

Dedicated to the defense of traditional baseball values.

Thursday, February 25, 2010

ttw

We hear about the side effects of steroid use, but mostly we see the positive ones. Mark McGwire destroys the historic home run mark and Barry Bonds destroys McGwire's new record. The negative side-effects are described as abstract "possible side effects". But they are not only possible, they actually happen. But, like Bonds, McGwire and other players steroid use, openly discussing those impacts will not promote the game of baseball. The result is a "conspiracy" of silence that leaves many young people unaware of the real impact steroids can have.

The story of Kirby Puckett's career is that it ended "tragically" when he developed glaucoma. But there is an elephant in the room. Here is just one of many links that discuss the connection between steroid use and glaucoma and cataracts:

"With long-term use of steroids, cataracts or glaucoma may develop."
<http://www.anaboliceurope.com/information/side-effects-of-steroids.html>

Moreover, Puckett ultimately died of a stroke. Strokes are another known potential side effect of abuse of steroids.

So is there evidence in Puckett's career of the kind of jolt in productivity that we now see as evidence of potential steroid use? The answer is yes - in spades. After hitting a total of 4 home runs in his first two full seasons (and 41 doubles) in 1300 plate appearances, in 1986 at the age of 26 Puckett power suddenly "emerged" with 31 home runs and 37 doubles in 723 plate appearances. His strikeouts increased, his walks declined, but his batting average improved by 40 points from 1985. Puckett had gone from a 5'8" singles hitter to the next Hack Wilson in a single season.

Of course that doesn't "prove" Puckett was using steroids, any more than Bonds and McGwire's power surge proved they used steroids. And Puckett's fans will use that as a defense, just as Bonds and McGwire fans did when the obvious signs of steroid abuse were pointed out to them. But there is plenty of evidence that Puckett's career end and death were both the elements of a classic Greek tragedy, that which makes you great will bring you down.


Posted by [TT](#) at 9:45 AM       

38 comments:

 [Matthew](#) said...

Are you bloody kidding me? This post is possibly the most distasteful piece of "writing" I've encountered in the Twins blogosphere. You know what else causes glaucoma? Getting smoked in the dome by a baseball. You know what else causes strokes? Letting your weight balloon to somewhere in the 350 pound range. What happened to the Kirby is just as tragic as Griffey's career. To try and tarnish such a sorrow legacy is asinine. Show some respect.

Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 10:12:00 AM CST

 Anonymous said...

I bet Joe Mauer is using now since his power surge!!! Crazy Lady

Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 11:31:00 AM CST

 Jeff said...

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I see your points and would be untruthful if I didn't mull those around in my mind also. But as pointed out above there are other causes for both those health issues. After baseball I don't think Kirby was taking particularly good care of himself, so his death may have had causes other than steroids.

Could someday there be a smoking gun linking Puck to PED's? Yes. But there is a strong possibility there will never be such a link because it does not exist?

Considering the how PED's help you recover from injuries and keep you healthy enough to play has anyone checked on Cal Ripken Jr? Seemed he played a lot of games? Silly, yes. But that is the dangerous type of BS that can be floated around when you have no proof.

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 11:48:00 AM CST](#)

 Jesse said...

Alright, let's actually look at the stats in depth on this. Kirby was in the minors for only a short time but his slugging percentage was .446 during his time there.

<http://www.baseball-reference.com/minors/player.cgi?id=pucket001kir>

His career slugging percentage in the majors was .477.

<http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/p/puckeki01.shtml?redir>

That is a pretty small gap and can be easily explained by things like Kirby gaining strength through regular means, Kirby learning the game since he was rushed through the minors, ect.....

In regards to your observation about the big jump in 1987 I would point out it wasn't as big a jump as you would think:

1984 .336
1985 .385
1986 .537
1987 .534

The first thing I would point out is he was already on an upwards trajectory. Dropped in during the 84 season without a decent amount of time in the minors he was just trying to survive. In 85 he jumps up 49 points. In 86 and 87 he jumps a 150 points which is alarming but when you adjust for the juiced ball era. Here is a list of total home runs for those years:

1984 - 3,258
1985 - 3,602
1986 - 3,813
1987 - 4,458
1988 - 3,180
1989 - 3,083

There has been rampant speculation that something happened with the ball during 86-87 and I think that exaggerated Kirby's power those years. Take in to account the fact his power normalized and he came back down to earth with a slugging in the high .400's after that (with no drug testing to prevent him from juicing) I think it is unlikely that he was juicing.

