

Taking Out the Trash Talk?

Should insulting other players be part of the game or out of bounds?

Michael Jordan thrilled basketball fans when he said that he was coming out of retirement. He made his return when he joined the Washington Wizards in October 2003.

Many people say Michael Jordan was the greatest basketball player ever to play the game. Some also say that Jordan is the greatest at something else: trash talk on the basketball court.

Sometimes trash talkers say funny things to each other. Sometimes they say cruel things. Sometimes players tell other players how badly they're going to be beaten.

"Michael would be telling you, 'I'm driving to the basket, and there's nothing you can do about it.' You were at his mercy," said B.J. Armstrong. He was Jordan's teammate on the Chicago Bulls.

Some say that trash talk is a part of competing. Others, though, say that trash talk should be dumped.

What do you think? Should pro sports ban trash talk? Read the arguments. Then decide for yourself.

Yes! Pro Sports Should Ban Trash Talk!

Trash talk is an ugly part of any game. It has no place in pro sports.

Talking trash to an opponent is bad for the team. Talking trash might make the other team angry. That will only make the team work harder to win.

Pro athletes who talk trash are bad sports. They set a bad example for the kids who look up to them. Pro players should teach kids to respect opponents. They should not teach kids to taunt the other team.

Trash talk can also lead to fights during a game. "The last thing you want is a 250-pound guy trash talking, and all of a sudden somebody loses his temper and gets into a fight," said Don Beck. Beck studies how athletes think and behave.

Sports are supposed to be fun. But trash talk isn't fun. It should be stopped.

No! Pro Sports Shouldn't Ban Trash Talk!

Trash talk has been going on for as long as sports have been around. It's part of every game. It shouldn't be banned.

Talking trash is a way to get an edge on another player. "If I can get someone to lose concentration, even if it's only for one play, I've done my job," said Fred Smoot. Smoot plays football for the Washington Redskins. He is one of the biggest fans of trash talk.

Pro athletes who talk trash show kids how to be intense during a game. They teach kids how to use their minds and not just their bodies to win.

Most players enjoy trash talk. They know that it's not personal. Many think it's funny. They like to see who can come up with the cleverest thing to say. "You want to be smart," said Rod Babers, who plays college football. "[Trash talk] is an art form."

Sports are supposed to be fun to watch and play. Trash talk is a fun part of sports. As long as it doesn't get out of hand, it shouldn't be banned in pro sports.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the passage, why do some players talk trash?

- A Some players talk trash to be bad sports.
- B Some players talk trash to get into fights.
- C Some players talk trash to help win games.
- D Some players talk trash to come out of retirement.

2. What is one argument against trash talk that is presented in the text?

- A One argument against trash talk is that it is intense.
- B One argument against trash talk is that it is poor sportsmanship.
- C One argument against trash talk is that it is funny.
- D One argument against trash talk is that it is part of basketball.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that

- A all players use trash talk when they play
- B most players do not want to learn how to talk trash
- C some players are not bothered by trash talk
- D only a few players are as good at trash talk as Michael Jordan

4. Read the following sentence and answer the question: "Trash talk has been going on for as long as sports have been around. It's part of every game. It shouldn't be banned."

In this sentence the word **banned** most likely means?

- A allowed
- B encouraged
- C repeated
- D stopped

5. What would be another good title for this passage?

- A Trash Talk: Yes or No?
- B Trash Talk: Part of the Game
- C Trash Talk: Bad for the Team
- D Trash Talk: Michael Jordan's Specialty

6. What are two examples of trash talk?

7. Why might some people say that trash talk is dangerous?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Some people like trash talk _____ they think it is a fun part of the game.

- A but
- B however
- C because
- D though

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Trash talking can lead to fights during a game because players can get angry.

What? trash talking

(can lead to) What? _____

When? _____

Why? _____

10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

Vocabulary Word: insult (in · sult): to say or do something very rude.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **insult**.

1. I was angry when my little brother insulted me by saying my dress was ugly.
2. If you insult someone by accident, you should say you are sorry.
3. It was upsetting to hear the baseball players insult each other before the game.
4. When the president of one country insulted the president of another country, it almost started a war.
5. My mom insulted me when she told me to brush my hair.

10b. Which image shows a face that may insult someone?



11. If you tell someone that you like their t-shirt, are you insulting them? Why or why not?
