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An Open Letter/Sports Wish List For President-Elect Obama posted 2008-12-15

"Dear Santa/Bama"

By Kimberly Gadette

O Mr. Obama! We were thrilled to hear you say that once you take office, you're going to look into revamping the college football playoffs. Wow. What a gift, just what we wanted—and so much nicer than that ratty old sweater Grandma's been knitting ever since Babe Ruth moved from the pitching mound to the outfield.

Not to egg-nog you on, but since you're the closest thing to Santa Claus we've seen in years (thinner, yes, but how fitting for these lean times), there are a few other issues in the sports world that could use a little holiday spruce-up.

And so, dear Santa/Bama, following is our Christmas wish list, baseball style. (Depending on your reception, we may follow up with other sports lists.) Of course, if you require any documentation regarding past behaviors, naughty or nice, we'll be happy to comply:

- Spare the Rod: No more calling players named "Rodriguez" by their first initial followed by their surname, i.e., "A-Rod," "I-Rod," "K-Rod." It's not like enunciating a few more syllables is going to put additional stress on anyone's mouth. Not after all the words we've merrily exchanged with another on the highway during pre-game traffic tie-ups.

- Turn On That Camera and Shoot Me Now: Bud Selig and the MLB is finally allowing the Instant Replay! Sort of. Only for homeruns. Which is like allowing a plaintiff to appeal to a higher court maybe once a month, on a Thursday, if he's wearing the right undershorts and the judge is in a good mood. Presenting Mr. Selig: The Scrooge of the Show. Off with his wig.

- It's a Game, Not a Grammy: Could you see about banishing the singing starlets, all trying to turn their fifteen minutes into fifteen hours with their assorted, sordid yowlings of "The Star Spangled Banner"? There we sit, self-medicating on trays of super-sized nachos that our wallets and arteries can ill afford, while we're subjected to vocal renderings that are even cheesier than the aforementioned nachos. The simple fact is that Whitney Houston hit the proverbial high note years ago—anything more is most certainly less. And lest I bring up Roseanne's assault on our ears in San Diego?

- Adieu, Wahoo: In the spirit of your new Obamaan vision of inclusion, let's finally do away with that offensive 1948 Cleveland Indian caricature of a red-faced cartoon stereotype, aka Chief Wahoo. As he rides off into the sunset, we could underscore his departure with the last strains of yet another American Indian grotesquerie: The Atlanta Braves' Tomahawk Chop.

- Counting Years Is Not a Sport: It's great that Jamie Moyer and Randy Johnson are still going strong. But while the geezers are sucking down Centrum Silver caplets out on the mound, the announcers might want to pay attention to their number of pitches rather than their number of years. Here's a thought: once a player's got grandsons coming up in the minors, he gets a restrictive "AARP-rating" ... and he's outta here!

- The World Series in Nome: When the pitcher's mound grows eight feet high due to the latest blizzard, it's time to rethink the length of the baseball season. There's no more magic to the numeric game total of "162" than the numeric wind-chill factor of "30 degrees below." Unless the league is ready to announce an expanded roster including deranged polar bears and penguins, how about a shorter season with more doubleheaders? And please, Santa/Bama, could we have just one daytime World Series game? For kiddies and oldsters? It's a shame that the likes of Moyer and Johnson might have to skip the show on account of it being broadcast waaay past their bedtime.

Thanking you in advance, dear Santa/Bama, for considering our wish list. Please note that we tried to behave ourselves, that we didn't ask you even once to lower the price of beer to "Free." On the other hand, if you think that's a good idea, you have our most enthusiastic support.

Wishing you a winning presidential season,
Baseball's (and Your) Biggest Fans

