

[**PLAYOFF BUZZ**  **ANTHONY RIEBER**]
 anthony.riever@newsday.com

Stadium roof? A retractable plan

DETROIT
Since it apparently rains every day in New York now, the question has been asked a lot recently: Why doesn't 3-year-old Yankee Stadium have a retractable roof?

If it did, then Friday's suspension of Game 1 of the ALDS would not have happened. The rain that threatened play during the resumption of Game 1 Saturday would have bounced harmlessly off the roof. So, too, would the drops that pelted Derek Jeter when he struck out in the ninth inning of Sunday's Game 2.

Rain delays? Gone. Rainouts? None. Trying to figure out whether to go to the stadium or stay home when you spent hundreds of dollars on tickets? A thing of the past.

Stadiums built for the Yankees and Mets cost more than \$2 billion. So why didn't anyone think to put lids on the darn things?

It turns out retractable domes were part of the new stadium planning for both teams. Ten years ago. But not for the stadiums that opened in 2009.

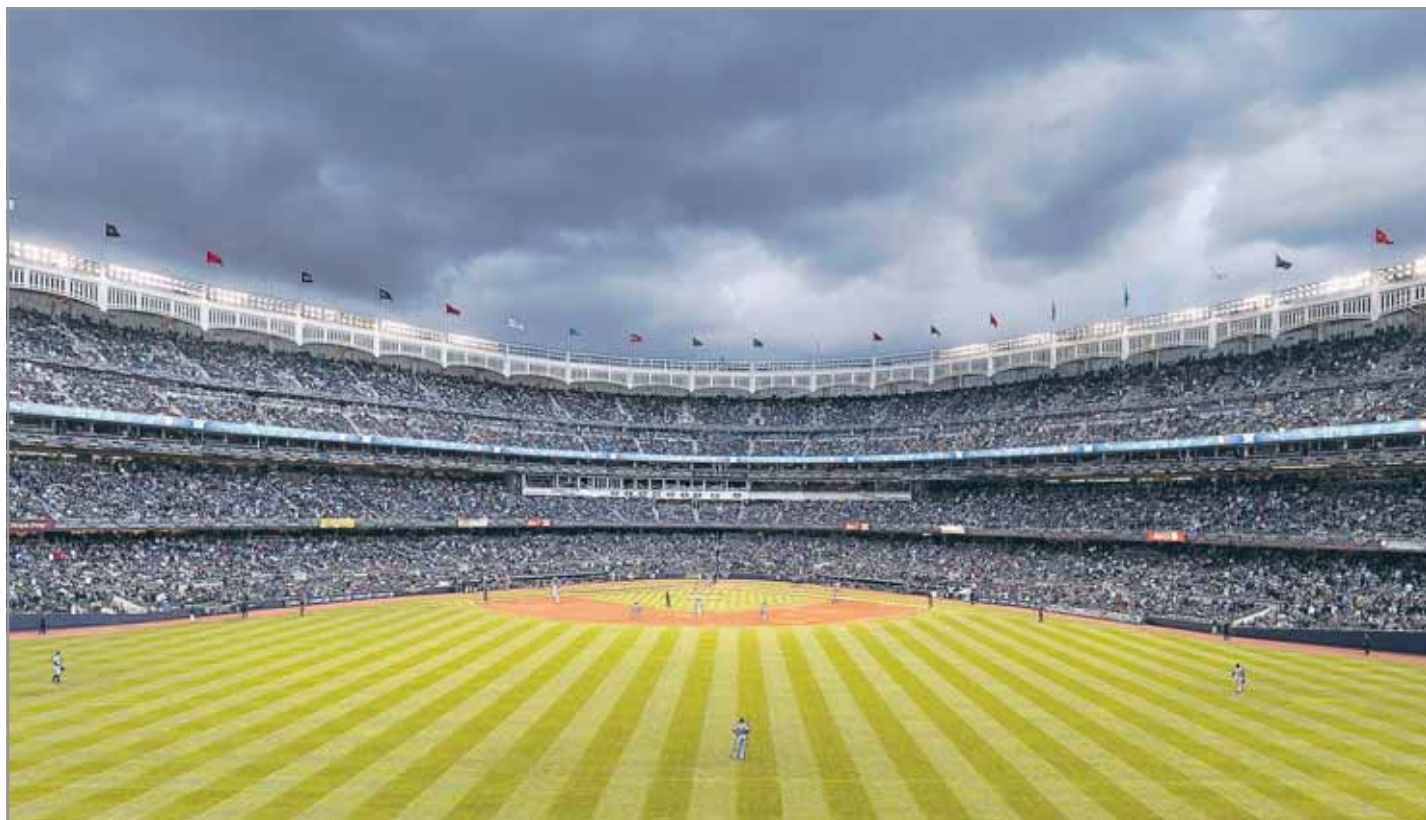
In 2001, then-Mayor Rudy Giuliani unveiled a nonbinding agreement with the Steinbrenners and Wilpons for new stadiums during his last days in office. Retractable roofs were part of the deal.