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 11:49:00 AM CST](#)

 Mathew said...

Mathew -

If you can hear with your head stuck firmly in the sand:


Obviously you can never draw a direct causal connection between steroid use and any of its "possible" side effects. They can all be caused, or encouraged, by other factors. The only certainty is that they will help your performance. That's why lots of players took the risk.

Is there really evidence of glaucoma developing six months after a head injury. I don't think there is. This is the remotely plausible being the enemy of the more obvious.

Excess weight alone does not cause strokes, any more than steroids do. They both just increase the risk. A blow to the head causes strokes too, but usually not several years later.

The fact is either one of these is very unusual for someone Puckett's age regardless of their weight. And he had both.


Your predictable reaction of outrage is the same as McGwire and Bonds fans had to anyone pointing out the obvious evidence of their steroid use. That power surge was a result of "modern training techniques", their "hard work" and the dilution of pitching. All plausible, but not really likely in the

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face of the evidence to the contrary which was plain to anyone who wanted to acknowledge it.

The facts are that Puckett developed almost miraculously from a singles hitter to a power threat in a single off-season. He later developed diseases that are linked to steroid abuse. If that "tarnishes" his legacy, maybe it should. Just as steroid use ought to have tarnished Bonds and McGwire.

But there is more to it than that. Because the failure to acknowledge that these are results associated with steroid use, just encourages others to use steroids. McGwire recently said how sorry he was, but at least steroids let him play the game a few more years.

In Puckett's case they may have shortened his career and ultimately helped kill him. That message isn't one he is ever going to give.

"I bet Joe Mauer is using now since his power surge!!!"

Mauer is a great example. He is 6'6 and he had 44 home runs in the big leagues before hitting 28 last year with corresponding doubles production. Mauer had hit for gap power his entire career and his home run power was expected to develop.

Puckett went from hitting his first 4 career home runs in 1985 to over 30 home runs in one season. At age 25, Puckett had Nick Punto power. At age 26, he suddenly developed Joe Mauer power.

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 12:01:00 PM CST](#)

 TT said...

■ Jesse -

"In regards to your observation about the big jump in 1987 "

Wrong year. It was 1986. And then your observations are no longer true. For instance, Puckett's own home run surge in 1986 accounts for over 10% of the total increase in home runs hit in the the major leagues (26 of 211).


Its unlikely there will ever be a smoking gun. And if there were, you still wouldn't have a smoking gun that it caused his eye problems or his stroke. Just as there is no "smoking gun" that his weight contributed to his stroke.

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 12:09:00 PM CST](#)

 Joe Blogger said...

■ You have "Balls of Steel" to put Puckett and Steroids in the same sentence. Enjoy the target on your back.

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 12:31:00 PM CST](#)


 JustinMorneauMVP said...

■ This is the biggest piece of BS I have ever heard. Puckett was rushed through the minors, so his lack of homers in 84-85 was to be expected.

Also a huge caveat in your statement is the fact that you never brought up the fact that Puckett never had a dramatic increase in size like McQwire and Bonds and Sosa and Canseco. Puckett's increase in size occurred gradually just like Morneau's and Mauer's and Hunter's. If you dare bring up the fact that Puckett was skinny as a rookie and then was bigger in 87, I will refer you to pictures of Torii Hunter as a rookie, and Torii Hunter as he appears now.

Steroids is not the answer to every power surge in baseball....otherwise, Albert Pujols, Joe Mauer, Babe Ruth, Roger Maris, Mickey Mantle etc. all took steroids. Please give me a break!

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 3:11:00 PM CST](#)


 Anonymous said...

■ From TT: "The only certainty is that they [steroids] will help your performance."

False.

It would be less funny if you were not pretending to possess a monopoly on logic.

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 3:17:00 PM CST](#)

 Anonymous said...

■ Attention! The following are confirmed steroid abusers and should be thoughtlessly defamed:

Jose Feliciano and my Grandmother: glaucoma. (Stop it Gramma! You're making Jesus cry.)

Dick Clark and Peter Gammons: Stroke. (Hey - I think we've identified Ortiz and Ramirez's source!)

