

# All I can say is WHAT!!!

I was listening to a ball game tonight and it sounded like it was going to be something special. Very close, well pitched game. 1 – 0 going into the 8th inning. A blown call and a hit/error later made it a 3 – 0 game going into the 9th. The home team pitcher had a perfect game going.

Long fly ball to deep center field, chased down by the center fielder, 1 out.

Ground ball to short, 2 outs.

Ground ball to 1st, close play at first. Perfect game/no hitter ruined. And then the announcers started to complain. They yelled, they screamed. They could not believe what they just saw. The same ump that blew the call in the bottom of the 8th did the same thing in the 9th to ruin a perfect game. Both announcers said it was an outrage.

Tempers grew hot when the game ended. Final score Detroit 3, Cleveland 0.

Strange thing, I was listening to the game on the Cleveland network, since I get that better than the Detroit network at home. The Cleveland announcers were outraged at that call in the 9th. They were the ones yelling and screaming about the umpire. I'm sure the Detroit announcers were doing something similar, but I was amazed to hear this from the Cleveland crew.

Watching the replay on the net, confirms that the umpire blew the call. Out by at least 1/2 a step. I didn't see the 8th inning close play yet, but I am going to assume the announcer got that right too.

There are very few times we are able to witness perfection in any activity. A perfect game in baseball is very rare indeed.

Funny how human error eliminates this perfection. Good life lesson that.

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## Goodbye To Simon's Pants On The Ground

And congratulations to Lee DeWyze from Mt. Prospect, Illinois.

Even if Crystal had not been from our neck of the woods, being talked about continuously on the 4 local stations, I would definitely think that she was the clear front-runner.

From what I have seen of American Idol this year, the paint salesman has grown by leaps and bounds and deserves to be crowned. But why, oh why do we need two hours of it. We had the good, the bad, and the ugly. Some of the performances by the top 12 were good... others not so good (Siobhan), and others were downright UUUUUGLY! (I was almost afraid that one of the myriad of guest performers was going to have another wardrobe malfunction).

Taking second place to the anticipation of the announcement was the farewell to Simon Cowell. I'm not totally convinced that the show will be the juggernaut it is without him. I don't think it is now after nine years. Video tributes, a hilarious segment by Ricky Gervais, and the inevitable return of Paula Abdul all ate time up. I think it will all come down to who the new person at the table will be as to how it will fare.

My favorite part of the evening: THE YANKEES WIN! About time. The win TWICE. The suspended game from yesterday and today's scheduled game at Target Field against the Twins. Plus (and I can't believe I'm saying this) but kudos to the

Red Sox for sweeping the Tampa Bay Rays which inches the Bombers closer to that first place AL East lead.

Plus, the Pants on the Ground rendition featuring Season 3 standout William Hung was priceless. Congrats, Lee! And THAHHHHHHH YANKEES WIN!

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## Sad day in Tiger Town

I just read that [Ernie Harwell](#) passed away. This was expected, since he had an inoperable form of cancer.

I grew up listening to Mr. Harwell on the radio. As a Tiger fan, he was the voice of the Tigers. I would have the game on TV, but the sound would be off and I would listen to the guy on the radio. His strong voice would carry Tiger games over the airwaves of WJR from Detroit.

Of course things change with the Tigers as I grew older, but for the most part the voice was constant. Until one year he was no longer there. He had been let go!! Outrage by Tiger fans eventually brought him back to the booth until he retired. Oh the many good memories he provides me. That old transistor radio hidden under my pillow, just what was needed for those West Coast Series. That same radio hidden at School to listen to day games in the fall or spring. Driving in the evening tormenting my wife and oldest daughter because I had to listen to the game. I grew out of that (mostly) when Ernie left. He was the voice for me.

He retired many years ago, but would visit the booth from time to time. Often in spring training to recite the following:

*For, lo, the winter is past,*

*The rain is over and gone;  
The flowers appear on the earth;  
The time of the singing of birds is come,  
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*

I never knew what that had to do with baseball, but it was a springtime tradition for Tiger fans.

Sad day in Tiger Town, and in the world of Baseball.

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## **And They Still Managed To Lose**

Happy Earth Day a day (or two at his point) late! Did anyone happen to see this remarkable play begun by a little-known third baseman in the top of the 6th inning against the Oakland A's? The first time such a feat was accomplished by the team since 1968 when one of the greats was involved. The bad news is that the Yanks still lost. The good news is... it did not matter, they still took the series! There was even some squabbling between A-Rod and the pitcher for the A's. Something about how the Yankee made his way back to first base after a play... I dunno.

