

Sports – In Word And Image



BY PRESTON KERES—THE WASHINGTON POST

Players, Fans and Media – It's About People



BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

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An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

A Word About Sports — In Word and Image

Every Friday KidsPost features a sports column by Fred Bowen. By fifth grade many young sports fans have joined the avid readers who turn to the Sports section before reading the Front Page and comics.

This guide encourages teachers to use the Sports section to study the work of *Post* reporters as models for students to write ledes, sports news and columns, to prepare charts and graphs using the scores and other data, and to read maps to follow the schedule of teams, reporters and photographers. For your photographers we have *Post* photographer Jonathan Newton's pointers that are illustrated with his photos of high school and professional athletes.

Reprinted articles reflect the challenge faced by the Sports section to produce its diverse coverage and on-deadline reporting and photography, layout and printing. Some of the articles and columns that appear daily are done well before the 10 p.m. deadline, but others are being written as games are played on the West Coast or have gone into overtime. Photos, taken to reflect the emotions at the end of the confrontation as well as the pre-game activities, are being sent electronically with accurate captions to layout as the presses are readied to run to meet home delivery schedules.

Sports writers cover victory and defeat, hopes and poor decisions, injury and death. As material in this guide was being prepared, news reports came of the shooting of Washington Redskin Sean Taylor in his Miami home, then his death. Three of many articles about the defensive back, his family, the Redskins and fan response are included.

COVER PHOTO CREDITS

Top: Cornerback Shawn Springs, on the Redskins' first defensive play: "It just came about. We went out there as a way to honor Sean. It was a sad moment for us, but it was a way to honor him."

— Preston Keres Washington Post Staff Photographer

Lower photos:

Left: Steven Knight of Calvert High reacts to winning the Boys 100-meter hurdles in the 2003 Maryland Track and Field Championships.

Center: Douglass High wide receiver Marcus Barnett tosses a tire during "Junk Yard Drills" which help the football players with their strength and agility as they prepare for the 2005 football season.

Right: The Kennedy High team is left reeling in the team room following their loss to Northwest in the second round of play-offs. — Jonathan Newton Washington Post Staff Photographer

Lesson: The Sports section of *The Washington Post* provides lessons in meeting deadlines, mathematics and statistics, photography and graphics, language arts and journalism, and geography.

Level: Low to high

Subjects: Journalism, Mathematics, Photography

Related Activity: English Language Arts, Geography, PE

NIE Online Guide

Editor — Carol Lange

Art Editor — Carol Porter

Contributing to this guide: Jonathan Newton, a newspaper photographer for 22 years and one of four *Post* sports photographers, gave us his time during a very demanding week to write guidelines for scholastic photographers and to select from his many excellent images ones to share as a teaching tool. New *Washington Post* Photography Editor Michel duCille gave his full support to this project.

Send comments about this guide to:

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Sports —In Word and Image

Introduce the Sports Section

Give students the Sports section of today's *Washington Post*. Discuss the number of stories and photographs on page 1. What information is in the "rail" that runs down the left side of the front page of the E section? Walk through the rest of the section. Some articles have subheads as well as headlines. How does typography distinguish columns from news articles? Note special features; the different local, national and international sports and events that are covered; the scores, schedules and standings; articles and summaries.

Look at the bylines and datelines. Do Post reporters and photographers travel away from D.C. to cover sports? What percent of the stories are written by Post staff reporters? What percent are Associated Press or news service stories?

Another approach would be to group students and give each group a different day of the week Sports section. What features appear daily in this section? What features appear only on Monday, Friday or Saturday? Do certain days have more coverage of games played and others more focus on games to be played?

Review the way scores, statistics and schedules are presented. Might your school newspaper or Web site use a similar format?

Read a Sports Article

Give students copies of "Dunbar Back on Top After Turkey Bowl Win." This story appeared in *The Post* the day after the game had taken place. Who would be interested in reading this article?

Read the first four paragraphs. Questions you may consider include:

- If you did not read the headline or subhead, how would you know what game was being played and which teams were playing? Note how this conveys the same basic information as "Football teams from Dunbar and H.D. Woodson high schools played each other in the Turkey Bowl on Saturday."
- How does the reporter know what Jharron Armstrong is thinking? Observation? Interview?
- In addition to describing the action of the game, what interesting pieces of information are given in the second paragraph? [The author knows something about both teams and players.] Does knowing the ability of the opposition make Armstrong's following action better?
- Note that the last half of the fourth paragraph ("Dunbar won ...") is the traditional lede to a news article. These four sentences are an example of a delayed lede.

Read the fifth paragraph. Note the historic perspective that is added.

Read the sixth paragraph.

Note that the information in this paragraph is based on observation. What is added by the contrast to last year?

Read the remaining article. It is composed of reporting and quotations. What function does the last sentence of the article serve? If the cut-off test were applied this unity would be lost. If a writer knows the word count and works

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Fred Bowen's Books & Columns

www.fredbowen.com/

Fred Bowen: Sports Writer for Kids

Books, school visit information and an archive of his *The Score* columns that appear every Friday on the *KidsPost* pages. Check out the Q and A in the bio section.

www.washingtonpost.com/kidspost

KidsPost

Read Bowen's most recent *The Score* columns

The AllStar Sports Story Series

In addition to a lively story, each book provides a history section illustrated with photographs in the back. All of these stories by Fred Bowen are published by Peachtree Publishers.

Baseball

The Golden Glove
The Kid Coach
Playoff Dreams
T.J.'s Secret Pitch
Winners Take All

Basketball

The Final Cut
Full Court Fever
Off the Rim
On the Line

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with layout, this kind of good writing is not lost.

Write a Sports Article

Using the Turkey Bowl article and others from the Sports section as models, ask students to write a news article covering one of the sports currently being played at your school. The Dunbar article is a good example of covering games/matches of rivals or highlighting accomplished players on both teams who are playing against each other.

For background, students should review rules of the game and research information on both teams. See what stats and school records your sports department can provide. If they do not keep them, this could be a class project. Go through yearbooks and/or the newspaper morgue to compile a reference source for your school's media.

For more information on writing a sports article, download "How To Write a Sports Story" found in *INSIDE: The Sports Page*.

Distinguish News from Opinion

Discuss with students the reasons for news coverage. How does news coverage differ from opinion or column writing? Sports reporters may favor the home team, but they should still fairly cover the opposing team and players.

Turn to today's *Washington Post* Sports section. Have students identify sports news articles. Assign these articles to students. Have them underline or highlight the facts that are included: names, scores, actions. Box who is quoted. What is added to the article by using quotations? Have them circle what might be considered opinion.

Does this include the influence or impact of winning or losing or how players felt? Is most, if not all, of the opinion found in the quoted material?

Locate opinion pieces. You may wish to list on the board *Post* Sports columnists: Andrew Beyer, Thomas Boswell, Norman Chad, Sally Jenkins, Tony Kornheiser, Angus Phillips, Leonard Shapiro, George Solomon, Michael Wilbon and Mike Wise. Have students spend several days reading the Sports section and collecting columns. Which column do they like best? Why? Older students could focus on the rhetorical approaches used by the columnists.

Read Bowen's Columns

Lawyer and juvenile novel writer Fred Bowen's columns appear every Friday in KidsPost. This guide provides two as examples of his approaches and to stimulate student writing.

"If I Ruled the (Sports) World" still has value as a model. Bowen uses the second person voice. He is directly addressing his readers and assuming that by reading his column they are interested in sports. You could also discuss the following before assigning students to write their own opinion pieces on what they would change if they ruled the sports world:

- He supports each of his wishes with specific examples.
 - After he has complained, he offers his solution. Readers can decide if they like his ideas. Will his suggestions remove the irritation or cause another problem?
 - He creates a rhythm in his essay by varying his sentence length.
- Have students underline the two-

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Read About Sports

Curtis, Gavin

The Bat Boy & His Violin

Grades 1-4 (2001)

Reginald loves to play the violin; his father makes him his Negro National League team's batboy. Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book.

Feinstein, John

Last Shot

Grades 6-10 (2005)

Who's blackmailing one of MSU's star players? Sportswriter Feinstein blends real players and sportscasters with his fictitious characters. If you like this mystery, read Feinstein's *Cover-up: Mystery at the Super Bowl* (2007) and *Vanishing Act: Mystery at the U.S. Open* (2006).

Hamill, Dorothy

A Skating Life: My Story

Grade 9+ (2007)

Hamill's candid account of her life before and after winning the 1976 Olympic gold medal in figure skating

Pieroth, Doris Hinson

Their Day in the Sun: Women of the 1932 Olympics

Grades 6+ (1996)

Former PE teacher and historian Pieroth introduces this generation to 14 of the first female American Olympic competitors, including Babe Didrikson

Robinson, Jackie and Walter Duckett

I Never Had It Made: An Autobiography of Jackie Robinson

Grades 10+ (2003 reprint, 1972)

Grandson of slaves, UCLA's first four-letter athlete and Brooklyn Dodger, Robinson is one of sport's real legends.

Siegel, Siena Cherson

To Dance: A Ballerina's Graphic Novel

Grades 4-7 (2006)

Based on ballet professional Siegel's struggle and success; illustrated by her husband Mark Siegel

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three- and four-word sentences. What effect do they have on the pacing and movement on to the next point? You might box the five-word sentences to see where these fall in the essay.

- He has a punch line.

Read "Sports Laughers: Where's the Fun?" What are "blowouts," "laughers," and "routs"? Have students played in a "laugher"? Do they agree with Bowen that being on the losing side is no fun?

- Bowen has a news peg, a recent NFL game.
- After summarizing what took place and relating the action to his theme or main idea, he returns to his readers' age group and experience ("kids' games or high school sports").
- He inserts his own experience as a coach. Does this give him more credibility?
- He goes beyond complaining. He provides three alternative actions. What do students think of his suggestions?

Teachers may have students write a response to this article, write an essay on something they would change in a game they play or watch, or write an opinion piece about a coach's or referee's action that they want to praise and wish others would emulate.

Read a Sports Story

The sidebars in this guide list some titles you can use as a starting point. Two of the authors are *Washington Post* writers who have been inducted into the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association Hall of Fame. Shirley Povich (inducted in 1984) is one of the icons of sports writing. His

career spanned 75 years at *The Post*. Sally Jenkins (inducted in 2005) is the only female in the Hall of Fame and the daughter of NSSA Hall of Fame inductee Dan Jenkins (1996). She also authored *The Real All Americans: The Team That Changed a Game, a People, a Nation* (2007) and co-authored an audio cassette, *Funny Cide*, with the Funny Cide team.

