

CUBS WORLD SERIES QUEST

Wind-blown Cubs triumph turns into a bunch of hot air in Game 3

*Witnesses to '45 Series should
be allowed into '16 gala.
[See story below...](#)*

*By George Castle, CBM Historian
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A ground ball cannot be hit for a home run.

And mix in key strikeouts, including Javy Baez's whiff on a high Cody Allen fastball for the final out, and the result was the second shutout thrown by the Cleveland Indians against the Cubs in three 2016 World Series games.

The Indians got a form of hoodoo, or mojo, or something dropped from the sky with their pitching staff. They have shut down the offensively robust Boston Red Sox and Toronto Blue Jays. Now they are working on the Cubs, and they throttled their hosts 1-0 in the first World Series game at Wrigley Field since Oct. 10, 1945. With a seemingly short starting rotation, Cleveland has tossed five shutouts in 11 postseason games.

The result has been witnessed before, but rarely catalogued in media accounts. The wind blows out at Clark and Addison, a home-run barrage is predicted, and a Cubs shutout is the end product.

The outblowing flow was described as "brisk," fitting for a vintage 1970s Cubs-Phillies-Mike Schmidt slugfest ending in a football-sized score. Yet the pitching tag team of Josh Tomlin, Andrew Miller, Bryan Shaw and closer Allen kept the Cubs well-grounded when they weren't executing a clutch K.

That doesn't compute considering starter Tomlin's record of serving up 36 homers among the 187 hits surrendered in 174 regular-season innings. That's a gopher-ball pace exceeding the likes of Bert Blyleven, Robin Roberts and Fergie Jenkins back in the day.

"You lick your chops a little more than you should," Cubs left fielder Ben Zobrist said of the pre-game scouting report combining the friendly wind and Tomlin's scheduled start.



**Josh Tomlin was
hardly home-run
prone as he was in
the regular season.**

But one other number about Tomlin also stuck out – just 20 regular-season walks, a Clayton Kershaw-like control performance.

“His MO is to start out with the breaking ball (to persuade the hitter to chase),” said Cubs manager Joe Maddon, and then to go away from the bender.

When Tomlin could locate enough based on that master-control potential, he kept the Cubs from lifting the ball – “nothing really close in the air,” said Fox analyst John Smoltz – and began a Kershaw-like game, the second 1-0 Cubs loss in as many postseason rounds. They also were shut out in Game 1 by Corey Kluber, Game 4’s starter Saturday. The Cubs can only hope short rest takes an edge off Kluber’s best stuff.

Bottom line is not hanging crepe. The Cubs also trailed the Dodgers 2-1 before storming back with three straight wins. However, the hopes for a World Series victory Sunday night at Wrigley Field are now dashed. If the Cubs hope to retire the concept of “1908,” they’ll have to do it at Progressive Field next week.

The ball is now literally in John Lackey’s court. Vowing he did not come to the Cubs “for a haircut,” he’ll need to trim the Indians’ burgeoning confidence in the Game 4 duel against Kluber. So far, Lackey has given too many hints he’s a 38-year-old with his postseason glory days behind him.

The spotlight also focuses in Kris Bryant. A favorite for NL Most Valuable Player, Bryant’s power bat has quieted lately. Game 3 seemed perfect for Bryant, yet he and his teammates had trouble making hard contact.

By the ninth inning Friday, not even a “Kansas City Special” could be collected against Allen with Cubs runners on second and third with two out.

With two World Series championships on his resume, Cleveland manager Terry Francona continues to push the right buttons. He got Tomlin out before he could elevate pitches. Then he squeezed another middle-inning shutdown outing from lefty Andrew Miller. Remembering his NL days with the Phillies, Francona then put the right pinch hitter in at the right time. Batting for Miller, mid-season acquisition Coco Crisp singled in the only run.

An underrated performer was setup man Shaw. He kept the Cubs at bay bringing the game to Allen after most figured the coast was clear to score following Miller’s departure.

Francona also got away with a vintage 1980 Joey Amalfitano Cubs move, moving a ponderous first baseman-DH type in Carlos Santana into his first big-league start in left field.

Without the DH, Francona sacrificed Rajai Davis’ speed and overall defense to keep Santana’s 30-homer power in the lineup. Former catcher Santana would have been great mixing in during Jimmy Carter’s swan song season with Bill Buckner, Scot



Kris Bryant's power bat is waiting to unlimber again.

Thompson and Larry Biittner, first sackers all, shifted to the outfielder so the even-slower Cliff Johnson could play first.

