

*All I want is to see a
World Series in my lifetime.*

--Thousands of
Chicago baseball fans

Baseball News

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GO GO SOX RUN AWAY WITH SERIES

The small market team with the Big City dreams dominated the Baseball World. The 2005 Chicago White Sox tore through the play-offs in a historic fashion, sweeping two play-off foes in route to the Championship in Houston.

The Astros never really had a chance. The Texas franchise had never been to the Big Dance before this last week. Texas is football country, Big Football Country, from birth through death (and distribution of family season tickets).

The White Sox franchise



has deep roots in the core of the baseball sports lexicon. However, most of its history deals with the dark side of the Game.

Charles Comiskey founded the franchise and instilled the cheap owner philosophy which still prevails in the city. This led to the Black Sox scandal of 1919, and the lifetime ban of one baseball immortal player, Shoeless Joe Jackson. The current owners were blamed for the last baseball strike and ruined World Series and the "White Flag" trade when the team was not eliminated from the post-season. But all is forgiven to the fans and purists this fortnight because the Sox are the World Champions.

The morning after the Victory, there was the first hard frost of the season. The ticker tape parade north on LaSalle Street cut through the crisp fall air. No one cared. This was the city's day to revel in its sports heroes; to have one of those rare "community" moments.

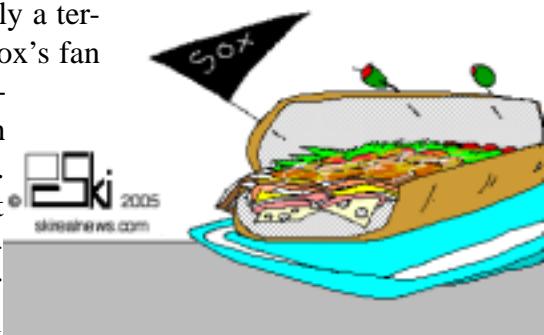
The 2005 White Sox played like champions the entire season, but stayed under the national radar. Like an odorless deadly gas, the Sox led from wire to wire to capture the first baseball world title since the pre-Black Sox of 1917. A team of non-superstars, journeymen grinders, playing fundamental baseball in the shadow of the Other Baseball team in town playing marketing games, is a lost story like a non-fatal ore barge shipwreck on Lake Michigan.

The networks are moaning about the Series having the lowest ratings in modern history. It is the network's own fault: Fox starts its baseball coverage in July when the season is about half over, and the national broadcasts focus mostly on east coast teams like the Red Sox or the Yankees or west coast teams like the Dodgers. The nation could have joined the bandwagon of the Go Go Sox if the

network showed some of their regular season games. There was no bandwagon to jump onto because it never came to the other 49 states.

Baseball is mostly a territorial fan base. The Sox's fan base has been mis-identified as being South Siders from Bridgeport. But the Sox season ticket holder mirrors the Chicago Cub fan: upper middle class, located in the northwest suburbs. The Cubs big draw is the nouveau Yuppie Gen X drinker crowd that falls into the largest north side tavern called Wrigley Field. The Sox

TODAY'S SPECIAL:
HERO SANDWICH



games.

Only a generation ago, it was a baseball fan's luxury to have two teams in town. There were no interleague play except for the All-Star game and the World Series. If you wanted to see superstar players in the American League, you'd go to Comiskey Park. The Yankees were always the big draw.

Less than a generation ago, new Sox ownership threatened to move the team to Tampa unless it got a sweetheart new stadium deal. The politicians relented and another cookie-cutter concrete circle was built on the hallowed grounds of McCuddy's across from old Comiskey Park. We were at the Irish Wake when the old park was destroyed in 1990. That was an end of another era, a time capsule lost, from the Golden Age of Youth.



THE IRISH WAKE OF THE LATE WHITE SOX

DEALING-CHICAGO, Ill. (AP) — The Sox...
The Sox...
The Sox...

the error made the Sox...
The Sox...
The Sox...

the Sox...
The Sox...
The Sox...