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 3:49:00 PM CST](#)

 TT said...

- Keep dishing out the defensive nonsense. This is the same conversation that went on with McGwire, Bonds, Rodriguez et. al.

Torii Hunter hit 25 home runs at the same age Puckett was hitting his first 4 home runs. Hunter had hit 14 the previous two years, while playing half time. The comparison in their development is no more similar than Mauer and Puckett.

Lets be clear - Puckett didn't hit a single home run and only 12 doubles in almost 600 plate appearances his rookie year. We are talking Jayson Tyner here. Then he hit four, then he hit 31.

"The only certainty is that they [steroids] will help your performance."

False."

That's the reason they are called Performance Enhancing Drugs. People use them because they work. Its pretty obvious the old cliché that they wouldn't help baseball players' performance wasn't true.

What's truly funny is that saying Puckett ate himself to death is acceptable. Suggesting it was performance enhancing drugs that ultimately killed him is defamation.

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 4:21:00 PM CST](#)

 TT said...

- <http://www.steroidabuse.com/side-effects-of-steroids.html>

"WEIGHT PROBLEMS

Steroid abusers who stop abusing often deal with atrophied muscle mass which converts to fat. Many former abusers report a problem managing weight gain, or losing excess flab and soft tissue that occurs when the muscles are no longer being fed high doses of testosterone. Excess body weight contributes to a host of long-term problems including the aforementioned cardiovascular issues."

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 4:38:00 PM CST](#)

 TheBlackFreighter said...

- TT-

It appears that your mind is pretty much made up, but perhaps my response can at least provide a bit of doubt in your argument.

<http://www.twinkietown.com/2010/2/26/1327308/in-defense-of-kirby-puckett>

[Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 11:53:00 PM CST](#)

 Boss10 said...

- "Is there really evidence of glaucoma developing six months after a head injury. I don't think there is. This is the remotely plausible being the enemy of the more obvious."

TT - Yes. And its not terribly uncommon.

http://www.glaucoma.org/learn/traumatic_glaucom.php
http://www.2020aec.com/About_Your_Eyes/Glaucoma/Traumatic_Glaucoma.php

[Friday, February 26, 2010 at 1:17:00 AM CST](#)

 TT said...

- Blackfreighter -

Its a good defense and no I am not absolutely convinced by it.

I don't think anyone thinks steroids, by themselves, instantly give you glaucoma or a stroke. From your description and others, it does not appear Puckett's glaucoma was diagnosed as resulting from his beaning. Instead it was part of larger health problems that ultimately lead to his stroke. The question is whether steroids played a role in those problems.

As for Puckett's performance. There is some evidence in Puckett's minor league career for his hitting for power. But that was in the hitter-friendly California League. His power numbers there were nothing special, he was not among the league leaders. And he was the oldest player to ultimately

make it to the big leagues of any of the players with top 100 batting averages.

Is it possible it was Oliva's handiwork that made Puckett a power hitter? Maybe. But it sounds more like a good sports page story narrative. I would love to see some evidence that Oliva worked that same magic on other players.


As for the juiced ball argument, that was the same claim made about McGwire, Bonds and all the rest. Major league baseball has always insisted the ball was NEVER juiced.

We should at least question the conclusion that they were lying, given what we now know about the use of performance enhancing drugs. As I pointed out above, Puckett's own home run surge was a major part (over 10%) of the increase in home runs in 1986.

There were some comments about how defensive I have been here. I suggest people read the first couple comments here, not to mention the ones I deleted for profanity. The tone tends to make you a bit defensive even if you expected the reaction.

As I have said here, we will likely never know for sure. If steroids helped kill Kirby Puckett, he is never going to be able to share that with us. But Mark McGwire is going to continue to be a poster child for their benefits. Talking about how at least they lengthened his career, all while making heartfelt apologies and continuing to work as a coach. In that role he is being held up as an example for other young players in baseball.

[Friday, February 26, 2010 at 7:35:00 AM CST](#)

 Anonymous said...

- A.J. Pierzinski is a boor, and most fans in this area will agree. But A.J. Pierzinski engaged in boorish antics as a Twin and fans viewed those antics as endearing and him as a fan favorite. Twins fans heaped vitriol upon those testing positive for PEDs, but they reserved judgment on Juan Rincon, whose pathetic "I didn't know what I was taking" alibi suddenly seemed plausible. Brett Farve's singular monomania is recognized by fans and casual football observers alike in every other market, and was recognized here until he donned a purple jersey. Now he's a saint.

