

Written by Maury Brown
Wednesday, 15 July 2009 02:42

Video of Presidential address courtesy of MLB Productions

UPDATE: [John Ourand of the SportsBusiness Journal/SportsBusiness Daily reports](#) :

Last night's MLB All-Star Game posted a 10.4/18 overnight rating in metered markets, down 5% from a 11.0/18 for the first nine innings of last year's 15-inning game. The pregame show drew an 8.3/15, also down slightly from last year's 8.4/15. Fox execs attribute the small ratings drops to St. Louis' smaller market size compared to N.Y. Last night's game drew a 37.0 rating in St. Louis, compared to N.Y.'s 17.1 rating last year. But even with its smaller rating, N.Y. had 775,000 more homes watching its game than St. Louis.

With a 4-3 victory Tuesday evening, the American League kept their winning streak of All-Star Games moving forward – 12 years straight. The game also came in at 2 hours 31 minutes, which according to Stats Inc. was the fastest played All-Star Game since the 1988 game took 2:26.

It's good the game went short, because if it had gone much longer, FOX would have surely figured out a way to gaff even more of it.

Before the first pitch, there were oddities (why did the director have one camera operator aim up from ground level for the AL players while the NL players were shot level?).

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But the biggest gaff of the night was missing President Obama's ceremonial first pitch to Albert Pujols.

The director had a handheld camera follow the President out to the mound, but there were no cuts to Albert Pujols. And then, when the time came for the President to make the pitch, the director kept the field level shot instead of going to the centerfield camera, so viewers were basically treated to the release, not the pitch crossing the plate to Pujols. Groans could be heard across the country. It wasn't until much later in the broadcast that FOX went to the footage from the centerfield camera, and then only briefly (for those that missed it, the pitch was decent, but not as good as George W. Bush's throw shortly after 9/11 in Yankee Stadium). It was a huge blunder for such a historic occasion. After all, the last president to throw out the ceremonial first pitch at an All-Star Game was 1992 when President George H.W. Bush threw out the pitch with President Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico, a gap of 17 years. Presidential first pitches at the All-Star Game don't come around all that often.

While that was the chief blunder of the night, FOX's continual programming tie-ins added to a finger nails on a blackboard effect. The worst of these was just before a late game commercial break when the camera did a tight close-up on a bald individual in a suit. No explanation from the broadcast booth as to who it was. No graphic mentioning a name. It was only later that I found out it was some freaky bald guy that keeps being shown in episodes of FOX's "Fringe". Simply unneeded and annoying.

There were some redeeming moments, which thankfully were taped.

The best part of the broadcast may have been the unprecedented segment by MLB and People for the "All-Stars Among Us" featuring President Obama, along with former Presidents George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George H.W. Bush, and Jimmy Carter. The call to service, which has been one of President Obama's efforts, played out well, given the state of the country.

Lastly, the most talked of part of the 2009 All-Star Game broadcast may not be that FOX blew the President's ceremonial pitch, but rather Taco Bell's "It's All About the Roosevelts" ad. While it grated on some, there's little doubting that when you watched it, you weren't going to forget it. See the ad below:

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