



# Rico Petrocelli's Tales from the Impossible Dream

## Red Sox

*Rico Petrocelli, Chaz Scroggins*

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## **Rico Petrocelli's Tales from the Impossible Dream Red Sox** Rico Petrocelli, Chaz Scroggins

By the end of 1966, the Boston Red Sox--the proud flagship franchise of the American League--were a team in serious trouble. The Red Sox had not won a pennant in 20 years and had not posted a winning record in eight. Pampered by their benevolent owner, Tom Yawkey, the Red Sox had developed a reputation as a team that cared more about having a good time than winning baseball games. The "Gold Sox" (or "Jersey Street Jesters") were sometimes playing before fewer than 1,000 fans at Fenway Park. Yawkey, disillusioned, began seriously considering selling the team or moving the franchise to another city.

Then, in 1967, a brash rookie manager named Dick Williams took charge of a hungry, but very young and inexperienced team that did not know how to win. A strict disciplinarian, Williams had no tolerance for nonsense, and he taught the Red Sox how to play the game right. Yet, when he predicted that the Red Sox would win more games than they'd lose in 1967, no one took him seriously. The Red Sox forged a 10-game, midseason winning streak, and 15,000 rabid fans converged on Logan Airport to greet them as they returned from the successful road trip, paralyzing the facility. Adopting the theme song from the hit Broadway musical, *Man of La Mancha*, the 1967 Red Sox season became "The Impossible Dream." The fans grew excited again and started flocking to Fenway Park or tuning their radios to the broadcasts of the games. Over the season's final six weeks, the Red Sox never led or trailed by more than 1 1/2 games. Three teams were still in the pennant race during their final game. When that day was over, the Red Sox had become the first and only team in major-league history to rise from ninth place to league champion.

Forty years later, the Red Sox remain indebted to the 1967 champions, and they will be indebted forever. Rico Petrocelli, one of Boston's most beloved athletes and a 24-year-old shortstop on that "Impossible Dream" team, recaptures the thrills of that improbable season through his unique anecdotes, chronicling both the nightmare that threatened to swallow an organization and the resurrection that would reinvigorate a team and a city that share the same heart.

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