

Bill Buckner, forever known for October error, passes

Former Red Sox dies after a long battle with Lewy body dementia

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Bill Buckner, a star hitter who became known for making one of the most infamous plays in major league history, died Monday. He was 69.

He died after a long battle with Lewy body dementia, Buckner's family said in a statement. The disease causes Alzheimer's-like symptoms along with movement and other problems.

"Bill fought with courage and grit as he did all things in life," his family said.

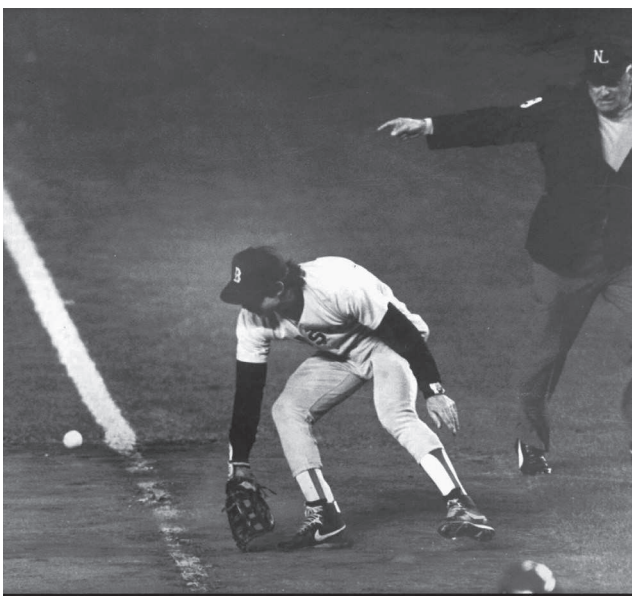
Buckner won an NL batting title, was an All-Star and got 2,715 hits in a 22-year career. He was long considered a gritty player, a gamer who would be welcome on any team. A reliable fielder, too.

But it was a little groundball in the 1986 World Series that forever changed his legacy.

Trying for their first crown since 1918, the Boston Red Sox led the New York Mets 5-3 going into the bottom of the 10th inning in Game 6 at Shea Stadium. The Mets tied it with two outs., then Mookie Wilson hit a trickler up the first base line that rolled through Buckner's legs, an error that let Ray Knight rush home from second base with the winning run.

The Red Sox lost 8-5 in Game 7, and their World Series drought continued until they won the championship in 2004.

In the aftermath of Boston's near-miss, Buckner became a target of fans in New England and beyond, with his misplay shown



AP Photo/Stan Grossfeld, File

Boston Red Sox first baseman Bill Buckner misplays the ball during Game 6 of the 1986 World Series against the New York Mets.

over and over on highlight reels.

Buckner was released by the Red Sox the following summer, went on to play for the Angels and Royals, and returned to Boston for his final season in 1990, playing 22 games.

In 2008, Buckner accepted an invitation to throw out the first ball for the home opener at Fenway Park as the Red Sox celebrated winning another title.

Buckner drew loud cheers as he walked from the Green Monster in left field to the mound, and made his ceremonial toss to former teammate Dwight Evans.

Buckner said the moment was "probably about as emotional as it could get."

"I really had to forgive," he said later that day, "not the fans of Boston per se, but I would have to say, in my heart, I had to forgive the media for what they put me and my family through. So I've done that. I'm over that. And I'm just happy

that I just try to think of the positive. The happy things."

"You can look at that Series and point fingers in a whole bunch of different directions," Buckner said. "We did the best we could to win there and it just didn't happen and I didn't feel like I deserved" so much blame.

Cleveland manager Terry Francona was the Red Sox skipper that afternoon at Fenway. On Monday, with the Indians set to play in Boston, Francona reflected on that experience: "I thought it was kind of a healing moment, it seemed, for a lot of people and for him, I hope," Francona said. "You have to be up here to understand how people take things that happen. I thought that was a really cool moment."

Buckner lived in Boise, Idaho, after he finished playing. He was the hitting coach for the Chicago Cubs' minor league affiliate in Boise in 2012-13, owned three car dealerships and several commercial properties in Idaho.



AP Photo/Michael Dwyer

Boston Bruins' Charlie McAvoy, right, celebrates his goal against the St. Louis Blues with Marcus Johansson, left, during the second period of Game 1 of the Stanley Cup Final on Monday in Boston.

Kuraly, Bruins overcome early deficit, beat Blues 4-2 in Stanley Cup opener

By JIMMY GOLEN
Associated Press

BOSTON — Sean Kuraly scored to break a third-period tie and assisted on another goal to help the Boston Bruins rally from a two-goal deficit and beat the St. Louis Blues 4-2 on Monday night in Game 1 of the Stanley Cup Final.

Tuukka Rask stopped 18 shots for Boston, which fell behind 2-0 on goals from Brayden Schenn and Vladimir Tarasenko. But the Bruins outshot the Blues 18-3 in the second period — and 38-20 in the game — to take the opener in the best-of-seven series.

Brad Marchand added an empty-netter to clinch it.

Forty-nine years after Bobby Orr flew through the air following his Cup-clinching goal against St. Louis in the 1970 final, Boston defenseman Connor Clifton and Charlie McAvoy scored in the second period to tie it.

Jordan Binnington made

34 saves for the Blues, who haven't been back to the final since then. Game 2 is Wednesday night.

It had been 17,914 days since the Blues' last appearance in the Stanley Cup Final, when they lost to Orr's Bruins in four games.

They ran into a familiar problem: the Boston defense.

After taking advantage of Boston's slow start — the Bruins hadn't played since sweeping the Carolina Hurricanes in the conference final on May 16 — St. Louis jumped to a 2-0 lead.

Schenn made it 1-0 lead midway through the first period on a third-chance shot. In the first minute of the second, David Pastrnak got sloppy behind the Bruins' net and Schenn was there again, this time to pass it to Tarasenko in the slot to make it 2-0.

But just 76 seconds later, Clifton tipped in a pass from Kuraly to cut the deficit to one goal. And in the middle of the second, on the Bru-

ins' fourth power play of the game, McAvoy came right up the middle and wristed it past Binnington's glove to tie it.

It was still tied five minutes into the third when Noel Acciari, on Binnington's left, made a spin move and swept the puck across the crease to Kuraly. He steadied it with his skate and then poked it in with his stick to give the Bruins their first lead of the game.

The crowd, which had previously been most excited to see the 2011 champions waving banners before the game, began a chant of "Let's Go Bruins!" Although David Krejci's penalty quieted the building, it came back to life when Torey Krug, angry over a scuffle with David Perron in front of the St. Louis net, sped down the ice helmetless and flattened Robert Thomas.

After the whistle, fans chanted "We want the Cup!"

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