Read a Feature

"Pearl's Unfaded Luster" is included in this guide to illustrate the impact of sports and athletes on the American culture. Wil Haygood's essay appeared in the Style section. It's news peg: the Washington Wizard's will retire Earl Monroe's No. 10 jersey on Dec. 1. Through Haygood's recollections, readers understand Monroe's nickname the Pearl, his impact on youngsters and fans, and his inclusion in Spike Lee's film *He Got Game*.

Which other sports figures have influenced a generation through their athleticism and style? Dorothy Hamill, Michael Jordan, and the Williams sisters, might be answers.

The feature is also an example of writing about former stars. Where are they now? Or writing about the people for whom buildings, fields and gymnasiums might be named at your school.

Compare and contrast Haygood's piece with "The Pearl Changed the Culture of the Game," a column by Mike Wise.

Use Stats

Give students "It's About You ... and Sports." Discuss the information provided in the infographic (a chart, graph or illustration that conveys

Post Writers

Boswell, Thomas, Liz Clark and others
The New Updated Edition Redskins: A History of Washington's Team

Grades 7+ (2000)
Washington Post sports writers (William Gildea to Richard Justice, Povich to Wilbon) and photographers cover Redskins history from George Preston Marshall to the Snyder years. Take the Trivia Quiz to see how much you really know.

Jenkins, Sally
It's Not About the Bike: My Journal Back to Life

Grades 9+ (2001)
Written with Lance Armstrong, this story of the Tour de France winner and cancer survivor made the bestseller lists

Maraniss, David, ed.
The Best American Sports Writing 2007
Grades 6+ (2007)
Washington Post editor Maraniss selects the 2007 works for this series. Contains examples from the usual sports as well as surfing and boxing.

Maraniss, David
Clemente: The Passion and Grace of Baseball's Last Hero
Grade 8+ (2007 reprint)
The life of baseball's Roberto Clemente. Also available in Spanish

Povich, Lynn, Maury and David and George Solomon, eds.

All Those Mornings at the Post: The Twentieth Century in Sports from Famed Washington Post Columnist Shirley Povich

Grades 7+ (2006 paperback)
The best of 75 years of exceptional sports coverage and columns by Shirley Povich are organized by decade. Readers watch the maturation of one of America's best sports writers and receive an overview of American sports.

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information). Teachers can guide students to the three Web sources used by KidsPost or before class select information from the sites to prepare data sheets for student use. These are three reliable sources that could provide students a useful exercise in finding information when writing articles or doing reports. An assignment is suggested.

Using the scores and records of your school's sports teams create an archive for use in the future. Students will be able to compare and contrast teams in words and graphs: Long distance bests of 2003, 2006 and 2008; how each weight class in wrestling has done over a five-year period; most innings without a hit.

INSIDE Journalism: The Sports Page and the Sports section of the online manual suggest activities and provide worksheets for use with the Sports section of the daily *Post*.

Take a Picture

Jonathan Newton, one of four *Post* sports photographers, shares his perspective on getting better sports pictures. Duplicate these pages to give to your photographers; he is talking photographer to photographer. In addition to his guidelines, Newton pairs his photographs to show and discuss what can be done at a high school event and at a professional event.

As a sports photographer at *The Post*, Newton has to be ready for varied assignments and travel. During the week this guide was produced, his assignments included high school games, the bonfire before and the Army-Navy game, the first game the Redskins played

after the death of Sean Taylor and Taylor's funeral in Florida.

Locate Them

Select a local high school, college or professional team. The map students will need depends on the team's schedule. Locate the team's campus on a map with a star or mascot. Either using the team's game schedule or consecutive news articles, plot the team's schedule on the map; 1 for the first game, 2 for the next, etc. On a separate sheet of paper, you might do any of the following:

- Total the number of miles the team has spent on the road
- Using the current price for gas and the miles per gallon that the team bus averages, compute the cost of transportation for a season
- At \$25 per player and coach for each away game, compute the cost of the meal allowance per season.
- Make a list of the cities or states in which the team has played. Using the Internet or other travel guides, create a guide for fans and families who plan on attending the games. What might they do before the game that is educational, cultural or historic?

The dateline on an article indicates that the reporter and photographer were in that city covering the game or event. Give every student a Sports section. Ask students to list the cities, other than Washington, D.C., where *Washington Post* reporters and photographers are covering sporting events.

- Where were *Post* reporters if they were not in the D.C. metropolitan

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Past Post Guides

INSIDE Journalism: The Sports Page

In addition to featuring *The Post's* great sports writer and columnist Shirley Povich, this guide includes the work of Sally Jenkins. Student reproducibles include "How to Write a Sports Story," "Be a Good Sport," and "Sportsmanship and the Extent to Which Athletes Must Speak." Use "Sports Writing by the Numbers" and "Figures or Words?" to practice using numbers. (April 1, 2003)

Circumnavigation

This guide focuses on the Volvo Ocean Race around the globe. Geography, weather and math as well as health and endurance figure into survival in this sport. (April 23, 2002)

Sports

In addition to the monthly online guides, teachers have the resources of *The Post NIE Manual* to use with current pages of the Sports section. Download the Sports section at www.washpost.com/nie. "Stats, Please" that begins on page 12 of this section has three suggested activities that involve the use of statistics. "Sports Jargon" focuses on the particular vocabulary of different sports and its use in sports reporting.

INSIDE online guides and manual for use with *The Washington Post* are found at www.washpost.com/nie.

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area covering their assignments? Find their datelines and plot them on a map.

- Using the photographers' initials indicate where the photographers were when they took the pictures that are published. Some days will require a map of the metropolitan area and others a U.S. map. For example, on Nov. 29, 2007, Toni L. Sandys (TS) was at Redskins Park, Kevin Clark (KC) was at Comcast Center, Jonathan Newton (JN) was at Farragut Field in Annapolis, and Richard A. Lipski (RL) was at Verizon Center.

After using the Sports section for one day, students might be asked to select a reporter or a sports photographer and follow that individual for a week, plotting his or her locations on a map.

Cover the Unthinkable

In late November 2007, *Washington Post* sports reporters and columnists covered the usual sports news, wins and losses in high school and professional sports, coaches and playoffs. On Nov. 22 "Arenas Undergoes Surgery" headlined stories about the Wizards Gilbert Arenas' surgery to repair a partial tear of his left medial meniscus. Five days later the bold headline read "Redskins Rally Around Taylor." Reporters told of the gunshot wound the 24-year-old player suffered at his Miami home during a break-in, of prayer vigils at Redskins Park. On Nov. 28, the 4-word banner read "Death Hits Redskins Hard," under it a smiling picture of Sean Taylor, 1983-2007, filled the top of the fold.

Print and online editors, reporters and columnists, photographers and graphic artists covered this emotional and close-to-home death in many ways. A special Web page that

comprised *The Washington Post's* print, photo and video coverage can be found on washingtonpost.com. Three of the many pieces written are included in this guide: a Mike Wise column, a news article that covers the day after Taylor's death at Redskins Park and an article that focuses on the Buffalo Bills, the first team the Redskins will play after the loss of Taylor.

Read the first eight paragraphs of Wise's column, "A Life Passes, And the Game Goes On." He compares Taylor and Marcus Washington and quotes Washington and Pierson Prioleau who sat next to Taylor on game days. How do these opening paragraphs play against the next four? Read the remaining column, studying how Wise weaves together events that are taking place, quotations and his point of view. Why is it appropriate to quote Washington in the last paragraph of the column?

Two news articles serve different functions. You might compare "Somber Redskins Stand Together" with the column by Wise. Both convey elements of the Redskins team and leadership meeting with Sean Taylor's father and girlfriend. The article answers fans' questions about how the team and family were handling their grief. What other questions are answered in this article?

Including the opposition in coverage is part of good sports writing. "Redskins' Pain Echoes Loudly for Their Next Opponent," in part, does that, but it also reminds readers why the Buffalo Bills players understand the tenuousness of health and fragility of life. What tragedy have the Bills faced this season? What other insight is provided about being a professional athlete? You might compare the two news articles and how the two teams are responding as people and professionals.

Photography

Georges, Gregory

Digital Photography: Top 100 Simplified Tips and Tricks

John Wiley & Sons (2005, 2nd ed.) Step-by-step explanations and colorful illustrations; difficulty level of each lesson is indicated.

Jensen, Doug

Digital Sports Photography Made Simple: How to Take Great Action Photos

Vortex Media (2006)

A DVD workshop including fundamentals and advanced techniques; 14 chapters with examples, tutorials and tips

Kelby, Scott

The Digital Photography Book

Peachpit Press (2007)

Advice on which button to push, setting to use and more than 200 tricks of the trade. Each page covers a concept.

Kinghorn, Jay and Jay Dickman

Perfect Digital Photography

McGraw-Hill (2005)

A Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer and a Photoshop certified expert take you from thought to finished print. Aesthetics and technology are addressed.

Skinner, Peter

Sports Photography: How to Capture Action and Emotion

McGraw-Hill (2007)

Some of the best sports photographers tell how they get the shots

www.washingtonpost.com/sports

Eye on High School Sports

Select "Photo" within "High Schools" to view the archive of Post sports photographers' high school coverage

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Take the Lede

The lede is the opening paragraph(s) of an article. There are many possibilities for structuring the lede (pronounced leed). It may summarize the article or it may set up the story by providing background or setting the scene. Traditional, delayed, descriptive and narrative ledes are among the ledes used in sports reporting.

Traditional

The traditional lede contains the who, what, where, when, why and how of the story. This is straightforward and reportorial in nature.

In a News Story

Randy Thomas, the Washington Redskins' starting guard who tore his left triceps in the second game of the season, returned to practice yesterday for the first time since he was injured. His presence was a lift for teammates, because 10 other players missed practice because of injuries or illness.

— Jason La Canfora, Nov. 22, 2007

"Thomas Returns to Practice for Hobbled Team"

In a Behind-the-Scenes News Story

The Minnesota Twins were discussing trade options for ace left-hander Johan Santana with both the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox, according to a major league source, pitting baseball's two richest teams and fiercest rivals against each other for the services of the pitcher widely considered to be the best in the game.

— Dave Sheinin, Nov. 30, 2007

"Red Sox, Yankees Each in Trade Talks for Santana"

Delayed

Readers are given a set-up, an attitude, a contrasting situation before they learn the main idea — the who, what, where, when, why and how of the story.

For a News Story

CHARLOTTE, Nov. 21 — After playing one of his best games of the season at Minnesota on Friday night, Gilbert Arenas woke up the next morning, felt his sore left knee and knew something wasn't quite right.

On Wednesday, the three-time all star found out why. An MRI exam revealed that Arenas suffered a partial tear of his medial meniscus. He underwent surgery to repair the meniscus and what the team doctor described as a defect in a bone on the side of his knee at Sibley Memorial Hospital and is expected to miss at least three months.

