

Why Football Will Be The Death Of Me

I get this piercing pain. Like someone has just pushed a stake through my chest and is twisting it around in my heart. United have just drawn against Portsmouth after United took an early lead. A draw, not a loss, and it feels like it's going to kill me. I will die watching football. When I was 14 a doctor wanted to admit me to hospital two hours after a football match had ended because my blood pressure was still too high. Needless to say I remind myself of this every single time I am watching the beautiful game and the chest pains start. At 21 I eat healthily and work out regularly, I smoke but don't really drink much, I'm not in some weird group of young people in danger of suffering a heart attack, yet that is exactly how I feel. For someone who smokes five cigarettes or less a day, this can easily double or even treble on match day. Maybe all of this is a sign... a sign I care too much. No. I'd rather care so much it aches when we draw and it kills when we lose, than to never care at all.

A draw or a loss is not the end of the world; of course I know that as much as any other person watching football supporting their team, whichever team that may be. However, when you are Manchester United, you have been spoilt since the early nineties. We go into each match demanding a win, and our hearts are unforgiving when the boys cannot master this. The ill-feelings aren't as much towards the team, who most of the time are playing as good as they can, but towards our own minds. Driving ourselves crazy with the longing for the three points during the match, breaking our hearts into little pieces because of the loss, being left frustrated and confused when we do neither of those and simply draw. The amount of times I have had people who aren't as passionate as me ridiculing my feelings when we lose and watching me like I'm mentally deranged when we're winning, I can't even count that far. It annoys me. It annoys me when people seem to be able to just watch a game of football and simply shrug when we concede, and maybe manage a slight smile when we score. Why watch football if you're not in it for the whole experience? To me football isn't as important as breathing fresh air; fresh air can be replaced by oxygen masks. Nothing can replace football.

You can tell when someone is passionate about football, and as much as I dislike, or even feel hatred for some football clubs, I am ALWAYS going to respect a passionate fan. Just as much as I am not going to respect someone who changes team with the same frequency a prostitute changes her knickers. You only get one football club. It's not like having a boyfriend or a girlfriend, or even being married, there are no break ups or divorces. Supporting your club is a life long commitment, through the good times and the bad times, it's not a one night stand with someone that you can shag then sneak out of their bed and go home. Your club and the other fans, the ones who feel like you, you laugh, you cry and you celebrate together. You stand together through thick and thin, and you love the team as you would your lover, passionately and with fire in your heart. However, as lovers come and go, that is the one fire that even the heaviest stream of tears will never extinguish.

They say it's the people that you love the most that can hurt you more than anyone or anything else. I don't believe in that. I think that some types of love are so strong that, although it can hurt, if it's right it will always be O.K in the end. That's what I feel for United, love so strong that nothing could ever hurt it or taint it. Whatever happens off or on the pitch, however hurt or disappointed I might feel, it will never damage my love and passion for the club. Not when you see the manager screaming, and you know he's screaming for you. Not when you see the boys scoring, or tackling like it's their lives at stake and you know they're giving it all for you. You win some, you lose some, and sometimes you do neither and it makes you want to cry. However you will always bounce back. Through tears, pain and disappointment, you always bounce back. Some might say it's dramatic for someone who supports the reigning champions to make such comments; after all we're not fighting relegation or anything are we. That isn't the point though. The point is, every match we play is fighting that relegation battle, because anything below champions is relegation to the true champions of England.

Maybe I am too passionate. Maybe I do care too much. Maybe my mood shouldn't depend on whether or not United managed to get three points against Harry Redknapp and his Pompey. I know one thing for certain though, the one day that I end up not feeling like my life depends on United being successful and making my heart fill with joy, I will be missing a huge piece of my soul. So I might die watching football when I get older. We all have to go one day, and there is no other way I would rather leave.