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## Miscellaneous Stories from Baseball, Basketball, Football

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR ARETE  
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Item---The City of Orlando is reviewing the contract between the City and the Orlando Magic for the rental of the Arena. This is a subject I talked about two weeks ago, and I hope the city will use its leverage on approval of the sale in order to obtain more realistic terms. The giveaway of city dollars to an extremely profitable professional sports franchise and money making machine should end. We are not talking about bleeding the Magic. We are talking about equity.

Item---I went to the Citrus Bowl last Saturday afternoon to see the number one team in the nation and they didn't show up. There were players there dressed in the Florida State uniforms, and Coach Bowden was leading them, but they were clearly imposters. They played sloppy football, there was not a Hiesman candidate in sight, and they were fortunate to get a victory over a very ordinary Virginia Tech team. The defense played reasonably well and I suppose the good news is that if they can win while playing so poorly, they must be a very good team.

Item---Roy Tarpley of the Dallas Mavericks tossed off three million dollars by refusing to take his mandatory drug test after missing several days of practice. He has been given a lifetime suspension by the NBA, appealable after two years. More than likely his career in professional basketball is over. Tarpley becomes the second professional athlete in a little over a month to throw over several million dollars in future earnings for a drug habit. Braves fans will remember Otis Nixon. Some may regard this as stupid, but it is much more than that. It is an indication of just how difficult it is to drop the drug habit once you are hooked. It is all very sad indeed.

Item---The gods of baseball strike again. I said last week that in my view the gods of baseball would not allow the World Series to go outside the United States. This is the second time the Blue Jays have been favored to win the AL playoffs and they have come up short. In 1985 they actually led the Kansas City Royals three games to one, and then lost three straight. Sometimes the gods love to tease mere mortals. But not this time. The gods simply thumped the Jays. It was a clear message to each and every one of those four million fans who paid their way into Skydome this past season. And the message is this: No matter how many come to worship at the home of the Jays, no matter how spectacular the shrine of Skydome, the gods will not be

appeased. Ask some Expos fans, if you can find any, if they remember 1981 and Rick Monday. No World Series in Canada, eh!

This is to take nothing away from the Twins who played excellent aggressive baseball. Good starting pitching, timely hitting, a magnificent bullpen, contributions both offensively and defensively from up and down the lineup. This is how teams win pennants. Crank up your homer hankies fellow Twins fans, the gods of baseball can be quite fickle.

Item---The Atlanta Braves have won the National League Pennant. I repeat, The Atlanta Braves have won the National League Pennant. This is not a dream and it is not Iowa. The Braves join the Twins in the World Series. Two "worst to first" teams in one World Series. As a longtime Braves fan, and a longer time Twins fan, I don't know what to do. I guess I'll have to do the tomahawk chop with a Homer Hankie in my hand.

The achievement of the Braves in the playoffs was truly amazing. To leave Atlanta on Monday afternoon down three games to two, and have to win two in Pittsburgh was a major task. The Pirates needed only one victory, they couldn't even get one run. The pitching of Steve Avery and John Schmoltz was magnificent as shut out the best hitting team in the National League. Game Six was one of the best games I have ever seen, and Steve Avery was as good as you'll see. The Braves shut out the Pirates three times, with Avery doing it twice.

I can not remember seeing a pitcher who was so much fun to watch, since Dwight Gooden's rookie year, and Frank Viola's magical year leading the Twins to the 1987 World Championship. For three years now Braves people have been saying that Steve Avery would become their ace. Last year he arrived in the majors and was an unimpressive 3-11. This year he arrived, going 18-8, and in the last six weeks there was not a more dominating pitcher in the game. He is a left-handed surgeon who can throw at 98 miles per hour. At age 21 he either has the maturity of a thirty year old, or he is such an innocent he doesn't know enough to be nervous.

As for the departing Pirates, this was clearly their year, and over the course of the year they were the best team in baseball. But they didn't make it, and they are not likely to be a major factor for several years to come. As for Pirate fans when there are 13,000 empty seats for a seventh game, they don't deserve to see another World Series, and I trust the gods of baseball will take care of that.

Now for a quick comment on the World Series. The Twins are the best hitting team in baseball, especially at home, and four of the games are in the Dome. Teams that haven't played in the Dome before have trouble with Dome ball. But the Braves right now have the best starting pitching in baseball, with a very good closer. They say good pitching will beat good hitting every time. Sometimes it doesn't. Whatever the case this should be one great World Series, with two teams of destiny ready to knock heads.

If last spring you had gone to Las Vegas you would have found the two longest shots to win the World Series were the Braves and the Twins. Now one of them will. What a hell of a quinella.

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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