But check out the historic play... even though the A's came out on top in the end.

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# Something New

We were looking for a family-friendly activity to do with our kids on Saturday. The zoo was out since we're chaperoning a Girl Scout field trip there next Saturday. Our original plan was to take our very furry and smelly dog to get groomed, but when we called around for prices, the quotes were much more than we wanted to spend on something that will just have to be done again in a few months.

So my husband searched around and found [this: Roller Derby](#). Do you remember Roller Derby? It was popular in the 70's and 80's, and there was a recent movie about it called [Whip It](#), which was also Drew Barrymore's directorial debut. We saw the movie not too long ago, and it was enjoyable, but now I'm going to have to watch it again after seeing the sport played live.

Roller Derby is a sport played on roller skates by women. I asked my husband why men don't play, and he said they'd get carried away with the aggressiveness and kill each other. I think there are some men's leagues, but they aren't professional like the women's league. So anyway, a basic game of Roller Derby has two periods separated by a halftime. Each period has several "jams". Basic game play consists of a pack of skaters skating around a circular track. There is one "jammer" on each team, and she is supposed to break through the other teams' pack of players, scoring a point for each opposing team member she passes. There's more to it, but those are the basics. The action is fast, the sport can be brutal, and fights occasionally break out. It's a lot of fun to watch!! Especially if you're brave enough to sit in the "suicide seats" where you sit on the floor next to the track. Our friends were brave enough to try, and they came out in one

piece! If you are interested in watching a bout or maybe even trying out to be a Derby Girl, check out the website of the [WFTDA – Women's Flat Track Derby Association](#) – they have a list of teams so you can find one near you. Here is a video from their website explaining the very basics of Roller Derby:

It was a great time – fun for the whole family, and I highly recommend it as something different to do. Tickets are pretty cheap – we paid \$12 for each adult and \$7 for my oldest daughter – the rest of the kids (5 and younger) were free. For that, we got about 5 hours of entertainment. The atmosphere is family friendly (despite some of the dirty innuendos some of the players' names imply that would go right over most kids' heads), and there are clowns running around providing additional entertainment. At halftime, my kids got to go out in the arena and play a racing game with the clowns, and they also do skits and make free balloon animals. Each kid gets a little noise maker when they walk in the door, and they also have a Hokey Pokey time and do the bit where they throw beach balls around the audience. While it was family friendly, my little ones were bored at times (they didn't understand the sport) and our little guy, who is not even 2, kept us from watching much of the action with his shenanigans. The lady who was waiting for me to finish with the changing table in the bathroom said, "I'm never bringing her to something like this again!" as she pointed to her little girl who looked about my son's age. So you might want to prepare yourself with lots of snacks, activities, and candy if you bring your kids. The kids ended up having a lot of fun, mostly because of all the yummy concessions Dad bought them and the little toys they got to take home. Hubby and I are going to check out a bout sometime for date night without the kids though so we can actually get into it and watch the game. And hopefully, there will be closer scores with a little more excitement – we witnessed two blowouts. In the first game, the Fort Wayne SWAT team got creamed by a team from Rockford, IL (where we used to live, what a coincidence!), and we left the second game early since it was getting late and the score was Fort Wayne – 154, Dayton – 13. OUCH!!

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# The Ring Was The Thing

Opening Day in the Bronx with the added spectacle of a little jewelry distributing. Across the street the rubble that had been the home of the Bombers was little more than a memory of years gone by. I was lucky enough to visit the cathedral in the 90s. World Series Champs for the 27th time! Presenting the hardware was the most decorated Bomber of them all... Yogi Berra (with 10) and former pitcher Whitey Ford (who has a mere 7). Throwing out the ceremonial first pitch... another Yankee great: Bernie Williams. I still have to question the release of two heroes from last season particularly in the post season: Johnny Damon (off to Tiger country) and Hideki Matsui (MVP of the 2009 World Series at the stadium today as an Angel of Anaheim). However, new stars Nick Johnson and Curtis Granderson (from Detroit) have put an early mark on the team.

Some early naysayers have played the age card. Admittedly, Posada, Pettitte, A-Rod, Rivera, and Captain Jeter are getting up there but they all seem just fine to me (even if it is only week two of the season). The pitching is better than ever. C.C. had a no-hitter going into the 8th inning on Saturday.

