

Comet 17P/Holmes, the Red Sox Comet

by Jim, October 2007



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Before the days of the telescope and modern astronomy, comets were considered omens, both good and bad, due to their unpredicted and sudden appearance in the sky. Today we know what comets are, where they come from, and by observation we can calculate their orbits to predict when and how good their next appearance will be with reasonable accuracy. While I'm not at all superstitious, it does seem an unseemingly rare coincidence that a significant astronomical event occurred during each of the two Red Sox wins.

This comet may become known as the Red Sox Comet, as I was observing and photographing it at Seagrave Memorial Observatory on Thursday night, under a full moon, while listening to Game 2 on the radio. Two days of cloudy weather followed, but sudden clearing on Saturday night led to a flurry of [photography](#) between innings of Game 3, and more photography before, during, and after Game 4. Favorable weather for the first half of this week will offer even more opportunities to observe and photograph this rare event. If you haven't yet seen the comet, it is still [naked-eye visible](#) in Perseus.