

# TNP

If winter comes, can spring be far behind? Not in the land of baseball, where winter is but latent spring, a warm climate for reflection on past joys and anticipation of new ones. TNP's intrepid weather prediction: Minnesota's winter (made over as re-Twin) will be unusually balmy this year.

As the pennant race and postseason play recede into perspective, their accounts added to the game's swelling ledger, the old gods take to the field with renewed vigor. This is their season: Move over, Kirby and Ozzie; come on back, Babe and Lou. For in the mind of the fan, as in Stuart Leeds' lovely drawing on the cover, the snow may fall but the grass is ever green.

This issue of *The National Pastime* is filled with the special pleasures of the hot-stove league:

*Historical Excavation:* What ever happened to Eddie Gaedel? Was Honus Wagner a racist? What was the real story behind the Willard Hershberger suicide? Was Senator catcher Jim French a hidden star? These teaser questions only point to the articles by, respectively, Jim Reisler, Adie Suehsdorf, James Barbour, and Merritt Clifton—let them speak for themselves.

*Statistical Rumination:* The fault, dear reader, is not in ourselves, but in our stars—that's the turn John Holway works on the Bard in his stimulating look at astrological influences on baseball performance. In the sabermetric area, one of the hottest questions of recent years has concerned clutch hitting, paralleling the old conundrum about the curve ball: Does it truly exist or is it an optical illusion? Bob Kelly makes his case on behalf of clutch pitching; check it out. See also our format innovation for this edition (everything old is new again): the reprinting of a significant but neglected article of long ago, this time a 1916 piece by F.C. Lane that you'd think was written by Bill James or Pete Palmer.

*Controversy:* Can baseball bridge the gap between Nicaragua and the U.S.? Jay Feldman thinks so, and relates a neat bit of inter-American cooperation. Should we rip some plaques off the walls of the Hall of Fame, or establish a separate wing for super-superstars? John McCormack has some provocative suggestions. And what about Macmillan's *Baseball Encyclopedia*? Mixing fast-food metaphors, is Big Mac more doughnut or hole? Surely the one book that any serious baseball fan must own, Big Mac has a fascinating history, detailed for the first time, and splendidly, by Frank V. Phelps.

*Profiles:* Ossie Bluege, a lion in winter, is deftly captured by Jane Levy. And Joe Overfield looks back affectionately at Lee Allen, the unique individual whose knowledge and spirit infuse not only the Macmillan *Encyclopedia* but SABR itself.

Special thanks for their help with this issue go to Mark Alvarez, Mark Rucker, Paul Adomites, and as always the good people at Ag Press.

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Editor: John Thorn  
Associate Editor: Mark Alvarez

PICTURE CREDITS Stuart Leeds: front cover. Dennis Goldstein: back cover, 25, 44 (right). Syracuse University: inside front cover. John Thorn: inside back cover. Cynthia Ciesenek: 3. National Baseball Library, Cooperstown, NY: 13, 17, 24, 26, 29, 30, 31, 33, 44 (left), 54, 65, 71, 73, 74, 81, 86, 87. Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library: 16. Gene Karst: 23. Mike Mumby: 45-52.

THE NATIONAL PASTIME (ISSN 0734-6905, ISBN 0-910137-25-0), Winter 1987, Vol. 6, No. 1. Published by the Society for American Baseball Research, Inc., P. O. Box 10033, Kansas City, Mo. 64111. Editorial and Advertising Offices, 18 Virginia Avenue, Saugerties, NY 12477. Postage paid at Manhattan, Kansas. Copyright © 1987 the Society for American Baseball Research, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.

FIRST PRINTING—Ag Press, Manhattan, Kansas.

# The Hidden-Ball Trick, Nicaragua, and Me

JAY FELDMAN

**T**HE HIDDEN-BALL TRICK is one of baseball's most difficult and least-witnessed defensive plays. I've always been fascinated by this rarely executed maneuver, and by the audacious cunning needed to pull it off. It's not exactly illegal, but it's just renegade and sneaky enough to titillate my anarchistic tendencies. It's also something of a mystery. In fact, it wasn't until I visited Nicaragua that I discovered what the hidden ball trick is really all about.

Accomplishing the hidden-ball trick was an unrealized ambition of my baseball career (which ended, for all intents and purposes, twenty-five years ago when I graduated from high school). Not that I didn't try—in sandlot and Babe Ruth League, we were forever looking to steal an out with the hidden ball. The problem was that we were so pathetically obvious about it. You know the scene: You go to the mound and “confer” with the pitcher, who surreptitiously—or so you and he think—slips you the horsehide. As you're nonchalantly trotting back to position, some sharpie on the other team yells, “Watch out, he's got the

ball!” And you've been foiled again. “How the heck do they do it?” you wonder to yourself as you lob the ball back to the mound. And this underlines one of the main reasons why working the hidden ball trick is so difficult: You not only have to fool the baserunner, you also have to hide your move from the rest of his teammates and their fans.

Since high school, except for the occasional game of over-the-line or some similar ersatz diversion, my diamond exploits have been limited to softball—good hands at shortstop, but the arm, legs and eyes have all gone—until late 1985, when I had the good fortune to be involved in a Walter Mitty-type adventure called “Baseball for Peace.” This excursion was a ten-day, nonpartisan goodwill tour of Nicaragua for players, fans, and writers.

The idea behind “Baseball for Peace” was to promote understanding between the people of the US and Nicaragua through our common national pastime. Ping-pong diplomacy, if you will. From December 28, 1985, to January 7, 1986, a rag-tag group of fifteen North Americans barnstormed around the Nic-

araguan countryside, playing baseball and distributing the many thousands of dollars worth of equipment donated by individuals, schools and three major league teams (Oakland A's, San Francisco Giants, Seattle Mariners). For ballplayers, we had everything from young, semipro to aging, over-the-hill types like myself to my fifteen-year old son, a high school student-athlete sponsored by then-Oakland A's outfielder/first baseman Dusty Baker. We played a variety of Nicaraguan ballclubs, including a farmworker-cooperative's team, a regional championship team, and even a First Division (equivalent of major league) team.

To say that Nicaraguans are crazy for baseball is a monumental understatement—sort of like saying that Romeo really liked Juliet. Baseball is a *passion* in Nicaragua, a profound expression of the national character. There's a saying in Nicaragua that every boy is born with a glove and ball in his hand (“*Nació con un guante y una bola en la mano*”). As such, baseball is one of the main bridges between our cultures.

There were many wonderful moments in the course of our whirlwind tour, but without a doubt, the outstanding highlight of my trip came in the mountain town of Boaco, in our third game, where—you guessed it—I executed, at long last, a bona fide, honest-to-goodness, no-doubt-about-it hidden-ball trick.

In Boaco, we were greeted by a brass band, beauty queens and fireworks, and we were paraded through the streets to the ballpark. The entire population of the city turned out, with people hanging off the rooftops. When we reached the stadium, they lined us up along the foul line, World Series style; we were presented with a trophy, and the local Little Leaguers pinned boutonnières on our shirts. The crowd sang the Nicaraguan national anthem, and then, to our

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*This piece is excerpted from Hot Corner: A Nicaraguan Baseball Adventure by Jay Feldman.*

utter amazement, over the p.a. came the familiar strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Of all the things we'd been treated to in Nicaragua, this was the most unexpected, and one of the most moving. Here were people whose lives are daily threatened by the U.S.-backed *contra* forces, but who were still willing to look beyond that. They somehow dug up a recording of our national anthem because they wanted to honor us in the traditional manner.

The bad news was that we were scheduled to play the Campesino League's regional champion Roberto Clemente team. (Hall-of-Famer Clemente is a national hero, because it was to the Nicaraguan capital of Managua that he was headed with relief aid for the victims of the devastating 1972 earthquake when his plane crashed and he was killed.) In our first two games we had been decisively trounced. One of our problems was that we had no real pitcher. (One member of our club could throw very hard but was terrifyingly wild and quite capable of giving up a mess of walks—not to mention the possibility of his killing someone and provoking an international incident.) We also lacked a catcher, so, by necessity, we borrowed those two key players from the opposition. Now, facing a regional championship club and fearing another rout, we hit upon a real brainstorm. "We want your *best* pitcher and catcher," we told the local officials. No problem. We were introduced to a fellow named Roger Lopez, a reserved little southpaw who, we were told, was just exactly what we were asking for.

We managed to push across a run in the top of the first inning, and Lopez made it stand up. From the outset, he was all business. When he struck out the side in the bottom of the first, we knew he was for real, but it was a relatively minor thing he did that really caught my attention. Checking a new ball which the umpire had given him, he found something about it not to his liking and



*Jay Feldman and Roger Lopez*

threw it back, requesting a different one. This was highly unusual—all the other pitchers we'd seen worked with anything they were given.

I had the pleasure, at shortstop, of returning the ball to Lopez after we fired it around the infield following each strikeout. Each time, I'd give him a little pump with my arm, and he'd acknowledge my support with the faintest nod of his head.

When we reached the dugout after the inning, I noticed that his glove was a "Danto" brand (the kind used only by the best ballplayers), and for the first time, I also noticed the "NICARAGUA" on the front of his jersey. I put two and two together.

"Have you played for the national all-star team?" I asked in my broken Spanish, pointing to his shirt.

"Yes, for nine years," he answered proudly.

I was in the presence of greatness!

He seemed genuinely pleased that I had made the connection, and his reserve thawed a bit. "This jersey is from the '82 team that toured the world," he said.

Somewhere in the middle innings, I made a play that cemented our friendship. With a runner on second and two out, a batter lifted a high pop-up behind short, and I started back for it. At first, it seemed like a routine play, as I thought I would

only need to go back a few steps onto the outfield grass, but the ball got up into the wind and kept carrying. It was one of those nasty, twisting fly balls that keeps changing direction as it descends, the kind that's a real adventure to stay with, especially when you're going back on it. Nobody else was calling for it, and I realized that I *had* to get it—with two away, the runner would be going all out, and if the ball fell, the tying run would easily cross the plate, the batter would wind up at second, the gates would be open, the seam would unravel, and we'd never recover. I kept going back, and when I caught the ball, I was halfway out in left field. I don't think I ever squeezed a pop fly harder.

When I ran in to the bench, Lopez came over and patted me on the back. "*Buenas manos*," he said appreciatively. That sure made me feel good. After that, whenever we came in from the field, I made a point of spending a few minutes visiting with him during our half-inning at bat.

When we took the field for the bottom of the last inning, Lopez was still throwing a shutout. He'd been held up by good defense, including a diving catch of a sinking line drive by our centerfielder, Mike Martinez, a drug-abuse counselor and semipro ballplayer from Detroit. Now, the

leadoff hitter doubled down the left-field line.

Lopez went to work, popping the next batter up and striking out the one after that. Meanwhile, the runner on second was becoming increasingly daring with his lead, going a little farther on each pitch. On the first delivery to the next batter, he bluffed going to third. The batter swung and missed. I cut in behind the runner, and the catcher rifled a perfect throw down to second. Before the ball arrived, however, the runner came sliding back hard and took my feet out from under me. In the instant I was going down, I thought, "If I don't catch this ball, it's into centerfield, the run scores, and we're in trouble." I didn't actually formulate the thought exactly like that, of course—I didn't have time; it was more of a wordless gestalt. I don't know how I caught the ball because I never saw it, but as I was falling, I instinctively threw my glove up to where I guessed the ball would be, judging by its earlier trajectory (you play enough ball, you do that sort of thing by sixth sense), and it hit squarely, right in the pocket of the mitt.

We rolled around on the ground. The bag, which was not secured, had been kicked about twenty feet, and the second base umpire went to retrieve it. The runner stood up and dusted himself off, his back to me, while the umpire replaced the bag. There was a lot of confusion, and nobody, I realized, was paying any attention to me. My heart leapt. If there ever was a time to pull off the hidden ball trick, now was it. But would Lopez go along? I looked at him and nodded as imperceptibly as I could, and he didn't hesitate a moment; he turned away and went into a beautiful act—kicking dirt, spitting, mopping his brow, and all the while being careful not to commit a balk by approaching the rubber.

I retreated to short, the ball nestled in my glove, resting on my hip. I was hoping the second base umpire could see the ball in my glove. The runner took two steps off second. I wanted

him to take one more step, but then I thought, "If I wait too long, someone's going to figure out that the pitcher doesn't have the ball." So I ran right at the runner. At the last second, he heard me coming and tried to get back to the base, but he was dead. I slapped the tag on his butt and turned around to show the ump the ball. He did a triple pump and rang up the runner for the last out of the game. The crowd exploded. In my excitement I spiked the ball.

I ran for Roger Lopez. We embraced and laughed and slapped palms. It was a sweet moment. I was on Cloud Nine as my teammates mobbed me, thumping me on the back and offering kudos. I tried to savor the moment (how many times in your life do you get to be a hero?), but there was too much happening.

In the ensuing pandemonium, Lopez and I lost track of each other, but later, at the party, we had a chance to discuss the play through an interpreter. It was the fifth time in his career that he had done *la trampa de la pelota escondida*, I learned. "Did you know," he asked me, "that I was trying to tell you to keep the ball?"

"Really? I was trying to tell you that I wasn't going to throw it back," I

replied, realizing only now for the first time that each of us had believed the play to be his own idea, but in fact, the thought had occurred to both of us simultaneously!

And I understood then what the hidden ball trick is all about, and why we could never pull it off when we were kids: we were going about it backwards; it has to arise not from intent, but from circumstances. The essence of the play is not trickery—that's simply the external part, the part that shows on the outside. From the inside, the hidden ball trick is dependent on wordless communication and cooperation, because even if you speak the same language, you can't very well yell over to the pitcher, "Now we're going to do the hidden ball trick!" You have to be on the same wave length. You have to read each other's minds. Each player has to know what he *and* the other man need to do to make it work.

And that's how we did it. By the subtlest of looks, two men of different tongues and widely divergent backgrounds silently communicated in the universal language of *baseballese* to executive one of the rarest and most difficult of the game's defensive ploys.

#### SHAKESPEARE ON BASE BALL

Old Billy, ye play writer, must have been a ball player once. Read what he says:

"You base (foot) ball players."—*Lear*.

"Why, these balls bound."—*Merry Wives*.

"Now, let's have a catch."—*Twelfth Night*.

"I will run no base."—*Merry Wives*.

"And so I shall catch the fly."—*Henry V*.

"Hector shall have a great catch."—*Troilus and Cressida*.

"More like to run the base."—*Cymbeline*.

"As swift in motion as a ball."—*Romeo and Juliet*.

"Ne'er leave striking in the field."—*Henry IV*.

"After he scores."—*All's Well*.

"Ajax goes up and down the field."—*Troilus and Cressida*.

"Have you scored me?"—*Othello*.

"He proved best man i' the field."—*Coriolanus*.

"The word is pitch and pay."—*Henry V*.

"However men do catch."—*King John*.

"What foul play had we?"—*Tempest*.

"Unprovided of a pair of bases."—*Titus Andronicus*.

"No other books but the score."—*Henry VI*.

"These nine men in buckram."—*Henry VI*.

"His confounded base."—*Henry VI*.

"I will fear to catch."—*Timon*.

"What works, my countrymen, in hand? Where go you with bats and clubs?"—*Coriolanus*.

"Let us see you in the field."—*Troilus and Cressida*.

"The very way to catch them."—*Coriolanus*.



## BALLPARKS

# Bill Veeck Park: A Modest Proposal

PHILIP BESS

**I**N SPITE of its exorbitant cost and monumental ugliness, the modern-day, multi-purpose stadium—with or without a dome—has become the urban icon of our times. This is bad, both for our cities and for our games. It is bad for cities because it perpetuates their division into functional zones, making impossible that concentrated and simultaneous mix of activities that for millennia has been the hallmark of urban life. It is bad for our games because it manages to combine extraordinary lack of character with seating arrangements and playing surfaces that are unsatisfactory for both football and baseball.

Twenty-five years of these megabuildings have persuaded nearly everyone but those responsible for building them that they are a blight upon our cities and upon our games. The time has come to abolish these monsters, and to restore the aesthetic, urban, and athletic sanity of the single-purpose sports facility. We need to make both less and more of our baseball parks: they need to be less monumental in scale and intention, and they need to be more suited

to baseball and more civic in character, built at a scale that contributes to and promotes the richness and variety of traditional urban life.

To be specific, here are five reasons why the traditional 40,000 seat urban ballpark is good for our cities and good for baseball:

- 1. Because its size is in part a function of the size of the city block it occupies, it reinforces the traditional urban pattern of streets and squares.
- 2. Because it is typically near public transit lines, it reduces the amount of automobile traffic generated by ballgames.
- 3. Because of its relatively modest scale, it is more hospitable to adjacent activities (including residential neighborhoods), and it can be built with standard construction techniques, making it less costly to build.
- 4. Because of all these factors, the result is ballparks and playing fields with idiosyncrasies and character. This also results in neighborhoods with

identities: Wrigley Field and "Wrigleyville," Ebbets Field and Flatbush, Fenway Park and Back Bay.

On the other hand, here are five reasons why the 60,000 seat multi-use stadium is bad for cities and bad for baseball:

- 1. Because it is unconstrained by the standard unit of urban design (the block), it is typically an island in a sea of parking, mandating exclusive automobile access, and destroying traditional urban spatial patterns.
- 2. Because of its size and parking requirements, it discourages adjacent development, except for other anti-urban mega-projects of similar scale: convention centers, high-rise hotels, and amusement parks.
- 3. Because it is conceived as either a dome or as a state-of-the-art technological marvel, it is typically more than twice as costly to build as the traditional park. When it is built to accommodate football as well as baseball, parking requirements (and their costs) increase by as much as 250 percent.
- 4. Because of its size and the fact that it is not designed for any sport in particular, seating patterns are good for neither football nor baseball, and seats are far removed from the playing field.
- 5. Finally, the result of all of these factors is stadiums that could be anywhere, and uniform dimension playing fields devoid of idiosyncrasies and character.

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*PHILIP BESS is an architect in Chicago. He would like to thank the School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame, and its chairman Robert Amico, for providing workspace; Notre Dame students Jeff Smith, Mauricio Salazar, and David Gester, for their assistance.*

Today, more than ever, cherished patterns of urban living and the game of baseball require a disciplined defense against the multi-purpose stadium and the violence it does to our cities.

Toward that end I went to work on a proposal for Bill Veeck Park, not as a prototype that could be plopped

down anywhere (and certainly—though the point may now be academic—not as an alternative to either Comiskey Park or Wrigley Field), but as a site-specific project intended as a model for how urban ballparks and their environs should be conceived.

The site for this project is a parcel

of land on the near south side of Chicago, which has already been designated by the city for development as a multi-use stadium. The city chose the site in part because of its proximity to both public transportation lines and major expressway connections. Right now, it is the site mostly of abandoned railyards, although a few live railway lines remain as constraints upon the use of the site. None of the adjacent buildings illustrated in my drawings exist; they are part of my proposal.

Bill Veeck Park is a 44,000 seat, natural grass, baseball-only facility that takes its form in part from existing constraints: The Chicago Transit Authority tracks beyond right field; the St. Charles Airline, a freight line, that runs below the bleachers in left field; the Chicago River beyond the third baseline, and 18th Street beyond the first baseline. The obtuse angle in centerfield implied by the adjacent tracks dictates that left field and left-center field be deeper than right field; and the necessity of entering through the center field tower entry at about 40 feet above grade provides the opportunity to create loge-like box seating atop the right field wall, some 35 feet above the playing field.

In addition to the center field tower (which would contain team offices, some executive suites, and a scoreboard), fans enter from the right field corner and from behind home plate. On the south side of the park—replete with a statue of Bill Veeck—is Bill Veeck Square, the point of arrival by both CTA train and taxi service. On the north side of the park is the grand stair and ramp, which brings pedestrians and fans who use the north parking lot up over the railroad tracks and into the park. I am proposing to relocate Claes Oldenberg's Bat Column to one of the mid-level terraces. In the event of pennants clinched or World Series won (admittedly uncommon here in Chicago), the square and the terrace would lend themselves to spontaneous but manageable civic celebrations.

#### SEATING ANALYSIS

A) 44,000 seat ballpark @ \$1500/seat  
= \$66 million

B) 50,000 seat ballpark @ \$1500/seat  
= \$75 million

Ballpark "B" provides 6,000 extra seats for \$9,000,000. (Building costs alone—figure does not include additional parking costs or debt service.)

If every fan spends \$20 on tickets, parking, and concessions, filling the additional seats would generate 6000 x \$20 = \$120,000/game.

$$\frac{\$9,000,000 \text{ (cost of construction)}}{\$120,000 \text{ (extra seat revenue)}} = 75$$

Team would have to sell out Ballpark "B" 75 times in order to cover the principal building costs alone.

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#### DOMESTIC COST ANALYSIS

1) Assume that a dome built in 1987 would add \$700/seat to building construction costs (excluding debt service and dome maintenance).

2) Assume that revenue lost for a weather-induced postponement = \$20/seat.

$$\frac{\$700}{\$20} = 35$$

Team would have to have 35 postponements of a full house in order to cover the principal costs of a dome. Since teams in a bad year will suffer 2-3 rainouts at home, the financial advantages of a dome (when debt service and maintenance costs are included) become highly doubtful.

#### COMPARATIVE COST ANALYSES

##### Costs for 80,000 seat multi-use stadium:

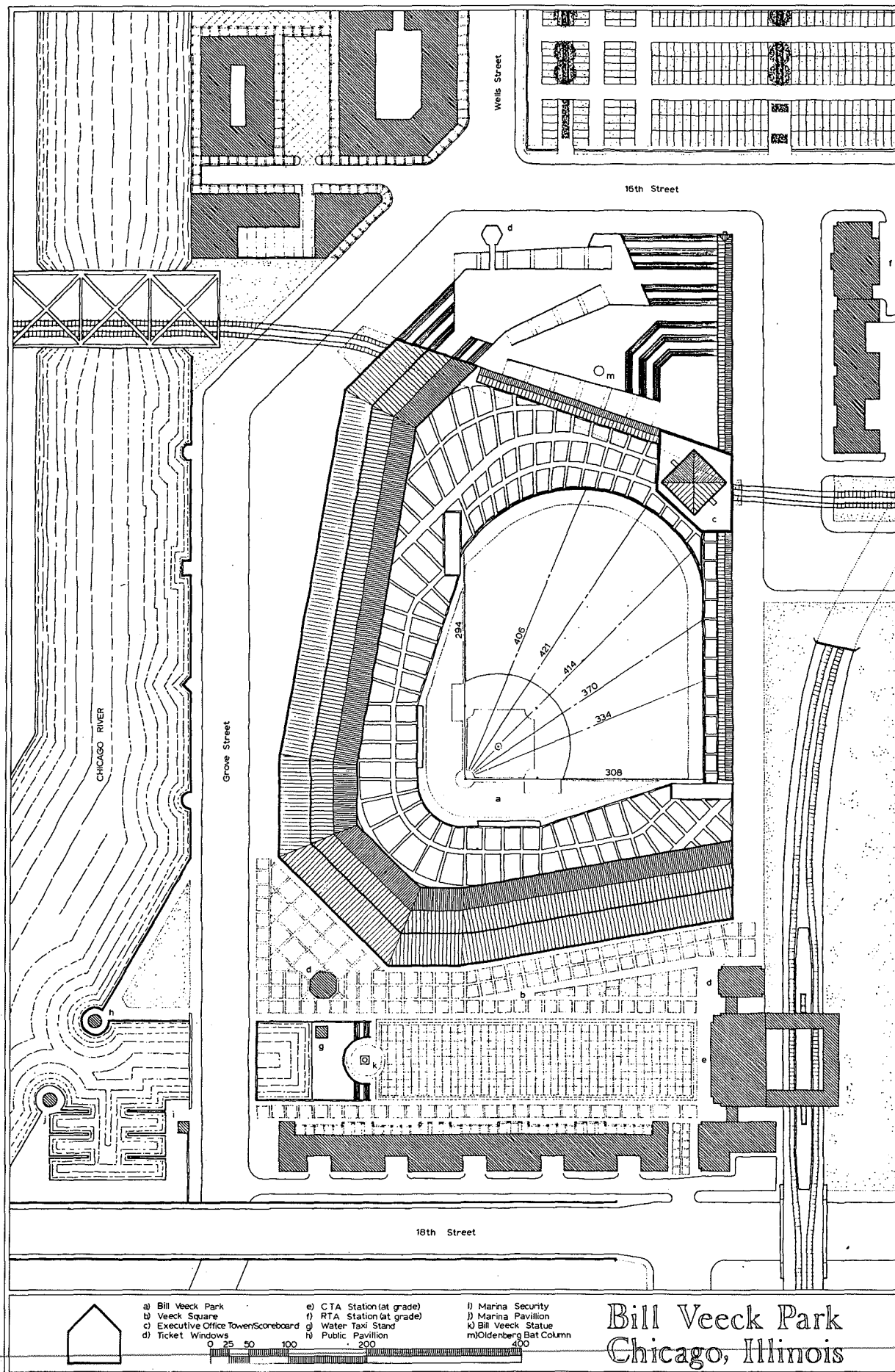
Land costs	\$25,000,000
Infrastructure improvements	68,000,000
80,000 seat stadium at \$2019/seat	161,520,000
Parking on 60 acres (20,000 spaces required):	
for 8,700 cars @ \$1500/car surface parking	13,050,000
for 12,300 cars @ \$6000/car structure parking	73,800,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$341,370,000</b>

##### Costs for 44,000 seat baseball park:

Land costs	\$25,000,000
Infrastructure improvements	68,000,000
44,000 seat ballpark @ \$1500/seat	66,000,000
Parking on 54 acres (6500 cars required):	
for 6,500 cars @ \$2000/car surface parking	13,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$172,000,000</b>

Figures based upon the following assumptions:

- (1) Cost of domed multi-use stadium at \$2019/seat (4th quarter, 1984)
- (2) Cost of single use open air ballpark at \$1500/seat
- (3) 70 acres of land at \$25,000,000
- (4) Infrastructure improvements at \$68,000,000
- (5) Parking requirements of 1 space/4 seats (football)  
1 space/7 seats (baseball)
- (6) Parking costs of \$1500-2000/space (surface)  
\$6000/space (structured)



How does this proposal differ from older traditional urban ballparks? Mainly, it has to take automobile access into account. Bill Veeck Park is accessible by City and Regional transit lines, as well as by water taxi from the Loop. Nevertheless, if adjacent neighborhoods are to be protected from the traffic that the ballpark will inevitably generate, it is necessary to provide parking facilities at a ratio of about one space per seven seats. But instead of the typical modern solution of the stadium as an island in an ocean of parking, my design calls for linear parking to the north and to the east. (The parking to the east could also double as overflow parking for Bears games held in nearby Soldier Field.)

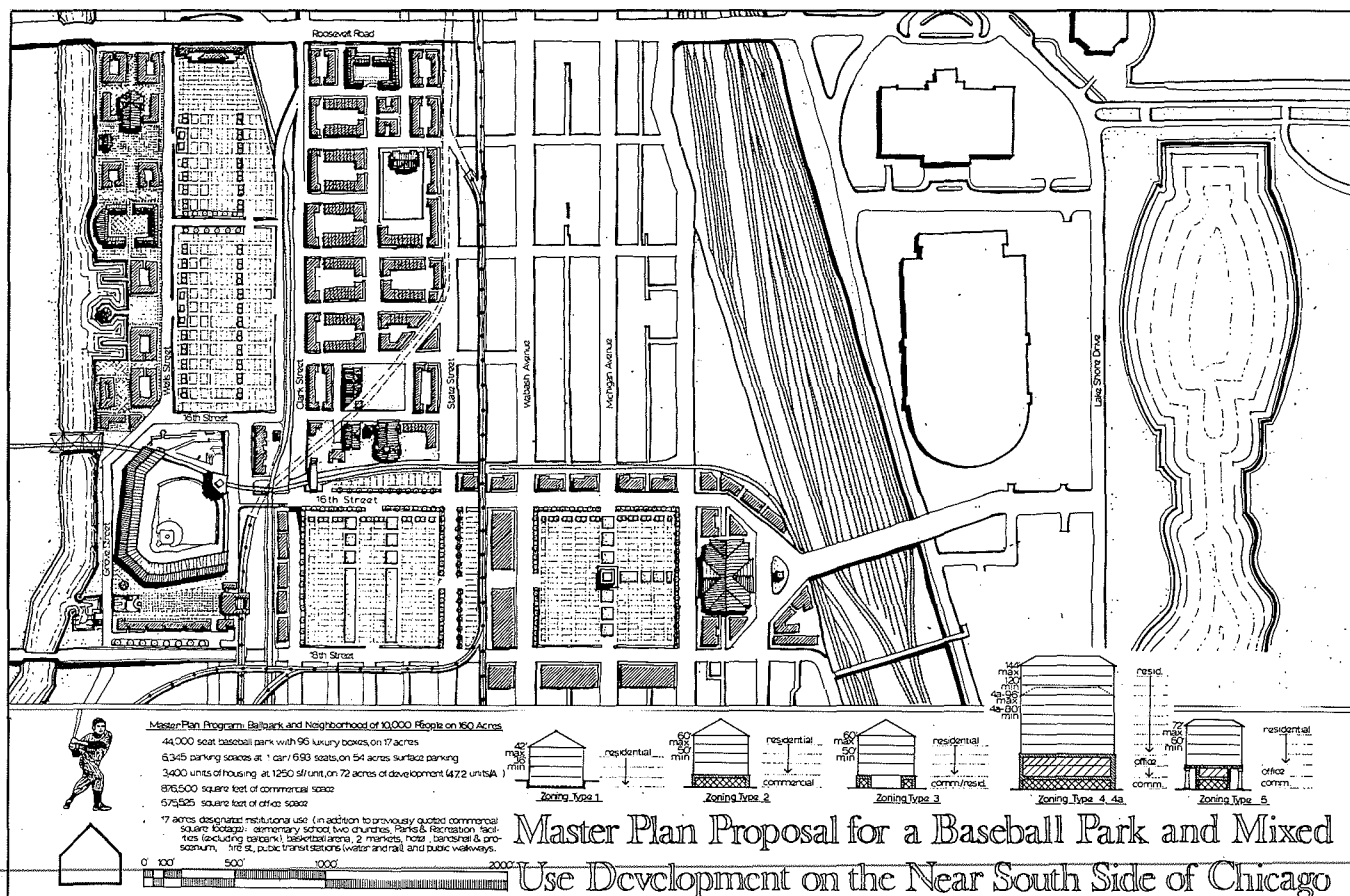
How about the economics of a modern, traditional ballpark? Robert Baade, professor of economics at Lake Forest College and a specialist in sports stadium financing, documents impressive evidence that the construction of large-scale megastadiums is motivated by reasons that

have little to do with economic sanity. He puts it rather succinctly: "The history of recent stadium construction is written in red ink." He makes a persuasive argument that stadium development *per se* is not profitable, but that a smaller scale ballpark done as part of a larger adjacent development—like the one I'm proposing—might be not only an aesthetic and urban improvement, but economically feasible as well. My plan calls for a combination of low-rise high-density housing and commercial and office space, as well as civic and institutional buildings and public open space. Most of the buildings range from three and a half to six stories; a few are as tall as twelve stories. You can get a good idea of the proposal from the diagram in the lower right of the master plan drawing.

The people who are currently responsible for the planning, financing, and construction of professional athletic facilities seem to have a mental picture of modern stadiums beneath

which are captions like "state-of-the-art technology" or "world-class facility." But America is becoming saturated with virtually identical world-class facilities. It is no small irony that almost any one of the more modest ballparks of the early 20th century contributed more to the uniqueness of its city, to its city's sense of place and identity, than any of the new superstadiums. I know of no one who is enamored of these newer stadiums, except for planners, developers, politicians, and architects.

This architect hopes that this demonstration project can help to change current thinking. I believe that Bill Veeck Park illustrates a reasoned and reasonable alternative to current practice. It has always been, and will always be, necessary for ballpark design to satisfy pragmatic and economic criteria. But the current paradigm is wrong. Bill Veeck Park is right. It is right economically. It is right for our cities. And it is right for baseball.



## BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH

# Eddie Gaedel: The Sad Life of Baseball's Midget

JIM REISLER

**I**N AN undistinguished grave at St. Mary's Cemetery on the southwest side of Chicago is buried a man immortalized as the answer to one of baseball's better trivia questions.

He lies in one of the older, more crowded parts of the cemetery, made especially pretty in the summer by the trees that shade the graves. In some ways, it is fitting that Eddie Gaedel is there; in section G, grave number X-363B, he may finally have found the peace he never knew when he was alive.

Much is known of the day that Gaedel, 3'7" and 65 pounds, stepped up as the St. Louis Browns' first batter in the second game of an August 19, 1951 doubleheader against the Detroit Tigers, walked, and ended his career as quickly as he had started it. But for a game as well-documented as baseball, it is ironic that virtually nothing is known about the man.

The fact is that he died tragically, the victim of a mugging on a south-side Chicago street corner. Fewer than fifty people attended his funeral.

"It was a pretty sad situation all the way through," says Bob Cain, the Detroit pitcher who faced Gaedel. "It's a shame he had to die the way he did

but I guess he got in quite a bit of trouble off and on. He ended up with the wrong crowd."

Few baseball people besides then Browns, owner Bill Veeck even knew Gaedel. Those who did met him only briefly. Bob Broeg, the longtime St. Louis baseball writer, who wrote the game story for the next morning's local paper, was one.

After the game, he found the diminutive slugger, dressed in a yellow sports shirt and a tan jacket, sitting on a counter in the Sportsman's Park press box.

"I asked him two or three questions and he gave kind of routine answers," Broeg recalls. "Then I said to him that he's what I wanted always to be, an ex-big leaguer. He suddenly jumped down, thrust out his chest and seemed very proud of himself. Then he shook hands and was gone. I never saw him again."

At first, at least, he made out well, appearing in the following few weeks on television shows, including Ed Sullivan and Bing Crosby. The shows earned him \$17,000, "a tremendous amount in those days," according to Bob Fishel, now executive vice president of the American League and then a Browns' official.

"Bill Veeck was looking for a midget, not a dwarf or somebody with a large head," Fishel says of Gaedel's agreement to a \$100 contract. "We got him from (Cleveland talent coordinator) Marty Caine, a short guy himself. When we saw him, there was no question that Eddie was right. He was actually a very attractive guy."

However, for the few days that he knew Gaedel, also the only man in big league history to wear a fraction as a uniform number ( $\frac{1}{8}$ ), Fishel admits "I didn't think the world of him." He won't elaborate.

On September 2, 1951—about three weeks after his big league appearance—Gaedel got into trouble on a Cincinnati street corner when he was caught screaming obscenities and then tried to convince a police officer he was a big league ballplayer. He was arrested for disorderly conduct, released on \$25 bond, and received a suspended sentence.

According to an interview with his widowed mother, Helen, published in a four-part Louisville *Courier-Journal* series in 1971, Eddie's size had gotten him in trouble for a good part of his life.

Born to a healthy Chicago family that included a 5'6" brother, Robert, and a 5'11" sister, Pearl, Eddie's growth was stunted from the age of three by a thyroid condition. "He was picked on as a kid, [not excluding] small kids too who ganged up on him," Helen was quoted as saying. Nonetheless, Eddie made it through Spaulding High School on Chicago's Southside, and was working as an errand boy at *Drover's Daily Journal*, a defunct Chicago newspaper, when he got to the Browns.

He appeared to have made the most of his size. He worked as the Buster Brown shoe man, appearing at shoe store openings around the Chicago and St. Louis areas. In the 1950s, he appeared in the Ringling Brothers Circus, and as a promotion man for

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JIM REISLER writes for the Morristown (NJ) Daily Record.

Mercury Records, but refused to go with the company to California, because, according to his mother, "he was scared to go out."

In April 1961, nearly ten years after appearing for the Browns, Gaedel was briefly back in the news when Veeck, by then the owner of the White Sox, took note of the fans' constant complaints about vendors blocking their views, and hired him and seven other midjets to work as salesmen in the box-seat sections of Comiskey Park for opening day.