— Ivan Carter, Nov. 22, 2007

"Wizards Star Will Miss at Least Three Months After Knee Operation"

To Start an Opinion Piece

Two years ago, even last year, losing Gilbert Arenas for three months would have been a season killer. The Washington Wizards were built around Arenas completely and perhaps to a fault. Though Antawn Jamison, Caron Butler and Larry Hughes all were accomplished players, the Wizards were dependent on Arenas, as most NBA teams are on their star player. And this latest knee surgery that will keep him out of the lineup for three months is, in the short term, an obvious setback.

But it shouldn't kill this season, not if the Wizards have any resourcefulness about them. If Arenas isn't out for the entire season, the Wizards actually can benefit during his absence.

— Michael Wilbon, Nov. 22, 2007

"It Might Not Hurt That Much"

Descriptive

Emphasis is on setting the scene, describing action or dropping readers into the middle of the event. Concrete nouns, adjectives, color and details relate the arena and present the fans.

To Begin a Game News Story

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 23 — Washington Capitals center Nicklas Backstrom displayed the patience of a seasoned veteran Friday afternoon at Wachovia Center, where, in overtime, he held the puck, the game's outcome and his teammates' fragile confidence on the blade of his stick.

He didn't let them — or interim coach Bruce Boudreau — down.

Backstrom delayed shooting for a moment, waiting for Philadelphia Flyers goalie Martin Biron to drop to the ice. When he did, the smooth-skating Swede scored to cap his best performance yet, lifting the NHL-worst Capitals to an emotional 4-3 victory.

— Tarik El-Bashir, Nov. 24, 2007

"Boudreau Is Victorious in His Debut"

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Nov. 27 — Sean Singletary hauled down the rebound with one hand, another Northwestern shot having clanged high off the rim. He dribbled down the court, barely far enough to begin directing Virginia's offense, but the spot on the court hardly mattered. He stopped, leapt and spun the ball off his fingertips. Why not? Almost every other shot that left the Cavaliers' hands rippled the net. This one was no different.

— Adam Kilgore, Nov. 28, 2007

"Diane, Cavs Warm Up Fast, Stay Hot From Long Range"

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Narrative

The reporter tells a story. There are elements of description, facts and scores as well as allusion and comparisons in this approach. The reader may know immediately who is involved or must wait for the essential information.

For a Game Story or Opinion Piece

When the Washington Redskins tell bedtimes stories to their children, the bears eat Goldilocks, Jack never escapes down the beanstalk and Little Red Riding Hood gets intercepted in the end zone. With these guys, there's never a happy ending. They just can't finish a good story.

Twice in the last four minutes Sunday, the Redskins were working on a fairytale ending, one that might reverse the ugly story of their season full of find-a-way-to-lose defeats. Twice Jason Campbell threw toward Santana Moss in the northeast end of Raymond James Stadium where the pirate ship with the huge skull in its prow is perched beyond the goal posts. Twice, Buccaneers jumped the pass routes, made almost simple interceptions and left Washington with more recurrent nightmares of a season that, after this utterly unnecessary 19-13 loss, is unlikely to extend into January. Cue Captain Hook: Almost time to snuff Peter and Tinker Bell.

—Thomas Boswell, Nov. 26, 2007
“Another Nightmare Ending”

For a Profile

Demetric Evans was 12 years old in March 1992, spending a lazy Saturday with his best friend Edward Crittenden, playing basketball at a classmate's home in their Haynesville, La., neighborhood.

The classmate said his father owned a gun and offered to show it to Evans and Crittenden. There was no one else home at the time.

“When we went in the house and he got the gun, I thought it was actually a BB gun,” Evans said. But the classmate told Evans that it was no BB gun. It was a 9mm handgun. Evans said he immediately became unsettled.

“When he was like, ‘No, it’s a real gun,’ I was like, ‘Okay, guys, well I’m fixin’ to go home,’” he said.

Evans had scurried only a few paces from the classmate’s home when he heard the gun go off. None of the children had known it was loaded. Crittenden was killed, the incident later ruled an accidental homicide.

—Jason La Canfora, Nov. 25, 2007
“Evans Pays His Respects to a Long-Lost Friend”

To Begin a News Feature

When Gregg Williams was most irate on the sideline, screaming and yelling and fuming at his safety, Sean Taylor would defuse the situation with a sly smile. Taylor would remind his coach that the play was over, there was no going back and it was time to move on. When Taylor died Tuesday morning from a fatal gunshot wound, those words were with Williams again.

—Jason La Canfora, Nov. 30, 2007
“Williams Recounts a Special Bond: Coach Treasured Time With Taylor”

Now it is your turn. Write the lead to a sports story about one of your school’s teams or a recent game/match you have seen.

Headline:

Type of Lede:

Your Lede

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Dunbar Back on Top After Turkey Bowl Win

Dunbar 20, H.D. Woodson 9

By ALAN GOLDENBACH
Washington Post Staff Writer

• Originally published November 23, 2007

Dunbar's Jharron Armstrong stood at his free safety spot and wondered which player H.D. Woodson would pick to try to win the Turkey Bowl.

Armstrong fixed his eyes on senior Tavon Wilson, who had caught six passes. He saw the University of Maryland recruit start a slant route and waited for him to come his way.

"I had a feeling they'd go to their big-time player," Armstrong said. "I thought they'd try something inside. I sat there and waited for it."

As Wilson approached, so did the ball. Armstrong stepped in front of Wilson, picked off the pass and raced untouched 41 yards for the clinching touchdown as Dunbar won the 38th Turkey Bowl, 20-9, yesterday before an estimated 6,000 at Eastern High School.

It was the Crimson Tide's record ninth victory in the D.C. Interscholastic Athletic Association championship game, breaking a tie with Woodson, Anacostia and Eastern. Eight of Dunbar's titles have come in the past decade, an unprecedented run of success.

As the Dunbar players posed for a team picture, they each held up 10 fingers to symbolize their run of consecutive appearances in this game. But when Coach

Craig Jefferies brought over the championship plaque, those hands changed to just one finger. The Crimson Tide was back on top of the DCIAA, a sweet return after losing to Ballou, 34-33, in last year's game.

"Things are back to normal," Jefferies said. "Last year left a bitter taste in our mouths."

Dunbar won the game up front, putting constant pressure on sophomore quarterback

Ricardo Young and his backfield. Excluding a 22-yard run in the second quarter by Raymond McCray, Woodson managed 46 yards rushing on 24 carries.

Not known for its running game, the Crimson Tide's offense thrived with a ball-control game plan. Dunbar earned eight of its 12 first downs rushing with a variety of ballcarriers.

knew the plan was to spread out the handoffs in hopes of keeping Woodson's offense off the field.

"That was the key to this game, ball control and no fumbles," Siler said.

Jefferies said: "We knew we had to do it, and we were capable of it. The weather was perfect for it, too."

On the ensuing possession, Woodson fumbled the snap on a punt, which gave Dunbar the ball at the Warriors 33. Set up by an 18-yard run by Siler, a seven-yard run by Dejuan Davis and a three-yard sneak on fourth down by Tyree White, Dunbar had first down on the 1. White ran in a bootleg for the touchdown and then hit Dartanion Lesane for the two-point conversion to make it 14-0.

Woodson responded on the next drive, when Young hit junior Kayvone Spriggs on a perfect timing pattern down the left sideline for a 38-yard scoring pass that made it 14-7.

But the Warriors admitted they missed their big chance when they regained possession less than two minutes before halftime, following a punt and penalty at the Crimson Tide 21. They couldn't convert on fourth and five from the Dunbar 10 and went into the break trailing.

"We really needed to pack in it there," Woodson Coach Greg Fuller said. "That was a momentum-breaker for us."

Neither team could get inside the other's 20-yard line for nearly the entire second half. When Woodson's Dion Guy wrapped up Vernard Roberts for a safety midway through the fourth quarter, Woodson trailed 14-9, and regained possession near midfield. But the Warriors couldn't convert and had to punt.



Dunbar Coach Craig Jefferies gets a lift after his Crimson Tide won its record ninth D.C. Interscholastic Athletic Association championship.

Woodson didn't put itself in good position, getting called for 15 penalties that cost the Warriors 124 yards. Four of the penalties came inside the Woodson 20, and Dunbar capitalized with two first-half touchdowns.

Crimson Tide junior Charles Siler opened the scoring with a four-yard run four minutes into the second quarter to make it 6-0. Siler had season highs of 11 carries for 63 yards and

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The Score

by Fred Bowen

Sports Laughers: Where's the Fun?

They are called blowouts. ... Laughers.... Routs. They are the games where one team piles up points or runs or goals so fast that the other team doesn't stand a chance. Blowouts can be fun when your team is winning. They are not so fun when you are on the losing end.

Blowouts can happen anywhere. Earlier this season, the New England Patriots crushed the Washington Redskins, 52-7. Some Redskins fans thought Patriots Coach Bill Belichick was a bad sport because he went for first downs and touchdowns late in the game when he could have kicked field goals.

I don't agree. While it would have been nicer for Belichick and the Patriots not to score so many points, you have to remember they are playing professional football. Things are very close to even in the National Football League. All the teams have top coaches and roughly the same chance to get good players.

But just because blowouts are okay in the NFL doesn't mean it's all right to run up the score in kids' games or high school sports. Kids' sports are very different from the pros. There are lots of games where one team is much better than its opponent. One team might be older, more experienced or have much better coaches.

So what is the stronger team supposed to do? Stop playing? Stop trying to win?

No. I coached more than 30



BY JOHN MCDONNELL — THE WASHINGTON POST

Enough is enough? Tom Brady and the New England Patriots never slowed down against the Washington Redskins.

recreational-league teams, and I never told my kids, "don't score" or "don't try to get a hit," no matter what the score was. Sometimes a blowout game gives a kid who might never score a basket or a goal a chance to put one in the net.

Still, there are things coaches and kids can do to keep an uneven game from being a blowout.

■ **Use substitutes.** The winning team should always give its weaker players or bench-warmer more of a chance to play. Against the Redskins, Belichick didn't re-

place star quarterback Tom Brady until late in the game.

■ **Change the lineup.** Coaches can put weaker players in scoring positions. For instance, in a lopsided soccer match, less-talented players might play on the front line and the team's top scorers could play defense.

■ **Change the game plan.** In basketball, a team that is way ahead should stop playing pressure defense. Instead of running a fast-break offense, the team should pass the ball around and give kids who don't score as much a chance

to get some shots. In baseball, a team should stop stealing bases or moving up an extra base on every error by the other team.

Unlike pro sports, where winning is so important, kids' sports should give players a chance to improve their skills and have some fun. Blowouts, where one team crushes another, do not help kids improve and aren't much fun.

Fred Bowen writes *KidsPost* sports opinion column and is an author of sports novels for kids.

