

AARYN BELFER

BACKWARDS & IN HIGH HEELS

Menopause and baseball: Two sides of the same coin?

I'm a sports fan. Football. Soccer. Basketball (college and pro). Tennistennistennis of any kind. But there are few things I like less than baseball. It seems completely irrational that ESPN should be saturated with baseball highlights for nine months of the year, and that each team should need to play 162 games just to get to the playoffs. Snore. Zzzzzzzz. Kill me now.

My friend Scott, on the other hand, is so dedicated, he decided to live tweet his deep (and hilarious) thoughts about the Padres opener until they scored a run. As it happens, Scott's not on Twitter so my Facebook feed filled up with almost as many baseball tweets as there are games in the season. "This live tweeting until the Padres score a run in 2016 seemed like a funny idea in the bottom of the second inning...#CelibateFriars," he wrote of their 27 scoreless innings that prompted Fox Sports to call their season opener a "putrid beginning." Ouch and double ouch.

As I read through Scott's Facebook tweets ("This is what happens when your team mascot wears open-toed shoes. #CelibateFriars"), I started to ponder the many things I'd rather endure than baseball, and I decided that even menopause is preferable to this game. Which is saying something because menopause is eerily similar to baseball. The discomfort it causes varies in type and severity from person to person, it drags on without end, and just when you get a respite from the symptoms and think it's done, it ramps up all over again.

> **The emotions in menopause are as unbearable as 13 innings.**

First of all, there's sweating. Not the dew-y, glow-y, Scarlett Johansson-y kind, but the I-just-completed-a-hot-yoga-class kind. Except I didn't just complete a hot yoga class. I completed getting out of bed in the morning, or overexerted myself by laughing at a joke, or looking over my shoulder to check my blind spot while driving, or swiping my credit card a little too vigorously while checking out at Target and *boom*, my knee caps are sweating like Hollywood Medium Tyler Henry's forehead as he convenes with the dead.

The weight gain shouldn't be a shocker but it's hard to imagine until it happens to you. The day after I turned forty*blurgityblurg*, I had to put out an APB for my waistline, which still hasn't been seen. I'm beginning to worry. Meanwhile, I had a long talk with my dry cleaner to find out what he'd done to my shirts seeing as how I was suddenly Incredible Hulking my way out of every blouse I owned.

Menopause has given a whole new meaning to tight pants and believe me when I say that as much as I like 'em tight, I do *not* want to emulate Chris Christie in his NYPD baseball costume of 2015. (Labia can go south, BTW, increasing the likelihood of a moose-knuckle situation, but my husband has urged me not to disparage the vag here in any way so I'll stop there and just say: All hail the vag!) Did you know your fingers contain fat cells? And your shoulders? Turn away if this is upsetting to you.

Memory, of course, is affected by the hormonal changes. If I know you and we bump into each other at Trader Joe's and I don't acknowledge you, please don't take offense. I don't even remember what it was I came to buy. Was it the corn nuts or the Cookie Butter? This is not my beautiful wife. My, God! How did I get here?

The emotions in menopause are as unbearable as 13 innings. I've always been a crier. I like having feels, as my friend's tweenage daughter puts it. But I don't want to have all of the feels all at once. In the span of 60 seconds, I'm fine, I'm happy, I'm in love, I'm ecstatic, I'm sinking, I'm blue, I'm despondent and now I'm weeping like John Boehner at the feet of Pope Francis. But don't unbuckle yet, folks, because now I'm so pissed I could crack the sweet spot of a Louisville slugger over my knee and splinter that thing in half. I'll hulk right out of the dugout and lead the brawl, my friends. I am the Valedictorian of rage. You ballers don't want to see me when I'm angry.

And look here. No discussion of menopause would be honest if I didn't mention the gargantuan effort it is to want to have sex. Here's me keeping it 100: If given the choice between watching one of the Padres no-score season openers or having sex, and death is not an option? I'd choose to go to the DMV to renew my driver license without an appointment. And while I don't wish to disparage the vag, well...let's just say that, if I were live tweeting menopause on Facebook, my hashtag might be #aridgyners.

Fortunately for me, I want to want to have sex, so I think things are looking up. And according to friends who have already been through this, it gets better. But I cannot say the same for baseball. Unless the bases are loaded and the score is tied in the bottom of the ninth in Game Seven of the World Series, I'd rather go through menopause for the next 10 years. Don't even get me started on golf.

Backwards & In High Heels appears every other week. Write to aaryn@sdcitybeat.com.