The point is that you cannot trust the typical sports fan to view their sports objectively. Emotion clouds their critical thinking skills, and the inevitable and no less distressing result is what you are seeing in a couple of the comments here. There is nothing intrinsically "distasteful" or "asinine" "crazy old lady like" about this post. Responses built around invective rather than a dispassionate criticism of the points TT makes says more about the blinkered, jock-worship mentality of the poster than it does to the substance of TT's argument, or character.

I don't think TT makes a compelling case that Puckett was a steroid user. The evidence he presents is suggestive, but entirely circumstantial. As some have pointed out, there are causal, non-steroid related factors that could explain the existence of this evidence; I'd need more evidence than what TT's presented here to conclude that TT proved steroid use beyond a reasonable doubt.


Still, I think this post represents more than a smear. A case is made. It makes for some interesting reading. Local bloggers and their readers take pride in the openness, robustness, and sophistication of the local blogosphere, and the Twins blogosphere in particular. A blogosphere worthy of those accolades ought to be open to this kind of post.

[Friday, February 26, 2010 at 9:36:00 AM CST](#)

 PIngrassia said...

- Has anyone seen Tony Gwynn lately? He's turned into a load. I doubt Kirby or Tony were on steroids, but what the hell, this is a blog, so let's speculate away

[Friday, February 26, 2010 at 1:28:00 PM CST](#)

 Anonymous said...

- What I find most disgusting about this post is why smear someone's name through the mud when they are dead? It is real easy to talk trash about Kirby while he is not here. I do remember that even when Kirby was in the minors he used one of the biggest heaviest bats for that time. Also TT you say that Kirby hit homeruns in the minors because of hitter friendly parks...what is the metro dome? certainly not a pitcher's friendly park, something like 360 to left field, kind of easy for a right handed hitter to pull one down the line huh? you also say that steroids lead to weight gain, what about depression? everyone in MN knows that after Kirby had to retire he was not the same man? his family history proves that he would struggle w/ his weight when not physically active and I'm pretty sure once he retired he was NOT physically active. Regardless of any of this the fact that you would go back and deface a

beloved baseball player w/ at best circumstantial evidence and peddle it as facts, is pretty low. And Kirby was not just loved by Minnesotans but by baseball fans in general!

[Friday, February 26, 2010 at 2:56:00 PM CST](#)

 [TI](#) said...

- "you say that kirby hit homeruns in the minors because of hitter friendly parks"

I think I mislead you. Puckett hit 9 home runs at high-a ball Visalia in 550 at bats. He had a teammate the same age who hit 37 in fewer at bats.

"Kirby was not just loved by Minnesotans but by baseball fans in general!"

So what? You can love him all you want.

There are plenty of young kids who are being tempted by steroids because no one talks about the real side effects on real people. Kirby is a better poster child for what could happen to them than Mark McGwire.

[Friday, February 26, 2010 at 4:13:00 PM CST](#)

 [Jesse](#) said...

- I would like to correct something:

"In regards to your observation about the big jump in 1987 "

Wrong year. It was 1986. And then your observations are no longer true.

This was a simple mis-typing so I would like to correct my sentence above:

"In regards to your observation about the big jump in 1986"

Given that I enumerated the slugging from 1984-1987 which showed the jump in 1986 and also said:

"Dropped in during the 84 season without a decent amount of time in the minors he was just trying to survive. In 85 he jumps up 49 points. In 86 and 87 he jumps a 150 points which is alarming"

I thought that both of those subsequent points showed I knew when the surge started but I am happy to correct myself for %100 certainty.

Given that I have now corrected this one char mistake that rendered my entire post untrue would you be able to react to the points it contained:

1. Minor League and Major League career slugging nearly identical.
2. Upswing in slugging from 84 to 85 showing the start of a possible trend.
3. League wide aberation in home run totals in 1985-1987. You accounted for %10 of 1986 with Kirby's numbers, please account for the remaining %90.

In return I will state we cannot know the steroid history of anyone in Baseball. Since steroids were shown to have strength impact in the 50's when Russian olympians used steroids for the weight lifting events I must assume that any athlete since then had opportunities to use them.

