

Eighty-six years in the making: Red Sox win World Series

Chris Lett

Staff Writer

As the crisp autumn wind whipped through the stands, past the dugout and around the "Green Monster" of legendary Fenway Park, game 4 of the American League Championship Series (ALCS) seemed as if it would cap a typical post-season run for the Boston Red Sox: one punctuated with failure.

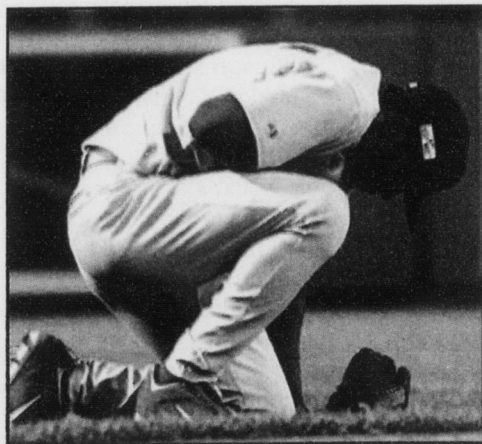
The odds were stacked against them; no team had ever come back from a 3-0 deficit in post-season history.

On top of that there was still what many believe was the "curse of the Bambino," which followed the Red Sox like a dark cloud through the decades.

According to bambinocurse.com, the theory behind the curse is that Harry Frazee, owner of the Red Sox in 1920, needed extra money to finance a play for his girlfriend. His solution: to sell "The Bambino" Babe Ruth's contract to the New York Yankees for \$100,000.

Since then, the Yankees have won 26 World Series titles while the Red Sox have appeared in four, only to lose in game seven of each.

But in this game four of the



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Guilford alum Tony Womack took a ball to the collarbone in game one but played throughout the World Series

ALCS, something began to happen to the Red Sox. A second-base steal by backup outfielder Dave Roberts in the ninth inning snowballed into a score, followed by a two-run home run by David Ortiz off the Yanks' Paul Quantrill, putting them in the lead and giving the Sox their first victory of the series.

"Momentum is easily changed in a short series. It will come down to who pitches the best," said Yankees manager Joe Torre after the game to FoxSports.com.

Little did he know his statements would foreshadow the rest of the series.

That mystical momentum which made baseball exciting in its heyday had returned to recharge the Red Sox. With Curt Schilling lined up to pitch in game six, the team known as "the idiots" for their sloppy fundamentals, was on the road to cleaning up their act.

The \$184 million Yankees somehow became the first team to lose a 3-0 post-season lead in one of the most dramatic series of our time.

The Red Sox went from calling the Yankees "Daddy" to making history and - more importantly - to getting the opportunity to break the curse.

The next step in removing the curse was for the Red Sox to win the World Series for the first time since 1918. The Sox needed to best the Saint Louis Cardinals, who held the best record in the National Baseball League.

Luckily, the momentum gained from beating the



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The Bambino, aka Babe, George Herman Ruth, in his Red Sox uniform more than 80 years ago

Yankees seemed to spill over into the World Series, giving Boston two home wins.

Looking at the fan-filled seats of Busch Stadium in game three, it was hard to differentiate the Sox fans from the Cards fans, the two forming a sea of red hovering over the field sopping wet with rain water.

The game began play on a positive note for the Sox with Manny Ramirez popping out a solo home run in the first inning. Clumsy play by the Cardinal's offense seemed to be the overarching theme with pitcher Jeff Suppan's hesitant run halfway home then run back to third only to be tagged out on a ground hit by Larry Walker.

The Sox pulled out another win at the

Cardinal's home.

The fourth and what proved to be the final game of the World Series was very similar to the previous three.

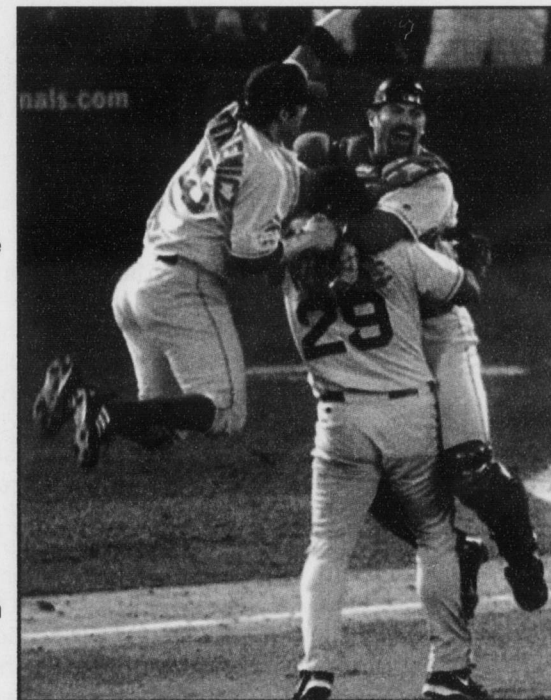
Boston "outplayed (St. Louis) in every category," said Cardinals manager Tony LaRussa to FoxSports.com.

However, Guilford graduate and former World Series winner Tony Womack provided some hope for the Cardinals in the first inning by nailing a line drive that zoomed past baseman Orlando Cabrera. In the end, however, the Cards needed to produce on such play if they wanted to save face - and they didn't.

The Boston Red Sox were battling more than just another team: they were at war with a dynasty of disappointment.

Finally, after two world wars, men on the moon, the rise and fall of the Soviet Union, and 21 presidents, the Boston Red Sox achieved what everyone (including their own fans) believed they were doomed to be denied: a World Championship title.

The Curse is broken. ☘



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Red Sox team members celebrate after winning game four of the World Series 3-0