News Release

Rabbi Moskovitz – Lessons from Baseball

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A new Rabbi has come to Vancouver to assume leadership of Temple Sholom, the city's largest Jewish congregation.

Rabbi Dan Moskovitz, a tech-savvy Californian, who previously served a 1250 household congregation in Los Angeles brings new energy and an ambitious program of innovation to the well-established institution.

He is available as a spokesman on a wide range of issues including raising children in an interfaith family, the importance of formal and informal Jewish education, social justice and Jewish men’s issues.

Recently Rabbi Moskovitz, who will be throwing the opening pitch on Aug. 25 for the Canadians at Nat Bailey stadium, tackled the difficult issue of performance enhancing drugs and baseball player Ryan Braun.

For generations, Jewish ball players, from Sandy Koufax to Shawn Green, have become icons as high-profile Jews.  But Braun's Jewish heritage is rarely mentioned.

Braun, a Milwaukee Brewers left fielder, has the credentials to attract media attention.  He was the first Jewish player to win Rookie of the Year in 2007. He was the 2011 National League MVP, the first Jewish MVP since Koufax in 1963. However Braun was suspended on July 22 for the remainder of the 2013 season (65 games) for doping.

Rabbi Moskovitz connects the steroids issue to a Talmudic text that says it is a sin to misrepresent a product you are selling. ‘A shop keeper is not allowed to sprinkle fine wine in a shop that sells lesser quality wines.’

"If you are watching a ball game and thinking an athlete's performance is because of his natural abilities or training, and it is really medically enhanced, then in the Jewish tradition it’s a form of stealing, stealing the mind of another person.

"Lance Armstrong, Barry Bonds - they are human and were doing the inhuman. But if they are juiced, what is the point, where is the sport?”

However Rabbi Moskovitz would still invite Braun to the synagogue, especially for Yom Kippur, the Jewish holiday of repentance in September.

“How does he repair the damage he has done?” Rabbi Moskovitz says, “That’s a sermon he’d like to hear Braun deliver”.

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