<http://www.steroid.com/steroids-in-sports.php>

Maybe Hank Aaron had longevity with power due to Roids. Maybe Ripken was able to hit for power at SS because of roids. He does show the baldness side effect described in one of your links. Maybe Tyner was able to hit a ball out the infield occasionally due to roids. Maybe Puckett used them from 85-87 and then stopped which caused his power surge, dropoff, glaucoma, wieght gain, and stroke. I stipulate that I cannot disprove any of this and you cannot prove any of this.

[Friday, February 26, 2010 at 9:03:00 PM CST](#)

 [jon](#) said...

- i hope you get glaucoma...

[Saturday, February 27, 2010 at 11:53:00 AM CST](#)

 [thrylos98](#) said...

- You can find circumstantial "evidence" of steroids use for a lot of players out there.

For example:

Roger Maris age 22, 14 HR .402 slg, age 26, 61 HR, 620 slg. Steroid use is a risk factor for lymphoma.

Did that mean that they used steroids?

Nope.

Methinks that the Salem Witch trials gotta end.

Play ball

[Saturday, February 27, 2010 at 12:46:00 PM CST](#)

 [werddrew](#) said...

TT:

Here's what I have to say about steroid accusations. This isn't a topic you ought to be broaching without some significant and irrefutable evidence. Steroids is to baseball today as "communist" is to politics in the 60's. Rumors alone have the potential to do significant damage.

As such, I wish you'd have done this somewhat more responsibly, and been less defensive YOURSELF when people point out that your thoughts on the issue may not have been as well developed as they ought to have been before making accusations (or implications) like you have.

[Saturday, February 27, 2010 at 1:15:00 PM CST](#)

 [TI](#) said...

"Steroids is to baseball today as "communist" is to politics in the 60's."

I don't think accusations of steroid abuse are remotely like those made about communists. Is Alex Rodriguez on a blacklist? No, he is touted as a world series hero. How about Mark McGwire? No. He has been hired to coach young players. To the contrary, its Jose Canseco who is blacklisted for having exposed them.

Given the advantage use of steroids provides, anyone who had success in the late 1990's and early 2000's is under suspicion. And players, like Puckett, who had extraordinary successes that have no historic parallel are particularly under suspicion. You can argue that is unfair. But there were a lot of players using steroids, their teammates knew it and chose to ignore it. They were complicit by their silence. And when Canseco broke that silence, he was ostracized. They all helped create the situation they are in.

"For example:
Roger Maris age 22, 14 HR .402 slg, age 26, 61 HR, 620 slg."

Puckett hit zero home runs at age 24, not 14 at age 22. The comparisons people have made reinforce just how extraordinary Puckett's development was.

I am not sure you can find any other player in the history of the game had 500+ at bats in a season with zero home runs and later hit 30. No matter what the difference in age.

A more apt comparison is Jason Tyner suddenly hitting 30 home runs. Would anyone not suspect something was amiss?

Jesse - If 1987 was a typo your post made no sense unless you arguing that the jump from .385 to .537 in one year is not that big?

"I would point out it wasn't as big a jump as you would think:

1984 .336
1985 .385
1986 .537"

[Saturday, February 27, 2010 at 11:41:00 PM CST](#)

 [TI](#) said...

Let me put a challenge to those who don't believe Puckett's development was out of the ordinary. Come up with a list of other players who had no home runs in their first 600 major league plate appearances and later hit more than 30. I don't think there are any.


So come up with a list of players who come even close to Puckett. Say, who had 4 home runs in their first 1200 plate appearances and later hit more than 30.

Frankly, I don't think the real issue here is whether Puckett's performance warrants suspicion. I don't think the question is whether Puckett's health problems are consistent with what you might expect in a steroid abuser.

The real question is what level of proof do you need to raise those suspicions. It appears that for some people, nothing short of a public

confession is sufficient.

[Sunday, February 28, 2010 at 12:03:00 AM CST](#)

 Anonymous said...

- The issue here TT is that it feels like your suspicions means that Puckett is guilty of steroid use. If you want to say that Kriby's jump in power numbers means that the possibility he took steroids exist fine. but If we were to take your article on face value, you would have us believe that there should be no doubt Puckett took steroids. I don't want a verbal confession but I would like YOU to acknowledge that every bit of evidence you have submitted that Puckett did use steroids can just as easily be explained by something other than steroids. If you want everyone else to admit the possibility that Puckett took steroids will YOU admit that it is just as possible that he did not?

