

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

New Wild Card Rule Impacts 2012 MLB Playoffs

Maitlyn Healy, staff writer



The Oakland A's go head-to-head with the Detroit Tigers in the American League five-game series. Image via bleacherreport.com; Getty Images

The 2012 MLB Playoffs are underway with a new rule about the Wild Card teams that majorly changed the structure of the playoffs. Before this season, only one team for each league was chosen as the Wild Card to represent the National and American leagues and that team played against the number one team when the playoffs began. This season however, each league had two Wild Card teams representatives; this year the Baltimore Orioles and the Texas Rangers for the American League and the St. Louis Cardinals and the Atlanta Braves for the National League. These teams competed against their league opponent on Oct. 5 with Baltimore and Seattle emerging victorious.

These two teams will now go on to play the number one team in their designated leagues. The addition of this Wild Card game changed the season significantly as the Orioles would not have received a playoff berth without this new rule, as they trailed their division rivals, the New York Yankees, by two games when the regular season

ended. Before the rule change, the Orioles would have simply been out of the running, and the Yankees would have gone on to play the Rangers.

On the whole the new rule allows more opportunities for teams in the postseason. Now a playoff berth is up for grabs with only seven games left in the season. This gives all teams an incentive to continue to play hard rather than let up on playing with as much intensity as they would have in the past.

After the Wild Card game on Oct. 5, the eight remaining teams began to compete to get a chance at winning their league's championship series. Currently in the American League the Baltimore Orioles and New York Yankees are competing in this five game series, and are tied at 1-1. The Oakland Athletics and the Detroit Tigers are also going head to head in the AL with the Tigers up 2-0. In the National League the Cincinnati Reds are playing the San Francisco Giants, and the Giants lead 2-0.

The Washington Nationals and St. Louis Cardinals are also competing for a chance at the championship series with Washington up 1-1. After these five-game series, the victors will move on to play each other in the National and American league championship games, which are seven-game series. The National and American league champions will then go on to play each other in the World Series beginning on Oct. 24.

Rowling Steps Away from Magic with "Casual Vacancy"

Christa Riley, staff writer

J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series, released her first adult novel, *Casual Vacancy*, on Sept. 27 with the hopes of reaching a wider audience than her previous teenage readers.

In the novel, Rowling asks, "How many of us are able to expand our minds beyond our own personal experience?" *Casual Vacancy* is a tragicomedy about the death of Barry Fairweather and the small town of Pagford. The Pagford town council has been divided over an issue of what to do with The Fields, a housing development on the border of the neighboring town, Yarvil. The Fields has been known to be filled with low-income families that have their own set of problems with addiction and crime. A *Time* Magazine reviewer summarizes the novel's core conflict: "Barry was sympathetic to the Fields, but his death creates an opening on the council — a casual vacancy — and in their unseemly haste to fill it, Pagfordians on both sides expose their carefully concealed inner lives."

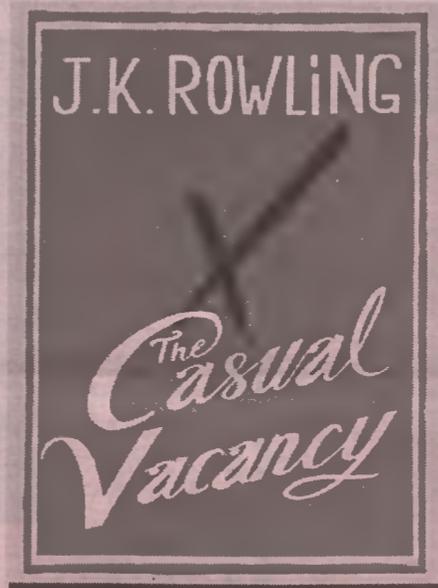
The novel focuses primarily on the characters and allows each one to work out their views and opinions on the matter. Rowling's adult characters are depicted as selfish, uninterested in circumstances not immediately impacting their daily lives. A *Huffington Post* reviewer notes that, "the real stars of this book are the teenagers, whose lives are lived in parallel to those of

their parents. Their actions feel more believable and instinctive, their motivations more confused and equivocal." Rowling mentions in an interview that, "this was very much me vividly remembering what it was like to be a teenager, and it wasn't a particularly happy time in my life."

In the two weeks since its release, the novel has received mixed reviews. David Ulin of the *L.A. Times* criticizes problems of character insight and transition: "The first third of the book moves continually among Howard, Miles Parminder and a dozen other

central figures, all identified in such broad strokes that I had to keep flipping back and forth to remind myself who was who." Canada's *National Post* compares the weaknesses of *Casual Vacancy* with the strengths of the *Harry Potter* series: "The novel also makes clear that Rowling was wise to stake her claim in the realm of fantasy, a realm that does not require a feeling for contemporary social milieus." But *Time* magazine disagrees,

giving the novel a largely positive review: "It's a big, ambitious, brilliant, profane, funny, deeply upsetting and magnificently eloquent novel of contemporary England...a deeply moving book by somebody who understands both human beings and novels very, very deeply." But whether or not *Casual Vacancy* is a novel equal to Rowling's previous success, it's definitely worth reading as long as you're not expecting another trip to Hogwarts.



Rowling's new book, *Casual Vacancy* Image via amazon.com

ASK GIGI

Dear Gigi,

As a senior graduating in May, I am nervous about finding a job after graduation. Obviously, the job market is scarce, and I am starting to feel that I will never be employed. I want to be doing something that I like, but I know that first jobs typically are not the most fun forms of employment. I am feeling overwhelmed in my job search and I want to get a head-start above my classmates. What ways can I better prepare myself for the job search?

Sincerely, Unemployed

Dear Unemployed,

I guarantee you that you are not the only senior feeling the heat when it comes to their upcoming job search! It is a time which can be very stressful, but there are definitely steps which you can take to make yourself more prepared.

For starters, our Academic and Career Planning office is an amazing resource which you should utilize. The ACP office offers resume clinics, interviewing help and individual meetings with the staff. Meredith also hosts networking events throughout the year

which offer you a chance to practice speaking to employers. LinkedIn and CareerLink are also great online resources.

If you want to take your preparation a step further, sign up for CPS 301, a seminar for juniors and seniors. You will get intensive help on resume-building, networking and advice on potential career paths. You are already getting a head start by researching your options early in the year, and rest assured, Meredith Alumni provide an amazing network of professional women, and they are always eager to hire fellow angels!

Talk to ACP, alumni, family and friends to find leads on potential jobs, and don't stress--everyone is in the same boat as you! Concentrate on your connections and having a great senior year. If you advertise yourself positively as potential employee, the right job is sure to come your way.

Love, Gigi

Email your questions to herald@email.meredith.edu. You are always anonymous!