



FROM PLAYOFFS TO POLITICIANS TO MANY MEMORIES

By Kerry Schmidt

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First, I have to get this tidbit re politics out of the way.

The 2nd Presidential debate (YAWN) was held at Belmont University in Nashville. They had tried to get one there for 12 years, and they finally got it. WHY/HOW?

They promised the media that there would be a special area set up just for them, with the required open bar! Yep, no bar, no Nashville.

Now I spent 8 years as an NFL beat writer, and yes, the top thing in every city was to see which one had the best open bar. Atlanta and Philadelphia were right up there. Any kind of mixed drink you wanted, with top name brand booze.

Worst? The Saints. They only had beer, and then they stopped even that after the 2002 season. Said that it was "Being abused." Hell, when you cover the Saints, you have to have booze, for God's sake.

I bet as much as 60% of all sports writers were in various states of inebriation when they wrote their stuff. Made for some really good stories, though.

Don't know re the politicians, but I would think they MUST be drunk just to listen to all that s..t. But, who the F cares.

October means MLB playoffs and the WS.

Again this year, you have an interesting final four.

The two teams with the season's best records, the Cubs and the Angels, were ousted. The Dodgers, who finished just 6 games above .500, swept the Cubs. My favorite is the Devil Rays (WHO?) beating the White Sox, 3-1.

Toss in the Phillies and Baaahhston, and there you have it.

Now I'm sure the media wants L.A. and Boston; the 2nd largest TV market and the New England's cursed team.

Just to piss off the media, I'd root for TB and Philly, but I want the Dodgers there, just because Joe Torre is in, and the Yankees ain't!

Joe Torre. I think he is one of, if not THE best managers in baseball.

When he was so rudely ousted by the Yankees, with the JR. Steinfuker saying Torre was not good enough, having only led them to 12 consecutive playoffs and 4 WS titles.

Hank Steinfukodome still is saying Torre sucks, but Torre shows the class. HS does not.

He refuses to say a single negative word on the Yankees. But his brother Frank, lashed out at HS after he said, "Where would Joe Torre be without the Yankees?" Frank responded, "HS is very lucky he was born in the Steinbleep family, and his inheritance is a whole lot bigger now than it would have been if (Joe) had not been there. That family made a hell of a lot of money because of my brother."

While Joe Torre will not say anything re this series, Frank says, "If he were to win the WS this year, it would be his most satisfying of any, I am sure."

Frank added that, "(Joe) again said nothing, but I know he was deeply hurt that nothing was said about him during the closing ceremonies for Yankee Stadium."

Hey, the Yankees have been very good, but no one ever said they had any class. The closest the Stienrs got was to remove the "c and l" before the ass.

The Dodgers have not won a WS since 1988 (see below) and Philly last won in 1980.

Yes, the Phillies have quite a less than happy history.

In 2007, they set a record that will likely never be broken. They lost their 10,000th game. No other team has come close, unless you count the Washington Nationals playing the Globtrotters.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

Their starting pitcher in game one, Cole Hamels, was not yet born when any Philly team last won a championship.

And their fans, while loyal to the end, are the worst behaved of any team, any sport.

I was in Philly in December, 1968 when the Eagles played my 49'ers. During halftime, Santa Clause was pulled around the field by reindeer. Never made it all the way, as fans began pelting him with snowballs!

Thus, even Santa could not "win" a show in Philly

I think that whenever the Eagles play the Raiders, it should be in a cage, like that fighting stuff, and the refs should all be heavily armed.

This brings me to the last Dodgers' WS, 1988.

I was there in Dodger Stadium, with my wife and two sons. Umpire Ed Montague, my brother-in-law, got us great tickets.

They were playing the cross-town Oakland A's, who were heavily favored.

It was game 1, October 15, 1988.

Kirk Gibson was not playing. He was not to play the entire series. "He was so beat up he could barley walk," said Dodgers' manager Tommy Lasorda.

"He couldn't raise his arms above his shoulders and he could not even stand on his left knee and he had a torn hamstring on his right leg.

Lasorda kept going into the club house and asking "Gibby" if he could play, and he gave the thumbs down.

But as the 9th inning started, Hall-of-Fame broadcaster Vin Scully said, "There will be no Kirk Gibson tonight." Gibby heard that, and "quickly put on a jock strap, my uniform and limped out to the dugout."

Scully said, "There is no way this man can play."

Down 4-3 in the bottom of the 9th two out with a man of first. But Dennis Eckersley, he of the unhitable slider and 1.79 ERA was on the mound.

Gibby took two quick, very feeble swings, now down 0-2. Twice he had to step out of the box, and bend over in pain. He somehow worked the count full, then he remembered what Dodgers' scout Mel Didier, who had watched Eckersley for years, said. "After the 3-2 count, I stepped out of the box and looked over at Didier and heard him say what he had told me before. With his thick hick accent, he said, 'Pardnuh, as sure as I'm standin' hear breathin', you're gonna get the back door slider.'"