[Monday, March 1, 2010 at 10:04:00 AM CST](#)

 TT said...

- "will YOU admit that it is just as possible that he did not?"

You mean like I did here:

"Of course that doesn't "prove" Puckett was using steroids"

or here:

"Its unlikely there will ever be a smoking gun"

or here:

"As I have said here, we will likely never know for sure."

Lets be clear though. While I think it is possible Puckett didn't use steroids, I don't think its "equally as likely".

Puckett went from a Jason Tyner style singles hitter to a home run threat almost over night. And his career and life ended with a whole host of health problems that are associated with long term abuse of steroids. While there isn't "proof beyond a reasonable doubt", I think the "preponderance of evidence" is that Puckett used steroids.

[Monday, March 1, 2010 at 11:16:00 AM CST](#)

 Jesse said...

- TT,

"Jesse - If 1987 was a typo your post made no sense unless you arguing that the jump from .385 to .537 in one year is not that big? "

I think the part after this in my original post explains my thoughts.

"The first thing I would point out is he was already on an upwards trajectory. Dropped in during the 84 season without a decent amount of time in the minors he was just trying to survive. In 85 he jumps up 49 points. In 86 and 87 he jumps a 150 points which is alarming but when you adjust for the juiced ball era."

His natural growth was exaggerated by the juiced ball era. His slugging normalized to .477 for a career which is within %10 of his minors slugging percentage. This is why the jump from 1985 - 1986 is not as big as you would think.

[Monday, March 1, 2010 at 12:04:00 PM CST](#)

 TT said...


- Jesse -

Kirby had a total 80 minor league at bats above A ball. His SLG in those at bats was .325 - 200 points lower than his major league SLG just two years later in 1986.

In 1986, he had a major league SLG almost 100 points higher than he had in 1983 in A ball.


His minor league numbers just don't tell the story you are trying to tell.

[Monday, March 1, 2010 at 12:44:00 PM CST](#)

 mn_me said...


- Kirby was a god of the field to me while he was playing, but as i learned of some of his off-field exploits (as in his penchant for hitting his wife and other women), the idea that he might have been using PEDs seems more likely to me now in retrospect. It's not uncommon for steroids to cause rages in men. We'll never know for sure, and it's probably better that way. But i'm not naive enough to believe that it's out of the realm of possibility.

[Monday, March 1, 2010 at 2:22:00 PM CST](#)

 Anonymous said...

- Your correlation between steroids and glaucoma is misleading. CORTICOSTEROIDS such as prednisone routinely cause glaucoma, however anabolic steroids taken by athletes to improve performance do not cause glaucoma. There is no proof in American medical literature that links anabolic steroids to glaucoma.

[Monday, March 1, 2010 at 3:02:00 PM CST](#)

 JustinMorneauMVP said...

- "Kirby had a total 80 minor league at bats above A ball. His SLG in those at bats was .325 - 200 points lower than his major league SLG just two years later in 1986." - Kirby went from A ball straight to AAA. He only had 80 ABs in AAA. The transition from A to AA is hard, so A to AAA is even harder. It makes sense that Puckett only had a .325 SLG.

Also, there is erroneous info: Anabolic steroids, which athletes abuse, do not have a correlation with glaucoma. There is, however, a link between corticosteroids and glaucoma. Corticosteroids, prednisone for example, are taken routinely by many patients to reduce inflammation. I know of no study in the American Medical literature that states anabolic steroids may cause glaucoma.

So it appears that Puckett's glaucoma did not occur because of steroids, so that part of your argument just crashed and burned.

Also, if anybody does bring evidence that other players hit sub 10 homers one year and then burst out to hit 28 homers the next year, you will say they took steroids...player coming to mind, Joe Mauer!

And dont give me crap saying that Mauer always had the extra base power and it finally transfered over the wall; because if you do, I suggest that you go back and look at Puckett's double and triple numbers.

[Monday, March 1, 2010 at 3:34:00 PM CST](#)

 IT said...