Judge Bouter's
Feet Record
from the New
Hampshire
High Court

It has been reported...
The Sox...
The Sox...

OCTOBER 13, 2005-- The national, regional and local media's moth to a single flame sole concentration of the controversial play in the bottom of the 9th inning missed the key element of the contest that Mark Buehrle pitched like Koufax in his prime.

But everyone is digesting the A.J. Pierzynski play ("stealing first base") so here is my morning nasal drip, projectile vomiting on the subject:

How many wrongs/mistakes make a right?

Mistake #1: A.J. swinging like an 82 year old man falling out of his wheelchair.

Mistake #2: Josh "Oh My Gosh" Paul catching the pitch backhand-down. With the creased catching gloves, catchers can get lazy (as Pierz did earlier in the game with a passed ball on a strike). If Paul had an older glove, a traditional bowl design, he would have had to knee drop and cup the glove up toward his face in order to catch the pitch. This would have given the ump a clear view of the ball. But instead, the backhand maneuver looks like from the ump's angle as a "trap." Harold Reynolds commented after the play that in the split second of the catch, the glove, its straps hitting the ground could give off the sound of a ball hitting the dirt.

Mistake #3: Ump Eddings marching band hand gestures confused everyone. First the straight right arm to signal no foul tip; then the right arm bicep curl to signal a strike; then another straight right arm . . . his explanation was that he only signaled a strike but not an "out."

Mistake #4: Listening is a Skill. John Kruk commented after the replays that the video is only part of the play. If the umpire did not verbally call A.J. "out," then the play remained "alive." During the game, it appeared that the home plate ump was consistently calling balls and strikes and outs verbally (as the Fox microphone behind home plate picked up some of the more animated calls.) Pierzynski said he looked back after the swing because he did not hear the ump say "out." Pierz had been behind the plate the entire game and knew Eddings mannerisms; Paul did not.

Mistake #5: Paul dribbling the ball back to the mound believing he caught the third strike--inning over. However, it is not Paul's call when the inning is over, it is the man over his shoulder's call. If A.J. did not hear the bark "out" then neither did Paul. In the history of the catching profession, with close calls on swinging strikes in or near the dirt, it is "best practice" for the catcher to tag the batter to confirm the out even if it is not necessary.

Mistake #6: Escobar walking off the mound not reacting when Pierzynski started to run toward first base. Something should have signaled fireworks, marching band music or something in his head on why the slow-footed Sox catcher was running toward first. The ball was only a few feet away from him; a simple spring training bunt drill, grab and throw, would have ended the inning.

Mistake #7: Manager Mike of the Angels not PROTESTING the game. Regular season rules apply to the post season. He made the on-field appeals to no avail. If he believed that the ump made an absolute bogus call which COULD cost him the game, he should have protested the call, and protested the game to the official scorer in the booth. If the Angels won, he could have withdrawn the protest. If the Angels lost because of the call (which they did), he could have put the entire league office and umpiring officials on the griddle to decide the protest. The replays and the public opinion dynamic would have been on the Angel's side. The decision the next day could have been a) ump's judgment call stands or b) bad call, continue to play the Game starting at the top of the 10th. (The latter would have Bud Selig running around town in an armor limo).

Mistake #8: With two outs and 0-1 count, the Angels should have known that Ozuna would attempt to steal second (he bluffed on the first pitch). The Angels should have called a pitch out on the second pitch. Instead, Paul double clutched the strike and no throw to second on the steal. The stolen base was the key to getting the run to score on Crede's double on the next pitch.

Mistake #9: Allowing Lou Pinella to broad-

LOST IN THE WOODS

Joe Morgan's one man crusade against Ryne Sandberg going into the Hall of Fame was lost when Ryno made his speech in Cooperstown this summer. Morgan wanted to keep the second baseman wing of the Hall to himself. Then he returned to the broadcast booth to start an old-timers crusade against the Steroid Era sluggers who are tarnishing the game's record book and soiling the memory of his fellow Famers. This crusade has faded away without a whimper.

