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The Chicago Cubs From 1945: History's Automatic Out

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The Chicago Cubs From 1945: History's Automatic Out

Abstract

Since 1945, many teams have made it to the World Series and have won. The New York Yankees, Philadelphia/Oakland Athletics, and St. Louis Cardinals have won many. The Boston Red Sox, Chicago White Sox, and San Francisco Giants endured decades-long dry spells before they finally won the World Series. Even expansion teams like the New York Mets, Toronto Blue Jays, Kansas City Royals, and Florida Marlins have won multiple championships. Other expansion teams like the San Diego Padres and Texas Rangers have been to the Fall Classic multiple times, although they did not win. Then we have the Chicago Cubs. The Cubs have not been to a World Series since 1945, and have not won one since 1908. In the seventy years since their last World Series appearance, the Cubs have flirted with a return to the Fall Classic several times. Unfortunately, each time they would suffer some amazing calamity that would stunningly snatch defeat from the grip of victory. This is their story.

Keywords

baseball, Chicago Cubs, World Series

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THE CHICAGO CUBS FROM 1945: HISTORY'S AUTOMATIC OUT

*Harvey Gilmore**

ABSTRACT

Since 1945, many teams have made it to the World Series and have won. The New York Yankees, Philadelphia/Oakland Athletics, and St. Louis Cardinals have won many. The Boston Red Sox, Chicago White Sox, and San Francisco Giants endured decades-long dry spells before they finally won the World Series. Even expansion teams like the New York Mets, Toronto Blue Jays, Kansas City Royals, and Florida Marlins have won multiple championships. Other expansion teams like the San Diego Padres and Texas Rangers have been to the Fall Classic multiple times, although they did not win.

Then we have the Chicago Cubs. The Cubs have not been to a World Series since 1945, and have not won one since 1908. In the seventy years since their last World Series appearance, the Cubs have flirted with a return to the Fall Classic several times. Unfortunately, each time they would suffer some amazing calamity that would stunningly snatch defeat from the grip of victory.

This is their story.

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INTRODUCTION

For better or worse, competition is a zero sum game. For every winner there is a loser. For every team that wins the World Series every year, there is a team that finishes dead last every year. Similarly, for a team that has a dynastic track record, there is a team with a track record of not being able to get out of its own way.

As I am now in my quinquagenarian years, I have been a New York Yankees fan since I was ten years old. Since 1976, I have enjoyed the privilege of seeing the Yankees go to the World Series eleven times,

winning seven of them.¹ On the other end of the spectrum, as of 2015, we have the Chicago Cubs. In their now far distant championship history, the Cubs have won ten National League Championships and two World Series Championships.²

I. OTHER FANS' TEAMS WIN... WHY NOT US?

For long-suffering Cubs fans, the two most important details of their team's deep rooted futility are these: a) the Cubs last won the World Series in 1908,³ and b) the Cubs last went to the World Series in 1945.⁴ This is all the more frustrating considering the histories of some teams that *have* reached the Holy Grail of a championship pedigree. For example:

A. Drought Breakers

1. The 2004 Boston Red Sox

Prior to 2004, the Red Sox had endured a lot of postseason heartbreak since their last World Series win in 1918⁵ (against the Cubs). They suffered crushing World Series losses, all in Game 7, in 1946⁶, 1967⁷, 1975⁸, and 1986⁹. The 1967 and 1975 Game 7 losses were in Boston's

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1. New York Yankees Team History & Encyclopedia, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/NYY/>.

2. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CHC>.

3. 1908 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1908_WS.shtml.

4. 1945 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1945_WS.shtml.

5. 1918 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1918_WS.shtml.

6. 1946 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1946_WS.shtml.

7. 1967 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1967_WS.shtml.

8. 1975 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1975_WS.shtml.

9. 1986 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1986_WS.shtml.

Fenway Park, and the 1986 loss came after the Sox had a 2 run lead in Game 6, with 2 outs and the New York Mets down to their last strike in the 11th inning. The Mets then scored 3 runs to pull out a 6-5 win in game 6¹⁰, and then overcame a 3 run deficit to win Game 7, 8-5¹¹.

In addition to the World Series losses, the Red Sox had also lost a shot at the postseason on the season's last day in 1949 (against the Yankees),¹² 1978 (against the Yankees and Bucky Dent),¹³ and on the season's final weekend in 1972¹⁴ (against the Tigers),

The Red Sox finally broke through in 2004. The previous year, they had lost another heartbreaking game 7 (in the American League Championship Series) when Aaron Boone hit a home run in the 11th inning at Yankee Stadium, giving the Yankees a 6-5 comeback win and sending them to the World Series yet again.¹⁵ This time, after the Yankees had taken a 3 games to none lead in the American League Championship Series, the Sox came all the way back by winning the next four games. The last game

10. See, e.g., Dan Shaughnessy, *One Strike Away: The Standard for Booting Victory is Set*, BOSTON GLOBE (October 22, 2004), http://www.boston.com/sports/baseball/redsox/articles/2004/10/22/one_strike_away_the_standard_for_booting_victory_is_set/?page=full; *Top 10 Infamous World Series Moments: Bill Buckner's Error*, REALCLEARSPORTS.COM, http://www.realclearsports.com/lists/top_10_infamous_world_series_moments/bill_buckner_error.html?state=stop; See also, Dave Anderson, *Mookie Wilson's Grounder. Bill Buckner's Legs*, N.Y. TIMES (October 25, 1986), http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/sports/year_in_sports/10.25.html. ("Just when these Red Sox thought they had won the franchise's first World Series championship since 1918, the Mets somehow patched and pasted together three runs on singles by Gary Carter, Kevin Mitchell and Ray Knight, a wild pitch by Bob Stanley and Mookie Wilson's grounder that Bill Buckner, the Red Sox first baseman, let slip through his aching legs. And tomorrow night Ron Darling has an opportunity to measure the Mets for their World Series rings in the decisive seventh game.").

11. 1986 World Series, *supra* note 9.

12. JOHN TULLIUS, *I'D RATHER BE A YANKEE* 115 (MacMillan 1986).

13. See Thomas Boswell, *Yankees Beat Red Sox, 5-4 in Playoff; Blinded Piniella Saves Yanks; Dent, Jackson Homer to Win A.L. East Title*, WASH. POST, Oct. 3, 1978, at C3; see also *The Yanks and the Sox: Nobody Lost*, WASH. POST, Oct. 3, 1978, at A18.

14. *Tigers Top 20 Seasons: #18 1972*, DETROITTIGERTALES.COM, <http://www.detroittigertales.com/2012/01/tigers-top-20-seasons-18-1972.html>. ("As it turned out, the strike may have helped the Tigers win the American League East division title. Because of games missed to the strike, the Tigers wound up playing one more game than the Red Sox. That one game proved to be the difference in the race as the Tigers beat out the Red Sox by a half a game. Going into the final weekend, the Red Sox led the Tigers by one half game as the two teams met in a three-game series. The Tigers won the first two games of the series to clinch the division title. The Red Sox won the final game to pull within a half game, but it didn't matter.").

15. See, e.g., Bob Hohler, *Haunting Blow*, BOSTON GLOBE (October 17, 2003), http://www.boston.com/sports/baseball/redsox/articles/2003/10/17/haunting_blow?pg=full.

was a 10-3 rout in Yankee Stadium that sent the Sox to the World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals.¹⁶ The Cardinals, who had beaten the Red Sox in 1946 and 1967, were no match for the high-flying Sox this time, who destroyed the Cardinals in a four game sweep.¹⁷ Since then, The Red Sox have won 2 more World Series, sweeping the overmatched Colorado Rockies in 2007,¹⁸ and beating the Cardinals again, this time in six games, in 2013.¹⁹

2. The 2005 Chicago White Sox

Prior to 2005, the White Sox last World Series win came in 1917.²⁰ They returned to the World Series in 1919,²¹ and that was the year in which several of the team's star players were accused of taking bribes to deliberately throw the World Series²² to their opponent, the Cincinnati Reds. As the legend suggests, the players involved saw it as a way to make some easy money and also strike back against their miserly owner, Charles Comiskey.²³

As thoroughly discussed in other forums, the White Sox did lose the World Series, and the players allegedly involved went to trial.²⁴ The players were eventually acquitted in the criminal trial.²⁵ However, Commissioner Kennesaw Mountain Landis hit the players with a lifetime ban from the game, and none of them ever played a single inning thereafter in the major leagues.²⁶

16. See, e.g., Dan Shaughnessy, *A Date That Will Always Be Remembered*, NY TIMES (October 21, 2004), <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/21/sports/baseball/21globe.html>.

