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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

When an athlete quits tobacco

I was pleased to read that Nationals shortstop Ian Desmond is determined to stop using smokeless tobacco ["Nats have a good win to chew on thanks to Desmond's late homer," Sports, April 7].

Mr. Desmond, a role model for many youngsters, has realized how much harm smokeless tobacco can cause, including oral and pancreatic cancers and tooth loss. Fifty years ago, Surgeon General Luther Terry issued his "Report on Smoking and Health," laying out the health risks of smoking. As a country, we have made great strides toward ending this public health scourge, with smoking increasingly banned in public venues and ever-greater numbers of people — like Mr. Desmond — realizing that tobacco is injurious in any form.

I applaud Mr. Desmond for his determination to stop using smokeless tobacco. I do not underestimate how hard it is for him to quit, and I have no doubt that someone with his discipline will succeed.

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