

Mader, Jack. Personal interview with the author. Lancaster, PA. October 10, 2016.

Overview by Daniel Mader:

Jack Mader grew up watching MLB's all time hit leader, Pete Rose, play baseball, and he was a big fan of him. He admired a lot about how Pete played, rather than what he accomplished. He also remembers when Pete was banned from baseball, and he described how he and how the media reacted at the time. He had some opinions about the topic that he thinks a lot of other people agreed with at the time.

Question (Daniel): My first question: How do you think Pete Rose impacted the game of baseball?

Answer (Jack): I think he was the greatest hitter of all time. Maybe not the greatest defensive first basemen or third basemen, or wherever he started playing, outfield, but he was the greatest hitter of all time.

Question (Daniel): So do you think that makes him deserving of being in the Hall of Fame?

Answer (Jack): Yes. I think the guy that has the most hits, ever, deserves to be in the Hall of Fame.

1

Question (Daniel): What do you remember about when he was first betting on the sport?

Answer (Jack): I kind of didn't really care at the time, I guess so much, although he was my favorite player, but he was a manager when it actually happened, and I didn't really like the Reds, so I didn't really think much of it. One of my first thoughts was that there way no way he threw a game. He's too competitive a person

Question (Daniel): So, you think that he bet for them all the time?

Answer (Jack): That's what I would assume, that was my first assumption that what he did, that he was betting on his own team to win, because he believed that with him playing and managing at the same time that he could do whatever it took to win, and he knew when they were gonna win.

Question (Daniel) What was your reaction to when he got the lifetime ban?

Answer (Jack): Again, at the time it didn't really seem like it had an impact, and I didn't really think it would actually happen. I don't think I understood it when it happened. I just assumed it meant that he couldn't manage anymore, and so be it, I didn't really care about that. I didn't know that would keep him out of the Hall of Fame at the time.

Question (Daniel): What do remember about him managing, or do you not remember like you said before?

Answer (Jack): He was a player-manager most of the time that he played for the Reds. At the end he was just a manager in the last year or two. I don't remember a lot, I just remember him as a person, he's very competitive and arrogant, abrasive.

Question (Daniel): Do you think he changed more with the way he played rather than what he did when he played, like his numbers?

Answer (Jack): Yeah, I don't think Pete should have ever been a manager, because he may even have gambling issues to this day, but as a player he was competitive. The story that I always think of is the one where he's in the All Star Game, back when the All Star Game didn't even mean home field advantage, and he took out a catcher, and ended the catchers career. In the All Star Game!

Question (Daniel): Do you think there should have more evidence at the time about him being banned from baseball?

2

Answer (Jack): Yeah, I remember at the time there was a lot of questions on whether or not they had evidence. I don't even know what evidence they had, to tell you the truth. He hadn't come out and admitted anything yet. In hind sight now, he probably should have been banned from baseball. At least from playing and managing. Why that excludes you from going into the Hall of Fame, I don't understand that, but he should have been banned from the sport, like actively participating in any way, like the front office or in any way.

Question (Daniel): Do you think there was a lot of people who agreed or disagreed with the decision that he shouldn't be part of it anymore?

Answer (Jack): Well, a lot of people are torn on it I think. I've flipped flopped myself a few times because I just think, he doesn't do himself any justice because he's that arrogant and full of himself, and still really wants to be relevant, and he's just a jerk, but he's the greatest player ever.

Question (Daniel): Do you think people are more biased because they think he's a jerk so that he should be banned?

Answer (Jack): Yeah, I believe that people see how somebody acts, and that's not what should determine if you should go into the Hall of Fame or not. It should be based on what you did when you played. That's it. There was a lot of jerks in the Hall of Fame. I've heard Ty Cobb was a real jerk, the guy he passed in hits.

Question (Daniel): What memory do you remember most from when he was a player?

Answer (Jack): Catching the ball off of Bob Boone's glove in 1980, which is why I like him, I'm a Phillies fan, so I didn't really care for him when he played for the Reds, or pay much attention to him, or even afterwards when they traded him back to the Reds. He was just a hitting machine, you knew he was gonna get a hit, or he'd foul twenty-five balls off before he walked. Then he ran to first base, which is why they call him "Charlie Hustle". Because he was the first guy to ever get a walk and run as hard as he could every time to first base. Nobody does that. Still nobody does it.