17. 2004 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2004_WS.shtml; See, generally, Dan Shaughnessy, *YES!!!*, BOSTON GLOBE (October 28, 2004), <http://www.boston.com/sports/baseball/redsox/articles/2004/10/28/yes>.

18. 2007 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2007_WS.shtml.

19. 2013 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2013_WS.shtml.

20. 1917 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1917_WS.shtml.

21. 1919 World Series (5-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1919_WS.shtml.

22. See Douglas Linder, *The Black Sox Trial: An Account* (2010) <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/blacksox/blacksoxaccount.html>.

23. *Id.*

24. *Id.*

25. *Id.*

26. *Id.*

The White Sox did not go to the World Series again until 1959, losing in six games to the Los Angeles Dodgers.²⁷ The White Sox next postseason appearances came in the American League Championship Series in 1983²⁸ and 1993.²⁹ They lost to the eventual World Series winning Baltimore Orioles³⁰ and Toronto Blue Jays,³¹ respectively. After the 2000 season, after winning their division, the White Sox were both embarrassed and undressed by the Seattle Mariners in a 3 game sweep in the Division Series.³²

The White Sox finally ended their championship drought in 2005. They played the Houston Astros, who were making their first ever World Series appearance. The White Sox finished a dominant postseason run by sweeping the Astros.³³ In doing so, they went through the entire 2005 postseason losing only once, finishing with a record of 11 – 1.³⁴ The only other wild card era team to go through the entire postseason with only one loss was the 1999 World Series Champion New York Yankees.³⁵

3. The 2010 San Francisco Giants

From 1885 until 1957, the Giants played in New York.³⁶ During that time, they enjoyed seasons ending with World Series wins in 1905,³⁷

27. 1959 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1959_WS.shtml.

28. American League Championship Series (3-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1983_ALCS.shtml.

29. American League Championship Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1993_ALCS.shtml.

30. 1983 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1983_WS.shtml.

31. 1993 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1993_WS.shtml.

32. American League Division Series (3-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2000_ALDS2.shtml.

33. 2005 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2005_WS.shtml.

34. See, Tyler Kepner, *White Sox End 88-Year Wait for Series Title*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 27, 2005), <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/27/sports/baseball/27series.html>.

35. See, Thomas Boswell, *A Decade Ahead of the Rest*, WASH. POST (October 28, 1999), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/sports/baseball/longterm/1999/playoffs/worldseries/articles/boz28.htm>.

36. San Francisco Giants Team History & Encyclopedia, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/SFG>.

37. 1905 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1905_WS.shtml.

1921,³⁸ 1922,³⁹ and 1933.⁴⁰ In the 1950’s when the Cubs were firmly mired in the second division, the Giants enjoyed two postseason runs that remain part of New York lore to this very day. First, in 1951, the Giants pulled off the “Miracle of Coogan’s Bluff,” in which they charged all the way back from a 13 game deficit to pull into a season ending tie with the arch rival Brooklyn Dodgers and force a three game playoff to decide the National League Championship.⁴¹ In the 9th inning of the deciding game, with the Giants trailing 4-2, Bobby Thomson hit a three run home run that won the game 5-4,⁴² stunned the Dodgers, and sent the Manhattan based Giants to a World Series matchup against their Bronx neighbors, the New York Yankees, where they lost.⁴³ The Giants would return to the World Series just three years later. Led by their all-world centerfielder, Willie Mays, a future Hall-of-Famer and the National League’s Most Valuable Player,⁴⁴ the Giants destroyed the 111 game winning Cleveland Indians⁴⁵ in a shocking 4 game sweep.⁴⁶

Unfortunately for New York National League baseball fans, both the Giants and the Dodgers left New York for San Francisco⁴⁷ and Los Angeles,⁴⁸ respectively, after the 1957 season. Unfortunately for the Giants, their move to the west coast would include a more than fifty year odyssey before they would again reach the top. During that stretch, the Giants’ arch

38. 1921 World Series (5-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1921_WS.shtml.

39. 1922 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1922_WS.shtml.

40. 1933 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1933_WS.shtml.

41. See, A.J. Foss, *Do You Believe in Miracles? Top 20 “Miracles in Sports History*, SPORTSTHENANDNOW.COM (February 22, 2011), <http://sportsthenandnow.com/2011/02/22/do-you-believe-in-miracles-top-20-miracles-in-sports-history>.

42. *Id.*

43. 1951 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1951_WS.shtml.

44. Willie Mays, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/m/mayswi01.shtml>.

45. Cleveland Indians Team History & Encyclopedia, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CLE>.

46. 1954 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1954_WS.shtml.

47. San Francisco Giants Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 36.

48. Los Angeles Dodgers Team History & Encyclopedia, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/LAD>.

rival, the now Los Angeles Dodgers, would win the World Series in 1959,⁴⁹ 1963,⁵⁰ 1965,⁵¹ 1981,⁵² and 1988.⁵³

The now San Francisco Giants would make numerous trips to the post season during that time, but a World Series win proved elusive. The Giants suffered losses in the National League Championship Series to the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1971⁵⁴ and the St. Louis Cardinals in 1987.⁵⁵ They also lost in the National Division series in 1997 to the Florida Marlins,⁵⁶ the New York Mets⁵⁷ in 2000, and the Marlins again in 2003.⁵⁸ The Giants also made it to the World Series three times during that stretch. First, in 1962, they lost a 7 game heartbreaker against the New York Yankees.⁵⁹ The 7th game, in San Francisco's Candlestick Park, ended with the Yankees winning 1-0.⁶⁰ Star slugger Willie McCovey, with the tying and winning runs on second and third, hit a vicious line drive right at Yankee second baseman Bobby Richardson for the game's final out.⁶¹ Next, in 1989, they were badly overmatched against the powerful Oakland Athletics, who blew them out in an easy four game sweep.⁶² Finally, in 2002, they lost another heartbreaking 7 game affair, this time to the Los Angeles Angels of

49. 1959 World Series, *supra* note 27.

50. 1963 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1963_WS.shtml.

51. 1965 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1965_WS.shtmlhttp://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1965_WS.shtml.

52. 1981 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1981_WS.shtml.

53. 1988 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1988_WS.shtml.

54. 1971 National League Championship Series (3-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1971_NLCS.shtml http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1971_NLCS.shtml.

55. 1987 National League Championship Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1987_NLCS.shtml.

56. 1997 National League Division Series (3-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1997_NLDS1.shtml.

57. 2000 National League Division Series (3-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2000_NLDS2.shtml.

58. 2003 National League Division Series (3-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2003_NLDS1.shtml.

59. 1962 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1962_WS.shtml.

60. *Id.*

61. TULLIUS, *supra* note 12 at 287-289.

62. 1989 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1989_WS.shtml.

Anaheim.⁶³ In Game Six, the Giants blew a 5 run, 7th inning lead to lose 6-5,⁶⁴ and the Angels put Game Seven away early to win 4-1.⁶⁵

In 2010, the Giants returned to the World Series. This time, they exorcised the demons of postseasons past by trouncing the Texas Rangers in five games.⁶⁶ Since then, the Giants have won two more World Series titles, sweeping the Detroit Tigers in 2012,⁶⁷ and defeating the Kansas City Royals in seven games in 2014.⁶⁸

B. *From Expansion to Champions*

I would assume that there are few things more frustrating to a long-suffering Cubs fan is the fact that expansion teams have actually gone to the World Series and have won. Here they are, in no particular order:

1. New York Mets (1969: 4-1 vs. Baltimore Orioles⁶⁹; 1986: 4-3 vs. Boston Red Sox⁷⁰);
2. Kansas City Royals (1985: 4-3 vs. St. Louis Cardinals⁷¹; 2015: 4-1 vs. New York Mets⁷²);
3. Florida Marlins (1997: 4-3 vs. Cleveland Indians⁷³; 2003: 4-2 vs. New York Yankees⁷⁴);
4. Toronto Blue Jays (1992: 4-2 vs. Atlanta Braves⁷⁵; 1993: 4-2 vs. Philadelphia Phillies⁷⁶);

63. 2003 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2002_WS.shtml.

64. *Id.*

65. *Id.*

66. 2010 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2010_WS.shtml.

67. 2012 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2012_WS.shtml.

68. 2014 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2014_WS.shtml.

69. 1969 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1969_WS.shtml.

70. 1986 World Series, *supra* note 9.

71. 1985 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1985_WS.shtml.

72. 2015 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2015_WS.shtml.

73. 1997 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1997_WS.shtml.

