

Konerko and Pierzynski: a defining White Sox dynamic duo

Written by Tawni Ricketts, Daily Vidette Columnist
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The baseball business is a lot like baseball card-trading. Just as cards are always being traded, so are baseball players.

Sometimes we want the old legends. Sometimes we want the young rookies. Sometimes we want the big talent. Sometimes we just want the big names.

While fans unfortunately can't control who is and is not traded, we all have those players that we absolutely don't want to see go. They might be getting old, their arm might be wearing out, but these players help define your team.

For me, Paul Konerko and A.J. Pierzynski are those guys.

I have said it before and I'll say it again: I am a die-hard Chicago White Sox fan. As such, I can say with confidence that this team just wouldn't be the same without these two. I dreadfully await the day when the duo no longer plays for the South Side.

But thankfully, that day isn't today.

Growing up with season tickets to White Sox games has to be among the coolest things a kid can experience. I lived in Chicagoland for the first 13 years of my life — thus I was regularly attending White Sox games for 13 years.

As I grew throughout those years, so did my knowledge of baseball (and my patience/attention

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span at the games). I went from wanting cotton candy, to wanting to see home run fireworks, to wanting to see the Sox win, to getting irritated when they lost.

But, I also saw the team change and grow. I watched greats like Frank Thomas, Robin Ventura, Ozzie Guillen, and Harold Baines take the field.

I witnessed Ozzie fulfill both player and managerial roles. I watched Mark Buehrle pitch his no-hitter against the Cubs on Apr. 17, 2007, and I attended the first round of the 2005 playoffs, as well as the 2005 American League Championship.

Watching a team change, grow, and evolve however, means watching your favorite players get traded, injured, and retire.

I'm not even going to go into the topic of Mark Buehrle and the Marlins. My heart still aches at that loss.

With Buehrle no longer a part of the ball club, the team now rests in the hands of Pauly and A.J — the only two members from the 2005 World Series team left on the current roster.

Konerko is just one of those players who is loved by all. He doesn't cause problems, he's solid offensively and defensively, and he's a crucial team leader (the team captain actually). Konerko made his MLB debut 15 years ago in 1997 and has remained with the Sox for the latter 13 of those years.

Not only has Pauly appeared in five All-Star games, obtained over 2,000 career hits, and has

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had five seasons in which he produced at least 30 homers and 100 RBIs, but he was also voted in as one of three finalists for the 2011 Marvin Miller Man of the Year Award.

Pierzynski too has been with the Sox for some time, since 2005. He has made two All-Star game appearances and has a track record of being quite the team leader as well. In 2010, Pierzynski was the recipient of the White Sox Heart and Hustle Award, given to one player from each MLB team based on passion, desire, and work ethic demonstrated both on and off the field.

It's no secret that the White Sox are rebuilding this year. With numerous new, young guys filling spots on the roster, plus the addition of a new manager, Konerko and Pierzynski are really the only source of stability in the line-up.

As the only two Sox players left whom I grew up watching at Comiskey Park and U.S. Cellular Field, Pauly and A.J. hold a special place in my heart. They are the lifeblood of the White Sox.