Question (Daniel): When do you think that-- I don't know if you remember this or not--people first started noticing that how he played the game had an impact, or was different then other people?

3

Answer (Jack): I don't know exactly because when he started I was probably young. I don't know if he won Rookie of the Year—I think he might have. The year he came up might have been like '69 or something like that. I remember when I was a kid and we used to slide head-first, nobody had slid head first yet, and when we did it we called it a "Petey". I think he changed the way people slide. Everybody slides head-first now, where as he was the only one that did that back in the day that I remember. How else did he impact the game? He changed guys around him too, like Mike Schmidt became more of a hitter than a home run hitter. He became a more well-rounded hitter when he played for the Phillies. I believe he's the reason that the Phillies won in the 1980 world series.

Question (Daniel): So what do you remember about that season that he (Pete Rose) was part of that team?

Answer (Jack): Just his ability to hit. He was a single machine. He could put the ball where ever it wanted to go. If a pitch was outside, he would just lay it into-- left handed-- into left field.

Question (Daniel): Do you think there could ever be anybody like him, currently or could ever be like him, the way he hit?

Answer (Jack): I think theres guys that were as good as him for a season, but not anybody that could put it together for twenty three years, or whatever his career was. I think Tony Gwynn was very good for a year or two, he was that type of hitter where he just slapped singles. John Kruk, man there was tons of them. Mattingly, Boggs.

Question (Daniel): Recently I think he tried to write a letter to the Hall of Fame, and I think it was seven pages, about being inducted. Do you think that he will ever be allowed in? He does do broadcasting things, but I think that's just about all they let him do. Do you think they'll let him do more eventually with the ban?

Answer (Jack): I have a feeling they're waiting until he dies, to teach him a lesson. Seriously, I don't think they're gonna let him in now. The punishment itself actually seems excessive for what he did. He didn't throw a game. It wasn't like the Black Sox scandal with them throwing a game. He wasn't throwing the game, he basically gambled. Now you're not supposed to gamble, it says in every clubhouse "No Gambling". He understood what he was doing I guess, but the penalty seems excessive for a lifetime ban.

Question (Daniel): Eventually there was actual evidence after they banned him. Do you think they should have waited to give any kind of punishment-- there was a document they found at someone's house that proved something about it, so do you think they should have waited until there was actual evidence?

4

Answer (Jack): Well, yeah. If that's the case. It sounds like to me that they pretty much nailed it though right? The end results the same. It just shouldn't be a ban from the Hall of Fame in my opinion. He should be banned from the rest of baseball.

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Question (Daniel): What do you remember about the media, or like did they make a big deal out of it when it first started?

Answer (Jack): Oh it's been a big deal since it happened. I mean, how is it still a big deal? People are still talking about this, and how long has it been since he was banned, like twenty, thirty years? People are still talking about it. So it was a huge deal then. Plus you have (unknown) as the owner, and she was always in the media with her racist comments and stuff like that.

Question (Daniel): You said you thought the punishment was excessive. Why do you think that?

Answer (Jack): Because he never actually threw a game. There are other people who have been caught gambling in other sports and they received suspensions and one game suspensions in football, and it just doesn't seem appropriate that he was completely banned from the game, that obviously he loves. For betting on his team to win. Is it wrong to bet at all? Yes, because the problem with the gambling, especially in sports, is that you can do it and bet

them to win, but what happens if you your down money? Now you owe money. There was the enticement to throw the game. Because now you need money or their gonna break your legs.

Question (Daniel): So what do you think the punishment should have been?

Answer (Jack): I think it should have been a-- maybe not a ban from baseball, but obviously been fired from the manager position, not allowed to play, not allowed to coach, no involvement in front office or anything like that, but it should have only been for a few years even. It should have been for something like a five year period or something like that. Like for five years you can't do these things. And if he was able to come back in that five years and prove that he had been clean and not gambling, and didn't have association with the people that he did before, then he should have been reinstated. In my opinion, even as a manager. People should get a second chances if they show they deserve it. I believe the decision, to ban him was excessive. I believe he was guilty of what they said he was guilty of, it just seems like the punishment was too excessive.

Question (Daniel): Do you think you were the only one that thought that at the time or that most people thought that was fitting for what he did?

