



Dom DiMaggio had just retired and owned a mattress company. He was touting one of the first king-size mattresses and wanted me to promote it. I did it for nothing just so I could get to meet him. It was worth it as he is a wonderful man.

Bases Loaded Advice

On a hot muggy day in the middle of summer 1957, the Boston Red Sox and the biting flies from the nearby stock yards were visiting Comiskey Park on the south side of Chicago. The Red Sox were there to play the White Sox. The flies were working on somewhat more tender bodies. The weather was stifling hot and the women were using their player programs as fans. The men were wiping their torsos with the shirts they had taken off. There was the smell of Polish sausage and knockwurst and sauerkraut and marginal restrooms and sweat. It was perfect. It was baseball in the fifties and I was on the mound.

Well, not so perfect. Unfortunately, things were not going according to plan and bases were loaded. The great Nellie Fox was on third via a broken bat hit. Jim Rivera was on second with a bunt down the first base line and Jim Landis was on first by legging out an infield single. There was no one out and Minnie Minoso was at bat. For those of you who don't remember, Minnie was their best hitter. He was fearless and stood so close to the plate that you could hit him with a strike. I always felt I could get any right-handed hitter out, but Minoso could be a problem.

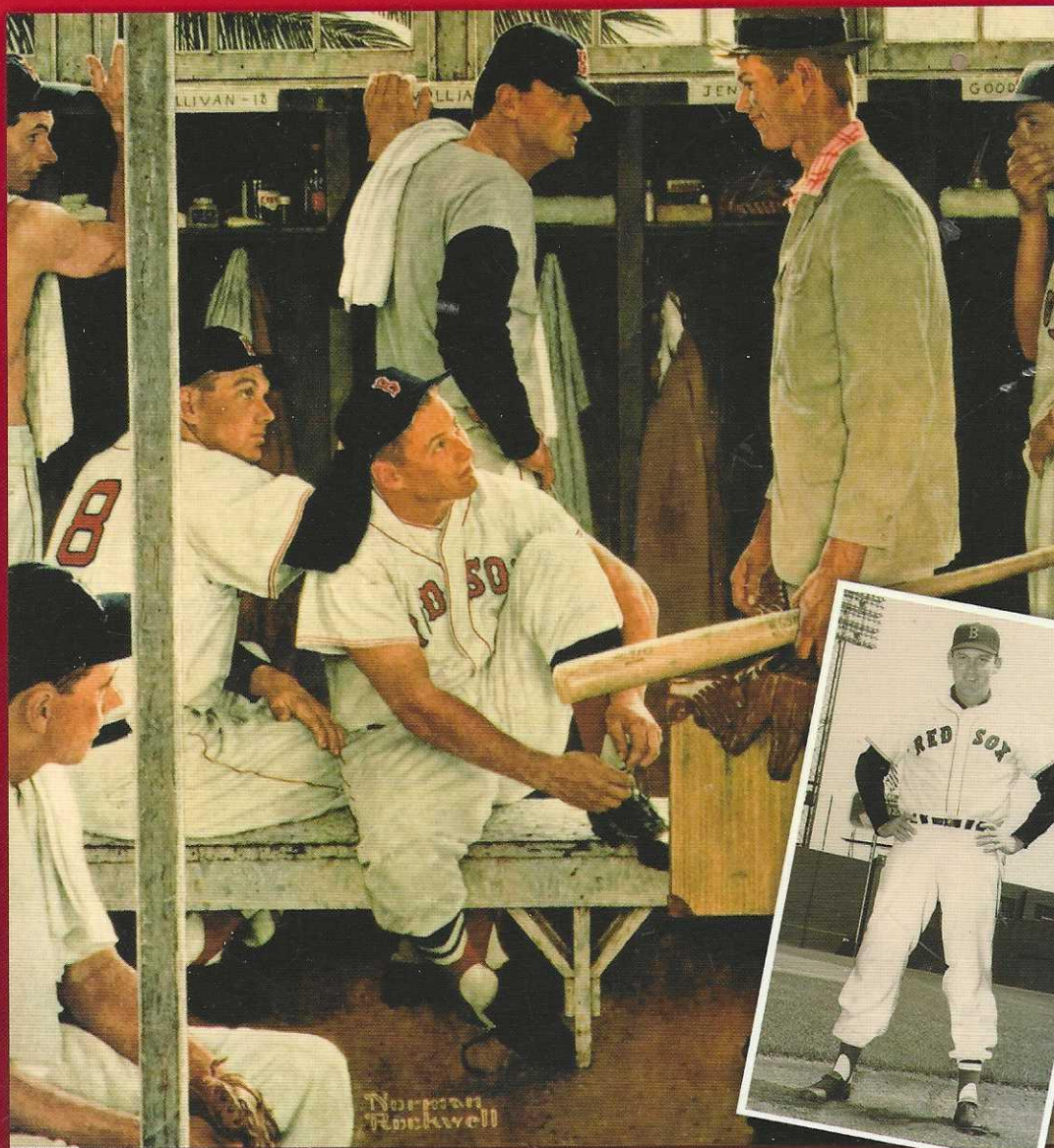
Sam White (my catcher) called "time out." It was OK with me! I figured he would have some situational advice and I was more than willing to listen because of the moment. What I really thought he would be reminding me about was the fact that we should pitch Minoso away because he would let an inside pitch hit him just to score a run.

The problem was that Sam chewed tobacco and spit it through his catcher's mask. I wish I could report that all of this awful slime made it cleanly through the wire when he spat but, sadly, I cannot. It was, in fact, strewn down the front of his uniform as if he had been sick to his stomach. So while I was anxious to hear his sage thoughts, I preferred he kept a reasonable distance. I motioned with both arms for him to keep at least at arms length and then cocked my ear so I could hear his ideas on how we were to proceed. He turned his head to the right and looked over at Landis on first base, then looked back at me. Then leaned his head over and looked past me to Rivera at second base, then back at me. This was taking some time and I'm was getting a little edgy waiting for him to say something, but he merely looked now at Fox on third base and again back at me. Finally he took his dripping mask off, looked back at home plate where Minoso waited, then again back at me and said his only words before leaving the mound, "Jesus Christ! You're in a lot of trouble!"

All of which, I believe, proves that bad news doesn't always travel fast.

LIFE IS MORE THAN 9 INNINGS

BY FRANK SULLIVAN



Memories of a Boston Red Sox Pitcher