

# Selig to owners: Don't get 'cocky' on pricing

By CHRIS JENKINS  
AP SPORTS WRITER

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Given the state of the U.S. economy, baseball commissioner Bud Selig warned team owners Saturday not to “get too cocky” and overprice game tickets.

“Because you do pay a price,” Selig said.

Speaking before Game 3 of the NL playoff series between the Philadelphia Phillies and Milwaukee Brewers, Selig called 2008 a “phenomenal success” for baseball despite a decline in attendance that Selig attributed to bad weather and high gas prices.

But Selig acknowledged

concern about a prolonged economic downturn and how it might affect the sport next year.

“I think anybody in every business is concerned,” Selig said.

Selig was optimistic about baseball economics, citing playoff appearances by the small-market Brewers and Tampa Bay Rays as an example of the positive effects of revenue sharing.

“I think the sport has more competitive balance today than there's ever been,” Selig said.

Selig, a former owner of the Brewers, is expected to throw out the ceremonial first pitch Sunday after the Brewers beat the Phillies 4-1 Saturday to send the NL

division series to a fourth game. He said the festive atmosphere surrounding Milwaukee's first playoff appearance since 1982 made him recall the contentious legislative fight he went through to get Miller Park built in 2001, mostly with public funding.

“Every time I drive by the stadium I'm reminded of much that went on,” Selig said. “But as my mother would have said, thank goodness for small favors: All the politicians that fought it are either gone or don't say anything. That's a good thing. It's a wonderful day for Milwaukee.”

Selig acknowledged that there are “reasonable” arguments for and against public financing of

sports stadiums, but insisted that it would be hard to argue that the new stadium didn't make Milwaukee a better place.

“You can debate the economics,” Selig said. “I think it's a plus, but we can have a reasonable debate. But the question you must always ask yourself is, will this be a better place because we have done this?”

Selig also praised the popularity of the wild card but downplayed talk of allowing more teams into the playoffs.

“I don't happen to believe that,” Selig said. “I happen to think the system is good this way. I don't think it should be changed. But I think it's fair. And nobody can say that the Milwaukee club this

year that won 90 games shouldn't be in the playoffs. Because, of course, they should.”

Selig also downplayed any talk of expanding the first round of the playoffs from to best-of-seven series. He told team owners that expressed support of more playoff games they would have to cut regular-season games from the schedule — something owners clearly weren't willing to do and the players' union likely would oppose.

“End of discussion,” Selig said.

Selig said there were no new developments in the impending sale of the Chicago Cubs.

## Wait 'til next year, again: Cubs eliminated by LA

By JOHN NADEL  
AP SPORTS WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It's a century and counting for the Chicago Cubs.

Manny Ramirez and the Los Angeles Dodgers shoved Chicago into another long winter Saturday night, completing a three-game sweep of their first-round playoff series with a 3-1 victory.

The Cubs' latest flameout has to be among the most galling, considering they fell flat against the Dodgers after their best regular season since 1945 — the last time they appeared in the World Series.

The Dodgers dominated this series, outscoring Chicago 20-6 thanks in part to a lot of help from the stumbling Cubs. Cursed or not, they were outplayed in every way, committing six errors and doing a woeful job of hitting with runners in scoring position.

“Let me tell you this: You can play postseason baseball for now to another hundred years, but if you score six runs in three games, it's going to be another hundred years before we win,” manager Lou Piniella said. “We just didn't hit. We had opportunities and you have to take advantage of them.”

“This is six games I've managed now in the postseason and we have scored just 12 runs. That doesn't get it done.”

James Loney hit a two-out, two-run double in the first to get Los Angeles started, and Hiroki Kuroda worked 6 1-3 brilliant innings in the first postseason outing of his career.

“Man, right now this is the place

to be,” Ramirez said. “We're going to the second round.”

The three wins boosted first-year manager Joe Torre's postseason total to 79 — the most in baseball history. His first 76 came in the last 12 years as skipper of the New York Yankees, including 16 in four World Series triumphs.

“We had a lot of people doubting us all year,” Torre said. “We struggled to find out who we were for a long period of time.”

After earning their first postseason series win in 20 years, the Dodgers will face Philadelphia or Milwaukee in the best-of-seven NLCS starting Thursday — at Philadelphia should the Phillies win, at Dodger Stadium should the Brewers prevail.

“There's no easy way out of this thing,” Torre said. “But we're just happy we have a chance to sit back a little bit.”

