

CLOTHES TO YOU

SOME SPORTS JERSEYS WOULD GET AUF'ED ON PROJECT RUNWAY

By Kimberly Gadette

Professional male athletes may not realize it but they're playing dress up. Like Madonna, J. Edgar Hoover and bank tellers on Halloween, it's all about the costume. But since we live in a material world, it's the design of that very material that makes all the difference.

Let's take a closer look at the, ahem, seamy underworld of the major leaguers:

The NBA – Sleeveless fashion perfectly complements the basketballer's muscular arm. Well, with the exception of Shaq. And what the players lack in verbal skills, they more than make up for in exposed, easily-viewable tattoos. Unfortunately, though the NBA dares to bare, the jersey "blouson" look is so yesterday—ancient Greece, circa 5000 B.C. yesterday. And baggy britches? Please. You could stuff five NBA players into one pair of those shorts and still have a perfectly good game. Maybe even better.

The NHL – Excuse me, are there any men under all those swerving blankies? It's like Disney On Ice, starring a chorus line of lookalike Jasons from "Friday the 13th." Kick, two, three, four; bludgeon, two, three, four. Hello, Wardrobe Mistress? Something a bit more body-hugging, other than the player's opponent?

The NFL – The fierce horde of cleated warriors rush onto the battlefield. They are called Steelers, Titans, Lions...dressed to kill, we wouldn't dare stop any of them to ask for the time.

Perhaps one of the linebackers has jowls? Maybe the quarterback is losing his hair? Suppose the safety has a lazy eye—or three? It's amazing what a mask and a helmet the size of a Hyundai can do. But unlike the NHL, the helmets are just the icing on the beefcake. The football get-up gives us the myth of the supersized superhero, his manly attributes exaggerated to comic book perfection. Necks are subsumed into chests the size of a firm Sleep Number Bed. With a salute to Joan Crawford and Isosceles, the mile-wide shoulder pads

create a reverse triangle that tapers down to such a seemingly tiny waist, Scarlett O'Hara would be jealous. Rotating toward the rear, our gridiron guy's got the tight end of, well, a tight end. Thanks to nylon/ECS Lycra® spandex construction with a two-and-one-half-inch elastic waistband, reinforced zipper fly, a three-panel back and reinforced thigh guard and knee...

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I'm in love. Even if his hips were an average measurement, when contrasted with his doublewide chest, he's practically V-shaped. V for Very, Very Vonderful. Wow, I'm getting overheated. If the center wouldn't mind, might I share his towel along with the quarterback? No holding, I promise.

The MLB – In cute baseball caps and/or one-eared helmets, my baggy boys of summer sport a cotton/poly ensemble that moves right along with them (moves while they scratch a buttock, adjust a jewel). But that same flexibility allows for the unencumbered growth of beer bellies, drooping behinds, and all-around weight gain. Oh dear, like David Ortiz, Frank Thomas, and CC Sabathia, has our summer romance gone to pot?

I say "no." (I also said "no" to manager Mike Scioscia, who insists on wearing that god awful smock year-in, year-out. Intervention, anyone?)

Upon reflection in a player's polished helmet, any helmet, it comes down to this: whether the duds are cotton, spandex or sheetrock...how I LOVE a man in uniform!



Kimberly Gadette's articles and columns entail a deep dismemberment of GLBT issues, film, spectator sports, politics, dating and dogs (though it's funny, dogs seldom date). She's been published over 200 times in the last two years in publications from the East Coast to the West, as well as internationally. Though no one's ever asked to see it, she has an MFA from UCLA.