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Yes, there is crying in baseball, for the Cubs



If Cubs fans are crying, there's a good chance this is what they're really feeling -- at least in part.

Steve Lundy | Staff Photographer



Jamie Sotonoff

There is crying in baseball this year.

After the Cubs won the National League pennant Saturday night, tears flowed for many grown men and women. Bill Murray cried. Joe Maddon cried. Anthony Rizzo's parents were crying. And countless fans broke down in tears in the stands at Wrigley Field and in front of TVs around the country.

Some were happy tears, from fans who've waited their whole lives to see the Cubs get to the World Series. And some were sad tears, as people thought of deceased family and friends who would have loved this moment.

It was a mix of both for third-generation Cubs fan Brad Robinson, 37, who grew up in Long Grove. Robinson watched Saturday night's game at a family party in Wauconda, where several men wept after the Cubs won and exchanged man hugs.

"I was straight up sobbing," said Robinson, who went to his first Cubs game when he was 2 months old and has been a die-hard fan ever since. "After the initial wave of it all, we went outside for a cigar, and we were talking about, 'Why does a baseball team do this to us?' Because it's not just about the baseball. It's about the family."

Robinson said his tears were partially for his late grandfather, with whom he watched Cubs games and talked about the 1920s and 1930s teams. He also thought of his grandmother, a lifelong Cubs fan who now has Alzheimer's disease and can't grasp what's happening.

"It's been a big family thing for us as long as I've been alive," Robinson said.

That's why Tom Brennan, 57, of Crystal Lake was tearful Saturday night -- and all season long. His father and best friend, who was a huge Cubs fan, died in January. One of the last things his father said before dying was how sad he was that he wouldn't get to see the Cubs play this year.

"I said, 'Dad, you're going to see this, just from a different seat,'" Brennan said. "It was hard to watch this season, because my dad's not here to see it with me."

Ron Salata, 32, of Pingree Grove got teary-eyed thinking that he, his dad and his brother were able to witness this historic moment together, after years of heartbreak over the Cubs. Sports have never made him cry before.

"It was a welling up of tears," he said. "Then (WXRT's) Lin Brehmer played a recap of highlights this morning, and it happened again."

If the Cubs win the World Series, Salata believes he'll be "crying and covered in beer," like Eddie Vedder predicts in his Cubs fandom song "Someday We'll Go All The Way."

Robinson, too, expects the waterworks to resume if the Cubs win it all.

"It's gonna hit pretty hard. I just hope I'm not at work when it happens," said Robinson, a sports anchor for Illinois Radio Network and a writer and editor at WBBM-AM.

Crying over the Cubs is OK, and even healthy, says Dr. Cliff Saper, a clinical psychologist and executive director of outpatient programs at Amita Health/Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital-Hoffman Estates.

"Crying for something that's momentous, or something you're so grateful for, or something that's significant and meaningful to you, it's perfectly normal to cry," Saper said.

Crying still has a stigma for many, who might consider it unmanly.

"Maybe a Cubs win in the World Series would beat down the stigma," Saper said.