But new Mayor Michael Bloomberg quickly scuttled that agreement after taking office, citing the city's damaged economy after the 9/11 attacks.

When the stadium deal resurfaced a few years later, the roofs were gone.

"There were some renderings early on that had a dome, but really they were just renderings," Yankees president Randy Levine said yesterday in a telephone interview. "The real plans that led to the new stadium — a roof was never really contemplated."

Money, of course, was part of the reason the tops were popped. Levine said it would have added about \$350 million to the cost of Yankee Stadium, which already had an estimat-



Like Yankee Stadium, Comerica Park in Detroit doesn't have a roof, but luckily it wasn't raining at start of last night's ALDS Game 3.

Dome sweet dome

The six baseball teams with retractable roof stadiums:

Team	Stadium	Year Opened/To Open
Toronto Blue Jays	Rogers Centre	1989
Arizona D-backs	Chase Field	1998
Seattle Mariners	Safeco Field	1999
Houston Astros	Minute Maid Park	2000
Milwaukee Brewers	Miller Park	2001
Florida Marlins*	New Marlins Ballpark	2012

*Will change name to Miami Marlins and move into new ballpark next season.

ed price tag of \$1.3 billion.

But for the late Yankees owner George Steinbrenner, it was more than just a cost issue, Levine said.

"The Boss very much wanted it to look like the original Yankee Stadium and have all the tradition and everything involving Yankee Stadium," Levine said. "No matter how many architects and engineers you went to see, a roof is a giant physical thing and you couldn't make the building

look like Yankee Stadium. All the attention would be drawn to the roof.

"Rainouts were never really a problem. We always had two or three. This year is a freak year. To try and basically shoe-horn in that — because of the freak weather this year, we should have had a roof — doesn't make sense. This was a very, very unusual, freaky year."

And how. The Yankees have had 23 games affected by

CAN YOU PICTURE THAT?

DETROIT — Artist's renderings of Yankee Stadium with a retractable roof that were prepared in 2001 are available for viewing on a website called stadiumpage.com.

Click on the link for "Unrealized Concepts." It's a treasure trove of ballparks that never happened around North America.

Included are renderings of a Mets stadium with a retractable roof; a stadium the Mets proposed for New York's failed bid to win the 2012 Summer Olympics; a Yankees stadium in Manhattan with the Empire State Building in the background; a Meadowlands baseball stadium, and Branch Rickey's design for a domed stadium for the Brooklyn Dodgers from 1956.

— ANTHONY RIEBER

weather this season, home and away, including nine postponements and one suspended play-off game. And many other games were played in conditions that ranged from less than ideal to awful.

Told that it was drizzling yesterday in Detroit, where the

Yankees were scheduled to play the Tigers last night in ALDS Game 3, Levine referenced a character from a classic comic strip.

"Wherever we go," Levine said. "Remember L'il Abner? Joe Btfsplk with the black rain cloud over him? That's us."

NEWSDAY PHOTO / J. CONRAD WILLIAMS JR.