5

Answer (Jack): I think that most people don't think it was really fitting at all. Because you have the greatest hitter of all time, with the most hits, I don't know if he has the most runs. I know he's close if he doesn't. He's gotta be like top three I would think. Just the way he played the game, a lot of people liked, like who doesn't love Chase Utley? It's really hard not to like that guy because he played the game like Pete Rose. Except for that Mets shortstop, right? Pete is very hard to like because he is very pompous, arrogant, he is just full of himself, just a jerk.

Question (Daniel): So do you think people who love him have to love him and people who hate him have to hate him?

Answer (Jack): Yeah, I think you either get over the fact that who he is as a person and how he is, or your on the other side and you're like yeah, just ban him, he deserves it because of his personality.

Question (Daniel): Do you think, well the steroid issue at the time, I don't know if they really know much about it in the 90's--

Answer (Jack): Oh they did. Yeah they did. This is totally my issue with the whole steroid thing. And with baseball in general, and with Pete Rose, because steroids, I played football in high school, and graduated in 1987, and I was more than able to get my hands on steroids if I wanted them then. And how people were ignorant of it, and how Major League Baseball was ignorant of it in the 90's, when footballs already addressing it, professional football anyhow, is beyond me. What happened was they had the strike in 2004 then, I meant 1994 not 2004.

Question (Daniel): So do you think that people who use steroids should get more of an excessive punishment rather than people who gamble like Pete Rose?

Answer (Jack): Well I believe if they go into the Hall of Fame then there should be an asterisk next to their name, but their not gonna be banned from managing or playing or anything, but for whatever brief period that they have to serve a ban for, or whatever the rules state. That is garbage because their records are tainted and every hit that they got for that period of time is in question. That's why I believe he should be reinstated now. At this point he should be reinstated. Baseball has given itself a black eye by ignoring the issue because Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire had a home run spree one year that actually brought attention back to baseball after the '94 strike.

Question (Daniel): Do you think that they should gotten punishment then?

6

Answer (Jack): No, because baseball had no rule. If anybody should be punished it should be baseball itself. And I'm not sure how you can do that. Major League Baseball just turned the other way. They knew what was going on, it was quite obvious what was going on. To me at least it was. I don't find myself to be the smartest person in the world, so if I know whats going on, I would think many others would know whats going on. Bonds just blew it out of the water. He went away one winter and he came back and his head was benching 350. I mean his head was like fourteen times the size it was the previous season. So how do you act like you didn't know is, Major League Baseball is, it's not right.

Question(Daniel): So do you think if they almost switched the scenarios that if Rose and people who bet that they just let it happen, and people who were using steroids they were banned like Rose was, how do you think that would change what happened?

Answer (Jack): Well their not letting any people in that did the steroids yet, because they have to be voted in. I believe they have to eventually. Especially Bonds. I don't know how you deal with it. I believe Pete Rose should be forgiven though at this point. That he should be allowed into the hall of fame. Even if they just changed it, and said your banned from baseball and participating in any matter, coaching, owning, participating in any manner. You can do your broadcasts in the booth, and your in the hall of fame. It doesn't really matter, it would probably actually bring a lot more people, because Pete does his own signings. He still wants to be relevant. What was it, 4,162 hits?

Question (Daniel): In 2004, he said he only bet as a manager and not as a player, so do you think that means that he should even have less of a punishment then, if he wasn't even doing it when he was playing?

Answer (Jack): Well he was a player-manager for quite a while, so I don't buy that. I still think the whole punishment is excessive. It should have been less than that. Even if it's not excessive, then it should have been turned over by now. Why we're still talking about it is

beyond me. He is 77 years old, it's not like he's gonna go back into the game and start managing, or he's certainly not gonna play. Baseball is trying to make a statement, which is where I have a problem, because baseball itself is being hypocritical, because of the steroid thing, where they just looked the other way when it suits them, and try to make an example of this guy, and your not making an example, your just making yourself look stupid.

Question(Daniel): So do you think that baseball should feel more pressure because many people think that he should be in the hall of fame?

Answer (Jack): No, I don't believe they do. I don't believe they care what anybody thinks other than what the commissioner thinks. I think that's the problem with it. That's why I think Pete Rose got the ban initially. I don't remember who the commissioner was then but I do remember that he and Pete didn't see eye to eye.

7

Question(Daniel): I remember at last year's All Star Game the Reds had him for their first ceremony part, and they inducted him into their Hall of Fame, so do you think that should make him belong in the national baseball hall of fame?