But the end was near. By then, Gaedel was suffering from high blood pressure, an enlarged heart and the effects of frequent falls. On June 18, 1961, he was mugged on a Southside Chicago street corner. According to the *Courier-Journal* story, the \$11 he had in his wallet was taken from him.

Afterwards, he apparently staggered home and died in his bed of a heart attack. Paramedics were unable to revive him. A coroner's report

said that Gaedel also had bruises on his knees and his face.

The article points out that Helen Gaedel, nearly penniless and out of touch with her other children, was devastated. Adding insult to injury, she was swindled out of Eddie's bats and Browns' uniform by a man purporting to represent the National Baseball Hall of Fame. The curators at the Hall say their only remnant of Eddie Gaedel's brief big league career is the famous photograph showing him crouching with his tiny bat cocked at homeplate with the catcher, the late Bob Swift, on his knees to receive a pitch.

Gaedel's death attracted little notice beyond the obligatory wire story and a brief mention in Broeg's column the following day. Pitcher Cain was the only baseball representative to attend the funeral.

"I never even met him, but I felt obligated to go," says Cain, who by then was retired from his six-year

major league career. "It kind of threw me for a loop that no other baseball people were there."

Only the trivia buffs seem to remember. "Four or five times a year, I'll get a call from somebody wanting to know about him," says Jim Delsing, the Browns' regular rightfielder who became an addendum to a trivia question by pinch-running for baseball's only midjet.

Delsing says that after he went in to run for Gaedel, "I never met him or never heard from him again, except for what I read in the paper. It was unbelievable what happened to him. And sad, so very sad."

At Bob Cain's home in Cleveland, there is a three-foot vestibule covered with religious artifacts. Occupying a small place in the arrangement is a palm card from the funeral:

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. May Jesus have mercy on the soul of Edward Gaedel: Departed June 18, 1961."

#### LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

**HORSESHOE BROWN**, former St. Louis shortstop, played seventeen consecutive games in 1909 while suffering from a severe headache. . . . Wally Norton, Boston third baseman, slipped and fell three times in one inning without hurting himself. . . . A baseball, even though it appears round, is not a true geometric sphere.

**PRESIDENT William Howard Taft** refused to throw out the first ball at the opening game in 1909, thereby terminating the season. . . . James (Ferriswheel) Finnegan, Philadelphia first baseman in 1916, played 13 games for Chicago by mistake. . . . Ty Cobb, who holds the all-time record for most runs scored, lifetime, never touched second base. . . . Oddball (Don) Ryan, St. Louis outfielder, reported for 1969 spring training a year early.

**BABE RUTH** once hit a ball that landed on a train passing outside the ballpark and was delivered two months later by parcel post to the home of Ty Cobb, who brought the ball to Yankee Stadium and handed it to the umpire when Ruth appeared at the plate for the second time in the first game of a doubleheader. Ruth was declared out, and the Yankees lost the

pennant by one game. . . . Mordecai Rhodes, left-handed pitcher for Boston, played for seventeen years in the major leagues without a nickname.

**THE NEW YORK Yankees** won the 1923 pennant by refusing to play the Chicago White Sox and the Detroit Tigers; as a result, Washington lost the pennant by one game. . . . Hank Greenberg, who hit 58 home runs for Detroit in 1938, could have broken Babe Ruth's single-season record of 60; Greenberg hit three homers in one game on July 12, but nobody was watching. . . . Wiley Fox, player-manager for the old Bare Legs in 1886, once ordered himself to bunt, and refused. Even though he subsequently hit a home run, he fined himself and was later fired for punching himself in the nose.

**BABE RUTH**, in the year he was traded from the Boston Red Sox to the New York Yankees, hit a home run off one of his own pitches. As a result, he won and lost the pennant that year by one game. . . . In 1929, Peoria pitcher Tiger Bright struck out 27 men in a nine-inning game with a yo-yo. . . . George (Rightly) Wilson, pitcher for the really old Orioles, won 86 games in 1886 at the age of 86.

**THE longest game in major history** took 14 days, 12 hours, and 36 minutes to play because New York, which beat Bos-

ton 1-0, allowed everyone in Boston a chance to hit at least once. . . . The shortest game in minor-league history was played between two teams of midjets. . . . Ten years ago, Henry Wilson Welch was a broken-down, penniless bum wandering the streets of Chicago in search of a nickel for a glass of beer. Where is he now? Today, Henry—or Hank, as they used to call him—is the star centerfielder for the Chicago Cubs.

**ONE-FINGER MURPHY**, St. Louis catcher and pitcher during baseball's Blue Period, was fined for spitting more times than any other major league ballplayer; on three separate occasions he was arrested and held without bail. . . . A righthanded batter usually hits better against a left-handed pitcher than a left-handed batter. . . . Muleskinner Lancaster, Boston first baseman in the thirties and later a famous insurance agent, once hit a foul ball into the rightfield stands that was caught by his own mother. . . . Only one major league ballplayer ever died of boredom during a World Series game, but baseball historians disagree on his name. . . . Ten players have hit four home runs in a single ball game, but superstition forbids any major league player from hitting five.

—CONRAD HORN



*"Will come for sixty-five. Send ticket."*

# Honus Wagner's Rookie Year

A. D. SUEHSDORF

**D**URING THE SUMMER OF 1895, John Peter Wagner—not yet known as "Honus" or "Hans," nor yet as a shortstop—played at least seventy-nine games for teams at Steubenville, Akron, and Mansfield, Ohio; Adrian, Michigan, and Warren, Pennsylvania. He rapped out at least 91 hits in 253 known at-bats for an overall average of .360.

The numbers are approximate, for reasons that will be explained, but they are a factual beginning to the hitherto unsubstantiated, or erroneously reported, record of Wagner's first season in professional baseball.

Gaps in the great man's stats have occurred through a variety of circumstances. His leagues—Inter-State, Michigan State, and Iron & Oil—adhered to the National Agreement. They were acknowledged in the annual Reach and Spalding guides and their organizational details were noted by *Sporting Life*, but by and large their statistics were ignored. Two of Wagner's leagues and three of his teams collapsed while he was with them, leaving only random evidence of their existence. Contemporary newspapers, although the principal sources for this article, were erratic in their coverage and scoring.

Discrepancies in the available box scores raise the possibility that Wagner actually had 93 hits, which would improve his average to .368. There also were eleven games in which he made a total of 15 more hits, but in which, unhappily, at-bats were not scored. (His average at bats in the games for which box scores are complete was 3.83; for those eleven games that would be, conceivably, thirty-five. Add these to 253, and the 15 hits to 91 or 93, and you reach hypothetical averages of .368 and .375.) Finally, there were twelve games, including four exhibitions, in which Wagner probably played for which no boxes have so far been found.

Honus himself was a fount of misinformation when pressed for biographical detail many years after the event. In an early episode of a nearly interminable life story run the *Pittsburgh Gazette-Times* in 1924, a boxed tabulation of the Wagner record carries a BA of .365 in 20 games at Steubenville and .369 in 65 games at Warren. Both, Honus claimed, were league-leading averages.

Actually, he played a mere seven games for Steubenville before the franchise was shifted to Akron, where he played five games more. He did hit .367 for Steubenville (or .400 if he deserves an extra hit one box score gave him) and .304 for Akron. Twelve games, however, are obviously too few for him to have been league batting champion.

If he hit .369 at Warren, it was not from 92 hits in 249 ABs in sixty-five games, as cited by the *Gazette-Times*. Wagner played his first game for Warren on July 11 and his last on September 11, a total of sixty-three days during which he missed twenty-one because of an injury to his throwing arm and several others because no ball was played on Sundays. In the playing days available to him, only thirty-four league games were scheduled (plus ten exhibitions), hardly enough to support a claim to league batting honors. From the numbers I have at hand, I believe he played all thirty-four and batted about .324.

For all the uncertainty, a close look at Wagner's rookie season gives us a fascinating look at a youngster developing in the minor leagues of ninety years ago. The enormous skills of his National League years—power hitting, exceptional range afield, base stealing ability—already were apparent. A reporter for the *Mansfield Shield* seems

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A.D. SUEHSDORF, retired editor of *Ridge Press*, is the author of *The Great American Baseball Scrapbook*, as well as many contributions to SABR publications.

to have printed it first and said it best: "Oh! for nine men like Wagner."

In 1895, John Wagner had just turned twenty-one and had been playing hometown ball around Mansfield, Pa.—now Carnegie—a coal-and-steel suburb of Pittsburgh, for some six or seven years. He was working in the barber shop of his brother Charley, presumably as an apprentice, but mostly sweeping up, running errands, brushing stray hairs off the customers' suits, and trying to get loose to play ball.

Like many leagues of its time, the Inter-State began bravely, with well-attended games and intense local rivalries, then foundered amid turmoil and confusion, which led the acerbic reporter for the *Shield* to dub it the Inter-changeable League.

"Will" Wagner appears in the Steubenville lineup for the first time on April 20, an exhibition victory over Holy Ghost College. He played right field, batted seventh, and went 2 for 5. (E. Vern Luse has backstopped my Steubenville, Akron, and Warren numbers by generously sharing his research into Inter-State and Iron & Oil League statistics.)

The regular Inter-State season opened at home on May 2 with a wild 29-11 win over Canton. Will was in left field, again batted seventh, and went 1 for 6, a homer in the fourth with a man aboard. He also got an outfield assist for nailing at the plate a runner trying to score from second on a single.

On May 4 he stole three bases against Canton, an individual effort not usually credited in game summaries, but available here because the paper published a play-by-play story.

On May 7, with the Kenton Babies in town, Will started in left and went 3 for 5, including a homer and a triple. He also struck out four in two shutout innings of relief—a short "row of post holes," as scoreboard zeroes were sometimes called in 1895. Always a strong thrower, Wagner had done some impressive relief work in pre-season exhibitions, and Manager Moreland may have thought to make a hurler of him.

The following day, in a rain-shortened five-inning contest, Wagner pitched all the way. He gave up six runs and seven hits, including three home runs, but won easily as Steubenville teed off on Kenton pitching for 26 runs on 22 hits, two of them Wagner doubles.

Now considered a pitcher exclusively, Wagner set out the next game and entered the one following in the sixth, with the Mansfield Kids already well ahead. He allowed two runs in two-plus innings.

Meanwhile, Moreland had telegraphed the league president, Howard H. Ziegler, requesting permission to transfer his club to Akron, pleading inadequate support by Steubenville. "Akron has the baseball fever in the most malignant form," said the *Ohio State Journal*, "and has promised Moreland to receive his nine with open arms." Belatedly, Steubenville began to raise money to keep the

team in town and urged people in neighboring communities to come by streetcar and support the club.

President Ziegler, always mentioned scornfully by Mansfield's *Shield* as a dilatory and do-nothing leader, acted promptly in this instance. He approved the move over the weekend and by Monday, May 13, the team represented Akron.

#### Akron

Games	AB	R	H	Pct	PO	A	E	Other
5	23	4	7	.304	11	1	1	2 HR, 2 2b, 4 RBI

The first game in its new setting was a rousing 21-5 win over Findlay, whose location at the center of the state's oil and gas producing region earned it the nickname "Oil Field Pirates." Wagner, back in left field, had three RBIs with a homer and two doubles in six at-bats. "The Wagner brothers are little," said the *State Journal* in a sidebar, "but the way they hit the ball is something awful."

In fact, the more experienced Al was judged to be the more promising player. Batting cleanup in thirteen games for Steubenville/Akron, he had 26 hits in 56 ABs for an overwhelming average of .464. He also scored 25 runs. Neither man, however, was physically small.

On the 17th, Will pitched a complete game at Canton's Pastime Park, winning 14-7 and contributing three hits and a run. He allowed seven hits, including two doubles and a homer, walked four, hit two, and had a wild pitch. Not an artistic success. Even so, because of five Akron errors only one earned run was charged against him.

Akron's final game was a 5-5 tie in the seventh when one of its players was called out attempting to steal third. A violent protest erupted, and when Moreland refused Canton's request to remove an abusive player, the single umpire gave him five minutes to comply and then forfeited the game to Canton.

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Following the game, Akron "went to pieces," and its place in the league was awarded to Lima, OH, whose team, inevitably, was called the Beans. Canton immediately signed Al Wagner. Will was picked up by Mansfield. Claude Ritchey, the excellent shortstop, went to the Warren Wonders, where Honus would catch up with him again.

#### Mansfield

Games	AB	R	H	Pct	PO	A	E	Other
17	62	15	24	.387	26	43	15	5 HRs, 1 3b, 1 2b, 10 RBIs

Honus was in the Mansfield lineup May 20, batting second and listed as "J. Wagner." Lacking a shortstop of Ritchey's caliber, Mansfield's manager, Frank O'Brien, gave the versatile Wagner his first try at the position.

## ERRATUM

In A.D. Suehsdorf's article on Honus Wagner in *The National Pastime* Winter 1987, some of the copy was omitted. To correct the error, we have enclosed this sheet. It replaces the page 12 currently in the book, and continues as page 12A on the back. Insert it between pages 12 and 13 and the article is complete. We apologize for the error.

to have printed it first and said it best: "Oh! for nine men like Wagner."

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He escaped the barber shop forever when George L. Moreland, owner and manager of the Steubenville club, wired him an offer of \$35 a month. Moreland, who moved in Pittsburgh baseball circles, may have seen Honus as a kid, playing in the Allegheny County League, or he may have asked his third baseman, Al Wagner, Honus's elder brother, if he knew any young prospects. Or maybe both.

At a Pittsburgh spring training camp in the mid-thirties, Moreland, by then a baseball statistician and historian, recalled Al saying: "I've got a brother who is a peach. He's loafing now, and mebbe you could get him to play for you. If so, you won't go wrong on him. He's a great ballplayer."

John tried to squeeze an extra \$5 a month and got a wire back: "If you can't accept thirty-five you had better stay home."

Abashed, he jumped aboard a late-night freight hauling coal and was in Steubenville by 5 the following morning.

### Steubenville

Games AB R H Pct PO A E Other

7 30 7(8) 11 .367 6 6(7) 0 2HR, 13b, 32b, 3SB

Wagner's contract has several point of interest. First, he signed as "William" Wagner and thereafter became known as "Will" throughout the league. William was the name of still another ball-playing Wagner brother, and old Hans occasionally said he signed that way because he thought William was the Wagner Steubenville wanted. Well, perhaps, although that lets the air out of Al's recommendation. On the other hand, Manager Moreland noted that the contract was received February 10, which was a mite early for third-baseman Wagner to be hanging around Steubenville offering advice on young prospects. Honus's comment on the contract obviously was much later; maybe Moreland's was, too.

The club obligates itself to pay expenses on the road,

while charging the player for his uniform and shoes, a not-unusual practice in those days. Les Biederman's 1950 biography of Wagner, *The Flying Dutchman*, has 76 year-old Honus recalling with amusement that \$32 of his first month's salary went for two uniforms and a pair of shoes.

Steubenville's nine seems not to have had a nickname, but it had handsome "Yale gray suits," with cap, belt and stockings of blue. On the left breast of the shirt was the letter S. A "decidedly pretty effect," said the Steubenville *Daily Herald*.

Steubenville was one of seven Ohio teams in the Inter-State League. Wheeling, West Virginia, the eighth, justified the name. All the clubs were in a 275-by-80 mile area. Steubenville's scheduled road games would have involved about 2,200 miles of travel.

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*Continue to page 13.*

He played through June 8, a total of seventeen games for which box scores of thirteen are available. The missing four involve games with the Twin Cities—Uhrichsville and Dennison, manufacturing towns adjoining each other on a bend of the Tuscarawas River—Cy Young country—south of Canton. One game, at Mansfield May 29, was skipped because the *Shield* did not publish on Memorial Day, and got only a paragraph in the issue of the 31st, which also had to report the holiday doubleheader. The other three—June 6, 7, and 8 at the Twin Cities, which meant the park at the fair grounds, several blocks from beautiful downtown Uhrichsville—are forever lost. The *Shield*, like many small-town papers of the time, did not send a reporter on road trips, and there was no local coverage because the Uhrichsville *Chronicle* did not start publication in 1895 until after the baseball season. The summary under the line score for one of these three credits Wagner with a homer, so there is at least one AB, run, and RBI to add to his totals.

As it happened, Wagner did well when his team was thriving and tailed off when it slumped. While the Kids were winning five of the first six he played for them, his average was a fantastic .467. When they lost ten of the next eleven, he dwindled to .313. All told, he had a countable twenty-four hits in a traceable sixty-two at-bats for a handsome .387 average. (It might even have been .403. In one game—again with the wretched Twins—the box gives him one for 5, but the summary credits him with a homer and a double. So, maybe he had twenty-five hits.)

In a 14-10 loss to Canton (and Brother Al), he had two home runs and three RBIs, then pitched relief in the sixth, evidently shutting down the Dueberites, as Canton was called, with one run in two innings plus. “Wagner Covered Himself with Glory,” said the *Shield*’s headline bank. And somewhat less kindly, for this could be a harshly critical paper: Third Baseman Jack Dunn “Loses His Head and His Stupid Playing Alone was sufficient [no cap] to Lose the Game.”

There is no indication of the distances to the outfield fences. One of Wagner’s homers was described as “a hot shot deep into center” and the other as an inside-the-park drive that the center fielder was slow getting to.

With the glove he did less well: ten errors in eight games at short, one in two games in center, four in three games at third. This was called “yellow” support in those days. The etymology is unknown, although it probably derives from the many pejorative uses of the word. Here it obviously means sloppy play that lets the side down.

Wagner was nothing if not willing. In one game at short he drifted into the center fielder’s territory for a fly and had to be called off. Another post-game note had the second baseman, Billy Otterson, a veteran who had played with the Brooklyn (AA) team, chewing him out for backing into the left fielder.

Against Canton on May 24, he nearly put the Kids under all by himself. In the seventh, his “rotten fielding” allowed



Honus Wagner

a batter to reach first. This so occupied the umpire’s attention that a Canton player, McGuirk—“McSquirt the robber,” the outraged *Shield* called him—“cut third base by at least twenty feet and the umpire allowed the score to count because ‘he didn’t see it.’”

The Kids went into the ninth leading 7-4 until two Wagnerian errors enabled Canton to tie it up. “The agony of the rooters was painful, but it couldn’t be helped. Smith [Harry, a catcher who would be Honus’ teammate at Warren and for six years at Pittsburgh] was safe on Wagner’s [second] error and the rooters were ready to faint and were cussing Wagner in language which the pastors of Christian congregations do not use, but Smith was thrown out at second and the church members, who had been swearing like pirates, breathed easier.”

Mansfield rallied for *nine* runs in the tenth and won, 16-9. Wagner’s contribution was a walk. He refused to “accept four nigger-chasers” was the phrase used, one of the few racist remarks I encountered in all this research.

With victory in hand, the *Shield* was more forgiving. “J. Wagner’s three errors yesterday,” it said, “were sheer awkwardness, but Wagner played a great all-around game and accepted chances outside of his territory which resulted in some of the errors marked against him.”

With 26 putouts, 43 assists, and 15 errors, Honus’ fielding average was a painful .821.

As May ended, the league's perilous condition became obvious. Canton disbanded and Al Wagner and Harry Smith quickly jumped to Warren. The collapse put Mansfield in a bind. Well entrenched in last place with a record of 8 and 23, the club now faced an idle week through the loss of six scheduled games with the non-existent Dueberites. The end came June 14. "LOCK THE GATES," read the *Shield's* one-column headline. "The Jig is Up with Mansfield for This Season."

Al, looking out for little brother, wired John to join him at Warren. "Will come for sixty-five [dollars per month]," Honus wired back. "Send ticket."

That was too steep for Warren, and Wagner moved on to the Adrian Demons of the Michigan State League—at \$50 a month.

#### Adrian

Games	AB	R	H	Pct	PO	A	E	Other
16	70	23	27	.386	36(37)	46(49)	9(10)	2 2b, 5 2b, 16 SB

The long jump of an untraveled rube from Ohio to Michigan has a simple explanation. In 1949, Honus told Jim Long, then the Pirates' PR man, that the Mansfield owner, "a man named Taylor," said his brother ran a hardware store and a baseball team in Michigan and would have a spot for a hard-hitting youngster.

This time Wagner's memory was on track. Mr. Taylor would have had to be William H., the *father* of Rolla L. Taylor of Adrian, who did, indeed, run a hardware store that was known throughout Lenawee County for its reliability. Moreover, Rolla was a prime mover in the consortium of Adrian businessmen who financed the Demons. He served as club secretary, managed the team, and selected as mascot his little son, Grandpa's namesake.

William's connection with baseball can be established only circumstantially today, but he was a member of a pioneer Ohio family, earned a captaincy in the Civil War, and between 1885 and 1895 was a partner in a Mansfield cracker factory which evidently was one of the regional bakeries amalgamated into the National Biscuit Company. He sounds distinguished and wealthy enough to have backed a small-town ball club.

Honus also told Long that, although he was a stripling with twenty-nine games' worth of professional experience, Adrian appointed him manager. Not so. Rolla ran the show.

The Michigan State League was a well-organized, well-run circuit of six clubs, located generally in the lower half of the State. Besides Adrian, which was also known as the Reformers, there were the Lansing Senators, Owosso Colts, Port Huron Marines, Battle Creek Adventists, and Kalamazoo Kazoos, Zooloos, or Celery Eaters, celery being a big local crop.

Adrian, the Maple City, performed at Lawrence Park and Wagner appeared in his first game there on June 20,

playing second base and batting cleanup. In the first inning, the semi-weekly *Michigan Messenger* reported, Wagner "made the greatest slide for first probably ever made on the grounds, but in an effort to steal second his great slide failed to save him. He played on second base and did good work."

It wasn't all heroics, however. In his third game, he "took the stick with bases full and had an opportunity to distinguish himself, which he unfortunately did by striking out, and retiring the side." He contributed a double and a triple later on, and Adrian beat Owosso in ten, 12-11.

Against Battle Creek the following day he came to bat with two on in the first and "almost lost the ball over between left and center fielders for a triple." Not bad afield, either, according to the *Daily Times*: "Some of the ground stops he made were handsome plays in every respect."

In a game against Port Huron, the best and worst of the young Wagner's abilities were made evident. In the first he "made a beautiful stop" to retire the side with the bases full. In the third, again with bases full, a Marine drove the ball to right field, and a "wild throw of Wagner"—a relay, no doubt—allowed three Marines to score. Finally, in the eighth with three on, Port Huron "sent a red hot grounder to Wagner, who plays all over his field and half of the adjoining sections, [and who] made the best stop of the day and retired the side."

All told, available stats give him 36 putouts, 46 assists, and 10 errors for .891.

For hitting, I am relying on Ray Nemec's thoroughgoing research into the Michigan State League's 1895 season, which he assembled some years ago. He credits Wagner with 27 hits in 70 ABs for .386. I have confirmed fourteen of Wagner's sixteen games and am persuaded that the missing two would match Ray's numbers.

An interesting aspect of Honus' experience at Adrian was the presence of two excellent black players on the Demons' roster, another piece of history authoritatively researched by Nemec. These were George H. Wilson, a 19-year-old righthander, and Vasco Graham, his catcher. Wilson appeared in 37 games—30 complete—winning 29 and losing 4. He pitched 298 innings, allowed 289 hits and 173 runs. He struck out 280 and walked only 96. He hit .327 in fifty-two games as pitcher and occasional outfielder. Graham played in seventy-seven and hit .324, with 19 doubles and 18 SB. I encountered one reference to them as Adrian's "watermelon battery," but the town's, and the league's, tolerance seems to have been exceptional and newspaper admiration of their talents genuine.

The two were acquired from the Page Fence Giants, a highly successful team of black barnstormers organized by the legendary John W. "Bud" Fowler and sponsored by Adrian's Page Woven Wire Fence Company. Fowler also played for the Demons, though not during Wagner's few weeks. A measure of the Giants' prowess can be gained



## Adrian's First Championship Baseball Team of 1895



The Adrian Southern Michigan League team of 1895 that won the league championship for the Maple City in that year. Hans Wagner, the famous National League star, is the second from the left. Rolla L. Taylor, the manager of the team, and his son Will Taylor, the team's mascot, are in the center of the group. The colored battery, Wilson and Graham, are seated at the left and right of the manager and mascot respectively.

Thirty-five years ago, back in 1895, Adrian's team of the Southern Michigan League brought home this city's first baseball pennant, a pennant that cost the backers of the club something like \$3,000 in good old pre-war cash.

Playing on the championship club were two of the greatest baseball luminaries ever to set foot on a diamond. One rose to the heights of his chosen profession. The other, because of his color, was relegated to the smaller clubs of minor organizations where he made major leaguers stare with wonder at his brilliant performances on the mound. The one was Hans Wagner, known to the baseball world as a member of the Pittsburgh club of the National League. The other was George Wilson, a Negro, an iron man on the mound who gained most of his fame with the Adrian Southern Michigan League team and with the Page Fence Giants.

The Adrian League team of 1895 lasted only one season. It was too much of a luxury for Rolla L. Taylor, the manager, and a few other persons who were interested from a financial as well as a sportsman's standpoint. At the end of the season the team's backers found themselves in red ink up to a depth of nearly \$3,000. With the winning of the pennant Adrian dropped out of

league competition until 15 years later when the city once more won the Southern Michigan title.

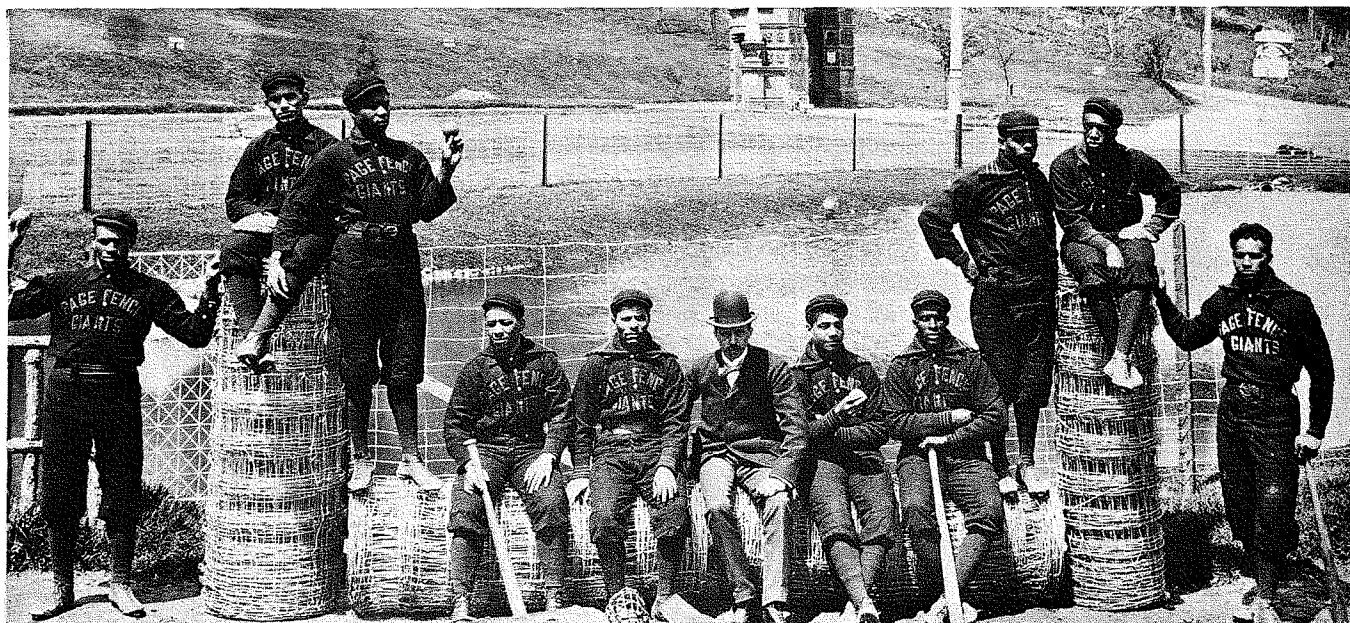
Mr. Taylor well remembers many of the incidents connected with the 1895 championship race, a race that was fought out not only on the diamond but in hotel lobbies, in ball park dressing rooms and on station platforms as well. One incident in particular is recalled by the former manager. It was in the heat of the race and Adrian was playing in Jackson. Jackson had replaced another team in the league late in the season and had hired the crack Findlay, Ohio, Independent team intact to play for Jackson through the remainder of the schedule. The game was close but Adrian won in the closing innings. A large crowd, rooting for Jackson to win, became incensed at a late decision of the umpire. One word led to another and the result that the Adrian team was chased out of town with stones.

Mr. Taylor still has his account book that shows Adrian's dealings with John (Hans) Wagner. Wagner came to Adrian June 30, 1895 at a salary of \$50 a month, hardly a day's pay for the best of our present day athletes. He was a wizard on the diamond from the start and on July 6, less than three weeks after his arrival he left to

join the Louisville team. Mr. Taylor's records show that he received \$27 during his stay with Adrian. From Louisville, Wagner was drafted by the Pittsburgh club and it was with this organization that he developed into one of the hardest hitters of all time.

Wagner never "hitched" so very well with the Adrian team. He didn't like to play with Adrian's colored battery, George Wilson, pitcher and Graham, catcher. It was thought that this had something to do with his quick departure. Wilson has been described as one of the marvels of the mound. He has been known to pitch through a doubleheader without relief and games on successive days were nothing to him. After the break up of the Southern Michigan League team Wilson joined the Page Fence Giants the next season. In a spring exhibition game he held the Cincinnati Reds to five scattered hits and turned in victories over several other major league teams.

Wilson had speed, he had curves and control and above all he had stamina. He seldom was defeated and it has been said that if he had not inherited a dark complexion that he would have been one of the greatest hurlers in the major leagues.



The Page Fence Giants, 1895

from an account of an exhibition game between the Demons and the Giants eleven days before Wagner's arrival. Watched by a crowd of 1,400, the Giants walloped the Demons, 20-10. Fowler, in right field, went 5 for 6. Sol White was at second base, got two hits, and took part in three double plays.

In later years, Honus laid his departure from Adrian to homesickness. There may have been more to it than that. During the exhibition with the Giants it was evident that some of the Demons were in a truculent mood. Referring to their haphazard play, the *Messenger* observed: "No club can play a good game unless harmony can prevail among them. When a set of men get to kicking about this and that, and seem dissatisfied, it is time they were called to a halt, and from all appearances the greater part of the team needed a calling down. . . . If Mr. [J. T.] Derrick is manager of the club [he was not, but as pitcher and outfielder may have been field captain], the players under him should be made to obey. . . ." Did this have something to do with the Demons' reactions to getting shell-shocked by blacks?

In July, twelve days after Wagner's departure, the *Messenger* reported: "Derrick was released this morning. There seems to have been a strong feeling among members of the club against him in some way, with the result that there was a greater or less lack [sic] of harmony in the organization. It is strongly hinted that Wagner left largely on account of that feeling." What feeling? One could wish that the reporter wrote plainer, more felicitous English.

In a retrospective interview with Manager Rolla Taylor in 1930, the *Adrian Daily Telegram* offered this paraphrase: "Wagner never 'hitched' so very well with the Adrian team. He didn't like to play with Adrian's colored battery. It was thought that this had something to do with his quick departure."

The trail ends there. Efforts to elaborate, or refute, the story through contemporary sources have been futile. I found no one in Adrian today aware of the history, let alone the personal circumstances. Perhaps it is less a comment on Honus than on the perniciousness and relentlessness of baseball's color bar, which would soon be absolute and persist for more than half a century.

#### Warren

Games	AB	R	H	Pct	Games	PO	A	E	Pct	Other
17	68	15	22	.324	26	57	49	17	.862	3 2b, 1 HR,
9	—	9	15							11 SB, 5 DP

Joining Warren was like old home week for Honus. Five of his mates from the disbanded Steubenville club were in the lineup. Aside from Brother Al at third, there were Claude Ritchey at short; Dave "Toots" Barrett, a workhorse lefthander; Jakie Bullach (Bullock in Steubenville boxes), who could play second or the outfield, and outfielder-catcher Jimmy Cooper.

For all the talent, the Wonders were fifth in the Iron & Oil League, two games under .500, when Wagner arrived.

The I&O comprised six small cities in the northwestern corner of Pennsylvania, plus two refugees from the defunct Inter-state: the obscurantist Twin City Twins and Wheeling's Mountaineers (or Stogies), whose factotum, also headed for the big leagues, was Edward G. Barrow. It had the usual dropouts and replacements, but seemed on the way to completing its split-season schedule.

Warren's home field was Recreation Park, which the Pittsburg (no "h" in those days) *Post* called the finest in the league. In his first game there on July 11, Wagner had his one and only trial at first base. He batted fourth, following Al, and produced a double and a stolen base. The following day he was in right field and the day after

that at short and batting second. He got four hits, including a home run, scored three, batted in three, and stole two bases. He had six assists afield and the Warren *Evening Democrat* told its readers: "John Wagner covers a great deal of ground at short."

Of his first nine games, eight involved the same opponent representing two towns. Four were with Sharon (Pa.), two of them played as exhibitions after the franchise folded and was transferred to the curious little town of Celoron (N.Y.). Located, with its large neighbor, Jamestown, by Lake Chautauqua, Celoron was at the heart of the era's famous "Chautauquas"—summertime tent meetings where huge crowds gathered for educational lectures, concerts, and revivalist sermons by evangelists. (A year later, a star attraction would be the ex-ballplayer, Bill Sunday.) Two of Warren's four games with the no-nickname Celorons also were exhibitions as the league marked time before starting the split season's second half. The ninth game, still another exhibition, was a loss at Warren, before a crowd of 1,000, to Connie Mack's National League-leading Pittsburgh Pirates.

As for Wagner's performance, statistics are available for seventeen games, half of those he played, including exhibitions. Several of the I&O League towns reported at-bats irregularly or not at all. This affects nine games in which he got 15 hits. For eight others, particularly those with Celoron, there is no coverage whatever. "The Jamestown people," said the Warren *Evening Democrat*, "take a great deal more interest in balloon ascensions than they do in baseball." This was an unseemly gripe, considering that the *Democrat* was among those that ignored at-bats.

We know for sure that Honus went 22 for 68 in the seventeen games, an average of .324. Fielding stats are complete for all twenty-six scored games: A not very impressive average of .862.

He played right field and third base, eventually taking over there from Al, who shifted to second. ("J. Wagner put up a good game at third . . . that seems to be a regular Wagner base.")

Then, on Monday, July 29, the *Democrat* reported that "while running to catch the train at Titusville, John Wagner fell and received a rather severe cut under his right arm. The muscles were not affected but it took several stitches to close up the wound. . . . It will probably necessitate his being out of the game for a week or so." Actually, three. He rejoined the team for a game with the Franklin Braves and had a week of action before the league started to disintegrate. Three teams disbanded. A fourth decided to drop out and play as an independent.

A twelve-game winning streak in Wagner's absence had moved the Wonders into the league lead, with the strong Wheeling organization some three games behind. When it was clear that the league could not continue, Warren agreed to play a seven-game series at Wheeling to decide the championship.

It was State Fair week at Wheeling, which guaranteed good crowds for the games, even though baseball was playing second fiddle to bike races and Buffalo Bill. One game was scheduled in the morning to avoid a conflict with Bill's street parade of cowboys and Indians. Another was played at four in the afternoon, after the bike races.

Wheeling won four of the first six games, so that Warren's victory in the seventh was technically an exhibition for another payday. Wheeling immediately claimed the championship. The Wonders, although hard pressed to ignore their agreement to a decisive series, could not help noting that their season's record, including the seven at Wheeling, was 26 and 12 for .684, while the Stogies' 27 and 16 was .630. Warren went on to lose two out of three to New Castle, languishing in third place, which thereupon had the temerity to proclaim itself the league champs. For what it's worth, the A. G. Spalding Company, in its wisdom, sent a pennant to Wheeling.



The Paterson Team, 1896

Warren's management wanted to keep the team going. It was only September 12, after all. But there was a small matter of paying the players, who had received nothing since the first of the month. A wrangling negotiation led nowhere and the players voted to go home. Last to leave were Manager Bob Russell and the Wagner boys.

