

Despite call, some say Sox are cursed

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You wouldn't know it by the White Sox' fluky finish Wednesday night.

You wouldn't know it by the way pitcher Mark Buehrle led the crowd in chanting "Cre-de! Cre-de!" after the team's 2-1 victory.

And you definitely wouldn't know it by the way 41,000 fans remained at their seats singing and dancing for 10 minutes after the game ended.

You wouldn't know it, but some people actually think this team is cursed.

Baseball historian David Fletcher, a Glen Ellyn native and lifelong Sox fan, believes the organization will be jinxed until it atones for sins committed against members of the 1919 team. After losing the World Series, eight members of the club were banned from baseball for conspiring with gamblers to throw the championship.

Two of those players — outfielder Joe Jackson and third baseman Buck Weaver — hit exceptionally well during the series and denied wrongdoing until their deaths. Their plights, however, have gained sympathy in recent decades from movies like "Eight Men Out" and "Field of Dreams."

Until Major League Baseball reinstates both men, Fletcher contends South Siders will continue to have their hearts broken.

"They're not going to make it this year," said Fletcher, president of the Chicago Baseball Museum. "I'm telling you, they're cursed."

The club has not won a World Series since 1917. The majority of that winning team played with the notorious 1919 group, often referred to as the Black Sox for the ugly mark the scandal left on baseball.

But South Side fans historically have refused to embrace the curse theory. They dismiss the topic as an excuse reserved for uneducated Cubs fans and the Red Sox nation.

Manager Ozzie Guillen also rejected talk of a White Sox jinx this week, saying it's a weak excuse for bad teams.

Fans shared his view before Wednesday night's win at U.S. Cellular Field.

"It's something both the Cubs fans and Red Sox fans come up with when they don't get the job done," John Adamski of Addison said. "We accept responsibility for our shortcomings."

Fletcher, who has begun a national campaign to clear Weaver's name, believes fans might be too quick to dismiss the wrong inflicted upon the two players.

Weaver, who remained both a Chicago resident and Sox fan, begged for reinstatement for

nearly 40 years. He spent the rest of his life mentoring other South Side players and hoping for a shot at managing.

His body is buried in a cemetery just a few miles from U.S. Cellular Field. Though his ghost may haunt the team's fortunes, Fletcher said Weaver would have liked to see the club succeed.

"He would not have wanted the team to be cursed," Fletcher said as he took in the game from the left field bleachers. "But he felt baseball did him an injustice. And it needs to be remedied."

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