

**ALCS Game 2: Well, That Didn't End Like We Thought It Would** – by Mark Pattison

The newspaper writers whose game accounts you see in the papers or online aren't exactly written in advance, but they're cobbled together in real time from events during the game. And, you get to a point late enough in the game where they hope nothing too drastic happens and they can exit the press box to go to the clubhouse or the interview room and do some postgame reporting.

Well, the scribes and assorted ink-stained wretches had to write their material virtually from scratch after a late-game turnaround by the Boston Red Sox that tied this series at a game apiece. Detroit, up 5-0 by the middle of the sixth inning, let things leak, and a lot of good performances by individuals became secondary to a late-inning collapse.

Max Scherzer's no-hit performance through 5.2 innings on the heels of Detroit's 8.1 hitless innings of the Bosox the night before – not to mention Justin Verlander's 6.2 no-no innings on Thursday to clinch the AL Division Series against Oakland? That'll be relegated to a spot in the story way down deep, if not in the game-notes sidebar at the end of the big story.

Oh, and that big story: Boston came back from that five-run deficit largely through an eighth-inning, two-out, first-pitch grand slam by David Ortiz off Tigers closer Joaquin Benoit that tied the contest at 5-5. Then a series of mishaps in the ninth inning led to Boston scoring the winning run with no out to snatch Game 2, 6-5, from Detroit.

If you look closely enough at a reply of Ortiz' grand slam, you'll note that Detroit right fielder Torii Hunter actually overran the ball in flight. He actually might have had a chance to snag it otherwise. That he probably hurt himself tumbling over the fence in the desperation leap to grab the ball (but was too macho to admit it) also became secondary, at least for the moment.

Detroit's gloves also failed them in the ninth inning, but not before defensive replacement Jose Iglesias' arm betrayed him first on the leadoff ground ball by Jonny Gomes. After making a breathtaking stop of the grounder, Iglesias flipped it wildly to Prince Fielder, who still couldn't nab it even though he had moved off the base. With catcher Jarrod Saltalamacchia at the plate, he lofted a foul pop that Fielder had a chance to catch, but it bounced off the pinkie of his mitt. Then Rick Porcello, who started the ninth inning because Tigers manager Jim Leyland had burned thorough four relievers in the ill-starred eighth, let loose with a wild pitch that Alex Avila could not snag to advance Gomes to third. Finally, Saltalamacchia hit a grounder that nicked Iglesias' glove as part of a drawn-in infield to give the Red Sox the win.

So, obscured will be the fact that Cabrera hit his second homer of the postseason, a blast that reached the seats of Fenway Park's Green Monster. (He also launched a second ball into the warning track of the deepest right-center field corner, but that was just a long out.)

Frittered away will be the questions of Boston manager John Farrell's judgment of starting Clay Buchholz instead of John Lackey, who was virtually unstoppable during his home starts this season. Lackey will be the opposing pitcher Tuesday afternoon (start time 4:07 p.m. ET) against Verlander; he might also be considered a sacrificial lamb.

Lost to the ether will be Tigers radio commentator Jim Price saying how Avila used "the buggy whip" in launching a two-run homer to put Detroit up 5-0 – although it is true that Avila uses the bats with the thinnest handles I can ever remember seeing – and that Detroit set a franchise record with four extra-base hits in one inning.

If Leyland had brought in Phil Coke to face Ortiz in the eighth inning, given Coke's success against him in the past, things might have turned out differently, and in a good way. And when did you think you'd ever hear someone say nice things about Phil Coke?

## Short Stripes

First off, two things related to Saturday's game that came too late to my mind to include in E-Mayo Flash #103. The first thing was an old "B.C." cartoon where Clumsy Carp, the bespectacled caveman, is on the mound. And Wiley, the peg-legged manager, comes to take him out of the game. "But coach," Clumsy says, "I've got a no-hitter going!" "Yeah," replies Wiley, "but seventy-three walks!?"