74. 2003 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2003_WS.shtml.

5. Arizona Diamondbacks (2001: 4-3 vs. New York Yankees⁷⁷);
6. Minnesota Twins (1987: 4-3 vs. St. Louis Cardinals⁷⁸; 1991: 4-3 vs. Atlanta Braves⁷⁹).

C. *The Dynastic Yankees*

In 1923, fifteen years after the Cubs' last World Series win, the Yankees defeated the two-time defending champion New York Giants for their first ever championship.⁸⁰ After that, the Yankees got rolling and became the team of the 20th century. Since the Cubs' last title, the Yankees went on to win forty American League Championships and twenty-seven World Series Championships.⁸¹

D. *Honorable Mention*

These teams at least got there, even though they lost:

1. San Diego Padres (1984: 1-4 vs. Detroit Tigers⁸²; 1998: 0-4 vs. New York Yankees⁸³);
2. Houston Astros (2005: 0-4 vs. Chicago White Sox⁸⁴);
3. Milwaukee Brewers (1982: 3-4 vs. St. Louis Cardinals⁸⁵);
4. Colorado Rockies (2007: 0-4 vs. Boston Red Sox⁸⁶);

75. 1992 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1992_WS.shtml.

76. 1993 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1993_WS.shtml.

77. 2001 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2001_WS.shtml.

78. 1987 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1987_WS.shtml.

79. 1991 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1991_WS.shtmlhttp://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1991_WS.shtml.

80. 1923 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1923_WS.shtml.

81. New York Yankees Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 1.

82. 1984 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1984_WS.shtml.

83. 1998 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1998_WS.shtml.

84. 2005 World Series, *supra* note 33.

85. 1982 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1982_WS.shtml.

86. 2007 World Series *supra*, note 18.

5. Texas Rangers (2010: 1-4 vs. San Francisco Giants⁸⁷; 2011: 3-4 vs. St Louis Cardinals⁸⁸).

II. SOME NOTABLE FIGURES NOT YET BORN WHEN THE CUBS LAST WON

On October 14, 1908,⁸⁹ the Cubs shut out the Detroit Tigers 2-0 in Game 5 of the World Series to clinch the World Series Championship. On that date, Theodore Roosevelt was the President of the United States.⁹⁰ Also on that date, nine other men who would become President of the United States had not been born yet. They are:

Ronald Reagan (1911-2004)⁹¹
 Richard Nixon (1913-1994)⁹²
 Gerald Ford (1913-2006)⁹³
 John F. Kennedy (1917-1963)⁹⁴
 George H.W. Bush (1924-)⁹⁵
 Jimmy Carter (1924-)⁹⁶
 Bill Clinton (1946-)⁹⁷
 George W. Bush (1946-)⁹⁸
 Barack Obama (1961-)⁹⁹

87. 2010 World Series, *supra* note 66.

88. 2011 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2011_WS.shtml.

89. 1908 World Series, *supra* note 3.

90. *Theodore Roosevelt*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/troosevelt.html>.

91. *Ronald Reagan*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/rwreagan.html>.

92. *Richard M. Nixon*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/rmnixon.html>.

93. *Gerald Ford*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/grford.html>.

94. *John F. Kennedy*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/jfkennedy.html>.

95. *George H.W. Bush*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/ghwbush.html>.

96. *Jimmy Carter*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/jecarter.html>.

97. *Bill Clinton*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/wjclinton.html>.

98. *George W. Bush*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/gwbush.html>.

99. *Barack Obama*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/obama.html>.

In addition, Presidents Clinton, Bush (#2), and Obama were not yet born when the Cubs made their last World Series appearance in 1945.

Next, some iconic Hall-of-Fame baseball players were not yet born the last time the Cubs won the World Series. They include, among many others:

Jackie Robinson (1919-1972)¹⁰⁰
 Joe DiMaggio (1914-1999)¹⁰¹
 Ted Williams (1918-2002)¹⁰²
 Willie Mays (1931-)¹⁰³
 Mickey Mantle (1931-1995)¹⁰⁴
 Roy Campanella (1921-1993)¹⁰⁵
 Phil Rizzuto (1917-2007)¹⁰⁶
 Hank Aaron (1934-)¹⁰⁷
 Ernie Banks (1931-2015).¹⁰⁸

Finally, the show business phenomenon known as the “Rat Pack” was still more than fifty years down the road, and none of the membership had made his mortal appearance when the Cubs won its last World Series. The members of the Rat Pack were:

Frank Sinatra (1915-1998)¹⁰⁹
 Dean Martin (1917-1995)¹¹⁰

99. *Barack H. Obama*, THE INTERNET PUBLIC LIBRARY, POTUS: PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.potus.com/bhobama.html>.

100. *Jackie Robinson*, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/r/robinja02.shtml>.

101. *Joe DiMaggio*, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/d/dimagjo01.shtml>.

102. *Ted Williams*, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/w/willite01.shtml>.

103. Willie Mays, *supra* note 44.

104. *Mickey Mantle*, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/m/mantlmi01.shtml>.

105. *Roy Campanella*, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/c/camparo01.shtml>.

106. *Phil Rizzuto*, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/r/rizzuph01.shtml>.

107. *Hank Aaron*, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/a/aaronha01.shtml>.

108. *Ernie Banks*, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/b/bankser01.shtml>.

109. See, ANTHONY SUMMERS & ROBBYN SWAN, *SINATRA: THE LIFE* (Vintage Books 2006).

Sammy Davis, Jr. (1925-1990)¹¹¹

Peter Lawford (1923-1984)¹¹²

Joey Bishop (1918-2007).¹¹³

III. THE CUBS WORLD SERIES CHRONOLOGY

A. 1900-1909: *A run of Dominance*

Believe it or not, at the start of the 20th century, the Cubs were an actual dynasty. In 1906, the Cubs began a run of three consecutive National League Championships by finishing with a record of 116-36. The Cubs' 116 wins that season stands to this day as the most regular season wins by a National League team.¹¹⁴ The Cubs' 116 wins were matched only by the 2001 Seattle Mariners, who finished with a record of 116-46.¹¹⁵ The Mariners have the American League record for most wins, having surpassed the 1998 World Series Champion New York Yankees' mark of 114-48.¹¹⁶

In spite of the Cubs' regular season dominance in 1906, they could not carry it into the postseason. They lost the World Series in six games.¹¹⁷ To add insult to injury the team that beat the Cubs was none other than the hometown Chicago White Sox!¹¹⁸

In 1907, the Cubs continued their dominance with a regular season record of 107-45,¹¹⁹ and finished the season by sweeping the Detroit Tigers in that year's World Series.¹²⁰ In 1908, the Cubs again dominated the

110. See, WILLIAM SCHOELL, *MARTINI MAN: THE LIFE OF DEAN MARTIN* (Cooper Square Press 1999).

111. See, SHAWN LEVY, *RAT PACK CONFIDENTIAL: FRANK, DEAN, SAMMY, PETER, JOEY AND THE LAST GREAT SHOWBIZ PARTY* (Doubleday 1999).

112. See, JAMES SPADA, *PETER LAWFORD: THE MAN WHO KEPT THE SECRETS* (1991).

113. See, Matt Schudel, *Joey Bishop, 89; Mild-Mannered Comedian Grounded Hollywood's High-Flying Rat Pack*, WASH. POST (Oct. 19, 2007), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/18/AR2007101801101.html>; See, MICHAEL STARR, *MOUSE IN THE RAT PACK: THE JOEY BISHOP STORY* (Taylor Trade Publishing 2002).

114. See, HISTORIC BASEBALL: BRINGING BASEBALL HISTORY TO CENTER FIELD, http://www.historicbaseball.com/teams/1906_chicagocubs.html.

115. 2001 Seattle Mariners, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/SEA/2001.shtml>.

116. 1998 New York Yankees, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/NYY/1998.shtml>.

117. 1908 World Series *supra* note 20.

118. *Id.*

119. 1907 Chicago Cubs, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CHC/1907.shtml>.

120. 1907 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1907_WS.shtml.

National League with a record of 99-55.¹²¹ They returned to the World Series for a rematch with the Detroit Tigers and the Cubs came out on top again, this time winning in five games.¹²² The now two-time defending champions returned in 1909 and scored another stellar season, finishing with a record of 104-49.¹²³ Unfortunately, they fell a little short that year as the 110-win Pittsburgh Pirates¹²⁴ won both the National League Pennant and World Series.¹²⁵

Needless to say, life was quite good for Cubs fans. The Cubs had three 100 win seasons, three National League Pennants (and came within shouting distance of a fourth), and two World Series wins. As a Yankee fan that has enjoyed the experience of seeing my team win multiple times, I can certainly imagine how Cub fans must have felt about their team in those days. As I write this in 2015, I believe it is safe to say that no one could have imagined back then that the Cubs and their fans would not only never again reach the pinnacle of success, but would also experience some excruciating near misses in the succeeding decades.

