

For a generation of Chicago sports fans, Ryne Sandberg has a place on the Windy City's Mount Rushmore next to Walter Payton, Michael Jordan, and Carlton Fisk. Ryno, inducted into MLB's Hall of Fame in 2005, was a ten-time All-Star, won nine consecutive Gold Gloves, and still holds the major league record for second basemen with a .989 fielding percentage.

Ryne, along with his teammates, made 1984 a special summer for baseball fans. This season, he is managing the Philadelphia Phillies, the club that drafted him out of high school, and we chatted at spring training to talk balls with stitches and balls with dimples.

Ryne Sandberg

Chicago Cubs legend talks baseball, the summer of 1984, and a little golf.

by Dave Weretka

Interview

GOLFChicago: *How does it feel to come full circle as the manager of the team that initially drafted you?*

Ryne Sandberg: It feels very comfortable and natural. I've enjoyed seeing familiar faces from the past, including Dallas Green, Pat Gillick, and Ruben Amaro Jr. I've also now had a chance to bring former teammates and friends on my staff; Larry Bowa, Juan Samuel, and Pete Mackanin

GC: *Which one of your career highlights are you most proud of?*

Sandberg: Being part of two post-season teams was very special. The 1984 and 1989 teams were great, and to be able to share those [memories] led by Jim Frey and Don Zimmer was a great opportunity. Also, I'm proud of spending six seasons in the minor leagues preparing to be a major league manager, which I'll have the chance to do this season.

GC: *Where does the '84 season rank with all the years that you played?*

Sandberg: The '84 season is right at the top. I was 24 years old and it was my first taste of winning. The entire city of Chicago was electric all summer. It was an experience that I wanted to duplicate for the rest of my career. Not making it to a World Series still hurts, even today, but I now have the opportunity to bring that experience to the Phillies organization.

GC: *What did you enjoy most during your playing days here in Chicago?*

Sandberg: Other than the two winning seasons, I loved playing day baseball for most of my career at Wrigley Field. It gave me the opportunity to have a (somewhat) normal lifestyle where I was able to be home around 4 or 5 p.m. and have dinner



Photo courtesy of the Chicago Cubs

and the evening with my family. I also always saw the ball better at the plate during the day at Wrigley Field.

GC: Do you think the league is taking the right steps to make sure the game remains clean?

Sandberg: Yes, I know the aggressive testing policy is taking the right steps to keep the game clean. I do still believe that, in some cases, we may need to have a longer penalty and to make the penalty more severe.

GC: When did you pick up the game of golf and who was influential in leading you to the game we love?

Sandberg: I believe it was when I was 10 years old. My brother, Del, who is 6 years older than me, cut two greens in our front and back yards. We would take a pitching wedge and hard plastic golf ball and play to each green from across the yard. When I was 12 or 13, we would ride our bikes, with clubs across the handlebars, to a couple of the courses in the Spokane [Washington] area. I grew up playing Indian Canyon, Downriver, and Hangman Valley.

GC: Which of your teammates did you enjoy getting out on the links with and why?

Sandberg: I enjoyed getting my first glimpse of Pebble Beach during an off day in San Francisco in 1984. A group of us went down for the day and teed off at Spyglass in the morning and Pebble Beach in the afternoon. We had two or three foursomes. Jodi Davis, Keith Moreland, Rick Sutcliffe, and Fergie Jenkins were all there.

GC: Favorite courses to play while in Chicago?

Sandberg: I've always enjoyed playing Shoreacres in Lake Bluff where I'm an honorary member. I've had many great rounds with my good friend Peter Bensinger and my son, B.R. I also love playing The Glen Club.

GC: Now that you've moved out of the Chicago area, what will you miss most about the city?

Sandberg: Probably the restaurants. Chicago has a great restaurant scene

and there were a few that we went to regularly. Ron of Japan is a great Japanese steakhouse that I miss. My family would go there often.

GC: What would you like to impress upon your players that is of greatest

importance as you begin this new chapter in your career?

Sandberg: Teaching my players the right way to play. Teaching them respect for the game and how to be the ultimate teammate.

