

DAN SHAUGHNESSY

# A different kind of love-hate relationship: Rooting against Tom Brady, LeBron James, the Lakers, and the Astros

By [Dan Shaughnessy](#) Globe Columnist, Updated October 9, 2020, 12:19 p.m.



Rajon Rondo and LeBron James are on the cusp of being part of Banner 17 for the Los Angeles Lakers, who will finally pull back even with the Celtics, who wrested the lead from them with their sixth championship in 1963. MARK J. TERRILL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The older I get, the longer this pandemic goes, the more I love to hate-watch.

I'm not talking about CNN, Fox News, or the debates. That's easy. Everybody hate-watches that stuff. I'm talking sports.

With the Bruins, Celtics, and Red Sox all done, and the Patriots barely playing once a week, the daily sports hate-watch has become my sustenance. It's a reason to go on living. It's one of my four major food groups.

Thursday night was hate-watch heaven. We got to see Tom Brady smiling through the pregame, telling everybody again [how it was time](#) to leave New England. Tom wanted warm weather and more fun. Swell.

Then we watched the Buccaneers commit a million penalties in a [20-19 loss](#) to the Chicago Bears. Even better, we saw 2020 Tompa Tom looking like 2019 pouty Tom in New England. Brady yelled at his teammates. He was Mr. Frowny Face all night long. When it was over, he ran off the field without acknowledging the Bears' Nick Foles, a pedestrian QB with a habit of beating Brady.

Most unbelievable of all, we saw Tom make a mental mistake. A huge one. Brady lost track of the downs as the Bucs tried to get into field goal range for a potential winning kick. After a fourth-down, game-ending incomplection, we saw Tom holding up four fingers, asking for another play. It appeared that Brady thought his final play was a third-down pass. It was not. This was like watching a big-league hitter swing and miss at strike three and stand in the box, waiting for the next pitch.

Anybody can make a mistake. No big deal. But Brady and the Bucs could not admit the mistake. Tampa coach Bruce Arians tried to cover for Brady, telling reporters that Tom knew it was fourth down. When Brady was asked, he dodged the question. He talked about being "up against the clock."

Please. What a baby. Just own it, Tom.

This was the best Brady hate-watch since the season opener when Tom threw a pick-6 and looked lost against the Saints.

My hate-watch weekend continued Friday when the Yankees were knocked out of the playoffs by the Rays, and then LeBron James and the Lakers were beaten again by the upstart Miami Heat in Game 5 of the NBA Finals. As hate-watching goes, this was almost as good as seeing Brady dissolve Thursday.

Nothing needs to be said about hate-watching the Yankees. It is part of our New England DNA. And it was sweet to see the underdog, no-name, low-payroll Rays beat the Despicable Them from New York.

Then we had Jimmy Butler and the underdog Heat stayin' alive in the bubble. Rooting against LeBron and the Lakers comes as naturally as rooting against the Yankees. If LA beats the Heat, the Lakers are going to tie the Celtics for most championships by an NBA franchise (17). Since the heady days of Red Auerbach and Bill Russell, the Celtics have enjoyed the clear distinction of being the NBA's winningest team. The Celtics did much of

this winning at the expense of the Lakers, beating them seven times in the Finals with Russell in the middle. When Russell retired in 1969, Boston had 11 championships to the Lakers' five (all won when the Lakers played in Minneapolis, by the way). The Showtimers have done a lot of catching up in this century, winning five NBA titles since 2000.

Miami extending the Finals to a sixth game means the hate-watch smorgasbord is going to continue around here. On Sunday, we get to jeer LeBron vs. the Heat at 7:30 and also get Game 1 of the ALCS. On Monday, the NLCS begins. This means hate-watching the Astros and rooting for the Dodgers.

Let me explain:

All of America hate-watches the Astros. They won a World Series by cheating in 2017 and paid no price for it. Now they are trying to position themselves as victims. When the Astros beat the Twins in the first round of the expanded baseball playoffs, the official team tweet featured this beauty from shortstop Carlos Correa: "I know a lot of people are mad, I know a lot of people don't want to see us here. But what are they going to say now? We're a solid team, we play great baseball, we won a series on the road in Minnesota. So what are they going to say now?"

Easy answer, Carlos. "People" are going to say they hate you more than ever now. You cheated and got away with it. You didn't even play .500 baseball in 2020, but you got into the playoffs because of the phony expansion to 16 teams. Now you're looking for love?

No love. We will hate-watch the Astros in the ALCS. And maybe in the World Series.

The Dodgers are playing the Braves in the NLCS and this presents a more subtle form of hate-watching here in Boston. I am rooting for the Dodgers because it's a vicarious way to hate-watch the Red Sox. The disgrace of the 2020 Sox will be complete when we see Mookie Betts hoisting the World Series trophy over his head at the end of the month. The

Red Sox gave up on their season when they salary-dumped Betts to Los Angeles, and LA winning the World Series is a perfect ending to the worst Red Sox summer since 1932.

Please, let's have the Dodgers over the Astros in the 2020 Fall Classic. It would avenge Houston's phony title, won at the expense of the Dodgers. And it would complete the Red Sox humiliation for dealing Betts in the name of payroll flexibility.

It would be the best hate-watch since Tom forgot what down it was in Chicago on Thursday night.

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