

I never actually have watched a World Series game. It never struck me as a fun thing to do because I'm not a sports fan.

The closest I ever came to watching a televised baseball match was a gay porn video called *The Bases Are Loaded*. I dated a man who dragged me to Baltimore Orioles games, but he lured me with beer and hot dogs.

We were in the middle of that blush of new love, when you do things with the understanding that it will sustain your sex life. That man also had me cooking and living in a Washington, D.C., suburb, so baseball was an ugly natural progression.

I never have been much for television, period. My first name has guaranteed that I've been haunted by Capt. Kirk jokes since kindergarten.

Supremely creative men still use *Star Trek* as a pickup line shortly before asking me, "What's your sign?" But I never have watched an episode of that show, either.

I'm a little baffled by the allure of baseball, which is supposedly the epitome of all things American. To me, picking between the New York Yankees and the New York Mets was a daunting prospect, akin to sorting out a favorite in the Israeli-Palestinian war. The so-called Subway Series had me scratching my noggin with confusion.

I have three older brothers, one of whom is an obsessive sports fan. He would watch tiddly-winks if it were televised.

He's an avid golfer, which is something else that falls into my aesthetic blind spot. He's so

A whole new ball game

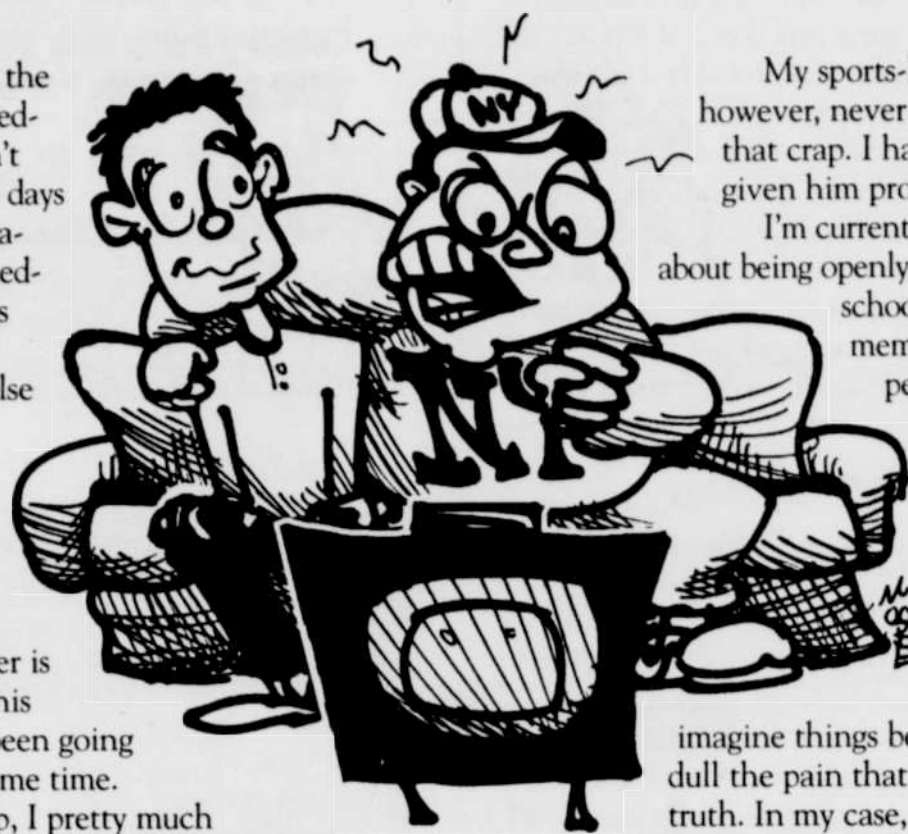
World Series proves to be an eye-opener for this sissy

neurotic about the Washington Redskins, he doesn't shave on game days and has a miniature wooden Red-skin he touches at kickoff.

If anyone else touches it—ever—that person is responsible for the jinx of an entire season. My brother is 40 years old; this behavior has been going on for quite some time.

Growing up, I pretty much assumed all of my brothers were homophobic assholes. I mean, come on. Two of them are born-again Christians, and one of them is a sports fan who lives in Jesse Helms territory.

Sometimes their words and actions bore out my assumptions. When I came out in high school, one of them condemned me at his breakfast prayer group. One of them donates money to Operation Rescue and opens my mail to his children to make sure I'm not indoctrinating them into my "lifestyle."



My sports-loving brother, however, never pulled any of that crap. I haven't always given him proper credit.

I'm currently writing a book about being openly gay in high school. Funny how the memory molds our personal history.

Sometimes we remember things to be worse to give ourselves impressive sob stories. Sometimes we

imagine things being better to dull the pain that accompanies truth. In my case, I let the stereotypes about macho heterosexual sports fans get in the way of our relationship.

This is a man who only recently has started watching the Oscars. How much can you trust someone who doesn't watch the Oscars?

But the truth about my brother is he really tried. He took me out on cold mornings to teach me to kick field goals. He tried in vain to teach me how in the world they calculate a first down. He took me to football games in the freezing cold, and on the way home we sang

along to Hall and Oates songs on the radio. He took me to my first concerts and taught me how to smoke pot with a water bong. All in all, he hit all the marks.

As I've written about him and my other two brothers, I've realized how selective memory can be. I expected to dredge up all sorts of repressed memories of them taunting me as a sissy.

But I haven't. I've remembered a lot of very loving moments.

Gay people often run from family, for good reason. I ran like hell from my brothers.

I went to D.C. and New York and San Francisco. Living in the gay ghettos gave me a touch of cynicism about the redemption of straight people in general.

Time and distance have allowed me to be more forgiving. However awkward it was for me to be gay in a flamboyantly heterosexual family, they were no better prepared for it.

My brother the sports fan, as I look back on it, has been pretty damn great to me. Now it's my turn to try to understand him.

When the first game of the series ended—after what seemed like 53 innings—I called him. I still had no idea who to root for.

During the third inning I started making hash marks in two columns to tally which team had the cutest players. But I gave up.

"Who are you rooting for in the series?" I asked him.

"Are you really watching it?" he asked.

"Yeah."

"The Yankees, man! How about you?"

"The Yankees...man."

God, I feel like Hillary Clinton. **JK**

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