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The Score
by Fred Bowen

If I Ruled the (Sports) World

• Originally published November 3, 2000
Sometimes don't you wish you could be the leader of the sports world and change all the things that drive you crazy?

I do. And there is plenty I would change.

Take pro football. Every week two teams of 300-pound giants battle away, giving everything they've got, for 60 minutes. Then some puny kicker comes out and wins the game by kicking a field goal.

I know it's called football, but I think there is too much "foot" in football.

If I ruled the sports world, I would move the goalpost's uprights closer together so it would be harder to kick field goals and extra points. That way teams would be more tempted to go for a touchdown instead of a field goal.

But why stop with football? There are plenty of other sports I want to change. Soccer for one. It's too low-scoring. I don't mind seeing a 1-0 game every once in a while, but it seems that too many soccer games are 1-0.

I say, make the soccer goals four feet wider and two feet taller. A bigger target would mean more goals and more fun for the fans and players.

Same thing with field hockey. The scores are too low and the nets too small. Let's get bigger nets and more goals. And while we are at it, let's make the blade of the stick a little wider for better ball-handling.

Now on to softball. Did you see the Olympic softball games? Those pitchers can fire the ball 60 to 70 miles per hour. And they are pitching from closer than kids pitch in Little League baseball.



BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

Patuxent #3 Jessica Lankford clears the ball from Mt. Hebron defenders during second half action. Lankford scored the only point of the game for a 1-0 win.

I think it's too close. I would move the softball pitcher back five to 10 feet and give the batter a chance to get a few base hits.

Baseball has a speed problem of a different kind. The game has gotten way too slow. And it makes me mad.

My first new baseball rule would be: The batter cannot leave the batter's box between pitches. No more stepping away to adjust his batting gloves, tug at his shirt or tap the bat against his spikes. Under my rule, if a batter steps away, it would be an automatic strike. That should keep the game moving.

Golf? I think the players have too many clubs. If kids can play with six or seven, why do the pros need 14? I would love to see a special tournament where the golfers can only have seven clubs. With fewer clubs, the pros would be forced to make tougher, trickier shots.

Of course, Tiger Woods would probably still win.

I can't change everything.

Fred Bowen writes the KidsPost Sports opinion column and is an author of sports novels for kids.

Name _____

Date _____

It's About You ... and Sports

KidsPost

»it's about«

YOU

... and Sports

More kids than ever are playing sports. And more kids younger than 14 are getting hurt — about 3.5 million each year are treated for athletic-related injuries. Be careful out there.

Number of kids playing sports
IN MILLIONS

Year	Number of kids (in millions)
1997	32
2000	38
2006	41

PHOTODISC IMAGE
GRAPHIC BY THE WASHINGTON POST

SOURCES: National Council of Youth Sports,
Consumer Product Safety Commission, Safe Kids USA

Sources

National Council of Youth Sports (www.ncys.org/)
Use Market Research information.

Safe Kids USA (www.usa.safekids.org/)
See reports and facts under Research.

Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.cpsc.gov/)
Much information is found in the CPSC Press Room section.

Your Assignment: Create an Infograph

1. KidsPost used three sources to gather accurate information to include in the copy (written information) and bar graph.
 - a. Follow your teacher's directions to create a pie, bar or line graph to communicate information that you locate on one or more of the same Web sites.
 - b. Write a paragraph of no more than 50 words to accompany the graphic.
 - c. Write a title for the infograph.
2. After finishing the infograph, explain in a paragraph why you selected this topic.
3. After finishing the infograph project, explain why you used this form of graph (circle, bar or line) to communicate the information.

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Out the Door Every Day

Sports Photography at The Washington Post

BY JONATHAN NEWTON
Washington Post Staff Photographer

The four full-time sports photographers at *The Washington Post* stay pretty busy covering nearly 300 high schools. Add to that nine area colleges — American, George Mason, George Washington, Georgetown, Howard, Maryland, Navy, Virginia and Virginia Tech — and Pro teams — Redskins, Nationals, Wizards, Mystics, Capitals, D.C. United, Orioles and, occasionally, the Baltimore Ravens. We treat the high school assignments just like we do the college or pro ones.

Most of us cut our teeth shooting pictures at the high school level. This is a good place to learn. Making mistakes is O.K. just as long as you learn from them. If something goes wrong try to figure out what happened and try not to do it again.

Never give up is a good rule when shooting sports. Be just like the athletes you are covering. They keep working hard even though they are losing. It happens to photographers too. We get blocked, we're on the wrong side of the field, our camera settings get messed up. Many things can happen, but you just keep working hard and good things will come from it. The great golfer Bobby Jones said, "The harder I work, the luckier I get." Think about that!

Our standard approach to covering sports is to treat it like a news assignment. We are there to tell the story of the game. We want to capture the moment that sums it all up for our readers, like having the shot of the game-winning touchdown or the buzzer beater in basketball. We look for the



BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

On the first play of the game Washington defenders #24 Shawn Springs and #97 Renaldo Wynn knock the ball loose from San Francisco quarterback Alex Smith. The 49ers recovered the ball.

Tip: *"It is very important to always be ready. I shot this picture on the very first play of the game, and the story of the game turned out to be the defensive pressure the Redskins applied all day to the 49ers. I used a 300mm lens with an ISO rating of 400 at 5.6 aperture. I was standing about five yards behind the line of scrimmage so I had a cleaner look at the quarterback when he dropped back."*



BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

Gonzaga's LB Pat McConnell goes airborne as he goes after a loose ball fumbled by St. John's #20 Cliff Pearson inside the five-yard line. Gonzaga landed on it for the touchback.

Tip: *"When I shoot high school football, I like to shoot from the back of the end zone when the ball is inside the 20-yard line. That way the players are coming at you instead of from the side. I like to shoot loose with 70-200mm zoom lens because it allows more information to get into the photograph. If I were tighter the guy would have jumped right out of my frame."*

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emotion of the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.

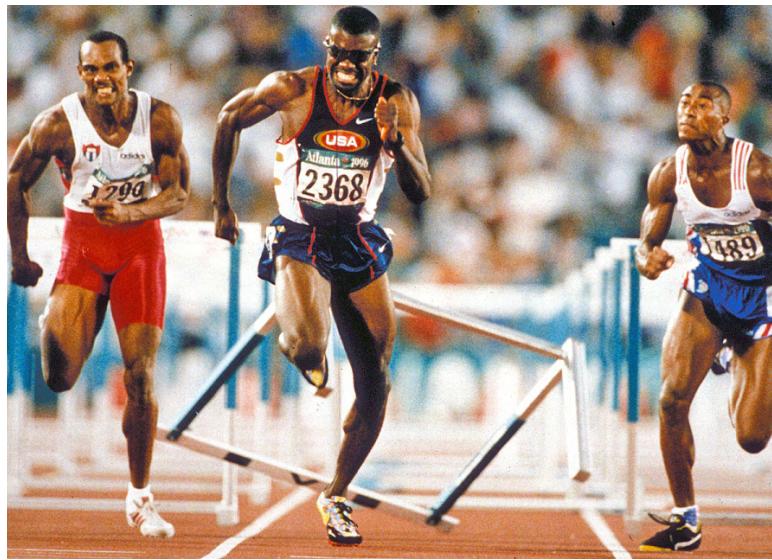
When shooting sports it helps to have good eye-hand coordination because things move very fast. Practice helps with your reaction time. It pays to be a thinker, to anticipate where you need to be on a field to get the picture and to be ready when the moment comes.

There are many things to consider when you are out there. First are the mechanics like making sure your camera is set to the proper shutter speed, aperture and ISO setting. For example, for most high school football fields at night, we would set our shutter speed at 250th of a second at 2.8 aperture with an ISO rating of 1600. Sometimes we will add a little fill flash if the field is extra dark. Pretty much the same with high school basketball games in gyms.

When we shoot high school basketball we set up under the basket a little to the left or right in order to get the action coming toward us so we can see the players' faces when they take the shot or get fouled. If you shoot from the side most of the time, players' arms will be up, blocking their faces as they shoot.

Remember, if you are going to shoot pictures at an event like basketball do a little homework before you go. Study photographs that appear in the Sports section. Look at the basketball pictures, find ones that you like and try to figure out how they shot them. The four sports photographers at *The Washington Post* take many more images than appear in the daily paper. The ones that are selected are chosen because they tell the story of the event, capture the participants and fans, and, often, take readers to the game through the emotion and action displayed.

The Internet is another wonderful tool for this. You can go to the *Washington*



BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

Allen Johnson of the U.S. track and field team (center) wins 110-meter hurdles in Olympic record time at the Olympic stadium Monday, July 29, 1996, during the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, Ga. Left is Emillio Valle from Cuba and right Colin Jackson from Great Britain.

Tip: This picture really captures the energy of the event, and his determination is all over his face as he sets an Olympic record. I shot this with a 400mm lens at the finish line during the 1996 Olympics.



BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

Anjewan Geter of H.D. Woodson throws on the burner after the final hurdle in the Men's 110-meter hurdles for the win in the DCIAA City Championship track meet.

Tip: Look at the picture of the Olympics 110-meter hurdles and look at this image. They capture the same look of determination on the faces of the competitors. This shows you that the same pictures can be made at all levels. Look closely and you'll see that even the hurdles in both pictures are falling the same way.

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Post Web site (www.washingtonpost.com), *Sports Illustrated* or just search the Internet for sports pictures. In the *Post* online Sports section, under Photos, you will find Eye on High School Sports, our weekly archive of coverage. See what we shot of the games, the sidelines and coaches. These sites give you ideas so you have a plan when you arrive.

Don't forget to shoot pictures of the crowd. They can become more emotional than the players.

Becoming a great student of photography is very helpful in getting better. When you look at a picture, try dissecting it. Ask yourself what focal length lens was the photographer using? What was the aperture? Where were they standing when they got the shots? This will give you a reference point for when you are on the field. You can think back and then be in the right place at the right time. It's much like artists who study Rembrandt to understand light and Monet for composition and Van Gogh for passion. The more you do the better you get.

You don't need to have a super duper big lens like you see on the sidelines of the pro games to be able to shoot sports. Some of my favorite pictures were shot with a wide angle lens. It helps to get close to the action. You can do that at many high schools, but at the college and pro games there are tons of rules and lines you need to stay behind. They have lots of security guards making sure you don't go where you're not wanted.

Practice makes perfect is the best way to become a successful photographer. Many times our assignments are to feature a certain player for an upcoming game, and we go to shoot him or her at practice. Shooting at practice gives you an excellent opportunity to get closer and be more creative than during a game.



BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

River Hill 140-pounder Kevin Cannon twists up his opponent Dominic Do of Long Reach High. Cannon scored his 100th career win.

