



Holtzman award wows CSN producers

*By George Castle, CBM Historian
Posted Tuesday, January 28th, 2014*

As an experienced video editor, Sarah Lauch knows all too well that often less is more.

Perhaps inadvertently, Lauch applied that style to her public speaking.

As one of three Comcast SportsNet Chicago producers to win the Jerome Holtzman Award from the Chicago Baseball Museum for contributions to the city's baseball history, Lauch's acceptance speech at the Pitch and Hit Club Banquet Jan. 26 was one of the shortest, yet most impactful.



(From left) Ryan McGuffey, David Kaplan and Sarah Lauch celebrate their Jerome Holtzman Award at the Pitch and Hit Club Banquet. Photo credit CSN Chicago.

Honored along with Ryan McGuffey and David Kaplan for their work putting together the astounding 90-minute documentary "5 Outs," Lauch quickly became emotional in expressing appreciation for the Holtzman honor. The veteran CSN Chicago producer gave credit to her parents, who had driven through tough winter weather all the way from Pennsylvania to watch her receive the award.

McGuffey told the 400-some banquet attendees the timing was special with his second child due in April. Kaplan, used to hours on the air daily via CSN Chicago and WGN-Radio, was his usual verbally dynamic self.

Dr. David Fletcher, president of the Chicago Baseball Museum, presented the Holtzman Award to the CSN Chicago trio. A big contingent of CSN Chicago personnel, led by general manager Phil Bedella and public relations chief Jeff Nuich, was in attendance to root on their colleagues.

“5 Outs,” first airing in October, told the story of the star-crossed 2003 Cubs, from the eventful regular season to the catastrophic finale in Games 6 and 7 of the National League Championship Series against the Marlins at Wrigley Field on Oct. 14-15. The documentary, CSN Chicago’s longest-ever, has received critical acclaim.

A two-minute clip of “5 Outs” was played for the banquet audience.

Next stop: the regional Emmy Awards in September. CSN Chicago executives may have a dilemma on their hands. “5 Outs” could compete with the sports network’s other Chicago historical series, “Bears Classics.” The night before the Pitch and Hit event, the latest “Bears Classics” featured a Gale Sayers six-touchdown game in 1965 with an emotional Sayers recalling his experiences.

“5 Outs” still has an edge over the Bears series, similarly produced, in its overall impact. Either way, CSN Chicago’s people seem favorites to take home additional Emmys in 2014. Quality in today’s fragmented media marketplace is still justly rewarded.



In photo at left, Braves manager Fredi Gonzalez (left) meets Pitch and Hit Club president Ken Miller. In photo at center, Jerry Hairston. Sr. and wife Esperanza are present to accept the President's Award honoring all five ballplaying Hairstons over three generations. In photo at right, Pete Caliendo (left), who will take over from Miller as Pitch and Hit Club president, joins former White Sox outfielder John Cangelosi in flanking main speaker Mitch "Wild Thing" Williams.

The honors for CSN Chicago did not end with Lauch, McGuffey and Kaplan. Todd Hollandsworth, who teams with Kaplan on the Cubs pre- and post-game telecasts, won the “Harry Caray Sportscaster of the Year” Award. As a coincidence, Hollandsworth was a reserve outfielder with the 2003 Marlins who then joined teammate Derrek Lee, a key player in the dramatic eighth inning of Game 6, as Cubs in 2004. Hollandsworth settled in the Chicago area during his North Side days.

Top baseball luminaries such as Braves manager Fredi Gonzalez and Mets outfielder Curtis Granderson also were honored at the Pitch and Hit Club banquet.

Former Sox outfielder Jerry Hairston, Sr. accepted the President’s Award in honor of his family’s service to baseball. A total of five Hairstons spread over three generations,

tying a record with the Delahanty family, have played in the majors. With Jerry Sr.'s son Scott Hairston playing with the Cubs to start 2013, all five Hairstons have logged time with either the Cubs or Sox.

Pat Salvi, owner of the independent Schaumburg Boomers and Gary Rail Cats, accepted the Organization of the Year Award.

Former Cubs closer Mitch Williams, now a baseball analyst for MLB Network and Fox Sports, provided a humorous main speech. The erstwhile Wild Thing was fashionably dressed – casually – in keeping with his left-hander's image.

Whiting, Ind. Mayor Joe Stahura, a lifelong Cubs fan, was a special guest of the Chicago Baseball Museum. Stahura is helping quarterback efforts to build a permanent, bricks-and-mortar facility for the museum in his city.

Also attending as a guest of the museum was public relations ace Pat Brickhouse, wife of the late all-time Chicago baseball announcer Jack Brickhouse.



In photo at left, CSN Chicago's Todd Hollandsworth was honored as "Harry Caray Sportscaster of the Year." In photo at center, Pitch and Hit Club Treasurer Bill Motluck, a south suburban Lansing resident, meets honoree Curtis Granderson, who hails from neighboring Lynwood. In photo at right, Dr. David Fletcher (left), president of the Chicago Baseball Museum, meets old friend Roland Hemond, the legendary White Sox executive who has long been active in the Pitch and Hit Club.