

At a Glanz...

Goodbye to My Home



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I'm officially about to end my childhood. Yankee Stadium has ghosts,

legends, aura, mystique, etc. etc. etc. But as corny as this sounds, Shea Stadium has me. It's where I grew up. I used to tell my friends, it's where I was born. And as a Long Islander, the Metsies are our home town team. Not those evil-doers from the Bronx.

So when people say, "Shea's a dump" I always thought, "Yeah, but it's my dump!"

When I was growing up, my parents used to take me to around 15 games a year. It was always a thrill. I remember as a young teenager, wanting to take that trek with my own car and my own friends. And when I became a senior in high school, I was finally able to go to the games without my parents. I felt like an adult.

While I was in college during the early 90's, my friends Marc Herschmann and Pete Fiorino would go every time Dwight Gooden pitched. The Mets were pretty bad and Dwight was no longer Doctor K. But it didn't matter because it was still fun to go root him on.

One of my favorite Shea Stadium memories was on my birthday, May 23. I think it was 1995, but I'm not really sure. I was with my friend Frank and I was walking behind the lodge section right behind home plate. David Segui is up and he hits a foul ball around 10 feet

away from where I'm standing. I start running to it. There is no way I'm going to get it, as its rolling towards this 30-year-old woman. It's obviously her ball as its rolling right to her, and there is no one else near the ball. But much like Rocky in Rocky V, I didn't hear any bells.

So I ran. I'm running and she's reaching slowly to pick it up. Out of nowhere this crazy guy dives on the floor and grabs it right before she picks it up! The crazy guy was me!! She jumps on me and has her hand over my hand. My hand was holding the ball. She says, "It's mine!! It's mine!!!" I say, "No, I got it!" The fans are booing and chanting, "Give the girl the ball! Give the girl the ball!!!" Then they started cheering. I was confused. I turned around and Segui had just hit a home run.

Luckily I had a solution that everyone was happy with. I had caught five batting practice balls that day, so I said to her, "Its my birthday and this is my first foul ball. I can't give it to you. But I got a batting practice ball and I can give you that." She was very happy and even gave me a kiss on the cheek. I have no idea where that ball is anymore, but that memory will never go away.

As great a moment that was for me, it's not my favorite Shea Stadium memory. I probably shouldn't tell you but luckily for me there's this thing called the statue of limitations. I'm not sure of the year, but I was in my mid 20's, and my friend Rob and I decided we wanted to play baseball. It was a nice November night. So what better place to play baseball than Shea Stadium? We drove down to the park and tried to psyche ourselves up to sneak onto the field. Rob chickened

out but I didn't. I climbed over a fence, hopped over the Centerfield wall and ran in between 2nd and 3rd. I slid a few times and ran back. It was fun but a little unfulfilling.

So the next November when I was telling my friend Owen about it, and he suggested we finish the job. We drove to Shea, played whiffle ball, and just hung out for more than an hour. I didn't want to leave. I ran around the bases, slid and pretended there were 50,000 fans watching me. Thankfully, there were zero security guards watching me!

I know Citi Field is going to be a beautiful building with plenty of amenities. I'm sure its going to be big, new, clean, beautiful etc. etc. etc. One thing it will never be is home because Shea will always be home for me. And I'd like to thank my Dad and Mom for bringing me to my home so many times as a kid.



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