Pete Rose

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In a bold move that has surprised Democrats, confused traditional Republicans, and caused a few Tea Partiers' heads to explode, President Obama has just tapped 69 year old **baseball legend Pete Rose** as his **new Chief of Staff**, replacing Rahm Emmanuel who is off to Chicago to run for mayor. Mr. Rose, known as "Charlie Hustle" for his aggressive play, finished his 23 year playing career (1963-1986), with the all-time major league record of 4,256 hits. Also, he earned one Most Valuable Player award, appearanced 17 times in the All Star game, and owns three World Series rings. Indisputedly, by all measures, Mr. Rose hustled to one of the greater careers in baseball.

However, in one of the sadder episodes in baseball history, the term "Charlie Hustle" took on a more sinister meaning, when,in 1989, Mr. Rose accepted a lifetime ban from baseball for gambling on baseball games, although he denied betting on his own team, the Cincinnati Reds. In a 2004 autobiography, however, he admitted to betting on Reds games, although he claimed he never bet against the Reds. This ban led to Mr. Rose being permanently barred from induction into the Hall of Fame, although, recently, sentiment has softened somewhat.

More guts and hustle for the White House. President Obama's choice, though unexpected, is at least a bold one. Rahm Emmanuel, who Mr. Rose rreplaces, struck too many presidential and democratic insiders as too tight-fisted with access to the Oval Office. Even cabinet members felt frozen out. In addition, many progressives felt that Emmanuel pushed compromise with the right wing GOP rather than actively fighting for the President's mandate for change. Responsibility for a number of diplomatic missteps were laid at Emmanuel's door. Finally, his sometimes brittle and autocratic style offended many within and without the White House. By the time Mr. Emmanuel signaled his departure, a sigh of relief was audible.

Against that backdrop, one can understand the choice of Pete Rose to the post, White House Chief of Staff, most identified with pushing a president's agenda through Congress. In many ways, President Obama's choice makes great sense. His forward looing agenda for change has been hijaceked to limbo by obstruction within the GOP and his own Democratic party Blue Dog wing. One GOP senator, James Coburn (R-OK), is a virtual Dr. No, having personally put on hold scores of proposals, without a vote, using one of his individual privileges as a senator. The compromises and defeats of the Dems in Congress - even though they hold a "technical" majority - are well known and with the Midterm elections coming up, a game changing move was needed.

And no one can change the game like Pete Rose. Now, obstructionists of *both* parties will face a high energy, fearless, and determined man:

I'd walk through hell in a gasoline suit to play baseball.

Somebody's gotta win and somebody's gotta lose and

I believe in letting the other guy lose.

Sliding headfirst is the safest way to get to the next base,

I think, and the fastest.

Chief of Staff Rose will demand much of his staff, and will, most importantly, have his eyes on the *win* not the tie. About his years as a manager, Rose opined, "The manager of a team is like a stagecoach, he can't move unless he has the horses." That metaphor signals a Chief of Staff with a whip in his hand, striving for mastery of a re-dedicated staff. Exactly what a frightened and moribund White House needs. Coming with only a month remaining before the Midterms, Mr. Rose may very well energize White House communications and concentrate efforts on messages of power rather than apology, of fearlessness rather than kowtowing, and of strength rather than weakness bordering on wimpiness. As Rose said, "Somebody's gotta win and somebody's gotta lose and *I believe in letting the other guy lose*."

Some problems may appear, of course. Will his resolve flag - will, for example, Mr. Rose begin betting on legislation? Will the White House staff become little more than a betting pool? Will Chief of Staff Rose require the White House staff to wear uniforms? Will he extend that requirement to the entire executive branch? Will he literally slide into Congressmen and Senators he disagrees with? How will that affect the budget? Will he insist upon President Obama issuing him a pardon to grease his way into the baseball Hall of Fame. Failing that, would he go so far as to demand that Congress modify or repeal the antitrust exemption granted to baseball? Will he "bench" or "cut" cabinet members? Will sunflower seeds become the primary White House snack? And what about the spitting and crotch manipulating?

Yes, there will be difficulties with a Chief of Staff named Pete Rose, but I'm putting this blog on record. Applause, Mr. President! Bravo!

To the critics who will object to your choice, Mr. President. Remember, legislative battles are often won by a *single vote*. Now you have a Chief of Staff in the legendary Pete Rose who fully understands that:

The team that wins two-thirds of its one run games usually wins the pennant.

Chief of Staff Pete Rose will keep his eye on the ball and *paste it*!

*See the ball; hit the ball.*Pete Rose

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