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# West Word Web Exclusives



## Sports commentary

# Time for Milton Bradley to take his games elsewhere

**w Sarah Espinosa**  
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Coming from Tacoma, WA, as a kid and moving to Chicago was a challenge, but once I got here, I fell in love with the city. Chicago is one of the greatest places in America, which is clear to any resident of the metropolitan area—minus one.

Chicago Cubs right fielder, Milton Bradley, seems to have a different opinion and is not afraid to share it. According to the *Daily Herald*, Bradley thinks that Chicago is a downbeat city, and when asked if he liked the city, he had a shocking reply.

“It is just not a positive environment. I need a stable, healthy, enjoyable environment. There are too many people everywhere in your face with a microphone asking the same questions repeatedly. Everyone is just bashing you. You go out there and play harder than anybody on the field and never get credit for it. It’s just negativity,” Bradley said.

Now, I am not a Cubs fan, never have been. My dad grew up in New Jersey, so I am a die-hard Yankees fan. (Pause for boos.) However, I feel that the Cubs have some of the greatest fans in Major League Baseball, so Bradley’s surliness is annoying, even to me.

Cubs General Manager, Jim Hendry obviously agrees.

“There have been a lot of issues that we have lived with during the year,” Hendry told the *Daily Herald*. “I’m not going to let our great fans become an excuse; I’m not going to tolerate not answering questions from the media respectfully. Whether you feel like talking or not, it is part of our jobs. I am not going to allow disrespect to other people in that locker room and uniformed personnel.”

That last comment speaks volumes. It is one thing to bash the media and fans, but to treat teammates and team personnel poorly is unacceptable.

Cubs outfielder Reed Johnson doesn’t understand Bradley’s behavior, either. In the same *Daily Herald* piece, Johnson said, “I came from Toronto and just fell in love with the city and with the organization,” Johnson said. “It is hard for me to believe that you can come to this city, come to this organization and not enjoy your time here.”

I am glad that Hendry took a step forward and suspended Bradley. It is not the fans who win or lose the games, nor is it the media or anyone else in the city. Along with being a famous athlete come media, fans and other distractions. If

Bradley can’t stand the heat, he should get out of the kitchen; if he is not cut out for pressure, he shouldn’t be in the majors. Bradley’s attitude obviously affected the other team members as well, making *him* the source of negativity not his surroundings.

The problem is that Bradley signed a three-year contract worth \$30 million this year, a contract that is back loaded, with the bulk of the money, nearly \$23 million, to be paid next year and in 2011, money the Cubs would be required to eat if he were released.

For that, Hendry must share the blame. He felt that the Cubs needed another left-handed batter and figured Bradley would get the job done. Hendry took the gamble, hoping that the Cubs were picking up the winner from Texas who batted .321, with 22 home runs (HRs) and 77 runs batted in (RBI) during the 2008 season. Instead, at the time of his suspension, he was hitting .257, with 12 homers and 40 RBI in 124 games. As a point of comparison, Jake Fox, who was called up during the season from Triple-A Iowa, has 11 HRs and 43 RBI in 78 games. That is just embarrassing.

Instead of enhancing the lineup that won 97 games last year, Bradley failed to produce, his antagonistic personality got him suspended and now the Cubs’ front office personnel are debating whether or not to keep him.

While Hendry and his staff must be disappointed, they can’t claim surprise. Bradley has been a behavior problem everywhere he has played; the Cubs are his seventh team in his 10-year career.

His remaining contract aside, I think the Cubs should release him immediately. He is bringing unnecessary problems to the team and making a big deal out of what every professional athlete must endure. Plus, by all accounts, he is a cancer in the clubhouse. If he had a better attitude with the same statistics, or even if he had the same attitude but were producing better statistics, that would be a different story. However, all he is doing is making a fool of himself, embarrassing the team, and alienating his teammates, the media, the fans, and the city.

If he doesn’t want to be here, he should leave, and Hendry should show him the door. Don’t let it hit you on the way out, Milton. Like those of your namesake, we are bored with your games.



**Milton Bradley’s futility at the plate was just one reason for his rocky season.**  
Photo courtesy [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)