Today's game was a dandy. I could not watch it as I had to work but I kept checking the score via cell phone. The last I remember, the Yanks were up 7-1. When I got off at 5, I saw the final was 7-5! It must have been a whale of the top of the 9th. But The Great One dispatched his former teammate to seal the deal. 5-2 Record.. .5 games behind Toronto in the start of the season!

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# Thoughts (from a PO'ed Cubs fan) On Opening Day...

Well, this was going to be a blog post where I was going to stay upbeat. I was going to talk about the positives and (as it became apparent) the negatives of the 2010 Chicago Cubs team, but I was going to do it as sort of an objective sportscaster... until the bottom dropped out, and I realized, for the first time on the opening day of a season, that the Chicago Cubs might just have to be written off in APRIL...

There have been seasons where the Cubs look great – they might make me nervous, but even in those years, providing they get a few lucky breaks and play some great baseball, they have a chance to make it into the post-season, if not the World Series. And then there are the years where they can be completely written off; years where even the most optimistic of true fans can tell that our beloved Cubbies won't get much further than the dog days of summer, if we're lucky. I remember a year when I had to write off the Cubs in May. It was late May, but May, nonetheless, but it had become apparent to me that the Cubs were not going anywhere and that I had better explore the idea of a back-up team; not because I love the Cubs any less after all of their failures but simply because I love baseball, and I needed to have a team to follow into the post-season...

But I digress... back to today; the Cubs 2010 season-opener...

First inning was great – the Cubs were up 3-0... until the Braves got their turn to bat, and Zambrano (the famous hot-tempered Cubs pitcher) fell apart. While he did deliver on his promise to curtail his outbursts, that didn't stop him from choking. First the Cubs lost a fly ball in left field between 3 players – one of those 'who's-gonna-get-it-anyone-but-me' scenarios that should not exist in games where the

players get paid millions of dollars to play baseball. Next, in the bottom half of the same first inning, Zambrano gave up a homerun, got an error (with an idiotic play – the ball got through the infield, but good fielding managed to make up for it and got the out at first. Apparently, Zambrano, who was covering first, got so high off the save of the play that he decided to throw to third base to get the runner, but he was so hepped up on his save at first that he overthrew third and got himself an error, which led the Braves to score – UGH). So back to my list of things Zambrano did wrong... So then, in his trademark frustration, Zambrano proceeds to bean a batter with the ball **and** give up yet another homerun – and he was finally out of the game, but at least he left the field tantrumless, per his promise... at least?!?

Then I find myself at the top of the 5th inning when there is a double play on the Cubs – a line drive was hit, but the runner at first couldn't get back to the base in time – terrible base-running!! Honestly, it looked worse than spring training out there!! Again, these guys get paid millions for this?!? WHERE is the coaching? I find myself wondering, just like I did at the end of last season – has Lou Piniella just given up? But isn't it too early in the season for that?!?

Next, to end the top of the 5th inning – Nate McCloud (on the Braves) makes a great catch – it was a great hit by the Cubs, but the Braves seem to have a team – why can't WE catch balls like that?!?

And then, at the top of the 6th – McCloud makes a diving catch... but wait, he drops it. He picks it up so quickly that the umps rule the ball caught and runners out – Kudos to Cubs coach Lou for not losing it and abstaining from performing one of his famous dirt-kicking tantrums, which is more than I can say for myself... total crap, and a few choice words were said in my living room... but to my credit, the kids were upstairs.

Bottom of the 7th – some Cubs pitcher named Samardzija walks 3

in a row but still gets to stay in the game somehow – maybe the team really does think it's still spring training? Then there is a huge error, but thankfully, I had to go to the bathroom so I missed it. Good thing too, I haven't yet learned how to control my cussing during baseball and my kids were still awake... And then... what's THAT? Someone hits a ball way back into the outfield which bounces into the stands, and the ball is played wrong, plus the throw to third is terrible... And that's it, I'm done. I'll watch the rest of the game and maybe offer some final thoughts, but the bottom line is this – I am sad to say that the Chicago Cubs did not show up to play baseball today.

At least the Detroit Tigers, a team I chose long ago to be my back-up team due to their close proximity to where I live plus the fact that they are in the division of my nemesis team, the Chicago White Sox, won their opening game, albeit against the Kansas City pushovers.

And as for the Cubs...

