

After 820 Games, Sellout Streak Ends for Red Sox at Fenway Park

Written by Maury Brown
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Contrary to popular belief, not everyone likes to have their predictions come true. That's certainly the case here. While each year writers look to predict the final outcome of MLB's regular season, I've tried to look at attendance trends to see what may occur during the season.

The Red Sox were one of those cases. After missing the playoffs in the last day of the 2011 season, the whole "chicken and beer" fiasco, the firing of Terry Francona, the gaffe and ensuing train wreck of hiring Bobby Valentine as Francona's replacement, the sheen of the 2004 and 2007 World Series wins for Boston have worn off. Throw in a rebuilding phase, and it was time for the Fenway Park sellout streak to come to an end.

The question, really, was when? It seemed certain to be this season, but when in the season was what we all wondered.

Today is that day.

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After selling out Fenway on Opening Day, the streak ends today. It started May 15, 2003 and continued through April 8, 2013, spanned 794 regular-season games and 820 games at Fenway Park, including the postseason. It is the longest record of its kind in major professional sports for the regular-season, and for the regular season combined with postseason play. The club has averaged 36,605 tickets sold per game during this period. (Fenway Park's seating capacity was only 34,807 in 2003, when the streak began.)

The previous record in Major League Baseball was 455, set by the Cleveland Indians between 1995 and 2001, when they won six consecutive Division Titles and two American League Championships. Red Sox fans surpassed that total on September 8, 2008. The longest professional streak in all major league sports, including postseason play, was formerly held by the Portland Trailblazers at 814 games.

While the game has not yet started, the club acknowledged that the streak has ended releasing a statement with thanks from the executive ownership.

"The streak is a reflection of a phenomenal period of baseball in Boston and of America's greatest ballpark," said Red Sox Principal Owner John W. Henry. "But more than that, it is a testament to the baseball passion of New England fans. As we close the book on this incredible era, we look forward to another with a renewed certainty that the next couple of generations of Red Sox fans will also be enjoying baseball at the ever magical Fenway Park."

"We have all experienced a wonderful combination of compelling baseball, a revitalized ballpark, and an atmosphere of warmth and hospitality," said Red Sox Chairman Tom Werner. "I'd like to thank publicly our players, coaches, managers, our architects, our designers and construction workers, and our front office and day of game ballpark staff. Their work, together, connected with Red Sox Nation—passionate fans who helped take this team and this park to these heights. It is these fans to whom we are most grateful."

"We are proud of this historic achievement," said Red Sox President/CEO Larry Lucchino. "Over the past ten years, more than 30 million, many among the most sophisticated baseball fans in America, have purchased tickets to see games at Fenway Park. Never in that period was there a crowd less than 32,000. No other club in Major League Baseball can make that statement. That speaks volumes about the constancy and dedication of New England baseball fans."

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