

## RED SOX MAKE HISTORY

### USC students enjoy classic baseball series

By **STEPHEN FASTENAU**  
STAFF WRITER

USC cornerback Taqiy Muhammad sported a New York Yankees cap after practice Wednesday, less than an hour before the deciding game of the American League Championship Series.

"The Red Sox won't make it out of New York alive," Muhammad said.

Longtime Boston fan Brandon Newton, a third-year management student, thought differently.

"I knew there was something special about this team," Newton said. "As they say, anything can happen in a seventh game. Johnny Damon is my hero."

Red Sox fans might be pronouncing Damon a little differently from now on. The Boston outfielder was "Da Man" Wednesday night after the Red Sox completed the biggest comeback in postseason history and won a series with the New York Yankees for the first time ever. Damon came out of a 3-29 series slump with two home runs in the decisive seventh game, including a grand slam.

Before the final game, baseball analyst Peter Gammons said that the contest was likely the "most anticipated game in sports history." The most heated rivalry in sports reached its peak this year, as the Yankees took a three games to none lead in the best-of-seven series. Boston battled back to win the next four, including the two longest games in playoff history, and will play for the chance to be World Series champions, a feat the franchise has not achieved since 1918.

Newton, who lived in New Hampshire for seven years, learned that hating the Yankees was the number one priority of being a Red Sox fan.

"After beating those guys, the World Series will seem anticlimactic," Newton said. "The Yankees represent all that is evil in the world."

Yankee apparel was a rare site on campus Thursday,

**"I'm not a huge fan, but I hate the Yankees just like everyone."**

**SPENCE ROBEY**  
SECOND-YEAR ADVERTISING STUDENT

whereas many students sported a Red Sox logo. Jerseys of Damon and pitcher Pedro Martinez were spotted as well as all varieties of baseball caps, from the traditional navy blue to the pink worn by several girls. Even those who were fans of neither team got in on the act.

"I'm not a huge Red Sox fan, but I hate the Yankees just like everyone," second-year advertising student Spence Robey said.

Political science professor Donald Fowler took a quick poll in one of his classes to determine how many Red Sox fans were present. Roughly half the students raised their hands.

The rivalry has escalated recently, as the two teams played to a virtual tie in head-to-head match-up wins since 2002. Yankees shortstop Alex Rodriguez became the symbol of everything Red Sox fans hated about New York when he was traded to the Bronx Bombers after a deal that would have sent the former MVP to Boston fell through. Rodriguez was involved in a fight with Red Sox catcher Jason Varitek midway through the season after the two exchanged words at the plate.

Yankees fans, too, were given a target to heckle after Martinez lost a second straight game to New York toward the end of the season and uttered a now famous quip in the news conference that followed.

"What can I do?" Martinez said. "I'll just tip my hat and call the Yankees my daddy."

Chants of "Who's your daddy?" resonated throughout Yankee Stadium during Martinez' time on the mound in the ALCS.

For all the celebration surrounding the Red Sox' historical win, "The Curse" stays only partially lifted. Boston has yet to win a World Series since trading Babe Ruth to New York after the 1919 season, a statistic the Red Sox and their fans would love to put behind them.

"Children laugh; God is not dead — all because the Red Sox won," Newton said. "But we have to do it one more time."

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### New York makes for great loser

■ **Highest paid team in history makes Sox' win one for the books**

The true test of a man comes when he knows he's made a mistake. The honorable thing to do is to admit your inaccuracies and move forward. That is what I am going to do for you today.

I wrote a column Feb. 18 that said the acquisition of Alex Rodriguez and the \$190 million payroll of the Yankees were bad for baseball. I said that this Yankee team, the highest-paid team in baseball history, was a stain on the sport. I could not have been more wrong.

I, like any other sports fan with a pulse, was glued to my television Wednesday night watching game seven of the American League Championship Series. Not having any affiliation with either team, I began to

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contemplate just exactly why I could not turn my eyes away from this game.

Was it because the Red Sox had the chance to become the first team in baseball history to rebound from a 3-0 series deficit to win the series? Yes.

Was it because I could identify (being a Braves fan) with Boston's heartbreak in 2003 on the Aaron Boone home run? Probably.

Was it because we all like to cheer for the underdogs, especially the ones believed to be stuck in the middle of an 86-year curse? Without question.

However, the most intriguing thing about this game was that the Red Sox' opponents were the Yankees. That's right sports fans — the 26-time world champion New York Yankees. This is the most storied franchise in sports, the best team that money could buy, the undeniably most-stacked team in sports history.

And how perfect was it that New York would lose, in Yankee Stadium, the house that Babe Ruth built, to a bunch of unshaven self-proclaimed "idiots" like the Boston Red Sox? Was anyone else tired of seeing Yankee fans holding up pictures of Ruth's ugly mug all night? Any way, a year and a half ago, you couldn't have convinced me of this, but this is without a doubt the greatest rivalry in sports.

Just looking at the lineup cards makes me want to smile. The Yankee lineup is filled with future Hall of Famers like Jeter, Rodriguez, Sheffield, Giambi and maybe even Matsui.

