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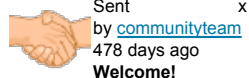
Sports Stack

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kylestack

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[devjfl1 \(jeff\)](#) You all MUST read my latest blog! ANOTHER WEIGHT WATCHER SUPERSTAR!!!!
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ESPN Dumbs Down Hard Hits

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Written by [kylestack](#) on 10/30/2011 9:57 PM

I've become passionate about supporting research on concussions. I'm one of those folks who thinks athletes should be removed from games – and held out of play – while showing concussion symptoms. Which means I also believe that big-time tackles in football or checks in hockey or hits in other sports shouldn't be glorified by the media. That's why I have a problem with what ESPN's Numbers Never Lie program did recently.

The show is a part of ESPN's new weekday afternoon lineup; although I won't do it the service of listing at what time and on which ESPN channel it airs. It's a half-hour statistics-based program that pits the quintessential "nerdy" stat geeks against ex-players and ex-coaches who use their experience to question the stat-geeks' assertions. It's all very contrived.

Two weeks ago, I caught the end of the show, which had a bit that celebrated the weekend's three hardest NFL hits. The hosts and analysts yucked it up with all the typical yelling and woofing you'd expect. That struck me as ironic, considering the celebration of the bone-jarring tackles ran counter to the concussion-related information ESPN dispenses.

That same week, I watched an interview in which the network's proclaimed injury expert, Stephanie Bell, visited Baltimore Orioles second baseman Brian Roberts at a Pittsburgh-based medical facility. The eight-minute story revealed how Roberts had been rehabilitating from a devastating series of concussions he suffered the last two seasons. It was enlightening in that it divulged how many road blocks there are to concussion recovery – even for world-class athletes.

In other words, the hard hits that are the cause for concussions should not be laughed at. In fact, ESPN removed a segment from its Monday Night Countdown show called Jacked Up!, which showed NFL players getting drilled as the on-air cast oo'd and ah'h'd after every hit. It wasn't the same as the Numbers Never Lie segment, but its effect was similar. It seems that sports programmers should have moved on from that by now.

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