Tip: *Looking at faces is a great way to tell the story sometimes. Getting in tight on this wrestler as he struggles tells the story and shows the skill of the winner. The picture displays why this guy had won 100 times in his high school career. I lay on the gym floor to put myself at their level. You should always think about trying different angles when you are shooting. Get high and get low. Don't shoot everything from the same vantage point. Mix it up. Have fun. I shot this with my 70-20mm zoom again with a strobe bounced off the ceiling.*



BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

Members of the Gwynn Park High field goal unit practice for an upcoming game.

Tip: *Getting a different angle or vantage point away from the norm makes a photograph more interesting to the viewer. For this picture, I pre-focused the camera and shot at f16 to have maximum depth of field, making everything in the picture in focus. I shot this a few times and selected the one where the ball was in the right place.*

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Digital cameras have made our jobs much better. It has allowed us to stay at assignments longer and still make deadlines. We use iBook computers and a program called Photo Mechanic to caption, crop and send our pictures to the *Post*. For example: I shoot a high school football game, staying until the very end to get the emotional pictures of the win or loss, and then I go to my car and ingest the pictures into my computer. I select the best storytelling photos that I then caption, crop and send to the *Post* either by cell phone or wireless card where a layout person is waiting to design the page. This all needs to be done by 10 p.m. So I need to be fast, but I need to make sure I am accurate. Getting correct caption information and spelling people's names correctly is just as important as shooting a good picture.

Photography is a difficult profession to master. It takes a tremendous amount of work early on when you are a student to learn the craft, but remember the more you do it the better you get. Things come easier the more you practice. You can get a lot of knowledge from books and in the classroom, but the real learning comes when you are out there shooting pictures every day. Remember to have fun, get close and shoot things that you find interesting. Curiosity is a photographers No. 1 tool to be successful.

This is my twenty-second year as a newspaper photographer. I've made every mistake there is. I know I'm not perfect and that drives me to be better. People I meet ask me what is the greatest picture I've ever made and I tell them (and I truly believe it) that I haven't taken it yet. That sends me out the door every day with a renewed passion that today might be the day that I take the greatest picture ever. That is how I keep a fresh attitude.

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Some members of the Severn School student body try to distract St. Mary's Guard Ben Shriner as he attempts free throws in the final moments of their OT victory.

BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

Tip: Sometimes the best pictures from an event are not on the court or the field. Always look around and work the angles until everything comes together. The student body was dressed up for a dance that was to follow the game, and I knew I wanted to get a picture of them. It didn't come together until the very end of the game when the guy from the other team went to the foul line. I worked this picture all night, and it finally happened right at the end. So keep going back to something 'til it works. I put a 400-watt second light in the corner of the gym and pointed it toward the ceiling and bounced it off to light this dark gym. You can add a strobe to your camera if the gym is really dark.



Fans engulf Georgetown Center Roy Hibbert as they storm the court after their 87-84 upset victory of No.1-ranked Duke.

BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

Tip: Anticipation was the key to getting this picture. I knew that the students would storm the court if Georgetown pulled off the upset. As the seconds ticked off the clock, I ran over to the scorers table. When the rush came, I jumped up on the table (so I wouldn't get run over) but mainly so I could get higher. I was really lucky when Roy turned my way and had such a great expression. I shot this with a 17-35mm wide angle lens.

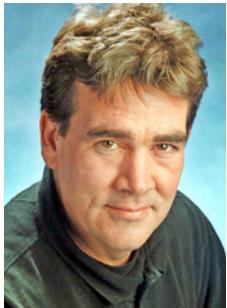
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About the Photographer

Jonathan Newton has worked as a busboy, house painter, apple picker, liquor store clerk, fish fryer and aluminum-siding installer. Which is to say, it took him a few tries before he decided to pursue photojournalism at Western Kentucky University, and even longer to figure out that he wanted to cover sports.

"There was a time early in my career that I didn't like shooting sports," recalls Newton. "After some soul searching, I discovered I wasn't very good at it." In response, Newton dedicated himself to sports photography, and it wasn't long before he was hooked. Hard work led to great stories, which led to recognition. In a 21-year career with the *Nashville Banner*, *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, *St. Petersburg Times* (Fla.), and *The Washington Post*, Newton earned numerous national awards, including the NPPA Morris Berman Award for the advancement of photojournalism. He is also a two-time winner of the National Baseball Hall of Fame photo contest. "I love the pageantry of sports," he says. "I love all the emotion."



BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

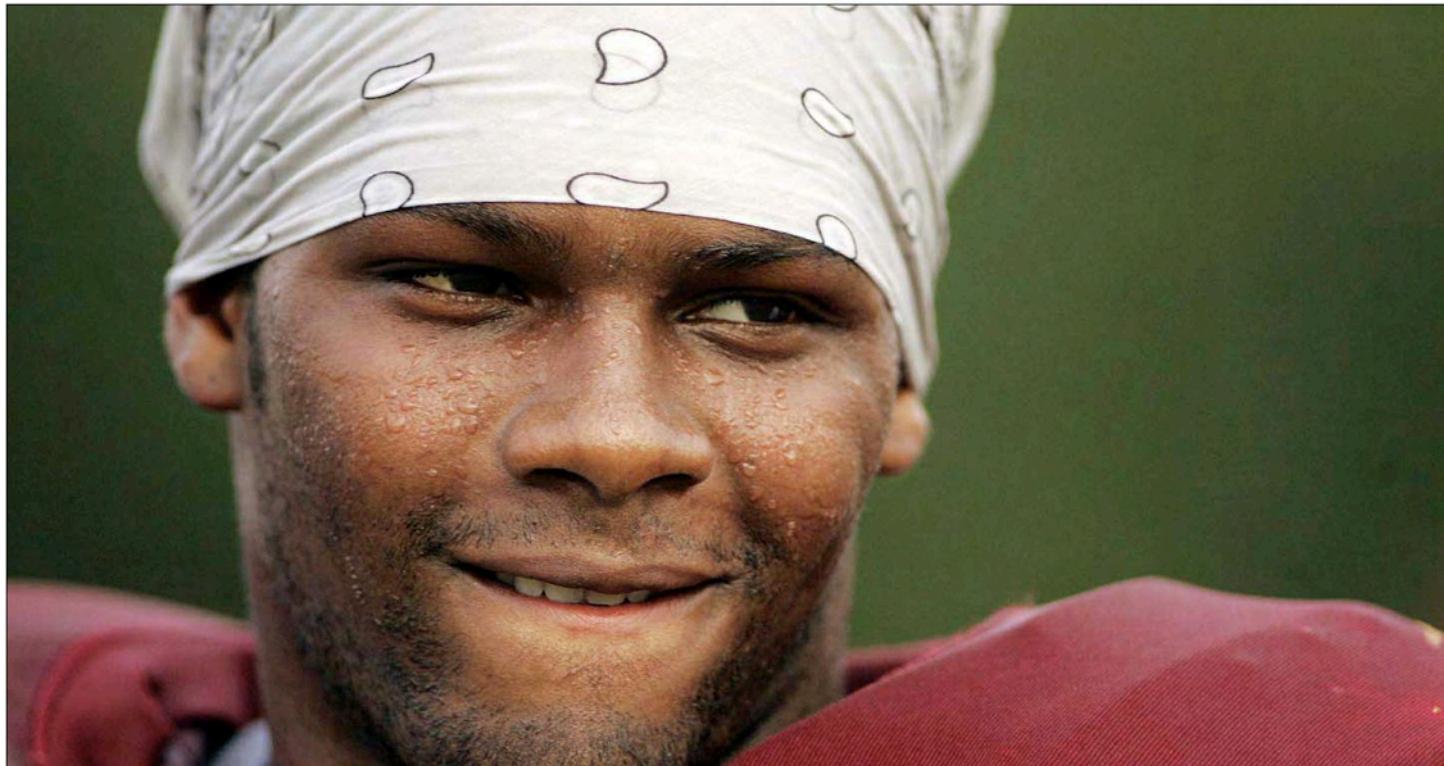
Northwest quarterback
Josh Volpe leaves the field with his 15-year-old sister Renee following their undefeated season.
Renee and her friends made her "I Love the Quarterback" T-shirt.

Tip: *I just love this quiet little moment. I call it a Norman Rockwell moment. Renee really loves her brother the big star quarterback. I wanted a picture of Josh as he walked off the field so I went down to the gate where his bus was and waited. I got lucky when his sister joined him. All the elements came together for me. Again I shot this with the 70-200mm lens.*

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MIKE WISE

A Life Passes, And the Game Goes On



BY JOHN MCDONNEL —THE WASHINGTON POST

"For me personally, I think I can honestly say this: Sean felt like God made him to play football," Redskins Coach Joe Gibbs said about Sean Taylor, who died early November 27 at age 24.

• Originally published Thursday,
November 29, 2007

Marcus Washington has some of the same duality Sean Taylor had. He's constantly negotiating two worlds. On Sundays in Landover, he's the menacing tackler who cares not that his torso is perpendicular to the ground before a monster hit. The rest of the week, he comes across as a soft-spoken homebody.

If it is hard to reconcile that Washington with the guy who lifts his muscular arms to the heavens — the player who incites the FedEx Field crowd between timeouts — it's harder

still to reconcile Washington's latest, if unwanted, identity:

That of the grieving teammate, one of 61 yesterday afternoon at Redskins Park.

"Nobody knows really what to say, how to act, what to do," Washington said. He shuffled his feet. He bit his lip. He swallowed hard.

"You just kind of sit with your teammates or with your coaches. You may not say anything, but knowing someone else is there kind of feeling what you're going through, it was tough. Sometimes you kind of zone out. You think of Sean."

Washington spoke somberly the day after Taylor's death, moments after coming off the practice field — four days before a game no one is thinking about and five days before a funeral in Miami he and his teammates never imagined attending.

It was Day 2 in the life of a team trying to cope, and the emotional hurt associated with the loss and the tragedy hardly felt any better yesterday afternoon.

"Anytime you would usually daydream about anything, the only thing you can possibly have in your mind now is

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Sean," said Pierson Prioleau, the veteran defensive back who sat next to Taylor on game days. "That moment when you think away from football about your family and kids, anytime your mind gets an open moment to think, it is all about Sean. And that is the way it is going to be for a while."

Maybe these kind of stories make the hard-boiled among us say, "You're a football player with a game on Sunday. Get over it."

Or maybe the attention paid to the death of a prominent sports figure — compared with the second story on the local news about a 2-year-old girl who

was beaten to death — is enough to turn the stomach.

It's also fair to wonder if the grown men breaking down in tears beside a memorial of Taylor at the Redskins' training facility grieve as much for their own family members as for a player they never met or knew.

They are all points worth arguing and debating. But the truth is, everyone deals with death and loss in his or her own space and time. And no matter how one feels about such personal and delicate matters, it would be unfair to dismiss the authenticity of the recovery process in Ashburn. This is literally, as Joe Gibbs said, "an hour-to-hour thing."

