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The Cursed All-Star Game In Milwaukee: Bud Lite Makes the Bad Worse

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From the beginning the omens were bad. At the home run hitting contest Sammy Sosa ran out of gas in round three and could only get one out of the park. Then it started raining and for a brief moment ESPN showed that beautiful waterfall coming off the roof. Was this part of the construction flaw at the brand new Miller Park, Bud Selig's monument to himself extorted from the people of Wisconsin?

Then came All Star Night. The two children of Ted Williams who were to be in Milwaukee to take part in the ceremony honoring their father did not show. Ted's son was spirited Ted's body off to Arizona to be frozen, while Ted's daughter was looking for help from the courts in retrieving the body so she could have Ted cremated. The Fire and Ice show did not become an All Star moment.

When the large #9 was unveiled in the left field grass the three All Stars from Boston did the honors. At least that went well. In addition Ted was honored when it was announced that the Most Valuable Player Trophy for the All Star game would be named for Ted Williams. Unfortunately that didn't go as planned either.

The next disaster came with the singing of the national anthem. Pop Singer Anastacia, whose song "Boom" was the official song of the FIFA World Cup (shouldn't that have been warning enough?), had a voice like a coal miner with a hangover. Then she managed to upstage her alleged singing by garbling the words. What were those rockets doing? It made me long for a return of Rosanne.

It was now clear; this was not going to be a run of the mill All Star game. Little did we know just how great it would be by the time the night had turned to morning and Bud Selig had been turned into a whining blubbering idiot in front of the television cameras.

The game itself was a good one. It had its home runs, some good pitching, some extra base hits, and some terrific fielding plays. All the players played and all the fans got to see their favorites. The only thing lacking was a winner. Sorry the only two things lacking were a game winner and a Most Valuable Player for the new Ted Williams Award.

No one can blame Bud Selig for making the decision to call the game. The teams were out of pitchers. What Bud was responsible for is the way in which the matter was handled. In the ninth inning it was clear that both teams would start the 10th inning using their last pitcher. Before that inning started a decision should have been made on how to proceed.

Instead in the middle of the 11th inning the Commissioner was holding a meeting at his box seat with the two managers, while for what seemed like ten minutes Freddie Garcia the American League pitcher was left standing on the mound waiting for something to happen.

Then after one man was retired in the bottom of the 11th inning for no apparent reason the announcement was made to the fans and teams that if the National League didn't score within that inning the game would end. The boos began from the fans, and then showing their own brand of savvy humor the fans began to chant "Let Them Play" from the "Bad News Bears."

The best part of the entire evening was just ahead. For those of us who have come to savor any unpleasantness that comes the way of Bud Selig it couldn't have been better. As the boos and the chant cascaded down there was Bud in the stands with no where to hide. He was squirming in his seat unsure of where or how he should look at this awkward moment.

Finally the game ended and FOX went to commercial. After the usual break FOX came back only to have Jeanne Zelasko tell us that the Commissioner stiffed us. There would be no post-game explanation to the national television audience. He had to leave, he couldn't wait. Shouldn't Bud be explaining this mess to those who sat through umpteenth hours to reach this point? Apparently he didn't think so.

Quickly I hit the remote and moved over to ESPN where surprise, surprise, I found Bud Selig. He was holding a press conference along with Joe Torre and Bob Brenly. There he was again looking exquisitely uncomfortable. As the questions rolled on Bud became increasingly despondent and it was then that he began to whine. By the time the news conference broke up he was nearly blubbery. It was worth staying up all those hours after all.

If the players had boycotted the game to show their displeasure with Bud's positions on the labor issues and his shameless attempts to manipulate the press, the Congress and the public, they would have suffered a public relations disaster. Instead all they had to do was let nature take its course and sit back and watch Bud Selig's little party self-destruct before their eyes and his.

No one rained on Bud Selig's parade in Milwaukee. No one had to. He managed that himself.

It was one of the great moments in the All Star history and sheer agony for Bud Selig. I couldn't have enjoyed it more.

Some men are called to greatness, others have greatness thrust upon them. Bud Selig had it crash down around him.

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't need to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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