

The Final Pitch

For the record, I am an all-American, die-hard baseball fan. I can think of no better way to spend an evening than to go to the big ballpark and root on the home team.

It was a quiet night in early October and I was settled in to watch the seventh game of the National League playoffs between the Dodgers and the Mets. I make no bones about - I detest the Dodgers. I grew up in San Diego which, for many years, was the laughing stock of the National League. We always accepted our place in the cellar as long as we beat up those bums in L.A. (nothing personal for those of you of the L.A. persuasion - it's just a matter of basic San Diego history ... you can't be a REAL Padre fan and have any warm feelings for the Dodgers).

Anyway, as you can imagine, I was praying for the Mets to blowout the Dodgers and make them look bad, but by the third inning, it was clear to me that I needed to search for another program to watch as the Mets were getting beat up 6-0.

About two hours later, I got a phone call from an officer at the scene of a natural death. He was an older man with a history of heart problems. I took down all the information and then asked the officer what circumstances surrounded this man's death. He told me that his wife found him collapsed in his chair while he was watching a baseball game.

No kidding, I thought, he must have been a Mets fan. Boy, could I relate. The only thing that had saved me was a youthful heart and the early exit to another channel before I got too emotional.

I know a lot of people are thinking that it's not proper to make fun of someone's death, but I've worked here long enough to know that there are, in fact, many times when a death brings about more warm feelings than they do cold, painful sadness. I think of the guy on vacation who died on the 18th green at a golf course. The lady who passed on while she worked in her favorite garden. There are many cases that, although it's always unfortunate to see one's life come to an end, their death in itself creates a humorous response for those with a good sense of humor - and when you deal with death every day, there is no doubt that a good sense of humor is a quality to be revered.

Yes, I am sorry that the man passed away. But considering my emotional involvment in the same game, I found it humorous in the circumstances surrounding his death. What will they put down as the cause of death?

Collapse of the Mets? How about trama from Hershisers' disease? Or, maybe Cardiac Arrest secondary to E-5, E-4 and Darling Deficiency? Homicide Lasorda?

Do you think they should file charges against the Dodgers for involunteery manslaughter? Naaaaaaaaa, not even an old Padre fan like me would buy into that one. Oh well, scratch it up as just another night at the morgue.