B. 1910-1918: Two More Pennants

After the 1909 near miss, the Cubs came back in 1910 to cruise to a 104-50 record,¹²⁶ finishing thirteen games ahead of the competition.

They met the Philadelphia Athletics in that year's World Series, and the Athletics won in five games.¹²⁷ The Athletics were starting their own run of dominance that would see them win the World Series in 1910, 1911,¹²⁸ and 1913.¹²⁹

121. 1908 Chicago Cubs, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CHC/1908.shtml>.

122. 1908 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1908_WS.shtml.

123. 1909 Chicago Cubs, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CHC/1909.shtml>.

124. 1909 Pittsburgh Pirates, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/PIT/1909.shtml>.

125. 1909 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1909_WS.shtml.

126. 1910 Chicago Cubs, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CHC/1910.shtml>.

127. 1910 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1910_WS.shtml.

128. 1911 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1911_WS.shtml.

129. 1913 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1913_WS.shtml.

After the Cubs lost the 1910 World Series, they went on to have winning records in five of the next seven seasons,¹³⁰ but did not reach the World Series again until 1918. That year, the Cubs met the Boston Red Sox, who, as I mentioned previously, had their own issues with championship near misses as well. In this matchup, the Red Sox defeated the Cubs in six games.¹³¹ Interestingly, this concluded a dynastic stretch where the Red Sox had won the championship in four of the past seven seasons, in 1912,¹³² 1915,¹³³ 1916,¹³⁴ and 1918.

C. Joe McCarthy and the 1929 World Series Collapse

After a down period, the Cubs hired Joe McCarthy as manager in an attempt to reverse the team's fortunes. Under McCarthy, the Cubs posted winning seasons in 1926, 1927 and 1928.¹³⁵ In 1929, the Cubs won the National League Pennant and met the powerful Philadelphia Athletics in the World Series. "McCarthy won the 1929 NL pennant as the Cubs zoomed to status as baseball's most powerful and popular franchise, even ahead of the New York Yankees."¹³⁶

The turning point in the series came in Game Four. Trailing 2 games to 1, the Cubs had a seemingly had a safe 8-0 lead in the seventh inning. Thus, the Cubs were only nine outs away from tying the series at 2 games apiece, and making the remainder a best of three. Unfortunately, the Athletics scored ten runs in the bottom of the seventh inning to win the game, 10-8.¹³⁷ In Game 5, the Cubs continued their practice of coming from ahead. They were ahead 2-0 going into the bottom of the ninth inning. Sadly, just like the previous game, the Cubs just could not put the Athletics away. The Athletics scored three runs in their final at bat to win the game 3-

130. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

131. 1918 World Series *supra* note 5.

132. 1912 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1912_WS.shtml.

133. 1915 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1915_WS.shtml.

134. 1916 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1916_WS.shtml.

135. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

136. See George Castle, *Cubs Keep Falling Into 'Curse of Joe McCarthy' on Manager Moves*, CHICAGO BASEBALL MUSEUM, <http://www.chicagobaseballmuseum.org/files/CBM-McCarthy-Curse-20131004.pdf>.

137. *Top 10 Infamous World Series Moments: Cubs Blow 8-0, 7th Inning Lead*, REALCLEARSPORTS.COM, http://www.realclearsports.com/lists/top_10_infamous_world_series_moments/cubs_blow_eight_run_lead.html?state=stop.

2, and the series in five games.” But the A’s played the comeback role once more. Trailing 2-0 in the ninth, Philadelphia rallied behind a two-run homer by Haas and a game-winning, two-out double by Bing Miller off Malone that put the Series to rest.”¹³⁸

The fallout from the Cubs shockingly blown leads resulted in Cubs owner William Wrigley demonizing Joe McCarthy. Wrigley believed that because McCarthy did not deliver a World Series win fast enough, maybe McCarthy was not the man to lead the Cubs to the Promised Land.¹³⁹ I have to believe that Wrigley sorely regretted that hasty decision, especially when Joe McCarthy quickly landed on his feet and would score some very sweet revenge.

D. The 1932 World Series: Joe McCarthy, Mark Koenig, and Babe Ruth’s “Called Shot”

The Cubs’ next trip to the Fall Classic came in 1932 after finishing the regular season at 90-64.¹⁴⁰ There, they met the New York Yankees, just five years removed from their run as “Murderer’s Row,” resulting in a World Series sweep in 1927,¹⁴¹ along with a championship repeat in 1928.¹⁴² Two very interesting backstories highlighted this particular matchup.

First, the Yankee team was managed by none other than Joe McCarthy, the same man who Cubs owner William Wrigley said could not deliver a championship for the Cubs.¹⁴³ How quickly one forgets...

Over in the National League that year the Cubs had finally won their pennant. William Wrigley, owner of the Cubs, had fired McCarthy because he wanted ‘somebody who [could] get [him] a World Championship.’ Now McCarthy had a chance for some very sweet revenge. McCarthy held a

138. See, 1929: *Running on Ehmke*, THISGREATGAME.COM, <http://www.thisgreatgame.com/1929-baseball-history.html>.

139. Castle, *supra* note 136, at 3. (“That was enough for Wrigley, who demanded a World Series winner. He told McCarthy he would not return for 1931. The owner, otherwise a rational man who mined gold with his decisions, convinced himself McCarthy was not the manager to take the Cubs to Point A. McCarthy opted to leave with four games to go.”).

140. 1932 Chicago Cubs, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CHC/1932.shtml>.

141. 1927 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1927_WS.shtml.

142. 1928 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1928_WS.shtml.

143. Castle, *supra* note 136 at 3.

pregame meeting with the club before the first game, and for the first and only time in the players' memory he asked them to go out and *kill* the other team.¹⁴⁴

The second back story surrounded Cubs' shortstop Mark Koenig, who was the starting shortstop on the Yankees' championship winning teams back in 1927 and 1928. Late in the 1932 season, Koenig was brought in by the Cubs as a late season replacement after their regular shortstop was injured. Koenig hit over .350 and played flawless defense down the stretch.¹⁴⁵ The general consensus was that the Cubs would not have made it to the World Series without Koenig, but the Cubs showed their gratitude by voting Koenig only a half-share of the World Series money.¹⁴⁶ As Koenig still had friends on the Yankee team, the Yankees did not take kindly to Koenig's mistreatment by the Cubs. This resulted in a lot of ill-will, name-calling, and just plain bad blood between both sides.¹⁴⁷

The Cubs were no match for the Yankees as the Yankees won in an easy sweep.¹⁴⁸ The highlight of that series, sparking debate to this very day, is whether Babe Ruth called his home run shot at Chicago's Wrigley Field in Game 3.¹⁴⁹ Depending on the accounts of players and writers, Ruth might (or might not) have pointed towards center field. In any event, Ruth hit a prodigious shot to right center field helping to seal the Cubs' doom.¹⁵⁰

McCarthy and the Yankees would again sweep the Cubs in the 1938 World Series.¹⁵¹ In addition to beating the Cubs twice, McCarthy would win the World Series five other times with the Yankees. William Wrigley is still waiting for his first.

E. 1945 and the Billy Goat Incident

After another World Series loss in 1935,¹⁵² the Cubs made their last World Series trip to date. By this time, the Cubs had lost their last 5 trips to

144. TULLIAS, *supra* note 12 at 140.

145. *Id.*

146. *Id.*

147. *Id.* at 116.

148. 1932 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1932_WS.shtml.

149. TULLIUS, *supra* note 12, 116-118.

150. *Id.*

151. 1938 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1938_WS.shtmlhttp://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1938_WS.shtml.

152. 1935 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1935_WS.shtml.

the Fall Classic. Unfortunately, the losing streak would extend to six as the Detroit Tigers beat the Cubs in seven games.¹⁵³ Before the Cubs lost this Fall Classic, there was a legendary incident involving a goat and a curse. If this “curse” is to be believed, it is the very reason the Cubs have not been to a World Series since 1945.