Whatever the statistical confusion of his season, John Peter Wagner was on his way. By August he was beginning to be known as "Hannes," though not yet as a shortstop. Of the sixty-seven games for which his position is known, only ten were spent at short. He played eighteen at third, seventeen each at second and the outfield, one at first, and five on the mound.

If his fielding left something to be desired, it was not for lack of range or a strong throwing arm. And as a hitter, he already was awesome. He did not escape the notice of "Cousin Ed" Barrow, who would move on to Paterson (N.J.) in 1896 and arrange to have Hannes with him.

Thereafter, it was Louisville, Pittsburgh, and the Hall of Fame.

*A 1985 visit with the Senators' third baseman.*

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# Ossie Bluege: The Quirkless Man

JANE LEVY

April 1985

**H**E STILL HAS GREAT HANDS. There are rivers of veins, and gullies between the knuckles. They are an American landscape.

The left pinky angles in juxtaposition to the rest of the hand. The index finger of his throwing arm points permanently south, toward spring training. They were said to be the biggest hands in baseball. Believe it. His baseball card says it is so.

These hands have fielded 10,000 ground balls, maybe more, bouncers and liners and bunts and chops, wicked hops and hot smashes. They are big enough to encompass an entire era. And they do.

Ossie Bluege, the only living player who was on all three Washington Senators pennant-winning teams rises out of his wheelchair. He is 84 now. He has had two strokes in the last year and his heart, biologically, is not what it was. He has lost the sight in one eye. The vision in the other is blurred. Fourteen months ago he was in the hospital, paralyzed on the right side. When they wheeled him into his room at the nursing home he sat up, got off the stretcher, and walked to his bed. His wife, Wilor, told him he could come home.

He stands in the living room, knees bent, ready to charge the ball. Wilor holds her breath. You know what they say about old ballplayers: The legs go first. He is oblivious to her concern. He is young again. The third base line stretches before him, chalk dust waltzing in the breeze. He can see the ball coming. He always could.

"I was the best third baseman in baseball, young lady. I was as good a third baseman as you're going to find anywhere. I could throw from here on a bunted ball, charge it, pick it up, boom, get it over to Joe Judge at first.

"I'd like to do it again," he says. "Yessir. I'd like to do it

again. There's a time when you're out there playing day in and day out and you wonder when the hell it's going to end. You get a little tired."

He sits back in the hated chair. Wilor relaxes. "All I wanted to do was play ball," he says, his voice thinning with fatigue. "And I did. Oh, I loved it. No getting away from it."

He played eighteen years in the majors, 1,884 games, and every one for the Washington Senators. He played in every World Series the Nats reached — 1924, 1925, 1933. He remembers how Washington was ablaze with fireworks that night in 1924 when the Senators won their first and last World Series. He remembers how he allowed himself a beer at Gus Buchholz's Occidental Restaurant.

Ossie Bluege is all that survives of the Nats' winning ways. He is Washington's winning tradition.

There is no evidence of this in the living room except for the twelve-piece silver goblet set his teammates gave him on Ossie Bluege Day in 1933, a few days before the Senators captured their last pennant ever. The bats and balls and pictures of the Big Train, Walter Johnson, fill the basement.

Bluege witnessed it all. He spent fifty seasons in baseball from his rookie year in 1922 to his last as manager in 1947 to the day he retired as comptroller of the Minnesota Twins in 1971. He met presidents — Coolidge and Roosevelt and Truman and his favorite, Ike — and dined at the White House. He wasn't impressed. He saw the Senators win and he saw them lose and finally he saw them

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*JANE LEVY is a staff writer for the Washington Post. This piece first appeared on April 8, 1985. It is reprinted by permission of the Washington Post. Ossie Bluege died on October 15, 1985.*

leave town. "I felt sick," he says. "Nothing to do but sit and take it."

"No," his wife says, gently. "You were comptroller of the team. You did some of the work negotiating the move."

"Not much," he says.

There has been talk of another team for Washington, a National League club perhaps, backed by Jack Kent Cooke, owner of the Redskins. "I hope so," Bluege says. "I hope in the time I have to live, they'll bring a club back to Washington." He still gets seven letters a week asking for his autograph.

"The capital of the nation. We carried the ball, so to say, to sell the product to the public. We did all right all those years. Well, not *all* those years."

The clippings of a lifetime are pressed neatly between the cellophane pages of the scrapbooks the youngest of his three daughters assembled.

"Studios Young Chap to Battle in World Series." "Bluege Brilliant Play Big Factor in Flag Fight." "An Unsung Hero, Bluege Real Star of Diamond Pastime." "Great Tribute to Bluege, Bluege Feted in 11th Year of Service with Nats." "Bluege, Capital Career Man, One Player Griff Would Never Trade."

Only one date is missing — that of his last game, when he was 39 years old. He says he doesn't remember it. He says he had no regrets. He says he was ready to retire to the coaching box. (In 1940 he signed contracts as both a player and a coach, but did not play.)

Scrapbooks do not lie. There among the contracts (\$2,000 in 1922) and the record of his 1924 World Series share (\$5,959.64) is the notice of his release on Feb. 26, 1941, and the letter he wrote to owner Clark Griffith asking to play one more year.

"Dear Mr. Griffith," he wrote. "I was in hopes that such a decision on your part would be deferred. Obviously, it expresses but one thing and presupposes that my value or valuation to you or to baseball in general as an active player is nil. With which opinion, I beg to differ . . ."

"I don't remember that," he says.

Pride plays tricks with memory.

"That was 1941? I wasn't ready for it. Tired?" He smiles. No one gets tired of playing baseball.

There is a difference between a ballplayer and a baseball man. A ballplayer stays young in the game. A baseball man grows old with it. Ossie Bluege is a baseball man. An organization man. A player's player. A cog. That's what the newspapers said: "A priceless cog in the only three pennant-winning teams in Washington history."

"I was an unsung hero," he says. "I didn't parade around like a lot of guys do, strutting around. I was never a pop-off guy."

They called him the Cat and they called him the Dutchman, though his family was German. Mostly, they called him colorless. He blended in like the beige house he and Wilor have lived in since 1961. In the offseason he worked

as an accountant, auditing the books at Washington's best hotels. He looked the part.

"He was a quirkless man," says former baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn, who was a scoreboard boy at Griffith Stadium when Bluege managed there.

"It t'aint no use, I tell you," a former teammate said in a 1924 story. "That kid's got the bookies. Get me, he goes to his room and he gets his soup and beans and gives the lamplight a plug and about 10, when you and the rest of us are having a good time, he hits the hay. He's a freak."

He didn't smoke and he didn't drink, not even a bottle of beer until he passed out after a game at Sportsman's Park in St. Louis and the doctor prescribed a brew a day to build up his strength. "I was a good boy," he says. "Too good."

He met his first wife, Margaret, in the hospital where she was his nurse. She died of cancer after they had been married eleven years. Wilor, who is nineteen years younger than her husband, was working in the Senators' front office when they met. They were married in 1940. Bluege had been her mother's hero.

"I didn't chase women," Bluege says. "Or did I? No, I didn't."

But he could cuss. "Boy, I'm saying he had words you never heard of," says Calvin Griffith, who was the bat boy in Bluege's first year and became president when his uncle died in 1955.

Bluege's world was divided into quiet unassuming players, of which he was usually one, and happy-go-lucky guys. Hank Greenberg was a quiet unassuming player. Babe Ruth was a happy-go-lucky guy. "He had more women around him than Carter's has liver pills," Bluege says. "But he could hit. Ruth was a glamor guy who liked to pose in front of the stands. He liked the attention. Lou Gehrig used to talk German to me at first base. 'How do you do, *Landsmann*?' he'd say. He was a quiet unassuming guy."

"Bluege is one of the two quietest men in baseball," the newspapers said.

"Walter Johnson was the other," Bluege says. "He was as poor a man to interview as I was."

Clearly, that has changed. The years, and the inevitable realization that there are not an infinite number of them, have loosened his tongue. "I was quiet," he says. "I've learned my lesson now."

Maybe if he had been a pop-off guy, if Washington still had a team that nurtured tradition, he'd be in the Hall of Fame now. Five or six years ago he and Wilor circulated some petitions and sent them to Cooperstown, N.Y. Calvin Griffith always talks him up, but as he says, "other people have friends, too."

Cooperstown offers a hint of immortality. For Bluege, feeling as mortal as he does now, the pain of exclusion is fierce. He has outlived most of the men he played with and more of the men who covered the team. "I'd like to be there," he says.

"I *should* have been there. Don't know whether I'll ever make it now. I guess there's something they don't know that I know."

He hit .272 lifetime. They said he was a sucker for a curve. "Who wasn't?" he says.

In 1983, two third basemen were inducted: Brooks Robinson and George Kell. "They couldn't hold my glove," Bluege says. "Do you know what Pie Traynor says? He was attending a game in Baltimore and he was walking on the field and . . ."

He looks to Wilor for help. "And somebody asked Pie what he thought of Brooks Robinson's spectacular play," she says. "And Pie said, 'Bluege would have made those plays look easy.'"

One time in spring training, Luke Sewell, the former Nats catcher, was asked to name the greatest team of all time. This is a ritual in the spring. "I can't name the best all-time team, but I can tell you the two greatest infielders who ever played in my time," Sewell said, pointing to Bluege. "And there he is over there hitting fungoes."

There was a dance in his step and a song in his arm. His hands moved in deft syncopation. "Fast as a streak of lightning," said Sammy West, an outfielder with the Senators from 1927 to 1932.

"I never saw him fooled by a bad hop," said Walt Masterson, a pitcher who arrived in Washington just as Bluege was retiring. "One time there was a bad hop and he picked the ball off his cheek with his glove. He was that quick."

"He just seemed to glide," said pitcher Jack Russell, who was traded to the Senators in 1933.

"He was the best I ever saw," said pitcher Tommy Thomas, who arrived in 1932. "The best in the world. I can tell you. He was just uncanny."

In 1925 a sportswriter wrote: "Paradoxically enough, the greatest barrier that Bluege must vault in order to obtain recognition that is his by right is his own grace as a fielder."

"It is a paradox," Bowie Kuhn says. "He had that smoothness that stood out. He never seemed to strain at the position. There was nothing dramatic. I think Bluege was so quick, you almost never saw the rough edges. He was a natural."

Bluege is energized by the words. Reflex propels him out of his chair. He is an athlete, a ballplayer. He is trying to answer the question: What makes a good ballplayer?

"On your feet!" he says, and everyone stands with him. He has a ball in one hand, signed by the members of the 1965 American League Champion Minnesota Twins, and a glove in the other. Stiff, but still a good piece of leather.

"On the balls of your feet! And you're moving all the time. You're moving this way and that way, not flat-footed. You got to be loose and free with your legs. That's the way I played. That's the way I got a jump, too, I could run, madam. I had a good pair of legs till I hurt that knee.

"I played a shallow third base. I got to the ball quicker. I

had the quickest release of anybody you ever want to look at. I copied it from Charlie Pechous. He played in the lot adjacent to my home."

Ossie Bluege was born and bred on the sandlots of Chicago. He was the starting shortstop for the St. Mark's Lutheran Church team when he was 14. He lied about his age and got a job in the accounting department at International Harvester, which also fielded a team. "What do you have to do to play ball?" he asked the office manager. "He says, 'Are you a player?' I says, 'I think I am.'"

He became the starting shortstop that day. "I was an upstart," he says.

He played for the Logan Squares, one of the best semi-pro teams in the country, and was offered a contract with the Peoria Tractors in the Three I League. He was underage and asked for his father's consent. "Was?" Adam Bluege replied in German, consenting only after his son promised to quit if he didn't make the major leagues in two years.

And he did — sold to the Washington Senators for \$3,500. He had injured his left knee sliding into second base, and several teams, including the Philadelphia Athletics, had lost interest in him. He says Joe Engel, the Senators' scout, lined up three players and told Bluege that if he beat them to the center field fence he had a job.

The morning he arrived at the Senators' spring training camp, Clyde Milan, the manager, hit grounders to him for an hour. When they were done, he says, Milan summoned Clark Griffith from the golf course and told him he had to come see the new kid whose name he couldn't pronounce. "Blu-ghy," the kid explained.

"Griff Strong for Windy City Rookie," the spring training headline read.

On opening day Bobby LaMotte, the regular third baseman, got hurt. "Clyde Milan, the manager, comes up and says, 'Hey kid, can you play third base?'" Bluege says. "I say, 'If it's a ground ball, I can field it,'" which is how he became a third baseman.

"Bluege and Peck Show Fans a Thing or Two About Baseball."

He charged bunts and cut off ground balls in front of Roger Peckinpah, the shortstop. "Bluege electrified the bugs," the morning paper said.

They went on to Chicago, where he says his friends held an Ossie Bluege Day and gave him flowers at home plate. But he only stayed with the team for 19 games before being banished to the minors in Minneapolis because of "light stick work." He batted .313 there and he says set a record one day for fielding 27 chances during a double-header. A year later he was back in Washington for good. The turning point of his career came on July 17, 1923, when Gorham Leverett struck him out five times. "I probably didn't see the ball," Bluege says.

The next day he received a standing ovation the first time he came to bat. Bluege doffed his cap and got a hit. "To left center," he says.



He was a regular by the time the Senators won the pennant in October 1924. "The '24 series?" Bluege says. "We were lucky."

The final game against the New York Giants was played at Griffith Stadium with President Coolidge and the first lady in attendance. The series was tied 3-3 and the seventh game 3-3 in the bottom of the 12th. Downtown a crowd of 8,000 gathered under the *Washington Post* scoreboard. With one out, Muddy Ruel lifted a pop foul behind home plate. But the Giants' catcher became tangled in his mask and dropped the ball and Ruel doubled. Walter Johnson bounced to short but the fielder bobbled the ball. Earl McNeely came to the plate. He hit a bouncer to the third baseman and providence intervened. Legend has it that the ball hit a pebble and bounded into left field.

"Meusel fielded the ball and Muddy's running like hell and that's when Meusel stuck the ball in his pocket," Bluege says. "He could have thrown Muddy Ruel out."

"Was he fast? You wouldn't call a catcher that caught 154 games fast. We were on top of the bench, pulling like hell. I remember Nemo Leibold standing up alongside of me, pumping, 'C'mon, Muddy. C'mon, Muddy,' trying to pull him across home plate. When he did, we jumped like hell and we greeted everybody and kissed everybody. But there was no champagne at that point in time. We didn't believe in champagne."

"City in Carnival, Whirlwind of Joy Sweeps Capital in Big Demonstration," the *Post* headline said the next day. "Milling Crowds Combine Armistice and Mardi Gras Outburst."

Wilor still wears the pendant from that World Series around her neck.

The next year the Senators won the pennant again, and Babe Ruth named Bluege the most improved player in the league. In the second game of the World Series he came to bat against Vic Aldridge, the Pirates' starting pitcher, at Forbes Field. "As I walked up to the plate Earl Smith, the catcher, says, 'What the hell are you going to do up here?'" Bluege says. "And I say, 'What do you think? I've got a bat in my hand.' Not thinking at all that this was a knock-down pitcher."

"He hit me right here," he says, pointing to a spot behind his left ear. "That's when I forgot to duck."

"Bluege Still Groggy."

Rumors circulated in the capital that he was dead. Ring Lardner devoted a column to him. Clark Griffith spread the word that the X-rays had come back negative. "In fact," the doctor told Griffith, "we believe Mr. Bluege's skull is the thickest we've ever X-rayed."

He missed two games and returned to the lineup in time to face Aldridge again. "When I walked up to the plate, Earl Smith is still digging me, see? He says, 'What are you doing here?' I says, 'What the hell do you think? I've got a bat in my hands.'"

Bluege doubled to left.

He grows quiet, remembering. The hits, the errors, the

seasons, the memories have all run together in sweet profusion. The time Ty Cobb took a run at him with his spikes high and ripped Bluege's shirt and undershirt. Bluege never let go of the ball, and later named his dog Tyrus Raymond. The way Griff gave free passes to all the clergy in the city and they came and sat along the third base line like a bunch of bird dogs.

Bluege remembers.

He remembers that he earned his top salary, \$10,000, in 1929 and in 1931, in the midst of the Depression, and that the Yankees offered \$40,000 for him in 1933 but Griff wouldn't let him go. That was the year he got the silver goblets and a Pontiac and flowers at home plate on Ossie Bluege Day. The same year Griff ordered him to stop working as an accountant because it was ruining his batting eye.

And opening day 1936, with FDR sitting in the President's Box and Bobo Newsom on the mound. Ben Chapman bunted the ball but Bobo got in the way and for once Bluege's throw didn't make it to first base. Bobo staggered. Bobo stalled. Bobo stayed in the game and he won 1-0.

Later Bluege said: "My arm must be going. I hit him in the head and it didn't hurt."

He was past his prime. He stayed on for three more years as a utility man and then as a coach. In 1943 Griffith made Bluege manager. His teams finished second twice, losing to the Tigers in 1945 by 1½ games. He was named Manager of the Year. One day in 1947 he got into a scuffle with Burt Hawkins, a reporter who had written about dissension on the team. They called each other liars and Bluege threw a punch. "That SOB. I'm still mad at him," he says.

"I stand by my story," Hawkins says.

The next year Bluege became farm director and in 1957 the comptroller of the team. When the Senators left for Minnesota, Bluege went with them. He bought a house ten minutes from the stadium, which was abandoned in 1982 for an indoor palace carpeted in Astroturf.

"We went where the grass is greener," he says. "Where it's permanently green."

Fatigue dims his memory. He slams the ball into his glove at his inability to remember the name of a friend. His wife suggests a nap. "I'm not going to lie down," he says. "I have a lot to say."

He could talk baseball forever. "It's supposed to be improved, improved, improved," he says. "What are you going to improve? It's the same old game. You catch the ball and throw it."

The clock chimes 5. The afternoon is gone. "I'm a ballplayer," he says. "I was a ballplayer. That's what I am."

He flexes his hands. He caresses the ball. "I could go out there right now and play," he says, and looks toward the window.

"Has it stopped raining out there?"

*Flying the "Southern Clipper" with the Cincinnati Reds.*

# Spring Training Pioneers

GENE KARST

**J**UST OVER FIFTY YEARS AGO, on March 5, 1936, I watched the sun rise in San Pedro de Macoris in the Dominican Republic.

Today San Pedro de Macoris is famous as the birthplace of Pedro Guerrero, Joaquin Andujar, George Bell, Tony Fernandez, Pepe Frias, Rufino Linares, Julio Javier, Mariano Duncan, Julio Franco, and a host of other present and past major leaguers.

What was I doing there long before any of those players had been born? I was traveling secretary, shepherding a group of Cincinnati Reds on their way back home from an historic spring training trip to Puerto Rico.

Before 1936, no big league club had ever trained outside of the continental United States. True, the New York Giants had played a few spring exhibition games in Havana, but that was all.

Larry MacPhail, general manager of the Reds, had arranged the jaunt. We spent about a month working out in San Juan, then half the team had taken a ship to Ciudad Trujillo to play a couple of exhibition games in the Dominican Republic. The rest of our trip back to the States would be by air—the first team flight in baseball history.

Few of us had ever set foot in a plane of any kind. So we were pretty nervous as we awaited the Catalina flying boat. A "sereno" or hotel night watchman had pounded on all our doors to wake us up at 4 AM. We piled into rickety taxis and were driven forty miles over winding, scary roads to our place of embarkation, a town destined to become an unbelievably fertile source of big leaguers.

Manager Charlie Dressen and many of the players had remained in San Juan and would join us later in Florida, where we would all finish our spring training in Tampa. Charlie's two husky coaches, George "High Pockets" Kelly

and Tom Sheehan, were with us, as was veteran National League umpire Bill Klem. We also had with us the three Cincinnati baseball writers, Jack Ryder of the *Enquirer*, Frank Grayson of the *Times-Star*, and Tom Swope of the *Post*; the club trainer, Dr. Richard Rohde, and players Campbell, Raimondi, Scarsella, Kampouris, Riggs, Cuyler, Harvey Walker, Blakeley, Herrmann, Schott, Hollingsworth, Si Johnson, Freitas, Kahny, Brennan and Wistert. So our group totaled twenty-four men.

We tried to hide our jitters as we all stood around the dock in San Pedro de Macoris. Kelly produced a bottle of brandy to spike the black Pan American coffee. Finally we spied a silver speck on the horizon in the early morning sky. It grew larger and more brilliant. It was our big bird, called "The Southern Clipper." It glided gracefully into the harbor without a bounce, hardly causing a ripple.

Pan American had started using these flying boats a few years earlier with commercial flights between Florida and Cuba. By now, they were flying to South America, as well as across the Atlantic and the Pacific.

MacPhail had agreed that nobody would be forced to fly against his will. He tried to reassure us that in a "flying boat" traveling over water, we would have our "landing field" beneath us at all times. Benny Frey, a righthanded pitcher, was dubious, but he didn't raise a fuss. Gilly

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GENE KARST was the first fulltime publicity man for any major league club (the 1931-34 Cardinals). He was later with the Cincinnati Reds, Montreal of the International League, and Hollywood of the Pacific Coast League, then spent 27 years with the State Department, the Voice of America and the United States Information Agency. He is the principal author of *Who's Who in Professional Baseball*.

Campbell, our loquacious catcher, had been the last holdout. He reluctantly agreed to tag along when he saw the rest of us ready to take part in the historic event.

As the clipper drew up to the dock, the skeptics among us seemed reassured by the perfect landing we had just witnessed. The baggage was loaded. We climbed on board, and soon we began cruising across the bay to takeoff position. The engines revved up, and we were off. Once in the air, it wasn't long before we—at least outwardly—shrugged off our nervousness. Within a few minutes, Gilly Campbell was telling everybody on the plane, "This is the way to go!" Not only was he glad to be on the plane with us but he proclaimed again and again that in the future he was taking a plane wherever he went.

Somebody started a foursome of bridge and a couple of gin rummy games got under way. Others read magazines or got into bull sessions.

Tony Freitas, our lefthanded pitcher who had once been with the Philadelphia Athletics, wasn't as quickly sold on flying as Campbell was. Tony kept his face glued to the window, looking for sharks and watching the flying fish skim along the surface of the ocean. We flew low enough that we could easily see the waves and an occasional ship or small boat. Our cruising speed was 110 miles an hour, as I recall. I don't think we ever rose higher than 1500 feet above the water.

Normally a clipper would have accommodated perhaps a dozen passengers more than the two dozen in our group. But allowance had to be calculated for our heavy load of baseball bats, uniforms and other athletic paraphernalia.

It took two hours to reach Port-Au-Prince, the capital of Haiti. A brief stop there enabled us to mail a few souvenir post cards. There we heard a French patois instead of the Spanish we had become accustomed to in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

We found that the flight was bumpy when we had to travel over land for short distances. But over the Caribbean and the Atlantic you could have juggled a cup brim-full of coffee without spilling a drop.

Two hours out of Port-Au-Prince we came down in Nuevitas, Cuba for our second stop. During the first two legs of the journey there had been several magazines on board. After we left Nuevitas I asked the steward to let me see a copy of *Newsweek* or *Time*.

"We took off all the magazines before we left Cuba," he told me. "We need to figure weight allowance very carefully so we can carry the maximum amount of fuel for the long hop to Miami."

If they were calculating the weight of four or five magazines for a hop that couldn't have been more than 500 miles—well, that began to shake my confidence. I wondered what it would be like if we had to ditch the clipper ship on those Atlantic waves, possibly many miles from our destination. I began to think of Tony Freitas and those sharks.

We flew on, however, without incident the rest of the afternoon, finally landing a short distance from Miami's waterfront about 5 PM. It had been a long, arduous day. Despite our bravado, all of us were glad to plant our feet on terra firma.

We were disappointed that no newsreel cameramen were on hand to greet us. After all, they had been notified about our ETA. As an old newspaper man, I thought the

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Martes Marzo 3 de 1936 a las 3.00 p. m.

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**CINCINNATI**  
VS.  
**ESCOJIDO**  
Miércoles Marzo 4 de 1936

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**CINCINNATI VS. LICEY**  
PROBABLES JUGADORES PARA ESTOS JUEGOS.

Cincinnati	Escojido	LICEY
<b>CATCHERS</b>	Papin	C. Lantigua
RAIMONDI — CAMPBELL	Güigüi	C. Nonito
<b>PITCHERS</b>	Diaz	P. Gustavo
DERRINGER — FREITAS	Grillo	P. Bebesito
HEIRMANN — FREY	Carlos	P. Bragana
HOLLINGSWORTH	Ninín	1b. Luis Vicioso
WISTERT — JOHNSON	Laitico	1b. Nina
BRENNAN	Bragana	2b. Bombolia
<b>INFIELDERS</b>	Loló	3b. HORACIO
SCARSELLA — HANDLEY	Pedrito Alvarez	S.S. Enrique
KAMPOURIS — KAHNY	Mariano Deilló	Of. Pepe
RIGGS	Carlos Augusto P.	Of. Sonily
<b>OUTFIELDERS</b>	Enrique Veloz	Of. Mellizo
CUYLER — GOODMAN	Pajarito	Of. Pasito
WALKER — BLAKELY		

Umpires: Chief, Klen, de la liga Nacional de los E.E. U.U. En Bases, Vicioso, del Campeonato Nacional de Base-Ball 1936

Coaches: Cincinnati: Kelly, Sheehan  
Escojido: Manuel, Hostos Prialto.  
Licey: Charles Dore.

Corresponsales de Periódicos Americanos viniendo con el Cincinnati.  
Ryder, Swope, Grayson.

Oficial ex del Club Cincinnati — Pownl. Crasley — Presidente y dueño del Team.  
Dueño de la estación W-L W, de Cincinnati. — Presidente de la Crosley Radio Corporation.  
L. S. Mac Phail, Vice Presidente y General Manager.  
Gene Karst, Director de Información

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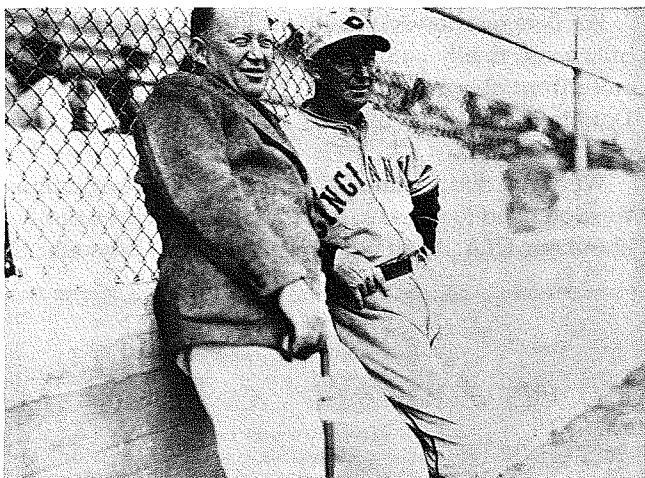
**Precios:** Sillas Preferencia \$2.00 Gradas bajas 0.60  
Gradas altas numeradas 1.50 Sol 0.40  
Gradas altas 1.00 Campo 0.25

Las localidades están a la venta en la calle Arz. Meriño No. 83

NOTA: — Debido a la fuerte suma garantizada al CINCINNATI B.B.C. quedan canceladas todas las entradas de favor. Se advierte pues para evitar desagrados en la puerta que no se dará paso a ninguna persona que no esté provista de su boleto.

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*Larry MacPhail and Chuck Dressen*

trip certainly was newsworthy. Here we were, pioneers—in baseball at least—and no cameras!

Next morning the newsreel people phoned me at our hotel. They apologized having missed filming our arrival by clipper ship but something or other had happened to prevent their covering the occasion. But they still wanted it for their newsreels. Would we cooperate?

Part of my job was to get publicity for the Cincinnati Reds, so I agreed to go along with their wishes. The club was due to play an exhibition game against the Philadelphia Athletics that Friday afternoon, and we were scheduled to leave the hotel at 12:30 PM. The players had to dress in the hotel because there were no accommodations for visiting players at the Miami ball park. I agreed to have the players get ready early and to have the bus stop off at the Pan American dock on the way.

This delighted the newsreel people. When we got there, the cameramen requested that all of us get on the clipper ship. At a given signal the door opened and the fully uniformed players descended the gangplank, some with balls and gloves in their hands, others with bats, while the newsreel cameras rolled. On instructions from the newsreel people some of the players began playing catch, with the clipper ship in the background. Others started pepper games, bunting and fielding the ball in midseason form.

It was strictly ridiculous. First of all, on Thursday we had been awakened at 4 AM, Dominican time, had driven forty miles to the place where we boarded the plane, and had flown all day, on the road or in the air probably fourteen or fifteen hours. That schedule had left us pretty weary by the time we reached Miami, certainly in no mood for frisking about with bats and baseballs as soon as we touched ground!

Yet the newsreels showed us emerging from the clipper ship, everyone in uniform and spiked shoes, full of energy, warming up the minute we finished that long, wearing flight. I wonder how many people who saw those newsreels detected the irony of the situation, or realized it was all simulated. But no harm was done and both Pan

American and the Reds got some nationwide free publicity.

Publicity, of course, had a lot to do with the whole Puerto Rico expedition. During the winter when the plans were announced it was my job as publicity man for the team to stimulate fan interest for the 1936 season. The newspapers and radio stations were friendly and cooperative with us, but they didn't have much manpower to dig up feature material. Cincinnatians didn't know much about Puerto Rico except that it was an island somewhere down there southeast of Florida.

In order to keep the material flowing to the newspapers I did some research about Puerto Rico. In one of my releases to the press I revealed that there were 49,545 horses and 8,041 mules on the island, as well as 24,446 bee colonies. Cincinnatians began to wonder where in the world there would be room for baseball players with all those horses, mules and bees crowding the place.

I also found out that there was a relatively high incidence of venereal disease among Puerto Ricans, but I shared this information only with MacPhail.

In New York, the redhead gathered a group of us in his hotel suite and lectured the players on the dangers of VD in Puerto Rico. "I will follow the practice of the army in case any of you get infected. You'll be suspended immediately without pay, and you won't get back on the payroll until you're completely cured and in condition to play."

Since the Cincinnati players lived in various parts of the United States, there were only some of the pitchers and catchers in our group, as well as manager Charlie Dressen, coaches Kelly and Sheehan, the three baseball writers, and Sue Ryder, wife of sportswriter Jack Ryder.

On the afternoon of February 6 our little party boarded the SS Borinquen in New York Harbor along with a few hundred passengers headed for San Juan. Gaity prevailed. Toasts were drunk. Envious landlubbers came down to say goodbye to their more fortunate friends heading for the tropics. When we sailed about 3 or 4 o'clock everybody seemed happy, carefree. And so it went through the dinner hour and afterward until everyone had bedded down. Sometime after midnight we reached the open Atlantic and the early smooth sailing became a thing of the past. That ocean can be rough and dangerously rugged in the winter.

Charlie Dressen was my cabin mate. During the night his steamer trunk banged from one side of the cabin to the other, narrowly missing Charlie's head one time as he tried to sleep in his bunk. Shortly after dawn we decided to dress since we couldn't sleep any longer with the ship pitching, tossing and rolling. We headed on deck and for the dining room and the sitting rooms. Except for the stewards and crew, the whole ship seemed deserted.

Almost everyone was seasick. I was one of the fortunate ones. Lanky George Kelly reportedly got as far as the dining room, smelled bacon and eggs at the door, made a bee-line back to his cabin and wasn't seen again for days.

And the rough weather knocked out Whitey Wistert, a former All-American football player who was trying to make the grade as a righthand pitcher, as well as most of the other players and the other passengers.

At one point during the day I returned to our cabin and found Dressen in his bunk, fully dressed.

"What's the matter, Charlie, are you seasick?"

"No, no, Gene, I'm just resting," he replied. He knew that I knew he was lying.

Jack Ryder doubted the ship captain's assertion that the storm was due to rough weather around Cape Hatteras, long known as the graveyard of ships.

"We've been passing Cape Hatteras for three days," said Jack later. "And at the point of the cape it's just six inches wide. Time for another scotch and soda."

The Atlantic calmed down gradually as we neared Puerto Rico. On the fourth or fifth day Kelly, Sheehan, Wistert and other players and passengers we hadn't laid eyes on since the day we sailed from New York put in their appearances on the deck.

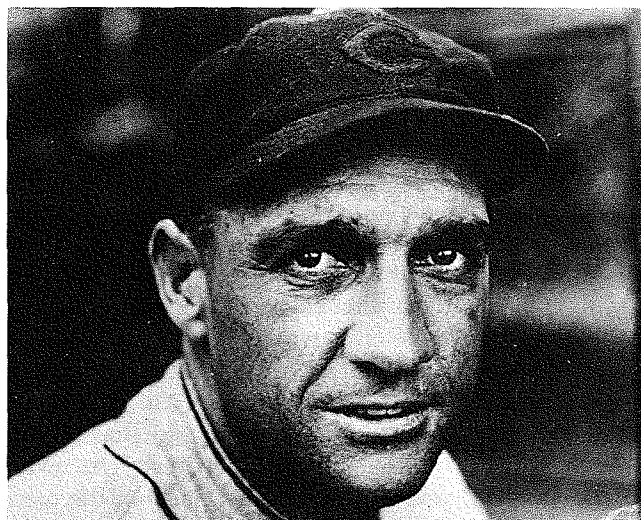
I'll never forget Kelly on that last day just before we docked, pale and wan, sitting in a deck chair all bundled up in a blanket up to his chin, evidently ready to swear off ship travel forever.

By this time it was warm, with tropical sunshine, blue seas and palm trees coming into view as we neared the old Morro Castle and our dock in San Juan. Numerous Puerto Rican officials and baseball fans greeted us. By noon we had checked into the old Condado Hotel and soon were taking refreshments in the colorful Garden-By-The-Sea, with salt air on our lips. I knew this was going to be a most enjoyable spring training for me.

My duties were light. All I had to do was to make a note of when players checked into the hotel to see that the bills were straight. During workouts I took pictures to send back to the Cincinnati papers. And I wrote feature articles. Cabled stories were out of the question because of the heavy expense, so I air-mailed my pieces to papers in Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia and southwest Indiana. Pan American had flights out of San Juan only two or three times a week, so I didn't have to hurry to write my stories.

The rest of the players dribbled in from all over until we had about thirty-five veterans and rookies on hand. Charlie ordered calisthenics to start workouts, followed by batting and infield practice, fielding bunts, pitchers covering first base, wind sprints and all the rest. Starting by 9:30 or 10 AM, we were finished by 1 o'clock. A light lunch, a siesta and then many of us were swimming in the hotel salt water pool. We were told not to use the beach because the Atlantic was full of barracudas, which could slash even a wader to ribbons.

That Garden-By-The-Sea was most attractive. We ate there, and many of us danced there under the stars night after night. Two orchestras took turns, providing a blend of American and Latin music. The intoxicating setting could hardly have been more romantic. In my job, I felt it



George "Highpockets" Kelly

my duty to provide the newspaper men with drinks and put it all on the expense account. And there were other attractions, including alluring Puerto Ricans and vacationing girls from the mainland.

That combination of salt air, moonlight in the tropics and Latin music often kept me busy till 2 or 3 AM. Next morning by dawn I was wide awake, refreshed, not wanting to miss anything. The players, however, usually had been tired enough to disappear into their rooms by 10 o'clock or so.

While MacPhail was still back in Cincinnati I had occasion to cable the home office, despite the stiff rates. One of our players came up with what might be called a "social disease." Dressen came to me with the news.

"You know what MacPhail told us in New York," I said. "We have to let him know immediately."

So I got out my cable code book, which was designed to let me say a lot in just a few words. The cable to MacPhail read something like this: ALAMY ANFIB ANHOC DEZIT QUANVI LARRUSCU. Translated, it told the story about the rookie player "Larruscu" and what ailed him. (I have purposely substituted the name "Larruscu" for the player's real name.)

When the coded cable reached MacPhail's office Larry was too impatient to get out his own code book. Instead, he yelled at Frances Levy, his secretary and a proper middle-aged spinster, to decipher it. "What in hell is Karst trying to tell me?"

