

The ballpark in Pittsburgh is right over the Allegheny River, and the day started with a walk across the Roberto Clemente Bridge, which is closed to cars on game day. The span takes you from the cheap \$8 per day parking across the river right to the center field entrance.

I've heard many times how pretty the park is and how picturesque, and that's very true during the walk up. You have a lot of rental boats below, and the picturesque upper deck is seen over the outfield wall as you cross the river. Strangely enough, once we were seated on the first base side of home plate all we really saw was the top span of the bright yellow Clemente bridge and the top of the buildings across the river. As a ballgame view from inside the park, it wasn't remarkable. It did have one really nice area that featured rather comfortable outdoor furniture behind first base, with string lights overhead and a couple closed circuit monitors as you faced out overlooking the junction of the three rivers.

As a former organist, I enjoyed the organ music playing the pregame music rather than canned music. I also noticed there didn't seem to be any bass pedal so it was more likely a synthesizer, but I'll take it.

During the National Anthem, I realized that the sound I was hearing was perfectly in sync with the young girl's lips moving on the big screen, as well as what I was seeing on the field. The sound system was really good and real time. It's also a good thing - because in an unusual move, the girl was facing center field. Maybe it was good that she could see the words that way, but it would really throw me off if I saw my own face thirty feet high while I was singing, as the video was pretty close up the whole time.

Speaking of the jumbotron, our seats were mostly behind home plate on the first base side, sort of looking straight down the third base foul line, but surprisingly we were also behind the dugout. Those go farther back towards home plate than I'm used to. It was the perfect spot to see the big screen and the field of play, though – and a glance to the right caught the out of town scoreboard on the right field wall.

Bottom of the first inning, and Josh Harrison leads off – and there he is walking in the video in front of his name and stats which are about at mid-thigh level – at which time he steps backwards over the ledge where the stats are, so that it looks like he's behind a window – he then reaches up with both arms and pulls down a window shade that is his standard picture with the Pirates background. It was cool. The second player comes to bat, and does the exact same thing. As does the third. By the second inning, it's so idiotic that I'm mesmerized. I keep hoping one of them will walk in from the other side, lead with the other foot while they're climbing the ledge, or maybe just raise one arm to bring down the shade. Nope. It was a huge relief when they came up the second time through the order and just showed the picture.

Halfway through the game, I noticed something different. When Billy Hamilton climbed to the top of the center field fence in a vain attempt of catching a homer, I realized just how high up he was. The fences (they were flexible enough for him to hang on when he did that really impressive jump) were at least fifteen feet high. No dramatic reaches into or out from the fans, but much easier to avoid any sort of interference or calamities.

There was a good selection of food, with two unusual things – the Primanti sandwiches and the pizza logs. The pizza logs in the picture looked sort of like the pizza egg roll things in the freezer section of the grocery store, only long – Primanti Brothers is a local chain (the USBL guys met at the original one) that has sandwiches (I got the "Pittsburger") served with slaw and fries. It wasn't what I expected. It's two

pieces of thick white sandwich bread (more than half of which were torn) with the fries, slaw, and whatever meat stuffed together in between them – which explains why they were sort of ripped to shreds. Served with slaw and fries now has a whole different meaning.

The Milwaukee sausage races have caught on everywhere, and here there were five racing pierogis (come to think of it, I don't remember seeing any of those in the concession stands). Now if this was a sponsored event, they messed up – because unlike the others I've seen, this one didn't seem to be for fun. It was a real race between six employees running in pierogie suits, and it had their real first names on the board instead of any stupid gimmicks (the Almond Brothers, Johnny Cashew, etc., even in the Richmond Flying Squirrels peanut races). Who would think anyone would miss the stupid gimmicks? Surprisingly enough, I did – not being related to any of them or being a season ticket holder or anything, it seemed sort of flat.

In the end, this was a really nice park and a great place to see a ballgame – but as far as any unique experiences that I'll brag about seeing or remember for years, it did seem to fall kind of flat.