Answer (Jack): No, but how are they able to do that? How is he able to walk out onto that field, and participate in the game In a way, how is he in their hall of fame when their in major league baseball? It doesn't seem like it would be allowed. It shouldn't be allowed, where they get to make a decision over Major League Baseball. So no, I don't think so. I don't think that should be a deciding factor in anything.

Question(Daniel): It says here that Rose bet on at least one MLB team on 30 different days, so do you think if it was a one time thing there would be a different kind of punishment or do you think it's just because he just continuously just kept on doing it and doing it?

Answer (Jack): I doubt it was one time. You see a lot of athletes once they stop playing and they were that good and that competitive like Michael Jordan and Charles Barkley would drop millions at a time in Vegas or whatever, or gamble on the stupidest things you could imagine.

Question (Daniel): So why don't you think that they had, I know that the NBA is a different thing, but do you think they should have had the same punishment?

Answer (Jack): Well, they probably didn't bet on their own sport. There has been speculation that Michael Jordan may have actually bet on basketball, to win, and it was literally just overlooked because he basically was the sport when he played. He was that important to the NBA at the time.

Question(Daniel): So why don't you think that the MLB thought that about Pete Rose, because obviously he was a pretty big part of it?

Answer (Jack): Because baseball has been around forever and it's got more honor to it.

Question(Daniel): Do you think it's because Michael Jordan brought more name back to basketball than Pete Rose to baseball?

Answer (Jack): Yeah because Pete Rose himself didn't necessarily put people in the seats. Baseball is more of a team sport, and he's not the only one. I was going to games more to see Pete Rose than to see Mike Schmidt when he was with the Phillies. Although I still enjoyed seeing Schmidt play too, Pete Rose was my favorite player. He was always my favorite player because of the way that he played the game, and just the results that you got in every at bat, and if you needed a clutch hitter, he was your guy.

Question (Daniel): How do you think this would have changed if it were a bigger name like Hank Aaron or Willie Mays, or do you think it would have changed if it were other nicer guys?

8

Answer (Jack): I do. I absolutely believe that if it were that he wasn't so ignorant. He might have even got it because of the way he spoke to the commissioner at the time. He was probably very rude to him and blew him off. Pete probably got most of his punishment for that. If it had been somebody like, maybe not Hank Aaron, but if it had been Willie Mays, I think that they maybe would have tried to brush it under the carpet, and try to hide it, not hit him in the face with it. Telling him to stop now or this is it, I'm not sure that happened with Pete. It seems to me like they just immediately went on a witch hunt on him.

Question: So you think that they were out to get him, or they were looking for something to get him in trouble about?

Answer(Jack): I don't think so, I think that they had the evidence. They may have approached him and said "Hey Pete, what's this about?" He probably denied everything and told them to go pound sand, because that's kinda how he is. Had he owned up to it at the time and said he'd stop, they probably wouldn't have pursued it any farther.

Question (Daniel): He is the all time hit leader, MVP, gold gloves, Rookie of the Year, 17 all star games, do you think just because of how historic he was, that it would just be automatic Hall of Fame, or if there is issues off the field that it just cancels all of that?

Answer(Jack): I believe that the Hall of Fame should be filled with players that played the game better than anybody else. They should be the greatest players of all time. Players. Not personalities, because he is one of them. He's one of the top five, if not number one. Based on what you like, if you like hits, home runs, RBI's, he's up there. It shouldn't be judged on your character. What if he murdered 18 people while he was the manager of the Reds? Does that mean he should be kicked out of the Hall of Fame if he was already in? I don't think so. It's like a sidenote, like hey, he had over 4,000 hits and he killed 18 people.

Question(Daniel): About a few years before the ban, he had a thirty day suspension for shoving an umpire as a manager over a call. Do you think that people started to think then that they didn't like him as a person before anything else?

Answer(Jack): Nobody liked Pete Rose on the field. If you were on the other team, you most certainly didn't. I would imagine he was pretty brutal on umpires. I don;t remember much about his managing days or him managing so much, but if he managed anything like he played, then he was out to win, and out for blood.

Question (Daniel) He denied it for about 10 years. Do you think that that made a difference in what happened?

9

Answer (Jack): Yeah, well he was already banned, but it probably made a difference in some people's mind that finally this arrogant idiot has come clean. It was probably one step closer for some people to forgive him I believe, because he actually told the truth, instead of lying and he would just deal with it, and it already happened so it can't get worse.