Miss Levy got out the code book and, blushing, read him the translation into plain English. MacPhail exploded, then dictated his reply in clear, uncoded English:

"PUT LARRUSCU ON THE SLOWEST AND WORST CARGO SHIP YOU CAN FIND AND SEND HIM HOME SUSPENDED WITHOUT PAY. MACPHAIL."

I got busy on the project and lined up the player's passage home on a slow freighter. I fear the accommodations were not nearly as bad as MacPhail wanted for the sinner. He did recover to play in the Cincinnati minor



league organization, but he never reached the majors.

Our pleasant routine continued into early March. MacPhail had come to San Juan not too long after Larruscua left. He rounded up Dressen and me and said we were going downtown to the office of the telephone company. There we found the Governor of Puerto Rico, phone company officials and other guests. The occasion was the initiation of the first telephone service between San Juan and the mainland. Champagne was served while we waited for the official first conversation. We sat around tables with earphones on so we could listen in. It was the voice of Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes coming from Washington with the Governor in San Juan. When their greetings were ended we were told that a commercial call was scheduled with Powel Crosley, Jr., owner of the Reds, in Cincinnati. Crosley and MacPhail discussed the weather in Cincinnati contrasted with the warm sunshine of San Juan, how the spring training was progressing, and what the prospects were for a good baseball season in 1936. When MacPhail ran out of things to talk about he said to Crosley, "Here's Charlie Dressen." Dressen talked to Crosley a minute or two and then he ran out of things to talk about.

I happened to be sitting next to Dressen, and without any warning Charlie thrust the phone into my hands, saying, "Mr. Crosley, here's Gene Karst." This caught me

completely by surprise and soon I, too, was tongue-tied and the conversation ended with our goodbyes. I confess that the celebratory champagne may have slurred my enunciation. I was embarrassed when I later learned that our stilted conversations with Crosley had been broadcast simultaneously over his Cincinnati radio station, WSAI.

The Reds played several exhibition games against Puerto Rican all-stars. Then McPhail dispatched me by ship to Ciudad Trujillo to line up games for the half of the team that wouldn't be remaining in San Juan.

Those of us tapped for the trip left San Juan reluctantly. A large group of local fans and friends came down to the SS Coamo to see us off. As the sun set we sailed into the Atlantic, past that landmark the Morro Castle and eventually through Mona Pass, southward and westward into the Caribbean. When dawn came we saw the mountains of the Dominican Republic on our right. When the Coamo docked at 10 AM, we were welcomed by a large crowd of Dominican baseball fans, as well as officials of the Trujillo government and William Ellis Pulliam, who was in charge of the Customs Service of the country. Pulliam was an official of the United States Government, sent there to collect export and import duties the U.S. thought the Dominicans owed us. Pulliam was the brother of the late Harry Pulliam, who had been president of the National League some years previously.



*Cincinnati Reds, 1936*



During my first trip to the Dominican Republic, I had seen Hector Trujillo, brother of the dictator, about arrangements for the two exhibition games. With his brother's approval, half-holidays were decreed for both of the days the Reds were in town.

H. F. Arthur Schoenfeld, American Minister to the country, threw out the first ball for the first game. The Reds won both games, though the second one wasn't decided until the ninth inning, when Kiki Cuyler doubled with two men on base, giving us a 4-2 victory.

It seemed fitting that the oldest professional team in baseball, the Cincinnati Reds, should carry the banner of major league baseball into the oldest city in the New World.

The oldest city, however, carried the newest name anywhere. A short time previously the brutal dictator had changed the ancient name of Santo Domingo to Ciudad Trujillo — in honor of himself!

At our hotel I got into conversation with a chambermaid. She told me about herself and her family, saying she had a six-year-old son. I asked what grade the boy was in.

"He doesn't go to school," she said.

I asked why not.

"He doesn't have any shoes. And it's forbidden to go to school without shoes."

Visiting American tourists generally had remarked about how clean the city was, how well everybody was dressed. But it was just part of the dictator's plan to make a fine impression on visiting foreigners. Behind this facade of a happy, prosperous, well-run country, the Trujillo dictatorship was one of the most brutal regimes any country ever saw. The real poverty of the people was carefully hidden.

We did not realize this at the time. Instead, we visited the tomb of Christopher Columbus at the old cathedral and did other sightseeing. The country was noted for its mahogany, so many of the players picked up small wooden souvenirs such as canes, cigarette and jewel boxes, book ends and ashtrays. However, they had to keep in mind the need to limit their luggage to forty-four pounds for the upcoming flight on the clipper ship.

In retrospect, I now realize that I was in distinguished company that whole spring training trip in 1936. Dressen, our manager, was destined to lead the Brooklyn Dodgers to pennants in 1952 and 1953, and he later managed the Milwaukee Braves, the Washington Senators and the Detroit Tigers. Kelly, one of our coaches, had been a great first baseman for John McGraw's New York Giant pennant winners in the early 1920s and was eventually elected to the Hall of Fame. Sheehan, the other coach, had pitched for various clubs and later managed the San Francisco Giants. Hazen "Kiki" Cuyler had been a stellar outfielder with the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Chicago Cubs before joining the Reds. He too, was elected to the Hall of Fame. So was one of baseball's most colorful personalities and most competent umpires ever, Bill Klem.

Nor should we forget the guy who dreamed up the whole, history-making training jaunt—Larry MacPhail. Think of any adjective, complimentary or derogatory, and you could apply it to him. He had pioneered night baseball in the major leagues the year before. An avid devotee of plane travel, he flew the Reds from the West Indies to the United States long before any other team took to the air. (He claimed to have been a passenger on the second commercial plane trip in history, back in 1915 or 1916, between Tampa and St. Petersburg.) In the future he was to gain fame as boss of the Brooklyn Dodgers and later head man of the New York Yankees. He, too, finally was elected to Baseball's Hall of Fame, taking his place in Cooperstown in 1978.

MacPhail's tour of duty in Cincinnati was brief. But he took a tailend ball club and set it on its way to success. When he left the Reds at the end of 1936, Warren Giles, his successor, inherited such stalwarts as Paul Derringer, Ernie Lombardi, Billy Myers, and Ival Goodman. Others still in the minor league organization included Johnny Vander Meer, Frank McCormick and Harry Craft. These were the men who brought Cincinnati National League pennants in 1939 and 1940.

I always loved getting away from midwinter snow and ice to go south to spring training with various baseball clubs, but that 1936 expedition with the Cincinnati Reds was the best ever.

#### IKE AND THE BLACK SOX

That was the week of the World Series when Cincinnati of the National League met Chicago of the American League. As in my boyhood, news about the series came by telegram. These were posted in the windows of drug stores and newspaper plants. Mr. Doud and I watched every bulletin, wondering why the great Chicago White Sox could not get going. Each of us considered himself a baseball expert. We spent hours debating what was wrong with Chicago and we not only plotted up every mistake of the Sox manager and coaches, we knew exactly how Cincinnati could be trimmed. We little dreamed that we were second-guessing an event that was to stand in athletics as an all-time low for disloyalty and sellout of integrity.

Out of the "Black Sox" scandal, I learned a lesson and began to form a caution that, at least subconsciously, stayed with me. It must be remembered that in the fall of 1919, the war over and the country back to business as usual, the World Series was a national preoccupation. Millions waited for each telegraph bulletin, scrutinized it word by word. Newspaper reporting was factual. The stories after each game, narrating the play, were strictly objective. But stark facts and objective reports could not give the whole story.

In the passage of years, whether because of the Black Sox scandal or not, I grew increasingly cautious about making judgments based solely on reports. Behind every human action, the truth may be hidden. But the truth may also lie behind some other action or arrangement, far off in time and place. Unless circumstances and responsibility demanded an instant judgment I learned to reserve mine until the last proper moment. This was not always popular.—DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, from *Ike at Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*

A researcher's fond, tough look at The Baseball Encyclopedia.

# “Macmillan”

FRANK V. PHELPS

**C**ONCEIVED AND NURTURED by Information Concepts Incorporated (ICI), a systems company, and published by The Macmillan Company, *The Baseball Encyclopedia: The Complete and Official Record of Major League Baseball (TBE)*, emerged publicly on August 28, 1969 during a press conference at Mama Leone's Restaurant in New York City, where baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn hefted a copy of the six-and-a-half pound book for the photographers. The *New York Times* afforded the wondrous new reference work three reviews, a rare accolade for a sports publication. In one, Christopher Lehman-Haupt called it “. . . the book I'd take with me to prison, and I haven't nearly the time to explain why.” Bill James recently called this first edition a major influence in the sharp increase in big league attendance during the 1970s because it “. . . facilitated and thus encouraged baseball mania.”

In 1970, Macmillan issued a later version of the initial work differentiated by addition of an Appendix D containing a summary of 1969 statistics and not identified in the sequential numbering of editions. Macmillan subsequently published a second edition (1974), a third (1976), a fourth (1979), a fifth (1982), and a sixth (1985). The publisher has also brought out *The 1986 Baseball Encyclopedia Update*, and, to date, six statistical histories of major league teams, the title of each reading *The Complete Record of (team name) Baseball*. Together the six editions, the 1986 update, and the six team histories occupy two feet of shelf space, weigh forty-three pounds, include more than 16,000 pages and cost \$231.50 at purchase prices.

But the value of the series to baseball fans and researchers far exceeds cash or physical measurement. *TBE*

editions have fascinated baseball followers from serious students of the game's past to young fans whose baseball memories and interests span less than a generation. Sometimes called “the bible of baseball,” a characterization previously reserved for *The Sporting News*, *TBE* is so familiar to diamond buffs that mention of “the encyclopedia,” or “the Macmillan,” or just “Macmillan” leaves no doubt of identity.

## BACK TO BEADLE

The statistical evaluation of individual performance in baseball is almost as old as the game itself. The *Chicago Tribune's* claim on October 7, 1877 that its published batting averages were more accurate than the official figures of the National League illustrates how firmly the worship of totals and averages compiled from box scores had taken hold by the 1870s: “. . . some scorers have a habit of tampering with figures so as to raise up friends and put down enemies . . . not in newspaper scores but . . . in the private League official scores. To a certain extent, therefore, the newspaper scores are the most trustworthy.”

Since the time of the War Between the States guide serials like *Beadle*, *DeWitt*, *Spalding*, *Reach*, *Sporting News*, and others have carried official batting, fielding, and pitching totals and averages according to the scoring practices of their times, and with the addition of new statistical columns as scoring rules slowly expanded. Almost all of the early guides excluded men who played in

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FRANK PHELPS, chairman of SABR's Bibliography Committee, is doing research for a tennis history and a chronological listing of all obituaries in *The Sporting News*.

fewer than a certain minimum of games per season—usually six, ten, or twelve. The practice of carrying full lines of statistics for all AL and NL players wasn't established until the publication of the 1941 *Sporting News Official Baseball Record Book*. Full figures for play with two or more clubs during a season were not shown separately for each team until the 1943 guides appeared. League totals frequently failed to balance. For example, the 1946 AL batting and pitching averages fail to balance between offensive and defensive walks, hit batsmen, and sacrifice hits; and 1942 AL figures reconcile even less, with differing league batting and pitching totals for plate appearances, walks, strikeouts, hit batsmen, and sacrifice hits. There are more recent instances of imbalance, but over the last twenty years *The Sporting News Official Baseball Guide* has proven accurate and logical in its presentation of averages.

*Baseball Magazine* and railroad man John J. Lawres furnished the earliest collections of individual players' career totals and personal facts in 1912. They followed up in 1916 with a new edition covering sixty-two contemporary pitchers and 145 other players in an expanded form, providing for each player: birth date and place; height; weight; side batted; side threw; either G, IP, W, L, PCT, SO, BB, H, ERA or POS, G, AB, R, H, SB, BA for every season in the minors and the majors, and notes stating dates and details of trades, sales, and releases. They did not, however, supply the statistics that were missing from official averages because of too few games played. In time, more columns were added. Commencing in 1939 *The Sporting News* put out a more elaborate rival of the same type, *The Baseball Register*, which, for many years included the playing records of contemporary players, managers, coaches, umpires, and some former star performers but now covers only players and managers. Both serials have continued through 1986, and in line with expansion, both have increased markedly the number of active players included.

*Balldom: "The Britannica of Baseball"* by George Moreland, 1914, provided year-by-year NL and AL team rosters, but Moreland didn't include given names, nor did he furnish teams in the National Association, the American Association, the Union Association, the Players' League, or the Federal League. Another great architect of baseball history and statistics, Ernest J. Lanigan, authored *Baseball Cyclopedia* in 1922. This work included an alphabetical register of the names, positions, clubs, and leagues of all AL, NL, and FL players from 1901 through 1921. Yearly supplements brought the register up through 1933.

The most important forerunner of *TBE* emerged in 1951: *The Official Encyclopedia of Baseball* by sportswriter Hy Turkin and S. C. Thompson, a baseball fan who had compiled a gigantic file of all-time player records. Sanctioned by commissioner "Happy" Chandler as "official," and published by A. S. Barnes as "the jubilee edition," its 620 pages included many well-researched



Henry Chadwick

features—like an all-time roster of umpires for six major leagues—but its essence was an 1871-1949 register of nearly 9,000 one-or-more game players or managers (NA, NL, AA, UA, PL, AL, FL), stating for each: date and place of birth; date of death if deceased; year; club; position(s); number of games, and either or both BA and W & L, for each season in the majors. Managers were noted as such. This initial volume was followed by a 1952 supplement and ten full revised editions, the last in 1979. A spin-off, *All-Time Rosters of Major League Baseball Clubs*, by Thompson, came out in 1967. It was revised in 1973 with 1965-1972 material added by Pete Palmer, who also edited the final editions of the encyclopedia, Turkin having died in 1957 and Thompson in 1967.

#### DEVELOPMENT

Gaps and obvious errors in official averages, the lack of many early records, difficulty in securing the records of players who appeared in only a few games, and frustrating discrepancies among existing guides and registers had long since created a desire for an ultimate, complete, correct set of major league records. But it wasn't until the mid 1960s that the development of sophisticated computers which could absorb, retain, order, and output huge amounts of data finally made a project feasible. As the preface to the first and second editions of *TBE* noted, Information Concepts conceived the notion of building a data base from modern-style box score statistics for all major league games played from 1876 forward and an all-time player file of personal facts, team affiliations, and



Ernest Lanigan

ultimately, from the data bases, individuals' yearly and career batting, baserunning, fielding, pitching, and managing statistics. Successively, ICI:

1. Enlisted the services of Lee Allen, historian at the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (and professor of the largest baseball demographic file extant) and John Tattersall (and his life-time accumulation of the game accounts and box scores, particularly critical to the nineteenth century portion of the project).
2. Gained sanctions from Commissioner Kuhn, the AL, and the NL, for the published results to be the official records of the baseball establishments.
3. Reached agreement for The Macmillan Company to be the publisher.
4. Organized an outside research staff of baseball experts to find, analyze, organize, and record material from official game sheets, newspapers, and other available sources for input into the data bank (many of the volunteers became charter members of the Society for American Baseball Research in 1971 or later joined the society).
5. Managed the research effort, the data input, the accuracy checks, and the ordering of the material for printing. As David Neft, ICI's Research Director, summarized the final stage, "It took just seven hours to print . . . the book, but a year and a half to tell the computer what to do."

Before the last stage was completed, a Special Baseball Records Committee (Allen; David Grote of the NL; Robert Holbrook of the AL; Jack Lang of the Baseball Writers

Association of America; and Joseph L. Reichler of the Commissioner's Staff) drew up a code of rules governing the record-keeping procedures needed because some past records are based on "definitions . . . either incomplete or inconsistent with the rest of baseball history"—like bases on balls being hits in 1887.

This code changed some old records, particularly nineteenth century ones. A questionable change was the disqualification of the National Association, 1871-1875, from major league status "due to its erratic schedule and procedures." That may be a good reason to treat NA records separately, but it probably doesn't justify denigrating the NA, which certainly was the major league of its day and was so regarded in the "official" encyclopedias of Turkin and Thompson. On the credit side, the committee affirmed that the majors should have one continuous set of records "without arbitrary division into nineteenth- and twentieth-century data."

The player, pitcher, NA, and manager registers constructed from the ICI data bases dominated the first edition as they continued to dominate all subsequent editions. But other features merit attention also. The box on page 34 lists the subject divisions of each edition, the space allotted to each, and notice of the statistical column headings in the registers and "The Teams and Their Players." The sections I've termed "basic to book and baseball history" shouldn't be ignored:

1. The original preface covered the development of the first edition. In later editions, the preface was updated, but the original text remained almost unchanged, with one exception: all mention of Information Concepts, the prime mover of the enterprise, was deleted from the third and all subsequent editions. (The partnership between ICI and Macmillan ceased before the second edition was prepared.)
2. "Development of Baseball" is an historical account which belabors some events yet ignores others: the draft (as distinguished from the modern reentry draft), the rise of the farm system, the decline of the minors coincident with the growth of television audiences and other occurrences of mutual concern to the minors and the majors. Its length doubled by the sixth edition, with the new text devoted entirely to the years 1969-1985.
3. "Sources," Appendix A, lists the initial research materials: the official records (NL 1903 to date and AL 1905 to date); the collections of Allen and Tattersall and the files of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum; trade papers (*Sporting Life* 1883-1916, *The Sporting News* 1886 to date, *The Sporting Times* 1890; and 124 newspapers of thirty past and present major league cities).
4. "Decisions of the Special Baseball Records Committee," Appendix B, Rules 3 through 17 are logical

and consistent with the principle of change only when necessary. Rule 15 errs in saying tie games of five or more innings were excluded from official player averages before 1885, inasmuch as the AA did include them before that year. Rule 17 lists all thirty-seven batters denied "sudden death" home runs before 1920, possibly because Babe Ruth was one of them.

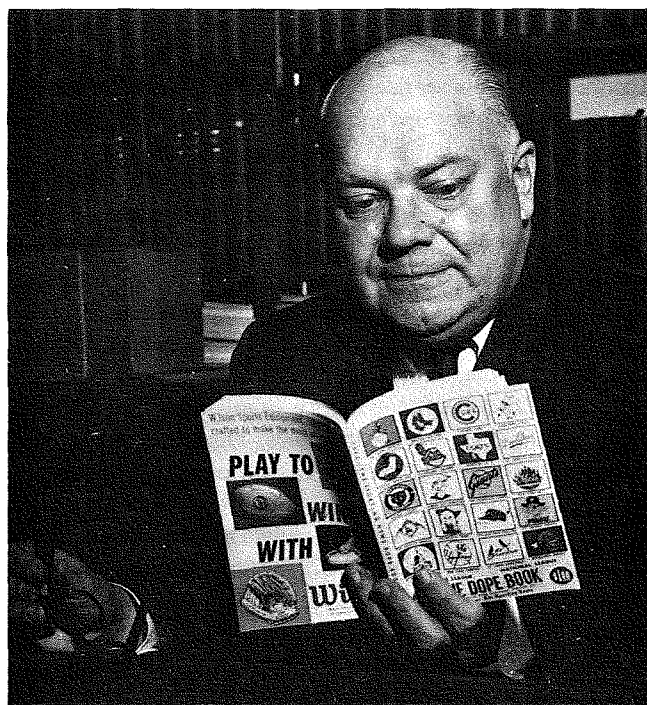
5. "Major Changes in Playing Rules and Scoring Rules," Appendix C, is a useful adjunct to Appendix B and a helpful reference in itself. The rules affected by committee decisions are marked by asterisks. The latest *TBE* editions cover rule changes enacted through December 1978.

"Player Register" and "Pitcher Register" form the main substance of *TBE*. Besides the statistical items shown in the box, they furnish full names, nicknames, dates and places of birth and death, playing weights, heights, batting and throwing sides, close relatives who also made the majors, Hall of Fame membership, no-hitters pitched, and reasons for "career interruptions" exceeding thirty consecutive playing days (illnesses, injuries, suspensions, military service). This tremendous wealth of facts and playing statistics was a great achievement.

The forty-four person staff of the first edition obviously understood the essence of baseball records. It shows in their choice of which statistics to print from those available in the data bank and their rearrangements of batting and pitching columns from traditional sequences of official averages into more logical groupings. The introductions they prepared for each of the ten parts concisely describe the content to follow, note all abbreviations and symbols employed, and illustrate every type of subsequent entry. Another mark of excellence was their creation of "The Teams and Their Players," which set forth yearly league standings and certain key batting, baserunning, fielding, and pitching totals for each team and league, a rundown of teams' personnel (regulars, prime substitutes, main pitchers, and managers) with some season totals, and lists of the top three, four, or five leaders in many offensive and defensive categories. This section nicely complements the player, pitcher, and manager registers.

The staff wasn't perfect, though. Four practices adopted in the 1969 book and perpetuated in later editions seem less appropriate than the following recommended alternatives:

1. For men who played on more than one team during a season, include full lines of statistics for performances with each club (as they were initially in the data bank) instead of lumping them together and breaking out only G and BA or G, W, and L per team. Such an arrangement would still occupy only two lines except in the few instances when a man



Lee Allen

played for three or more teams during the year.

2. Alphabetize the registers by surnames and *given* names, instead of nicknames or familiar forms of given names. By using the standard method found in respected biographical compendiums the dilemma of what to call some early lesser-known athletes is avoided; the search to find a particular Smith, Jones, or Wilson is shortened, and the possibility of over-emphasizing a nickname known during only a part of a man's life or baseball career is eliminated.

3. Program sacrifice hits into the data bank and substitute SH for HR% in the batting records. The deterrent here may have been the in-and-out history of combining SH with other categories like SF and AB. Perhaps someday research will complete records of hit by pitcher so they too can be added.

4. In "The Teams and Their Players," add to batting totals team G, AB, H, and BB (all available in the data bank) by moving PCT and GB up and left under team names and eliminating duplication of the W and L columns.

One more criticism. A publisher's note in the first edition reveals that "much of the source material that was used in the research of this book and the resulting compilations are being donated to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y., for writers and researchers." This material consists of thirty huge binders of computer printouts, one per league per season for each year of the four defunct majors and for the NL 1891-1902, and the AL 1901-1904 (ceasing just prior to the years for

which official game sheets have been kept by those leagues). Each binder is arranged into team sections containing sheets for each player and the team, listing the date and statistics for each game played, with pitching records similarly entered on separate sheets. If printouts ever existed in the same form for NA 1871-1875, NL 1876-1890, 1903-, and AL 1905-, they have vanished from public notice. One source tells me they were destroyed in a fire. While the individual player files at the National Baseball Library in Cooperstown contain many obituary articles, death certificate copies, and completed questionnaires to back up the personal facts appearing in the registers, no collected evidence is available for the majority of former major leaguers. Discriminating consumers do not believe statements simply because they are in print, so if *TBE* is to be the ultimate authority it self-proclaims, it should try to collect and maintain proofs for every piece of personal information and every statistic printed and every change in subsequent issues. This source available to anyone on request.

The slip case supporting the first *TBE* omitted blurbs, but the dust jackets of succeeding editions all contain them. Naturally, they stress the updating process. They also call attention to revised and expanded text and advertise new features (but never the ones reduced or dropped). The encomiums call *TBE* "the bible of baseball" and say things like "...never before has baseball been so thoroughly researched. . .so carefully scrutinized. . .so painstakingly verified. . ." Taking these at face value you might expect that by now *TBE* had reached near perfection. It hasn't.

### FORMAT PROBLEMS

When Macmillan published the second edition in 1974, the only carryover from the initial group on the twelve-person editorial and research staff was John G. Hogrogian. The book listed the staff alphabetically without specifying their individual responsibilities but Red Smith in his May 26, 1974 *New York Times* column called Reichler the editor. Macmillan accomplished its stated objectives of updating records through 1973 and reducing bulk and price, eliminating 32 per cent of *TBE*'s length and 28 per cent of its retail cost. A jacket blurb said "Here, once again—fully updated—is the complete and official book of baseball records." Neither the jacket nor the prefatory pages warned that a considerable amount of original material had been dropped:

1. About 2,500 noncurrent players with less than 25 AB and pitchers with less than 25 IP and no won or lost decisions were cut to a single line: name, club(s), year(s), and BA or IP.
2. Other pitchers who played little at other positions or did not pinch hit frequently were eliminated completely from "Player Register."

3. In "Pitcher Register," relief pitching records were reduced to W, L, and SV, and the vacated space was used to insert pitchers' brief batting records, G, H, HR, BA, "because a pitcher's batting statistics are of relatively minor importance—and the Designated Hitter rule may eliminate pitchers' batting entirely." Why should a future possibility wipe out the past?
4. The carefully researched "career interruptions" were dropped from the player and pitcher registers.
5. "The Teams and Their Players," renamed "The Teams Year-by-Year" omitted the lineup material entirely.
6. Also dropped was the "Historical Summary" of charts and graphs showing yearly averages for many categories from 1876 through 1968, and the tables with yearly team totals and averages in fifteen categories for each NL, AA, and AL team covering the same seasons.

Reichler was credited with heading the editorial staffs of all later editions. In the third and following issues, Macmillan restored the 2,500 one-liners to equity with the others in the register and reestablished "The Teams and Their Players" by reinserting the lineups and their statistics, but the changes 2, 3, 4, and 6 above have not been reversed to date.

A new section, "Lifetime Team Rosters," appeared in the third edition, was repeated in the fourth, then dropped. It contained all-time alphabetical listings of teams' personnel from 1876 forward. Despite confusion between the St. Paul and St. Louis UA rosters and an occasional computer trick of forgetting the last season played for a club when the man had returned there following absence of a year or more, this was an appropriate and useful feature.

Several elements were added in the sixth edition. "Home/Road Performances" provided home and away records of won and lost and runs and homers made and allowed. It introduced factors designed to measure the influence of the home park on a team's ability to score and prevent scores in home games and to compare a team's performance in road games to league performance. Pete Palmer is credited for this feature. Also added were line scores for all League Championship, World Series, and All-Star games and statistics to the player and pitcher registers from the League Championships and World Series.

Another newcomer, "Trades," lists every major league trade, sale, or free agent signing of 1900-84 by alphabetical order of the players involved. This material, differently arranged, had been published as *The Baseball Trade Register* by Reichler in 1984. A note promises that this record will be extended back to 1876. A good, solid piece, yes, but I don't think it belongs in *TBE*. It uses 433 pages that I would rather see devoted to products of the central data base, such as pitchers' batting statistics.



## ACCURACY—GAINS AND LOSSES

With the voluminous content of the first edition in place, most of us expected that the inevitable errors would be corrected in subsequent editions. That this has not always happened is attested by a hot review of the fourth edition wherein the critic spent 800 words damning mistakes and misspellings concerning players of the 1970s, the omission of Dane Iorg, the failure to correct the listing that had Red Faber playing fifty-two games at first base in 1932, and sundry other failings. While that reviewer was so obsessed with the hole he overlooked the doughnut, he did make telling points about the need for careful editing and proofreading. My favorite goof is the record of Fred Clarke in 1899 as it appeared in the third edition,

<i>Edition</i>	<i>AB</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>BA</i>	<i>SA</i>
1st	602	206	.342	.435
2nd	602	209	.347	.440
3rd*	209	206	.986	1.254
4th	601	209	.348	.444

\*The .986 season pushed Fred's career BA up fifteen points and carried over into "The Teams and Their Players" but he wasn't credited with the 1899 BA title. Perhaps the computer balked.

Turning to purposeful changes and focusing first on their personal facts presented in the registers, obviously progress has been made in filling in the blanks observed in the first edition. To measure the progress I compared the first and sixth edition records of the 362 1904 major leaguers:

	<i>No. of Facts Missing in 1969</i>	<i>No. Added by 1985</i>	<i>No. Still missing</i>
Batting style .....	64	1	63
Throwing Style .....	32	13	19
Height .....	148	74	74
Weight .....	147	52	95
Birth Date .....	17	13	4
Birth Place .....	6	3	3
Death Date (of 362) ...	16	14	1
Death Place (of 362) ...	31	30	1
Full Names .....	—	—	—

As far as I can tell, no new facts or figures have been added to the "National Association Register," the orphan child of *TBE*. Either researchers have not produced anything of value or the publisher is disinclined to use whatever new material has been developed.

Acceptable accounting requires balanced figures, and so do baseball records if they are to be considered reliable and significant. Box scores must prove. Accumulated totals must balance between each team and its players, both per game and per season. Batters' totals (H, R, HR, BB, HP) must reconcile with pitchers' totals (H, R, HR, BB, HB). Putouts must equal Innings Pitched. The staff who planned and implemented the first edition understood this well, and their product shows it.



*J.G. Taylor Spink*

This statement from the first "Preface" was repeated in all later editions: "The last important step of the research phase began when the statistical information was fed into the computers. . . . If a team's hits did not equal the hits of the individuals on the team, a message was printed along with the information and the item in question was further researched." But this practice was certainly not followed by the staff of the second edition.

Players' batting statistics were changed without compensating changes in the records of other players on the same teams or in the corresponding team and league totals. Later editions included even more unbalanced adjustments. The records of the 1890s, for example, were disarranged badly out of balance and have not been corrected to date. For the entire decade, only 15 percent of league figures (9 of 60) and 33 percent of individual team figures (37 of 112) reconcile completely for the categories G, AB, H, 2B, 3B, R, BA, and SA.

And there's something interesting about many of the records that were changed. Taking 1897 as an example, it's easy to see that there is a star quality to the twenty-three players whose 1897 statistics were modified. Besides Clarke and Wagner they were: BAL, Doyle, Keeler, Kelley; BOS, Duffy, Hamilton, Long, C. Stahl, Tenney; BRK, Griffin, F. Jones, Sheckard; CHI, Anson, Dahlen, Ryan; CLE, Burkett, Wallace; NY, G. Davis, Joyce, Parke Wilson; PHI, Lajoie; WAS, DeMontreville. All had long careers as regulars except Wilson, the Giants' regular catcher in 1896 and the only one of these men who suffered negative adjustments. Only Wilson and Joyce had no AB or H adjustments

**THE BASEBALL ENCYCLOPEDIA**  
**THE COMPLETE AND OFFICIAL RECORD OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL**  
**Information Concepts Incorporated © 1969**  
**Macmillan Publishing Company © 1969, 1974, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1985**

EDITIONS	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>	<u>6th</u>
Year of publication .....	1969	1974	1976	1979	1982	1985
Latest season covered .....	1968	1973	1975	1978	1981	1984
Total number of prefatory and text pages.....	2347	1594	2142	2245	2248	2733
Purchase price at publication .....\$	25.00	17.95	25.00	25.00	29.95	39.95

CONTENTS AND NUMBER OF PAGES IN EACH PART	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>	<u>6th</u>
<i>Sections basic to book and baseball history</i>						
Preface .....	4	4	4	4	4	4
Development of baseball .....	8	11	12	12	14	16
Sources (Appendix A).....	2	2	2	2	2	3
Decisions [Special] Records Committee (Appendix B) ..	4	4	4	4	4	4
Major changes in rules (Appendix C).....	7	8	8	9	9	9
<i>Main sections prepared from databases</i>						
Teams and their players, 1876 to date.....	383	149	411	430	454	472
National Association register, 1871 - 1875.....	30	30	30	31	31	31
Manager register, 1876 to date .....	37	36	40	42	44	45
Player register, 1876 to date .....	1194	680	820	859	898	890
Pitcher register, 1876 to date.....	507	460	549	576	605	589
<i>Other sections derived from the database</i>						
Historical summary .....	33	-	-	-	-	-
All-Time Leaders: single season and lifetime .....	20	19	24	24	24	24
World Series and Championship Playoffs .....	73	92	91	100	113	119
All-Star games.....	6	6	6	7	7	7
Lifetime team rosters, 1876 to date .....	-	-	95	100	-	-
Home/road performances, 1900 to date.....	-	-	-	-	-	32
<i>Other sections</i>						
Commissioner's letter (separate sheet, 1st ed.).....	-	1	1	1	1	-
The magic of baseball .....	2	-	-	-	-	-
Special achievements: HOF, awards, no-hitters, etc. ...	-	5	13	15	12	12
Trades, sales, etc., 1900-1984 .....	-	-	-	-	-	433

Statistical items in each main section, noted by standard baseball abbreviations

*Teams & Players:* players POS AB BA HR RBI PO A E DP TC/G FA  
pitchers G IP W L SV ERA  
teams W L PCT GB R OR 2B 3B HR BA SA SB E DP FA p CG BB SO ShO SV ERA  
leaders BA SA HR TB RBI SB H BB HR% R 2B 3B, pitchers PCT ERA W SV SO CG H/9IP ShO BB/9IP SO/9IP IP G

*NA Register:* teams W L PCT GB R AB H BA Mgr Mgr W L  
players G AB H R BA pitchers W L PCT players G by POS

*Manager Register:* year club lea G W L PCT Standing

*Player Register:* G AB H 2B 3B HR HR% R RBI BB SO SB BA SA Pinch Hit AB H G by POS

*Pitcher Register:* *total starting and relief appearances*      *Relief only*  
1st ed. only: W L PCT ERA G GS CG IP H BB SO ShO W L PCT SV ERA G IP  
3rd, etc. eds.: W L PCT ERA G GS CG IP H BB SO ShO W L \* SV \* \* \*  
\* = replaced by pitcher's batting AB H HR BA

for 1897 by the sixth edition. Excluding these two, the other twenty-one, including ten Hall-of-Famers, had career adjustments of +309 AB and +415 H among them by the sixth edition. I think it's remarkable that of all the active players of 1897 twenty-one with long, outstanding careers should be the ones to gain more positive statistics both for 1897 and their careers? It's enough to remind you of the *Chicago Tribune's* 1877 diatribe over "...tampering with the figures so as to raise up friends. ...in. ...official scores."

The comparisons of the six 1901-1904 seasons differ from those of the 1890s by being less radical: the "Player Register" changes were fewer and smaller, and the adjustments in team and league totals occurred more frequently and matched the sums of the register changes more closely. BA and SA percentages seemed to change properly—as consequences of changed AB, H, 2B, and HR totals in player records. The percentage of 1901-1904 team records in balance with their players' records is about 69 percent, although league reconciliations are only about 42 percent (15 of 36).

Changes abound in the "Pitcher Register" of all revised editions, too, particularly in the second edition. Very few of those within the 1890-1904 span concern statistics other than won-lost totals, except in the cases of Cy Young and Kid Nichols. More than one hundred pitchers who labored between 1890 and 1904 had their won-lost totals adjusted for one or more of these seasons. By the sixth edition some of these adjustments accounted for seventy-three occurrences (of a possible 128) of team records not balancing with pitchers' records. Fifty of the seventy-three imbalance instances of the 1890s and one of the four during 1901-1904 happened because the won-lost record of one pitcher on the team was changed. As Frank Williams detailed in his article "All the Record Books are Wrong" (TNP 1982) the assignment of wins and losses for the years before 1950 is not a simple matter. There is no doubt that many of the won-lost records of the first edition needed attention. But staff decision and team totals must still reconcile. You just cannot change one pitcher's record without destroying the arithmetic balance. This elementary principle was clearly not followed by the staffs of all too many TBE revisions. The sixth edition extends a thank you to Frank Williams without stating for what, and I assume it was probably for his help in straightening out pitchers' decisions.

Of all six editions, only the third and the sixth, with minor exceptions, include changes in league and team totals for the 1890-1904 period. Those in the third concern NL 1895-1897, 1899-1901, and AL 1901-1902. The sixth contains a noticeably larger number of such changes, all for the 1901-1904 years for both leagues. Every revision has included adjustments of player records, but the second has by far the greatest number, the most plus adjustments, and the most sweeping involvement of all-time stars. The staff of the sixth edition clearly tried to balance

twentieth century records, but considering the massive deviations of the second edition, it seems too little, and—in view of an eleven year interval since 1974—a bit late.

Quite apart from the problem of record-balancing, the numerous changes in players' totals and averages has caused serious misapprehensions and confusions for fans, writers, and researchers. The records of Fred Clarke and Cy Young differ in all six editions even without counting Clarke's astronomical 1899 BA. The figures for Burkett, Chesbro, Duffy, Hornsby, Walter Johnson, Radbourn, Speaker, and Waddell differ in five of the six books. The same is so in four of six for at least twenty-three other Hall-of-Famers, and many more less gifted players. The publisher could have helped by tipping off the reader and including in each revision a list of names of non-current players and pitchers whose records had been changed in the new edition, adding simple symbols denoting whether personal facts, statistical columns, or specific years were affected. Assuming close to a hundred entries per page, each list would have occupied only a few pages.

