

# The missed photo that wasn't

Dozens of the United States' best sports photojournalists are not vying today – Friday – to take the Major League Baseball picture of the year.

That photo would have shown Terry Francona, the manager of the Cleveland Indians, walking past the “Green Monster” wall in Boston's Fenway Park, wearing the most politically incorrect baseball cap on the planet. (That would be the blue cap with a red bill, featuring a horribly stereotyped, toothy red-faced American Indian nicknamed “Chief Wahoo” sporting a large feather in his hair.)

Francona – son of Tito Francona, a popular Indians player for a few years in the 1960s – was unceremoniously fired by Boston after the 2011 season despite piloting the Red Sox to two world championships. After spending a year's purgatory in TV sports, he was hired this year to manage the “mistake-by-the-lake” boys of Cleveland, and in one year he managed to take a team that had lost 90 games in 2012 to the postseason one-game wild-card playoff against the Tampa Bay Rays.

Alas, the Rays deflated the Indians' dream of getting to (and winning) the World Series – something they've not done in 65 years of missed opportunities, low salaries, “the catch” and the curses of Rocky Colavito and Jose Mesa. The 4-0 score devastated Indians fans well-used to such ignominy. And, in the process, the Rays deprived photojournalists of the professional joy of elbowing each other out of the way as they positioned themselves to take Francona's photo as he walked triumphantly into the sports cathedral of his former employer. So much for the missed photo op that never was.

But as Indians fans have told sports journalists since 1948: “Wait until next year!”

*William A. Babcock is editor of Gateway Journalism Review. He is the senior ethics professor of the SIU Carbondale School of Journalism.*