

BASEBALL UNDER GLASS

Like the Cubs themselves, this quilt won't quit.

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This time of year, Joey Rodman is typically in the business of knitting Christmas gifts, scarfs and the like, for friends and family around her Oklahoma City home.

So what does she do with a 75-foot, 10-pound scarf – more like a sci-fi quilt that kept growing and growing and growing?

“It's hopelessly long and beautiful,” Rodman said.

Something that impressive should be brought to the attention of the Cubs themselves. Rodman is contacting the team. The biggest knitting project dedicated in honor of the team, tied to a world champion, might be good fund-raising fodder for Cubs Charities.

Loyal Cubs fan Rodman lovingly knitted the scarf/quilt from April through the very end of the World Series, dedicating a new stitch to each Cubs run. She's lucky she doesn't have carpal tunnel syndrome or something. That's 808 runs in the regular season, 17 in the Division Series, 31 in the League Championship Series and the final 27 in the World Series.

“For every run, I did a series of drop stitches. It looks like an oval shape,” said Rodman.

At 35, Rodman hasn't spent decade after decade suffering with the Cubs. She's part of the Harry Caray/Superstation Cubs generation –kids all over the country who became fans thanks to WGN's satellite-borne telecasts beaming in every afternoon.

“There's a ridiculous amount of Cubs fans here,” she said of Oklahoma's metropolis.



Joey Rodman finds a way to wrap the 75-foot quilt around herself. She has recorded every 2016 Cubs regular- and post-season run in her stitching.

“We would get way more Cubs games here on TV than any other team (back in the superstition days). I’m not even the most crazy one.”



A close-up of the stitching of the Cubs-colored quilt.

How Rodman produced such a delightful monstrosity in honor of the Cubs was a process, just like Theo Epstein’s assembly of the championship roster.

“I learned (to knit) from the little ol’ ladies from the neighborhood,” she said. “It was a way to be more social. They wanted to teach me. They lived a long time, and they were cool to talk to. It was a sense of accomplishment like you did some things.”

In 2015, Rodman knitted as the Cubs revived in Joe Maddon’s first managerial season.

Knitting proved Cubs’ good-luck charm

“I noticed on nights when I watched the game and I was knitting, we’d win,” she said. “On other nights when I didn’t knit, not so great.”

A Cubs fan friend prodded Rodman to keep knitting throughout the 2016 season. She vowed she would knit a scarf and would not quit until they went to the World Series.

Rodman decided she’d dutifully honor every run scored with her stitching. “One row for each inning, and a special flare for each run,” she said. That was the easy part. Much more challenging was keeping track of every run.

TV would have been the easiest part. But not all Cubs games were aired in the Oklahoma City market. She got a subscription to MLB-TV. But Oklahoma is considered Cardinals video territory. Certain games were totally blacked out on local carriers. So she’d bring the growing quilt to a local bar snaring the Cubs telecast off a satellite.

Then there was her job at a community college helping students with their math homework. How could Rodman work and knit while the Cubs were on? Good fortune, in the same manner the team itself experienced.

“I’m lucky my boss is a Cubs fan,” Rodman said. “She just kind of let it go. I got all my work done.”



A kitten is dwarfed by the length and width of the Cubs quilt.

“You can roll it up like a cinnamon roll,” she said. “Once it was rolled up, it was 12 inches in diameter. I brought a special backpack to hold it in.”

Employing two kinds of yarns, Rodman’s red wool came in 380-yard balls. She used four or five of them.

Now she stores the gargantuan quilt in a garment bag. “Eventually I’d put it in a wedding dress-sized bag,” she said.

In 2017, there will likely be Part II.

“Next year we’ll probably knit another scarf, but in a more reasonable length,” Rodman said. “This one got ridiculously big by May. Maybe I’ll knit in honor of wins and losses.”

The next generation won’t be small if the Cubs win, say, 95 games. The team and Rodman are in rarified territories, respectively.

In the meantime, the championship-honoring quilt deserves a happy home. Let’s hope in the spirit of the first holiday championship season since 1908, someone at Wrigley Field takes notice.