

OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Play on — dump the league

Perhaps by the time you read this the NHL players strike will be over.

I wonder why it hasn't occurred to anyone that the players don't really need the owners. The owners have succeeded in making the NHL the worst run major sports league in the world.

The players could simply reform into teams, secure arenas, and form a league. With a little foresight, they would hire capable administrators and pay salaries as a percentage of team revenue. Fans would get charged what the market would bear, teams would gravitate to markets where the game was popular and major teams would exist in major markets.

Minor markets would still have professional teams, but after years of not competing with the big city teams, they would form a second tier league. This league would exist in minor cities, or cities that could not support large salaries. They would still need good players to draw in the fans. It is possible that some stars could make more money in these leagues than by competing with all the superstars.

This could happen to major league baseball given the rapidly growing salaries. Some teams will break away into an upper tier league rather than continue to support the smaller markets. That's how it used to be.

Sure there are some stumbling blocks to the changing of the hockey guard. Traditional team names would be the property of the current owners. Some teams may have trouble in the short term securing large enough arenas.

There is no doubt that the players could do as capable a job organizing a league as the present owners' administration. They may even enact better rules which would open up the game and remove much of the stickwork and interference which mars the game today.

Does this sound farfetched? It shouldn't. In fact, it was done once around the turn of the century in major league baseball. Unfortunately, the Players' League collapsed because the

REAUME WITH A VIEW

with BRAD REAUME



players treated it as a short term thing to get the owners back in line. They didn't want to run the game they wanted to play it, so they didn't hire administrators.

Maybe Ken Dryden would consent to run such a league. He's a lawyer and has demonstrated a feel for the game both as a player and a writer and broadcaster.

Now that we've solved hockey's problems, why don't the current powers that be arrange a short winter baseball league using the idle domes of Minneapolis, Toronto, Montreal, Detroit (Silverdome), Indianapolis, and Seattle et al.

It could be limited to 40 games (only 20 at home) in December and January using only players with less than three years of major league experience. Teams could also limit the seating to only the best 20,000 seats in the park.

Why should these players go to exotic locales for winter ball. This way they could play right under the noses of the hometown fans and general managers. In addition the stadiums would be kept working and concessionaires would have year round jobs. Like so many things in this world, it just makes sense, so, of course it doesn't happen.

While I'm thinking about it: Cooperstown, New York is the alleged birthplace of baseball. Really, this is a quaint myth. Still, how could anyone believe that a game that requires large amounts of flat land, would be invented in the Adirondack Mountains?

You are your cat's meow if it wants you to be

You probably think you own your cat, right? After all, you chose him or her, you feed and clean and take to the vet's, this small creature, and you receive affection in return. Well, you receive affection at the whim of the cat involved, and it's wonderful when it's offered.

Cats can, indeed, be very affectionate creatures. However, it might be interesting to look at a typical scenario from a cat's point of view as well as from a human's.

Start with the obvious. You get out of bed, stumble into the kitchen, eyes closed, wondering what day it is. Your cat greets your awakening with extreme pleasure — purring, meowing, and rubbing against your ankles with blissful enthusiasm. Sure, that cat is hungry but, look how happy she is to see you. Your version.

Feline version. Cat radar has been sensitively tuned to your breathing patterns. Before you were even semi-conscious, the cat knew you were waking and soon to be mobile. Probably, said cat was waiting impatiently at the bedroom door (or your bedside), making slow, dance-like movements with all four feet, head and neck craned upward to detect signs of life.

As soon as you showed the slightest movement, food solicitation began, starting with a re-marking of the cat's territory i.e. you.

There are scent glands on the top of a cat's head, at the gum line over the incisor teeth, and at the base of the tail. When your cat rubs



PETS AND YOU

with ANNE NORMAN

the side of his face or the top of his head against you, he is marking you as his personal property. The same with his body rubbing against your legs; the scent gland at the tail is clearly marking you, so that any marauding outlaw cats will know whose property you are.

The marking ritual complete, you reach to stroke the cat, then supply food as it is your duty and obligation. The cat is happy, you're happy, a mutual satisfaction is achieved.

Perhaps another scenario would be enlightening. How about this one: you're watching television, lounging on the couch with your feet up, when your cat comes and proceeds to park himself on your chest.

You feel slightly irritated, after all, the darn cat is blocking your view of the TV, and he keeps making those kneading motions on you while he purrs so loudly you can't hear what Rebecca and Sam are saying to each other. What's more, when you push him down, he jumps right back up again. How annoying.

Cat's perspective. Aha! My pseudo-mother



Pushy parents cross the line

What is a "pushy" parent? What's the difference between pushing a child too hard, and guiding, encouraging, helping a child to discover new worlds. It's a fine line, one that many parents struggle with.

I was visiting preschools for my daughter, asking each what they did and what they taught. After they finished telling me about "self-reliance", "expression", and "independence", in my most kindly voice I asked, "What about reading?". If looks could kill, I'd be phht several times over. I was told that child shouldn't be "pushed", they'll be taught to read when they show an interest in reading.

Hogwash! If that's the case, she'll spend the whole year playing with dolls or Nintendo. Isn't it part of a teacher's responsibility to make it interesting, or am I just a pushy parent?

There's a literature showing that pushing a child too much can be harmful. There's also a literature showing that guiding a child, having high expectations, encouraging her to sample new and varied activities, is beneficial.

The question, then, is what's the difference? Studies with mothers having extremely high expectations find that their children tend to be less creative, more anxious, and have no



PSYCHOLOGY IN THE '90S

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

academic advantage in the first grade over peers. These studies suggest that early exposure to academics is not an advantage, that it was actually harmful.

Yet, other studies find that children of mothers with high expectations do in fact do better than their peers.

The difference lies in how the studies define mothers with "high expectations". Mothers in the former study had more than high expectations — they were more demanding, more critical and less affectionate. They would take over a game and turn it into a task, criticizing a child's Etch-A-Sketch drawing, colouring or placement of stickers.

The problem was not high expectations, for most parents in these studies had them. The problem was in how some parents translated that into daily life. The truly pushy parents were more anxious, controlling, rigid, over-protective, directive, placed more emphasis on perfection, and expressed much less affection when talking to or about their child.

Three simple principles may help a parent to separate when they are being facilitators from when they are being "pushy". First, we must always remember to praise the child. No matter how much they may blow it, we can at least praise them for trying. If they blow it several times in a row, it's a message to make it easier so that they can first succeed, and then move on from there.

Second, don't be afraid to sample, even if you have to cajole a bit to do it. Whether it's reading, skiing, or dance, children can be encouraged to give it a try. The important thing, however, is to monitor whether or not they like it. If they don't like skiing (no matter how much you like it), then it is a disservice to make them continue.

Finally, make it fun. Children will like to read, if it's a game. While reading a story, stop at an exciting part and ask the child what letter this is, or what sound it makes. Play "I spy" (something that starts with the letter P) and give the sound it makes.

The bottom line is that having high expectations is fine, as long as it is for the child's long-term welfare.

When it pervades the whole day, interferes with social and play opportunities, becomes a task rather than fun, or parents find themselves being constantly critical and directive, it becomes harmful to the child rather than beneficial.