When the mother of Taylor's 18-month-old daughter began to tell the players how they needed to cherish their loved ones because they had no idea how long they would be with them, when Taylor's father shared stories about his son, when Clinton Portis shed tears while trying to explain what his friend and teammate meant to him, well, it's impossible to just move on.

"It was real tough for his girlfriend," Washington said of Jackie Garcia, who along with Pedro Taylor traveled from Miami to Ashburn early yesterday morning. "That was the toughest part, seeing the pain she feels."

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BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

Sean Taylor is greeted by the crowd following their win over San Francisco.

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"Her message was, 'Don't take your loved ones or your family for granted — the people who mean the most to you in life — because you never know your last time with them.' She said, 'Give 'em a hug, tell them you love them.'"

Washington swallowed again.

"Sometimes it's easy to forget that you are human and you hurt and you miss a guy that you spent a lot of time with," he said. "It's okay to hurt and miss him and think about him."

It was written in this space almost exactly a year ago — after the murder of a University of Miami football player named Bryan Pata — that former Miami coach Larry Coker and school officials needed to at least consider canceling that weekend's game against Maryland, if for no other reason that emotionally worn-down kids, all of whom were between 18 and 22 years old, were not ready to make that decision themselves.

This is different. Nearly one-third of the players on this roster are 30 years older. They aren't kids trying to mean-mug their way toward adulthood. They understand the business obligations of the NFL, what Taylor's death means in the scheme of things; some probably know the history of NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle refusing to cancel or put off games after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy (Rozelle was harshly criticized) and Commissioner Paul Tagliabue understanding he needed to postpone games after 9/11.

Either way, most of them sincerely view Sunday's game against Buffalo as a

necessary, if awkward, event.

"I guess it is part of the coping mechanism in a sense," London Fletcher said. "But today guys were still thinking about what happened."

"The thing about our job is we have the human side and the professional side," he added. "As humans, you are grieving and mourning and hurting; the professional part is we have to go out and play a game because of the business we are in. For some of us and most of us, we know Sean loved to play football. For a couple of hours we get to do what he loved to do."

If nothing else, they will spend Sunday together, the day before they mourn the passing of their teammate in Miami.

"It's definitely easier when you're here with your teammates and coaches feeling the same way you're feeling," Washington said. "You've got a support group here at work."

"Some guys cried, some guys drove around. I just stayed locked in my room yesterday and didn't do much. We all got together today and shared our experiences."

Coaches are always saying their football teams are families, that they win and lose together. And so often it comes across as tiresome, cliched jock-speak. But a day after Taylor's death, hours after Jackie Garcia's words made them weep, there is no denying the bonds shared between these men and the long road of healing ahead of them.

"The only thing that makes you feel better is time," Washington said. "Something like this happens, you lose someone that meant a lot to you, only thing that will actually heal it is time."



BY JONATHAN NEWTON—THE WASHINGTON POST

**Washington Redskins vs New York Giants:
Redskins Sean Taylor reacts after he was
flagged for a penalty in the 4th quarter.**

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Somber Redskins Stand Together

Taylor's Family Visits Team As Players Return to Work

BY JASON LA CANFORA AND JASON REID
Washington Post Staff Writers

• Originally published November 29, 2007

Buoyed by an inspirational speech from Sean Taylor's father and a visit with some of their teammate's family members and girlfriend, the Washington Redskins returned to work yesterday at Redskins Park.

Pedro Taylor had asked owner Daniel Snyder if he could address the team in the wake of his son's death, and Snyder sent his private plane to Miami to pick up the family members. Taylor urged the 5-6 team to fight as hard as possible to reach the postseason.

"When Mr. Taylor stood up and said, 'Go win this next five and make it to the playoffs,'" team chaplain Brett Fuller said, "you felt a surge in the room that he almost gave his permission to play well."

Jackie Garcia, who was in the house with Sean Taylor and their 18-month-old daughter when he was shot, echoed Pedro Taylor's remarks about the importance of football and family in her boyfriend's life. "She just really spoke about cherishing your family while they are here and not taking a moment with your family for granted," linebacker London Fletcher said.

As Pedro Taylor told Redskins players about his son's love for football, linebacker Khary Campbell said he was immediately struck by the similarities between father and son, both in looks and mannerisms. The father's poise and composure reminded players of their friend as Pedro Taylor stayed focused despite his grief in a room full of strangers. "It was just showing us where Sean got his strength from," defensive lineman Demetric Evans said.

"He was great," Redskins Coach Joe Gibbs said of Pedro Taylor. "I don't think I could have that kind of courage."

The workday always begins with a full team meeting for the Redskins, but yesterday, rather than discuss the Buffalo Bills, Sunday's opponent at FedEx Field, or any football strategy, Gibbs spoke about the challenge at hand. Snyder, who was with Taylor's family at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami after the shooting, explained how their teammate fought to live, and gave them details about Taylor's funeral, which will be held at 11 a.m. Monday at Florida International University in Miami.

Fuller, who has counseled players this week, said a prayer for Taylor, his family and the team, and shared his thoughts on Taylor's faith. Tailback Clinton Portis, who has known Taylor for seven years, since their time together at the University of Miami, spoke about his love for his friend. Portis, who became choked up, talked about other teammates who have died, and, as part of the Redskins' contingent at the hospital Monday, explained the bond between team officials and Taylor's family.

"Clinton talked about Sean and Sean's family and how Mr. Snyder and the family were all kind of together down there going through everything together as they experienced it firsthand," linebacker Marcus Washington said. "It kind of gave us a little peace of mind just to hear that everyone was together."

Gibbs broke the meeting about 9 a.m., and he and Snyder met with Taylor's family in Gibbs's office while the players milled about. At about 9:15 they were back in the auditorium, and for the next 10 minutes Pedro Taylor commanded the room. Taylor, the chief of police of Florida City, Fla., explained how deeply

his son cared for his teammates, going back to the day the father and son were first in the auditorium after Taylor was drafted fifth overall in the 2004 draft. At one point, Gibbs halted the meeting for 20 minutes, giving players the chance to greet the family.

"I definitely did have a moment with [Pedro Taylor] and I gave him a hug," safety Pierson Prioleau said. "We wanted to let him know that we all love Sean and we're here with him and we're all going to be together through this."

The afternoon schedule was cut short, as Gibbs condensed the meetings.

"Nothing was normal about today," said Fletcher, one of the team leaders. "Nothing was really normal. We had the meetings, but it wasn't the normal type of meeting, so to speak. Practice wasn't the same feeling. We tried to make it feel the same as best possible but . . . I know I found myself thinking about Sean, and imagining him out on the football field playing free safety for us."

Gibbs took the team onto the field for walk-throughs and practice, getting them back into their usual routine. "You get a chance to do something you're supposed to be doing again — playing football, and coaching it, too," Gibbs said. "So I think practice was the best of what happened today as far as getting our minds off things."

After practice a media throng awaited the players, who then showered and headed home around 5 p.m., their first sad day back at work behind them.

"It's definitely hard when you've had the morning we had, and the week that we've had," Evans said, "Losing Sean, it's always going to be a hard thing, and it's something you have to take one day at a time. But he'll never be forgotten, and he'll always be missed."

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Redskins' Pain Echoes Loudly for Their Next Opponent

By DAN STEINBERG
Washington Post Staff Writer

• Originally published November 29, 2007

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y., Nov. 28 — Buffalo Bills wide receiver Josh Reed said he could hardly sleep Tuesday night, so distraught was he about the shooting death of Washington Redskins safety Sean Taylor. Safety George Wilson said Taylor's death was the last thing he thought about Tuesday night and the first thing that entered his mind Wednesday morning. "I don't think there was a minute that I didn't think about it," he said.

When Bills Coach Dick Jauron addressed his team a few hours after Wilson awoke, players said he spoke passionately and philosophically about Taylor's death and its implications. "Trying to shine bright from our small corner of the earth" was how special teams star Coy Wire summarized Jauron's message. Punter Brian Moorman said he had never been to a team meeting that quiet and solemn.

Jauron said he would have delivered such a talk regardless of the calendar, which dictates that his players will travel to Washington this weekend for what promises to be one of the most psychologically charged games of their lives.

"I would be pretty certain that every team in the National Football League would address that incident this morning," he said. "It's a tragedy, and it touches us. . . . It affects everybody. It affects everybody in our business."

Still, it was hard to ignore the ways this franchise has been especially touched. Sunday's game will be an



BY JOHN MCDONNELL—THE WASHINGTON POST

Fred Smoot sits dejectedly after the Bills' decisive field goal with four seconds left. The kick was shortened by 15 yards to 36 after Coach Joe Gibbs called consecutive timeouts, resulting in a penalty.

emotional caldron for both teams, from the pregame moment of silence to the prayers and black ribbons planned by Redskins fans. The Bills' roster includes former Redskins Derrick Dockery, Robert Royal and Jerametrius Butler, as well as wide receiver Roscoe Parrish, a teammate and friend of Taylor's at the University of Miami. And, of course, the Bills have been through a tragedy of their own this season, after tight end Kevin Everett was seriously injured in a season-opening loss to the Denver Broncos.

"If anyone in the NFL can have some sort of inkling of what they're going through, it would be us, but it's completely different," said Wire, one of

Buffalo's captains. "We always had the hope that Kevin would be all right. This is completely different. Sean Taylor is gone. I can only imagine what they're going through as an organization, what his family is having to experience right now. I don't know how they're going to be able to play on Sunday. It's beyond me."

Everett has made significant progress from a spinal-cord injury that was thought to be life-threatening. He is recuperating at his home in Houston and has regained limited use of his legs after an initial prognosis that he would never walk again.

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His teammates said they got through the tragedy by never trying to block it out or move on. They designed T-shirts and hats in his honor and sold them to raise money for spinal-cord research; some teammates still wear the shirts — bearing a team picture and Everett's name and number — around the locker room. They taped regular video messages for the third-year tight end, who, like Taylor, attended the University of Miami. They called him, visited him in the hospital and still pray for him before and after every game.

"The coaching staff did a great job of not acting like it didn't happen," running back Fred Jackson said. "We faced it. I think that was probably the best thing we could have done, not trying to put it behind us, just trying to move forward while keeping it in mind."

Tight end Ryan Neufeld agreed: "We're constantly thinking about him. It's going to be there through the whole season; there's going to be remnants of what happened."

Players and coaches said they relied upon one another in the initial days, when Everett's future was still very much unknown. Some said the injury made them more introspective: "Realizing how precious the present moment is, making sure I'm not taking anything for granted, teaching each and every day like a gift," as Wire put it.

