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Four remain pride of the Yankees

By Jayson Stark
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NEW YORK -- They stood together, arms around each other's shoulders, on a makeshift podium in the middle of a still-packed stadium as euphoria rained from the sky.

[Mariano Rivera](#). [Derek Jeter](#). [Andy Pettitte](#). [Jorge Posada](#).

They had done this before. And not just once. But somehow, this time was different. This time was special. This night was one that made them want to freeze time and hold onto a moment that was nine years in the making.

The clock had already blown past midnight on the night the [New York Yankees](#) won their 27th World Series. And the Gang of Four who connected two Yankee generations was going to savor this one for many more ticks of that clock.

So Derek Jeter held the World Series trophy in his hands and looked out at the ecstatic masses.

"Now," he said, cradling that trophy as if he might never let it go, "this thing is right where it belongs."

Behind the four of them, the scoreboard told the tale of the final World Series game, the final baseball game of 2009: Yankees 7, Phillies 3.

But scoreboards never tell you the whole story. And for these four men, this was a night that couldn't have followed a more perfect script if George Steinbrenner had been able to personally sign the big script-writing free agent in the sky to an \$8 zillion contract.

The Great Mariano got the final five outs. Derek Jeter slapped three hits. Andy Pettitte won the clinching game of a postseason series for the *sixth* time. Jorge Posada was the man catching that first pitch by Pettitte and that final pitch by Rivera.

There was something fitting about that -- the four of them finding their names in this particular box score -- because they are the men who connect all the dots in the Yankees' universe.

You might have trouble convincing a Cubs fan or a Giants fan or an Indians fan that it has been a long time since the Yankees had themselves a night like this. But it's longer than you think.

The last time they did this, the men squirting champagne all over the Gang of Four were long-lost names like [David Justice](#), and [Denny Neagle](#), and even [Jose Canseco](#). It feels like those guys haven't played in the big leagues in 90 years, not nine. But the last time the Yankees floated down the Canyon of Heroes, those men were riding right along with them.

In between titles, [Mike Mussina](#) came and went. [Jason Giambi](#) came and went. Even [Raul Mondesi](#), [Rondell White](#) and [Karim Garcia](#) came and went.

