

# GO CUBS GO!!!

As you've probably heard by now, the Chicago Cubs have clinched their division. They WILL be going to the playoffs in 2008!!!! YAY! It's been a great year; even though with my busy schedule I only got to see less than 10 games. But that's ok – I always said I won't plan my life around baseball. Tempting, but I won't do it, at least not until my kids are grown and I have nothing better to do. A prime example of this is the fact that we've planned a trip to Florida during the playoffs and world series. If the Cubs make it to the world series, I won't get to see that either. Luckily, we'll be home in time for game 4 of the world series, so I'll at least be able to see one game, possibly more if they need to play them. But I'm getting ahead of myself. First the Cubs have to make it to the world series. Given the way the team has played all year, I think there's a pretty good chance, but all we can do is wait and see. For now, it's comforting to know that they've already clinched their playoff spot and I got to watch that happen! GO CUBBIES!!!!

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## Let There Be Lights

Recently there was an article on cubs.com about how it's been 20 years since Wrigley Field started night games for the Chicago Cubs, i.e. got lights in their stadium. That made me feel kind of old because I remember that event, and it was 20 years ago: 8-8-88. Sigh. Since when can I remember 20 years ago? But anyway, I remember an elderly gentleman (turns out he was 91 in 1988 and actually remembered the Cubs winning the World Series in 1908 – a stark reminder that there is NO ONE left today who can say the same...) flipped the switch to turn

on Wrigley Field's lights for the first time ever. Funnily enough, it was a bit too early in the evening, and many fans and spectators said they couldn't see a difference in the lighting on the field. But it was symbolic, and Wrigley Field finally had its lights, even if it was the last major league ball park to get them. And the event was proven even more symbolic than functional that night when the game was postponed because of rain. So the first FULL baseball game at Wrigley under the new lights was actually 8/9/88.

Apparently the lights were snuck into the field in the middle of the night, under cover, literally. They were hoisted into place quickly by helicopters, for fear that protestors would shoot them in order to try to preserve the neighborhood's charm and innocence. But the plan was not foiled, and 20 years later, we still get to enjoy night games at Wrigley. **GO CUBBIES!!!**

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## **RIP Caray**

Recently Skip Caray passed away, a son of famed Chicago Cubs announcer Harry Caray. Skip was actually famous for his work announcing the Atlanta Braves rather than the Cubs, but his death in the news made me think of his father and everything he brought to Cubs games.

Since I didn't watch many Braves games, I wasn't really familiar with Skip's work, so I looked him up on wikipedia.com and found the following:

*Skip Caray's broadcasts were characterized by his witty and sarcastic sense of humor, a personality trait that endeared him to most fans, but alienated him from others. For example,*

*during a particularly long losing streak in the 1980s, Skip declared at the start of a game against the Pittsburgh Pirates "And, like lambs to the slaughter, the Braves take the field". More recently, in a game against the Florida Marlins, the Braves had loaded the bases, to which Caray quipped, "The bases are loaded, just like (Marlins manager) Jack McKeon probably wishes he was." During the 2004 season, Caray frequently made fun of Braves relief pitcher, Jung Bong, declaring every time the opposing team got a hit against him, "that's another hit off of Bong". In 2008, a player popped a fly ball so high that Skip said "That would've been a home run in a phone booth."*

Sounds like a funny guy, and I'm sure he'll be missed by legions of fans, much like his late father, Harry Caray, the voice of the Chicago Cubs.

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## **Baseball bat breaking news**

There seems to be a lot more shattered bats during a major league baseball game these days. I've heard the talk that the newer maple bats tend to shatter, while the ash just split. A [news article](#) I just read discusses this 'new' event in major league games.

I understand why they don't use aluminum/metal bats in the major leagues. If you ever saw a ball jump off of the new metal bats in college ball, or even the local softball leagues, you can guess why you wouldn't want one of those in the hands of a major league hitter. The pitcher would have to be 90 feet away just to be safe. I am wondering if some sort of material could be designed for baseball bats. Keep the elasticity (bounce of ball off the bat) the same as current

wood bats, but have it much stronger to prevent splitting.

