

SPORTS

White Sox End World Series Curse

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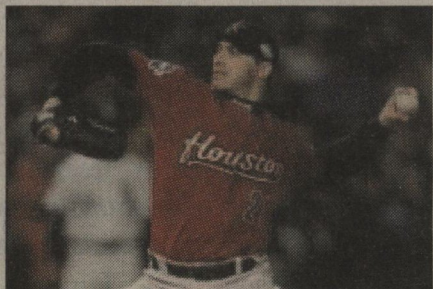


"Prediction: Chicago." - Oct. 25 issue of the *Cadre*.

It always feels good to be right.

This one's going down to the wire folks. Well, maybe I wasn't so right after all.

The Chicago White Sox defeated the Houston Astros 1-0 last Wednesday night to sweep the series and clinch their first World Series title since



1917. Most predicted that the series would be very close, and many saw Houston as the eventual winner. Then again, you had people like Fred 'Fiddler' MacDonald of the *Guardian* who decided to be smart and pick the Astros to win in four. The *Chisox*, however, burst out of the gate in Game 1 and took the next three games to win a long-awaited World Series for the city of Chicago, whose Cubs have not been world champs since 1908. The Fiddler looks pretty smart these days doesn't he?

This series was billed by many as a low-scoring pitching duel, and it turned out to be anything but. The teams averaged 11 runs per game during the first three matches, before Houston's Brandon Backe and Chicago's Freddy Garcia pitched the performances of their lives in a 1-0 Game 4 victory by the Sox.

In fact, home runs were the

order of the day. The winning runs in each of the first three games were driven in via the long ball, including two walk-off homers. Another big factor for the White Sox was the performance of rookie closer Bobby Jenks, referred to by manager Ozzie Guillen as 'the wide, tall guy', whose late-game domination prevented the Astros from mounting any comeback.

Any great post-season team has unsung heroes who perform in the clutch and Chicago is no different. In Game 1, third baseman Joe Crede drove in the winning run with his first career World Series home run. The next night, it was speedy centrefielder Scott Podsednik supplying the heroics by hitting a walkoff home run in the ninth inning as

the White Sox triumphed 7-6. Podsednik hit a whopping total of zero, that's right, zero, home runs during 162 regular season games. In Game 3, which went to 14 innings, defensive replacement Geoff Blum hit another walkoff homer in the top of the 14th to score two runs and secure a 7-5 win for the Sox. And in Game 4, we saw the exception to the rule in slugging right fielder Jermaine Dye, who drove in the only Chicago run in the 8th inning to all but cement the World Series victory.

The Red Sox broke the Curse of the Bambino last year. This year it was the White Sox. Is 2006 the year of the Cubs? Will Harry Caray finally be able to shout "CUBS WIN! CUBS WIN!" with satisfaction? Don't hold your breath.

Oh, and one more thing. This means an end to the Leafs' 38-year Stanley Cup curse. Parade down Yonge Street next summer!

.....And Now for Something Completely Belligerent: The New NHL

Liam McKenna
Sports Editor



I think that some of these new rules suck. I absolutely despise the delay of game call that a defending player receives if he moves the puck out of play in his own zone, even if it is by accident. Am I the only one that thinks it should be a judgement call by the referee? For anyone that says that players will make it look like an accident even when it's not, they're not very good at that - have you seen some of the dives getting called this season as a result of one of the better crackdowns? And you know what else blows - this lack of calling goalie interference now. Sure, they say they'll fix it, but in last night's Montreal-Ottawa game - one of the best games I've seen in a while - Anton Vermette knocked Jose Theodore over *again*. The fact that it didn't result in a goal does not mean it should go uncalled. It was preposterous, and Theodore gave him a shove to let him know that. To boot, there are far fewer fights than there used to be.

There. I had my rant.

Now, if I happened to be a GM, coach, or other team official in the NHL, I would have to empty my wallet for the league. Bob McKenzie, of TSN fame, says that this is a good thing, because it protects the integrity of our game and allows us to market the product better without so much negativity. As he says, neither football, baseball or basketball decries their game as much as hockey does.

Well, Bob, maybe they don't have to.

The reason we complain about hockey is because sometimes, the rules do suck. In the early 1900's, for instance, hockey was an onside game, with nine people on a side, passing backwards like it was rugby. That sucked, people complained, and now things don't suck nearly as badly anymore. I think it is safe to say that were it not for that rule having been changed, hockey would be even less popular than it is today.

If it wasn't for people complaining about hockey in order to prompt a change, it never would. If everyone had responded to the games a few years ago with "Man, I sure love watching the trap! I hope this game stays 0-0 as long as possible!" then there wouldn't have been any need to change the rules. But because people complained, there *were* changes.

I don't like Pat Quinn. I think he's whiny, self-important, and a douchebag. But you know what? Despite being a Habs fan, I understand why he says some of the things he says. Listen up, NHL: your changes to the game were not perfect, nor will they ever be. You won the lockout, congratulations, but realize that no quick fix will change the game. Like everything else that is good, the league needs to evolve in order to reach the level of greatness it has the potential to obtain.

So, in essence, Bob McKenzie, you are wrong. People speaking out is great. NHL, you are wrong too. You know who is right?

Me.

And Mark Recchi.