



Carol Yastrzemski with her daughters Susie (far left), MaryAnn and Cara at Fenway Park last night rooting for the 3000th hit. (Globe photo by Frank O'Brien)

Trials of the No. 1 Yaz Watcher

By Steve Marantz
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We call it Yaz Watching and we do it by pouring a beer as the man drags his sore ankles and heavy bat to the plate four times a night and attempts to hit a baseball once more with feeling. It is our surrogate pennant race.

He failed again last night, against the Yankees, so it's still one to go.

But if you are Carol Yastrzemski and you've watched Yaz, your husband, for 20 years, if you've cooked his sausage and raised his children, this canonization of a statistic is a merciless intrusion upon your life. You resent it, you've gone from smoking one pack a day to two, and you present a cheerful, brave front.

If you are Carol Yastrzemski, you want your husband to get his 3000th hit so badly you'll agonize over what coat and skirt to wear to the ballpark, because you're superstitious, and because in the '67 World Series he got a hit every time you bought a beer in the fourth inning.

"I've been telling him for three days to get this over with," you say. "I told him I think this is a plot to kill me."

You are the wife and you have always

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been the woman behind the legend, which means that the caré and feeding of the three daughters and one son and the organizing of the Yastrzemski clan, which arrived en masse from New York, is your job, not because anybody asked, but because it is expected of you. You are short of sleep and shorter on patience but when your husband leaves to go fishing at 9 o'clock in the morning you don't complain because he is trying to survive this ordeal the best way he can. Telephones ring in your dreams, and you grab quickly for the subconscious receiver so that he isn't disturbed.

The rhythms of your daily life are in abeyance. You are the mother and you are wondering what the good sisters at St. Joan of Arc are thinking down in Boca

Raton, Fla., waiting for your two youngest daughters a week late for school. Your first child, the oldest daughter, has missed her first day of college to see her father become more famous, and you are proud of her devotion.

"I like to complicate my life," you say on Monday when traffic was so bad on Storrow drive that the game was starting and you were a mile away from the park. So you hailed a motorcycle cop, asked for a siren escort, and reached your seat just before he batted. He didn't glance at you, but you thank God you made it in time, just in case.

You wait. Every nine batters you stand up and grip the rosary beads Msgr. Vincent Mackey gave you, not because you are religious in the way he is, but you have your own private faith and your own

quiet prayer. You aren't sure if they want you on the field for the ceremony after the hit, but in case they don't you will capture the moment with the new long-range lens you have bought for your camera. It will make a fine picture for his scrapbook.

You philosophize: "The baseball life is all you've known, and while you are grateful for it, you are curious. Your husband is 40 and your kids are getting older and you allow yourself the luxury of thinking about yourself. "My life is in turmoil," you say and try to figure out what comes next. You have an idea to use your conversational gift for interviewing people "like Phil Donahue," but you aren't sure your husband will approve.

Every nine batters you stand up and hope. Monday night your youngest daughter throws her confetti in disgust, you wonder if you'll be waiting "when the snow starts falling," and you aren't sure you'll be back at Fenway Tuesday night.

Of course you do come back, this time bringing the kids with helium-filled balloons, and when another hitless game passes into the autumn darkness you watch the balloons float away.