



## CUBS, CURSES, COACHES, OWNERS EQUAL TOTAL CHAOS

by Kerry Schmidt      10-05-2008

Yes, the Cubs are, to paraphrase Forrest Gump, “AGAIN,” about to fold like a bad umbrella. But before I get into this latest sordid disaster, I have to talk about a coaching change in the NFL. The Rams fired Scott Linehan . Note: The Raiders fired their coach, but that is all about Al “Delusional” Davis. See below.

The reason I want to discuss the promotion of Rams’ defensive coach, Jim Haslett, to head coach is because I was an NFL beat writer from 1996 to 2004, which included the five year tenure of Haslett.

And let me tell you, it was insane!

I was there with Jim Mora and his mid-season melt down, and Mike Ditka’s great Ricky Williams years and his infamous “scowl.” Said stare could scare a pitt bull off a meat wagon.

But it was Halsett’s horrors that I have the “fondest” memories of.

So Rams fans, unless he has changed, buckle up and prepare for a wild ride.

Haslett’s first year, he took the Saints to their very first playoff win and was named coach of the year.

All down hill from there. As a former player, he coached like he played. Wild, crazy and full of fire.

But he totally lost control rather quickly. He brought in a number of free agents without regards to locker room ambiance.

And, Kyle Turley was there – he threatened me once after one of my columns wherein I called him “Surly Turley.” He hated sports writers and few dared go near him. He was not a nice guy. He chased me around the locker room until other players stopped him.

Anyway, it got so bad with the team those next 2-3 years that Haslett lost complete control. Players were having wild parties some weeknights, and Haslett allegedly attended a few.

Fact: Widely known by us in the press box and reported in the “legal” section of the paper, Haslett was hit with a \$1 million paternity suit by one of the Saintsations (cheerleaders). He spent one Christmas holidays in a hotel.

Other accusations of harassment were widely reported, with the Saints allegedly paying upward of a million bucks to have said ladies leave quietly.

His temper also began to boil over as the losses piled up.

After a Sunday night game against the Jets (2002, I think), wherein they blew a big lead and, led by Turley who ripped the helmet off a Jets’ player and tossed it, leading to a 15-yard penalty and then a missed field goal, costing them the game.

During his post game interview, I asked, “Do you think this game was a step backwards?”

You’d thought I’d kicked him in the cahones. Face turned beet red, veins popping out, he screamed every profanity at me possible, saying how stupid, who was I, why was I allowed in there (press credentials, Jimmy), told me to get the F out, etc. He then abruptly walked out.

Later as I was in the locker room doing interviews, a member of his super protective PR guys – we called them Halsett’s Nazis (they would not let you get near a player without his permission and them several Nazis were there with you), told me Haslett was looking for me so he could apologize.

Never saw him.

Took an early flight to California next morning to visit my kids. When I checked into my hotel room, there were six messages and 11 emails of my laptop.

Haslett had gone on ESPN and profusely apologized.



# OFF THE WALL SPORTS

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Anyway, from then on in the press box, my nick name was “step backward.” He so lost control that the players lacked any semblance of cohesion, and I heard many players, in the locker room late in losing seasons, quietly saying to each other, “You be stealin’ man?” “Hell ya, I be stealin’” was the answer.

What that meant was they were just going through the motions, so as not to get injured. Regardless, those five years were very memorable. I have no animosity towards Haslett. He was an over performing player, going 100 % at all times, and he coached with the same fire. Problem was, he could not control the flames.

I wish him well.

## THE CUBBIES!

Fukmeordome was supposed to lead them to the promise land after exactly 100 years. Fukeame was 0 for 8 with 4 K’s and an error. Fuk u, dome.

Lou Pinella has to be one of the worst managers ever.

His first game pitcher, Dempster (Dumpster) had stats of 1.9 walks per 9 innings. He walked 7 in 4 2/3, including the bases loaded in the fifth. Pinella came out, talked to him and left. Second pitch, grand slam. End of story.

As one announcer remarked, everyone in the stadium knew Dumpster did not have anything. Everyone except Pinella.

Fans loudly “CURSE(d) Pinella.

Game two, they committed five errors and left 9 men on base.

ESPN writer Jim Caple wrote, “Fans were disgusted, and they left so early you would have thought the game had been played at Dodger Stadium.”

Boos rained down on players with hurricane force.

And, the Cubs had the best home record in all of baseball.

One fan, as he passed reporters waiting to talk to players, said, “Why in hell do you want to talk to them?” Another yelled, “Ask Lou why they sucked so much tonight.”

Stinging rebukes galore. Made the ivy turn brown,

USA TODAY writer Bob Nightengale, wrote, saying this was not the goat, black cat or Steve Bartman’s interference on a foul ball. Nor the “Murphy Curse.” (Cubs SS Joe Tinker in 1908 formed the West Side Social Rooters Club for fans. It was disbanded by owner Charles Murphy after the series, thus causing a “curse legacy” that some claim has followed the Cubs ever since. The Famous billy goat that was denied entry into the stadium in the 1945 WS was named Murphy. The Mets announcer when the black cat crossed the Cubs dugout in Shea Stadium during a key 1969 playoff series, was Bob Murphy.