As only Scully could call it, he said, "it's a fly ball to deep right"....pause, then, "and it is- pause – GONE." He then shut up for over three minutes.

"The crowd said it all," he said.

No one will ever forget Gibby limping around the bases, pumping his fist.

Immediately after he hit the ball, for about 3 seconds, you could hear a pin drop in Dodger Stadium, then all hell broke lose.

That home run was considered the most famous of all WS, especially due to the condition of Gibby. Bill Mazoriski's 9th inning walk off homer to win the WS vs. the Yankees is up there, but the injury to Gibson was the topper.

That was the last swing Gibby would ever take.

My youngest son, Brian, still has his ticket stub.

The Dodgers then won the WS in 5 games, and as Lasorda correctly stated, "that HR paralyzed them. They never recovered."

Now Torre has the Dodgers with a chance to get back at his old team. I gotta be rooting for him. The Cinderella of this season is Tampa Bay.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

Since their first season in `1998, they have never had a winning season, and for 7 consecutive years, they were dead last in attendance. Even this year, they were only 12th. Last season, the Devil Rays had the worst record in baseball. The proverbial “From Worst to First.” And, the ALCS tickets sold out in 15 minutes, said owner Stu Sternberg. Ironically, he is a New Yorker.

TB’s payroll: \$43 million and change. Boston: \$134 million. Yankees pay out \$214 million. Yet TB bested both in their division.

The Yankees Derek Jeter and A-Rod combined make more than TB’s entire payroll.

I’ll buy a beer for anyone who can even name a player or coach on the team.

The only recognizable face is “advisor” Don Zimmer, 77, a former player, coach and manager. He wears # 60 to mark his years in pro baseball.

After a September win in Boston, Zimmer approached first baseman Dan Johnson, who had just been called up from the minors and had hit a 9th inning home run to tie the game. “I don’t know who the hell you are, kid, but nice hitting,” Zimmer said.

Talk about the no-names. For example, Joe Maddon. He’s the manager. He once put 5 players in the outfield against Boston’s David Ortiz, and

intentionally walked Texas’ slugger Josh Hamilton – with the bases loaded!

Their 18-year, made up stadium has catwalks running around the lower deck. So? So, they are in play. Makes for some interesting hits.

Thus, the no-name Cinderella’s vs. the defending world champs.

And to spice up this giant distance, the two teams had an all-out brawl in June in Boston. Eight players were suspended. That could make for some good stuff. I say the TB pitcher should make the first pitch a fast one right at Boston’s leadoff hitter. Yea, good stuff.

I would love to see a TB vs. L.A. WS. Torre leading his team to the WS and the Yankees are at home. And, TB, hell, they’ve never been anywhere!

So, Boston, the Captain of baseball’s world, and TB, the gunga din of sports.

I always root for the underdog, unless it’s my 49’ers, who just happen to be the under dog these days.

In some ways, I long for the olden days, where there was only the WS, National League vs. American League winners.

But money rules, thus the two lead in playoff series.

But since it is about money, I think the division series should also go 7 games. True, a lesser team just getting hot for 3-4 games wipes out an entire year of a team with a much better record, but, well, who the F cares.

By the time you read this, each team will have already played two games. At press time, Philly leads L.A., 1-0.

By this time next week, we will know the winner of the NLCS, while the ACLS, if necessary will be playing a game 7 on the 19th.

Then, on to the WS. A tradition of well over 100 years.

This is the time when baseball is really worth watching.

A few minor, worthless tidbits.

The Cubs losing was bad enough for their fans, but an Elgin, Ill. High school student was forced to remove a Cubs jersey she was wearing at school, because the name on the back was FUKUDOME, and the powers that be at the school thought that was swear word. Those teachers must be huge Cubs’ fans. Or just very stupid.

Sports Illustrated had a poll to find out who is the most overrated QB in the NFL. Philip Rivers of SD came in first, followed closely by Tony Romo of Dull-Ass. At least Romo has a movie model girl friend he can take to Mexico during the playoffs.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

I can't get too much of Charles Barkley. He was interviewed by SI's Dan Patrick on fall sports and the baseball playoff/WS.

Barkley was asked about Manny Ramirez blasting the Red Sox, among other verbal outages.

Barkley: "I think when a guy can hit like that, you let him do what he wants to do. In college, I played with a guy, who smoked pot all the time. He was a really good player. They tried to get him to stop smoking pot all the time, and he couldn't make a shot. We went to the coaches and said, 'please, get this boy his pot.' He can't make a shot without it."

I'm guessing he never made it in the NBA.

But hey, putting in a good word for some good pot is OK with me.

And Mr. P

I often sip a wee dram of single malt when I'm writing my column – like now, and it seems work out better.

Go Dodgers and Devil Rays.