During the World Series, Morgan found it necessary to proclaim that the Astros roster was devoid of African-American players. He took it as a personal insult. But he missed the point, demographically, culturally and politically. The Astros philosophy has been to draft college baseball players. The team represents a fraternity style club sport. The team also has many Latin ballplayers. The White Sox take the other approach and have gone international for talent. The Game mirrors the Nation in many respects; it always was a bellwether of cultural acceptance. The largest growing segment of the population is Hispanic, not Black. That is why clubs have a growing minority

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cast the game. For an animated manager, he is duller than a serial killer's butcher knife. His yarns (yawns) kept the batters swinging like zombies during the game.

Any time a Chicago team is involved in any play-off, something WEIRD must happen. It is the destiny of the City not to be known for championships but WEIRDNESS. And when the Weirdness Turns Pro, one only has to look to the Ex-Cub factor to determine the outcome of the World Series.

The team with the most ex-Cubs in the playoffs was the Yanks and they stank.

Now, with the remaining four teams, there is a slight possibility that the World Series WILL NEVER END!! The 7th game will continue for hundreds and hundreds of innings without a victor because of the following:

The Cards have 4-ex Cubs which spells

A CHICAGO PARABLE

A man walks into a neighborhood tavern. He sits on a bar stool in the middle of the bar. To his left is a depressed penguin. After ordering his cold beer, the man asks "Why you so glum, chum?" The penguin replies that he is worried about the polar ice caps melting. "That's heavy," the man mutters. He looks to his right and sees an Angel with slumped wings. "Hey, Angel," the man asks, "why are you so depressed?" The Angel replies that the summer drought has killed many living things. "That's heavy, too," the man mutters.

He takes a deep swig of his beer. He sighs and asks the bartender why this place is so depressing. The bartender replies "it's always like this here in Chicago." The man looks around to the penguin and the Angel and scratches his head. "Why?" he finally blurts out loud.

The bartender shakes his head. "Because this is a Cub bar and everyone in it is waiting for Hell to Freeze Over."

ranks, but not in Morgan's traditional sense. Black Americans now rank 4th in total population behind Whites, Asians and Hispanics. Hola, Joe.

CERTAIN DOOM. (Grudz, King, Mahoney & Tavarez)

The Astros have 1 ex-Cub, Vizcaino.

The Angels have one ex-Cub, 9th inning spotlight catcher Josh Paul! (2003: 3 games with Cubs, 6 AB, .000 average!)

This should have guaranteed a White Sox winner, except the Sox have an ex-Cub, too (Gload). Can we gloat about a guy who played 18 games without anyone noticing in 2000, and batted a cool .194?)

If the Astros play either the Sox or Angels, the ex-Cub factor means the first Infinite World Series. Think about the possibility . . . none of the current Cubs will get hurt in Spring Training if the WS is still in progress; Nomar will end his career as a Cub with TWO SAVES!!!! (Boston Harbor rescue story people!)

