

ALWAYS ROOM FOR MORE IN SPORTS

It's a new year, and most resolutions begin with 'I want more' ... as in, 'I want more good health'; 'I'd like to make more money'; 'more wins for my favourite sports team'; or 'more birdies than bogies.'

But 'less than', or 'fewer than' can also be something to covet ... as in, 'fewer annoying social media posts'; 'fewer weather tragedies'; 'less gibberish by sports announcers'; or 'fewer injuries for the best athletes'.

So here's a number of 'more thans' (and the occasional 'less than') to look forward to over the next 12 months.

Canadian Football League — More full houses in stadiums again. Nothing better than, say, a raucous full house at Mosaic Stadium in Regina for the Labour Day Classic; more wins for the Edmonton Elks, whose team fortunes have fallen on hard times; more attention given the league by the national broadcasters; less talk about the CFL abandoning its unique rules and adopting some U.S.-style features, such as four downs.

National Hockey League — More Connor McMagic. The Oilers star brings fans and viewers out of their seats or off the couch when he produces breath-taking Houdini-like moves; more calls for cross-checking, which is getting out of control again; more hope in Buffalo; one fewer team based in Arizona, where the Coyotes seem to be in constant peril.

Major League Baseball — More exciting young stars to join the likes of Fernando Tatis, Jr., Vladimir Guerrero, Jr., Ronald Acuna, Jr. (are all the young superstars 'juniors'?), Juan Soto and Wander Franco; more complete games by pitchers; less use by managers of 'the shift'; fewer televised Sunday Night Baseball games featuring the Yankees and/or Red Sox.

Professional golf — More televised coverage of LPGA events, giving exposure to international stars like Canada's Brooke Henderson, Australia's Minjee Lee, New Zealand's Lydia Ko, South Korea's Jin Young Ko and American Nelly Korda, the latter two the dominant pair as we head into 2022; less 'contrived controversy' surrounding Brooks Koepka and Bryson DeChambeau; more brilliance from Collin Morikawa; and more tournament sightings (one or two, anyway) of Tiger Woods.

Basketball: More playoff success for the Toronto Raptors, who captivated Canadian fans with their title run three years ago; more three-pointers by Golden State's Steph Curry, the best pure shooter in the game; more updates on the next (or better) LeBron James, a 17-year-old Michigan player named Emoni Bates; and even more Canadians in the NBA (currently 25, but only three from Western Canada: Saskatoon's Trey Lyles and Kamloops' Kelly Olynyk of Detroit, and the Memphis Grizzlies' Brandon Clarke of Vancouver).

Sports broadcasting: More Jay Onrait, less Jack Armstrong and those annoying Rogers 5G commercials; more Darren Dreger and less Jeff O'Neill; more Sarah Davis and less Kate Beirness; more Vic Rauter and less Glen Suiter, more Scott Oake, Evanka Osmak, Harnarayan Singh, Ray Ferraro, Amanda Balionis, Elliotte Friedman, David Amber and Farhan Lalji.

- **Headline at TheOnion.com:** "Star high-school quarterback blissfully unaware he'll be Jets starter four years from now."
- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: "Jackson State linebacker **Abdul-Malik McClain** allegedly filed at least \$903,688 in COVID-related unemployment benefits. He faces 10 counts of mail fraud, two counts of aggravated identity theft and very illegal procedure."
- Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**, via Twitter, on the 6.2 earthquake hit off the Northern California coast: "To give you an idea how strong that is, a 6.2 earthquake could shake a New York Jet into the end zone."
- Another one from Kaseberg: "There are so many players being brought up to replace COVID listers, a phrase heard in an NFL locker room was, 'Does the side with your name on it go in front or back?'"
- **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com: "The IIHF has cancelled the World Junior Hockey Championship. Russia's **Matvei Michkov** and Canada's **Connor Bedard** showed some brilliance, but the Omicron variant skated away with a shutout."
- **Vic Tafur** of the Athletic, on the Falcons' quarterback: "**Matt Ryan** has somehow led the Falcons to seven wins this season, but he is slower than Heinz ketchup."
- Another one from **Dwight Perry**: "Another reason it's a shame actor **John Candy** died so young: His outsized persona would have been perfect for *'Boom! The John Madden Story.'*"
- Perry again: QB **Ben Roethlisberger** said 'this could be it' — on the Jan. 3 game likely to be his final home game after 18 seasons as a Steeler. "If anybody knows it's time, it's a guy known as Big Ben."
- Corpulent Chiefs coach **Andy Reid**, to reporters, on whether he has any New Year's resolutions: "I was going to say eat less, but then I'd feel like Pinocchio."

- North Carolina football coach **Mack Brown**, to reporters, on his potential mayonnaise bath in the Duke's Mayo Bowl: "If we won a game, I'd let someone hit me in the face with a frying pan. I don't care."
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