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The Artful Dodger

In the beginning...
Anonymous

Last, Last Beloved
Ancient Hebrew saying

One appealing aspect of sports is the clear and well understood rules of the games. Off the court, the rules are not nearly as well defined, not so consistently applied. Many of our daily interactions are shaped by a vague understanding of how to behave—"rules learned during kindergarten." Hitting the girl with pigtails because she giggled during your presentation is not appropriate, even if you are angry.

And so we search for golden rules, and pray for men in striped shirts with silver whistles to appear at our moments of crisis and recite from the official rule book. We are willing to suffer the consequences of failure if we can be sure that we have actually failed. It is not knowing where we stand that is so hard to take. Are we in the right, or the wrong? Have we advanced the ball, or are we in danger of giving up the winning score?

A ball player may look to the "stats" for an estimate of his performance at the end of the year, but the majority of us look to less tangible, and, hopefully, more satisfying criteria. Ultimately all we can really ask is that people behave consistently, and that once in a while we are given the opportunity to carry the ball.

In the *Journal*, we present opportunities for authors to express their observations in the articles we publish. In order to put their work in perspective, we occasionally ask an expert in the field to write an editorial. The editorial may make additional points about the work, praise the observations of the investigators or point to presumed deficiencies in the observations. To provide a forum for interested observers or other investigators, we strive for an active exchange of views in letters to the editor.

In each of these areas someone has to draw the line and signal when the game is over. The *JNM* rule book says: For articles with editorials, the editorialist will have the last word; for letters to the editor, the author of the article has last licks.

It may not be fair—but like all other games—those are the rules.
Now, does anybody know the score?

H. William Strauss, Editor
The Journal of Nuclear Medicine