Linebacker Angelo Crowell said it took him three weeks to be able to throw himself fully into on-field collisions, and the team lost its next two games. But others said they had no trouble returning to the sport, because they thought that is what Everett would have wanted. Several players said that they have drawn inspiration from his recovery, and that the incident increased their team's locker room bond.

"I won't speak for anybody else; personally, I felt like my son was laying in the hospital and yet I had a job to do, and I had obligations to other people,"



BY RICK STEWART — GETTY IMAGES

The Bills' Rian Lindell, left, and Brian Moorman warmed up before a September game in T-shirts honoring Kevin Everett, who is recuperating from a spinal-cord injury.

said Charlie Coiner, Everett's position coach. "It took me a long time, not to get back to work, but it took me awhile to get over the hurt, because I was hurting."

But as the Bills said again and again on Wednesday, their pain couldn't compare with what their upcoming opponents are facing.

"It's really a very, very different story," Jauron said. "It's a terrible tragedy. There's just not a whole lot else to say about it. It just leaves you almost speechless."

Teammates said Parrish, who had been telling stories about Taylor last weekend, was in rough shape; he was excused from Wednesday's practice because of illness.

Dockery spent Tuesday speaking with a host of his former Redskins teammates. "When it hits close to home, man, it hurts, it hurts," he said. "You're not just going to be able to get over it in one day, in one week or month. It's going to be with us for a long time."

Players said Jauron and Paul Lancaster, the team's director of player programs, offered counseling at Wednesday's team meeting and reminded them there are more important things than football. Wilson said that the incident made some players consider whether they should buy firearms or change the routes they take driving home, and that Taylor's death remained fixed in his mind.

"It's hard to not think about it, it's hard not to allow it to affect you," he said. "You turn on the local news you see it, you turn on ESPN you see it, you turn on CNN and Headline News you see it. You couldn't get away from it. At least now we're at work, able to go to meetings and go to practices to take our minds off it temporarily. But I'm pretty sure all the thoughts and concerns and prayers will come right back as soon as I get home."

And yet, at the same time, the Bills were preparing for a game between two 5-6 teams still alive for playoff berths. They faced questions about rookie quarterback Trent Edwards, who will make his fifth start, and about their injury-plagued backfield and their two consecutive losses. Dockery said that he expects to shed tears during the pregame moment of silence, but that he would be ready once the ceremony ended.

"We're all professionals," he said. "For that time and that moment, you have to try to focus on playing that game."

Jauron agreed, saying that he was not worried about his players making the transition from an emotional pregame scene into a typical afternoon of athletic competition.

"They all are pros, on both sides of the ball," he said. "This is what they do. Let's face it, this is what Sean Taylor loved to do. And you could see it on tape. He loved to play this game. They've all chosen this as their profession. I think it'll be a highly competitive game. I think it'll be a tough game. I don't think that will be an issue at all."

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Pearl's Unfaded Luster

For One Night in Ohio, Earl Monroe Held Court Over Wide-Eyed Kids

BY WIL HAYGOOD
Washington Post Staff Writer

• Originally published November 29, 2007

It was chilly outside and the trees were barren. But when the news came, it raced around the neighborhood like blown leaves. Earl "The Pearl" Monroe and his Baltimore Bullets were coming to Columbus, Ohio, to the Fairgrounds Coliseum. We didn't have an NBA team in Columbus, but the Cincinnati Royals (now the Sacramento Kings) would schedule exhibition games at the fairgrounds.

From playground to front porch stoop, we 12- and 13-year-olds were delirious, slapping fives and giddily counting paper-route savings to scrounge up the price of admission. We were off to see the Pearl.

I listened to Bullets games on a transistor radio, a faraway announcer's voice sailing into my bedroom. I wondered how the Pearl got to be so good; if he used white shoe polish on the bottom edges of his white sneakers as I often did. (I knew he wore white hightops from the basketball magazines I hoarded.) He was something new, vivid and soulful.

Now and then — an agonizingly rare occasion in those pre-cable days of the late '60s — Monroe's Bullets would appear on TV. A guard, he played with a sly quickness. He was Houdini on the court, hiding the ball behind his back, revealing it at the last moment. But he also had the coolness of a white-gloved butler circling the dinner table.

On Saturday, the Washington Wizards — formerly the Baltimore Bullets —

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UPI

Before Earl "The Pearl" Monroe, right, played for the Knicks with Walt Frazier, left in this 1973 photo, he wore the uniform of the Baltimore Bullets. On December 1, the Washington Wizards will retire Monroe's No. 10 jersey.

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will retire the Pearl's No. 10 jersey. He played fewer seasons with the Bullets than he did with the New York Knicks, who retired his jersey there years ago. But it was the Bullets who introduced him to the world, both as an athlete and as a cultural icon.

Monroe eschewed the traditional mechanics of the game to serve up something new. His signature spin move seemed as potent as Yardbird's horn, as lovely as a line of Langston's verse. He ran with his arms splayed; his knees were known to be fragile. A darkly hued figure in Bullet orange, he erupted in arias both rare and beautiful. Filmmakers — Woody Allen, Spike Lee — would come to rhapsodize about him. In that klieg-lighted world of 1960s and early 1970s celebrity, the Pearl seemed something culled from music, fashion and black pride.

He was part of a defining era that saw athletes — Walt "Clyde" Frazier of the

New York Knicks, Joe "Willie" Namath of the New York Jets, John "Frenchy" Fuqua of the Pittsburgh Steelers among them — flow from the sports pages into our wider cultural consciousness. Gay Talese and James Baldwin found freedom in their expressions. *GQ* magazine understood their vibe. There was the Pearl in fedora and long, belted coat. There he was in *Essence* magazine dressed in tennis whites and holding a racket. The sports figure had arrived as hipster, stopped by fashion photographers.

The Pearl didn't follow the trend in the game toward huge leaps and slam dunks. Let Julius "Dr. J" Erving or Connie "The Hawk" Hawkins handle such missions. He operated beneath the basket and preferred the finger roll, the ball floating up like a feather. Sometimes coming down the court — fast as he could, which wasn't very fast — he slowed like someone waiting to cross the street. Then — poof — he vanished down the lane.

Only a precious few had seen him play at Winston-Salem College, now known as Winston-Salem State University, part of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, the nation's oldest black athletic conference.

Those in the know pronounce it C Eye Double-A. And in the mid-'60s, in the CIAA, the Pearl was all the rage. News spread about him on the grapevine the way Southern women spread news about some gospel quartet seen in Alabama or North Carolina that had dropped them to their knees. *Ebony* magazine would have spreads about the yearly CIAA basketball tournament. Three- and four-page spreads, as much about the fashion extravagance of the weekend as about the basketball.

Monroe had scored plenty as a high school player at John Bartram High in Philadelphia. But the major college recruiters didn't chase after him. Maybe it was the times. Maybe it was the myopia of big-time college coaches, who were reluctant to field majority-black teams. Monroe's coach at Winston-Salem was Clarence "Big House" Gaines, who let Monroe become the Pearl. Monroe played in the South as the civil rights movement hummed beyond the campus dorms. Black college ball wasn't always on the nation's radar then, but a lot of first-generation college students would carry his exploits in their memory for years to come. The Pearl's legend grew. Some took to calling him "Jesus."

My boyhood hoops mate, Steve Flannigan, got himself down to North Carolina, to the C Eye Double-A, and into a basketball uniform for St. Augustine's College. On visits back home to Columbus, he'd regale us with stories about the Pearl that were still floating across the gyms and playgrounds long after Monroe had departed, such as how in one game the Pearl launched a jumper deep in the corner as time expired only



A larger-than-life image of Earl Monroe presides over a news conference last week announcing the retirement of Monroe's Bullets jersey.

BY MANUEL BALCE CENETA—ASSOCIATED PRESS

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to fade into the locker room before the ball sailed through the net.

In Spike Lee's film *He Got Game*, there's a haunting scene on a boardwalk. Jake Shuttlesworth (Denzel Washington) is a convict suddenly freed on a furlough to persuade his son to play basketball for a certain college. His son (NBA star Ray Allen) is named Jesus Shuttlesworth. On the boardwalk stroll, Jake explains to Jesus that he named him after Earl Monroe. "They called him Jesus," Jake said, "because he was the truth."

As soon as Jake mentions Monroe's name, the movie goes to a flashback of Monroe as a Bullet, warming up, then spinning in his orange jersey in some small hazy gym and vanishing downcourt. Then a quick flash back to the boardwalk, son and father still strolling: "I'm talking about him when he was with the Bullets," the father says, Afro bobbing against the sunshine. "But the Knicks, they put shackles on him. They locked him up in a straitjacket or something." And then the movie goes back again to Monroe, pirouetting in the air, spinning as if on ice skates, the Aaron Copland soundtrack hovering, too. It is as lovely a montage of an athlete as anyone might ever see.

Jack Marin, a teammate from the Bullets years, recalls that often there were no more than 5,000 or 6,000 people at their games. He laments that the crowds were not larger, if only to see Monroe's unique gifts. "Earl was very subtle but also deft," he says. "He did small sleights of hand. It took a trained eye to watch him and what he was able to do. He'd perform one of his magic tricks and move on to the next."

His Bullet career (1967-1971) was short, and it seemed alarming indeed when he was traded to the Knicks.

It hurt to watch him pull back his game a little — that straitjacket — but there were still enough moments of pure magical joy, the blind pass to Bill Bradley, the between-the-legs pass on a fast break to Mike Riordan, that left the kids in Columbus whooping.

The times seemed suited for Frazier and Monroe. Warren Beatty's movie *Bonnie and Clyde* ushered in a new fashion wave of fedoras and double-breasted suits. Disco was a sensation, but so were tie clips and long tweed coats and the Pointer Sisters singing "Yes We Can Can" and the Pearl spinning. Even Andy Warhol was known to get himself over to Madison Square Garden to see the Pearl and Clyde.

One of the first hardback books I ever bought was 1974's *Rockin' Steady: A Guide to Basketball & Cool*, by Walt Frazier and Ira Berkow. The photographs were dazzling. I'd lend the book to friends, but they couldn't keep it overnight. Still, one got the feeling that the Pearl didn't need to write a book to advertise his coolness.

But back to that 1960s night in Columbus:

The popular state fair took place in the summer, but in the fall the rides were gone, the skies darkened early and hoops were on everyone's mind. With four of my friends — Flannigan, Olen Miller, Aaron Lockett and Ron Prater — I happily angled up to the front door of the coliseum that evening. "It was a special night," remembers Miller, now a salesman in Tampa. "We barely got in because we had just enough money. Some people in the crowd wanted to see Oscar Robertson [of the Royals]. But we wanted to see the Pearl."

