable Internet Basic available for \$19.95/mo for the first 12 months to new customers, plus a one-time modem purchase of \$99. Taxes and a one-time \$29.95 Activation Fee apply. ⁶Taxes extra. Basic Cable and Digital Box required to receive digital programming. Channels and programming vary by region. All channels receive digital signal where Digital Cable permits. CHTC linkage rules apply. ⁷\$4.50 monthly System Access Fee (non-government fee) applies in addition to the monthly service fee. Monthly 911 Emergency, Hearing Impaired Assistance fees and a monthly recurring fee for some Long Distance Plans are extra. ⁸Norton AntiVirus is a trademark or registered trademark of Symantec Corporation or its affiliates in the U.S. and other countries. ⁹Trademarks of Rogers Communications Inc. used under license or of Rogers Cable Communications Inc. © 2007. *YAHOO! is a registered trademark of Yahoo! Inc., used under license.