

Ron Antonelli/Daily News

Bob Sheppard appears remote on scoreboard yesterday, pulling lever to reveal just one game remaining at Yankee Stadium, his workplace since 1951 (below).

Even a Sheppard can lose his way from time to time

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BETWEEN HIS majestic delivery and his unerring diction, Bob Sheppard will long be the standard by which public-address announcers will be judged. But that doesn't mean he's perfect.

"If you do this for over 50 years, you are going to make a few mistakes," Sheppard says with a soft laugh.

There are three gaffes Sheppard remembers most vividly. In 1982, the Yankees acquired lefthanded reliever Shane Rawley from the Mariners. Rawley would be moved into the rotation a year later, but while he was still in the pen he was summoned into a game with one out. The batter ripped a line-drive double to tie the score. In his tiny booth adjacent to the press box, Sheppard didn't realize his microphone was live.

"That's relief pitching for you, boy!" he said. And the whole stadium heard him.

The Yankees wound up winning, but that did nothing to make Sheppard any less mortified by his mistake. He made a rare clubhouse visit to apologize to Rawley.

"I never even heard it, Bob," Rawley said.

Twenty years earlier, Sheppard was behind the microphone at Philadelphia's Franklin Field for one of the sever-

al Army-Navy games he called. President Kennedy was in attendance. It was a brutally cold day. Following chief-executive custom, the President spent the first half on one sideline, the second on the other. As Kennedy walked across the field at intermission, Sheppard said, "Look at the President. He doesn't even have on a topcoat."

Again, Sheppard didn't know his mike was live — and didn't know what happened until he spoke with his wife, Mary, after the game.

"Well, you sure blew it today," Mary Sheppard told her husband.

"What do you mean?"

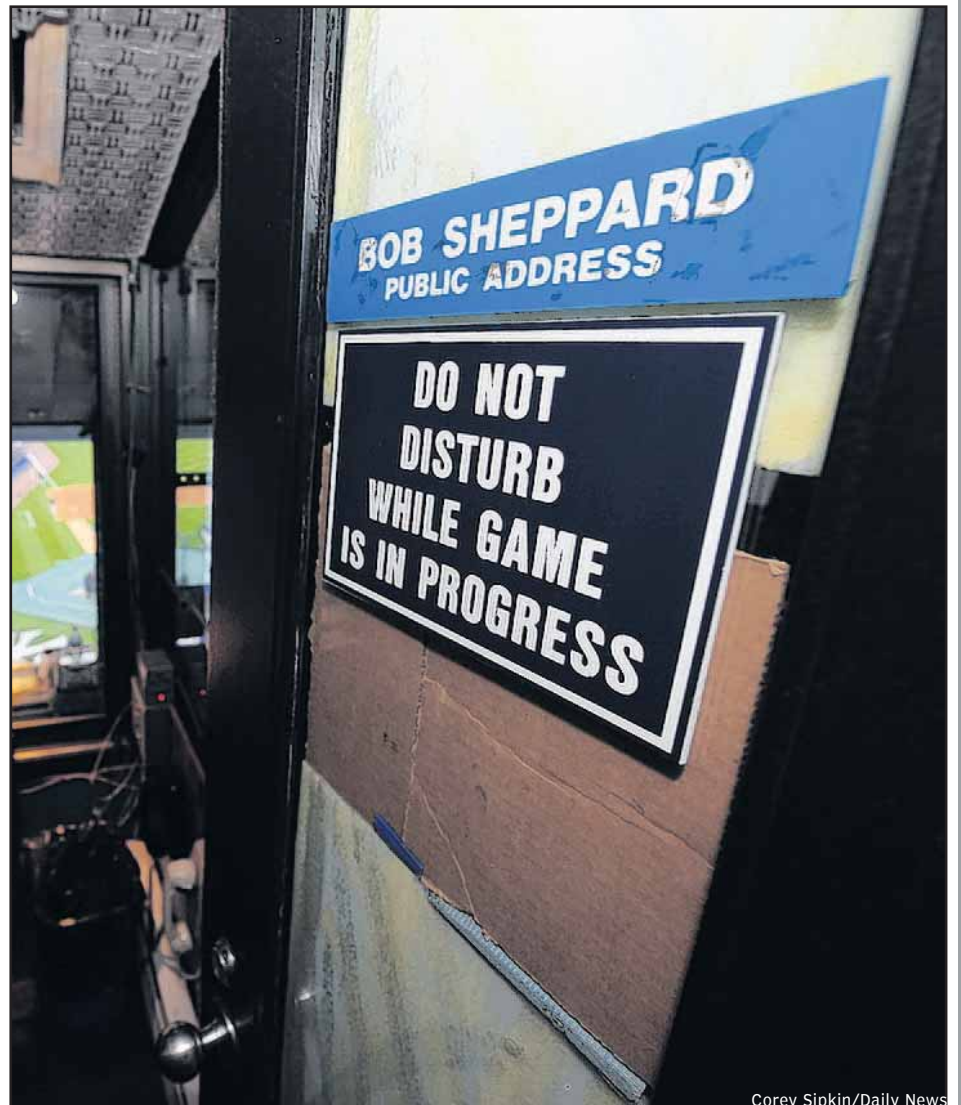
"The whole stadium heard what you said about the President not wearing a topcoat," she said.

"That went out?" a chagrined Sheppard said.

"It certainly did," his wife told him.

Maybe his most embarrassing episode, though, came the day the football Giants opened Giants Stadium, Oct. 10, 1976. He watched the Yankees play the Royals in an ALCS game before driving to East Rutherford. Settling behind the new microphone for the first time, Sheppard began with his trademark opening:

"Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen," he said. "Welcome to Yankee Stadium."



Corey Sipkin/Daily News