Could anybody other than true Yankee fans be cheering for Rodriguez, who, despite maybe being the most talented player in the game today, feels like he needs to slap at a player's glove to win a baseball game? Boston pitcher Curt Schilling later called the move by Rodriguez "bush league" on ESPN. He's absolutely right, and he has every right to say such a thing.

Schilling, whose teams are now 2-0 against the Yankees in postseason series, went out on the mound in game six with a tendon basically hanging off

## Have the Red Sox reversed the curse?

Boston Red Sox vs. New York Yankees in post-season play:

1999 ALCS: NY wins, 4-1

Yankees go on to sweep the Braves in the World Series

2003 ALCS: NY wins, 4-3

Aaron Boone hits series-winning home run in extra innings

2004 ALCS: Boston wins, 4-3

Red Sox become first team in history to overcome 0-3 series deficit

PHOTO AT LEFT: KATHY WILLENS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS; PHOTO BELOW: JULIE JACOBSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS; GRAPHIC ABOVE: DAVID STAGG/THE GAMECOCK

David Ortiz, left, celebrates after the Red Sox clinched the victory over the Yankees on Wednesday. Derek Jeter, below, crouches in the on-deck circle during the sixth inning. The Yankees fell to Boston 10-3 after failing to overcome a 6-0 lead. Jeter and the rest of the New York squad struggled offensively the last four games of the series.

# Boston finally topples Evil Empire

By **RONALD BLUM**  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**NEW YORK** — It was a strange sight indeed: the Boston Red Sox jumping with joy in Yankee Stadium.

Seldom have the Red Sox risen so high, and rarely have the Yankees bowed so low.

Believe it, New England — the Red Sox are in the World Series. And they got there with the most unbelievable comeback of all, with four sweet swings after decades of defeat, shaming the dreaded Yankees.

David Ortiz, Johnny Damon and Derek Lowe made sure of it.

Just three outs from getting swept in the AL championship series three nights earlier, the Red Sox finally humbled the Evil Empire, winning Game 7 in a 10-3 shocker Wednesday night to become the first major league team to overcome a 3-0 postseason series deficit.

"All empires fall sooner or later," Boston president Larry Lucchino said.

Cursed for 86 years, these Red Sox just might be charmed.

There is no torture this time, no hour of humiliation. Better yet for Boston fans, it's the Yankees who are left to suffer the memory of a historic collapse.

"Not many people get the opportunity to shock the world. We came out and did it," Boston first baseman Kevin Millar said. "You know what? We beat the Yankees. Now they get a chance to watch us on the tube."

Boston didn't need any of the late-inning dramatics that marked the last three games, leading 6-0 after two innings. Ortiz, the series MVP, started it with a two-run homer in the first off broken-down Kevin Brown. Damon, in a 3-for-29 (.103) slide coming in, quieted Yankee Stadium in with a grand slam on Javier Vazquez's first pitch.

After Derek Jeter sparked hope of a comeback with a run-scoring single in the third, Damon put

a two-run homer into the upper deck for an 8-1 lead in the fourth.

Lowe pitched on two days' rest and allowed one hit in six innings. He silenced the Yankees' bats and boasting fans, who just last weekend assumed New York's seventh pennant in nine years was all but a lock. Pedro Martinez started the seventh, his first relief appearance in five years, and immediately sparked chants of the now famous "Who's Your Daddy?"

Three hits and two runs got the crowd going, but the rally stopped there. Mark Bellhorn added a solo homer in the eighth, and the bullpen closed out a five-hitter.

"It's very amazing, I think, to do what we did," Red Sox manager Terry Francona said.

Yankees players slowly walked off, eliminated on their home field for the second straight season. "I'm embarrassed right now," Alex Rodriguez said. "Obviously that hurts — watching them on our field celebrating."

The World Series will start at Fenway Park on Saturday night against St. Louis or Houston.

Now that the Babe's team has been beaten, Boston can try to reverse The Curse, win the Series for the first time since 1918 and bring happiness to the Hub, which can scarcely believe the tumultuous turn of events.

From Fenway Park to Faneuil Hall, from Boston Common to Beacon Hill, the 11th pennant for the Red Sox, the first since 1918, will be remembered as the best for one reason: beating New York in Yankee Stadium, site of last year's Game 7 meltdown.

This was for Williams, Doerr and Pesky, for Yastrzemski and Yawkey, for Fisk and Rice and even Buckner and Nomar, just a few of the hundreds who suffered the pain inflicted by their New York neighbors.

"That's for the '03 team, just like it's for the '78 and the '49 team," Red Sox general manager Theo Epstein said. "I hope Ted Williams is having a cocktail upstairs."

None of the previous 25 major league teams

that fell behind 3-0 even forced a series to seven games. The wild-card Red Sox became only the third of 239 teams in the four major North American leagues to overcome a 3-0 deficit in a best-of-seven series and win, joining the 1942 Toronto Maple Leafs and the 1975 New York Islanders.