According to the legend, there was a die-hard Cubs fan by the name of William Sianis, who owned a local watering hole called the Billy Goat Tavern. Sianis also happened to have a billy goat as his pet. Additionally, he scored two tickets for Game Four of the 1945 World Series, one for himself and one for the goat. Unfortunately, the ushers would not allow the goat into the park. This is the point, according to the legend, that Sianis proclaimed: “The Cubs ain't gonna win no more. The Cubs will never win a World Series so long as the goat is not allowed in Wrigley Field.”¹⁵⁴ The Cubs, who were up two games to one before the billy goat incident, lost three of the next four games at Wrigley Field to see the Tigers celebrate the championship in their own building. The Cubs have not been back since. Ouch.

IV. RELEGATED TO THE SECOND DIVISION, AND OTHER NEAR MISSES

A. “Mr. Cub”: A pearl drowned in a sea of mud

Ernie Banks came up with the Cubs at the tail end of the 1953 season. Beginning with the 1954 season, he established himself as an all-world shortstop and emerged as one of the best players in the game’s history. He played the game with enthusiasm and passion, and was also known for his catch phrase, “let’s play two”. In addition to having a Hall-of-Fame career, he also won the Most Valuable Player award in the National League after the 1958 and 1959 seasons.¹⁵⁵ How did the Cubs do in those 2 years, you ask? They finished fifth in the eight team National League in both years.¹⁵⁶ Adding more injury to more insult, Ernie was also stuck seeing the hometown White Sox play in the World Series in 1959. That had to be painful. It must be hard to be an all-world player stuck on a team whose collective abilities do not match his own.

153. 1945 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1945_WS.shtml.

154. See, *The Billy Goat Curse – The Cubs Ain’t Gonna Win No More*, BILLYGOATTAVERN.COM, <http://www.billygoattavern.com/legend/curse/>.

155. Ernie Banks, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, *supra* note 108.

156. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

Hall-of-Famer Ernie Banks played for 19 years with the Cubs under 10 managers including five different ones in 1961 and 1962 when owner Phil Wrigley employed a revolving college of coaches. It was all to no avail. The Cubbies finished over .500 just six times over those years and only twice, in 1969 and 1970, were they legitimate pennant contenders.¹⁵⁷

B. Manager du Jour or Manager by Committee: In Cub Land, it's All the Same

To say that the Cubs have had a high turnover of managers is one of the understatements of the past two centuries (20th and 21st). In one five year stretch, from 1959 to 1963, the Cubs went through nine different managers. Evidently, owner Phil Wrigley did not see any correlation between continuity, consistency, and winning.¹⁵⁸ It showed as the rotating manager idea produced exactly one winning season, an 82-80 record in 1963,¹⁵⁹ and seventeen games behind the World Series Champion Los Angeles Dodgers.¹⁶⁰ The 9 managers, in order, were:

1. Bob Scheffing (1959)¹⁶¹
2. Charlie Grimm (1960) (managed the Cubs pennant winners in 1932, 1935, and 1945)¹⁶²
3. Lou Boudreau (1960) (player-manager for the 1948 World Series winning Cleveland Indians)¹⁶³
4. Vedio Himsl (1961)¹⁶⁴
5. Harry Craft (1961)¹⁶⁵

157. Hal Bock, *Think You've Got it Bad? Try Being A Perpetual Loser*, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS (Nov. 29, 1992), <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1696&dat=19921129&id=OvcaAAAAIBAJ&sjid=wkcEAAAAIBAJ&pg=6769,8443208> See also, Mike Axisa, *Wasted Greatness: Players Stuck on Bad Teams During Their Primes*, CBS SPORTS (July 6, 2013), <http://www.cbssports.com/mlb/eye-on-baseball/22660927/wasted-greatness-players-stuck-on-bad-teams-during-their-primes> ("Once upon a time, before the Wild Card system was implemented, only four teams qualified for the postseason each year. Long before that, only two teams qualified. As a result, some all-time greats never appeared in a playoff game. Ernie Banks, Luke Appling, Ron Santo, Joe Torre, George Sissler ... none ever went to the postseason as a player.").

158. Castle, *supra* note 136 at 5.

159. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

160. 1963 World Series, *supra* note 50.

161. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

162. *Id.*

163. 1948 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1948_WS.shtml.

164. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

6. Elvin Tappe (1961-62)¹⁶⁶
7. Lou Klein (1962)¹⁶⁷
8. Charlie Metro (1962)¹⁶⁸
9. Bob Kennedy (1962-65).¹⁶⁹

This is certainly a template former Yankees owner George Steinbrenner embraced and was infamous for from the mid 1970's to the mid 1990's. I certainly remember that circus. Similar to the Cubs' managerial misadventures, Steinbrenner's own revolving door resulted in twenty managerial changes as well as an eighteen year hiatus between his second (1978)¹⁷⁰ and third (1996)¹⁷¹ World Series Championships. Between 1973 and 1995, the Steinbrenner managerial carousel looked like this¹⁷²:

1. Ralph Houk (1973)
2. Bill Virdon (1974-75)
3. Billy Martin (1975-78; won 1976 American League Championship and 1977 World Series)
4. Bob Lemon (1978-79; won 1978 World Series)
5. Billy Martin (1979)
6. Dick Howser (1980; won 1980 American League East Division Championship)
7. Gene Michael (1981)
8. Bob Lemon (1981-82; won 1981 American League Championship)
9. Gene Michael (1982)
10. Clyde King (1982)
11. Billy Martin (1983)
12. Yogi Berra (1984-85)
13. Billy Martin (1985)
14. Lou Piniella (1986-87)
15. Billy Martin (1988)
16. Lou Piniella (1988)
17. Dallas Green (1989)
18. Bucky Dent (1989)

165. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

166. *Id.*

167. *Id.*

168. *Id.*

169. *Id.*

170. 1978 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1978_WS.shtml.

171. 1996 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1996_WS.shtml.

172. New York Yankees Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 1.

19. Stump Merrill (1990-1991)
20. Buck Showalter (1992-1995)

Still, love him or hate him, despite the instability, Steinbrenner's ownership resulted in seven World Series championships between 1977 and 2009.

C. *The 1969 Mets and the Black Cat*

After the near miss in 1945, the Cubs settled quite comfortably into mediocrity and ineptitude as they had exactly TWO winning seasons between 1946 and 1966.¹⁷³ However, in 1969 the Cubs started off great and were cruising into August with a healthy lead. Chicago fandom started getting their hopes up. If only Commissioner William Eckert had called off September...

Perhaps, ironically, the Cubs just are not friendly to other animals. First, they had their World Series hopes (allegedly) destroyed by a goat. Next, in the heat of the 1969 division race with the New York Mets, a black cat might have done the same thing. In August of that year, the Cubs were nine games in front of the Mets and were seemingly cruising to a first place finish.

So what happened? The Cubs picked a rather inopportune time to go on a prolonged slump. During a losing streak in early September where they would lose eight in a row, the Cubs showed up at Shea Stadium holding on to a precarious one-and-a-half game lead over the hard charging Mets.¹⁷⁴

Early in the first game, a black cat somehow jumped onto the field. The cat then ran past Cubs' third baseman Ron Santo in the on-deck circle, and disappeared under the stands, never to be seen again.¹⁷⁵ The Mets swept the Cubs, the Cubs fell out of first place and were never heard from again. The Mets, on the other hand, went on to shock the world by defeating the heavily favored Baltimore Orioles in that year's World Series.¹⁷⁶

D. *A Continuing Stumblebum Tradition: Losing and More Losing*

173. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

174. 1969 Chicago Cubs Schedule and Results, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CHC/1969-schedule-scores.shtml>.

175. See, e.g., Tom Singer, *Cubs Fans Still Trying to Solve 1969*, MLB.COM, http://mlb.mlb.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20080724&content_id=3186760&text=.jsp&c_id=chc.

176. 1969 World Series, *supra* note 69.

After 1969's year of dashed hopes, the Cubs settled once again into mediocrity and ineptitude, as their aversion to winning continued unabated. Between 1973 and 1983, the Cubs had ten losing seasons out of the next eleven.¹⁷⁷ During that stretch, three different teams won the World Series twice: the 1973-74 Oakland (formerly Philadelphia) Athletics,¹⁷⁸ the 1975-76 Cincinnati Reds,¹⁷⁹ and the 1977-78 New York Yankees.¹⁸⁰ The Cubs' high water mark during that same stretch was a .500 finish (81-81) in 1977.¹⁸¹ In keeping with their obviously successful 1960's tradition of management by committee, the Cubs sent eight more managers through the revolving door. This cast was the following:

Leo Durocher (1966-72)¹⁸²
 Whitey Lockman (1972-74)¹⁸³
 Jim Marshall (1975-76)¹⁸⁴
 Herman Franks (1977-79)¹⁸⁵
 Joe Amalfitano (1979)¹⁸⁶
 Preston Gomez (1980)¹⁸⁷
 Joe Amalfitano (1980-1982)¹⁸⁸
 Lee Elia (1983)¹⁸⁹
 Charlie Fox (1983)¹⁹⁰

E. 1984: A Magical Year...Until One Bad Inning

After all that losing, the Cubs began 1984 with new leadership, having championship credentials from other teams. At the top was General

177. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

178. Philadelphia Athletics Team History & Encyclopedia, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/OAK/> (Athletics moved to Oakland in 1968).