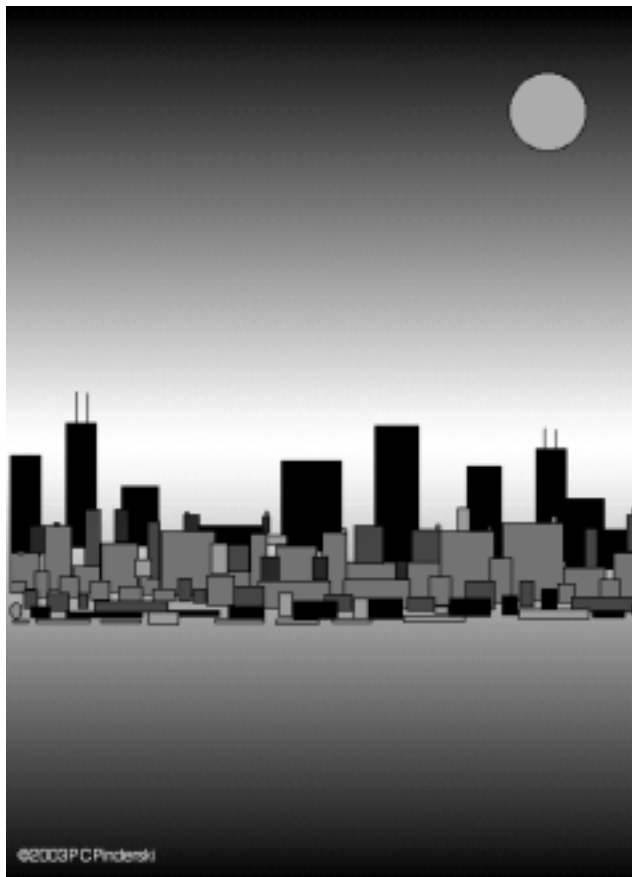
OCTOBER 24, 2005 --- They looked miserable. Their hawknoses protruding from the bottom of Hefty garbage bags. The cold rain pelting their shoulders to the bone. The clouds of their own breath warming the snotcicles forming below their noses. They looked miserable.

By teleportation, those miserable faces huddled in the pricey confines of new Soldier Field as the non-octane Bears waddled through an extremely, dental procedure like, contest against another hapless opponent, the Ravens, were huddled in the newly upscale pricey sections of the New Sox Park, being soaked with the chilled northeasterly rain.

Most of the game, the fans could not clap for fear that the frostbite would dislodge a fingertip. Any roars would inhale the damp air to form lung slushies. Yes, those south side souls were miserable in the firework glow of the fall classic.

Just as the Bears could not complete a slant if Lovie Smith's family was being held hostage by football terrorists, the increasing "slant" on the South Side Series has been not the actual game or the Sox players, but really on how the White Sox success will affect the Cubs. The collective head scratch would say, "Who cares!" but even in the overproduced, annoying metagraphics, insanely stupid Fox broadcasts, this subject was brought up the national opinionators. Why does the focus continually shifts back to the north side in the glory days of the south side? Because the dominant media franchise, the Tribune, has slanted its coverage of sports to determine that the Sox are still an annoyance in the big city sports scene. The Cubs are building new, expensive bleacher seats this winter; competition from the Sox could dampen the need for constant Wrigley sell-outs to bolster the sagging Tribune bottom line. And who wants to see those miserable corporate faces in their warm sky boxes during the bright, warm, sunny summer days?

The Sox fans endured the cold, the rain, the long commercial breaks because they had to and they wanted to; this is what parents instilled in the children at the ball yard: patience rewards.



The 2005 White Sox are showing the swagger of the 1985 Bears. In close games, they do not panic. They remain loose and confident. In 1985, the Bears went to the field knowing that they were going to destroy the opponent, and the opponent knew it. The Patriots in the Super Bowl would have rather been on a Southern chain gang than being manhandled by the champions. It was only a matter of Time until the game was iced in traditional Sox fashion. Nothing would dampen the victory, not even the cold hard gray rain. The victories in the post season continue to roll like thunder across the plains.

Carl Sandberg wrote about the pastoral quality of the linear game of baseball. Studs Terkel recorded the common man's stories relative to the circular nature of progressive class distinction. The Sox play baseball in the grinding, blue collar work ethic; nothing fancy, nothing manicured; nothing pretty. No nonsense, no excuses. The Cubs cater to the white collar, corporate event planner. To lose is still entertainment to the latter club.



OCTOBER 26, 2005-- The long Zoning Board of Appeals meeting lasted well past 10 p.m. I had no indication that the Sox game would still be on until I got back into the car to head home.

Upon arriving at the homestead, and finding that the VCR still won't program tape with the Commicast box, I sit down to see the last innings or so . . . I thought. Another two hours and 45 minutes of sitting down to see the last innings or so . . .

The Fox cameras continued to pan the stands, and the pictures of the fans were those of shell-shocked refugees, people who witnessed a horrific traffic accident, people at a wake; for a moment, it was stock film footage of Cub fans.

