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Late Night at the World Series

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR H-ARETE - Late Night at the World Series
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Here we are in early November and the World Series is over already. You probably missed much of the World Series if you live in the Eastern Time Zone and your bedtime is before 11 p.m. This would not be a problem if there were no baseball fans living east of Indiana. Given the location of major league franchises that is not likely.

So for those who are not night owls let me report that you missed much of the excitement of this series, some of the playoffs, and certainly one of the wildest games in World Series history, namely Game Five in Houston. It ended at 1:45 a.m. EDT.

This was a marathon with several sprints contained within. Well over five hours in length, this one started out in routine and predictable fashion. Clayton Kershaw was dominating the Astro hitters and by the middle of fourth inning it was 4-0 Dodgers and I was ready to write this one off. However, in the back of my mind I remember Memorial Day at Dodger Stadium where I saw Kershaw unable to protect a five run lead over the Cubs. He was out of the game before the end of the fifth inning.

So I would hold off at least until the Astros batted in the bottom of the fourth inning. So what happens, the Astros score one run and then tie the game via Gurriel's three run home run, a blast to left-center. So maybe this game was not yet over. Then the Dodgers answered in the top of the fifth with Bellinger's three-run homer giving Kershaw a three-run lead.

So the Dodger ace returned to the mound to protect a three-run lead. The Astros were in trouble especially with the amazing Dodger bullpen as backup. After retiring the first two hitters in the fifth, Kershaw walked the next two. Time for a pitching change, meaning that both starting pitchers, Kershaw and

Keuchel, a pair of aces, were gone. Kenta Maeda, one of the invincible Dodger relievers came to the mound, and Jose Altuve welcomed him with a three-run home run. Tie game at 7-7 after five innings. It was no longer a pitcher's duel.

Order was restored until the top of the seventh inning when George Springer misplayed a Bellinger single into a triple, scoring Hernandez, making it 8-7 Dodgers. Brandon Morrow came in to pitch the seventh inning. He proved to be another invincible turned vincible, as the Astros scored four runs on six pitches and Morrow was gone. Springer came to the plate and homered on the first pitch to once again tie the game. Bregman then singled and Altuve doubled him home and the Astros had their first lead of the game. Correa than homered to give the Astros an 11-8 lead.

The Dodgers scored in the top of the eighth on a double by Corey Seager, but left men on second and third with only one out. Brian McCann homered in the bottom of the inning to restore the three-run lead.

OK, that's it. The Astros are in control and it's time to relax and have a whiskey to accompany the final three outs in the ninth. Devenski is now pitching. So Puig homers with a man on and it is now 12-11 with one out. Barnes then doubles. Pederson grounds out and Barnes goes to third. Taylor is at the plate and has two strikes on him. The Astros are one strike from their first World Series championship, ever. Taylor, as he has done all season, singles to center. Game tied, 12-12. Seager flies out. What next?

The Astros do not score in the ninth, nor do the Dodgers in the top of the tenth inning. Have the pitchers gained control of the game? Is it time for another whiskey?

The bottom of the tenth begins with the once invincible Jansen pitching his second inning in relief for the Dodgers. The first two outs come quickly. Then McCann is hit by a pitch and Springer walks. Derek Fisher, not the former Laker, enters the game as a pinch runner for McCann.

Bregman now comes to the plate. He had homered off Jansen in the 9th inning of the previous game. This time he hit a line drive to left center and Fisher scores the winning run. It was a stunning finish to an incredibly exciting game. Luckily for everyone, the next day was a travel day.

Those who thought that Game Two was the most exciting World Series game they had ever seen, now had to reevaluate as Game Five eclipsed that one. My guess is that in ten years people will remember Game Five as the centerpiece of this World Series, and some will recall Bregman's hit as the winning hit of the final game of this Series. Memory is tricky and the excitement of this game will overshadow the relative calm of Games Six and Seven.

So two years in succession the World Series offered extreme excitement and ended a World Series drought; over a hundred years for the Cubs and over fifty for the Astros. For Houston it has been a long road from the mosquito infested first home of the Houston Colt 45s, through Judge Hofheinz's Eighth Wonder of the World and baseball's first domed stadium, and finally to their current home at Minute Maid Park known affectionately as the "Juice Box."

Next year let's return to the best of nine format.

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

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