179. Cincinnati Reds Team History & Encyclopedia, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CIN/>.

180. New York Yankees Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 1.

181. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

182. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2. *See also*, 1954 World Series, *supra* note 46 (who won the 1954 World Series with the New York Giants).

183. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

184. *Id.*

185. *Id.*

186. *Id.*

187. *Id.*

188. *Id.*

189. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

190. *Id.*

Manager Dallas Green, who had managed the Philadelphia Phillies to a World Series win in 1980.¹⁹¹ Green hired a new manager (another one?), Jim Frey, whose American League Champion Kansas City Royals lost to the Phillies in that year's World Series.

The Cubs, who were led by National League Most Valuable Player Ryne Sandberg, National League Cy Young Award winner Rick Sutcliffe, and power hitting first baseman Leon Durham (more on him shortly), had themselves an outstanding season. After running neck-and-neck with the New York Mets (them again) for much of the season, the Cubs pulled away down the September stretch. The Cubs won the division title with a 96-65 record, finishing six-and-one-half games in front of the second place Mets.¹⁹² Yes friends, the Cubs had actually made it into the post season for the first time since goat-tainted 1945!¹⁹³

The Cubs went into the National League Championship Series¹⁹⁴ against the upstart San Diego Padres,¹⁹⁵ a sixteen year old expansion team making its first ever postseason appearance. The Cubs were the favorites to win that series,¹⁹⁶ and certainly played like it, winning the first two games at home in dominant fashion, 13-0 and 4-2.¹⁹⁷ This left the Cubs one win away from a trip to the World Series. All they needed to win was one of the next three games in San Diego. The Cubs had won forty-five road games during the regular season.¹⁹⁸ Surely they could win one more road game...couldn't they? Well...

The Padres trounced the Cubs, 7-1, in Game Three,¹⁹⁹ and won Game Four on a walk-off home run by Steve Garvey, 7-5.²⁰⁰ This set up a winner-take-all Game Five. Leon Durham hit a two-run home run in the first inning and the Cubs were off and running. Jody Davis hit a home run in the second inning. With the Cubs up 3-0, and Sutcliffe on the mound, all

191. 1980 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1980_WS.shtml.

192. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

193. *Id.*

194. 1984 National League Championship Series (3-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1984_NLCS.shtml.

195. San Diego Padres Team History & Encyclopedia, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/SDP/>.

196. See, e.g., Bill Center, *The Greatest Padre*, UNION TRIBUNE, <http://www.utsandiego.com/sports/padres/gwynn/timeline84.html> ("The Padres won the NL West by 12 games, then rallied to beat the favored Chicago Cubs in the playoffs.")

197. 1984 National League Championship Series, *supra* note 214.

198. 1984 Chicago Cubs, Schedule and Results, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CHC/1984-schedule-scores.shtml>.

199. 1984 National League Championship Series, *supra* note 214.

200. *Id.*

seemed right in the world. Even when the Padres pulled to within 3-2, there was still cautious optimism that the Cubs would be able to hold on. Going into the seventh inning, the Cubs needed just nine more outs to make it happen.

Unfortunately, things fell apart for the Cubs in that seventh inning. The first key play in that inning was pinch hitter Tim Flannery hitting a routine grounder to first baseman Durham, which should have been the second out. But, the ball goes right under Durham's glove and between his legs into right field, letting the tying run score.²⁰¹ The next key play comes later in the inning when, with the bases loaded, Padres' all-world right fielder Tony Gwynn hits a rocket at second baseman Sandberg, which should have been an inning ending double play. But, the ball takes a nasty hop away from Sandberg into center field, resulting in two more runs coming in.²⁰² Garvey, the Game Four hero, drives in the final run of the inning with a single.²⁰³ Just like that, the Padres are up 6-3²⁰⁴ and the shell shocked, mortally wounded Cubs are done. No World Series.

Again.

In the last 30 years, Durham has certainly been vilified as making the error that lost the series. After that game, a cruel (but admittedly hilarious) joke about Durham started making the rounds. It went like this: "He attempted suicide the next day, stepping in front of a bus. Fortunately, the vehicle, like the baseball, went between his legs".²⁰⁵

Although I rooted for the Padres that year, I most certainly disagree that Durham's misplay cost the Cubs the game. Remember, his error only let the tying run in. And it was only the seventh inning, so it wasn't "last licks" for the Padres. Secondly, if Gwynn's grounder does not take that bad hop and Sandberg is able to turn the double play, the Cubs would have gotten to the eighth inning with a tie. Who knows what would have happened after that? Of course, this is just idle speculation on my part.

Of course, in baseball, there is any number of game changing plays that happen in a crucial time, especially in the postseason. What if Bill

201. See, e.g., *Soul Crushing Flashback: Cubs-Padres Game 5, 1984* DESIPIO.COM (February 11, 2013), <http://www.desipio.com/?p=4283>.

202. *Id.*

203. *Id.*

204. *Id.*

205. See, Barry Berak, *As Cubs Wander into the Bronx, They've Never Been Worse*, N.Y. TIMES (April 14, 2014), http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/15/sports/baseball/as-cubs-wander-into-the-bronx-theyve-never-been-worse.html?_r=0.

Buckner had caught Mookie Wilson's grounder in Game Six of the 1986 World Series? What if Bob Stanley had not thrown the wild pitch that let the tying run score when the Red Sox were one strike from winning the World Series over the Mets in the same game? What if Umpire Don Denkinger had made the correct call in the ninth inning of Game Six of the 1985 World Series? What if Bucky Dent's fly ball in the 1978 Division Playoff tiebreaker between the Yankees and Red Sox had been in cavernous Yankee Stadium instead of Fenway Park? The possibilities are endless. My answer to those questions is simply this: *your guess is as good as mine*.

F. Steve Bartman

Chicago has some legendary, albeit infamous, figures in its history. Tony Accardo,²⁰⁶ Sam Giancana,²⁰⁷ Paul Ricca,²⁰⁸ Frank "the Enforcer" Nitti,²⁰⁹ Murray "the Camel" Humphreys,²¹⁰ and Johnny Rosselli.²¹¹ And of course, Al Capone.²¹² I would assume that there are Cub fans who, to this day, want to add the name Steve Bartman to that Rogues Gallery.

After the Cubs' latest near miss in 1984, they returned to their inexorable losing ways, having fifteen losing seasons over the next twenty years. The losing was interrupted by a couple of hiccups as the Cubs made two more one and done appearances in the postseason. In 1989, they were trounced in five games by the San Francisco Giants in the National League Championship Series,²¹³ and were quickly swept aside by the Atlanta Braves in the 1998 Division Series.²¹⁴ In the latter series, former Cubs pitcher Gregg Maddux was the winning pitcher in the clinching game.²¹⁵

The Cubs next try at postseason success came after the 2003 season. They won their division with a record of 88-74,²¹⁶ and scored some very

206. See, generally, WILLIAM F. ROEMER, JR., ACCARDO, THE GENUINE GODFATHER (Ballantine Books, 1995).

207. *Id.*

208. See, generally, GUS RUSSO, THE OUTFIT (Bloomsbury 2001).

209. *Id.*

210. *Id.*

211. See, generally, CHARLES RAPPELYE, ALL AMERICAN MAFIOSO: THE JOHNNY ROSSELLI STORY (1991).

212. RUSSO, *supra*, note 228.

213. 1989 National League Championship Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1989_NLCS.shtml.

214. 1998 National League Division Series (3-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1998_NLDS1.shtml.

215. *Id.*

216. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

nice revenge when they upset the Braves in the Division Series.²¹⁷ This set up a showdown with the Florida Marlins in the National League Championship Series.²¹⁸ After losing Game 1, the Cubs won the next three games²¹⁹ to find themselves one win away from a trip to the World Series. The Cubs were in a position where they only needed to win one of the next three games to close the deal (where have we heard that before?). Even better, the Cubs had the last two games at home and their aces, Mark Prior and Kerry Wood, to pitch Games Six and Seven, if needed (they would be).

