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SPORTS COMPLEX By Kimberly Gadette

Keeping up with the sports world is exercise all by itself. The sports pages, the televised games, the constant Net activity (that's the Internet; not, um, hoops). It's not as easy as it looks. And these days, with one flurry of activity following another, I confess to feeling as flummoxed as those two homeless periods suddenly cut from CC Sabathia's name. (Were they under-performing? Demanding separate lockers? Picking fights with the capital letters?) But no

matter the challenge, I'm no



quitter. Let them pelt me with changeups and verbal curveballs—I'm ready.

Changeups such as:

- Teams changing colors faster than an NBA score in the fourth quarter. It's still unsettling to see a Diamondback without the pizzazz of all that purple, copper and turquoise. But why stand out from the crowd, when you can blend in with the rest of the MLB, cutting a fine, if achingly dull, figure in (yawn) red?
- Teams changing names faster than June brides. The Devil was banished from the Rays-but that's mere baseball peanuts next to the Oklahoma City Thunder, née the Seattle SuperSonics. On top of everything else (the move, the name, the uniform and logo), did they really have to lose their plural designation? Other than a one-time championship for the Heat, history has not been friendly toward the singular name. But no matter. Good luck and "congrat."
- Teams changing players as if the world of professional athletes is one big virtual baseball trading card. Seriously, what's Manny Ramirez doing in L.A.? And Allen Iverson is now a Piston? I'm still struggling with Nomar Garciaparra's departure from the Red Sox in 2004. Let's not even talk about Brett Favre. No, really, stop

Yet all these constant changes pale in contrast to my ongoing bout with the pig Latin-esque lexicology of sports terms. Take a walk with me and my pals, Merriam and Webster, won't you?

- "Defensive Indifference." Of course I know as much as the next gal about MLB Official Rule 10.07(g), but every time a sportscaster announces that an athlete's successful breakneck grab for a stolen bag has been met with the verbal shrug called "Defensive Indifference," I picture an arguing couple: She: "You forgot our anniversary." He: "So? Sue me."

Or worse:

She: "Darling, it sure would be nice if your underarms came in contact with an application of deodorant every now and then

He: "Why, yes...I imagine it would."

Which leads us to the next term of:

- "Personal Foul." Forget about awarding free throws to the victim. Instead, if the offender (let's call him "Stinkweed") were placed in an airless 2x4 cell without benefit of a ready water supply, with a goodly number of other Stinkweeds, chances are that said Stinkweed may succeed in cleaning up his act. Note: the Personal Foul is not to be confused with its kissing cousin, the Flagrant Foul—but that's a lifestyle choice, and none of my business.
- "Field Goal." Perfectly understandable in football. The place kicker stands on a field, and once the ball is snapped, he kicks it between the goalposts. Simple. It's a green field, and a ball's kicked to the goal. Hence, "Field Goal."

But the use of this same terminology in basketball? Is someone smoking a patch of that very same field of green? Rather than a stadium, we're stuck in the sweaty innards of a walled-in venue replete with a wooden court. No fields are discernable, not even some nasty neighbor's auto-strewn lawn. There's no kicking, unless Bob Knight's in the near vicinity. There's still a goal, which is to win, and additional points are nothing to sneer at, but how this action is defined as a "field goal"...well, I'm almost as confused as that basketball fan who just scored a brilliant price for Sonics' season tickets on eBay—and wonders why no one's congratulating him.

- "Pass Interference." Excuse me, Mr. Flag-Throwing Fancyman Who Looks Like Moving Prison Bars, isn't the point of football to interfere with the other team's passing of the pigskin? To stop them from winning? Or is the defending team just supposed to escort the big burly offenders down to their end zone, begrudgingly offering up congratulatory refreshments of day-old pastry and warm beer?

Which leads us right back to the concept of Defensive Indifference.

And yet, given all of the above, I still care. I'm in the game for good. Sue me.