The other is a song parody where the punch line came to me early in Saturday's game, but the build-up to it only came when I was clearing the table after Sunday dinner. The setup: the Red Sox' propensity to strike out in Game 1. It's a take-off of the Dean Martin chestnut "That's Amore," here called "That's a Strikeout":

If you are at the plate and your swing it is late, that's a strikeout  
If the ball seems a blur thrown at ninety-eight per, that's a strikeout  
Umps will ring you up with a zing, and the hurt will sting, like a bee in your bonnet  
And you're out, out till your next bout, and you will not clout one with some mustard on it  
If you want to hit that, but you don't swing the bat, that's a strikeout  
You will chalk up the K's and then count all the days till next spring  
You can carp, you can yelp, but you won't get no help from Joe Torre  
'Scusa me, but you see, if you're Mike Napoli, that's a strikeout

The Tigers have had an unusual history in the AL Championship Series: Sweep or lose. Consider:

1972: Lose to Oakland, 3-2

1984: Sweep Kansas City, 3-0 (the last year of the best-of-five LCS)

1987: Lose to Minnesota, 4-1

2006: Sweep Oakland, 4-0

2011: Lose to Texas, 4-2

2012: Sweep New York, 4-0

Of course, I don't like the lose/sweep pattern at all.

Speaking of the LCS, let's examine when the remaining playoff teams last won the World Series. Detroit has the longest drought, not winning since 1984. The Los Angeles Dodgers last won in 1988, the Red Sox in 2004 and 2007, and the St. Louis Cardinals in 2006 (against the Tigers) and 2011.

Max Scherzer matched his longest no-hit effort of his career at 5.2 innings. That was against Tampa Bay in July 2010. This was Scherzer's third time he'd started with at least five hitless innings in the playoff. Prior to Boston, his latest victim was the Yankees last year. Of course, to pitch a no-hitter, not only do you not give up any hits, but you have to pitch the whole game. And in 165 career regular-season starts, Scherzer has still to post a complete game to his credit. He's two behind the all-time lead, and if he keeps throwing strikes and balls at his current rate, he may never collect a complete game.

Detroit pitchers went 23.2 innings this postseason without surrendering a run, besting strings of 20 innings posted in both 2006 and last year. The all-time leader? The 1966 Baltimore Orioles, who blanked the Dodgers for 33 straight innings in a four-game World Series sweep. Once manager Hank Bauer replaced an ineffective Dave McNally with Moe Drabowsky early in Game 1, that was all she wrote for the Dodgers.

The 1997 Orioles, meanwhile, had held the record for the most strikeouts in back-to-back postseason games with 31 against the Cleveland Indians, until broken by Detroit in ALCS Game 2 with an eighth-inning whiff by Mike Napoli (see above). Speaking of strikeouts, Detroit starters have struck out 10 or more in three straight postseason games themselves.

Jhonny Peralta's 50-game suspension may have turned out to be the vacation that has rejuvenated him while teammates not using performance-enhancing drugs got ground down by the rigors of the full season. Peralta is fourth among active players with a .363 batting average. For his career, he's hit .295 during the regular season with runners in scoring position, but has upped that in the postseason to .333.

By now you've seen the commercial for Head & Shoulders shampoo with Troy Polamalu letting a Pittsburgh Steelers teammate wear his hair. Well, on anybody else, Polamalu's hair looks like Tiny Tim is wearing it.

At one point during Game 2, Boston's top-of-the-order hitters – Jacoby Ellsbury, Shane Victorino and Dustin Pedroia – were 0-for-17 with 11 strikeouts.

Boston manager John Farrell pitched for the Tigers at the end of his eight-year big-league career, in 1996. You may be forgiven if you don't remember him all that well. The Detroit pitching staff was horrible that

year, recording a team ERA of 6.38 and setting a franchise record for most home runs allowed with 204. In fact, it was the same game when Detroit pitchers broke that record that the Orioles set an AL record for most home runs hit. Farrell himself was gone from the Tigers by Memorial Day, when Detroit and the White Sox combined to hit a dozen homers in an extra-inning game won by Chicago. Farrell's line was 0-2 in two starts, lasting 6.1 innings total because he gave up 11 hits and 10 runs. His ERA was 14.21.

---

**E-Mayo Flash is a publication of the Mayo Smith Society -- Tigers Fans Who Always Care!**  
**To join, send \$20 to Mayo Smith Society, PO Box 119, Northville, MI 48167**

---