### SUGGESTIONS

If the established pattern holds, a seventh edition of TBE should appear, in one volume again, about 1988 or 1989. If and when it does, as a fan and a researcher, unencumbered by the realities and responsibilities of marketing considerations, I hope the editors will take the following reformatory actions:

1. Restore recognition of Information Concepts Incorporated in "Preface."
2. Drop "Development of Baseball" or have it rewritten by an historian.
3. In "The Teams and Their Players," add AB and H totals for each team each year.
4. In all registers, restore pitchers' full batting records, making room by eliminating "Trades." Publish "Trades" separately.
5. In all registers, when a player or pitcher performs with more than one club during a season, show his full statistics for each team.
6. In all registers, rearrange the order of names according to proper given names instead of nicknames or familiar forms of given names.
7. In the "Player Register" and the "Pitcher Register," restore "career interruptions."
8. In registers, include lists of noncurrent players and pitchers whose personal fact information or statistical records have been changed from those of the sixth edition.
9. In all records, observe strictly the arithmetic of baseball, even if it requires the same constructive steps as in the first edition to accomplish it.

Once it is published, I will grab a copy immediately, just as I have when each of its predecessors came forth, for truly it is "the bible of baseball"; I wouldn't be without it.

"Historians, like priests, are dedicated to the truth."

# Lee Allen

JOSEPH M. OVERFIELD

**M**Y FIRST CONTACT WITH Lee Allen came in 1955 after I had read his book, *100 Years Of Baseball*, and had written to tell him how much I had enjoyed it. In my letter I pointed out an insignificant error in his account of the death by drowning of Will White, the old-time pitcher. Within a few days, a long letter arrived from #5 Belsaw Place, Cincinnati. The letterhead read, LEE ALLEN, *Baseball Historian*. Rather pretentious, I thought at the time. I was soon to learn that this self-bestowed appellation was entirely justified. Allen wrote: "I am flabbergasted and pleased to learn there is someone out there who remembers Will White, let alone the facts of his death."

This first exchange of letters led to a 15-year association that consisted of an extensive correspondence, his occasional visits to Buffalo and our annual family pilgrimage to Cooperstown, where Lee and his wife, Adele, were always the consummate host and hostess.

Leland Gaither Allen was born in Cincinnati in 1915. His father was Alfred G. Allen, a congressman and well-to-do lawyer. The Allens were a family of means, and it was their affluence that enabled Lee to pursue his sometimes quixotic life. He graduated from Hughes High School in Cincinnati and then matriculated at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, a school of excellent reputation with a generally upper middle class student body. Bill Veeck was also a student there. Allen recalled him: "He was there as a freshman when I was a sophomore, but quit after his father died. He was a Beta and one time he fell out of a third story window during a party and broke his ankle, but was able to get up and ask, 'Where's my drink?'" Lee graduated from Kenyon in 1937 with a degree in psychology. The Kenyon yearbook, *Reveille* (in-

explicably pronounced Ruh-Vale-yuh), lists his credits as secretary and president of Nu Pi Kappa (a drinking club), honor roll, editor-in-chief of *Reveille*, associate editor of *Rika* (the college literary magazine), and four years on the staff of the *Collegian* (the college newspaper).

Allen then entered the Columbia School of Journalism, but left to become assistant to Gabe Paul, director of publicity for the Cincinnati Reds. Rejected by the military in World War II because of high blood pressure, he took a civilian job with the Navy and served for two years in Alaska and the Aleutians. After the war he worked at various times for the *The Sporting News*, the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, the Cincinnati *Star-Times* and for the *Evening Telegram* in Herkimer, N.Y., where he was managing editor. He assisted Waite Hoyt on broadcasts of Reds' games and worked at radio stations in Philadelphia and Albuquerque. He also served stints as editor of the Gruen Watch Co. house organ and as research director for an advertising agency.

In August of 1958 he married Adele Felix, a cousin of Gus Felix, who had played outfield for the Braves and the Dodgers. They had met when Lee interviewed her for a story he was doing for the *Enquirer*. In April of the following year he became historian at the Baseball Hall of Fame, succeeding Ernest J. Lanigan, who retired because of failing health. Shortly after arriving at Cooperstown, the Allens purchased Westridge, a large, rambling house on the Lake Road, built on the side of a hill and reachable only by a rather precipitous driveway. Later they acquired a home in Boca Raton, Florida, where they spent part of

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JOSEPH M. OVERFIELD has written for *Niagara Frontier*, *Baseball Digest*, and is a frequent contributor to SABR publications.

each year. On May 20, 1969, Allen was driving through Syracuse on his way back to Cooperstown from Cincinnati, where he had spoken at an old-timers dinner, when he suffered a fatal heart attack. It was ironic that he died during the centennial of the Cincinnati Red Stockings, the first avowed professional team and a team Allen had extensively researched and written about.

Allen was a brilliant and complex man. His delicious sense of humor almost, but not quite, camouflaged the many problems that plagued him. All his life he fought a losing battle with John Barleycorn, being on and off the wagon dozens of times, and this undoubtedly had something to do with his frequent job hopping. He felt a strong empathy and had an almost morbid interest in players who were problem drinkers, and his letters to me are sprinkled with references to these men. "Did you know," he wrote, "that Nava (Sandy, the old-time Providence player) died of uremia after doing a stretch for drunkenness?" And then, "Larry Corcoran was a lush and did his last pitching in London, Ont., in 1888, before being suspended for drunkenness." On Grover Cleveland Alexander: "He was a pathetic figure, but much of his travail was self-inflicted. It is too bad that Alex did not fall dead on the mound after Lazzeri's third strike. Most people die spiritually long before they do physically, and that third strike was the end of the line for Grover."

Allen was never a healthy man. I never knew him to indulge in any sort of exercise and he was overweight most of his life. ("They are going to put me in the hospital. They say I have to lose 25 pounds.") By his own admission he smoked too much. "I am a chain smoker—three packs a day (Kools). I wouldn't consider stopping and the threat of lung cancer doesn't concern me particularly. I'd just as soon die of that as anything else. It could probably be proved that heart attacks are caused by work, but who will avoid working on that account?" He worked punishing hours. Often he would arise at four and have half a day's work done before Adele would get up to prepare his breakfast. In one period at Cooperstown, he worked seven to seven, seven days a week. He eventually paid the price, but who can say if it was alcohol, the cigarettes or the work?

Twin children, Roxann and Randall, were born after Lee and Adele moved to Cooperstown. It was a thrilling experience for both of them, but Randall's health was a terrible worry for several years, and this, too, no doubt took its toll.

The Allen sense of humor was legendary. Often it took the form of an outrageous pun. When asked if he was familiar with the Aurora Inn in Ohio, he replied: "Yes, I know the place well, and there was a waitress there by the name of Alice, who was a bore. Everyone called her Aurora Borealis." He once wrote to Dave Grote, National League publicist, after Mike Lum had been called up from the minors; "Dear Dave: I would appreciate it if you would arrange for the Braves to play at Cooperstown. I know the

wire services would be delighted to send photographs of Lum at the grave of Abner (Doubleday)." When a reviewer in Buffalo praised his *National League Story*, but chided him for his "unimaginative" title, Allen responded: "I agree, *National League Story* is a lousy title, but I could not think of a better one. I wanted to call it *David Copperfield*, but I understand that has been used."

Allen delighted in the unusual names he came across in his research. One of his favorites was Cassius Candee, president of the Buffalo Baseball club in the last century, who certainly did not have that "lean and hungry look." He weighed well over 300 pounds. Of Harry Billiard, a major leaguer with a brief career but a fascinating name he quipped: "There have been reports that Harry Billiard has been behind the eight-ball lately, but that things are better since he changed his name to Pool."

Typically Allen was the menu he prepared in 1961 for a Victory Dinner at the Cooper Inn, after the Phillies had broken a long losing streak. Every item on the menu was a "play" on the name of a Phillies player.

But there was a dark side to Allen and times when he would be deeply depressed. On April 18, 1961, he wrote: "Misanthropy is the only intelligent attitude. Nine-tenths of the work done in the world is unnecessary, but the answer is not to eliminate work, but to eliminate the people." His discontent was usually vented on the so called "Lords of Baseball." "I always emerge from my sessions with the old newspaper files with a hatred of the Spaldings and the Hulberts and a love for the Dickinsons, the Says and the Jack Learys."

Over the years, Allen had an often comical relationship with the flamboyant and unpredictable publisher of *The Sporting News*, J.G. Taylor Spink. Lowell Reidenbaugh of *The Sporting News* wrote to tell me about Allen's employment there in 1948. Lee came into the office one day to do some research and while he was there was hired. When he left a year or so later, it was under equally abrupt circumstances. Allen was reading copy at that time, along with others. A story out of Milwaukee got into print in which there was a reference to "the late Ginger Beaumont." An eagle-eyed reader wrote to Spink to tell him that Beaumont was still very much alive. Spink dictated his reply in a foghorn voice that could be heard all over the office. "Yes," said Spink, "we know that Beaumont is alive, but the guy who let that get by ought to be dead." Allen heard this, took it as a personal affront, folded his tent like the Arab and silently walked away, without a word to anyone.

Spink bore no permanent grudge against Allen; as a matter of fact, he often called upon him for assignments. One time Spink called Allen's home at Cooperstown and left word for him to call Operator 91 in St. Louis. When Lee called the operator, she asked Spink for his credit card number and he responded with a barrage of expletives and refused to speak to him. An hour later Spink called back. "The Reds will win the pennant (they did) and

Dewitt (Bill) is the luckiest man in baseball," he bellowed. "Further, I have just called Gabe Paul in Houston to tell him so." In retelling the story Allen said he never could figure out the point of the call. But there were many Spink phone calls like that.

Allen was a man of strong dislikes. On his black list were Warren Gamaliel Harding, Richard Milhous Nixon and, strangely, the State of Indiana. With reference to Harding he wrote to me about a man who was trying to restore his memory and good character. Lee called it "the most useless task I ever heard of." "You know, of course," he wrote in a letter of April 3, 1961, which contained a single sentence, "that the John Birch Society was founded in Indiana (see: New York Times, April 3, 1961)." And then a month later:

Elmer Davis is proof of my theory that a person of merit has to leave Indiana. He is in the tradition of Theodore Dreiser and others. Richard Nixon really belongs in Indiana; although, since Social Security has been in effect, California has become the Indiana for the senile, so he is as much at home there as he would be in Indiana.

In another letter there was the following dig at the Hoosier state: "We were thrilled over the exploits of John Glenn. The most wonderful thing is that the trip produced so few ill effects, other than a slight nausea when passing over Indiana."

Lee spent countless hours answering the letters that came in from all over the country—a task he enjoyed as long as the requests were reasonable. But if he thought he was being imposed upon or deceived, watch out! The director of the famed Roswell Park Cancer Clinic in Buffalo once wrote and asked Allen to supply him with the death certificate of all major league players—a formidable, if not impossible task. Allen's response was a scathing one. The Buffalo doctor replied in kind, calling Allen, in effect, an S.O.B. who didn't care how many people died of cancer.

A Catholic priest once called Allen to tell him he had caught for the Cardinals in 1920. Lee found no record of such a player. The letter he wrote not only dripped with sarcasm, but was a perfect illustration of the lengths to which he would go to confirm or give the lie to an item of baseball information.

The St. Louis Cardinals of 1920 had the following catchers: Vern James Clemons (112 games), William Martin Dillhoefer (74), Carlos Timothy Greisenbeck (5), George Lewis McCarty (5), George Louis Gilham (1) and William Gibbons Schindler (1). Clemons died in St. Petersburg, Florida, May 5, 1959, and I am in touch with his descendants; Dillhoefer died of typhoid fever at St. Louis, Feb. 22, 1922; Greisenbeck passed away on March 25, 1953 at San Antonio, Texas, and his family is known to us; McCarty died at Reading, Pa., and his identity is established beyond dispute; Gilham, poor fellow, fell victim to Hodgkins disease and left this sphere on April 25, 1937 at Lansdowne, Pa. That leaves Schindler and he tells me he is very much alive at 303 North Walnut St., Perryville, Mo. If

## THE COOPER INN

COOPERSTOWN, N. Y.

Wednesday, August 23, 1961

BARBARA AND DICK WHITE

GERTRUDE AND ROWAN SPRAKER

ADELE AND LEE ALLEN

"The hell of it is they ain't hittin' " Joe Cantillon

23 Skidoo

## PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

### VICTORY DINNER

Manhattans Mahaffey Daiquiris Dalrymple  
Coker-Cola  
Shrimp Cocktails Malkmus  
Olives Gonzalez Cellar-y Buzhardt

Mauch Turtle Soup

Sirloin Steak, Sauce Roberts  
Potatoes Baldschun String beans a la Callison  
Sullivan Salad

Parfaits Ferrarese  
Short Demi-tasse Tea with Lehman

you wonder why I have dropped my other duties to devote so much time to your case, it is because historians, like priests, are dedicated to the truth, which I would go to any length to establish.

That letter, and I am not referring to its thinly veiled acerbity, brings to focus Allen's greatest contribution to baseball research—the vital statistics on major league players. Over the years he had compiled the same sort of information for thousands of ballplayers as he had for the six Cardinal catchers of 1920. The mountains of data that



he accumulated were neatly entered in loose-leaf notebooks. When the Allens moved from Cincinnati to Cooperstown in 1959, a separate van was required for his 5,000 pounds of books and baseball records.

Much of the information he accumulated himself, relentlessly searching old newspapers and sporting publications, consulting family Bibles, snooping around in graveyards, writing to bureaus of vital statistics and to the players themselves or their relatives. For several years he provided a list of "missing players" for publication in *Baseball Digest*, resulting in scores of finds. But even more important was the blue ribbon circle of researchers from coast to coast that he conscripted to assist him. Among them were John Tattersall of Philadelphia, who, with great care and patience, recorded every home run ever hit in the major leagues; Frank Marcellus, another Philadelphian, believed to have been the first to compile a list of major league players, even anteceding Ernest Lanigan's *Baseball Cyclopeda* of 1922; Harry Simmons, then secretary of the International League; Thomas P. Shea of Higham, Mass., an expert on New England players; Karl Wingle of the *Baseball Blue Book*, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Clifford S. Kachline, then of *The Sporting News*, and S.C. Thompson, who once played in Sousa's Band. It was Thompson, along with New York Daily News sportswriter Hy Turkin, who in 1951 brought out the A.S. Barnes *Encyclopedia of Baseball*, a milestone in the recording of the game's history and demographics.

I was also "drafted" by Allen as a tracer of "lost players." I learned early that Lee's interest was not confined to the better known players. The fact is, the more obscure the player the more he felt challenged. Take Elmer White, who played in 15 games for the Forest Cities of Cleveland in 1871 and who was thought to be a brother of James (Deacon) White and Will White. I had come across a note in the *Spirit of the Times* which stated that Jim White was taking "his cousin Elmer" with him from Caton, N.Y. to Cleveland for the 1871 season. Lee jumped on this immediately, and that summer as we were preparing to return to Buffalo after a visit to Cooperstown, he strongly suggested that we swing south on our way home and visit Caton, which is about ten miles south of Corning. "Look for the Methodist church," he said, "and then for the cemetery that no doubt will be behind it. I feel confident you will find there what happened to Elmer White." We reached Caton at dusk, with ominous thunder clouds forming to the south. We found the church and it did have a cemetery behind it. In the deepening gloom, my teenage son and I hurriedly scanned the tombstones, almost furtively, as though we were infringing on some private world. Then suddenly, Eureka! There it was just as Lee had predicted. The stone was scarred by the elements and the inscription was almost illegible, but it could be made out: ELMER WHITE—BORN DECEMBER 7, 1850—DIED MARCH 28, 1872—PARENTS—BENJAMIN AND MINERVA WHITE. These few words told with exquisite brevity

the story of a short life and a short baseball career. When the information was mailed to Allen (the names of the parents proved he was a cousin and not a brother of the better-known Deacon and Will), one would have thought the Kohinoor Diamond had been discovered in a rural graveyard, rather than a few facts about an obscure ballplayer.

Fifteen years after Allen's death, the tracing of other Elmer Whites goes on through a committee of SABR members headed by Richard Topp of Chicago and featuring such super-sleuths as Bill Haber of Brooklyn, who once spent 14 years tracking Louis (Bull) Durham; Joe Simenic of Cleveland and others.

When SABR member David S. Neft conceived the idea that later ripened into Macmillan's *The Baseball Encyclopedia*, he at once turned to Lee Allen for advice and information. In a recent letter, Neft wrote:

In the actual compilation of the demographic file, Allen was in charge. The starting point was Lee's notebooks of demographic information, organized by rookie year in the major leagues. Much of the information came from his research efforts and the Hall of Fame questionnaire project that he founded and nurtured and which still continues . . . My saddest memory of the whole project is that Lee died just before publication and was not there when the book was dedicated at Cooperstown in the summer of 1969.

There were other sides to Allen apart from researching old ballplayers. He was a sparkling conversationalist and a much sought-after public speaker. He spoke without notes, pacing back and forth in front of his audience while he regaled them, drawing from his bottomless well of anecdotes. Jimmy Cannon, the sportswriter, said Allen could outtalk anyone extant on baseball; Eddie Brannick, the Giants' road secretary stuck up for Pat Monahan, the Cub scout. One night in 1949 Monahan was brought to Cincinnati to face Allen in a TV baseball talkathon. The match began at 8 p.m. and ended at 5 a.m. when Monahan grudgingly accepted defeat, grumbling, "All you know about baseball is what you read in books."

Said Allen, "I love the research but I hate the writing." His dislike of writing is well-disguised in the 10 books he wrote, at least in the six that I have read. (In various sources, Allen has been credited with 10, 11 and 12 books. I have been able definitely to establish only the lower number.) I found them to be highly entertaining, filled with human interest, garnished generously with the famous Allen humor and replete with the off-beat and bizarre tales that appealed so much to him. Allen's books are anecdotal rather than scholarly, and you will never find a footnote or a bibliography in any of them. This is not to say he was careless with history. Far from it. His research was meticulous and he prided himself on being able to back up his facts.

His first book, *The Cincinnati Reds*, published in 1947, was one of a series of team histories put out by G.P.

Putnam's Sons. I've always thought that Allen's book was the best of the series. Three years later he completed *The 100 Years of Baseball*. Though it was well-received, Allen was quick to admit that any attempt to write a history of the game in 301 pages had to be superficial at best. In 1955 A.S. Barnes published his *Hot Stove League*, which was called "an informal story of baseball, including the game's origins, myths, legends and little known facts and figures." *Hot Stove* was probably his best book, but it gave him more grief than any of the others. At first he thought he had a commitment from the Putnam publishing house, and on the strength of that he took a trip to the West coast and rented an apartment there, only to learn that Putnam's had decided not to print it on advice of an unnamed "outside reader." Eventually, Barnes took it on, but according to Allen made no effort to promote it. For whatever reason, it did not sell at all. Thirty years after its publication, it has come to be highly regarded by baseball historians and is something of a collectors' item.

The best known of his later books were *The National League Story* (bearing the imprimatur of the league office), *The American League Story*, and *The Giants & the Dodgers*, the latter an attractive and diverting book, complete with a Willard Mullin cartoon on the jacket.

Allen was never completely satisfied with any of his books, unless it was *The Hot Stove League*. He found the writing difficult simply because he had too much information at his fingertips and the winnowing out process distressed him greatly. What he really wanted to do some day was to write a massive history of the game. On Feb. 7, 1956, he wrote:

Some day I will publish at my own expense an enormously detailed history of baseball in 20 or more volumes, knowing it will be appreciated by only a few. I don't care about the others or whether it ever makes a cent. But it takes time, time, time! I know now why Thomas Wolfe was so obsessed with time. Wolfe died at 38 and I am 41 and soon will be 44 when F. Scott Fitzgerald died. Please do not think that I flatter myself to be in a class with these gentlemen, but I do have the same temperament and disposition and now that I have passed 40 I am beginning to wonder.

Although baseball research was his all-abiding passion and the catharsis that cleansed him, at least temporarily, of his worries and self-doubts, Allen was also well-read and knowledgeable in many other fields. Strongly under the influence of Wolfe and Fitzgerald, he wrote a novel about flaming youth when he was only 20. The girl he was going with had visions that he would become rich and famous. When the book was rejected, she dropped him. On March 5, 1956, he wrote: "I still want to do the novel, which, hopefully, will be successful enough to permit me to pursue the baseball research necessary to write my 20-volume history of baseball." He continued to work on it, but like the 20-volume history of baseball it was to become an unfinished symphony upon his death in 1969.

Another who influenced Allen greatly was Lafcadio Hearn, the expatriate writer who specialized in the exotic and the macabre. Wrote Allen: "No writer, other than Wolfe, has had a more profound effect on me." In 1955 he was researching a book on Hearn's Cincinnati years. Apparently, this book, too, was never finished.

Allen's years at Cooperstown (1959-1969) were at first euphoric. He fell madly in love with the jewel-like village. He had a lovely home overlooking Glimmerglass (Lake Otsego); the twins were born there, and the facilities for research were almost unlimited. But the euphoria was not to last. Lee did not get along with Sid Keener, who was the director when he arrived in 1959. Ernie Lanigan, Lee's predecessor, had had the same problem. Ken Smith, Keener's successor, was more compatible, but still problems developed along the way. On Feb. 15, 1961, he wrote:

The story in the *Sporting News*, quoting me on standards for election to the Hall of Fame caused me a great deal of embarrassment and didn't help my situation here at all, because I am not a member of the Committee and I should not be quoted on anything pertaining to elections. The original story, as printed in a Harrisburg paper, had a bunch of stuff about Galvin in it. We'll get him in eventually. I am also booming Beckley, Connor, Keefe and Ward.

Galvin was chosen in 1965, Beckley in 1971, Keefe in 1964, Connor in 1976 and Ward in 1964.

In 1965 he wrote: "I am exhausted after six years of hard work, frustration and lack of appreciation." Eventually, he sold Westridge and moved to Florida, spending his winters there and staying at Cooperstown from mid-May to mid-October each year. As it was, he was historian at the Hall of Fame for ten years. He had never held another job that long.

While at Cooperstown, he started the column, *Cooperstown Corner*, that appeared in *The Sporting News*, first bi-weekly then weekly. Masterpieces of the columnist's art, they were carefully crafted, beautifully written and often concluded with an O. Henry twist. They usually dealt with the old-timers he so revered. ("Sure," he once wrote, "Willie Mays is a great player, but let's wait 20 years and then I'll be interested in him.") When Allen died the column died with him. Lowell Reidenbaugh, then managing editor of *The Sporting News* wrote the following to me in 1969:

His weekly columns required absolutely no editing. They were flawlessly written. The best efforts of any other writer would have been juvenile by comparison, so we decided to discontinue the column. It cannot be replaced, because there is only one Leland Gaither Allen.

Reidenbaugh was correct: there was only one Lee Allen. But his legacy remains. No one, unless it was Henry Chadwick, contributed more to the history of the game. Chadwick is honored at Cooperstown. Lee Allen deserves similar recognition.

# The Pitcher as Fielder

JIM KAPLAN

**S**EVERAL MEMBERS OF THE TEXAS pitching staff were sitting in the clubhouse one afternoon discussing the importance of fielding. They were quick to agree with Los Angeles manager Tommy Lasorda's assertion that a good-fielding pitcher can help himself win another two games a year. "It's really very simple," said Burt Hooton. "It's a question of a pitcher's very function: not putting too many runners on base."

"As soon as you release the ball," put in Dave Schmidt, "you're a fielder."

"When Ed Halicki was with the Giants," said Charlie Hough, "he was told he'd be sent down after his next start. Then he found himself protecting a one-run lead in the ninth. Somebody hit a liner at him, and he barehanded it and threw to first for a double play. He went on to win the game. He wasn't sent down."

"Fernando Valenzuela is the best I've ever seen at fielding grounders hit right at him," said Hooton. "Unlike most of us, he gets his glove all the way down. He's not as great at covering first."

"But that's the most important thing a pitcher can do on defense!" said Dave Rozema.

Hence, the critical and evocative drill that starts every spring training. The play is the very essence of spring: grounder to first, pitcher covering. It's as simple as three to one.

"It's gathering time, like a class reunion," says former major league pitcher Jim Kaat (see box). "All of a sudden, you're in the home room, with nineteen or twenty pitchers talking about what happened during the winter."

And working on the 3-1 play. It's a drill pitchers prac-

tice before they work a single game, a play they repeat until they see it in their dreams. That's because Lasorda and the Rangers were right about pitchers winning games with their gloves, and there's probably no play they make more often than the 3-1 putout.

The drill takes longer than any other because of the number of players involved. All the pitchers—veterans, rookies, minor-leaguers up for a quick look—participate, along with three or four first basemen. A weathered coach bats out grounders.

"It's a more difficult drill for the pitcher than for us first basemen," says Chris Chambliss, who starred for the Indians, Yankees and Braves, "because none of them run it as often as each of us does. They're not as accustomed to the play. Besides, during the game they're thinking of getting the batter out, and I'm thinking of playing defense."

Games can turn on how fast a pitcher reacts. "I learned to break for first on any ball hit to the right side of the infield," says Kaat, who won more Gold Gloves (16) than any pitcher. "When a hitter beats a pitcher, nine times out of ten it's because the pitcher didn't get a jump." Kaat used to head for a spot ten to fifteen feet down the line from first base. Then he'd turn sharply left and race parallel to the line. If all went well, he'd catch the first baseman's toss a couple of steps ahead of the base. Then

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*JIM KAPLAN, editor of SABR's Baseball Research Journal, was a long-time correspondent for Sports Illustrated; he is the author of Playing the Field, published by Algonquin Books, from which this article is adapted.*

he'd look for the base and touch it with his right foot to avoid colliding with the runner. "If you practice it enough," says Kaat, "you'll get your footwork down like a hurdler."

Of course, the play is not as simple as the neat 3-1 on our scorecard. For one thing, the throw doesn't always go from first baseman to pitcher. A bunt or slowly topped grounder can be fielded by either player. (If both converge on the ball, the second baseman should cover first, but for some reason, he rarely participates in the spring-training drill.) Also, the first baseman's throw to the pitcher may not be perfect. "I look for bad throws because I know I can handle the good ones," says Phil Niekro of the Braves, Yankees, and Indians. Niekro also doesn't panic about tagging the bag. Pitchers usually err when they look for the base before they have the ball.

The play looks simple enough when the ball is hit sharply to the first baseman, who then flips an underhand throw, chest-high, to the pitcher a couple of steps before he reaches the bag. Things start getting complicated, both in practice and games, when a ball is hit any distance to a first baseman's right. An underhand toss won't get the job done in such instances; the throw must then be sidearm or overhand and may not be right on the money.

A 3-1 play figured in the most exciting Series finale ever played. The Yankees were leading the Pirates 7-5 in the eighth inning of the 1960 Series' seventh game, with Pittsburgh runners on second and third and two outs. When Roberto Clemente hit a chopper to the right of first baseman Moose Skowron, a standard 3-1 should have ended the inning. Unfortunately for the Yankees, Bobby Shantz, the best-fielding pitcher of his time, had been replaced by the sluggish Jim Coates. When Coates was slow covering first, Clemente was safe, a run scored and the stage was set for a three-run homer by Hal Smith. The Pirates eventually won 10-9. Yankee fans are still fuming over manager Casey Stengel's decision to replace Shantz with Coates.

Fielding would be tough enough for a pitcher if the 3-1 play were all he had to make. It's not. The pitcher has to break to his left fast enough to cut off a drag bunt down the first base line; if the ball gets by him, it's invariably a hit. Sometimes the 3-1 play doesn't occur because the first baseman doesn't get to a slowly hit ball in the hole. The second baseman does, and the play goes to the pitcher, 4-1. Another corollary to the 3-1 play is the 3-6-1 double play. The first baseman fields a ball in the hole and throws to the shortstop covering second. With the first baseman out of the play, the shortstop then relays to the pitcher covering first. In this case, the pitcher somehow catches the ball as he's looking back over his left shoulder. Then he has to find the bag. Strange things can happen. On May 24, 1985, Hough induced Boston's Rich Gedman to hit a double-play ball with the Rangers leading the Red Sox by one run in the ninth, one out, and men on first and third. Gedman hit a one-hopper to first baseman Pete O'Brien,

who threw to shortstop Curtis Wilkerson covering second. Then Wilkerson relayed to first. Hough caught the ball, stepped on first to end the game—and tripped over the bag.

Most of the time a pitcher's fielding is no laughing matter. There's often a direct correlation between good fielders and big winners. Consider some of the most respected fielders to pitch in the last ten years. Tom Seaver. Jim Kaat. Fernando Valenzuela. Phil Niekro. Ron Guidry. By no coincidence, all of them may be Hall of Fame candidates.

Here's what a pitcher can do to help his team win a game. On June 28, 1974 the Cubs were leading the Expos 2-1 in the ninth, with Montreal runners on first and third and one out, when Ron Hunt tried to lay down a suicide squeeze bunt. He popped it up along the first-base line, and Cub pitcher Rick Reuschel dove for the ball and caught it just a few inches off the ground. Then he threw to first to double up a runner and end the game. Not for nothing is Reuschel considered the best-fielding active pitcher in baseball.

Here's what a pitcher can do to win a big game. In the fifth game of the 1964 World Series, the Cardinals' Bob Gibson, a righthander who always twisted toward the first-base line on his follow-through, was hit on the buttock by a liner off the bat of the Yankees' Joe Pepitone. The ball caromed over to the third-base line. After spinning around Michael Jackson-style, Gibson ran the ball down, retrieved it, and threw out Pepitone in what became the game's pivotal play. "It didn't seem like much at the time, but I still don't know how I did it," says Gibson. Other pitchers often contribute to losses by dropping throws from their first baseman. That's what happened to the Cardinals' Dave LaPoint in the 1982 World Series.

The only play a pitcher is likely to make as often as the 3-1 putout is the throw to first, second or occasionally third on a bunt situation. It's a play that doesn't come easily. After all, the pitcher is accustomed to being totally in charge before throwing the ball. Look at him out there: standing on the rubber, taking a deep breath, assuming the proper grip, throwing when ready. Suddenly, the ball's in play and he must field it, turn, sight the base and throw quickly—all without getting a good grip on the ball. Often his throw is hurried. Often it's off. In one of baseball's strangest ironies, the man who holds the ball and initiates the action comes unglued.

"On a bunt situation the most important thing is the first three steps," says Kaat. "Coming off the mound, the pitcher should take three strong strides. The closer he gets to the ball, the smaller his strides should be, so that he can get his body under control. While listening to his catcher tell him which base to throw to, he should get his hand up to the throwing position as quickly as possible. That way the fielder he's throwing to can see the ball, and the pitcher can make a better throw. Finally, he should spin off his back foot and take a little crow-hop before throw-

ing. That gets his body under control and his momentum going toward the base.”

There are other defensive jobs a pitcher must familiarize himself with. Like backing up third or home if a play is being made there. The idea is not to stand near the catcher or third baseman, but near the fence; that way, a pitcher can reach overthrows that kick to the side as well as those that go through the fielder. This is the sort of little-appreciated defensive work that wins games.

Holding runners on base is another defensive skill the pitcher must master. Actually the term “pickoff” is misunderstood. The idea isn’t as much to pick off a runner as it is to keep him close to the base. To put it another way, a pitcher who picks off fifteen runners a season but allows thirty to steal may not be as valuable as a pitcher who picks off two or three but allows none to steal.

Not that a pickoff can’t be useful. Tied 3-3 with the Blue Jays, the Orioles were forced to use a reserve infielder, Len Sakata, as their tenth-inning catcher. Three Toronto play-

ers reached first. None stole second, or even tried to. Tippy Martinez picked off each one.

White Sox great Wilbur Wood would throw to first so many times the runner would be lulled to sleep. Most often the key ingredient isn’t the throw to first as much as the quick throw home. The pitchers who do this best are those who don’t waste time. They come to the “stop” position on their windup with their weight on their back foot, so they won’t have to rock back before throwing. And they minimize the leg kick and throwing motion. A pitch that reaches the plate in 1.2 seconds or less won’t yield many stolen bases because the average catcher can get the ball to second in 2.0. The total of 3.2 is quicker than most baserunners with a lead can get from first to second.

Finally, there’s the business of handling grounders like any other infielder. Hall of Famer Whitey Ford was so adept at fielding balls up the middle that his shortstop and second baseman could play unusually wide of the bag. In short, Ford affected the entire Yankee infield. Tom

### KAAT’S POISE

In 1959 a big teen-aged kid out of Michigan named James Lee Kaat ambled onto a major-league field for the first time, wearing the uniform of the Washington Senators. In 1983 a 43-year-old Jim Kaat played his last major-league game, for the St. Louis Cardinals. In between he made an excellent case for selection to the Hall of Fame. Kaat had pitched an unprecedented twenty-five years over four decades in the big leagues, won 283 games, helped to popularize the quick-pitch delivery, and revolutionized training methods by continuing to throw between starts. But Kaat will be equally well remembered for his fielding. He won 16 Gold Gloves—more than any other pitcher. He could make all the plays in the field, and he could explain how to do them, too. That’s why he went on to coach the Cincinnati Reds pitching staff in 1985.

“A pitcher’s got to be aware that almost every time the ball is hit, there’s someplace he’s got to be other than the mound,” says Kaat, who is now in broadcasting. “Ball hit to the right side: Cover first. A single: Back up the second baseman so that the first baseman can stay on the bag and prevent the runner from taking liberties. Base hit with a man on first: Back up third. Base hit with a man in scoring position: Back up the plate.”

Among the greatest-fielding pitchers of all time, you can make an equally strong case for either Bob Gibson or Jim Kaat. Gibson is celebrated for spectacular plays; Kaat prided himself on perfecting the more routine but also more frequent plays. No one made the 3-1 putout better. No one moved faster to his right coming off the mound. And certainly no one thought more intelligently about fielding. Asked which play he remembers most fondly, Kaat cites the three 3-1 plays he and

Minnesota first baseman Harmon Killebrew made on the Dodgers’ speedy Willie Davis in a 1965 World Series game. He’s also proud of the many grounders that he turned into double plays.

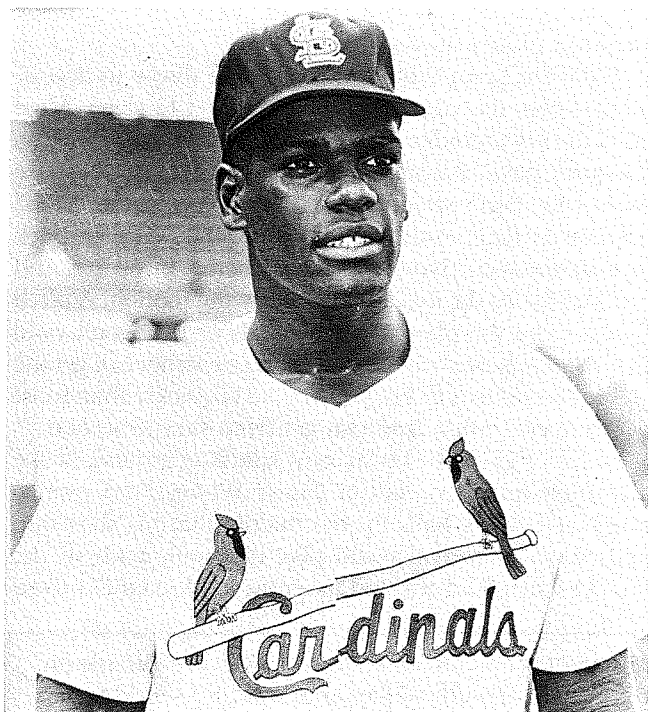
Not that Kaat couldn’t make spectacular plays, too. He once raced over to the dugout to make a sensational grab of a foul ball his catcher had lost sight of. And a memorable series of events brought Kaat’s fielding to the world’s attention in the first place.

