Sports

**Bad week for: Dee-fense, after the coach of Ripdorf, a minor-league German soccer team, ordered his players to keep 6 feet of social distance away from the players of SV Holdenstedt II, who were recently exposed to the coronavirus. The final score: Ripdorf 0, Holdenstedt 37. *(The Week magazine, October 2, 2020)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Like all sports, basketball has produced its moments of greatness. One of the high points of college basketball was reached in the 1949-50 season, when the underdog City College of New York became the first--and only -- team to win both the NCAA and NIT championships in the same year. The Beavers had finished their schedule that year without ranking among the top 20 teams, and had been the last squad to be invited to both tournaments. Yet they went on to victory in both competitions, in the process of defeating the teams ranked one, two, three, five, and six. (Bruce D. Witherspoon, in Astounding Facts , p. 47)**

**A scan for concussion damage: Evidence is mounting that concussions put professional and even high school athletes at risk of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative brain disease that can lead to severe depression and dementia. Until recently, however, doctors could only spot signs of CTE postmortem in autopsies, like the one that found the disease in former NFL player Junior Seau, who killed himself last year. Now, for the first time, researchers using positron emission tomography scans have diagnosed CTE in living patients, raising hopes that doctors can intervene earlier “rather than try to repair damage once it becomes extensive,” Gary Small, a psychiatry professor at the Semel Institute, tells The New York Times. He and his colleagues injected five retired pro football players with a special chemical marker that attaches to tau proteins, which are linked to the disorder. When they scanned the ex-players’ brains, all five showed significantly higher levels of tau than a control group did. If the testing technique can be fully developed, the implications of being able to detect damage in the brains of living athletes “could be enormous,” says study coauthor Julian Bailes. “What if these guys could walk away at the right time?” *(The Week magazine, February 15, 2013)***

**The depressing thing about tennis is that no matter how good I get, I’ll never be as good as a wall. *(Mitch Hedberg, comedian)***

**On November 7, 1970, the first interscholastic Ultimate Frisbee match was played between Columbia High School from Maplewood, New Jersey, and nearby Millburn High School. Columbia student Joel Silver had played "Frisbee football" at a summer camp in 1967. Upon his return to high school in 1968, he formed his own Frisbee team with friends from the student council and newspaper. Over the next few years, formal rules would be developed and printed for "Ultimate," and on this day in 1970, the first official interscholastic game was played in the school parking lot. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

**27% of Americans believe God plays a direct role in determining which teams win sports events. 53% believe God rewards athletes who have faith with success. *(Public Religion Research Institute, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 15, 2013)***

**On February 5, 1971, Alan Shepard hit a golf ball on the moon. Shepard wasn't just the commander of the Apollo 14 mission but also an avid golfer. Prior to the mission, he discussed the golf shot with NASA flight leaders, arguing that the shot would provide a cool moment of scientific outreach for the public. Once Shepard got permission, he had a 6-iron golf club head attached to the shaft of a lunar soil sampler. Shepard hit two balls. His first swing got more moon dust than ball, but Shepard boasted that his second hit went "miles and miles and miles." *(The Daily Chronicle)***

**The thing I love about sports is the emotion it brings to a world where true passion is such a scarce commodity. In a society where personal, political and religious beliefs are muzzled for fear of offending, sports remains one of our last legitimate outlets. It allows us to scream and cheer and wear our bias on our sleeves like medals of honor earned in combat. Here we can state our case, argue the obvious and steadfastly defend indefensible positions without fear or remorse. *(Ken Burger, in Charleston, S.C., Post and Courier)***

**Sport is the only profession I know that when you retire, you have to go to work. *(Earl Monroe, basketball great)***

**How sports is like religion: With organized religion in decline in the U.S., what is filling the void? asked Michael Serazio. The Baltimore Ravens. The Red Sox. The Miami Heat. And so on. Even in our increasingly secular country, people still crave the sense of tribal belonging and mass transcendence that they once found in churches and temples. And “if you look hard at sports, you can’t help but see the contours of religion.” Today, the cathedrals are called Wrigley Field, Madison Square Garden, and the Superdome; there, fans with allegiances that often date to their forefathers fill the pews, don the revered team’s sacred vestments, and melt into a collective identity. At the game, at bars, or in living rooms, we experience ecstatic exaltation when “we” triumph, and collectively mourn our losses. We even imbue relics like players’ jerseys, autographs, and Curt Schilling’s bloody sock with iconic significance. Through sports, we fill in the empty places in our lives. We identify with something larger than ourselves. The salvation our devotion provides may not be everlasting – but it sure looks like religion to me. *(The Week magazine, February 15, 2013)***

**Be careful what you wish for, girls: Girls do not belong on boys’ sports teams, said Jose Rodriguez in The Calgary Sun. This became glaringly obvious in 1992, when Canadian Manon Rheaume became the first woman to play in the National Hockey League. In a single preseason game as goalie for the Tampa Bay Lightning, Rheaume gave up two goals on nine shots – “hardly a giant leap for womankind.” That was the end of gender integration in professional hockey. But “sadly, the sport-meets-gender debate has reared its ugly head” again, this time in high school sports. The Manitoba Human Rights Commission has ruled that a pair of twin girls who wanted to try out for the boys’ hockey team should be allowed to do so – even though their high school has a girls’ team. The girls daily tried out and failed to make the cut, but they still claimed that the court ruling was a win for women’s rights. They were wrong. Armed with that same ruling, boys in Manitoba are now petitioning for the right to try out for girls’ teams. And “simple biology would dictate many of the boys trying out for the girls’ teams won’t be cut. It’s not sexist to say so; it’s a fact.” By pushing for the right to play with the boys, the girls may end up killing their own sports leagues altogether. Wouldn’t it have been better to just “let boys be boys”? *(The Week magazine, October 13, 2006)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***