

Phoenix Sports Digital Issue: Chicago Sports Preferences

Bar-goers on concussions in football and PEDs in baseball

by Joe Flaherty

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Editor's Note: For the Phoenix's digital issue, we, the Phoenix sports editors, asked our writers to go into the city and interview Chicago residents about sports in general, be it their favorite sports, favorite teams, favorite sports memories or their opinions on issues surrounding sports.



Amir, 31, and Tabitha, 28, Bastanipour

Amir Bastanipour, 31 retired military serviceman and Tabitha Bastanipour, 28 stay-at-home mom, near Murphy's Bleachers, behind Wrigley Field

Phoenix Sports: What's your favorite sport?

Amir Bastanipour: Football. I just love it. I know it's a violent sport, but baseball used to be the big sport and it's kind of boring. With football, there's a lot more feelings. It's alive, everybody is yelling, screaming. It's exciting and there's constant action.

PS: Did you play football in high school or college?

AB: I played in high school, I had a chance to play in college, but I joined the military instead.

PS: And how about you, what's your favorite sport?

Tabitha Bastanipour: My favorite sport would have to be basketball. I've played my entire life and I've coached for five years. It's just something I'm very passionate about, and I think that it takes a lot of athleticism to really pull it off and be successful as a basketball player.

PS: (Gestures to Wrigley Field) No love for the Cubs or baseball, then.

Both: Yeah, yeah there is.

TB: I like baseball. I watch all of it ... it's just not my favorite.

AB: Football takes the crown, hockey's good too.

PS: So what comes after hockey?

AB: Right now, I'd say football, hockey, basketball and then baseball.

PS: What is your favorite football team then?

Both: [BEARS!](#)

PS: What about a favorite college football team?

AB: Honestly, I'd have to say I don't really follow college sports as much as I used to when I was a kid, but [Northwestern](#) would be my favorite. But she's a traitor.

TB: [Ohio State!](#) I'm from Ohio.

PS: Oh, so you were happy about yesterday [Oct. 5] then ([Ohio State defeated Northwestern 40-30](#) at Northwestern)?

TB: I was! (Laughs)

AB: ...That was B.S...

(Both laugh)

PS: You talked earlier about football being a violent sport. What's your take on the concussion issue that's coming to light?

AB: I think back in the day when they didn't have the technology that they do now, for players it wasn't common knowledge and I think the NFL definitely knew and kind of withheld that. Because I remember playing football when I was younger and you get a concussion or you get shaken up real bad to where you can't walk, the coach is just kind of yelling at you to get back in there saying that you just got your bell rung a little bit. And that was kind of the mentality, it's the toughness and to keep going and fight through adversity and stuff like that. So I think that back then, with all the stuff coming up like the [C.T.E.](#) [Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy] and all that and the players that really didn't know. I think it's a shame. Nowadays, though, if you play football, you know what you're doing. You can't complain ... you know what's going on, you know the possibility of concussions. Plus, I think a lot of the stuff, too, is now they have the new helmets and they're saying they prevent concussions. I think the majority of that is that

they could, but players now feel safer using their head to tackle because they have better helmets. So it's kind of like misinformation. They're like, "oh, this should stop concussions so I'm going to spear somebody." You can't do that. Nowadays it's up to you. If you want play ball, you know the consequences, it's your choice. Back in the day, I think it was a little bit shadier and they were hiding a lot of the information that they knew and that's why you have people shooting themselves in the chest*.

*This is a reference to [Dave Duerson](#), a former Bears player who was severely affected by concussions from his career. He shot himself in the chest so that his brain could be used for concussion research.

PS: Another issue in sports today is performance-enhancing drugs, especially in baseball. What's your stance on that?

TB: I think it's something that's been going on for a long time. I don't think they should be used, obviously. I'm not an advocate of putting anything in your body that's not going to help it necessarily, and I don't think in the long term that it's worth it.

AB: I think Major League Baseball knew what was going on back when Sosa and McGwire and all the homeruns were bringing attention back to the sport. Because baseball has kind of been a dying sport, if you look at ratings and how much revenue football is generating in 16 games versus 162 for baseball, and football is still winning. They knew what was happening, but they were letting it ride because people were watching the games and then once it started coming out, they were like "oh my God, this is a travesty." But they knew the whole time. They were just using those guys.