After losing Game Five, Prior was pitching a gem as the Cubs had a 3-0 lead after the seventh inning.²²⁰ Just six outs to go. Enter Steve Bartman. Obviously, I was exaggerating when I suggested listing him among the biggest names in the history of organized crime. Bartman's only "crime" might have been being in the wrong place at the most inopportune time.

Bartman inadvertently became a link in the Cubs' long chain of postseason disasters in the eighth inning. The meltdown started with one out in the eighth inning. Here we go: Marlins second baseman Luis Castillo hit a fly ball near the left field stands in foul territory.²²¹ Cubs' left fielder Moises Alou attempted to reach over the wall to make the catch.²²² Once the ball is over the wall, fans have the opportunity to catch the ball and keep it. As Alou was reaching over the wall, Bartman tried to catch the ball as well.²²³ Unfortunately, Bartman knocked the ball away from Alou, and the play was merely a foul ball that prolonged Castillo's at bat resulting in a walk.²²⁴ The television cameras showed Alou reacting angrily to Bartman's interference.²²⁵ Again, as long as the ball is not in the field of play, there cannot be any fan interference. The fan has as much right to the ball as the player once the ball is in the stands.

217. 2003 National League Division Series (3-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2003_NLDS2.shtml.

218. 2003 National League Championship Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2003_NLCS.shtml.

219. *Id.*

220. *Id.*

221. See generally, Cliff Corcoran, *Ten Years Later, Cubs Loss in 2003 NLCS is Still Not Steve Bartman's Fault*, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (Oct. 14, 2013), <http://www.si.com/mlb/strike-zone/2013/10/14/steve-bartman-cubs-marlins-2003-nlcs>.

222. *Id.*

223. *Id.*

224. *Id.*

225. Steve Bartman Play, YOUTUBE.COM, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6er1XE2j0pE>.

Some would say that this particular play inexorably changed the Cubs’ fortune for the worse. Later on, the Cubs were still up 3-1 when Cubs shortstop Alex Gonzalez misplayed a sure double play ball (think back to 1984’s bad hop over Sandberg) that would have gotten the Cubs out of the inning.²²⁶ The Marlins took advantage of their good fortune to put up eight runs in the inning and win the game 8-3.²²⁷ Unfortunately, the Cubs lost everything the next night as Kerry Wood gave up seven of the Marlins nine runs. The Marlins 9-6 win²²⁸ sent them to Yankee Stadium for the World Series, and sent the Cubs home yet again.

Unfortunately for Bartman, the incident resulted in his having to go in hiding in Wrigley Field to watch the rest of the game in safety and leave with a security escort.²²⁹ In my view, he did not do anything wrong. Fans go after foul balls at a game every single day. I truly believe that Alou’s overreaction to the play was what really set off the animosity to Bartman. By the way, Alex Gonzalez never got the grief that Steve Bartman did. It was *his* error that really opened the door for the Marlins. Here’s another “what if;” I believe that if Alex Gonzalez turned that double play, or if the Cubs had somehow won either Games Six or Seven, Steve Bartman would have been just another fan going for a foul ball. And that is exactly what he was in Game Six, anyway.

G. Two More Postseason Whiffs

Believe it or not, in 2007 and 2008, the Cubs actually finished in first place in consecutive years for the first time since the back-to-back World Series wins in 1907 and 1908.²³⁰ As the legendary Cubs broadcaster Harry Caray might have said if he were still with us: “*Holy Cow!*”

Leading the charge as manager was Lou Piniella, another man with a championship pedigree who won two World Series with the Yankees as a player in 1977²³¹ and 1978.²³² He also managed the Cincinnati Reds to a World Series title in 1990 and was the manager when the Seattle Mariners had their 116 win season in 2001.²³³ Piniella was the latest in a growing and

226. Corcoran, *supra* note 238.

227. *Id.*

228. 2003 National League Championship Series, *supra* note 238.

229. *Id.*

230. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

231. 1977 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1977_WS.shtml.

232. 1978 World Series, *supra* note 169.

233. 1990 World Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1990_WS.shtml.

impressive list of Cub managers, who had championship experience elsewhere and tried to bring that elusive championship home to the North Side. Piniella thus joined Rogers Hornsby, Charlie Grimm, Gabby Hartnett, Lou Boudreau, Leo Durocher, Jim Frey, and Dusty Baker.²³⁴ Unfortunately, just like the other champions, this special brand of Cub karma also doomed Piniella.

As the Cubs had come so excruciatingly close in 1984 and 2003, well, the 2007²³⁵ and 2008²³⁶ postseasons finished quickly. The Cubs were swept out of the Division Series in both years. In those six games, the Cubs were blown out in four of them (8-4, 5-1,²³⁷ 7-2, and 10-3²³⁸). If it is any consolation, Cub fans can at least be secure in the knowledge that those seasons were not destroyed by an ill-timed error or a missed fly ball. To put it another way, fate did not punch the Cubs in the head this time. They just went quietly into the offseason.

V. COMEDY RELIEF...MAYBE

Needless to say, the Cubs' long history of futility sprinkled with occasional winning have made them the butt of many a joke over the past seventy years. Here are several pretty good ones. Now, before anyone gets mad at me for repeating these, let me say that sometimes it is good to laugh to keep from crying. Happy reading.

- 1) Q: What does C.U.B.S. stand for?
A: Completely Useless By September.²³⁹
- 2) Q: What do you call a Chicago Cubs player with a World Series ring?
A: A thief.²⁴⁰ (I think a better answer would be "TRADED.")
- 3) Q: Why can't the Chicago Cubs use the internet?

234. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

235. 2007 National League Division Series (3-0), [BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM](http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2007_NLDS1.shtml), http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2007_NLDS1.shtml.

236. 2008 National League Division Series (3-0), [BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM](http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2008_NLDS1.shtml), http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2008_NLDS1.shtml.

237. 2007 National League Division Series, *supra* note 257.

238. 2008 National League Division Series, *supra* note 258.

239. Rick Dawson, *The Chicago Cubs: A century of Futility*, THE RUSHVILLE REPUBLICAN (Apr. 7, 2010), <http://www.rushvillerepublican.com/columns/x552033818/The-Chicago-Cubs-A-century-of-futility/print>.

240. *Id.*

A: Because they can't get 3 W's in a row.²⁴¹

4) Q: What do I have in common with the Chicago Cubs?

A: Next week, we'll both be watching the World Series on television.²⁴²

And finally, a fan of a very bad Colorado Rockies team takes this shot at the Cubbies: "It's tough being a fan of the Rockies or Cubs in 2014. But Colorado can take solace in applying just a bit of perspective: It's bad, but it's not Chicago Cubs bad."²⁴³

Ouch...Again.

VI. 2015: A NEW MANAGER, A WINNING YEAR, POSTSEASON SUCCESS AND...

Shortly after the finish of the 2014 season, the Cubs stunned the baseball world by hiring former Tampa Bay Rays' manager Joe Maddon,²⁴⁴ in the hope of exorcising the demons and reversing the Cubs' fortunes going forward. Maddon, like several former Cubs' managers discussed above, brings with him a winning track record. Maddon managed the Rays to four postseason finishes, in 2008, 2010, 2011, and 2013.²⁴⁵ The Rays' winning history also included a trip to the World Series in 2008, where they lost to the Philadelphia Phillies in five games.²⁴⁶

After five straight losing seasons prior to 2015, needless to say, Maddon's hiring generated a lot of optimism in Chicago and resulted in a

241. JOKES4US.COM, <http://www.jokes4us.com/sportsjokes/mlbjokes/chicagocubsjokes.html>.

242. *Id.*

243. Doug Ottewill, *At Least the Rockies aren't Chicago Cubs Bad*, MILEHIGHSPORTS.COM, <http://milehighsports.com/2014/07/29/at-the-rockies-arent-chicago-cubs-bad>.

244. See, e.g., Mike Digiovanna, *Chicago Cubs hire Joe Maddon as Manager*, LATIMES.COM (Oct. 31, 2014), <http://www.latimes.com/sports/sportsnow/la-sp-sn-chicago-cubs-hire-joe-maddon-20141031-story.html>; Mark Gonzales, *Cubs hire Joe Maddon as Manager*, CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM (Oct. 31, 2014), <http://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/baseball/cubs/chi-joe-maddon-cubs-manager-20141030-story.html>.