Once inside we began scoping out unclaimed seats as close to the players' bench as possible. Now and then during warm-ups, Monroe would glance away

from the court as we yelled his name, but he refocused his attention quickly to the business at hand. As the game started, we elbowed one another every time he touched the ball. "We were rising and falling on his passes," says Miller. "This guy wasn't capable of making a simple pass."

Each of us knew that if we tried the same thing in basketball practice at school that we'd have to run those dreaded suicide drills up and down the court. Basketball coaches in the '60s could be autocratic. They taught fundamentals and expected things to be done by the book. This way, not that way. "The Pearl did everything wrong, according to the rules," says Miller.

Immediately after the game we rushed down a hallway to the Bullets locker room. We stood back from the door, waiting to see the Pearl. But when he emerged we couldn't get close enough. "Pearl. Pearl. Hey, Pearl." His head bobbed as he was whisked away. I remember we mimicked his moves walking home through the chill of the desolate fairgrounds. We debated the overcoat the Pearl had on, wondering if it was lamb or cashmere. We decided lamb, maybe because lamb sounded more exotic to us. I doubt we actually knew one from the other.

How we hold on to our heroes.

Just three months ago, I was sitting at Reagan National, waiting to board a flight. A gaggle of passengers got off another plane and began walking in my direction. I knew it was him even before he got within 10 feet of me.

"Pearl!" I blurted, louder than I meant to.

He turned toward my voice and we locked eyes in that nanosecond that a celebrity gives you. "Hey now," he said, his head nodding. The whole exchange lasted only seconds. I smiled to myself. And the Pearl kept moving.

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MIKE WISE

The Pearl Changed The Culture of the Game

• Originally published December 1, 2007

In his autobiography *Giant Steps*, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar recounted the day an all-star team from Philadelphia came to claim the Rucker League crown. He spoke of a player who had moves the gangly teen never had seen, vividly describing the two busloads of worshipers who came to see him play.

Harlem, circa 1966, and the only sound was a “continuous wail that seemed to be coming from everywhere.”

“Where’s Jesus? Black Jesus!”

Earl Monroe parted the crowd to get to the court. They kept chanting, in a whisper now:

“Black Jesus, Black Jesus, Black Jesus.”

“Mount Morris Park, that’s where it was played,” Monroe said yesterday. “What a place. ... What a time.”

Yesterday afternoon, it was all about back in the day. Same goes for tonight at Verizon Center, where a franchise’s past and future will be seamlessly fused together in a long overdue ceremony.

Earl “The Pearl” Monroe, who played for the Baltimore Bullets from 1967 to 1971, will have his number raised to the rafters of the building alongside Wes Unseld’s No. 41, Elvin Hayes’s No. 11 and Gus Johnson’s No. 25 this evening, 36 years after the smoothest, sweetest player of his generation left town, taking his soulful brilliance with him to Madison Square Garden.

For once, Gilbert Arenas will share the arena with another player who has taken more thrill-seeking, wild shots than himself. But his ego is okay with that.

“Come on, that’s Earl Monroe,” Arenas said yesterday. “I had an Earl number 10



1970 PHOTO BY WALTER IOOSS JR.—NBAE VIA GETTY IMAGES

“My first years in Baltimore, that was a great place and time,” said Earl “The Pearl” Monroe, who will have his number retired December 1, 2007.

Black Jesus shirt made just for Saturday. You got to see it.”

That’s the thing about the Pearl: From a teenage Lew Alcindor to a current NBA all-star, even the game’s stars always have been in awe of Monroe.

He played here only four seasons, “but Baltimore and Washington is where I became the player everyone remembered,” Monroe said. His titles and celebrity status were acquired in New York, but he entered the Hall of Fame in 1990 with a Bullets jersey. “Where I really got my start.”

The adolescent reading this who believes improvisation and creativity started with Michael and now resides on an AND1 bus needs to check himself before he wrecks himself. Monroe spun his body 360 degrees in midair before Jordan or LeBron James’s mother were born. So unpredictable, so original, Monroe painted more than he played, and the court was his canvas. He once was asked to describe his stutter-stepping, stop-and-pop game. The Pearl settled on this:

“The thing is, I don’t know what I’m going to do with the ball, and if I don’t know, I’m quite sure the guy guarding me doesn’t know either.”

Monroe was less a symbol of basketball’s evolution than society’s. He was not a free-flowing player as much as an ideal — a pirouetting vision of black empowerment, who married sport and pop culture long before Jordan. Something about his loping gait, his easygoing, “don’t-worry-I-got-this-game” smile — Monroe and teammate Walt Frazier’s style and panache flat-out

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reflected the zeitgeist of 1970s New York.

Clyde and the Pearl in fur on Friday night — that was how to live.

The Black Jesus tale isn't even my favorite Monroe story. No, you have to bring in Miles Davis for that one. The man who gave us "Birth of the Cool" often would telephone the embodiment of cool courtside.

"He talked with such a raspy voice, I couldn't understand him," Monroe said. "He kept saying, 'Ded, ded,' and I would keep saying, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah,' like I knew what he was talking about. It wasn't until I read Miles's autobiography that I realized he was trying to give me the name of his orthopedic surgeon."

Monroe needed bone spurs removed and Miles thought he could help. "Wish I could've understood him," he said.

"He was Miles," Monroe said, and he wasn't the only '70s icon to deal with adversity. The Pearl carried an awful secret to the stage the night he was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame 17 years ago. Monroe was severely in debt and had no health insurance. His joints and cartilage throbbed from all the midair improvisation during his youth. Double hip-replacement surgery would have to wait.

Three years ago, he admitted to me that he owed the IRS \$5.5 million, money the IRS said had been hidden in tax shelters by his accountant in the 1970s. "I looked at 'em and said, 'I didn't make this much; how did I owe this much?'" he said then.

Too prideful to ask friends for help, it took him most of the 1990s pay off the debt. "I went underground. The last thing I would do is ask somebody to help me," he said. At the time, he relied on a \$5,000 donation from former NBA player Dave Bing, one of the NBA Retired Players Association's founders, to steady his life again.

This is the part of Monroe's story edited from the highlight package.

The Pearl, penniless. Crazy, right? That's what Monroe thought. So he took it upon himself to devote his efforts to bettering life for players who didn't benefit from the stratospheric salaries of today; the average salary when he and Frazier played in 1974 was \$30,000. Monroe never made more than \$200,000 per season.

Recent changes in the pension plan have helped the retired players a bit, but Monroe presses on. "For the most part in my era, guys already took their pensions," he said. "We need programs for hospitalization when guys need it. I mean, the new deal is all well and good, but we still have guys that have are hurting out there. If we don't do it, who's going to?"

Certainly not this generation of fans. Marita Green, Monroe's wife, told me a disturbing story about the 2004 All-Star Game in Los Angeles. The woman distributing credentials to the Magic Johnson tribute had never heard of Earl Monroe. When he finally convinced her of his worthiness to wear an NBA lanyard, he and Marita strolled down the red carpet and heard loud applause.

"I thought, 'Finally, Earl gets his due around here,'" she said. "Then I turned

around. They were cheering for Dennis Rodman."

And yet Monroe makes it clear: He's not an old head about to go off on an "in-my-day" rant. He knows he had it good.

He's now a big fan of LeBron and Dwyane Wade, whose subtle flair he admits reminds of himself. And he loves Arenas, who last season erupted for 60 points one night and broke Monroe's single-game franchise scoring record against the same Lakers that Monroe once dropped 56 points on; it only took someone 38 years to eclipse his mark.

Asked if Arenas takes as many ill-advised shots as himself, he added, "Hey, if they go in, it's all good."

Monroe discovered he had an enlarged prostate nine years ago and now speaks to men about urinary care on behalf of a drug company. He still is recovering from hip-replacement surgery in July. A setback while walking in the sand in Puerto Rico this past summer left him feeling "a little gimpy" for his big night.

It's wild to think the Pearl is 63 now. He and Marita moved from New Jersey back to Harlem several years ago.

They live a 10-minute subway ride from where he and Clyde ruled Manhattan, where a flamboyant guard became something more than a basketball player. Much more.

"My first years in Baltimore, that was a great place and time. But once you leave that, you can't recapture it," he said.

As his No. 10 Baltimore Bullets jersey ascends to the roof of the arena tonight, Earl Monroe can't blame us for trying.

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Academic Content Standards

This lesson addresses academic content standards of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Maryland

Reading/ELA: Apply knowledge of organizational patterns of informational text to facilitate understanding

- a) Analyze the organizational patterns of texts such as sequential and/or chronological order, cause/effect, problem/solution, similarities/differences, description, main idea and supporting details, order of importance, transition or signal words and phrases that indicate the organizational pattern
(Standard 2 Comprehension of Informational Text, Indicator 3)

Reading/ELA: Analyze text features to facilitate understanding of informational texts.

- b) Analyze graphic aids that contribute to meaning
- c) Analyze informational aids that contribute to meaning
(Standard 2 Comprehension of Informational Text, Indicator 2)

Mathematics: Analyze Data

- a) Interpret tables
- b) Interpret box-and-whisker plots
- c) Interpret scatter plots
- d) Interpret circle graphs
(Standard 4.0, Knowledge of Statistics, Grade 8)

The Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum Content Standards can be found online at <http://mdk12.org/mspp/vsc/index.html>.

Virginia

English: The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational texts.

- c) Distinguish fact from opinion in newspapers, magazines, and other print media.
- d) Identify the source, viewpoint, and purpose of texts.
- e) Describe how word choice and language structure convey an author's viewpoint.
- f) Summarize what is read.
- g) Organize and synthesize information for use in written and oral presentations. (Reading, Grade 7, 7.6)

English: The student will write a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational. (Writing, Grade 8, 8.7)

Mathematics: The student, given a problem situation, will collect, organize, and display a set of numerical data in a variety of forms, using bar graphs, stem-and-leaf plots, and line graphs, to draw conclusions and make predictions. (Probability and Statistics, Grade 5, 5.18)

Standards of Learning currently in effect for Virginia Public Schools can be found online at www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml.

Washington, D.C.

English Language Arts: Distinguish fact from opinion in expository text, providing supporting evidence from text. (Informational Text, Grade 5, E1)

English Language Arts: Write persuasive (controversial issue) essays that

- structure ideas and arguments in a sustained and logical fashion;
- clarify and defend positions with precise and relevant evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations, and/or expressions of commonly accepted beliefs and logical reasoning. (Writing, Grade 10, E.5)

Media: Analyze the effect on the reader's or viewer's emotions of text and image in print journalism, and images, sound, and text in electronic journalism, distinguishing techniques used in each to achieve these effects. (10.M.2)

Social Studies, Geography: Students use map and globe skills to determine the absolute locations of places and interpret information available through a map or globe's legend, scale, and symbolic representations. (2.1)

Learning Standards for DCPS are found online at www.k12.dc.us/dcps/Standards/standardsHome.htm.