The park where the ball scooted through Leon Durham’s legs during the ’84 NLCS was in Jack Murphy Stadium.

Well, barring a sweep of the remaining games, wait ‘til 2108!

Other cities, in checking, have it worse, overall. San Diego, Cleveland and Buffalo have not celebrated a championship in any pro sport in over 40 years.

The Bears won the SB in 2006 (2005 season), and the Bulls had some guy called MJ, who produced 6 NBA titles.

But yes, the Cubbies remain the Mr. Futility in MLB.

Fans will say the curse continued, but 5 errors, no hitting and just bad baseball will cause curses. At press time, Tampa Bay, with it’s whopping \$34 million payroll – just 6 mil more than A-Rod makes, is up 1 -0 on “the other” Chicago team, the White Sox.

Philly is up 2 zip on s..t head Selig’s Milwaukee and Baahhston is 1-0 on the Angels, the team with the best record in MLB.

Joe Torre, Dodgers manager.



Led the hated Yankees to 12 straight playoff appearances, 4 WS titles.

The Yankees offered him a cut in pay, saying with the great talent on the team, he should have won the WS.

Well, Joe Girardi, with all the same talent, did not even make the playoffs.

Torre?

With a team that should be near the basement in the NL, he not only has them in, but, as above, they are up 2-0 on the Cubs.

How about a “supposedly” bad team, the Dodgers, vs. the no payroll Tampa Bay in the WS.

Speaking of teams with high expectations.

Detroit Tigers. Picked by many to win their division, they finished nearly 30 games under .500, dead last in their division. Was Lou Pinella their manager too?

Tampa, Milwaukee and the Dodgers were supposed to be out of it by the All-Star game.

And the Mets. Last year, they blew a 7-game lead with just 17 games left to miss the playoffs.

This year, instant replay, de ja vu all over. They had a 3 ½ game lead over Philly with less than three weeks to go. They then lost 7 of 11 to slip out of their division lead, but still had a one game lead over Milwaukee with three games remaining. They lost 2 of 3, including the last game of the season, to the last place Florida Marlins.

I love these NY teams!

This brings me to Al “delusional, delirious” Davis, owner of the Raiders.

He didn’t just fire Coach Lane Kiffin. He broiled him over an open fire pit.

Davis has gotten so senile he no longer knows a football from a basket ball.

Not only did he fire Kiffin, he said Kiffin had, among many things, “disgraced” the Raiders name. As such, he said the remaining 2 ½ years on his contract is now “null and void,” and as such, he will not receive the remaining \$2.6 to 3.5 million left on said contract. Let’s see how fast the lawyers get that changed, and they will.

Davis is the disgrace. He has had five different head coaches since 2002 (interim offensive line coach makes 6. I won’t bother to look up his name, since he will be gone very soon).

Back in the late 60’s, when the Niners went up to Santa Rosa, CA, to scrimmage the Raiders, I was there and talked to Davis a couple of times. He, then, had a brilliant football mind.

But as now announcer Warren Sapp said, “he still does. It’s just his mind is still back in the 60’s. Run a sweep and then throw the ball long.”

How dysfunctional are the Raiders? Sapp (who finished his all-pro career with the Raiders from 2004-07, said, “Any player who asks me re the Raiders, I tell they to stay the hell away. Do not go anywhere near Oakland.”

He adds that they will never get any better until Davis is gone.

In the last 7 seasons, the Raiders have the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> worst record over that time frame. Thus, they have had some great picks in the draft, but few have done much yet. And Sapp makes it clear that “Nothing happens unless Davis says so. So, yea, every draft choice is his pick. He can’t blame anyone else.”

In his 80’s and often a wheel chair, Davis is honestly senile.

Sapp tells of a game wherein a player comes in and says, “we’re going deep right here, dog” I asked him how he knew and why, and he said, “the phone just rang,” meaning Davis would often call “stupid” plays from the suite.

Sapp also mentions a time when the Raiders had a game plan to stop the run. “We practiced it all week. On Friday, just before flying out of town, the plan was scrapped. We all knew it was from Davis. What an ass.”

Defensive coach Rob Ryan later said that was not true, but a team source told Sapp, “Davis definitely ordered Ryan to refute the defensive change.”



# OFF THE WALL SPORTS

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Davis and George Steinfuker should get together. They are two mentally deranged owners. Green Bay's "new" QB, Aaron Rodgers, had two pretty decent games to start the season, both wins. But in the last two, he has sucked. Five INT's including three last week in back-to-back losses. Oh, and some old guy named Favre, or something like that, threw 6 TD passes last week. Plus, Rodgers hurt his throwing shoulder and is questionable. Rookie Brian Brohm, taken with the 26<sup>th</sup> pick in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round (56<sup>th</sup>) overall, would start.

Geeze what if some old guy was still there....?

Finishing up with some "impossible fans to satisfy."

New England, after winning a record 21 consecutive regular season games, lost two weeks ago to Miami, 38-13, thus ending said streak. The fans booed their Pats loudly. Wow, a 21-1 regular season record over two years, and they get booed.

Now those are some jerk off fans.

I'll have my single malt tonight and toast, or curse, the Cubs.