And the Cubs head home without having come close to their first World Series triumph since 1908. They have lost nine straight playoff games, including three to Arizona in the first round last year.

While the Cubs clinched the NL Central on Sept. 20 and won a league-high 97 games, the Dodgers had a losing record as recently as early September before turning things around behind Ramirez. They went 84-78 and won the NL West, baseball's weakest division.

“We have the best team in the league, and we struggle in the playoffs,” Cubs outfielder Alfonso Soriano said. “We did not play good, like a team. That's the reason we didn't win.”

The Dodgers, meanwhile, entered having won only one postseason game since beating Oakland in the 1988 World Series. They tripled that output against the Cubs, who became the first team to finish with NL's best regular-season record and be swept in the first round of the playoffs since the Astros in 2001, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Ramirez, who hit .396 with 17 homers and 53 RBIs in 53 games after joining the Dodgers, went 1-for-2 and scored a run, giving him five hits in 10 at-bats with two homers, five runs scored and three RBIs in the series. Rich Harden (0-1) walked Ramirez intentionally twice.

“I did it before, I'll do it again,” Ramirez said. “When you're relaxed and you're in a place you really like, this is what happens.”

The Dodgers acquired an unhappy Ramirez from the Boston Red Sox at the trade deadline.

The Dodgers began their locker room champagne celebration within a couple minutes after the final out, and several returned to the field shortly thereafter to share their joy with the fans. Russell Martin and Matt Kemp went into the left-field pavilion, and Kemp poured champagne into Kuroda's mouth in front of the Los Angeles dugout as the fans cheered.

Torre spoke to the fans some 20 minutes after the game ended.

“Dodger fans, you are very special,” he said. “The way you supported us all year when we struggled, when we couldn't get out of our own way ... I can't tell you how much we appreciate it. Just don't go away, we'll be back

next week, because we still have eight more games to win.”

With that, the fans roared their approval.

Kuroda, a 33-year-old rookie who signed a \$35.3 million, three-year contract with the Dodgers last winter, scattered six hits before being relieved by Cory Wade with two on and one out in the seventh. Kuroda never appeared in a playoff game during 11 seasons with the Hiroshima Toyo Carp of the Japanese Central League.

This wasn't Kuroda's first outstanding performance against the Cubs — he shut them out on four hits while striking out 11 on June 6 at Dodger Stadium.

“I must say I didn't have all my stuff today,” Kuroda said through a translator. “But watching those two games in Chicago and the fans cheering, I rode the wave along with the fans.”

The Cubs were pretty awful in the first two games at Wrigley Field, where they were an NL-best 55-26 during the regular season. Game 1 starter Ryan Dempster matched a career high with seven walks in 4 2-3 innings in a 7-2 loss, and each of the four Chicago infielders committed errors in Game 2, leading to a 10-3 setback.

A move to Los Angeles didn't help the Chicago offense, which scored a league-leading 855 runs this year. The Cubs had only four hits in 17 at-bats with runners in scoring position in the first two games before going 1-for-11 in Game 3.

At least the long-suffering Cubs fans weren't around to boo them

in Game 3, although the Dodger Stadium faithful made up for that.

Martin hit a one-out double in the first and took third on a single by Ramirez. After Harden struck out Andre Ethier, Loney hit a liner down the right-field line, giving the Dodgers a 2-0 lead and sending the towel-waving fans into an early frenzy.

Rafael Furcal walked with one out in the fifth and scored on a double by Martin.

The Cubs got their run in the eighth off Wade on a leadoff double by Derrek Lee, who had three hits, and a two-out RBI single by pinch-hitter Daryle Ward. Jonathan Broxton relieved and struck out Mark DeRosa to end the inning, and worked a perfect ninth with two more strikeouts to earn a save.

Harden allowed five hits and three runs in 4 1-3 innings. He had gone 5-0 with a 1.99 ERA in his last 10 starts of the regular season.

Notes: The Dodgers were 23-9 at Dodger Stadium after the All-Star break for the best home record in baseball. ... The Cubs were 42-38 on the road, but won 21 of their final 29 road games including nine straight from July 23-Aug. 15. ... Former Dodgers stars Don Newcombe and Duke Snider threw the ceremonial first pitches. Both were members of the franchise's first World Series champions, in 1955. The Dodgers moved from Brooklyn to Los Angeles three years later. ... The Astros tied St. Louis for the NL's best record in 2001