

The Mindset of a Fan: Delusions of Baseball Grandeur

by Jason Powers, April 2008

As a baseball season goes from a slow simmer to a hearty boil, it is the fan that reflects the bipolarity of a franchise's success. The fanatic lives and dies for his team, one game, one inning, and one pitch at a time. And do things that make sanity only a meager word in the psychiatric dictionary.

Last week, *for example*, LF Alfonso Soriano had begun the season batting around .050, one hit in 20 at bats. This started conversations *again* about his suitability to lead off for the Cubs. Fans were clamoring for a change. The Windy city's windbags were out in gale force. A cheap bottle of scotch and a linoleum floor were the answers to my baseball addictive behaviors. I was nearing the ledge – looking for a way down off the Sears Tower.

King Kong couldn't save me.

In Boston, the ledge dwellers never leave. With 1B David Ortiz hitting around the temperature in Boston, the 2007 World Champions' fans are putting curses on the New House of A-Rod, leaving Ortiz's jersey buried in the concrete supporting The Bosses' new digs. *Lunatics is, as lunatics does* – with Yankee jackhammers taking the time to remove the offending clothing from the complex. A Haitian taxi cab driver with a stellar resume that includes Times Square peep show operator and Voodoo practitioner has volunteered to perform a spiritual incantation to place a reverse-hex, Ouija board style on the formerly accursed Red Sox. *"Take back that Bambino Curse!!!"* The Haitian-accented Yankee fanatic was quoted on Friday last week. George Bush I would approve of the voodoo with the economics of breaking out this inconsequential addition to the foundation of a \$900-million dollar house.

In Cali, where left-wingers and Vegans unite in perfect Ying-Yang harmony, Anaheim-Los Angeles Angels batting averages and pitching staff woes are bantered on this [uniquely successful website](#). (Lying is the **actual 1st step** to admitting you have a problem...)

Even in the National League version of La-La Land, a man called Jones (not Jesus Jones, that early 1990's quasi-alternative troubadour and not Jim Jones, *either*) hasn't quite learned how to hang loose and catch some knarly wave action up on Santa Monica Peer. His 3rd base coach, Larry "David" Bowa wants him to think *"outside the box"*, but baseball is a box sport as the box score, batter's box, pitcher's box, coaches' box, box of Crackerjacks and *foxy boxing, uh, wrong sport*, indicates. Bowa received baseball's version of a "Pasadena" from the League office for 3 games. Bummer.

In *fly over* country, where this writer plies a meager existence, Milwaukee's renewed vocal interest keeps-on-a-wishin' for a healthy pitching staff while touting their young positional talent. "We're going to win the National League Central by 6 games," came

the proclamation down from Mt. Carmel to WSCR 670 in Chi-town. No supporting facts or in-depth analysis, just good ole fashion fandom, we're gonna win, narcissism-be-me statements. 10 games in, the season is over. *"Get Bud Selig on the phone, start the playoffs for your hometown nine, commish, and leave us fanatical Old Milwaukee beer swillers some brats, will ya?"*

These are just a few of the disorders in a baseball game: the craziness of analyzing 10 games out of 162, looking for "a pattern." Much like a psychologist giving a diagnosis of a troubled client's root cause to all his ills after three, \$250/hr sessions. (Course, at 250 bones, smackers or greenpesos, a "client" might want to try dialing up Eliot Spitzer's "therapist" for some TLC. At least the problem will be "out in the open", freed from "Levi constraints" for discussion and able "to get properly off" while in the search for the root of the problem.)

As we boo, cheer and chastise along with our fellow worshippers of the sport, like our ancestral Christendom Romans did, we are fulfilling the need of a brief reality break. Using these moments in the park to buttress our often, mundane lives. The filling of a void, that our careers, our families and our government (*most definitely*), will not always do. The making of a date to get away from economic woes, relationship foes, and their deteriorating effects on our lives. The seeing of baseball perfection, shaped in a field of dreams, is just the medicine for an eager, exuberant and loyal fan.

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