

Classified

Chicago Tribune
online edition

Today's newspaper

[News/Front section](#)

[Business](#)

[Sports](#)

[Leisure](#)

Newspaper ads

Customer service

THE LAST ROW TRIBUNE CLASSIC

Chicago's sports scene hasn't always been this bleak. This week, as a reminder, we take a look back at happier days for the home teams.

A Sox dynasty interrupted

By Ed Sherman

Tribune staff reporter

Published October 13, 2004

The White Sox were ready to rule baseball during the second decade of the 20th Century.

All the pieces finally were in place for an extended run of glory. The first payoff came on Oct. 15, 1917, when the Sox won the title, finishing off the New York Giants in the sixth game of the World Series.

[E-mail this story](#)

[Printer-friendly format](#)

[Search archives](#)

[See newspaper ads](#)



Advertisers



Sell your home fast!

How to advertise

It seemed like the beginning of a great dynasty. However, two years later, many members of that team would become known as "The Black Sox," committing baseball's ultimate sin for throwing the 1919 World Series. As fate would have it, the Sox have yet to win another championship.

Comiskey, the builder

Charles Comiskey has the reputation for being one of baseball's all-time penny-pinchers. While he played a role in his players turning on him in 1919, Comiskey also spent big money to build a winning club. In 1914, he purchased Hall of Fame second baseman Eddie Collins from the Philadelphia A's for \$50,000. In 1915, the Sox outbid three teams for a hitter named "Shoeless Joe" Jackson.

In 1917, Comiskey finished the puzzle by acquiring first baseman Chick Gandil.

"Comiskey was very aggressive in getting players," said Gabriel Schechter, a researcher at the Baseball Hall of Fame.

The season

After finishing second in 1916, the Sox sizzled, winning a team-record 100 games. Jackson led the offense with a 102 RBIs, and Collins ran wild with 53 stolen bases. Knuckleballer Eddie Cicotte dominated, posting a 28-12 record with a 1.53 earned run average.

The Series

The games had a somber tone. A few months earlier, the U.S. had entered World

War I. Fans were asked to give donations to the Red Cross as they entered Comiskey Park for Game 1.

On the field, the Sox went up against legendary Giants manager John McGraw. Sox manager Clarence "Pants" Rowland didn't have much of a reputation, but he had the better players.

Future Hall of Famer Red Faber was the star. He won Game 2. Then he sealed the deal with a 4-2 victory in Game 6.

Foreshadowing

The next day's Tribune was filled with telling ironies. The Tribune ran a huge celebratory photo of Gandil, hailing him as a hero for his two-run single. Three years later, Gandil's picture again would be prominent for his role in fixing the 1919 Series.

Also on the front page, there was a small story on how baseball fanatic, Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, insisted on getting reports of the game while he was on the bench conducting a trial. Landis went on to become the baseball commissioner who eventually banned the "Black Sox" for life.

What they said then

James Crustinberry in the Tribune: "Comiskey waited 11 years for this event, and he fears he may have to wait another 11 for another... He said he finally had landed another world's championship for Chicago, and he felt now as if his life's work in the old national game was completed."

What they say now

Historian Schechter: "Comiskey had a reputation as being one of the cheaper owners, but most of the owners were cheap back then. Because of the war, the league had a tough time. They had the power to keep salaries down, and they used that power.

Comiskey was the norm. He shouldn't be singled out." On the team, Schechter said: "They had great pitching and a tenacious offense. Most of those players were in their prime. (If not for the scandal), they probably would have had a run into the 1920s."

In perspective: 1917

The Russian Revolution begins.

President Woodrow Wilson asks Congress to declare war on Germany.

In Paris, Dutch dancer Mata Hari is executed for spying for Germany.

Copyright © 2004, [Chicago Tribune](#)

>> Save 47% off the newsstand price - [Subscribe to the Chicago Tribune](#)