

A Somber Return to Professional Sport by Adam GAUTHIER

The weeks following the suicide bombing of the World Trade Center in New York have been very traumatic for millions, if not billions, of people around the world. Returning to normalcy has been a difficult process and will no doubt be an ongoing one.

Unfortunately for some, returning to normalcy had to be done more quickly. At the time of the disaster, the professional sports world was at its peak. Major League Baseball was just weeks away from the playoffs, the National Football League was entering its second week of the regular season, the National Hockey League was about to begin its pre-season and 38 year-old Michael Jordan was to announce that he was coming out of retirement for the second time to play for the Washington Wizards. Countless sports organizations, from College Sports all the way down to little league, halted their regular schedules in the wake of the tragic events.

After taking six days off, the sports world made an attempt to go back to work. A lot had changed in a week. Security had been increased substantially in all of the professional leagues with new regulations. Backpacks and small bags are now banned from MLB ballparks. But the harshest of the new precautions hit young fans: Player autograph signings behind team dugouts are no longer permitted before the game.

the biggest fear for returning players was not security but the psychological effects the attack would have on their ability to play the game. Many players are used to annoying fans and the pressures of playing overtime but this is so much different. Many people, including players, have expressed worries about the possibility of a plane crashing into one of the sports stadiums during a game. Air space has therefore been restricted over all sporting facilities in North America during games. Some players also fear traveling on commercial airliners and, as a result, many organizations have had to use private jets to move their teams around North

America.

Many of the teams have been able to return to their routine, but for some teams it will be a gradual process. A week after the tragedy, the New York Rangers opened their pre-season at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan just a few blocks away from the World Trade Center. It was an emotional night in which tributes were given to the rescue workers of New York who gave their lives to save others, and who continue to dig away at the rubble of the twin towers.

Last weekend, the New York Mets returned home to play against the National League East leading Atlanta Braves. The Mets sat just two and a half games behind the Braves for first in the Eastern Division and were on a role having won 10 of their last 11 (The Mets now sit 4 games back). To honour the rescue workers of New York, the players donned the hats of the NYPD, FDNY, the NY Port Authority and the paramedics. The players on both teams then stood side by side as the national anthem and "God Bless America" were sung.

Beside the pregame honours that the various teams have bestowed, they have also donated millions of dollars in aid to those affected by the disaster. Players in the New York area have also donated their time to the effort. Players from MLB and NFL teams have visited the disaster site many times to move supplies and to help boost the moral of rescue workers.

Many of us see professional athletes as money-grubbing crybabies. There are definitely a few in professional sport, but I think over the past few weeks we have been able to look past this and see these people for who they really are: earnest human beings who are willing to put whatever resources they can offer forward in the hopes of helping those in need. In the aftermath of this disaster many people will change their outlook on life. In all likelihood the spectacle of the sports world, and the way in which we view it, will change as well.

The Event Tent

bar acts

wednesday, october 3

vacant

thursday, october 4

Baba's Lounge: **Chas Guay** and friends
Brennan's: **Eyes For Telescopes** and
Windom Earle
The Barn: **Great Balancing Act**
McAssey's: **Greg Doucette**
Myron's: **Some Metallica** cover band
Olde Dublin Pub: 1749

friday, october 5

Baba's Lounge: **Mitch Schurman Band**
The Barn: **Downtime**
Big Momma's Pub: **Roger Jones and
Marvin Birt**
Brennan's: **Eyes For Telescopes**
Melons: **Split Lip**
Myron's: **Kindle** and **The Mahones**
Olde Dublin Pub: 1749

saturday, october 6

Baba's Lounge: **Zubot and Dawson** and
Eyes For Telescopes
Big Momma's Pub: **Paul MacAusland
and Gary Chapman**
Brennan's: **Dysfunctional Dads**
McAssey's: **No Fuss Movers**
Myron's: **Big Tilda**
Olde Dublin Pub: 1749

sunday, october 7

vacant

monday, october 8

vacant

tuesday, october 9

Baba's Lounge: **Crush**

Have You Quit Smoking?

Participants willing to be interviewed about their experience will be awarded \$20 for a 30-minute interview.

To sign up or for information about interview eligibility, please call 894-2833 or e-mail aevans@upej.ca.

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