- "if anybody does bring evidence that other players hit sub 10 homers one year and then burst out to hit 28 homer"

Somebody already has. Now, find someone who hit zero home runs who later got up to 31. Or made the jump from 4 to 31 in one season. Again - this argument has been made over and over. Yes, players do break out. They just don't break out like that. Puckett is unique in baseball history.

"There is no proof in American medical literature that links anabolic steroids to glaucoma."

If there really is no connection between anabolic steroid use and glaucoma, it obviously makes the case for Puckett using steroids a lot weaker.

[Monday, March 1, 2010 at 4:09:00 PM CST](#)

 ISRW said...


- If we're meant to look at photos of Barry Bonds over time, from his rookie year to his record setting seasons, and slap our foreheads at how obvious the physical transformation was, how then do we respond to a string of similar shots of Kirby Puckett? Sometime take a look.

I know for a fact that the Star Tribune writer who did a retrospective on Puckett's career a few years ago asked several sources about this. Nobody wanted to talk about it, and the eventual published report didn't mention the issue. But there are several pieces of circumstantial evidence surrounding Kirby, not just one or two, and the reporter did think about that possibility.

To the issue of anabolic steroid use and glaucoma, I would observe that abusers of anabolic steroids do indeed experience inflammation as a result, and that I know at least one weightlifter used corticosteroids as part of his regimen of drugs and later wrote about it in a published collection of sports journalism.


The best way to approach this subject would probably be to use it to acknowledge how damaging the steroid era in baseball really was.... We're not going to know for sure about Kirby, and blaming him or tarnishing his reputation isn't the point. The point is, one of the great joys of my years as a baseball fan has this undercurrent to it. Wouldn't it have been enough for Kirby to be that enthusiastic little dude chugging out to center field? Was I, a big Twins fan at the time, in any way complicit in his decision that being a light-hitting leadoff batter wasn't enough? If that's a possibility, it's one I have to deal with. Hagiography isn't possible with that hanging over the sport.

[Monday, March 8, 2010 at 7:24:00 PM CST](#)

 Anonymous said...


- what other steroids does any athlete take but performance enhancing steroids. these are the only steroids that have been shown to cause any improvement in performance. explain to me why a professional athlete w/ millions of dollars at his disposal would take steroids that do not improve his performance. and if you want to say that perhaps puckett didn't now they weren't helping he had the money to find out.
That statement "If there really is no connection between anabolic steroid use and glaucoma, it obviously makes the case for Puckett using steroids a lot weaker" is a desperate attempt to validate one of the main arguments you made that puckett was on steroids.
one other thing of note, there are only certain types of steroids which cause muscle growth and those are the steroids that do NOT cause glaucoma. there are lots of other types of steroids used for all sort of medical uses but if you ask any doctor they will tell you flat these steroids will not cause muscle growth or increase athletic performance.
to quote you, I think that there is a "preponderance" evidence that shows Puckett did not use steroids.

[Tuesday, March 9, 2010 at 10:58:00 AM CST](#)

 Anonymous said...

- Jose Baustista went from 13hrs in 09 to 53hrs in 10

[Thursday, July 5, 2012 at 8:05:00 PM CDT](#)

 Jay Prov said...

- Puckett changed his approach at the plate, kept his hands back, and lead through the plate with the barrel of the bat rather than dragging his hands behind like he did the first two years. Dragging hands will push it opposite field. Rotating your wrists and leading with the head of the bat pulls. When you pull the ball it produces a different spin on the ball, and it is more power. It is almost as if you don't understand how to hit a ball opposite field versus pull it. Getting hit in the head by a fastball caused his eye issues. Eating, drinking, and not exercise caused his weight gain that caused his stroke. This article is rubbish.

[Friday, January 26, 2018 at 5:57:00 PM CST](#)

 IT said...

- 1) The doctor treating Puckett's glaucoma explicitly stated he didn't think it had anything to do with his being hit in the head.
- 2) There are lots of fat, overweight ex baseball players and others who don't die of strokes.
- 3) Its barely plausible that Puckett's power surge, unparalleled in baseball history, was a result of his new approach at the plate. Just as it was barely plausible that McGwire, Sosa and Bonds, et al home run surges all resulted from "modern scientific improvements in weight training" as their fans explained it at the time.

[Sunday, January 28, 2018 at 6:15:00 PM CST](#)

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