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Chicago Crosstown Classic Naming Rights Sold

The new owner of the Chicago Cubs, Tom Ricketts and family, has vehemently denied the possibility of selling the naming rights to Wrigley Field. This was one of the first questions asked of the new owners' last year. The naming rights to U.S. Cellular Field (aka Comiskey Park) were sold in 2003. U.S. Cellular purchased the rights for \$68 million over twenty years. Many still refer to the park as Comiskey.

Every summer in Chicago, the Cubs and White Sox play each other. Three games at Wrigley and three at Comiskey. Since the beginning of interleague play (1997), the White Sox lead the regular season series 37-35! These games' are marked on the calendar months ahead of time and the anticipation quickly builds. The Crosstown Classic showcases a myriad of jerseys, hats, and other memorabilia. It is not unusual to see a husband wearing a Sox shirt and his wife sitting next to him wearing a Cubs hat and jersey.

It was announced this week that BP (British Petroleum) purchased the naming rights to the Crosstown Classic. The contract was signed for three years and the winner of the BP Crosstown Cup with the most yearly wins will receive the BP trophy. "There will be a Chicago Motif to the Cup," according to White Sox Chief Marketing Officer Brooks Boyer. The trophy is currently being designed, but is expected to be more than three feet tall. "In addition to bragging rights, fans will have a chance to win prizes through this promotion, which will make the series even more fun", according to Cubs owner Tom Ricketts.

The financial terms of the contract have yet to be disclosed to the public, but each team is expected to generate one million dollars annually from the sponsorship.

The BP cup will create a tradition that will "officially" chronicle their competitive history. Similar traditions are currently ongoing in collegiate programs across the country (Little Brown Jug) and invoke the competitive spirit not just in the players', but fans as well. Adding a trophy further enhances the competition and brings awareness to the game.