Question(Daniel): Why do you think that he waited so long to admit it?

Answer (Jack): Because he's still gambling, or he was then at least. Or maybe it was part of his healing process or his wife made him say it. Any way it happened, I believe that it was only self serving to Pete Rose.

Question (Daniel): He accepted his penalty of being put on the ineligible list, but do you think he did it reluctantly, or he was owning up to what he did?

Answer (Jack): I believe that things could have been a lot worse for him probably. They probably had something on him to make him sign that.

Question(Daniel): So you don't think he did it by choice?

Answer(Jack): Oh no, he did it reluctantly. He either had to sign that or something worse was gonna happen I'm sure. Like a federal investigation and stuff like that. Which he didn't want. I believe that it definitely could have happened. He agreed to those termed because of the (inaudible) that was possible.

Question(Daniel): Baseball did say when they first banned him that he was eligible to apply for reinstatement in however many years, do you think they did that because they thought they might change their mind by then, or that they wanted to keep drama or media on it?

Answer (Jack): I think that they left it open because of the fact that your not letting the greatest player of all time into the hall of fame. It really doesn't pay for them to do that. Why would you not leave him in the hall of fame? The controversy really hasn't been that good for them, I don't

believe it's ever been good. It's not like your talking about baseball, your talking about gambling and people doing wrong, and doing things that are unethical, and I'm big on that, like ethics and sports ethics and sportsmanship, and Pete Rose violated the very core of that. Even if you're betting them to win, you shouldn't have been doing it. And he knew better, because theres a fine line from betting to win to, oh if we don't win this game, then I'll just shave a point. You're still trying to win but now your shaving points. Now your shaving a run off. How far is it until your actually throwing a game? It's not very far.

Question (Daniel): Him and Jenry Mejia, who got banned last year for steroids, are the only two ineligible. Which one is worse in your terms?

10

Answer(Jack): That's tough. Their both bad but the steroids are probably worse I believe because his punishment, he knew what his punishment was. It's all written on paper now. Baseball with gambling is where I think the punishment gets excessive. Nothing was written down that said if you gamble in baseball, this is gonna happen, but you knew you could be banned possibly.

Question(daniel): I think they did make a rule while they were banning him that people call the Pete Rose rule now. Do you think that shows that they wanted him out for what he did?

Answer(Jack): No, I don't think anybody was out to get Pete Rose initially. He probably made the situation worse by lying and telling the commissioner where to go a few times. He's a very abrasive person. I believe he made it worse on himself, but I don't think there was a witch hunt to go get him, no. They found out about what he was doing and confronted him. With the steroids, yes that guy deserves a ban because he was caught three times. You're an idiot if you get caught three times. Especially after the second one, don't you know the third one gets you banned? Yeah you knew that. Some of these guys make honest mistakes, like they didn't know they were taking a supplement that was on the list. Whatever, they didn't know. They still accept the ban, I think that happened to Carlos Ruiz. It's whatever, I screwed up, deal with it, move on, your not gonna have a second one. Especially not a third one, that guy knew what he was doing.

Question (daniel) So do you think that if they found out he was doing it a second time that then he gets a lifetime ban?

Answer(Jack): No, no, no, gambling is different to me because gambling is just a zero tolerance policy on the gambling. No gambling. Even though he was betting them to win, there was zero tolerance. There is just immediately went to a lifetime ban, and it was a one time offense.

Question(daniel): My last question is: In summary of what we talked about, do you think that today, with a different commissioner and everything, that he should be reinstated or not and why?

Answer (Jack): I believe he should be reinstated because I believe that he has done his time, he should be allowed into the Hall of Fame. I think why that should be is because of the things that baseball has done wrong over the years itself, they should be a little forgiving. Why wouldn't you want the greatest player of all time to be in the Hall of Fame because it would only benefit you. I believe he deserves a second chance, I believe he should be in because he's the greatest ever. Greatest player on the field, should be in the Hall of Fame. It should have nothing to do with personalities, flaws, your banning from baseball should only have to do with baseball. Being on a plaque on the wall in a building, why it means so much to him, is probably the same reason we're having this conversation, because we love baseball. It seems to mean an awful lot to Pete Rose. I think that fact that it means so much is probably the reason that he's not being let in. Because they know it hurts him and their trying to make him pay. So he should be in, definitely.