

## Motherhood, Baseball & Life

May 13, 2019

“Baseball is life,” say fans, meaning not merely that “the rest is just details,” but also that there are broader lessons to be gleaned from the game.

Yesterday, on Mother’s Day, I told my mom how big a fan of hers I am, and the two of us Detroit Tigers fans mulled over the latest brouhaha. A man in the cheap seats caught the homerun ball hit by Albert Pujols . . . and wouldn’t “give it back.”

That hit and resulting run gave the Los Angeles Angels and former St. Louis Cardinals slugger his 2,000th lifetime “run batted in,” or RBI, putting him in a very exclusive club: fifth on the all-time RBI list.\*

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pressuring him to give them the ball in exchange for, say, a picture with Pujols and some autographed swag. Hydes, a Tigers fan, wanted to think about it, however. He left.



The Twitterverse erupted.

The charge?

Selfishness — for not turning over a baseball “that would mean so much more” to Pujols.

At EconLog, David Henderson was having none of it: “[E]ven to suggest that Hydes, a law student in debt, is immoral for not giving some of his wealth to a very wealthy man, is breathtaking.” That baseball is likely worth at least \$25,000 and could fetch more.

Asked by reporters, Pujols was clear: “[Hydes] has the right to keep it. The ball went in the stands, so I would never fight anybody to give anything back.”

“Pujols’s attitude is admirable,” notes Henderson. “He defended a stranger’s property rights.”

As diehard Tigers fans, Mom and I still take issue. The Angels won that game 13-0. Following tradition, Hydes should have thrown the opposing team’s homerun back onto the field.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.

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\* Almost emblematic of our national pastime, there is disagreement over whether Pujols moved into third or fifth place. Major League Baseball says third, because RBIs weren’t officially counted until 1920. Babe Ruth batted in over 200 runs prior to that, and the Chicago Colts’ poor Cap Anson retired after the 1897 season. Thankfully, Baseball-Reference calculated those previously unaccounted for RBIs. Here’s the all-time list:

1. Hank Aaron (2,297)
2. Babe Ruth (2,214)
3. Alex Rodriguez (2,086)
4. Cap Anson (2,075)
5. Albert Pujols (2,000)