

8-3-2000

## Buying Cuba and other Absurdities

Richard C. Crepeau

University of Central Florida, [richard.crepeau@ucf.edu](mailto:richard.crepeau@ucf.edu)

 Part of the [Cultural History Commons](#), [Journalism Studies Commons](#), [Other History Commons](#), [Sports Management Commons](#), and the [Sports Studies Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/onsportandsociety>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Commentary is brought to you for free and open access by the Public History at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in On Sport and Society by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

---

### Recommended Citation

Crepeau, Richard C., "Buying Cuba and other Absurdities" (2000). *On Sport and Society*. 168.  
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/onsportandsociety/168>

SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR H-ARETE  
AUGUST 3, 2000

New York(AP)-At a hastily called press conference today the New York Yankees announced that they had purchased Cuba, the island and the country. A Yankee spokesman would not reveal the purchase price, believed to be in the ten or eleven figure range, but did say that Yankees' owner George Steinbrenner would spare no expense to ensure that the Yankees would remain competitive.

Purchase of the country has given the Yankees immediate access to all baseball players on the island, and several are expected to join the American League club shortly. The future of Cuban dictator Fidel Castro is uncertain although "The Boss" has been a longtime admirer of Fidel's leadership style. One unnamed Yankee insider was overheard to say: "if Billy Martin was still alive, Castro would already be gone."

In addition it is believed that former Miami resident, Elian Gonzalez, will be named the Yankee batboy sometime in the next two or three days. His rights must first be obtained from The Miami Relatives.

Access to the Cuban baseball players should allow the Yankees to tighten up their remaining roster weaknesses and once again make them an overwhelming favorite to win the World Championship of American baseball.

-----

For those who have been watching the mad dash of baseball teams to add key players via trades over the past few days this story should seem at least plausible. For those who have been reading their sports pages over the past few weeks the story seems no more bizarre than several stories recently in the news.

Last week the New York Times reported that a twelve year-old Italian football player was being pursued by the professionals. Vincenzo Sarno, the "little Maradona," is on the verge of signing over his professional rights to A.S. Roma, one of the top teams in Italy. The signing will result in an immediate payment of \$200,000 to the Sarno family, and bring millions more when Vincenzo reaches fourteen. The Sarno family will be moved to Rome, where there will be a job for Vincenzo's father and quality care for one of his younger brothers who has Down syndrome. Vincenzo has been scouted since he was ten, although

he was not red-shirted. Apparently the only thing unusual about this story is that young boys in Italy are generally not signed until they reach fifteen.

It was also revealed that Gaetano Mosca, who runs the Naples soccer academy that Sarno currently attends, owns the rights to Sarno's image for advertising purposes until the boy is eighteen.

I repeat. Vincenzo Sarno is twelve. The NCAA has declared that if Sarno signs with Roma he will be ineligible for a soccer scholarship.

Meanwhile, the papers here have been reporting with considerable gravity the news of the signing of coaches for XFL teams. It is hard to believe but Vince MacMahon's XFL is now being reported as a sport. What promises to be an obscene display of sexual titillation and glorified violence is being treated as a legitimate sporting enterprise.

Here in Orlando the WWF, MacMahon's other highly successful commercial venture, is reported only in the entertainment section of the newspaper. Why the XFL, the football version of the WWF, is any different remains a mystery. Perhaps it's because NBC television has forfeited all its claims as a legitimate public enterprise by its partnership with MacMahon.

Less disturbing, but in many ways just as confounding, television this week is filled with something called "The Great Outdoor Games." There are men climbing and cutting trees, women rolling logs, dogs retrieving plastic birds and jumping off docks in what apparently is some sort of faux sporting competition. The only question that arises in my mind is a philosophical one: Which came first, the Great Outdoor Games or the X-Games?

The other big news of the week was the debut of Dennis Miller as an "analyst" on ABC's Monday Night Football. Although this is slightly more important than the Republican Convention, it is difficult to understand the massive coverage given to this non-event. It was front-page news the morning before the game. Luckily, as Miller himself might note, we all have "escapability" from our TV sets.

The final straw, although there is no finality to any of this, came yesterday. The New York Times, the guardian of standards, judgement, and taste printed the "Preseason NFL Standings." I'll

bet many of you were totally unaware of the existence of such a thing. This leads to several questions: Is there a trophy awarded to the Preseason Champions? Is there a playoff and a Preseason Super Bowl? If not, why not?

The most intriguing part of this little exercise in journalistic lunacy appeared in the standings for both the AFC West and the NFC Central. No team in either of these divisions has played a game. I am not making this up. Wins, Losses, Ties, and Winning Percentages were signified with nicely arranged rows of zeros. The effect produced was a visual symmetry to be envied by all anal retentive football fans across America.

And as they used to say, "You know who you are."

Caught in the vortex of Florida Summer and wondering why, this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

Copyright 2000 by Richard C. Crepeau