

Piling On Clemens

Written by Jordan Kobritz
Wednesday, 07 January 2009 11:09



Rats fleeing a sinking ship, or piling it on? A Houston hospital removes Clemens name after raising millions of dollars for it in the past.

For Roger Clemens, the fallout seemingly has no end.

Last November, Clemens was asked to end his involvement with a charity golf tournament he had co-hosted for the past four years in his home town of Houston. With Clemens' help, the tournament has raised millions of dollars for local charities that benefited kids.

A month later, a Houston hospital announced it was removing Clemens' name from a sports medicine institute created in 2006. The Roger Clemens Institute for Sports Medicine at Memorial Hermann became known as the Memorial Hermann Sports Medicine Institute,

Piling On Clemens

Written by Jordan Kobritz

Wednesday, 07 January 2009 11:09

effective January 1. Clemens had given liberally of his time and money in support of the clinic. He was also a major contributor to other needs of the hospital, having donated a reported \$3 million towards a new pediatric wing at the time the sports medicine clinic was founded.

Why now? Why, after a year of denying the allegations in the Mitchell Report that he used performance enhancing drugs, was Clemens suddenly discarded like yesterday's newspaper? Was his name suddenly more of a liability than an asset? Was the association with Clemens costing more in contributions than he could offset? Did the hospital return any of Clemens' contributions? No one representing the hospital was willing to answer any of those questions.

This isn't an attempt to defend Clemens, either for using PED's or lying about using them. I know; Clemens hasn't been convicted of anything. But my Cornell Law education to the contrary notwithstanding, anyone who still believes Clemens' denials is in serious denial themselves. Common sense says Clemens used drugs illegally, cheated on his wife, and lied about both.

Come to think of it, that profile fits a number of current and former politicians, and if you believe the research, a majority of the people in this country. Should Roger Clemens be held to a higher standard than the rest of us, just because his physical talent is superior to ours?

Have John Kennedy's, Richard Nixon's or Bill Clinton's names been deleted from the many buildings and roads named after them? Is there any reason to think George W. won't have his name emblazoned on buildings and road signs around the state of Texas, if not other parts of this country? Why should athletes be held to higher standards than presidents?

Clemens is no different than the hundreds - perhaps thousands - of current and former Major Leaguers who used PED's. No different than former teammates Jason Giambi and Andy Pettitte, both of whom played in the Major Leagues post the Mitchell Report. Except Pettitte and Giambi admitted using (sort of, in the case of Giambi) and apologized for it; while Clemens, due to a combination of hubris and bad advice, responded to the accusations by attacking his accusers, which is the same way he approached the opposing team.

MLB drug users' biggest offense was against their fellow players. The fact remains that their teammates and the union treated replacement players – those who agreed to play during the 1994 strike - with more disdain and acrimony than the players who used PED's. Should we treat

Piling On Clemens

Written by Jordan Kobritz

Wednesday, 07 January 2009 11:09

the druggies worse than their teammates did?

Failing to admit guilt and say he was sorry has already cost Clemens dearly, with more likely to come. His reputation is in tatters, his lock on the Hall of Fame has evaporated, and criminal charges appear likely. And now, his hometown is turning against him. After so many years of supporting his neighbors, friends and people in need, those who should stand up and say "Thanks, you did wrong, but we appreciate all the good you've done for us and others," can't seem to find the will to do so.

The person Roger Clemens hurt the most was himself, followed closely by his family. So far, it appears as if his family is standing behind him. Good for them. If Hilary and the country can stand behind Bill, then Debbie and his Houston neighbors can do the same for Roger.

As Willie Nelson croons, "Forgiving you is easy forgetting seems to take the longest time." There's no need to forget all the wrong Clemens has done. But a little forgiveness from those who accepted his help along the way would seem appropriate.

Jordan Kobritz is a regular contributor to the [Business of Sports Network](#) . He is a former attorney, CPA, and Minor League Baseball team owner. He is an Assistant Professor of Sport Management at Eastern New Mexico University and teaches the Business of Sports at the University of Wyoming. Jordan can be reached at n jkobritz@mindspring.com