“There was a game in 1962 when I was hit in the mouth by a high-bouncing grounder,” he says. “The play cost me six teeth. The next time I pitched, two ground balls were hit back to me—sharp one-hoppers—and I got them both. People took note.” He won the first of his 16 consecutive Gold Gloves that year.

Like most of the good-fielding pitchers, Kaat was an excellent athlete. “Growing up, I was always one of the smaller kids, and I had quick reflexes and good coordination,” says Kaat, who excelled in basketball, golf and handball as well as baseball. “When I reached my full height (6’5”), I still had these qualities.” Of equal importance, Kaat had an agile mind. Long before it was fashionable, he was giving up red meat and stressing strength, flexibility, and stretching exercises in his training.

While other pitchers were haphazard in their fielding practice, Kaat rehearsed every play he’d have to make until it became second nature. And as a coach he made sure his pitchers did likewise. “We had a drill,” he says, “in which pitchers used a cloth-covered ‘Incrediball.’ They hit it at each other as hard as they can from fifty feet. It sharpens their reflexes.”

It’s obvious that Kaat’s influence on fielding will be felt long after the end of his playing career.



Bob Gibson

Seaver often takes thirty minutes of fielding practice, working not only on catching the ball but making the difficult turn-around throw to second. The most difficult fielding play a pitcher makes on grounders is the high bouncer hit over his head. Bob Gibson made one of these back-to-the-plate plays, turned almost all the way around in mid-air and threw a basketball chest pass to first. Hall of Fame pitcher Dizzy Dean called it the best fielding play he ever saw. "You have to think about the ball being hit to you, want it," says White Sox scout Bart Johnson, a former big-league pitcher. "Then you have to know what to do with it. Look at how well-trained the Detroit and Baltimore pitchers are; after they've fielded the ball, they get rid of it as quickly as anyone."

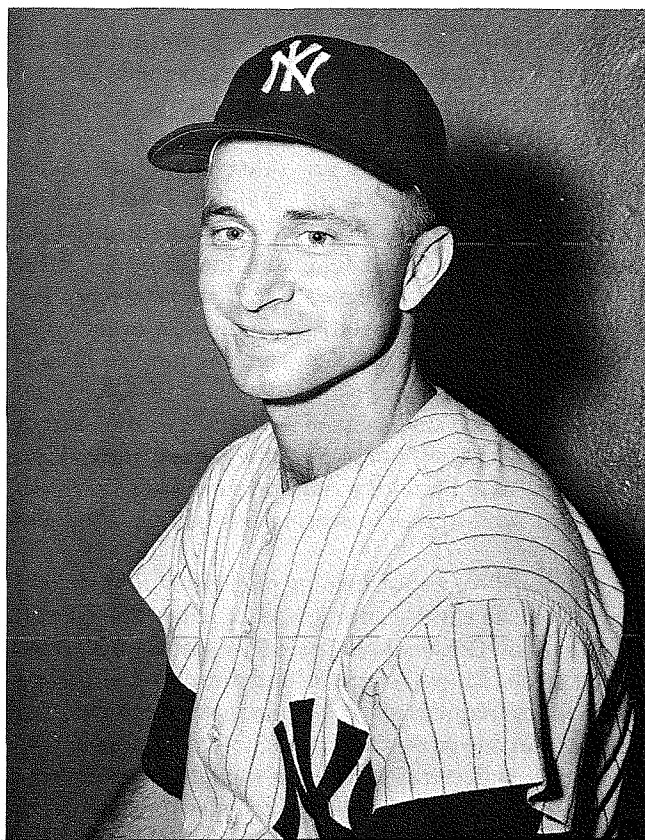
All of which is mere prelude to the real blood and guts of fielding the pitching position: staying alive. Let Johnson describe the starkness of it all. "We pitchers always get a kick out of third base being described as the hot corner," he says. "Hot corner? If the third baseman crept in fifty feet from home plate, people would say, 'He's nuts: He'll get harelip.' We pitchers are fifty feet from home every time we follow through!"

Every pitcher has been hit on some part of his anatomy by a line drive or hard-hit ground ball. Most escape without serious injury. All live in fear of experiencing the same fate as Cleveland's Herb Score. Once boasting a fastball reminiscent of Bob Feller's, Score was hit in the face in 1957 by a line drive off the bat of the Yankees' Gil McDougald. Score was never the same again. Nor was the White Sox' Wood after his kneecap was shattered by a Ron LeFlore liner in 1976.

Pitchers have their best and worst moments con-

tending with these shots. Before fielding Luis Salazar's sharp one-hopper early in 1985, Yankee reliever Dave Righetti made a 180-degree turn on his follow-through. Then he caught the ball between his legs. "All that was," Righetti said truthfully, "was protecting myself." Even more memorable was a play Gibson made on Orlando Cepeda. A Cepeda line drive shattered Gibson's leg. Gibson picked up the ball and threw out Cepeda. Then Gibson was carried to the hospital. Talk about profiles in courage. For years there's been a lively debate about how a pitcher should prepare for hard-hit balls at him. "You show me a pitcher following through in good fielding position and I'll show you a pitcher who ain't following through," said Dean. Actually, there have been some pitchers like Seaver who naturally finish the delivery square to the hitter and glove held high. "It's a delicate balance," says Kaat. "You don't want to alter a pitcher's motion to the point where he isn't throwing his best stuff, but you do want him to protect himself." For his part, Kaat resisted the temptation to wear a huge glove. He might have better protected his face that way, but he probably would have restricted his mobility. Kaat wore a small but supple mitt and took his chances.

The bottom line is that every pitcher can protect himself only so much in the face of 150-mph liners. He needs some luck, too. That's why pitchers think less about their hospital bill and more about the 3-1 drill. It's straightforward. It's sociable. And it's safe.



Bobby Shantz



## SCRAPBOOK

# Baseball Goes to War

MIKE MUMBY and MARK RUCKER

In January 1942, at the nadir of America's military prospects, President Roosevelt gave the green light to baseball to continue operating. However, players would receive no draft deferments and teams would have to scramble for transportation, lodging, and personnel. There was a war on, and baseball was part of it.



Bluejackets manager Mickey Cochrane greets nine new recruits—all major league veterans—to the Great Lakes Naval Training Station powerhouse of 1944, on its ways to a 48-2 season. Look for Schoolboy Rowe (left), Virgil Trucks (fourth from right), and Pinky May (second from right).

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MARK RUCKER is co-author with Larry Ritter of *The Babe: A Life in Pictures*, due out in 1988.

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MIKE MUMBY is an advanced photo collector from Pontiac, Michigan and previous contributor to TNP.



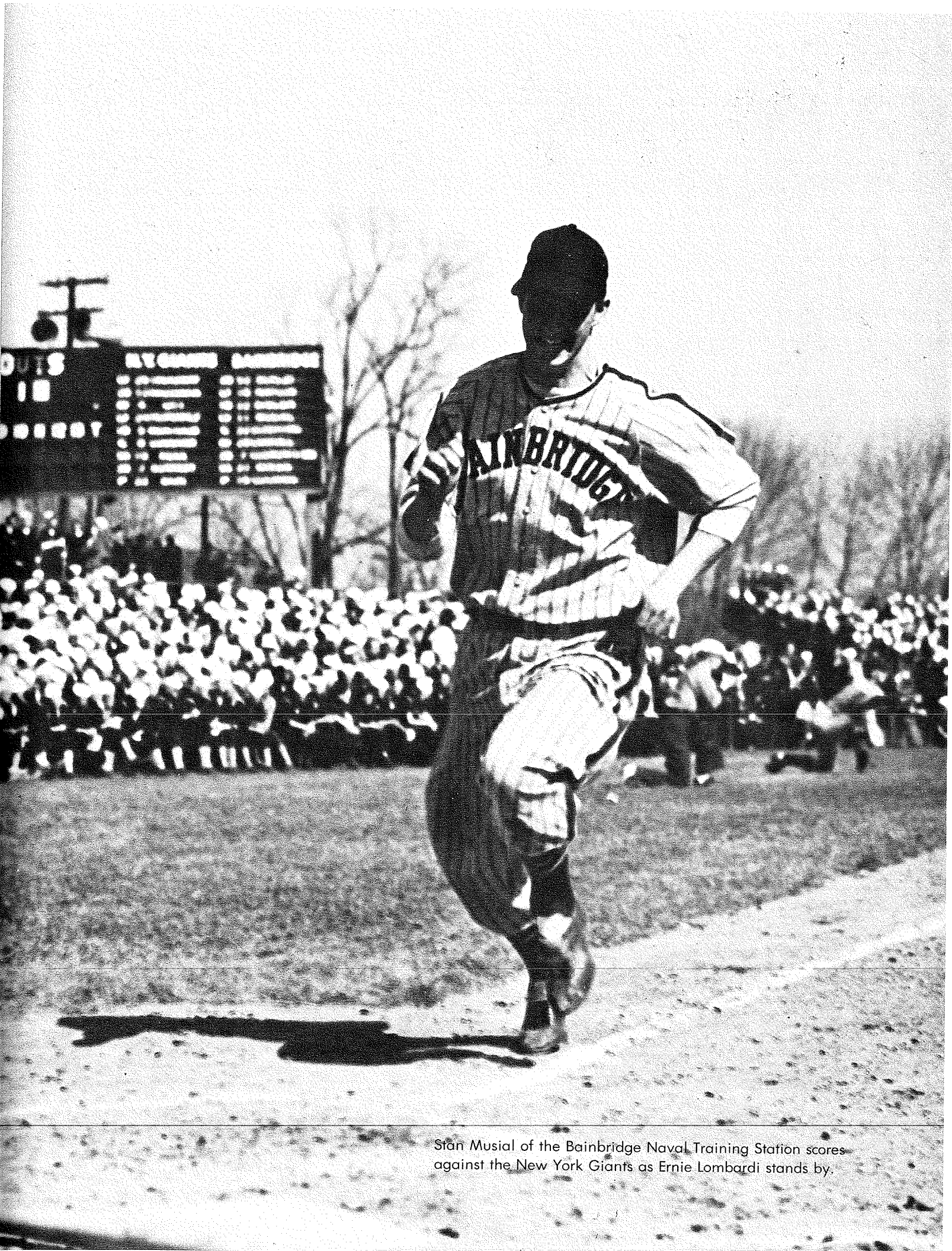
The Great Lakes Bluejackets were called "the seventeenth major league team," and they were probably good enough to have competed for a pennant in 1942-45. In that period they went 188-32 with one tie, featuring thirty-nine men who played big-league ball before, during, or after the War. These ranged from future Hall of Famers like Bob Feller (right), Billy Herman, and Johnny Mize to journeymen like Gene Woodling and Frankie Baumholtz through role players like Chet Hajduk and Al Glossop (left). Other players kept the home fires burning by providing "a recreational asset to at least 20,000,000 of their fellow citizens," in the words of F.D.R. At the bottom left are Bronx Bombers (l-r) Bill Steinecke, Oscar Grimes, Tuck Stainback, and Bill Bevens during the "grapefruit league" of 1945—in Atlantic City, New Jersey. And at the bottom right, readying for the Baseball War Bond Show of August 26, 1943, which netted \$800,000, are (l-r) Frankie Frisch, George Sisler, Eddie Collins, Connie Mack, Honus Wagner, Walter Johnson, and Roger Bresnahan.





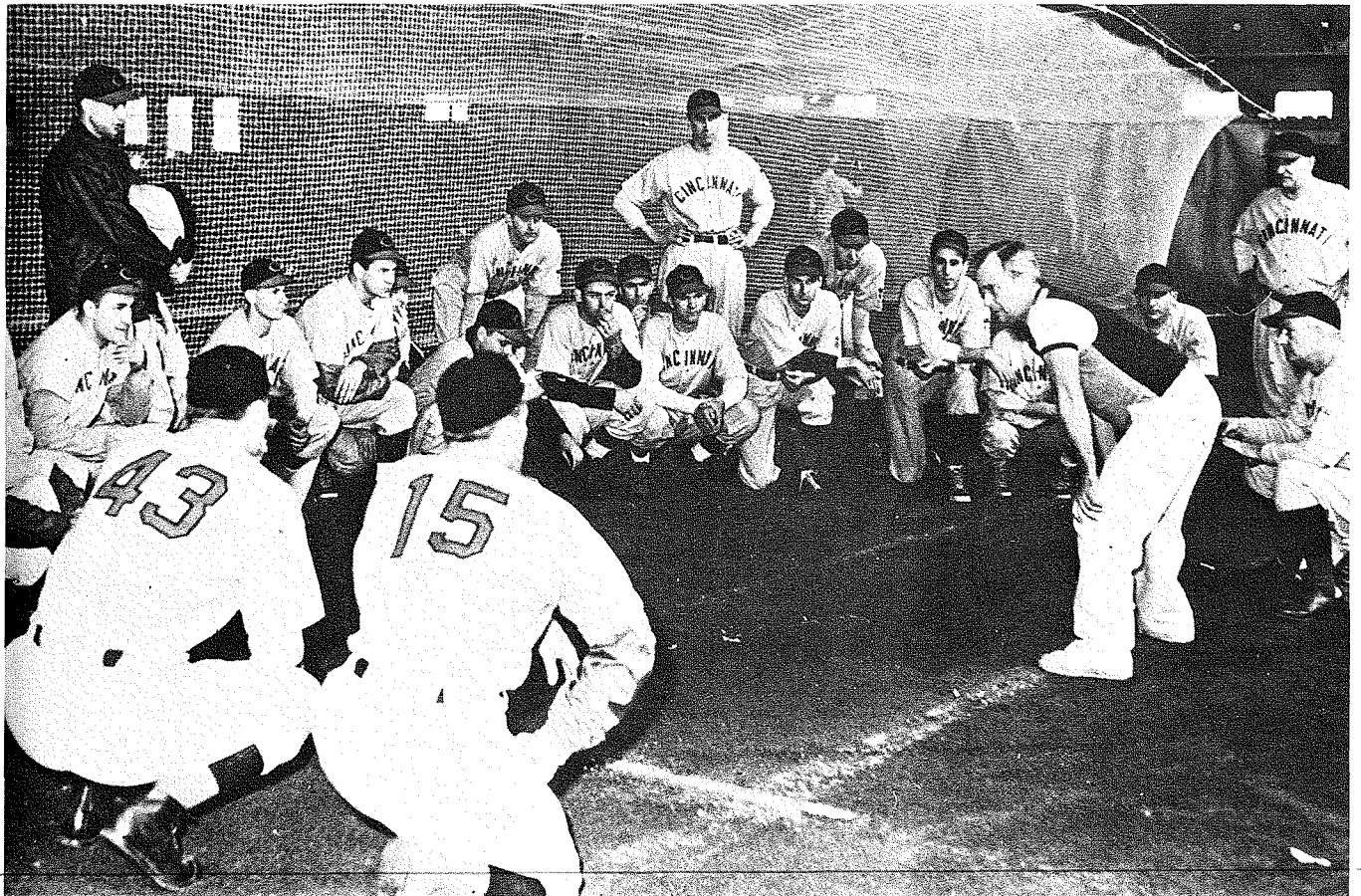


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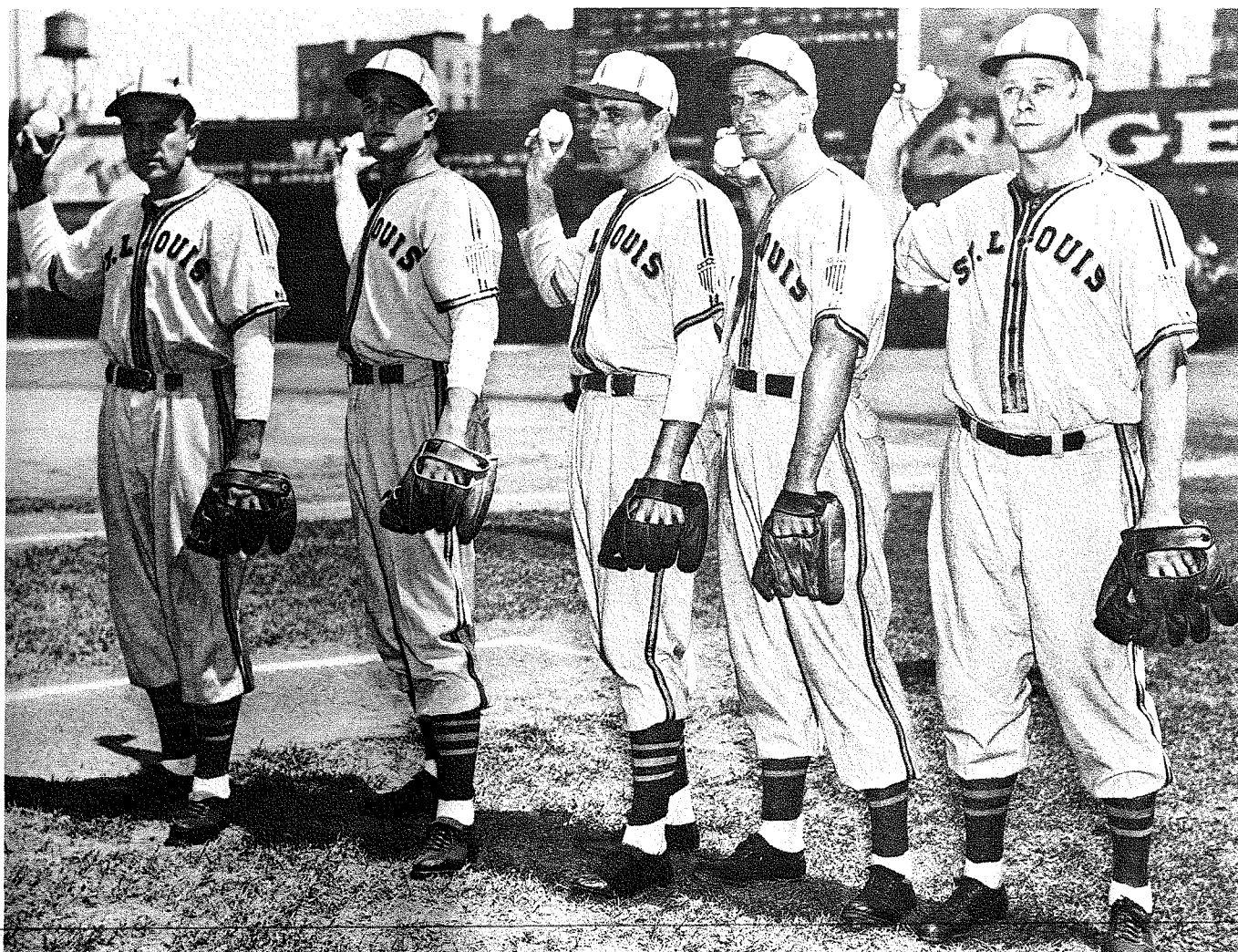
Stan Musial of the Bainbridge Naval Training Station scores against the New York Giants as Ernie Lombardi stands by.

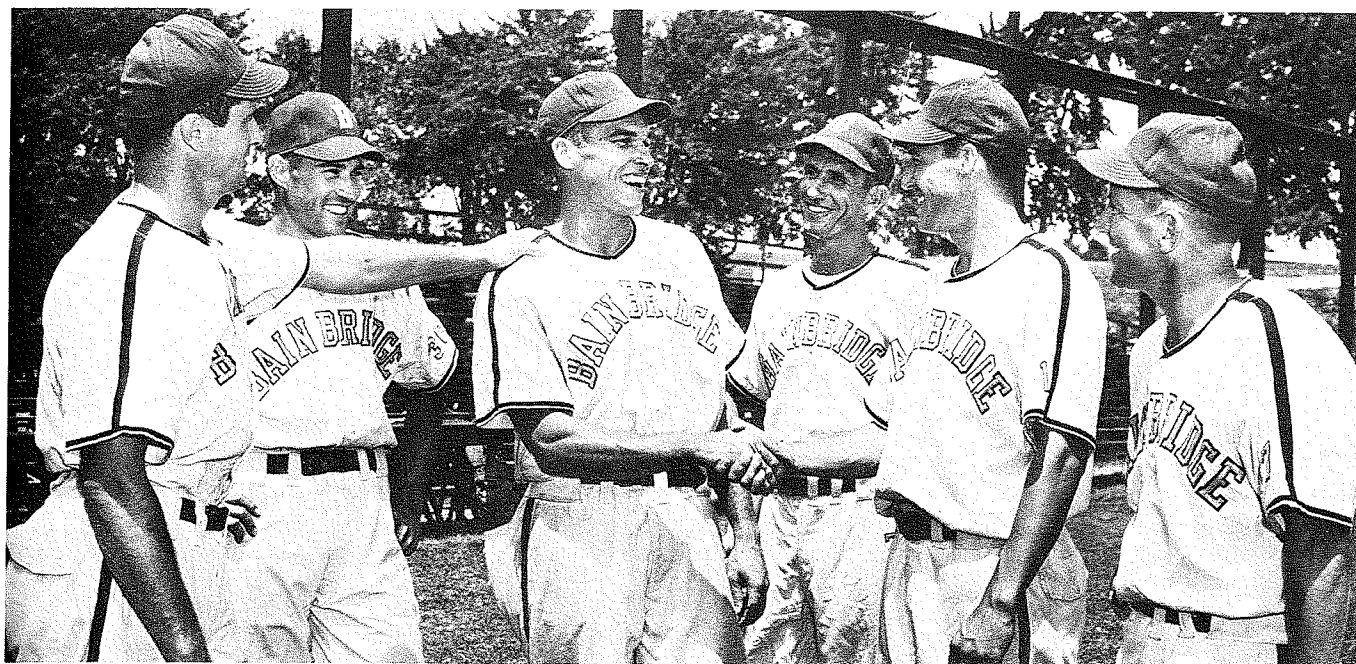






PeeWee Reese lost three years of play to the War; in March 1945, he posed with Al Glossop in Guam (left). Pete Gray lost an arm at age six, but in 1944 he hit .333 and stole 68 bases for the Memphis Chicks. That earned him a spot with the 1945 St. Louis Browns, who were defending the pennant won largely by their veteran pitchers. At the lower left, the Cincinnati Reds of 1943 get a lesson from their trainer during spring camp at the field house of Indiana University. At the right are manager Bill McKechnie (seated) and coach Hans Lobert.





(Top) Dick Sisler is congratulated for taking part in five double plays, tying a big-league record.  
 (Below) Opening Day at Crosley Field, 1943. Note the sign: "Please help . . . all baseballs returned from stands will be sent to men in the service." •



*A friend's plea from the heart.*

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# Let's Save The Hall of Fame

JOHN McCORMACK

**L**IKE THE OLD GRAY MARE, baseball's Hall of Fame ain't what she used to be. What's worse, each passing year has seen the Hall slip further away from what it was intended to be: baseball's Pantheon. Fortunately, the Hall can be saved. Difficult decisions will be needed. Mistakes will have to be admitted and corrected. Selection procedures will have to be changed. But then—and only then—will the Hall become once more a shrine for the game's few true titans, not a mere repository of stars.

Hall of Famers. All-stars. There is a vast difference between them. It's indefinable, but it's there. A Supreme Court justice once stated that while he could not define pornography, he knew it when he saw it. So, too, with Hall of Famers. Hall of Famers, unlike all-stars, are not enshrined as a result of sentimentality, friendship or election campaigns in their behalf decades after their careers have ended. No wholly objective standards can be set which, if met, would make a player indisputably a Hall of Famer. But when one comes along, he's usually quickly and widely recognized as being Cooperstown bound.

Examples? Stan Musial was, Chick Hafey was not. Paul Waner was, Lloyd Waner was not. Bill Dickey was, Ernie Lombardi was not. Ted Williams was, Kiki Cuyler was not. Lou Gehrig was, George Kelly was not. Al Simmons was, Chuck Klein was not. Why go on? The point is obvious. When they were playing, few fans would have equated Chick Hafey or Lloyd Waner with the game's all-time greats. But everyone soon knew that Musial and Williams were Hall of Famers to be. One other point is obvious. The Hall of Famers I've mentioned were elected by the Baseball Writers Association of America (BBWAA); the Committee on Veterans (the Committee) chose the all-stars.

Which brings us to the first step that must be taken if the Hall is to regain its rightful grandeur. The Committee must be dissolved and never reconstituted.

The creation in 1937 of a committee to select veterans for the Hall was an excellent move. BBWAA elections had been held in 1936 and 1937. Only players whose careers had ended in the teens or much later (except for Cy Young, who called it a day after the 1911 season) had been elected. There was rightful concern that since most electors had not seen the old-timers play, the game's early greats would be shut out of Cooperstown. The need for a committee to consider players whose careers had ended before 1910 was clear.

The initial old-timers committees served between 1937 and 1952. They did their jobs well. They did not operate on a grind 'em out annually basis. In fact no selections were made in eight of those years. Mistakes were made. Morgan J. Bulkeley was a monumental error. Johnny Evers and Joe Tinker, magnificent as they were to Franklin P. Adams, were clearly less than Hall of Famers. Thomas McCarthy was, at best, a dubious choice. But their other 33 choices were bona fide Hall of Famers. Those early committees earned high marks and the gratitude of the game's fans.

In 1953 the Committee took over. It too, initially felt no compelling need to produce Hall of Famers every year. It made no selections in four of its first eight years. Unlike its predecessors, however, it selected players other than those whose careers were before (or mostly before) 1910. Through 1966 the Committee selected eight bona fide

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JOHN McCORMACK, a former international lawyer from Texas Instruments, now plays contract bridge and writes for SABR.

pre-1910 Hall of Famers (plus Elmer Flick, who wasn't) and eight more who had begun their careers after 1910 and who had been passed over by the BBWAA.

Beginning in 1967, with the pre-1910 lode of old-timers about played out, the Committee turned its attention almost exclusively to players the BBWAA had already correctly deemed unqualified. When the Committee selected Lloyd Waner in 1967, it opened the floodgates. The deluge has never stopped.

Waner was a National League center fielder from 1927 to 1945. He was *never* chosen by *The Sporting News* for its major league all-star team. The All Star game was first played in 1933. Waner was then 27 years old, a ball-player's prime. He *never* played in an All Star game. Was he unlucky and kept from playing by a succession of true Hall of Famers? Hardly. From 1933 to 1945 starting National League center fielders included Wally Berger, Augie Galan, Frank Demaree, Terry Moore, Pete Reiser and Harry Walker. Two Hall of Famers did start a game apiece in center field during Waner's years, Mel Ott in 1938 and Stan Musial in 1944. Each, however, was really a right fielder. 'Nuff said about the caliber of the National League's center fielders when Waner didn't play.

I dwell on Waner at some length not to belittle him. I saw him play many times. He was a good ballplayer. He could hit (mostly singles) and field. He was fast and had an adequate arm. I dwell on Waner to castigate the Committee for selecting him for the Hall. How could the Committee have equated Waner with all-time greatness when he wasn't even an all-star in his own time?

The easy answer is that the Committee made a mistake. Doesn't everyone make mistakes? Of course. But everyone doesn't compound them. Unfortunately, Waner was no isolated slip. The Committee subsequently chose Waite Hoyt, Jesse Haines, Fred Lindstrom, Jim Bottomley and Hack Wilson to name but a few of its disastrous post-1967 selections. These were titans? Don't be silly.

The Committee's routine has become a virtual ritual. It meets annually in Florida in mid-winter. Judging from reports of its meetings no one is deemed too unqualified to warrant serious consideration for the Hall. Finally several more BBWAA rejects are chosen. Having further defiled the Hall, the Committee then adjourns until the following winter when the process is repeated.

The credibility of the Committee is beyond redemption. If it met in International Falls, Minnesota, in mid-January for the next ten years and chose no one for the Hall, it still would have no credibility. It would still be the group that had loaded the Hall with all-stars and almost-all-stars. The guardians of the Hall must pull their heads out of the sand and end this annual ludicrous, demeaning farce by dissolving the Committee immediately.

If that were done, all selections would thereafter be made by the BBWAA. Once in each decade the BBWAA could conduct a special election to consider any pre-1910 players who somehow have been overlooked in the last 50

years, plus blacks and non-players. Very few non-players (other than managers) even merit consideration, much less admission, to the Hall. Does anyone, except their immediate families and friends, believe that Ford Frick, Warren Giles and Tom Yawkey (to name but three of the Committee's non-player choices between 1970 and 1980) were super special, the likes of which the game will never see again? They were all good men. They all loved the game. They served it for a long time. All of which are fine qualities, but not enough to warrant enshrinement in the Hall. A Hall of Famer is exceptional. None of these gentlemen was. They should have received wrist watches for their long and meritorious service, not plaques at Cooperstown.

Any fear that dissolving the Committee might mean that there might be years when no one would be inducted should be dismissed. The BBWAA last failed to elect someone in 1971. There will be many bona fide candidates for it to consider in the foreseeable future. It's unlikely there will be many years in which no one will be chosen. But suppose no one was. That would be a magnificent plus for the Hall. It would make clear that selection is a rare honor, not an annual marketing ploy to promote the Hall. What would happen to the mid-summer festivities if there were no one to induct? Nothing really. It wouldn't take much ingenuity to present a fascinating ceremony built around living Hall of Famers. Such a program would figure to be far more interesting than the predictable acceptance speeches that accompany induction. When one and all finally trooped off to the annual exhibition game, there would be few visitors dissatisfied.

Would having the BBWAA make all selections mean qualified players would be ignored because of petty personal dislikes, lack of knowledge of the game's history, or a general ennui? The record of the last 50 years should dispel any concerns in those respects. No doubt there have been BBWAA voters who have not voted for a qualified candidate for personal reasons. It will happen again. But who has been kept out of the Hall because he was disliked personally? (It is, however, quite likely personal feelings and petty jealousies have affected Committee decisions. How else can some selections be explained?). As for knowledge of the game, the BBWAA has made very few mistakes in its choices. Rabbit Maranville, inventor of the basket catch and colorful and quixotic though he was, was no Hall of Famer. Nor were four other choices since 1971. Five mistakes over fifty years is surely an acceptable margin of error—though, of course, no errors would be infinitely preferable. Since a representative number of its members vote annually, the BBWAA can not be charged with a lack of interest in its Hall of Fame duties. One can only conclude the BBWAA has performed its Hall of Fame chores faithfully and well. It deserves high marks.

Correcting the sorry situation the Committee has created presents a greater, though fortunately solvable prob-



lem: separating the Hall of Famers from the all-stars and near-all-stars. It can be done in several ways.

The easier, more practical (but not absolute) solution would be to establish a new section of the Hall—call it Valhalla—restrict it to players, and install therein only the game's truly great. Such a step would be reasonable. It would demean no one. It would bestow on the truly exceptional the honor they deserve.

No matter the special group—presidents, generals, Nobel prize winners or whatever—all members are not equal. Some are markedly superior. And some few stand alone. That they do does not detract from the others, the rank and file. It honors them. It shows that they indeed are members of a very special group.



Ford Frick

So, too, with the Hall. The Ruths, Cobbs, Mayses, Aarons and other few truly great stand several notches above the remaining true Hall of Famers and head and shoulders over the Committee's all-stars and near-all-stars. These true titans should be recognized. It's shocking to pretend that Joe DiMaggio and Max Carey were equals. To do so reduces the Hall's stature. Valhalla would at least alleviate that problem.

Admission to Valhalla would be gained through special election by the BBWAA. Membership could never exceed fifteen percent of the *players* then in the Hall. Elections would be held every five years provided the fifteen percent limitation was not then in effect. Only Hall of Famers of ten or more years standing would be eligible for election. Voters could vote for five players unless the fifteen percent limitation would permit only a lesser number to be elected. A player would have to receive not 75 percent of

the vote but at least 80 percent of the votes cast to gain Valhalla. It would be difficult. That, however, would be Valhalla's *raison d'être*—to separate the game's gods from its greats and lesser performers.

A cleaner, absolute, though almost surely less acceptable solution would be for the BBWAA to hold every five years recall elections limited to deceased members. To recall a player would require 85 percent of the votes cast; a non-player 60 percent of the votes cast. Voters could vote for ten individuals.

Recall elections would have two positive effects that the creation of Valhalla would not. In time the all-stars, near-all-stars and run-of-the-mill non-players would be removed from the Hall. The Hall would once again become a true Hall of Fame. Secondly, once the lesser lights were cleaned out, the contention could no longer be made, alas with justification, that if X is in the Hall, then certainly Y belongs. This is why the Committee's election of ersatz Hall of Famers has had such a wretched effect. It is inevitable that the Hall will eventually be stuck with Y, too. This rationale will almost assure the arrival in Cooperstown of such as Gil Hodges, Nellie Fox and, probably, Riggs Stephenson and Tony Lazzeri. None belongs. Yet a persuasive X vs. Y argument can be made in behalf of each. (I have long wondered why the members of the George "Hooks" Dauss Marching and Chowder Society have not used the X vs. Y argument and been more forceful in pushing for their man's admission. His career stats are strikingly similar to (and generally better than) Jesse Haines'. As that *bona fide* Hall of Famer, Casey Stengel, was wont to say, "You could look it up." While Hooks was shut out in the 1947 BBWAA election, he trailed Haines by but one vote. The Committee in its wisdom elected Haines in 1970. Hooks had died in 1963. He never knew how close he came to Cooperstown.)

Recall elections restricted to deceased members (or even recall elections *per se*) would quite likely bring the Hall adverse publicity. The most vitriolic of the uninformed would castigate the Hall's guardians as wishy-washy ghouls. Even more restrained criticism would figure to be sharp. While the end would surely justify recall elections, Valhalla would seem more practicable.

I write more in sorrow than in anger. I have the greatest regard for the Hall. I have been a member of The Friends of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum for a number of years. It's far and away the greatest of all athletic halls of fame. I have been fortunate enough to have visited it. Every fan who has the chance should make the pilgrimage to Cooperstown. It's my great affection for the Hall that causes me to be torn apart annually when the Committee announces its latest selections and further defiles the Hall. The havoc wreaked by the Committee has gone on for much too long. It must be stopped. Its misdoings must be corrected. The Hall must be saved. I urge those in a position to do so to take the necessary actions. Now. Please.

*Was Rickey Henderson born to steal?*

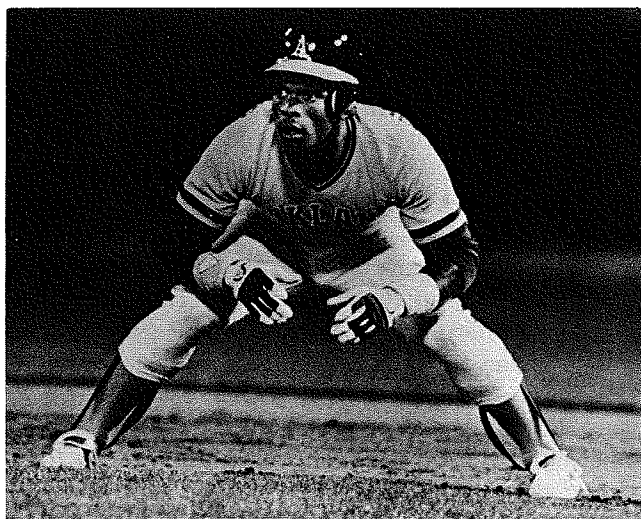
# Diamond Stars

JOHN B. HOLWAY

**J**IMINY CHRISTMAS! By the great heavenly stars! Was Rickey Henderson *born* to steal bases?

You bet your sweet ephemeris he was.

Henderson was born Christmas Day 1958, a good day to be born if you want to grow up to be a big league base stealing champion. For that makes him a Capricorn (Dec 22-Jan 19). In fact, he was born almost exactly 99 years



Rickey Henderson

after Hugh Nicol, the flying Scot, who set the old record (that still stands) of 138 back in 1887. Nicol was born New Year's day 1858. Another Capricorn speedster, Max Carey (born January 11, 1890), led the league in steals ten times.

Since 1876, 197 big league stolen base crowns have been won, and Capricorns have captured 29 of them, well above their fair share of 16.

But look at Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20) like Bert

Campaneris: They've won 31, twice as many as they should be expected to win.

