



Sports from the Women's POV

by Carlotta Schmittgen

What an exciting year 2016 was for sports! It's not too often that one sees so much history in the making as we did. The year started out with a Cinderella ending for NFL great Peyton Manning as he guided the Denver Broncos to a Super Bowl win. What a way to end a career!! He hasn't done too badly in post-football either. There's rarely a day that doesn't go by that I don't see Peyton in a commercial. I think the funniest is the one where he's sitting on the couch in his bathrobe and sipping coffee. Lionel Richie is singing in the background, "It's Peyton on Sunday morning." Manning is on the phone with brother Eli wanting him to come and watch Sunday football on his DirecTV set-up. Eli's seen in the Giants locker room explaining why he can't – he's playing football. "I'll pencil you in for Tuesday," and Peyton writes "Eli" in the empty calendar.

March Madness in college basketball made history too when the number fifteen seed Middle Tennessee upset number two seed Michigan State in the first round destroying just about every basketball fan's bracket including mine! The "experts" had predicted Michigan State to make the Final Four and some had even picked them to win the championship. And it didn't end there! The fourteenth seed Stephen F. Austin upset number three seed West Virginia and Syracuse became the first tenth seed in history to advance to the Final Four. The finals were held in Houston where Villanova upset North Carolina to win the championship on a three-point shot at the buzzer!

The NBA followed suit when the Cavaliers brought Cleveland their first sports championship in fifty-two years! Hubby was happy as he's from the suburbs of that city on the lake. As Rick watched the TV coverage, he wondered which speck was his nephew in the multitudes and was probably secretly envious because he wasn't there too.

Even car racing re-wrote history when both the June and July NASCAR races at Pocono Speedway had to be postponed due to weather as well as the Indycars at Texas Motor Speedway finishing the end of the

June race in August due to weather. Weather delays are never fun for fans as a lot of the spectators travel in and postponements cause havoc on hotels, car rentals, transportation and work plans. We know only too well after waiting out a few ourselves only to be watching concession stand commercials on Big Hoss and covered cars on the track as the rain dripped off our hair and clothes.

But no greater history was made with the conclusion of the Major League Baseball season! For a while, it looked like both Texas teams, the Astros and Rangers were destined for the playoffs. Houston had a September meltdown, and then the best in the American League Texas Rangers found themselves swept by the Toronto Blue Jays in the 1st round of the playoffs. Our home became a war zone with my husband's Cleveland Indians and my Boston Red Sox meeting in the AL Championship. I was the queen of trash-talking only to eat my words as Rick's Indians swept Boston and moved on to the World Series.

I quickly found myself OK with the loss when I realized that I was watching sports history unfold yet again! The Indians were in the World Series in 1997 when they lost in extra innings in game seven to the Florida Marlins. They hadn't won the title since 1948. The Cubs hadn't won the title since 1908, and hadn't made it to the World Series since 1945 – the infamous series where the Billy-goat curse was put on the team.

We were witnessing one of the two longest championship draughts in baseball finally come to an end! It looked like destiny was going to hang onto the coattails of the Cavaliers and side with the Tribe, who jumped out to a lead of three games to one. Then Chicago shocked themselves and the Indians not to only to piece together back-to-back wins, but they also forced a game seven and won in extra innings! . . . I just wonder if sports will ever repeat a year like 2016!