

## **Buehrle, perfect game are big winners in Chicago Baseball Museum Awards**

*By Paul Ladewski*

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The 2009 campaign won't be remembered as a banner year for Chicago baseball, but it hasn't been without its share of noteworthy accomplishments.

For the second consecutive year, the Chicago Baseball Museum selection panel chose the best of the best this season.

The envelope please . . .

### **Team of the Year: Cubs**

The Cubs failed to build on their success of the previous year, but their season wasn't without a silver lining. At 83-78, the North Siders finished above .500 for the third consecutive season, the first time they had done so since the 1967-72 period, when they finished on the plus side six years in a row.

### **Hitter of the Year: Derrek Lee, Cubs**

No Chicago player produced more home runs (35) and RBI (111) and a higher slugging percentage (.579) than the veteran first baseman. He finished ninth in the National League Most Valuable Player vote.

### **Pitcher of the Year: Mark Buehrle, White Sox**

Buehrle started more games (33) and pitched more innings (213 1/3) than any pitcher in town. He also had as many victories (13) as anyone.

### **Defensive Player of the Year: Buehrle**

Buehrle was the only local representative to be chosen for a Gold Glove Award, the first of his career. He was charged with one error in 55 chances.

### **Unsung Player of the Year: Matt Thornton, White Sox**

In the role of set-up man, Thornton was quietly effective out of the bullpen. He had 24 holds and a 2.74 earned run average in 70 appearances.

### **Rookie of the Year: Gordon Beckham, White Sox**

Only one year after Beckham was drafted out of college, he hit .270 with 14 homers and 63 RBI in 103 games. The third baseman ranked fifth in the American League Rookie of the Year vote.

### **Executive/Manager of the Year: Ken Williams, White Sox**

The White Sox general manager pulled off the most significant trade of the year on July 31, when he acquired former Cy Young Award-winner Jake Peavy from the San Diego Padres in return for pitcher Clayton Richard and three minor leaguers.

### **Performance of the Year: Buehrle pitches a perfect game**

On July 23, Buehrle retired 27 consecutive Tampa Bay Rays batters to become the 18th pitcher to hurl a perfect game in the major leagues. No less a fan than President Obama called to congratulate the veteran on his “extraordinary achievement” shortly after the game.

### **Game of the Year: White Sox 5, Tampa Bay 0**

Not only did Buehrle pitch one off the greatest games in Chicago history but also the White Sox into sole possession of the Central Division lead. Outfielder Dewayne Wise preserved the gem at U.S. Cellular Field with a sensational catch in the ninth inning.

### **Clutch Player of the Year: Aramis Ramirez, Cubs**

There was no more dangerous hitter with runners in scoring position, a situation in which the veteran third baseman produced a .425 batting average, two home runs and 46 RBI.

### **Chicago area Minor League Organization of the Year: Gary SouthShore Railcats**

The Railcats posted the best regular-season record (57-39) in the Northern League and advanced to the postseason championship round. They attracted an average of 3,539 fans in 47 home dates.

### **Broadcaster of the Year: Steve Stone, White Sox**

Stone made a seamless transition to the White Sox television booth, where he delivered the kind of analysis that baseball fans at both sides of town had come to expect over the years.

**Media Person of the Year: Chris Rongey, WSCR Radio**

Rongey performed one of the most difficult tasks in local baseball circles last season. As host of the White Sox postgame show, he served as the voice reason for South Siders who demanded much from their team.

**Amateur Baseball Person of the Year: Jared Voss, Joliet Catholic High School**

The Hilltoppers head coach guided his team to a 32-5 record and the Class 3A state championship. Led by seniors Steve Cservenyak, Brock Liston and A.J. Plese, the Joliet squad won 22 of its final 23 games, seven of them by 10-or-more runs.

Then again, how could we not like a team that had a pitcher named Ed Walsh on its roster?