

# sports

## Philly celebrates but baseball must face issues

By **TIM DAHLBERG**  
AP SPORTS COLUMNIST

Everybody loves a parade, especially the people of Philadelphia who haven't had anything to cheer about in, oh, about a quarter century or so.

Several hundred thousand of them gathered Friday to celebrate, a turnout so meaningful and heartfelt that in one city for one day it almost seemed like the clock had been turned back to a time when baseball reigned supreme.

On that feel-good moment we can say goodbye to baseball for another year, knowing as always that the familiar rite of pitchers and catchers reporting to camp is just a few months away. Baseball junkies who can't wait even that long can rest easy knowing that major league baseball will launch its own television network at the beginning of the year.

The new year will bring new stadiums and new hope in cities around the nation. Forgotten almost everywhere but in Philadelphia will be a

postseason that never lived up to expectations and a World Series that caught the country's attention only for the quirkiness of the last 18 outs.

Bud Selig said he was ready to wait until Thanksgiving if necessary to crown a champion between the Phillies and Tampa Bay. His worse nightmare, though, wasn't the miserable weather that forced a World Series game to be played out over three days for the first time, but the chance the Rays could come back to win the whole thing.

Imagine the celebration that would have broken out then.

A couple of people waving on a street corner, maybe. A few thousand more at Tropicana Field, assuming they remembered where it was.

Baseball got lucky, but baseball's been getting lucky for a long time. Mismanaged, filled with cheats, and so greedy that it casts aside the future for the profits of today, it somehow manages to survive despite itself.

But for how long? How long can baseball continue its ways until

it finally becomes just another niche sport in a country where football has long since reigned as king?

Don't look now, but it's happening already.

Not in Philadelphia, where a long history of losing has bonded fathers and sons and mothers and daughters into Phillies followers. Not in Chicago, where misery truly does love company.

And certainly not in the New York where the Yankees are almost a religion and the Mets aren't far behind.

Outside of traditional big markets, though, the game has become largely a place to take the family for a night, enjoy the ambiance of a new ballpark, and gorge on the latest in stadium cuisine. Nothing wrong with that, but the casual relationship doesn't breed the intense loyalties the sport once commanded.

Fans keep coming — the 1.1 percent drop this year was the first after four years of record attendance — but the lack of attention paid the World Series has become a reminder that

baseball will never regain the status it once held as the national pastime.

A lot of that is baseball's fault, of course, particularly in its never ending drive to squeeze the last dollar out of the sport. There's little doubt that starting games so late and littering them with endless commercial breaks is much to blame for ratings that each year shrink more and more.

But the ratings this year just didn't shrink. They plunged.

Just 14 percent of people watching TV during the World Series were tuned in to the games, a record low since Nielsen began compiling figures decades ago. That compares to 60 percent of televisions tuned into the game during the '60s, and 50 percent as late as the early 1980s.

A country that once used to pause for the World Series now seems barely aware that it is on. Children who once brought transistor radios to school to listen to games are now in bed long before they're over.

Baseball is losing generations and either doesn't care or hasn't

noticed. Even as postseason ratings tanked and bad weather made a mockery of the World Series, Selig was declaring the 2008 season a tremendous success and proof of the continuation of baseball's renaissance in America.

The commissioner is supposed to accentuate the positive, of course, and there was something good about the way the season ended. Presented with a night of abbreviated baseball, America responded by giving the completion of Game 5 the highest ratings of the series.

The game was tense, exciting and quickly played. Kids could stay up to watch it and it went by so fast we barely noticed the extra commercials between innings.

That doesn't mean every World Series game should be shortened to 3 1/2 half innings. Traditionalists might just object, and Fox wouldn't be able to sell nearly as many commercials.

But quicker games and earlier start times could be a wise investment in a future baseball has so far chosen to ignore.

### IM Sports Corner: Work done on Cooper Express, McLovin rolls

By **LOGAN ZUGAY**  
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The regular season has been full of diving catches, amazing interceptions, and laughs and smiles. The intramural football league at Harrisburg has been the talk of the campus the past few weeks, whether it is about scores or strategy.

"The Hill," as it has become known as, has been active Monday through Thursday nights from 9 to 11 p.m., for gridiron battles and now, halfway through the year, the cream has risen to the top.

In two heavyweight battles of titans, Team Do Work and McLovin established themselves as the teams to bat. Do Work defeated a young Cooper Express squad 26-20 with a balanced

offensive attack and a defense that contained the multi-faceted Express offense.

Despite a solid comeback behind wide receivers Charlie Keller (2 TD) and Malcolm Egun (1 TD), the D.W. offense was just too much. Alex Weaber emerges as the deep threat in the game to change the pace of the underneath routes of the tight ends and slot receivers.

In the white division, it was McLovin showing why they are the defending champions by taking Ownage behind the woodshed in a 39 to 22 rout.

Linebacker and team captain Tryan Dinger set the tone with a crucial interception returned for a touchdown on the opening drive. Doug Cantrell and Nick Knull paced the underdogs in place of star Wide-out Brett Harmony (sprained ankle). Ownage never led.

### The Capital Times is looking for sports writers.

Please see page 2.

### Do you have Panic Disorder?

You may be eligible for a clinical research study at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center.

Have you experienced sudden, unexpected episodes of intense anxiety, accompanied by symptoms such as chest pain, rapid heart rate, sweating, shaking, shortness of breath, fear that you were dying, losing control, or going crazy?



Sleep and anxiety researchers at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center need volunteers with panic disorder and trouble falling asleep for a research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate whether ramelteon, an FDA-approved drug for chronic insomnia, improves sleep difficulty in panic disorder patients who are also treated with escitalopram for anxiety.

You may be eligible to participate if you:

- Are between ages 18 and 50
- Have panic disorder
- Have taken at least 30 minutes to fall asleep at least three times per week in the preceding month

Medical assessment and study drugs are provided at no charge, and compensation is available for time and travel.

Study Director: Ravi Singareddy, M.D.

For more information, call  
Christie Schaeffer, R.N., 717-531-3779.

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This research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, under federal regulations, at Penn State Hershey Medical Center, Penn State College of Medicine.

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