Down at the other end of the list, the poor Cancers (June 20-July 22) have won only three of the 197 titles. Latest to do it was Willie Wilson in 1979. Now there's a man who seems to have figuratively outrun his stars.

What are the chances of such a distribution—31 on the high side, three on the low—occurring by chance? To find out, I asked Pete Palmer, statistician and co-author of *The Hidden Game of Baseball*. Pete punched some numbers into his computer and came up with the answer. This could indeed have happened by chance—once in ten million times.

Note that the top six signs account for 75 percent of all titles, the bottom six only 25 percent.

Note also that winter babies (Pisces, Capricorn, Aquarius) account for 71 titles, summer babies only 26, or about one-third as many.

Why?

I don't know why, I just know that they do.

Palmer questions whether repeat winners should be allowed, saying they skew the averages unfairly. Personally, I feel that a Luis Aparicio, with nine titles, deserves more weight than a Topsy Hartsel, with one. So we decided to do it both ways—total championships and total individual champions—and let the reader take his choice.

Pisces leads the total titles list with 16 per cent. It also leads the total individual champions list with 14.5 per cent. However, since the second list is less than half as

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JOHN HOLWAY is co-author of *The Pitcher* and author of the forthcoming *Blackball Stars* from Meckler Publishing.



large, the odds go down dramatically. It is far harder to toss 90 heads out of 100 than to toss nine heads out of ten. The percentages are the same, but the odds are vastly different.

Anyway, the odds on individual winners came to 40-1. Statisticians say anything over 20-1 is "significant." So, using even conservative numbers, the data pretty well rule out chance as an explanation.

Numbers like these intrigue me. A stubborn Scorpio, I began checking data in a dozen categories—Presidents, congressmen, Academy Award winners, Nobel laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners, and on and on.

Of course, I was especially anxious to check the old wives' tale that Scorpions make the best lovers and wrote to Masters and Johnson to see if they had any data on that. They replied huffily that they don't lend themselves to such research. A pity. Science will always be the poorer for it.

Meanwhile, you don't have to believe in astrology to read statistics, and the data I found made me pause and scratch my head and ask "why?"

I should say that I also did a thorough study of biorhythms and sports, checking over 1,000 performances in baseball, football, tennis, track and field, boxing, and swimming. I must report that I found absolutely no statistical confirmation of this seemingly scientific but—I'm convinced—actually fraudulent theory. If anyone wants to bet on the World Series, the Super Bowl, or a heavyweight title fight on the basis of biorhythm alone, let him see me. I'll be glad to take all the money he has.

On the other hand, astrology, which smacks of un-

scientific magic, produces numbers far outside what the law of averages says is normal. It seems downright unfair that a man's birthday can give him an advantage in stealing bases or hitting home runs, but then life has always been unfair. Athletes are not typical of the rest of us. They're taller, heavier, have better eyesight, better muscle tone, superior hand-eye coordination, etc. They also differ, I now must add, in their birthdays.

## BIG LEAGUE STARS

Palmer was also skeptical, so like a good SABR member, he decided to do some scientific checking. He ran a massive computer study on all 9,388 men who had played major league baseball from 1909 through 1981. His read-out produced an almost perfect sine curve of births arranged along the calendar year:

If you want to grow up to be a big league player, Palmer found, you'd be wise to plan to be born roughly between July 20 and Christmas, that is from Leo through Sagittarius. The best time of all is late summer. Virgo (Aug 24-Sept 23) has produced 921 players, or 18 per cent more than normal. In fact it leads at every position except shortstop and third base.

The worst time to be born is early spring, as an Aries (March 21 to April 20). Only 681 big league players were born then, 11 per cent below normal, and 35 per cent less than those born Virgos.

Incidentally, this is almost the same result I got in a study of pro football players in 1977. Virgo was way out in front, Aries next to last.

Suppose you throw 9,388 darts at a large round dart board divided into twelve slices and spinning furiously. Assuming that all the darts hit the board, what is the chance that 921 will land in one section and only 681 in another?

The chance, Palmer found, is over 700 million to one!

Of course not all slices of the zodiacal pie are exactly the same size. Cancer has 32 days, Pisces 29.

And births are not distributed equally throughout the calendar. However, authorities disagree on which are the high-birth months and which the low. One study says Gemini (May 22-June 21) has the least births, Aquarius (Jan 21-Feb 19) the most. But another study is just the other way around.

At any rate, the difference is not great, 15 per cent at the most. It hardly explains why Pisces has more than ten times as many stolen base championships as Cancer.

But, strangely, Palmer found, although Virgos get on the team more than anyone else, once they're in uniform, they don't particularly excel. They're about average in combined batting average and home runs among hitters, as well as ERA and won-lost records for pitchers.

About the only outstanding Virgos in big league annals are Ted Williams, Roger Maris, Frank Robinson, and Larry Lajoie. Virgos are supposed to be painstaking per-

Base-Stealing Champions			
Sign	Dates	Titles	
Pisces	Feb 19-Mar 20	31	Campaneris 6, Wagner 5, Reiser 2, Ashburn
Capricorn	Dec 22-Jan 19	29	Carey 10, Henderson 7, Taveras, Nicol
Sagittarius	Nov 22-Dec 21	25	Cobb 6, Minoso 3, Bruton 3, Moreno 2
Taurus	Apr 20-May 20	24	Aparicio 9, Mays 4, Lopes 2, North 2, Otis
Gemini	May 21-June 20	19	Brock 8, Werber 3, Galan 2, LeFlore 2
Virgo	Aug 23-Sept 22	21	Raines 4, Cuyler 4, Dillinger 3, Frisch 3, Coleman 3
Libra	Sep 23-Oct 22	13	Wills 6, Patek, Murtaugh, Crosetti
Aquarius	Jan 20-Feb 18	11	J Robinson 2, Schoendienst
Scorpio	Oct 23-Nov 21	11	Case 6, Stirnweiss 2, Rivers, Tolan
Aries	Mar 21-Apr 19	6	Sisler 4, Milan 2
Leo	Jul 23-Aug 22	4	Reese, Frey, Isbel 1
Cancer	Jun 21-Jul 22	3	W Wilson, Rivera, Hartsel
Total:		197	

fectionists. If that's true, it certainly describes Williams at least. And if there is any validity to these data, then Ted, who had to overcome so much—five years at war, a difficult home park, a variety of injuries—apparently had to overcome his stars as well.

### BATTING CHAMPS

Palmer's study reveals another anomaly. Aries, the least likely to get on a team, are collectively the best hitters once they do land a job. Their combined batting average is .267. The average for all signs is .262. Leo (mid-summer) has the worst average, .259.

In fact, the batting average curve is almost the exact opposite of the total players' curve, with above average figures in the late winter and early spring (Pisces through Taurus) and average or below average figures for the rest of the year.

My own study of 208 big league batting champs, 1876-1987, confirms Palmer's findings: Two spring signs, Aries and Taurus, are among the tops in producing batting champions. Late winter and early spring are the high periods. All other signs, except Sagittarius, are average or below.

(If Scorpio Stan Musial had been born one day later, his seven titles would have put Sagittarius out of reach—for the present, at least.)

Stan is not the only champ to overcome his stars. The 1985 king, Willie McGee, is also a Scorpio. Wade Boggs has won four titles so far for the next-to-last Gemini. And Bill Madlock won four for last-place Capricorn, which proves, perhaps—as the astrologers admit—that the stars impel, they don't compel. Long shots do come in. I just wouldn't bet on them, that's all.

Batting Champions		
Sign	Titles	
Taurus	28	Hornsby 7, Brett 2, Mattingly, Gwynn 2, Mays
Sagittarius	25	Cobb 12, DiMaggio 2, Buckner, Kaline, Kuenn, Garr
Aries	23	Rose 3, Waner 3, Sisler 2, Appling 2, Speaker
Pisces	21	Wagner 8, Ashburn 2, Reiser
Libra	17	Carew 7, Foxx 2, Oliver, Hernandez, Mantle
Leo	15	Clemente 4, Heilmann 4, Yastrzemski 3
Cancer	15	Oliva 3, W Wilson, Torre, Boudreau
Virgo	15	T Williams 6, Lajoie 3, F Robinson, Carty, Raines
Aquarius	14	Aaron 2, Lansford, Lynn, Ruth, J Robinson
Scorpio	13	Musial 6, McGee, Terry
Gemini	14	Boggs 4, Simmons 2, B Williams, Gehrig
Capricorn	9	Madlock 4, M Alou, Mize
Total:	208	

Let's look at the favorites. Taurus, Sagittarius, and Aries make up 25 per cent of the zodiac but account for 36 per cent of all batting championships, over half of all .400 hitters, and more than half of the lifetime 3,000-hit men. Two of the three, Sagittarius and Aries, have produced the six longest batting streaks of this century—Sagittarians Cobb (twice) and DiMaggio, and Aries Rose, Sisler, and Holmes.

The quintessential baseball Aries is Pete Rose. Who can forget the image of Rose barreling into catcher Ray Fosse to win the 1974 All Star game, a scene as indelibly engraved into the baseball psyche as the famous photo of Cobb flying into third with spikes flashing?

Aries are the "I am," take-charge egotists of the zodiac; they supposedly love the spotlight and usually hog it in conversation and everything else. Aries lead all other signs in winning Academy Awards (Marlon Brando, Gregory Peck, Paul Newman, Spencer Tracy, William Holden, Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, Liza Minelli).

Capricorns come next to Sagittarius in the calendar, but they rank at the bottom among batting champions, with only nine. One of those was Elmer Flick, who won in 1906 with a .306 average, second lowest winning average ever.

### HOME RUNS

Home run champions show a strong preference for being born in the autumn and winter. All of these signs, except Capricorn, are average or above. All the spring and summer signs, without exceptions, are average and below.

The best sign of all for power hitters is Libra. Out of 220 home run titles won or shared since 1876, Libras have won 34, five times as many as last-place Gemini. Libra Mike Schmidt alone has won eight crowns. Mickey Mantle, Jimmie Foxx, and Chuck Klein each won four, and Ed Mathews two.

Thanks to Schmidt, Libra has now vaulted into first place, overtaking the mighty Aquarians—Babe Ruth, Hank Aaron, Ernie Banks, and Ben Oglivie—who had been kings of the sluggers until Schmidt brought the age of Aquarius to an end.

Darrell Evans is another one who overcame the accident of birth. He's not only the oldest home run champ, he's a Gemini, the least likely sign to lead the league.

The greatest slugger of all, Josh Gibson (962 home runs), was a Sagittarius. Sadaharu Oh is a Taurus.

As the chart shows, autumn through winter (Libra through Pisces) is the best time to be born if you want to grow up to be a home run champ. But the month-to-month swings are too erratic to sustain any simple seasonal theory. Aquarius, with 28 home run titles, for example, comes right after Capricorn, with only 13. There is obviously something else at work here besides the earth's journey around the sun. If it is not astrology, whatever it may be deserves some serious study.

### Home Run Champions

Sign	Titles	
Libra	35	Schmidt 8, Mantle 4, Foxx 4, Klein 4, Mathews 2, McGuire
Aquarius	28	Ruth 12, Aaron 4, Banks 2, Oglivie
Pisces	28	Ott 6, Rice 3, Murphy 2, Stargell 2, Allen 2, Baker 2, Murray
Sagittarius	27	Kingman 3, Foster 2, DiMaggio 2, Thomas, Bench
Taurus	18	Jackson 4, Mays 4, H Wilson 4, Hornsby 2
Scorpio	18	Kiner 7, Dw Evans, Sievers
Cancer	18	Killebrew 6, Armas, Dawson
Virgo	15	T Williams 4, Maris, F Robinson, Cepeda, Snider
Aries	14	Cravath 6
Capricorn	13	Mize 4, Greenberg 4, McCovey 3, Conigliaro, Grich
Leo	8	Howard 2, Nettles, Yastrzemski, Colavito
Gemini	6	Gehrig 3, Da Evans
Total:	226	

April 8, 1974 was a particularly good day for Aquarians. If Hank Aaron had let his eye stray from the sports pages for a moment, he would have read in Sydney Omarr's syndicated horoscope column the following forecast for himself:

Advancement indicated. Views are vindicated. You receive compliments from professional superior. You make significant gains. Profit potential increases. . . . Standing in the community is elevated.

That night Aaron went out and hit his million-dollar 715th home run, the one that broke Babe Ruth's record.

### PITCHERS—ERA

Pitchers show a different profile altogether.

Palmer found that there have been more Virgo pitchers in the big leagues than any other sign, just as there are more Virgos in general. Capricorn has produced the fewest pitchers.

Yet, Virgos are only average as a group once they get on the team. Sagittarians, like Steve Carlton, have the best combined won-lost record, as well as the best combined earned run average. Cancers have the worst won-lost mark, Geminis the worst ERA.

My own study of ERA champs shows that Pisces Steve McCatty and JR Richard have pitched their sign into first place among individual winners, edging Aries (Don Sutton, Phil Niekro, Cy Young) by 28 to 27. The two signs incidentally come next to each other on the calendar—late winter and early spring.

Yet, again, the month-to-month differences are so large they rule out an easy seasonal explanation. Aquarius comes right before Pisces on the calendar, but it's dead last in ERA titles, with only seven.

Aquarian Nolan Ryan was really bucking the stars when he won in 1981. However, Aquarians are the only sign to produce one man who won all three titles—ERA, home runs, and batting. His name of course was Babe Ruth. (But note that Babe gave up pitching and took up slugging full time. Did his stars impel him?)

For four straight years, 1982-85, Cancer produced one of the two ERA kings—Rich Honeycutt, Alejandro Pena, Rick Sutcliffe, and Dave Stieb.

### PITCHERS—STRIKEOUTS

Power hitters differ astrologically from singles hitters. Do power pitchers, the strikeout kings, also differ from finesse pitchers, the ERA champs?

They sure do.

I haven't counted all the individual strikeout titles won, but on the list of the ten top strikeout pitchers of all time, four are Scorpios—Walter Johnson, Tom Seaver, Bob Gibson and Jim Bunning. A fifth Scorpio, Bob Feller, would surely be on the list, perhaps at the top of it, if he hadn't lost his four best years in the Navy. Two Scorpio youngsters will probably join the list within fifteen years—Dwight Gooden and Fernando Valenzuela.

Nolan Ryan, the all-time champ, is an Aquarius, the only one in the top ten. The entire list, as of Opening Day 1987, is on page 60.

Will the day ever come when big league scouts will carry a book of horoscopes along with a stop watch and the other tools of their trade?

Charlie O. Finley, boss of the Oakland A's, dabbled in astrology, though perhaps he was more interested in the astrologer, a beautiful redhead named Laurie Brady, than in astrology. At any rate, Brady predicted in 1970

### ERA Champions

Sign	Titles	
Pisces	28	Grove 9, Alexander 5, McCatty, Richard
Aries	27	Joss 2, Young, Sutton, P Niekro, Hunter
Libra	21	Palmer 2, Capra, McCormick, Podres, Waddell, Scott
Scorpio	20	Johnson 5, Seaver 3, Gooden, Rogers, Candelaria, Gibson, Marichal
Cancer	19	Hubbell 3, Coavaleskie 2, Stieb, Pena, Sutcliffe, Tanana, Lopat
Leo	19	Mathewson 5, Wilhelm 2, Blue, Fidrych, Clemens
Capricorn	16	Koufax 5, R Jones, Wynn, Lyons
Virgo	14	Guidry 2, Chandler 2, McDowell, Hoyt
Taurus	13	Spahn 3, Peters 2, Newhouser 2, Walsh 2, Key
Sagittarius	12	Tiant 2, Gomez 2, Carlton, Swan, Burdette
Gemini	9	Chance, Parnell, Cicotte
Aquarius	9	Ryan 2, Hammaker, Bosman, Reynolds, Ruth
Total:	207	

### All-Time Strikeout Leaders Through 1986

Pitcher	Sign	SO
Nolan Ryan	Aquarius	4547
Steve Carlton	Sagittarius	4131
Tom Seaver	Scorpio	3640
Gaylord Perry	Virgo	3534
Don Sutton	Aries	3530
Walter Johnson	Scorpio	3508
Phil Niekro	Aries	3342
Ferguson Jenkins	Sagittarius	3192
Bob Gibson	Scorpio	3117
Jim Bunning	Scorpio	2855

(The leading strikeout pitcher until 1987, with 4490—Japan's Masaichi Kaneda—is a Leo.)

that the A's would win the division crown in '71 and then the World Series three years in a row. They did. In '76 Finley asked her to do daily charts on every player on the roster. Manager Chuck Tanner promptly threw them in the waste basket. Perhaps he should have read them: That year the A's failed to win the division for the first time in six seasons.

Only one player has ever admitted to using astrology: Wes Ferrell, who won 20 games six different times for the Red Sox and Indians in the 1930s. An Aquarius, Ferrell "freely admits that his fortunes are governed by the stars," Washington *Post* columnist Shirley Povich wrote in July 1938. "Astrology rules his life. He is a confirmed disciple and credits astrology with curing the soreness in his arm when all other methods failed including the ministration of medical and bone specialists, quacks and voodoo doctors."

Povich continued: "On the days the stars say they are in his favor he will be the picture of confidence on the pitching mound. He says that several years ago when he was with Cleveland he had his horoscope read and a re-check of his season's victories revealed that he had won ball games on days when the stars were favorable and had lost games when, according to the horoscope, the days were due to be 'bad.'"

"He makes no bones about his faith in astrology. He points out that it was more than a coincidence two years ago at Griffith Stadium when, on the same day, Joe Cronin was beamed and Rick Ferrell suffered a broken finger. 'It was a bad day for people born in the sign of Libra,' said Wes, 'and the chart showed it. Both Cronin and Rick were Libra babies.'"

Did it work? Well, Ferrell won 193 big league games, including 25 in 1935 to lead the league.

### READING LIST

If astrology can predict the future, it should be able to "predict" the past. I went to two astrologers—Laurie Brady of Salem, Massachusetts, and Maude Chalfant of Washington—and gave them the birthdays of several

athletes and asked them to describe the men, knowing nothing else about them. Then I asked them to tell what might have happened to each on a particular day in his career. Their readings follow. See if you can guess who the men were. Answer on page 61.

**I.** *BORN: Feb. 6, 1895:* A very emotional chart. He either had an explosive temper or explosive energy, so if he were a baseball player, I would think he was one of your home run hitters, or a heavy-weight boxer.

He had sort of a tormented life, lots of problems. There were definitely problems in his natal home. His father or mother sat on him real hard. There was probably quarreling in the home, or a separation or divorce or loss of parent. He was extremely independent and hard to manage.

There's a very heavy emphasis in the House of Show Business, and Sports in general. He probably loved kids, and I would imagine he had many love affairs.

*EVENT: Oct. 1, 1932:* I'm wondering, was this person having some health problems? It could be a chart where a person was retiring, or the end of his career was coming. It could have been home runs if this was a baseball player.

**II.** *BORN: August 30, 1918:* He is terribly independent, probably was very hard to manage. He might have been frustrated, had to control himself, or was made to control himself. He has a fiery way of thinking, and fire in his hands. Anything to do with the hands would be good for him. I'm sure he had emotional problems, probably drinking problems, although I could be very wrong. There's a strong emphasis on his House of Self-Undoing.

He's precise, a Virgo, very exacting in details about everything. He has a quick mind, but he might have been sarcastic in his speech. He could have acted like a dictator to his friends. This is a psychic person, I'm sure, very sensitive.

**III.** *BORN: Oct. 25, 1923:* A terribly intense person, fixed and stubborn, but very sweet-natured, likeable, and very lucky. He might be a quarterback if he's in football. He would be a power hitter if he's in baseball.

*EVENT: Oct. 5, 1951:* I think this event was a very happy one. The moon was touching Venus, meaning that sweet things were coming to him or being stirred up. Jupiter in his House of Work also means good things. Uranus, the planet of Change and Surprise, was exactly over his Pluto (energy). So, whatever this was, it was probably unexpected and very strong and explosive. And very fateful. It's kind of hard to read whether it was pure luck or whether it wasn't.

**IV.** *BORN: April 14, 1941:* This is a strong, strong person. Super strong. A lot of self-confidence. He was born with it. Even before he opened his eyes, he knew what he wanted.

He's aggressive. He was born with that too. And stubborn. He wanted what he wanted when he wanted it. He rushes into things, just shoots out and does what he thinks he has to do.

When he's playing, he's totally into it. His whole being—his brain, his body—are all working for one thing.

He's got tons of physical energy. His friends would think he's courageous. His enemies would consider him pushy.

Sometimes he can be very strong-willed, rebellious, anti-social, when Mars hits him. All of a sudden he can turn into a really raging person. These are tendencies from birth; he may have mellowed since then. If his energy were all kept inside him, he'd probably hurt people. But he releases it physically in sport.

I would think he's extremely dextrous. His timing is excellent. He moves like a panther. He moves beautifully.

He's got a quick mind, like a hair trigger. Really, really fast mental chemistry. He had sort of a conflict with his relatives. He's quarrelsome and independent. He was kind of noisy as a child, or could have been.

He would also have to learn the value of sexuality. I think when he was younger he would rush into love affairs. But I think he's outgrown that. He's very charming and attractive. He may not be beautiful, but he's bewitching. He has this inner charm. It's more than just charm. I see a little gleam in his eye.

But he's better off when he does things on his own. Any mates would probably be jealous of him. He's dominating, and he attracts people who have a lot of needs, especially females, very sexual, who want a lot and are very demanding. He's sort of restless at home, a high-tension person, lots of nervous energy.

He's creative, though he might put it all into his sport. He's a lot more intellectual than people know.

I think he has a powerful position, because he has such drive, such energy. He needs power. He likes to be on top. If he were in politics, look out!

I like him, whoever he is. I would want to stay away from him with a ten-foot pole, as a female. But I think he's dynamite. He's a real power.

*EVENT: Aug. 1, 1978.* I get the feeling there has been a lot of strife going on. He may have been very aggressive in the few days just before this. He's so damn strong, you'd think he could overcome almost anything that goes wrong. But he may have been a little disappointed. Things may not have turned out the way he wanted them to.

**V.** *BORN: May 18, 1946:* He's a Taurus, which is a fixed, sort of placid, slow-moving person who is very interested in money. He's very lucky with money. He might be a little erratic with it, but I think he will make good money.

He probably has tremendous energy and heavy hands. I'm sure he's very charming. Probably women like him. He could be flirtatious and have lots of affairs.

He's really introverted, except for his moon that brings him in front of the public. I think he's ambitious and driving hard for what he wants, and the public pulls him out.

I suspect he's a little hard to handle because of that stubborn Taurus sun: "Don't tell me what to do." He probably loses his temper very easily. He might have a tendency to flare up and speak more angrily than he means to. He's probably impulsive and quarrelsome.

*EVENT: Oct. 18, 1977.* A terrific massing of planets in his House of Work. The north node of the moon—the lucky part—the moon itself, the sun, Pluto, and Venus—which usually means nice things and gifts—are all in his House of Work. This was just a fantastic day with all those planets—half of all his planets—all in one place. On the whole, I would think this was a fortunate event.

**VI.** *BORN: Nov. 22, 1950.* I'd say he's a sweet person, talks sweetly and thinks sweetly, perhaps idealistically. He probably likes to talk a lot, is jovial, likes people. He could be a good story-teller. Women like him.

A lot of energy. And he has the Saturn-Mars square found in a lot of boxers, so I would say he has power also.

*EVENT: Sept. 23, 1978.* This is so complicated, I can't make a flat statement whether it was good or bad. But it was of great significance, because there were aspects after aspects (of the stars) hitting his chart that day. There could be something very surprising about this event.

Saturn is right on the edge of his House of Career. Saturn is the planet of the ending of things, so this was very significant in his career and his life.

Was he hurt, or could there have been anything involving a hospital in this situation?

There was something mysterious, something about this whole thing. It may be that he had a sense of mysterious things happening around him that he felt very strongly. I sort of lean to something very disappointing, but I can't quite back it up.

But there's a strong emphasis on hospitals and health.

I. Oct. 1, 1932: Babe Ruth's "called the shot" home run  
II. Aug. 30, 1918: Ted Williams (I didn't give an event date)  
III. Oct. 5, 1951: Bobby Thomson's "shot heard round the world"  
IV. Aug. 1, 1978: Pete Rose's hit streak ends  
V. Oct. 18, 1977: Reggie Jackson's three World Series homers  
VI. Sept. 23, 1978: Lyman Bostock is shot to death.

#### ANSWERS TO READING LIST

*"My father took his own life, and so will I."*

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# The Death of Willard Hershberger

JAMES BARBOUR

**S**UICIDES ARE RARE AMONG baseball players. For athletes who perform in stress-filled situations before loudly cheering, booing, stomping crowds, ballplayers are a remarkably stable group. Tennis audiences are hushed before service begins, cameras can be heard breaking the silence before professional golfers putt, but ballplayers surrounded by pandemonium retreat into a still center of concentration—they cope with chaos and function, even triumph. Of course this generality breaks down on the outskirts of Boston. The influence of the baked bean and the cod and Brahmins who speak only to God seems to unsettle ballplayers.

Chick Stahl, manager of the hapless 1906 Red Sox comes to mind. Rather than return and face another season at the bottom of the American League, he drank carbolic acid. An extreme example is that of poor Martin Bergen, turn-of-the-century catcher for the Boston Nationals, who killed his wife and two small children with an axe and then took his own life by slashing his wrists. Both events happened during the off-season. But Boston was also the site of the only suicide committed by a major league player during the season when Willard Hershberger, backup catcher for the Cincinnati Reds, took his own life at the Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston on August 3, 1940. At the time of his death his team had a six-game lead in the National League and Hershberger was hitting a solid .309. Unlike Chick Stahl, Hershberger was not avoiding the prospect of living in the cellar, for the Reds seemed destined to win the pennant—as they did—nor was he clearly deranged as was poor Martin Bergen.

The wire service reports the next day offered no ex-

planation for Hershberger's unexpected act. Instead they focused on his activities that Saturday. Cincinnati was playing a double-header with the Boston Bees, as they were known that year, and Hershberger had not reported to the ballpark. His manager, Bill McKechnie, became alarmed because of Hershberger's reaction to the team's recent losses, so he asked Gabe Paul, the traveling secretary, to call the hotel. Hershberger answered and explained that he was ill but would report to the stadium. When he did not arrive between games and failed to answer his phone, the club dispatched Dan Cohen, a businessman traveling with the team and a friend of Hershberger's, to the hotel. Cohen and a maid unlocked his door and found him in the bathroom. The floor was covered with towels, his body slumped over the tub—he had slashed his throat with his roommate's safety razor. Years later, Cohen, finder and bearer of such terrible news, was also to take his own life.

What personal demons drove Hershberger to suicide will never be fully explained—even he probably did not understand altogether his motives. The newspapers, taking their cue from statements by McKechnie, reasoned that the catcher had taken the game much too seriously. There is an element of truth to what the manager said, but the apparent causes can be traced to Hershberger's childhood and to an ironic chain of events that finally doomed the young catcher. His decision was not spontaneous but one that he had contemplated with increasing seriousness

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JAMES BARBOUR is professor at the University of New Mexico. This is his first appearance in a SABR publication.



as he had sunk into a deepening melancholia during the 1940 season.

## II

Hershberger was a journeyman catcher, small and light for the position at 5'10" and 160 pounds. Photographed together with Ernie Lombardi, the Hall of Fame catcher whom he spelled during doubleheaders, the two bore a physical resemblance to Jack and the giant. But Hershberger was a good fill-in and a premier pinch hitter whose journey through organized baseball had taken him from El Paso to Erie to the Pacific Coast League and to the Yankee farm clubs at Binghamton and Newark. He played on the legendary Newark Bear team of 1937, was voted the International League Catcher of the Year, and was sold after the season to Cincinnati for \$25,000 and minor leaguers (a package that was eventually worth \$150,000 to the Yankees). Hershberger had batted .276 in his first season in the majors and had improved that to .345 in the pennant-winning 1939 season.

Pressed into full-time duty in late July 1940 when Lombardi sprained an ankle, Hershberger was hitting .362. And when the Reds embarked July 23 on a road trip that was to take them through the East, they were seven games in front of a second-place Brooklyn. They began by sweeping the Dodgers in a double-header 4-3 and 9-2, and they won the next day 6-3. An open date took them to Philadelphia, where they began the series by beating the Phillies 9-5. Hershberger opened the Brooklyn series by collecting four hits in the second game of the double-

header, and drove in two runs with a single in the Philadelphia win.

Hershberger's hitting fell off after the July 26 victory over the Phillies. He got three hits in a 6-3 win over the Giants on July 30, but including that game, he was to go three for twenty in the next five games he caught. A heat wave that made headlines in the East was partially responsible for his increasing problems. When the Reds arrived in Philadelphia, the temperature reached 93° and continued to rise each day thereafter. As the thermometer rose the ballclub slumped and the frail Hershberger melted. On July 27 the Reds lost to the Phillies in a 100° furnace. The *New York Times* reported that it was the hottest day since July 10, 1936, and that was the hottest summer of the century. There were four deaths in the city attributed to the heat that day (figures that include drowning), and the death toll for the summer in the country reached 523. The next day the Reds played a double-header in 99° temperature. Cincinnati newspapers reported that Hershberger had lost between ten and fourteen pounds in the July heat wave. He was clearly suffering from dehydration. It had affected his performance and was to affect his judgment.

The team traveled to New York in slightly cooler weather and split the first two games of the series, losing the first 4-3 and winning on July 30, 6-3. Hershberger got a hit for the first time since July 27.

If Hershberger's three hits and the comfortable win over the Giants seemed to indicate that Hershberger had bypassed his rendezvous in the Boston hotel room, it was

### WILLARD McKEE HERSHBERGER

(Herky)

Born, May 28, 1911, at Lemon Cove, Cal.

Brown eyes and dark brown hair. Throws and bats righthanded.

Nationality—Scotch-Irish-German.

Single.

Hobbies—Ranching, hunting and amateur radio work.

Year	Club	League	Pos	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BA
1930—	El Paso.....	Ariz. State										
					(No averages available)							
1931—	El Paso.....	Ariz. Tex.	C	115	432	90	154	***	***	***	4	.356
1932—	Springfield.....	Eastern										
					(No averages available)							
1932—	Erie.....	Cen	C-2B-OF	94	333	54	113	18	11	2	***	.339
1933—	Newark.....	Int	C	11	33	5	7	1	1	0	7	.212
1933—	Binghamton.....	NYP	C	103	345	43	105	18	3	2	58	.304
1934—	Hollywood.....	P.C.	C	114	332	41	102	18	1	3	46	.307
1935—	Newark.....	Int	C-2B	107	313	42	97	6	4	6	49	.310
1936—	Newark.....	Int	C	16	54	7	14	3	2	1	12	.259
1936—	Oakland.....	P.C.	C	89	259	25	68	6	4	1	40	.263
1937—	Newark.....	Int	C	96	314	54	102	15	3	5	62	.325
1938—	Cincinnati.....	Nat	C	49	105	12	29	3	1	0	12	.276
1939—	Cincinnati.....	Nat	C	63	174	23	60	9	2	0	32	.345
1940—	Cincinnati.....	Nat	C	48	123	6	38	4	2	0	26	.309
WORLD SERIES RECORD												
1939—	Cincinnati.....	Nat	PH-C	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	.500

only an illusion. Oedipus was on the road to Thebes. The illusion was shattered in the ninth inning of the concluding game with the Giants with the Reds in front 4-1. Bucky Walters was throwing a two-hitter and the contest was moving along with the monotonous rhythm of a well-pitched game. Walters disposed of the first two hitters in the ninth and with one out remaining, he quickly established a count of two strikes and no balls on the next hitter. It was a pattern that was to repeat itself four times. The *Times* offered this account.

Four times in a row Bucky Walters was one strike away from winning. Four times he failed.

He had a 3-2 count on Bob Seeds and lost him by issuing a pass. He reached the same tally on Burgess Whitehead and Whitey slashed a home run just inside the right field foul line. He did it again before Mel Ott walked. Then up stepped Harry the Horse Danning.

Bucky was taking no chances. He whisked in two strikes, took aim and fired again. The Horse swung from his heels and the ball sailed through the mild night air into the upper left field balcony.

The crowd of 30,324, the largest ever to see a night game at the Polo Grounds was ecstatic; it was a victory the Reds had already counted. Walters immediately turned and walked toward the clubhouse. Hershberger stayed behind the plate in disbelief as the others left. He was crushed by Danning's blow and blamed himself for the defeat. He had called for the wrong pitch, trying to sneak a fastball past Danning when he should have wasted a pitch. Walters had shaken him off, but he had insisted.

The Reds dragged into Boston where they were to meet the stingless Bees in three consecutive doubleheaders. They lost the first game 10-3 with Bill Baker, Hershberger's roommate on the road, catching. The nightcap was closer but the Reds dropped it in twelve innings 4-3 with Hershberger failing to get a hit in five at bats; each time he failed with runners on base. But worse than his inability to drive in runs, he seemed catatonic behind the plate. When Max West topped a ball that rolled only a few feet, Hershberger remained squatting behind the plate, forcing Whitey Moore, the pitcher, to make the play. In the dugout after the inning, McKechnie pointed to the spot where the ball had stopped and told Willard that it was his play. "Are you sick? Is there anything wrong with you?" he asked. "Yes, plenty," Hershberger responded. "I'll tell you about it after the game."

Late that afternoon the manager took his catcher into the deserted grandstand but Hershberger said he couldn't talk. "I'll break down," he explained. Back at the hotel McKechnie cleared his suite and listened for two hours to Hershberger sob and tell him that he was going to take his life. He revealed that he had tried before but lacked the courage. "My father took his own life, and so will I," were the words that McKechnie later quoted. Hershberger told McKechnie that he felt responsible for the team's recent losses and that he was letting his teammates down.

Their talk continued that evening in the dining room of the hotel. McKechnie was afraid to leave Willard alone. They talked throughout the meal until the manager was assured that Hershberger was in a better frame of mind. His teammates remembered his joking with them later in the lobby. But when Baker returned to the room, Hershberger was sitting in the dark, smoking a cigarette, with the antenna of his radio uncoiled on the floor. Hershberger was staring at the wire.

When Hershberger awoke on Saturday, he told Baker he wasn't feeling as well as he had the night before. Lou Smith, a writer for the Cincinnati *Enquirer* who traveled with the team, tried to joke with him at breakfast, but Hershberger, known as a good natured jokester to his teammates, did not respond. Baker wanted to take him to the park about 11:30, but Hershberger said he would be out later because he was scheduled to work the second game. Paul Derringer, who was to pitch that day, was the last person to see him alive. He asked the catcher if he was ready to go the ballpark, and Willard answered, "I'm waiting for a friend, but I'll be out soon."

How long Hershberger had been waiting is problematical, perhaps since his father died. But that afternoon he and his friend kept their date. Willard was shaving with his electric razor, apparently getting ready to report to the stadium, when he noticed Bill Baker's safety razor. He took off his shirt, spread towels over the floor of the bathroom, knelt, and leaning over the bathtub, slit his jugular. At the time on the radio the hometown Bees were making a late charge at the Reds.

McKechnie, unaware of what was taking place at the hotel but knowing that his player was deeply disturbed, made a speech to the team between games. "We have," McKechnie told them, "an unusually sick man among us who must be treated differently than we are in the habit of treating one another. We must cease playing jokes on him, and, above all, we must cease asking him how he feels. He is so sick mentally that we must overlook anything he does and try to raise his spirits back to normal." The recognition came too late. When Cohen found Willard's body, he called the ballpark and McKechnie, Gabe Paul, and a Dr. Richard J. Rhode left in the fourth inning of the second game. The team then knew that he was dead.

