

On the Passing of Jose Fernandez

BY RAHUL UPADHYA
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Last week, Jose Fernandez, a 24-year-old pitcher for the Miami Marlins, tragically passed away in a boating accident, along with two friends. He came to the U.S. as a young teenager from Cuba, saving his own mother from drowning during the journey. After attempting several times to arrive in the U.S., including some jail time, Fernandez was driven by a genuine desire to play baseball at the highest level.

Fernandez was finally able to accomplish this in 2013, zipping past Double-A and Triple-A. He had a magnificent debut with Miami, courtng a 12–6 record with a 2.19 ERA in 172.2 innings and 187 strikeouts. This resulted in a National League Rookie of the Year award and a third-place finish in the Cy Young race, behind fellow aces Clayton Kershaw and Adam Wainwright, along with an All-Star Game appearance.

A low point in Fernandez's career was when he underwent Tommy John surgery in 2014, but he mightily has bounced back from his torn ulnar collateral ligament (UCL). This season, he has been in contention for the National League Cy Young award all year, with a sparkling 2.86 ERA, an insane 253 strikeouts, and another All-Star Game appearance.

It was not just Fernandez's performance on the field that caught players' and fans' eyes. Part of his story will always be his true love of the sport.

Manager of the Miami Marlins Don Mattingly said it best.

"I see such a little boy in him [...] There's just this joy in him when he played [...] The passion he felt about playing, that's what I think about," Mattingly said.

This passion was not embraced by the league, at first. As a rookie, Fernandez slammed a home run in the massive Marlins Park against the Atlanta Braves. It was his first homerun in the big leagues, so he was justifiably thrilled. Brian McCann, a catcher for the Braves at the time, spoke to Fernandez as he crossed home plate,

which cleared the benches of both teams and led to altercations between various players on both teams.

Jose Fernandez never tried to justify what he did. He accepted responsibility, not wanting to burn unnecessary bridges.

As a result, Fernandez was the epitome of what the game is bound to become over the next generation. He was the type of player who would celebrate his own success, while recognizing and admiring the greatness of others. One time, Fernandez swung and missed at a nasty breaking ball from L.A. Dodgers starter Kenta Maeda. Rather than be upset with himself for striking out, he walked to the dugout amazed at Maeda's success. He had the candid look of a person who was thrilled to be playing baseball, no matter what.

The Cuban native also showed generosity towards the city of Miami, using his stardom to give back to the community. One of the countless stories involved the account of David Herrera, a Special Olympics coach for Miami-Dade county. Herrera and one of the kids from the Special Olympics Florida witnessed Fernandez's final game only a few days before he passed away.

"After the game, all the players kept walking by and not one would stop to sign autographs," Herrera said. "Then out comes Jose. Gives his mom, grandmother, pregnant girlfriend a kiss, and comes straight to us to sign autographs and take pics. Great human being. Such a pleasure to watch, man."

Fernandez embodied what every baseball player should aspire to be.

As such a young player with so much potential, it is crushing to see Jose Fernandez leave the sport too soon. MLB will be worse off without this generational player—someone who played the game with not only success, but grit, passion, and respect for others, including the fans.

Fernandez honored every aspect of baseball, and truly was an archetype of the American Dream.

Upadhyia is a member of the Class of 2017.

Event Inspires Other Fundraisers



JACK PHELAN / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior Wide Receiver Kyle Allegrini rushes the ball through a crowd of opponents at Saturday's game against RPI.

FOOTBALL FROM PAGE 1

Kish became passionate about cancer awareness after his mother passed away during his sophomore year at the University.

"I wanted to make as big as a positive impact as I can on this campus to show those who have battled and are currently battling breast cancer that we're here to support them, as well as to support the goal of finding a cure one day," the senior said.

True to Kish's word, UR has made a difference.

Last year, the Relay for Life branch here fundraised \$38,000—and the football team was the biggest contributor of the year, raising \$9,400, all through word-of-mouth

and social media advertising.

Other UR sports teams have participated in similar events to support charitable causes.

The softball team has a yearly t-shirt sale to "Strike Out Cancer." Each September, the field hockey team plays in a CURE Cancer game in support of pediatric cancer awareness month. Each member of both teams competing donates \$5 to the CURE Childhood Cancer Association, and, in return, wears a pair of gold shoelaces.

"On college campuses and just in general, sports and athletics are really in the media and paid attention to," senior field hockey midfielder Tiffany White said. "When a team supports a cause, it sheds more

light on it and how that it's important."

Similar to UR Football, the field hockey team will be hosting a breast cancer awareness game for the first time at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 23 against St. Lawrence University.

The support of charitable causes by UR sports teams is growing, and looks to continue to expand into the future.

And although Saturday's Liberty League matchup did not end up in favor of the 'Jackets, the game achieved its larger purpose.

"We're hoping to make the awareness event become the first home game of October every year," Kish said.

Douglas is a member of the Class of 2017.

Please Recycle this Paper

DIDN'T HIT
THE GYM?

WRITE FOR
SPORTS INSTEAD.

EMAIL SPORTS@
CAMPUSTIME.ORG

University of Rochester Program of Dance and Movement presents:

**PAST, PRESENT,
AND FUTURE**

DANCES BY FACULTY, ALUMNI, AND STUDENTS

October 8th, 2016 3-4PM

SPURRIER DANCE STUDIO

Celebrating the dedication of a new state-of-the-art dance floor!



Tickets \$5

On sale at the Common Market or at the door

Call for more information at 585-273-5150

or visit our website at www.sas.rochester.edu/dan