

## Commentary

# Brett Hull needs to get off my TV

I hate Brett Hull. I know that sounds like a pretty harsh statement to make, especially considering I've never met the man. But I do. I hate him. And I wish he would just go away.

Hearing him tell the people of Buffalo to "get over it" Sunday when his NBC broadcast partner, Ray Ferraro, reminded him of his "No Goal" from Game Six of the 1999 Stanley Cup finals, elicited such a colorful and vulgar retort from me that even my girlfriend recoiled in astonishment. Get over it? We're just supposed to forget how the Sabres were cheated by the league out of their chance to win the first championship this area has seen since the AFL days of the Buffalo Bills? We're expected to erase the images of Hull skating around the rink, holding our Stanley Cup over his head in celebration? I still see Hull's left skate sitting in the crease as he slaps home the winning goal past Dominik Hasek to give the Dallas Stars (why does Dallas even have a hockey team?) the series win. That memory will never disappear or even fade. It's just as crisp and clear in my head as it was the moment it happened eight years ago.

Now my mother taught me not to hate anyone, but I seethe with rage whenever I see Hull's howdy-ma'am smirk taunting me in high definition. Doesn't he

understand how much the sports fans of Western New York relate to the local teams? Doesn't he realize how our team's shortcomings reverberate within us all, making us feel inferior? His "No Goal" crushed the hopes of an entire metropolitan area. That was our year.

Now, the best Sabres team to ever take the ice is four wins away from returning to the Stanley Cup finals for the third time in franchise history, and we have to watch him openly cheer for the other team on national television. Nice tact, Brett. Let's get Rob Ray out of the MSG booth, send him over to NBC and give Hull a Buffalo beat-down as only Razor knows how.

Oh, and just as he picked the Sabres to lose to the Rangers in the conference semifinals, Hull is predicting the Ottawa Senators will trounce the boys in blue and gold in the finals. Well Brett, you'll have 18,690 fans inside HSBC Arena Thursday night ready to tell you where you can stick your disrespect.

Now my hatred for Brett Hull will not be the only vocal venom flying this week. When the Senators hit the ice in Buffalo, the fight will be on. Remember,

these are the same two teams that brought a 12-player brawl to the NHL back in February and racked up more than 100 minutes of penalties. We might as well bring Michael Buffer in to announce the starting lineups, since this will certainly be more hostile than that Oscar De La Hoya-Floyd Mayweather Jr. fight was Saturday.

It's no secret the Sabres and Senators hate each other. That's what happens when division rivals play fast, physical hockey and can match weapon for weapon. Buffalo and Ottawa played eight times in the regular season and not one of those games could be considered a tea party.

But that's what makes sports so interesting. When raw emotion figures into the equation, the contests take on added dimensions. Celebrations are euphoric, while disappointment is crushing.

At some point, every sports fan finds an athlete to detest, someone who can turn a philosophical pacifist into a warmongering barbarian simply by showing his face. For me, it's Brett Hull. Argh!

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## North softball continues improved play

Williamsville North had a very productive week as they went 3-1 in ECIC Division I play and split two games in the Wildcat Invitational Softball Tournament on Saturday, May 5 at Walden Pond in Lancaster.

The Lady Spartans are 6-4 in league play (after a 1-3 start) and are 9-8 overall.

North opened the week traveling to Frontier on Monday, April 30 for a rematch with the Lady Falcons. The Lady Spartans lost the first game to Frontier, 1-0 so revenge was on their minds.

Trailing 2-0 into the sixth inning and with two outs, Amanda Maraschiello started the North comeback with a single up the middle. Kristen Weber followed with a walk and Kaitlyn McNally hit a smash up the middle for North's first run.

The rally continued in the next inning. Krissy Flierl started the hitting with a slap hit to left field for a single. Lauren O'Brien followed with another single to left. Tricia Kennery was hit by a pitch to load the bases. Kristin Ball hit a fielder's choice and all runners were safe. Weber followed with the hit of the game as she lined a pitch to the left center field gap for a bases clearing triple. North scored six runs in the sixth to help avenge their earlier defeat.

North's league play continued on Wednesday, May 2 as they hosted Clarence in a rematch of an earlier game won by the Lady Red Devils, 16-8.



Williamsville North's Amanda Maraschiello swings at a Chelsea Plimpton pitch during a quarterfinal game of the Wildcat Invitational Softball Tournament held on Saturday, May 5 at Walden Pond in Lancaster. Catching

is Lisa Fronczak, who became second all-time at South for most career hits. South won 3-1 in eight innings.

Photo by Joe Eberle

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This game was a little different as a classic pitching dual was held between Jen Sansano of Clarence and Tricia Kennery of North.

Clarence scored first, pushing one run across in the fifth inning. Jen Curtis lined a double to the right center field gap and scored

on a single by Meg Rogers for Clarence's only run.

The cardiac kids from North came back again though as they responded with two runs of their own in the sixth. Flierl led off with a single and advanced to third on a single by O'Brien. Both

runs came in as Kennery supported her superb pitching by smashing a double for two runs batted in. Kennery only allowed four hits while striking out three and walking one.

The inconsistency that has plagued North at times this sea-

son returned as they played host to Lancaster on Thursday, May 3. The Lady Redskins put on a hitting clinic and shabby defense from North contributed to a convincing win for Lancaster, 15-3.

Thankfully, the Lady Spartans were able to get right back on their horse as they traveled to West Seneca West on Friday, May 4.

North fell behind 1-0, allowing an unearned run in the third inning. North answered back in the fourth to tie the game. Kennery singled up the middle and scored on a single by Maraschiello.

North broke the game open by scoring three times in the sixth. McNally was hit by a pitch. Liz Dutweiler singled to left field. Flierl had an excellent bunt single to load the bases. McNally scored on a passed ball and Erica Stricko followed with a hard single to center field scoring two runs. North added one more run in the seventh.

Kennery continued her excellent season as she pitched a complete game recording 14 strikeouts and only allowing five hits.

The Lady Spartans participated in the Wildcat Tournament and drew the unenviable task of drawing Williamsville South for their opening game in the Bracket A. North lost 3-1 in eight innings but continued their improvement and played an excellent game.

Eighth grader Robin Kennery threw eight strikeouts.

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