It reminded me of the time in the early 1980s when I met the gang at Wrigley Field in the 8th inning of a feeble Cub-Pirate(?) contest. This was the era when the Cubs did not sell out; the stands were wide open; you could get a front row seat at the ticket window a minute before the first pitch. Coming from work, I sit down and the remarks fly like "Nice of you to show up." But then, a rally and another 9 innings of baseball was played, with Harry Caray singing a SECOND 7th inning. If I recall correctly, the game ended with Nielsen trying to determine whether he would spend his last \$5 on gas to get back to Charleston or buy a sock puppet. Of course, he bought the sock puppet.

So, Ken Williams only trading deadline move to bring a piece of deadwood to the already hard bench actually paid off last night with Blum hitting a 14th inning home run, as Buerhle was doing his Wilbur Wood impersonation in the bullpen. It was kind of disappointing that the Sox actually took the lead in the 14th. Both managers were out of pitchers and bench players (except one pinch hitter each). Astros Game 4 starter Backe ran out to the bullpen in the 14th to warm up because Marte was still pitching (so an opponent always has hope). If the game continued, Backe would have had to pitch, and there would have been no one else (Clemens?) so the second game of today's day-night doubleheader, Game Four, would be a mess for the Astros. Bud Selig would be called to the field to confer with the managers after they ran out of pitchers like during that ill-fated All-Star Game in Milwaukee. Selig would have called the game a tie in the 16th because he would have been late returning to his suite to get his beauty sleep.

Geoff Blum?? Who knew he made the playoff roster??

Did you see his hair? It was like a porcupine jumped on an electric transformer.

Yes, it was an electric moment, but not with that much voltage.

Best moment? Phil Garner throwing a stool against the dugout wall.

OCTOBER 27, 2005--- One has had to tune out the overproduced, musical snippets of the Fox telecast fillers, so when the Sox players adopted a Journey song as a theme song for their faltering season no one should really care, except Steve Perry, who got comp tickets to Game 4. Bastard.

It was not that the Sox played especially well; it was the Asters played like they had a heavy cowbell around each of their necks in the class of a full size Buck sedan. Fireplug Phil (Garner) made the perfect "Dusty Baker move" when he took out the only thing that was working last night, Back, for a pinch hitter when the game was tied. A manager who is not a deer caught in the headlights would have kept the good hitting pitcher in the game, and let him throw until he did a Dombrosky, and have bits of bone and tendon fly to the backstop to put some blush in Barbara Bush's cheeks.

One key statement lost in the Sox locker room celebration should have pulled a pall on that Irish Wake. Reinsdorf said that "organizations win championships." I heard that and the mental video tape loaded Reinsdorf's Buddy Jerry Krause making that bold statement at the end of the Bull's run, and immediately dismantled the club instead of paying the players their current market value.

Any Sox free agent should relish the experience, and his teammates on the plane ride home, because you will have a new address next spring. (Sox FA: Blum, Widger, Thomas, Konerko, Everett). Ozzie will want "everybody" back, especially his pitchers and pitching coach, but Brandon McCarthy is the farm phenom so at least one arm will have to go (El Duque? Marte?) Konerko will be playing in California next season; Thomas probably won't be able to walk. The "organization" will use its championship good will to allow the tide of free agency dollar surf to take big money players and a higher payroll away from the Sox. Remember, the Sox are the ghost of Charles Comiskey to this day: the team extorted 2006 season ticket money from people just so one could obtain a ticket to a WS game. That is squeezing pennies from a situation. It does not matter to Reinsdorf's group because that championship pen-

nant will forever fly above Sox Park. He can go to owners meetings with the new pinky ring showing the other elitist owners that he is in an even more elitist sub-club, championship owner. And his investment group will also want to cash in --- more profits to investors (which means less payroll, higher ticket prices, push the merchandise).