It had been 100 years since Boston last won a pennant in New York on the final possible day, a 3-2 victory in a doubleheader opener at Hilltop Park in 1904. New York overcame the Red Sox by winning the final two games of the 1949 season at Yankee Stadium, the Yankees won a one-game playoff for the AL East in 1978 behind Bucky Dent's three-run homer at Fenway Park, and Aaron Boone hit the 11th-inning homer that won Game 7 last year.

New York, which dropped to 10-2 in the LCS, will no doubt face a bitter winter, with owner George Steinbrenner likely to take charge of overhauling a roster that has been short of starting pitching since the spring.

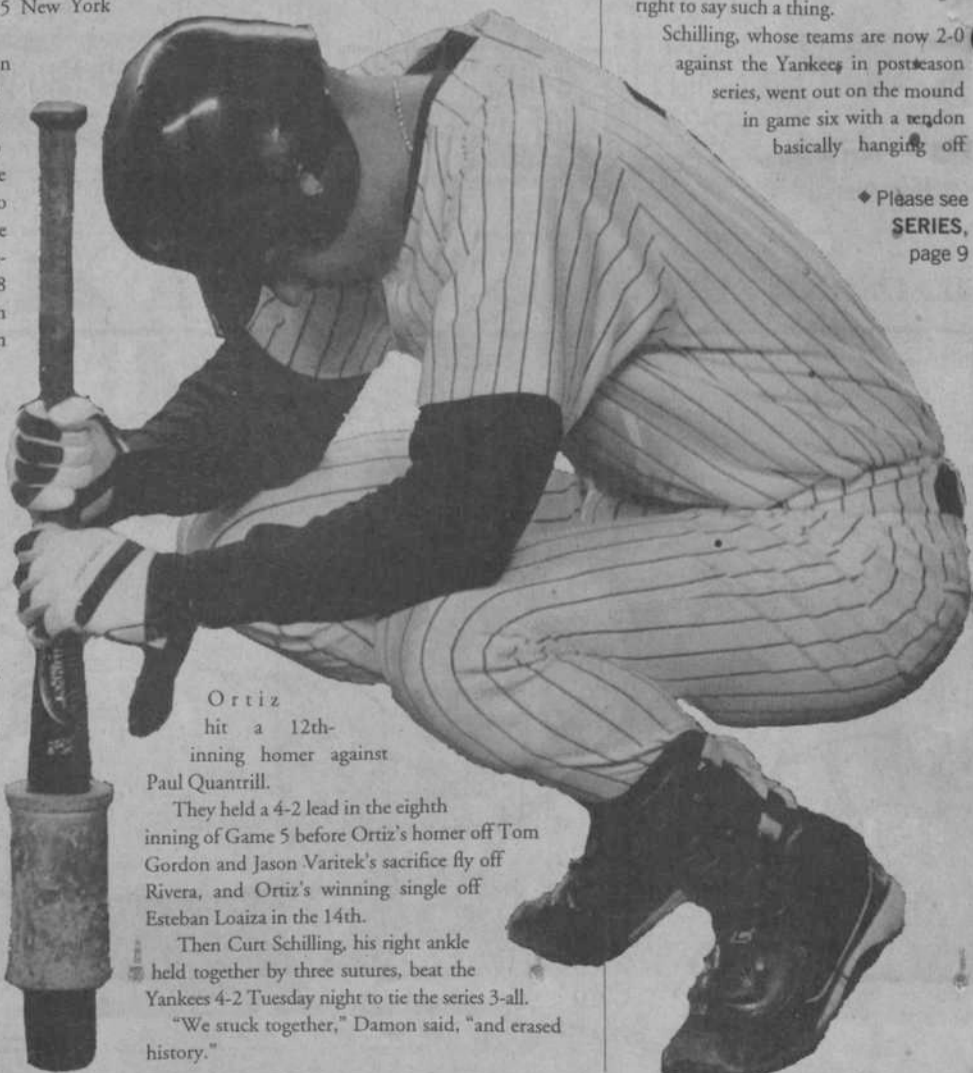
"I want to congratulate the Boston team," Steinbrenner said. "They did very well. They have a great team."

Brown and Vazquez were booed by the sellout crowd of 56,129. Rodriguez went 2-for-17 in the final four games and Gary Sheffield 1-for-17.

New York had a record \$186 million payroll, far beyond Boston, which was second at \$128 million. But the Yankees haven't won the Series since 2000 and couldn't finish off an opponent in the cool, efficient, ruthless way they did only a few

years ago.

The Yankees had a 4-3 lead in the ninth inning of Game 4 on Sunday night, only to have Bill Mueller single home the tying run off Mariano Rivera and



Ortiz hit a 12th-inning homer against Paul Quantrill.

They held a 4-2 lead in the eighth inning of Game 5 before Ortiz's homer off Tom Gordon and Jason Varitek's sacrifice fly off Rivera, and Ortiz's winning single off Estaban Loaiza in the 14th.

Then Curt Schilling, his right ankle held together by three sutures, beat the Yankees 4-2 Tuesday night to tie the series 3-all. "We struck together," Damon said, "and erased history."

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