245. Tampa Bay Rays Team History & Encyclopedia, BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/TBD/>.

246. 2008 World Series (4-1), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2008_WS.shtml.

very successful inaugural season.²⁴⁷ Under Maddon's leadership, the Cubs shocked the world by finishing the season with 97 wins,²⁴⁸ the most since their division winning year of 2008. The Cubs also made it into the postseason for the first time since 2008. The Cubs defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates in the Wild Card Game, and then upset their arch rivals, the heavily favored, 100 game winning St. Louis Cardinals in the Division Series.²⁴⁹

Thus, the Cubs rocketed to the National League Championship Series, where they met another old foe, the New York Mets. As the Cubs were the hottest team in baseball during the September stretch run, and coming off dominating victories in the first two rounds of the postseason, it certainly was not farfetched to believe that 2015 would be the year that the Cubs would finally slay that World Series dragon. The Cubs-Mets showdown resulted in...

VII. ...THE SAME OLD FINISH

As dominant as the Cubs were in the first two rounds, they inexplicably remembered who they were once they made it into baseball's Final Four. Unfortunately, the World Series dream died yet again with a shocking, embarrassing four game sweep at the hands of the Mets.²⁵⁰ The scores were 4-2, 4-1, 5-2, and 8-3. Like a bad boxer with a glass jaw, the Cubs went down and stayed there. The Cubs never came close to a game changing rally in any of the games, never had a lead in any of the games, and they were done after the third inning in games 2 and 4.²⁵¹

Perhaps the only saving grace of this most recent postseason failure is that the Cubs were not ruined by 1984 or 2003 type karma. Just like in 2007 and 2008, the Cubs went quietly into the night in 2015. Thus, the Cub nation is reduced yet again to hoping that next year is finally *the* year. As

247. See generally, Michael Beller, *Joe Maddon already giving Cubs fans reason to raise a glass*, SI.com (Nov. 4, 2014) <http://www.si.com/mlb/2014/11/04/joe-maddon-chicago-cubs-theo-epstein-manager>.

248. Chicago Cubs Team History & Encyclopedia, *supra* note 2.

249. 2015 National League Division Series (3-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2015_NLDS1.shtml.

250. 2015 National League Championship Series (4-0), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/2015_NLCS.shtml See generally Mark Gonzalez, *Cubs' Magical Season Ends With Shocking Sweep By Mets* (Oct. 21, 2105), CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/baseball/cubs/ct-cubs-mets-nlcs-spt-1022-20151021-story.html>; Daryl Van Schouwen, *It's Over: Mets Defeat Cubs 8-3, Complete 4 Game Sweep In NLCS* (Oct. 21, 2015), CHICAGOSUNTIMES.COM, <http://chicago.suntimes.com/sports/7/71/1034810/cubs-lineup-game-4-nlcs>.

251. 2015 National League Championship Series, *supra* note 270.

Brooklyn Dodger fans always said “wait till next year”²⁵², after losing the World Series to the Yankees again and again, “next year” finally came for the Dodgers when they finally beat the Yankees in 1955.²⁵³ This was memorialized in a well-known headline in the New York Daily News that screamed out: “THIS IS NEXT YEAR!”²⁵⁴

Will “next year” ever come for the Cubs? I certainly hope so. Obviously, only time will tell. In my view, the Cubs’ quest for that elusive World Series run has now become a Greek tragedy on the level of Sisyphus.²⁵⁵ In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was a king made to perpetually atone for his cunning misdeeds. Upon his death, Sisyphus was condemned to push a boulder to the top of a steep hill. Unfortunately, just as he got to the top, the boulder would slip from his grasp and roll back down to the bottom, compelling Sisyphus to start all over again... thus his fate for all eternity. As far as I know, Sisyphus has never reached the top of the hill. One can certainly make a compelling case that the Cubs are the baseball version of Sisyphus, and I would not disagree.

As of this writing, the Cubs and Cleveland Indians are currently on the clock as the teams from the National and American Leagues, respectively, with the longest dry spells since their last World Series victory. The Indians, at least, have gotten close since their last championship in 1948²⁵⁶, having suffered World Series losses in 1954,²⁵⁷ 1995,²⁵⁸ and 1997.²⁵⁹ Maybe someday these two teams could actually face off in a World Series in the near future; *somebody* would have to win.

CONCLUSION

We, as fans, certainly hang on the results of our team’s endeavors, whatever the sport. We exalt when our team wins and get mad when it

252. See, e.g., SPORTSCYCLOPEDIA.COM, <http://www.sportsecyclopedia.com/nl/bdodgers/brooklyn.html>.

253. 1955 World Series (4-3), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1955_WS.shtml; See, generally, Dick Young, THIS IS NEXT YEAR, N.Y. DAILY NEWS (Oct. 5, 1955), <http://www.nydailynews.com/sports/brooklyn-dodgers-champions-1955-article-1.2374508>.

254. <http://www.1960sailors.net/ThisIsNextYear2.jpg>, (Daily News front page October 5, 1955, Headline: THIS IS NEXT YEAR!)

255. See, e.g. *Sisyphu*, <http://www.mythweb.com/encyc/entries/sisyphus.html>.

256. 1948 World Series, *supra* note 163.

257. 1954 World Series, *supra* note 46.

258. 1995 World Series (4-2), BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM, http://www.baseball-reference.com/postseason/1995_WS.shtml.

259. 1997 World Series, *supra* note 73.

loses. I have certainly celebrated numerous Yankee World Series wins, but for many years I was especially bitter about the Yankees blowing the 1981 World Series²⁶⁰ against the Dodgers, and blowing the 2003 World Series²⁶¹ against the inferior (I think) Marlins (if Steve Bartman doesn't interfere with that fly ball, maybe that doesn't happen...maybe the Cubs might have beaten us...who knows?). I have also been blessed to see my favorite football team, the Oakland/Los Angeles Raiders, win the Super Bowl three times²⁶² (God Bless Jim Plunkett, who was my quarterback for the last two). Yes, when "our team" reaches the Holy Grail and grabs that brass ring, we are just as high as the players who did the actual work to bring home the championship.

I also know the *sui generis* feeling of seeing one of my teams do the unspeakable and win it all when I thought I never would. I am also a long time New York Rangers fan. I saw them come out of nowhere to reach the Stanley Cup Final in 1979, where they were quickly dispatched in five games by the three-time defending champion Montreal Canadiens (a team I hate to this day). The Rangers made another unexpected run to hockey's final four in 1986, only to have the Canadiens end the dream again in the playoff semifinals. Finally, in 1994, I saw the unthinkable: the Rangers won the Stanley Cup for the first time since 1940.²⁶³ When Game 7 was finally over (the Rangers won 3-2), the cameras of the Madison Square Garden Network panned the crowd, and there was not a dry eye in the building...we all saw the unthinkable come to pass! We all felt the same things after seeing the one thing we all thought we would never live long enough to see: our Rangers actually winning it all, along with the resulting joy, exhilaration, and relief.

The next camera shot showed the National Hockey League officials bringing out the Stanley Cup (wearing white gloves). Then the realization really hit home for me: (1) It's The Cup! (2) It's in our building, and most important (3) *IT'S OURS!!!*²⁶⁴ Then, I started crying unashamedly too.

Thus, I *knew* exactly what Red Sox fans were feeling when they finally slayed the World Series dragon in 2004. After the Sox won Game Four, I called a very dear friend (my law school dean) to congratulate him

260. 1981 World Series, *supra* note 52.

261. 2003 World Series *supra* note 74.

262. See generally, GLENN DICKEY, AL DAVIS AND HIS RAIDERS – JUST WIN, BABY (1991).

263. *It's Ours! Rangers Win Stanley Cup; First in 54 Years*, <http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-6aoy8rvrmdU/TmF9WhECS5I/AAAAAAAAABws/NBPYkPIXGgQ/s1600/RSCN5790.JPG> (Front page of the New York Post on June 13, 1994, when the NY Rangers won the Stanley Cup for the first time in 54 years.)

264. *Id.* (emphasis added).

on his team's epic victory. We didn't speak long because he too, was emotionally overcome by the experience. I was so happy for my friend that I completely forgot that the Red Sox had beaten my Yankees to get to that Series. Yes, I understood completely.

This will be the perfect storm of emotions Cubs fans will feel when a World Series victory finally comes their way. I can only say that the feeling that comes from seeing THE championship that fans thought they would never live to see is indescribable beyond words. One can think of this in terms of what Jesus Christ once said: "But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then."²⁶⁵ To paraphrase, the least shall be first.

I hope to see the Cubs win a World Series in my lifetime, and that they beat the Mets and Marlins to get there, and finally, anyone other than the Yankees to win it.

265. Matthew 19:30 HOLY BIBLE (New Living Translation).