With the problems with Ash borers in the midwest (Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and maybe Pennsylvania), there may be a supply problem with Ash baseball bats in the future anyway. I think they may need to do something, before more people get hurt sitting in the stands.

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## **Interesting Day in sporting news**

A little bit of sports trivia. The only bit of major pro sporting news yesterday was Baseball's All Star Game. Today outside of that last game that really counts for yesterday's scoreboard, there is no major pro sporting event going on.

No Pro Football, Basketball, Women's Basketball, Hockey, Arena Football, or even Soccer. The British Open in Golf will start tomorrow. That's right folks, today is a downer day for sports fans. After we finish talking about the All Star Game, there are no other scores to talk about. Tomorrow, until the British Open first round scores start coming in, and MLB starts again, there will be no scores to talk about.

Today is the one day for the year, you can be sure there will be no sport scores other than the game that started the day before. Interesting? or a MLB conspiracy? Will we ever find out?

Just thought you would like to know

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## Extra innings

It was the bottom of the 9th when I decided to check on Baseball's All Star game. Little did I know it would continue into the 12th inning. I'm just watching it on Gameday, so I haven't seen much of what has transpired. I do know that both teams have had scoring chances in those extra innings. The game should be over by now.

The game will now go into the 13th inning... They should be able to get everyone in now, don't you think?

15 innings!!!

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## I'm Not Rubbing It In, Honest, But...

With ***NINE STRAIGHT WINS***, the Chicago Cubs are the HOTTEST team in baseball right now! I am ecstatic about this and just had to make a remark or two. So I'm sorry to my friends who follow MLB, choosing instead to support franchises other than the Cubs – I don't know how your teams are doing, and I don't mean to rub it in about how incredibly awesome the Cubs are this year, but these days, "How about those Cubs?" is not just a conversation starter, it's a question being asked by baseball fanatics, Cubs fans, Chicagoans, and probably anyone who has ever heard of the Cubs, their 'loveable losers' nickname, and their awesome 2008 baseball skills. Gone are the days it seems when the Cubs were the laughing

stock of baseball; the “maybe next year” mantra and when an 8-0 deficit in a game meant certain disaster for my favorite team. The other day, they were able to turn an 8-0 losing game into a 10-9 **WIN** over the Rockies! Honestly, the Cubs have never been known for great comebacks in a game, and this was no fluke – that game was followed by 2 more games where the Cubs came from behind to save the game and declare wins for themselves. Then again, rallies are nothing new to Cubs’ manager, Lou Piniella – no manager in history has managed more eight-run comebacks.

So could 2008 be the year for the Cubs? Could 100, a whole century, be the magic number of years us Cubs fans have had to wait for another World Series win? That remains to be seen, of course, it is only June, but keep this in mind: according to the Elias Sports Bureau, the last time the Cubs had the best record in baseball entering June was 1908, the year they last won the World Series. Coincidence or fate? We will find out come October – I know I will be glued to the Cubs website until then!

*How about those Cubs?!?*

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## **The next big league scandal**

Normally I just roll my eyes to yet some other scandal happening in sports. Athletes are given god-like status by many fans, so why shouldn’t they act like egotistical know-it-alls {sarcasm}? Today, it seems Little League teams are no longer allowed to use the names of actual major league teams due to trademarks. Not just the logos- the names too. That is, unless MLB gets its share of the pie by forcing the Little League to use their “approved” uniform manufacturer. How cold

can their greedy hearts get? Now, to be fair, the trademark office requires companies to actively enforce compliance or risk losing their trademarks; and the MLB *could* have been threatened with that from said trademark office, but I really doubt it. I remember when I was in intermediate league one year and was on the Astros. A friend of mine was on the Phillies. Today we would probably be on the Oranges and Greens thanks to this ridiculous enforcement. What happened to just giving a nod and a wink because you support youth sports? It sounds like they support \$\$\$ more. Here's a link to the story:

