

Faculty Work Comprehensive List

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Are You Mad(ness)?

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Are You Mad(ness)?

Abstract

"The lure and fascination of athletics in our culture stems largely from the unpredictable outcome and untamed responses of the participants. As we tune in over the course of the next several weeks and stare intently at our television sets rooting for the Davids of the college basketball world, we might be better served to have a mirror nearby to ensure we are reflecting the glory of the Lord."

Posting about March Madness, players, and fans from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/are-you-madness/>

Keywords

In All Things, basketball, athletics, sports, fans, Christianity, NCAA, March Madness

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt College.

Are You Mad(ness)?

 allinallthings.org/are-you-madness/

Ross Douma

As we're into the second day of the [NCAA tournament](#), brackets are busted (thanks Iowa State) and people with very little knowledge of college hoops are likely leading their respective office pools. The beauty of March Madness is that history has taught us there is no scientific method to predicting the outcomes of these games and that using a team's favorite colors or mascot will bring about as much accuracy as reviewing a team's defensive field goal percentage or rebounding margin. For many of us, the novelty of the tournament wears off after the first two weekends when the likelihood of upsets significantly declines. As a society, and individuals, we reveal a lot about ourselves as we sit in front of TVs with our brackets in hand rooting with passion for 'David' to knock off 'Goliath', despite knowing little about either team. In that sense, are we a compassionate lot that enjoys seeing the little guy work his way to the top or are we vindictive and want to see the perennial power topple? Probably an internal question for each of us to ask ourselves.

Athletics are the great laboratory of the human spirit with so many emotions racing to the surface during the course of a contest. Each time an athlete steps in the batter's box or gets under center for a snap, he brings his personality and character traits with him and puts them on full display. Practices, team meetings, film sessions, etc. serve to build and reinforce character for athletes during the journey of a season; but the raw competition of games tend to reveal true character. During the intensity of a game, an athlete is not able to mask his emotions, conceal his personality, or alter his character traits. In short, he is very much exposed in the arena with every move being scrutinized and evaluated. Game competition serves as a measuring stick against not only an opponent, but also with the inner struggle to grow and mature as a child of God.

The same passion players take with them to the court can also be found among the fans in seats, bleachers or living rooms. While many observers are able to take in sporting events and admire the athletic gifts God blessed young people with, some fans leave venues unsatisfied and angry at the past two hours they spent watching a life-building activity. In a recent study done at the University of Maryland, researchers noted that 53% of those polled admitted they become angry at sporting events. What is more, the majority of those surveyed indicated they were unable to articulate exactly what made them act and feel the way they do. In addition, the [National Federation of State High School Associations](#) (NFHS) says the recruitment of officials has dropped by 20% this past decade as officials no longer want to put up with unruly and aggressive fans. Clearly there is something amiss in our culture when overzealous fans routinely drive new legislation that is necessary to protect officials, umpires and referees following contests. While anger at sporting events is not a new phenomenon (see Roman gladiators), our perspective seems tainted at times as spectators when we routinely critique college athletics on social media and gamble away millions of dollars on an 18 year olds jump shot.

The lure and fascination of athletics in our culture stems largely from the unpredictable outcome and untamed responses of the participants. As we tune in over the course of the next several weeks and stare intently at our television sets rooting for the Davids of the college basketball world, we might be better served to have a mirror nearby to ensure we are reflecting the glory of the Lord ([2 Corinthians 3:18](#)).