

Poor Sports Killing Sports

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On several occasions this year and in past years, we have heard of fans causing disturbances and near riots following basketball games and several times law enforcement officers have had to be called to keep the peace.

These fans claim they were treated dirty, that they were cheated, the referees were against them, the players on the opposing team were too rough or that their own players were roughed up – all because their team lost the game. In other words, they were poor losers.

Practically all such disturbances are caused by fans while the players themselves have nothing to do with them. The players, as a general rule, are good sports and after the game is over forget all that happened and are as friendly towards each other as they were before the game started.

They know that someone has to lose the ball game just as someone has to win, and when they are on the losing end, it is because they were outplayed.

BROKEN NOSES, cracked ribs, sprained ankles, gouged eyes, losing one-point games or getting severely walloped all come with the game, and players, although not enjoying such hazards, expect them and take them along with their victories and glories. Whenever something like that happens, the first to cry out is the disgruntled fan.

Occasionally, a player does get hurt seriously in a game; but with today's fast game, he should expect to take such a

chance or get out of it altogether. Likewise, his parents and other fans should know that he is taking such a chance and, if they think there is too much of a danger, they should keep him out.

Once in a while a member of an opposing team is blamed for deliberately causing a player to be injured. Such accusations are entirely false. Players are in the game for the fun they get out of it and, if they do something which causes injury to another player, it is far from deliberate.

ABOUT THE same defense can be offered for referees. Although some of the officials are not as good as the best, it is very, very seldom that a referee can justifiably be accused of leaning towards one team or the other. They call things as they see them and, if they call them from down on the floor, they should not be blamed for seeing them differently from the way fans in the bleachers see them.

Such unsportsmanlike goings-on on the part of fans are a far cry from what the sport is supposed to accomplish. All sports are supposed to create good will and a friendly spirit of rivalry; but when the friendly spirit turns to bitterness, the purpose of sports is being completely defeated and we would be better off without them.

This item is not aimed at anyone in particular since every team has such followers; but if the shoe fits, please put it on and wear it.