

IN THE BLEACHERS, BASEBALL FROM STEVE MOORE

Your cartoon "In the bleachers" give a large place of baseball. Why ?

Moore: Baseball is my favorite sport. I played ball from age 6 all the way through high school. (I mostly played second base.) I injured my knee in college, but I managed to hobble along and play amateur baseball and softball up until about five years ago.

So all of that accumulated experience playing baseball has given me a huge well of ideas to pull from for the comic strip. Also, baseball can be a very funny world full of crazy moments on the field, in the dugout and in the locker room.

What's the genesis of your cartoon ? is that it has given a boost to your career?

Moore: I originally decided to create the cartoon on a whim. I had no idea that it would be successful in worldwide syndication and still be going strong almost 30 years later. The Bleachers cartoon also opened doors for me in Hollywood and helped launch my career in animated films. ("Open Season," Sony Pictures Animation.)

Often, your cartoons are very realistic, in particular for baseball, about spirit of the game, loneliness of rightfielder, difficulties of pitcher... How come your ideas ? Only of your personal experience ?

Moore: Most of the ideas I come up with are based on personal experience. For example, when I first started playing baseball I sat on the bench a lot. That gave me a different perspective of the game. My playing experience helps me come up with ideas that are based on the idiosyncrasies of the game. For example, the coach calling time out and walking to the mound to talk to his pitcher. There are hundreds of crazy things that can happen on the mound. It's one of my favorite scenarios.

How to react baseball players when they see your cartoons ?

Moore: Of all the sports, baseball seems to get the biggest reactions from readers. I'm not sure why. Maybe because the ideas do come from my personal experience. I get e-mails and letters from baseball players. I think that they can relate to the familiar situations that I depict in the cartoon.

UFO, aliens... they are regularly in your cartoons, especially for baseball. Baseball players abduction by aliens are regular on american baseball fields ?

Moore: Do aliens not abduct baseball players in France? I thought it happens all over the world. My theory is that there is a shortage of skilled baseball players on other planets. The aliens are trying to develop their own leagues, so they import talent from Earth. Sort of like what Japan did back in the '70s and '80s by importing Major League ball players from the USA.

What is (are) your favorite(s) team(s) or player(s) actually or/and in the past ?

Moore: My favorite team is and always has been the Los Angeles Dodgers. My grandfather owned a barber shop down the street from Dodger Stadium, and he would cut the hair of Dodger players and team executives in exchange for two box seat tickets to games during the late '60s and '70s. So I got to go to Dodger games quite often. And one of my best friends growing up was Bob Bavasi, who's dad (Buzzie Bavasi) was general manager of the Dodgers. My favorite player of all time is Sandy Koufax.

You have others projects or desires, particularly about baseball ?

Moore: I have been working on a live-action movie story that involves an "In the Bleachers"-style Little League baseball team.

Thank you very much, Steve !