Now, the national media has proclaimed the Sox as taking over Chicago with the championship last night. This is now a Sox town. Hardly. At the 7-11 this morning, there were three bundles of Chicago Tribunes with the front page scream BELIEVE IT! but the Sun-Times was sold out. The S-T is the newspaper of news readers' choice; the Trib is an entertainment company which cross promotes and slants coverage toward the Cubs -- even during the playoffs. The Trib owns the top newspaper, radio station and local television station, and is the 500 lb gorilla in the local cable sports channel joint venture with all the local teams. The Sox story will quickly fade by Thanksgiving when the tailgaters at Soldier Field are burning polish sausage in the name of Bear tradition.

The Sox championship will rank as a Rushmore moment for any Chicago baseball fan, but in the transcendent nature of the causal sports fan or culturist bandwagon jumper, the Sox title would barely make the Top Ten list.

1. The 1985 Bears disemboweled their opponents in the Monster of Midway style that fans bloodlusted for, not seen since the Roman gore orgies of the Empire.

2. The 1963 Bears have held on to the hearts and minds of the parents and grandparents 1985 Bear fandom to bridge the generations through Ditka. At charity events and auctions, the 1963 Bears still hold their own in the hearts and minds of the general public.

3. - 8. The Bulls championship(s) in any order that King Michael would put them in.

9. The Cubs 2003 divisional championship will continue to spark baseball memories (and nightmares) forever.

10. The Sox World Series victory of 2005.

Continued next Page

LAST PIECE OF THE PIE

In 2003, Chicago was five outs away from the World Series. The trauma of losing the pennant to the Marlins was like an unhealing surgical scar; a painful reminder of what could have been from the knife of defeat.

In 2004, Chicago was only a week away

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The Game 4 MVP, and co-series MVP if they had such a thing, could have been Juan Uribe who made a Jeter-esque dive into the stands for Out 2 and made a stunning pick and throw to end the game. If he were in Yankee pinstripes, Uribe would have had a bronze statue waiting for him the stadium parking lot after last night's game. It also shows the difference between the 05 Sox and 03 Cubs --- Uribe made the tough plays and the Sox won; Alou and Gonzales missed the plays and the Cubs lost. The Cubs blamed the loss on their fans. The Sox players blamed no one for their mistakes. The Sox were grateful to share their moment with their fans.

The Houston fans were clueless. Too much college football face paint to watch a game. The television pans in the stands looked like an open casting call for a CSI walk-on shot (actor: relative going to morgue to ID body). Fox executives were clueless in wondering why the television ratings for this series hit rock bottom. Texas is not a baseball state --- it is a football, no, FOOTBALL, state since one is born. They live, breath and die football. The Sox are a small market second team in the second city with no PR, no "star" players, no national conscious. Outside of Chicago, the most famous Sox team is the 1919 Black Sox. This perception probably will not change.

There was no talk of the two teams repeating for the title next year. The Astros and Sox were built with cast-off veterans and home grown core players. The stars aligned just enough to put them into the World Series. However, who would not want to see the teams play again in Houston next year, but this time, Harriet Miers would sit to Barbara Bush's right in order to sharpen her scorecard pencil between innings.

from the playoffs, until another classic Swoon took place and the season ended with the rattling chains of the Grim Reaper.

The Chicago baseball hopes were being held with the Cubs, the only team in town that could spend the money to create a winner. The problem is that the Cubs just don't know HOW to win. One hundred sixty two games a year is not enough experience to handle the micro-dissection of a short post-season series. One hundred years of playing the Game has not instilled any franchise ethic since its last World Series victory. Each successful season quickly spoils on the organization's pantry leading to the prospect of stale crumbs for the next season. Wait to Next Year is the oldest marketing slogan in the city; after 2003 close but no cigar finish, the slogan has outlasted its usefulness.

The White Sox have most of their Championship team signed for next season. Paul Konerko, Carl Everett, and Frank Thomas will probably not return due to free agency and/or injury. That frees up \$20 million of the \$69 million payroll. It also puts the Sox in the position of hoarding the cash, paying investors a big dividend, and sit back on today's laurels; just like the Cubs have done for a century.