It's not about the 11 run deficit; the fact that the Cubs lost 16-5. If they had tried, been well-coached, and played good baseball, it would just be me here pouting. Fact is, they played terribly. It's one thing to have a bad game; that can be forgiven. But when you're a team who has so many dedicated fans, and you have so much to prove... how can you possibly recover from a debut this horrible? The Chicago Cubs looked like they don't even know how to play baseball.

I do have a tendency to over-dramatize things, so here is my plea to what I fear are the hopeless 2010 Chicago Cubs:

Surprise me. PLEASE.

**\*\*An addendum...** After this sorry excuse of a baseball game, I did a google search for 'cubs logo sad clown face' – thinking it would be easy for me to find a Chicago Cubs logo that someone had morphed into a sad clown face -after over 100

years of disappointment, does it really seem that far-fetched? I did not find what I was looking for, but I found [this amusing blog entry instead](#)...

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## OPENING DAY IS HERE!!!

GO CUBS!!!

GO CUBS!!!

GO CUBS!!!

Well, I just went to check my countdown timer on my blog site; it should say there are mere *hours* left until the Chicago Cubs open their 2010 season... but I can't find the countdown timer on my site. And I can't find it in the widgets section either. Since I have two kids fighting and one crawling around on the dining room table, I think it will be quicker to just write a little post about the opening day of baseball – I don't include last night since the Cubs didn't play ☐ – rather than try to fiddle around with the countdown widget.

So YAY!! Baseball season is finally here, and the Cubs open against the Braves today at 3:10pm Chicago time – I have made arrangements to shirk my responsibilities of making dinner, and hopefully the kids will be good for the first hour of the game until my husband comes home from work. I don't expect to watch all of the games or even most of them, but I figured I deserved a bit of a break for opening day – hey, it's been a LONG winter without baseball, as always!!

GO CUBS!!!

GO CUBS!!!

GO CUBS!!!

*(oh yeah, and GO Indians – just because they are an Ohio team who just happen to play the White Sox today!!)*

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## Almost Time...

Well, baseball season is almost upon us finally, and I'm really starting to get the itch – not that I'll be able to watch many games anyway since when we're actually home to watch tv it's dominated by Noggin and the Disney Channel... but I can dream, right?

So the other day, I did a search on youtube.com for "Cubs baseball" so I could give my son an early taste of what he'll hopefully enjoy watching with me all summer. I found a gem of a song by Steve Goodman, a grammy-winning artist who passed away from leukemia at the age of 36. Mr. Goodman was a die-hard Chicago Cubs fan his entire life, and sadly, his favorite team never made it to the playoffs during his lifetime. They appeared in the World Series in 1945, 3 years before Goodman was born, and then they clinched the Eastern Division title for the National League in 1984 – securing a place in the post-season just 4 days after Steve Goodman passed away.

I always knew about Steve Goodman from the awesome song, "Go Cubs Go", a song they play at Wrigley Field after every Cubs win. I seem to remember hearing the song over the intercom at the end of a school day one year when I was growing up – principal must have been a Cubs fan...

But anyway, in addition to "Go Cubs Go", Goodman penned and performed other musical works of art; some about the Cubs, some about Chicago, and some about neither. Here is the one I found today and enjoyed, however bittersweet its title and

message "A Dying Cubs Fan's Last Request". I chose to post this version of it, rather than the one that shows Steve Goodman singing it on the rooftops of Wrigley – that's just too sad.

And just so that this post doesn't end on a down note, here is the old favorite "Go Cubs Go" – let's hope this is the year the Cubs make Steve Goodman proud!

CUBS OPENING DAY – 17 DAYS, SOME ODD HOURS – GO CUBBIES!!!

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## Walkin Close To Midnight

Well... today was eventful. The H.S. Boys Basketball team is in the District finals for the first time since 2001. The final will be Friday night at the "Grand Canyon." This made for a very **UN**eventful evening at work. From 7pm-9pm, I probably could count the number of customers I had on one hand. I then walked home and listened to the final quarter of the District semi-final.

About 9.30, I traveled to B-town and took a nice long walk with Megan. About an hour and 15 minutes after, we made our way back. As we passed another friend's house, we wagered who would be bold enough to go and knock on the window. After we both thought better of it, I did make a loud "HAL00000" sound, but apparently not loud enough. So by 11.15, we made it back and the light misty rain made it wet enough that it was time to wrap it up. Fun time and good exercise walking at a nice, brisk pace. Good companion who kept up with me at what others have often complained is too fast a clip.

**GO BULLDOGS!**