[Major League Baseball Tells Little Leaguers: We Own Uniform Rights](#)

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## **It's Not the Years, Honey... It's The Mileage**

It seems that everyone is getting in the Indiana Jones spirit. While chatting with a friend I was directed to the [Chicago Cubs'](#) website and the [schedule](#) thereof. On the May 22nd space, there appears a picture of Harrison Ford as the reknowned archaeologist ready to embark on his latest adventure. We speculated that all of baseball may have decided to take the day off to celebrate Dr. Jones' return to the big screen. Somehow, I had my doubts. Sure enough on the [New York Yankees'](#) [site](#), there appeared the same picture but a game was listed. So, I thought all of baseball was celebrating but just not taking the entire day off. I checked out the [Detroit Tigers'](#) [schedule](#): there it was again, but yet again the team has a scheduled game. Only makes me more

anxious for the next 21 days to go quickly.

Check your favorite team's website to see if they are celebrating the release of *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. At least a Yankee fan had something to divert his attention to tonight ☐

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## Take Me Out to the Ballgame – Uecker Style

Well, the Cubs lost their second series to the Brewers this season, but equally upsetting is what happened today during the 7th inning stretch. Taking place at Wrigley Field, today's game was the "rubber game" of the series. Someone decided Bob Uecker, aka 'the voice of the Brewers' would be a good guest to come and lead the crowd in 'Take Me Out to the Ballgame'. Nevermind for a minute the events that took place during the song today; this decision doesn't seem very wise to me from the get-go. Bob Uecker was born and raised in Milwaukee. He grew up watching the minor-league Milwaukee Brewers, and the first team he signed with in the major leagues was the Milwaukee Braves. He's been doing the play-by-play announcements for the Brewers on the radio since 1971, and still holds the job. Why then, did someone deem it a good decision to have him come to Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs, to lead the crowd during the 7th inning stretch? If we pretend the Chicago White Sox don't exist ☐ – the Cubs have their biggest rivalry with their neighbors to the north, the Milwaukee Brewers. So why invite someone who has obviously been a lifelong Milwaukee fan to do the 7th inning stretch during a Cubs / Brewers game on Cubs turf? I just don't get it...

Here is a play by play of today's incident. Bob Ueker comes out to sing the 7th inning stretch. Nothing seemed amiss, until the part in the song that goes, "root, root, root, for the *Brewers*". He actually said 'root for the Brewers' at Wrigley Field. He was immediately BOOED LOUDLY by the crowd, of course, so then he sings, "you do the same for the Cubs" to the tune of the song, but by this point, the organist just gives up because now he's out of tune and has lost the organist in the song. In order to get back on track, he then proceeds to skip ahead, or maybe it's because he realized it would be an even worse decision to say something like "if they don't win it's a shame" about the Brewers in Wrigley Field. Either way, he skips ahead to "for it's ONE, TWO, THREE (*organist comes back into the song, hardly missing a beat except for the made-up lyrics*) strikes you're out at the old ball game!" I had kids to tend to, so I didn't see the entire fallout from the fiasco, but I did get back to the tv just in time to hear Ueker say, "I'm rooting for the Brewers, what do they want me to do, root for the Cubs?" YES! Of course the Cubs fans want you to root for the Cubs, especially at Wrigley Field! And if you can't do that, pretend! And if you can't pretend, then stay in Milwaukee!

Well, forget Bob Ueker and whoever invited him to Wrigley today – that person was probably fired before the beginning of the 8th inning anyway. The Cubs are off to a great start this year, and I can only hope I get less busy so I can see more games because they are playing some great baseball, and it's fun to watch! I can only hope they beat the pants off the Cardinals who are in first place in the Cubs division by only a half game... That series begins tomorrow and I will be watching – in between kid duties, of course! GO CUBS!