The lack of Cubs thunder surely disappointed a hepped-up crowd paying into the thousands for tickets. The most noise was Bill Murray's Daffy Duck-inspired seventh-inning singalong. Order was maintained outside the ballpark by literally a wall-to-wall Chicago police presence.

That matched the order dictated by the Indians pitching staff. But given the game's unpredictability, the scoring drought may be totally reversed against Kluber.

Stay tuned. The masses definitely will.



Mort Balaban and daughter Beth (left) were lucky enough to enjoy Game 6 NLCS box seats. The elder Balaban, Lenny Rubenstein and Marv Levy (right) were fortunate enough to attend the 1945 World Series at Wrigley Field.

All witnesses to 1945 World Series should gain entrée to 2016 Fall Classic

By George Castle, CBM Historian

So many people who had a live connection to the 1945 World Series are coming out of the woodwork the Cubs couldn't possibly accommodate them all with tickets for the 2016 Fall Classic to provide a nice linkage and the ultimate happy ending.

Or could they?

One individual in Tom Ricketts' totally re-constituted business operations department could have been designated to watch out for '45 Series veterans and ensure them an entrée into likely the most memorable weekend in Wrigley Field history. That would have been Public Relations 101. It's the World Series the Ricketts family has been working for, and it's worth the wait for the '45 crowd.

Without that team watchdog, the seniors whom the media have been rounding up have basically been on their own.

Luckiest was 97-year-old Jim Schlegel, who while in the Navy in '45 paid \$7.20 for box seats for Game 7 on Oct. 10, 1945. Schlegel's daughter started a GoFundMe campaign to raise the megabucks for a secondary-market ticket. She corralled \$12,000 before CNBC "The Profit" reality-show star Marcus Lemonis donated his own two tickets to Schlegel. The \$12,000 will instead go to the Purple Heart Foundation to assist Schlegel's fellow veterans.

Meanwhile, 82-year-old Mort Balaban of Wilmette could use a similar entrée. He drew the long straw in his group's divvying up of their two upper-deck season tickets. Balaban, who also attended Game 7 in '45 in first-row seats behind the Cubs dugout that belonged to Bishop James Sheil, was lucky enough to attend the clinching Game 6 off the NLCS. But his rotation did not come up again for the tickets through Games 3 to 5 of the World Series.

"I'll watch with (many of his 14) grandchildren," said Balaban, in his 60th year working as an architect with offices in Chicago's West Rogers Park neighborhood, where he lived in '45.

Spectating from 180 miles distant will be Lenny Rubenstein, who used to be able to walk to Wrigley Field from his longtime home at 525 W. Melrose in LakeView. Rubenstein, then 8, and father Harry used the shoe leather to attend Game 5 in '45, a Hal Newhouser-Hank Borowy matchup that went the Detroit Tigers' way.

"I remember we had seats in the grandstand behind home plate," Rubenstein said, "with the bunting draping the lower brick wall and upper deck, photographers and temporary seats on the field. Charlie Grimm clowning in the third-base coaching box."

Balaban does not remember many game details of the contest the Cubs lost 9-3. But, like Rubenstein, he recalled the pageantry and mood of the crowd just a month after the formal Japanese surrender to conclude World War II.

"The exciting part was it was so patriotic," Balaban said. "Red, white and blue bunting. During the Star Spangled Banner, everyone was standing and signing. Nobody was moving like today."

Balaban had a family connection to another important part of Cubs history. His cousins ran the Balaban and Katz theater chain and Paramount Pictures before starting WBKB, Chicago's first commercial TV station. WBKB produced the first-ever telecast of a Cubs game in 1946. The following season, the station – still the only one telecasting in Chicago – employed Jack Brickhouse at \$35 a game in his first TV baseball play-by-play job.

Still another attendee at Game 7 of '45 Series was four-time Super Bowl coach Marv Levy. A native of the South Shore neighborhood, Levy recalled attending the Fall

Classic as a 20-year-old Army Air Forces serviceman. Fortunately, at 91 he booked a return for Game 1 Friday night. Levy was introduced to the crowd, and was featured on the Fox telecast.

Levy was re-united with youthful Cubs favorites Phil Cavarretta and Andy Pafko via a live hookup on the “Diamond Gems” radio show in July 1994, five months after his final Super Bowl appearance with the Buffalo Bills.

WGN-TV even tracked down the visiting batboy for the ‘45 Series, who recalled getting Hank Greenberg’s pants cleaned in one-day service at a shop by the Addison Street L station. The batboy, 11 during the Series, said Greenberg tipped him \$5.