

# TRASHING UP THE WEEKEND

Since I'm a non-travelling Wheel this weekend (and since I'm batshit crazy about college baseball) I get the honor of writing the weekend sports trash talk. Lots of sports are on tap this weekend, as the NBA chooses its Eastern Conference sacrificial team to face the ascendant Oklahoma City Thunder who appear to have a rising dynasty. There's the Belmont Stakes, now sadly deprived of the chance for a Triple Crown winner. And, the reason I'm not in Providence, there are the NCAA Baseball Super Regionals, which are already underway as I write.

Here's another local Gainesville musician to kick things off. He's a bit better known than last week's group, but he somehow seems to be keeping the zombie theme alive into its second week. Note that from the video, this is clearly not happening in Gainesville, so Petty's "I'm tired of this town" doesn't apply to his hometown.

[youtube][http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aowSGxim\\_08](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aowSGxim_08)[/youtube]

Before the sports trash gets started, I have to engage in a bit of trash on journalism and blogging. I've been hammering a lot on the "Daily Drone" issue in Pakistan, making the argument that many US drone strike have been as much about political retaliation as about hitting terrorists, even coming up with the headline "The Beatings Drone Strikes Will Continue Until Morale Improves" Today the Los Angeles Times finally caught up:

Expressing both public and private frustration with Pakistan, the Obama administration has unleashed the CIA to resume an aggressive campaign of drone strikes in Pakistani territory over the last few weeks, approving

strikes that might have been vetoed in the past for fear of angering Islamabad.

/snip/

“They are trying to send a message: ‘If you don’t come around, we will continue with our plan, the way we want to do it,’ ” said Javed Ashraf Qazi, a retired Pakistani intelligence chief and former senator. It’s “superpower arrogance being shown to a smaller state... But this will only increase the feeling among Pakistanis that the Americans are bent on having their way through force and not negotiation.”

And if that’s not enough, it turns out that yesterday Jonathan Turley even mostly ripped off my headline. He attributed it to Panetta while I put it in Brennan’s mouth and he left out the strike face beatings.

I won’t hold my breath waiting for the Times or Turley to pay me for doing their work for them.

Anyway, on to the sports. As I predicted last week, Alabama came through and gave the SEC their first National Championship in softball. Congratulations to them for a very well-played series and to Oklahoma for battling very hard and keeping the final outcome in doubt well into the night of the third and decisive game in the championship series.

Tomorrow was supposed to be the exciting conclusion to the unlikely Triple Crown run by I’ll Have Another, but he was unexpectedly scratched this afternoon due to a swollen tendon. I’ve seen lots of stuff flying on Twitter and elsewhere on the net about the checkered history of his trainer and the fact that the owner is a payday loan baron, so maybe we dodged a lot of nasty muckraking had the horse won. It does occur to me that by scratching and not running in the Belmont, the owner will likely reap much larger stud fees than if he had run and lost. Of course, the fees

would have gone to unprecedented levels with a win, but the scratch does seem to preserve a huge chunk of income.

In the NBA, I warned last week about the geriatric Celtics. When they came up with a win in game 5 in Miami, I was with the rest of the geniuses who said the Heat were done, but last night's takeover by James was impressive, even if I don't enjoy watching him do well. I expect a Heat win in game 7 tomorrow. The Thunder looked incredibly impressive with their wins in game 5 in San Antonio and then game 6 at home. I think this team has been built for long term success and we are seeing the rise of a dynasty that will be as good as Miami's big three thought they were going to be.

Both the SEC and Pac 12 have four teams in baseball's Sweet 16. Even though the pundits loved the ACC going into the tournament, only two teams advanced, with Miami providing a huge blemish on the conference record by being the first number one seed to go two and out in several years.

The Gators had their wonderful no-hitter by Jonathan Crawford against Bethune-Cookman to open their regional and then added two more wins to go unblemished in a home regional for the fourth straight year. Their Super Regional opponent is North Carolina State, and I'm happy to be facing them instead of Vanderbilt. This series doesn't start until Saturday afternoon. The series will feature two of the three finalists for the Golden Spikes Award, the college baseball MVP, in Florida's Mike Zunino (catcher) and NC State's Carlos Rodon (pitcher). Rodon is a freshman while Zunino was the third overall pick (Seattle) in this week's MLB draft.

Only one of the top eight national seeds didn't advance, as North Carolina added another blemish for the ACC by failing in their home regional as a national seed. The Florida State – Stanford Super Regional should be very entertaining. This year's Cinderella team, Stony Brook (by advancing as a number 4 seed, they were the

equivalent of a 13 or lower seed making the basketball Sweet 16), is off to a great start in the first Super Regional game at LSU. Stony Brook took an early 2-0 lead. LSU picked up an unearned run in the 7th and then hit a solo home run in the ninth to tie it. Both teams then scored solo runs in the tenth and eleventh, with LSU's tying home run in the tenth coming with two outs and two strikes. As of this writing, the game is in a rain delay tied 4-4 getting ready for the top of the twelfth inning.

Perhaps because I'm a big SEC home-boy, I expect all four SEC teams to advance to Omaha and to be joined by Oregon and UCLA from the Pac 12. Arizona may have a bit of an advantage in their Super Regional as they now host since St. John's was a number 3 seed and advanced out of North Carolina's regional. I really can't call the Florida State - Stanford series but expect to enjoy watching it.

Game on, and throw it down in comments.