

The Devil Advocates:



A ROYAL RUMOR (IF YOU'RE BRITISH, RUMOUR)

Those Who Know Such Things keep gnawing on the pants-leg of the rumor that the Kansas City Royals wish to join the National League, which would make sense were they not already in a league with plenty of fine (and awful) teams to play. The ever-alert policy analyst wonders from whence came this notion (it's not fully of the status of an idea), and what kind of balance sheet of advantages and disadvantages the suits were working with. But then, this is the franchise that will not, in an era of inducing new merchandise choices, get rid of a logo that resembles one for a discount motel chain. Well, let's imagine what they had in "mind."

Gee, the temptation to give one more generation of fine young ballplayers the chance to play in the architectural disasters of the 1970s does require an NL experience beyond what mere interleague play can generate: Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Cincinnati, each an aesthetic candidate for terrorist demolition (since other methods fall short: the Hartford Civic Center attempted suicide years ago, but was brought back to life, and the NHL team therein finally became so dismayed that it escaped, naming itself the Carolina Hurricanes, in homage to their having been New England's foremost natural disaster for so long. But I digress). In domiculture, trading Seattle's concrete tomb for Houston's ill-lit movie theatre is even-up, but it makes no sense to give up playing in the entertaining toybox of Skydome for the fake retractable dome that is the triumph of Quebec engineering, in the free world's very own Third-World-nation to be (Newfie jokes seem so unfair when Canada, for the time being, still contains Quebec). Then there are the cultural advantages of San Diego over Boston ... huh? But in the NL, one visits neither Oakland ("there is no there there"— Gertrude Stein) or Anaheim (the city that sounds like a proctological emergency, and how apt). Surely Royals pitchers will appreciate the ambiance of Coors Field over all of that extra, badly-groundskept foul territory at

the No-There-There County Coliseum. Best yet, day or night, home or away, Royals' pitchers will fulfill their growth as human persons by getting to swing bats in both dank and rarefied air.

Of course, to make such a choice nobly ironic for the Royals, this Satanic scribe should get to pick which team gets transferred to the AL, depriving the Royals of a chance to play at their park. Now, there is only one team that has spent far too long in the NL, and it shows. So, welcome to the AL, Chicago Cubs!

SOME HATE MAIL (A SELECTION)

Dear Evil One:

Just who the hell do you think you are?
Nominalist

Dear Nominalist:

I am the GM of the Prince of Darkness, and if you've paid any attention to what must have been influencing administrators of MLB for the past 125 years or so, I know a lot more about the sport than you do. If you were merely making a pun, we have a place for you in Circle 8, Bolgia 7, with the Boring Abusers of Language.

Dear Dr. Hawkins:

I find it difficult to believe that someone who has spent his career inspiring impressionable young minds can be so unproductively negative. You need to be awakened to the wonderfulness and potential of the human spirit, and embrace compassion and the beauty of hope and optimism.

Dr. Paul Wellstone (D-MN)

Well, Dr. Millstone (around the neck of the Senate):

I wasn't inspiring young minds; I was inflicting irreversible damage on them, as opposed to filling them with air and sociobabble, as you did at Carleton. The only reason I might need to be awakened is that I have perused your speeches. What is ever wonderful is the potential for the human spirit to foul up practical policy: one can scarcely keep up with the errors made by legislators and MLB owners. I knew that in coming to this Victorian paradise, I would have to work overtime to broom back the tidal waves of Mary Tyler Moronism, and you could help by not adding any more to the deluge. As for optimism, I'll try it: where is this beauty, Hope, and when do I get to embrace her?

Dear Awful Man:

Shame on you! My wife and I have lots of fun at Saints' games!

Mike

Dear Mike:

That just proves that the Devolutionist's Delight will permit anything going on in the stands if it will sell tickets. Now I hear that they're going to let a dame (!) pitch. At least Dad had the sense to sign a midget. Besides, you're not supposed to have fun at baseball games: it's a religious observance. Pay attention to the liturgy!