The stories that appeared in the days after Hershberger's death indicated that his suicide was not as impulsive as it had initially appeared. He had been sending warning signs throughout the season and had recently been printing announcements in bold type. His misfortune was to be surrounded by ballplayers, not psychiatrists. Joe Beggs, a teammate who had been with Willard on the Newark Bears, reported that Hershberger had been subject to extended moods of depression even then. Always an insomniac, Hershberger had recently complained of severe headaches. Lew Riggs, his best friend on the team, reported that his pal had bought an insurance policy before leaving Cincinnati and had asked



Willard Hershberger

him to see that his mother got his car and a bond that he had recently purchased—"in case anything happens to me." And Riggs and Baker said that Willard had talked of taking his life several times that season, twice the day before he died. He had talked to McKechnie about quitting on several occasions, but had been advised to defer his decision until the end of the season. Despite his high batting average and his competency behind the plate, he had confided to the manager that he wasn't doing the job. On the recent road trip he had lapsed into an increasing depression, and at times his remarks manifested delusion and confused judgment, as when the popular catcher confided to Morrie Arnovich, an outfielder, that "the boys are all down on me." And when McKechnie at the eleventh hour recognized the extent of Willard's disturbance, it was too late. He had walked too far into the darkness.

Hershberger clearly contemplated suicide before he grabbed Baker's safety razor. It is equally clear that a bizarre sequence of events conspired against him, and had any one of them not occurred, he might have made it through the night that was increasingly enveloping him. In the beginning, had Lombardi not sprained his ankle before the extended trip through the East, Willard would not have been pressed into catching full time. And had the Eastern seaboard not been steaming in extreme heat, he would not have suffered from dehydration, which undoubtedly affected his pH factor and altered his blood chemistry thereby impairing his judgment and coordination. His physical condition, in turn, affected his hitting and caused him to feel that he was undermining the team. And had he been able to get one more strike on any one of four consecutive batters, the Reds' losing slump would have ended. Or had Danning popped the ball up.

Or had Whitehead sliced his drive down the right field foul line in any other ballpark but the Polo Grounds with its short dimensions in the corners. Or had he wasted a pitch on Danning. It was all a chain of events that might have been broken at any one point.

But perhaps Willard was fated, his end determined by his father's death. Like many children he may have felt responsible for the death he did not understand. Subsequently he attempted to resolve his guilt by not disappointing people—he was devoted to his mother and claimed that he could not marry while she was alive—and he felt an abnormal responsibility toward his teammates. And the losses in the games in which he was catching were more than he could finally handle.

Despite the loss of Hershberger and their collective sorrow, the Reds went on to righten themselves. They played winning ball in the remainder of August, winning two more than they lost, 15-13, and going on an eleven-game winning streak in September to close the season 23-8. They beat Detroit in the World Series in seven games. The hero for Cincinnati was Jimmy Wilson, forty-year-old coach who assumed the catching duties for the injury-plagued Lombardi. Wilson hit .353 in six games. But for his decision in a Boston room the hero would have been Hershberger.

### III

Willard's body was sent home to California and buried in the family plot in Visalia. On the father's stone is clearly etched the year and place of his death—November 21, 1929, in Fullerton, California. The Fullerton *Daily News* offers an account that perhaps begins and ends Willard's story.

Claude E. Hershberger, 54, 222 N. Yale Ave., father of Willard Hershberger, prominent high school athlete, committed suicide in his home at 2:30 a.m. today by shooting himself with a shotgun.

The decedent had been despondent for several weeks it was believed, brooding over financial worries brought on by changes in personnel of the oil company for which he was employed and which were said to have left him in an inferior position to that which he formerly held.

Retiring to the bathroom of his home, Hershberger is said by police to have pointed at his breast while seated on the edge of the bath tub. The trigger was pushed by means of a cane. Death was believed instantaneous.

The Hershberger family was awakened in the middle of the night to the sound of the shotgun blast and found a messy sight in the bathroom, one that the son was to repeat eleven years later across the country in another bathroom. The newspaper account at least solved one mystery about Willard's suicide: it explained the towels he had spread on the floor. He was cleaning up after his father—and perhaps he didn't want to disappoint the maid.

*Even the Splinter didn't know what he had in catcher Jim French.*

# Pardon My French

MERRITT CLIFTON

**Q**UICK NOW—name the top all-round catchers in baseball, 1965-1971.

From the National League, you'll probably think of Johnny Bench, Joe Torre, Dick Dietz, Manny Sanguillen, Tim McCarver, Randy Hundley, Tom Haller, Jerry Grote, and John Bateman.

From the American League, Bill Freehan, Elston Howard, Earl Battey, and John Romano.

Dividing time between both leagues was John Roseboro.

All fine catchers, no argument about it. But Jim French of the Washington Senators had as good an arm as any and better offensive stats than most. Perhaps a better arm than either Bench or Sanguillen. Certainly better at the plate than Grote, Roseboro, Bateman, or Hundley.

Say what? Jim who? That same little turkey who hit .196 lifetime with 5 homers in 234 games, who never played every day?

That's right, Jim French. Perhaps the most underrated catcher of all time, with due respect to Torre's unrecognized defensive prowess before his switch to other positions, and to the late Ernie Lombardi, who should have been a first-ballot Hall of Famer.

Fact is, Jim French probably had the best lifetime assists-to-games ratio of any catcher since the deadball era. He may have been the best all-round defensive catcher since Bill Bergen, whose howitzer arm kept him in the Cincinnati and Brooklyn lineups 1901-1911 despite the weakest bat in big league history.

Superficially, French and Bergen would seem to have had similar talents—actually better suited to pitching than catching, since they could both throw bullets but barely hit their weight. According to Pete Palmer and John Thorn's statistical analysis in *The Hidden Game of Base-*

*ball* (Doubleday, 1984), Bergen is the only catcher to make the all-time top 100 in games won on defense, lifetime. But he hit only .170 for his 11 seasons. His most active year, 1909, he managed just .139 in 112 games.

Overall, then, Bergen was a bum. Palmer figures he cost his teams even more games at bat than he won with his arm and glove. A career minus.

French didn't hit much better than Bergen. But he was a career plus on a team that didn't have many, a genuine offensive threat because he drew walks like nobody before or since. French walked often enough to achieve a lifetime on-base average of .330 despite his .196 bat. He walked more often than he got a hit—121 walks, 119 hits. Not even such legendary walk-wanglers as Max Bishop, Eddie 'Walking Man' Yost, Roy Cullenbine, Ted Williams and Gene Tenace could claim as much. Bishop came closest, 1153 walks to 1216 hits. Second runner-up Tenace had 984 walks to 1060 hits.

How good was French's .330 OBA? According to Palmer, "The average on-base average for [American League] catchers" during French's career "was .308, batting average .234. Of the 20 regular catchers in 1968," median for the period. "the following made 1,000 games: Torre, lifetime OBA .367; Bench, .345; Freehan, .342; Haller, .342; McCarver, .340; Roseboro, .329; Grote, .318; Hundley, .294; and Bateman, .273." Palmer's figures on Torre include his years as first baseman and third baseman, "so French did better than average."

French ranked far ahead of Paul Casanova, who played

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MERRITT CLIFTON is an environmental and occupational safety journalist by trade, and is also the author and publisher of numerous baseball books and chapbooks.

ahead of him throughout his career, and such other contemporary regulars as Johnny Edwards, Mike Ryan, Clay Dalrymple, Bob Tillman, J.C. Martin, Gerry McNertney, Andy Etchebarren, Elrod Hendricks, Bob Rodgers, Tom Satriano, Tom Egan, Jerry May, and Jim Pagliaroni. The only contemporary reserve catchers with comparable OBA's did almost as much pinch-hitting as catching: Charlie Lau, Smoky Burgess, Don Pavletich, Russ Nixon.

Unfortunately, French's abilities went almost totally unrecognized by both fans and baseball people. He played most of the time for a basement ballclub, an expansion team nobody watched, piling up impressive stats in categories not even listed by *The Sporting News*. Truth is, the importance of assists-to-games ratio and on-base average was scarcely recognized at all during French's career, when scientific statistical analysis was still in its infancy.

The only baseball people who ever really recognized what French could do were longtime batterymate Jim Hannan and Ted Williams, his manager 1969-1971. Even Williams, who knew the value of a walk if anyone did, never quite realized how good French was. He couldn't look past batting averages of .184, .211, and .146 to see that French ranked among the top offensive threats in his motley lineup. His OBAs during his three most active years, 1968-1970, were .277, .352, and .358.

Fact is, *nobody* on the Senators topped French in OBA every year they were teammates, and only Frank Howard had a better career OBA—.365 for his seven years in Washington. Playing the same seven years French did, 1965-1971, Howard had OBAs of .357, .348, .333, .334, .399, .418, and .367, always among the American League leaders. The noteworthy rise in Howard's OBA came in 1969, when Williams persuaded him to lay off bad balls. Suddenly Howard's season walk totals jumped from around 50-60 per season to over 100.

But of course Howard got a lot of walks because pitchers just didn't want to face him. He hit 44, 48, and 44 home runs during his top three seasons in OBA, while French had a career high of 2 homers (1969).

The Senators' other big hitters were Ken McMullen and Mike Epstein, both also long-ball threats. McMullen topped French's career OBA only in 1969, his last as a Senator, with a career-high .353. Epstein, who like Howard drew lots of intentional and semi-intentional walks, topped French with .404 in 1969, .364 in 1970.

OBA, however, isn't of primary importance for power hitters. Where it really counts is up front, at the top of the order. Williams used the same lead-off men his predecessor Jim Lemon had, fleet-footed outfielders Ed Stroud and Del Unser. Stroud was a legitimate base-stealing threat, with a career high of 29 in 1970, while Unser averaged as high as .286 in 1969. Yet neither ever scored more than 69 runs, Unser reaching that total in '69 while Stroud did it in 1970. They had Howard slamming in 106, 111, and 126 runs behind them, 1968-1970, backed by Epstein and McMullen's best RBI years. Unser and

Stroud didn't score much because they weren't on base all that often. Neither drew even the normal percentage of walks. Stroud's on-base averages as a Senator, 1967-1970, were .292, .285, .348, and .328. Unser's, 1968-1971, were .282, .351, .321, and .323.

Before Stroud and Unser, Bob Savarine and Fred Valentine were the Senator lead-off men. Savarine's highest OBA was .298 in 1966. Valentine was respectable at .342, in '66, but plummeted to .266 in '67. The Senators simply didn't have any lead-off hitters—or did they?

Could French have hit lead-off? He certainly didn't look like a lead-off hitter. He looked more like slow-footed old Burgess, the White Sox' pinch-hitter, who was arguably the first DH because he played three full seasons, 1965-1967, while spending only parts of two innings in the field. Baseball cards and guidebooks variously list French as 5'7" or 5'8", 180 to 187 pounds. Pudgy.

*But he bunted for base hits!* The lefty-swinging French led the Carolina League in sacrifice bunts, 1964, his second year in pro ball. And he wasn't just a good sacrifice bunter. He *beat out* several bunts per season to pad those low averages just a little. He also stole bases when he was given the green light, with three career steals in the majors. And he was fast enough, if no comet, to take occasional turns in right field, both in the minors and with Washington.

Maybe French could have been a lead-off man. Certainly he'd have made a good second hitter, with his small strike zone, patience, bat control, and bunting ability. Instead, Williams and all his other managers usually batted him seventh or eighth, often behind even the notoriously light-hitting shortstop Eddie Brinkman. Senator fans—the only ones who knew his name—often suggested he should have hit ninth. After all, Senator pitching ace Camillo Pascual hit a slightly better .205 lifetime, while relief pitcher Pedro Ramos slugged 14 homers in almost the same number of lifetime plate appearances as French.

Finally, even if French did hit only .196 in his 607 official big league at-bats, no one ever really proved he couldn't have produced as well as most catchers if he'd been in the lineup every day. His minor league averages were unremarkable, but adequate: .286 for Wisconsin Rapids of the Midwest League, 1963; .270 for Rocky Mount of the Carolina League, 1964; a respectable .256 with York of the Eastern League, 1965, a notorious pitchers' loop where batting titles have often been won with marks under .300. He finished '65 by hitting .297 in 13 starts with Washington—as close to a shot at a regular job as he ever got. After spending most of 1966 riding the Washington bench, playing only 10 games in the majors and 25 with Hawaii and Syracuse, French had his one weak minor league season in '67—.234 for Hawaii. But he recovered with a power display for Buffalo in '68: 10 doubles, 11 homers, 32 RBI, and .263 in 60 games, before joining Washington for good.

If French's offensive potential remains largely speculation, his defensive ability fairly leaps out at you from his stats. His fielding percentages were ordinary, but since the gap between league leaders and league's worst in the department is relatively slight, that doesn't mean much. He led the Carolina League in errors with 28 in 1964, but that also means little, as he caught 135 games, far more than any rival.

What does stand out is that French recorded a league-leading 89 assists. His throwing only improved thereafter. With Buffalo in '68 he shot down 39 runners in 59 games. In Washington, base thieves weren't exactly running Casanova ragged. Casanova piled up a respectable 46 assists in 92 games, 1968, for a better-than-average mark by the standards of the time—a time when the longball still prevailed, when except for Lou Brock base-stealing was still mostly something shortstops did if they couldn't hit for power. But in French's 53 games, he nailed 42 runners. And French played many of those games as a late-inning defensive replacement. Pinch-hitters replaced him early in many others.

The following year, 1969, brought more of the same. Casanova, an exceptionally agile gloveman, had his best-ever percentage, .992. He killed 59 runners in 122 games. French fielded 'only' .989, blowing away 44 runners in parts of 63 games.

In both 1968 and 1969, French had the highest assists-to-games ratio in either major league by a substantial margin.

How significant is this? Palmer and Thorn expressed some skepticism in *The Hidden Game of Baseball*. "High assist totals are usually accompanied by a high number of stolen bases allowed," they noted. "A catcher's main defensive contribution is in calling the ballgame and keeping his pitcher in the proper frame of mind. Second in importance is the ability to throw—not only the would-be base thieves he intercepts, but also his demonstrated ability in the past which later keeps runners nailed to their bases. Who ran on Johnny Bench in the 1970s? His assist total led the National League in 1968 (his rookie season), but never again. His reputation was sufficient to disrupt his opponents' offense. Catcher's assists are uniquely a product of fear, since the steal is an elective play. . . . The catcher is the only fielder whom opponents can deny the chance to strut his stuff."

Since French didn't play often, American League runners took longer to learn to respect him than National League runners took with Bench. But come 1969, the word was out. *Nobody* ran on Mr. French. Speedsters ran against the weak Washington pitching staff just as often with Casanova behind the plate (Casanova had another fine defensive season, fielding, .988, picking up 48 assists in 100 games). French got only 23 assists in 62 games, then a fairly normal ratio. His fielding average dipped to .973, giving Williams and some scouts the notion that he'd lost something. But after the Senators dumped him in '71, he

fielded .984 for Richmond of the International League, with 27 assists in only 40 games. The man still could throw bullets, any time some smart-aleck cared to try.

French's Richmond OBA of .371 was also among the league leaders. Williams recalled him for a final cup of coffee, but released him September 27. On December 31, the Milwaukee Brewers released Hannan, the only man who ever really appreciated French in all his dimensions.

Like French, Hannan could throw a ball through concrete. Signed by the Red Sox for \$30,000 in 1961, Hannan promptly led the N.Y.P. in strikeouts with 254 in only 196 innings, and in victories with 17. The Senators drafted him, hoping to turn him into a Ryne Duren-type short reliever. For Washington in '62, Hannan worked 42 games, posted an excellent 3.31 ERA, struck out 39 in 68 innings—and walked 49. Control trouble plagued him thereafter, even when he persuaded the Senator brass to let him go back to starting.

French and Hannan first teamed up at Hawaii during the last third of the 1965 season. A year apart in age, both were college men, still relatively rare, and intellectuals of a sort. French had earned a master's degree in finance, while Hannan held one in economics. They roomed together. Hannan came on like gangbusters under French's guidance, regaining his control long enough to close with a 12-6 record and return ticket to Washington. French went with him. In Hannan's first start they teamed up for a five-hit, 9-0 shutout against Kansas City. But even though French hit .297, he lost his shot at becoming the Senators' regular to Casanova. Casanova came up from the Carolina League in late '65 to hit .308, after leading two minor leagues in assists.

Casanova was an ironman for the Senators in '66 and '67, the club's Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year his first season, an American League all-star his second. French caught Hannan occasionally, sat in the bullpen, and returned to the minors. Hannan soon followed. They rose back to the big leagues together in '68, after French coaxed Hannan to a 5-2 record in seven starts at Buffalo.

Over the next two years, the Hannan-French battery won 10 and lost 2, by scores of 1-0 and 2-1. Hannan's overall major league record 1968-1969 was 17-12—only 7-10 with Casanova, which more or less matched the Senators' pace as a team.

After Hannan opened 1970 with a 9-5 record, again with French catching most of the victories, the magic vanished. The Senators slumped into the cellar. Hannan lost his last six decisions, was shifted back to the bullpen as his control problems worsened, and was shipped to Detroit as a part of the Denny McLain deal on October 9.

With Hannan gone, Williams figured the Senators didn't need French.

And nobody else wanted him either. At age 30, just entering his prime, the most underrated catcher of his time or perhaps any time went home to Andover, Ohio to commence a new career in business.



# Why the System of Batting Averages Should Be Changed

F. C. LANE

**S**UPPOSE YOU ASKED a close personal friend how much change he had in his pocket and he replied, "Twelve coins," would you think you had learned much about the precise state of his exchequer?

Would a system that placed nickels, dimes, quarters and fifty cent pieces on the same basis be much of a system whereby to compute a man's financial resources? Anyone who offered such a system would deserve to be examined as to his mental condition. And yet it is precisely such a loose, inaccurate system which obtains in baseball and lies at the root of the most popular branch of baseball statistics.

Fans and figures have a mutual attraction. The real bugs of the diamond like to pore over facts gleaned from the records, to compare Ty Cobb's batting average with Hans Wagner's. Statistics are the most important part of baseball, the one permanent, indestructible heritage of each passing season. And batting records are the particular gem of all collections of figures, the ones most to be desired.

Fielding records are known to be grossly inaccurate. Few well informed fans pay much attention to them except to find out how many putouts and assists a player is credited with and whether or not he is a good ground coverer. Pitching records are nearer accuracy, and since Secretary Heydler has inaugurated his admirable system of earned runs, they are more accurate than ever. But batting records are the most easily kept and readily interpreted of them all. Which is fortunate, since batting is the particular hobby of nine fans in ten who are persistent visitors at the games.

And yet, with all their value and their comparative

accuracy, the system which underlies all batting averages is precisely that indicated above. It is a system where dimes are considered equal to half dollars, where the man who has a half dollar, a quarter, three dimes, four nickels and three pennies lumps them together and instead of saying he has \$1.28 says "Twelve coins." Pretty poor system, isn't it, to govern the most popular department of the most popular of games?

How do batting averages follow this absurd system? Very simply. Batting records as at present conducted give merely the number of safe hits a player makes in comparison to the number of times he had a chance to make a safe hit. For instance, if he were at bat five hundred times during a season and made one hundred and fifty hits, he would be credited with a batting average of an even .300. That is to say, he would have hit safely three out of ten times.

This is all right enough, according to first glance, but on second glance it is easy to see it is merely the story of the twelve coins over again. Now the man we had in mind had a dollar and twenty-eight cents in his pocket, but some other man who lives beyond the Mississippi river where cart wheel currency is in order might have had twelve silver dollars in his pocket and still have had twelve coins, to say nothing of the fellow who might have had twelve eagles.

The batter who makes twelve hits out of fifty times at bat is given just as much credit as any other who makes twelve hits out of fifty times at bat. But are twelve hits

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*F.C. LANE was the long-time editor of Baseball Magazine. He also authored Batting (1925).*

always of the same denomination any more than quarters and dimes and nickels?

One batter, we may say, made twelve singles, three or four of them of the scratchiest possible variety. The other also made twelve hits, but all of them were good ringing drives, clean cut and decisive, three of them were doubles, one a triple, and one a home run. Is the work of the two batters on a parallel? The figures say so. In other words, it is the case of the coins without paying any attention to the denomination.

I once talked with a player who happened to have a bad leg and was sitting in the grandstand watching his teammates battle on the diamond. It was a critical time in the game and a runner was on second. The batter at the plate was the only three hundred hitter on the club. Apparently the situation was well primed for action. "Lucky M—— is at bat," I said to the player, who was chewing his lip with subdued excitement. "No, no," he retorted. "Too bad H—— isn't up. He's a good batter." And the man he spoke of had an average at least twenty points lower than the one who was facing the pitcher.

And yet this was merely an illustration of a commonly accepted situation among ball players. They know who are the good batters on the club regardless of what the records may say. They know that the figures grossly mislead and that players with a showy average are often far less formidable with the stick than others who perhaps lurk unappreciated in the shade of .270. Why do players have this usually accepted appreciation of batters apart from what the records tell? Because among themselves they are not willing to admit that a cent is equal to a quarter, that the scratchiest of singles is worth a ringing two-bagger, or that the grandstand hitter is equal to the grim-faced fellow with set teeth who battles best in the pinch. In short, players recognize the loopholes in the system of keeping the records and mentally make reservations in sizing up a fellow player.

Now, the sole purpose of batting averages is to give a correct idea of the comparative ability of baseball players with the stick. If these averages mislead or give mistaken ideas of batting ability they forfeit their only excuse in being. There is but one exception. Where records, in spite of errors, are as accurate as possible, they should be accepted as better than none at all. Fielding records, with all their inaccuracies, may be as nearly correct as circumstances permit. But does the same rule apply to batting? Is there no way to separate the dimes from the nickels and give each its proper value? Let us see.

I took up the matter with Secretary Heydler, who knows more about statistics than any other man actively connected with the game. "I admit," said Mr. Heydler, "that the system of giving as much credit to singles as to home runs is inaccurate to that extent. But it has never seemed practicable to use any other system. How, for instance, are you going to give the comparative values of home runs and singles?"

Mr. Heydler, with his usual clear perception of the facts, went straight to the heart of the matter. For, admitting that you can approximate the comparative values of home runs and singles, you admit that a system much more accurate than the present one might be installed. In short, the batting system of the present has wound its halting way down the history of baseball because the record makers tacitly admitted that there was no way of giving comparative values to the various hits, that there was no way to tell a dime from a nickel.

Now, the Baseball Magazine [from within this article is reprinted—ED.] is not willing to admit this. And before we are through we believe our readers will agree with us. We do not claim that an absolutely accurate system could be devised, but we do believe that one approximately correct, certainly far more nearly correct than the present system, is among the current possibilities.

In the first place, what constitutes the value of a hit? There is but one logical answer. A hit is valuable in so far as it results in a score. The entire aim of a baseball team at bat is to score runs. Hits, stolen bases, taking advantage of errors—in short, all the departments of play—are but details in the process of scoring runs. The one aim of every man on the team is to cross the plate with a tally or to assist some teammate in so doing.

Hits are not made as mere spectacular displays of batting ability; they are made for a purpose, namely, to assist in the all-important labor of scoring runs. Their entire value lies in their value as run producers. Obviously, many hits are made that are for all practical purposes wasted. Games are not uncommon in which one side failed to register a run and yet that side may have made several good hits. On the other hand there are games in which a considerable number of runs are scored, though there were comparatively few hits.

It would be grossly inaccurate to claim that a hit should be rated in value solely upon its direct and immediate effect on producing runs. The only rule to be applied is the average value of a hit in terms of runs produced under average conditions throughout a season.

Obviously, many singles coming when two men are out do not result in a score. Almost every game witnesses a time when a single means a run. The sole method whereby the value of a single may be obtained is to judge of its average value.

We have no figures at hand to show this average value, but we will outline a way whereby that value could be found and even hazard an estimate, doubtless an inaccurate one.

A single has two distinct values. First, its value as regards the man who makes it. Second, its value as regards the runner who may already be upon the bases. Now we have no figures available which would show the average number of times that a runner occupies the bases when a single is made. But we will assume, for argument's sake, that there is a runner already on base about

one-third of the time. The exact facts can be determined only by keeping careful records of a series of games, say fifty or more.

Now, a single, then, not only means that the batter advances one-quarter of the distance toward home, but that one-third of the time he advances another runner as well. Usually when a man is on first he goes to third on a clean single. Usually when on second he scores. Again, we have no figures to show the averages, but we will say offhand that the base runner advances two bases on a single three out of four times. Occasionally Cobb will advance three bases. But Cobb is an exception. Employing the values we have arbitrarily assigned, we learn that a single advances a runner one-third of the time at least one base and that three times out of four in such cases the runner advances two sacks. In other words, the total value of a single in terms of runs sums up as follows:

To the man who made the hit, one base, or 25 percent of a run.

To the man on bases one-third of the time, who advances two bases three times in four, 14 percent of a run.

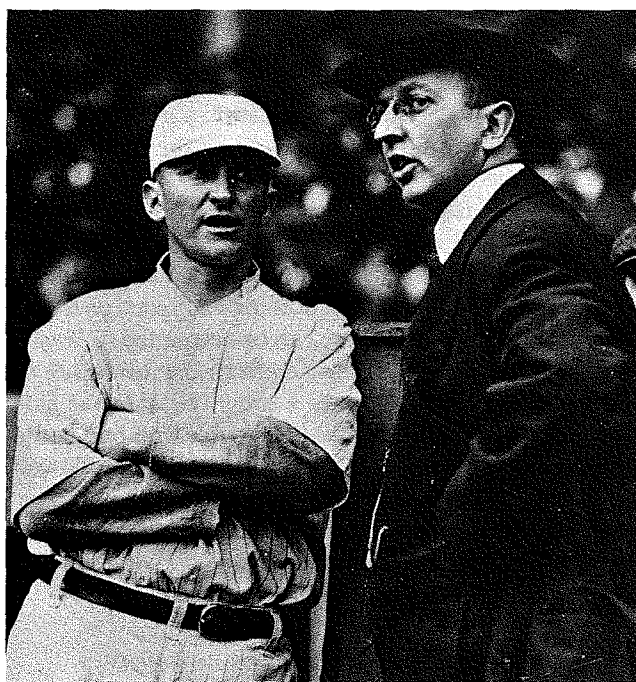
Ignoring fractions, then, we see that a single nets the team that makes it, in terms of runs, approximately 40 percent of a run.

There is a general shrinkage to be allowed for, which we will take up later.

Pursuing the same system and applying it to doubles we find this to be the case. Ordinarily doubles are made much more rarely than are singles. But the same rule should seemingly apply in the case of men on bases. Comparatively, a runner is just as apt to be on base when a two-bagger is made as when a single is made. In absence of evidence to the contrary, let us assume that this is true and follow out the value of a double in terms of runs scored.

The batter who makes the two-base hit gets one-half way around the bases; he is obviously entitled to 50 percent of a run. The value of the hit to the base runner who is on bases one-third of the time is not so clear, however. Obviously, he cannot usually advance an extra base, i.e., three bases, as there are not ordinarily three bases separating him from home plate. Assuming the runner is sometimes on first, sometimes on second and sometimes on third when the hit is made, and that, as a matter of general averages, he may be assumed to be on second, he could obviously advance but two bases. Two bases then, one-third of the time, nets the base runner on a two-bagger 16 percent of a run. A double, ignoring fractions, is worth 65 percent of a run.

A triple carries the batter three-quarters of the way around the bases. It is worth to him 75 percent of a run. It sweeps the bases of all runners, advancing them on an average, according to the above figures, of two bases each, 16 percent. In other words, a triple is worth nearly a run, 90 percent, according to our somewhat inaccurate system.



*Lew McCarty and F.C. Lane, 1917*

Lastly, a home run scores a clean hundred percent for the man who makes it and advances a runner one-third of the time an average of two bases, safely across the plate. In other words a home run is worth 116 percent of a run.

We spoke above of a shrinkage in comparative values. Let us illustrate. A runner may be on first, advance according to rule to third on a single, and yet not score because the next man up grounds out. Obviously, in the case of singles, more fractions of runs will be netted to a club than appear in the final score. In other words a batter might make four singles in a contest and himself be entitled to four quarters of a run, or an entire run, and yet fail to score. These excess fractions of runs are accounted for by the men who are left on bases. These men have got part way around, but didn't negotiate the entire distance. So far as their efforts for the day are concerned those efforts were wasted. The shrinkage in fractional parts of runs scored as against actual runs scored could be checked up at the end of the season and the allowance to be made in the value of a single approximated to practical accuracy.

In the case of a double there is a complication in that a runner already on base does not necessarily advance two bases. He might be on third, for instance. Hence, there is less comparative value to the base runner in the case of doubles than in singles, and this also applies to the runner on bases when triples and home runs are batted out.

The shrinkage noted in the case of singles is not so great in doubles—if there is a man on base when a double is made he is almost sure to score, while such is not the case when a single is hit.

Where a triple is made the man on bases is absolutely certain to score, for even Chief Meyers could go from first

to home on a triple. There is some shrinkage in the case of the batter himself, for a player occasionally dies on third even after a three-ply wallop.

In the case of a home run there is no shrinkage at all. Everybody scores, the batter as well as the man on the bases, and the slate is wiped clean.

We speak of this shrinkage because it must be taken into account and still further emphasizes the fact that there is a great difference in the value of hits.

Let us see. We have allowed nothing for errors, passes or stolen bases. Obviously, these can be accounted for easily enough and their total subtracted from the result. Let us give a concrete illustration. In a practice game one side made six singles, two doubles, one triple and one home run. They stole two bases. The opposing pitcher allowed two passes to first and two errors were made by their opponents. One of these errors netted a runner two bases. The team scored five runs. Applying our system and checking up the comparative value of hits:

6 singles @ 40% of a run.....	2.40	runs
2 doubles @ 65% of a run.....	1.30	"
1 triple @ 90% of a run.....	.90	"
1 home run @ 116% of a run.....	1.15	"
3 passes @ 25% of a run.....	.75	"
2 errors.....	.75	"
2 stolen bases @ 25%.....	.50	"

---

7.75 runs

Apparently the offensive attack of the club in question should have netted at least seven runs, instead of the five recorded. The discrepancy results from two factors; one, the excess value allowed to hits, particularly singles, and second, to men left on bases. Since the latter figures are most easily obtainable, let us glance at them first. We find that five men were left on bases. Of these one had advanced as far as third base, two as far as second, while two perished miserably on first. Adding these fractional runs we find the total as follows:

One man on third @ 75%.....	.75%	of a run
Two men on second @ 50%.....	1.00	run
Two men on first @ 25%.....	.50%	of a run

---

2.25 runs

We see, then, that more than a total of two runs were accounted for by men left on bases. Subtracting from the total offensive effort of 7.75 runs we get 5.50 runs. Now, the club actually scored five runs, so, assuming the contest was a nearly average one, 50 percent or half a run must be checked off as excess valuation allowed to certain hits.

Obviously, none of this excess value should be charged against the home run. The player who made that hit scored four bases and any one who was on base at the time

also scored. The home run rings true every time. In the case of the triple any one on bases also scored. The triple, like the home run, sweeps clean. But the man who made the triple need not necessarily have scored. In perhaps nine out of ten times he would do so, but on the tenth he might die on third. A certain slight shrinkage is apparent in the case of the triple. It isn't worth exactly what we claimed for it.

In the case of the double the shrinkage is even more apparent. The double does not necessarily sweep the bases, though it usually does. A runner might be on first when the double was made and advance no farther than third. Incidentally, the man who makes the double frequently fails himself to score. The shrinkage of actual value in terms of runs is apparent in the double.

But most of this shrinkage must be charged to the account of the single. Two or three successive singles may be made and no one score. In fact, the single is often barren of immediate results, save to leave men to die on the bases. The shrinkage to be charged against the single is considerable. We must obviously revise our assigned values somewhat. Instead, then, of allowing to a single the value of 40 percent of a run, let us cut this value down to 30 percent, which would appear fairer. Instead of allowing that a double is worth 65 percent of a run let us assume it is worth 60 percent. Let us, to avoid fractions, leave the triple at 90, while the home run will stay at 1.15. Now let us apply these figures to a concrete case.

Jake Daubert twice led the National League in batting. This season he slumped, but he was still a great hitter, as his record of .301 will show. [Gavvy] Cravath was not a three hundred hitter. His average was .285. According to the system in vogue Daubert was a better hitter than Cravath by a considerable margin. It is the old story of the twelve coins once more.

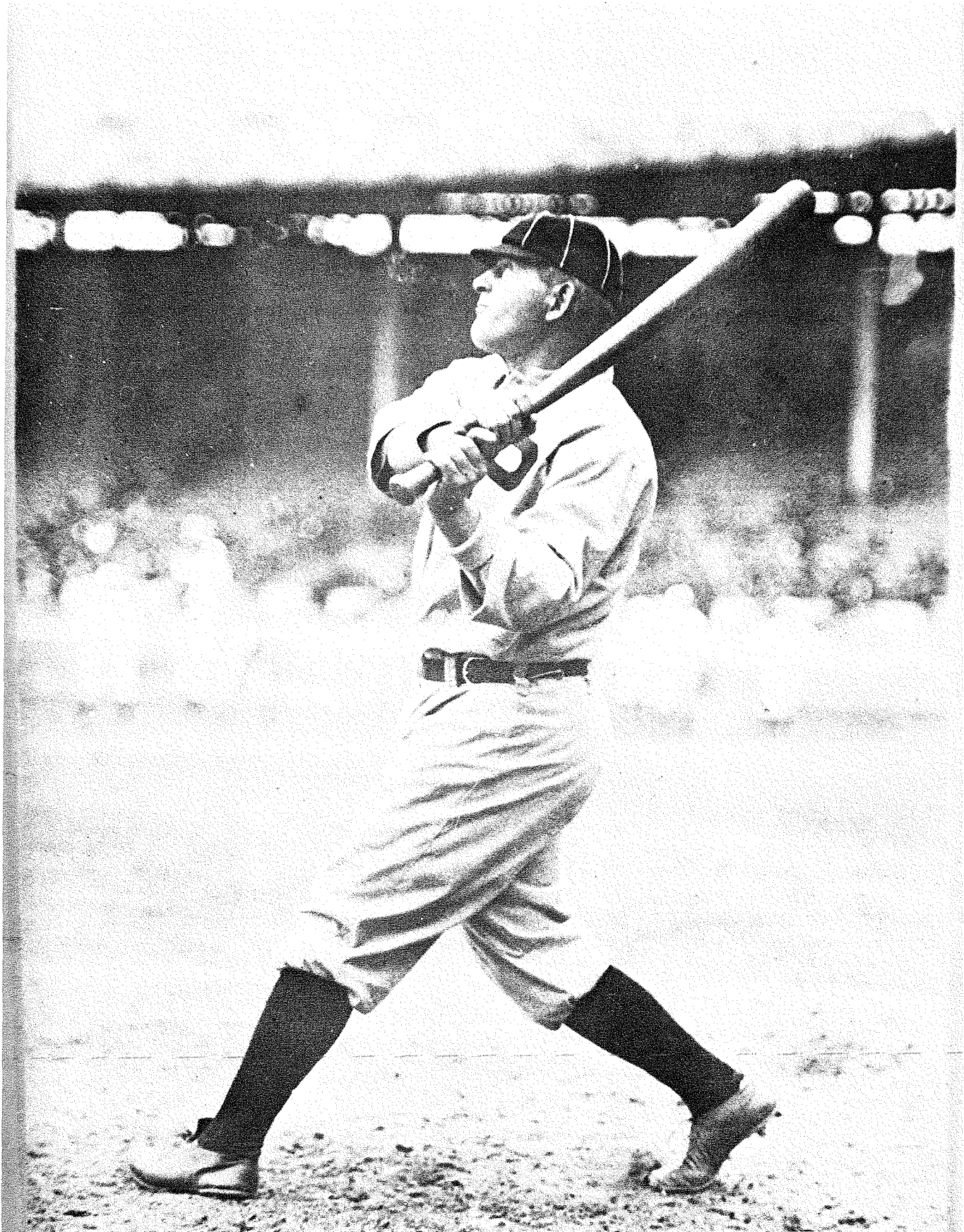
Now, the National League last season made 10,054 hits.

These hits were grouped according to denomination in the following ratio: Singles, 7,786; doubles, 1,488; triples, 554; home runs, 226.

Grouping these figures according to percentage we find these facts. Of all the hits made in the National League a little over three-quarters were singles. We will give the percentages accurately: Singles, 77.44 percent; doubles, 14.80 percent; triples, 5.51 percent; home runs, 2.24 percent.

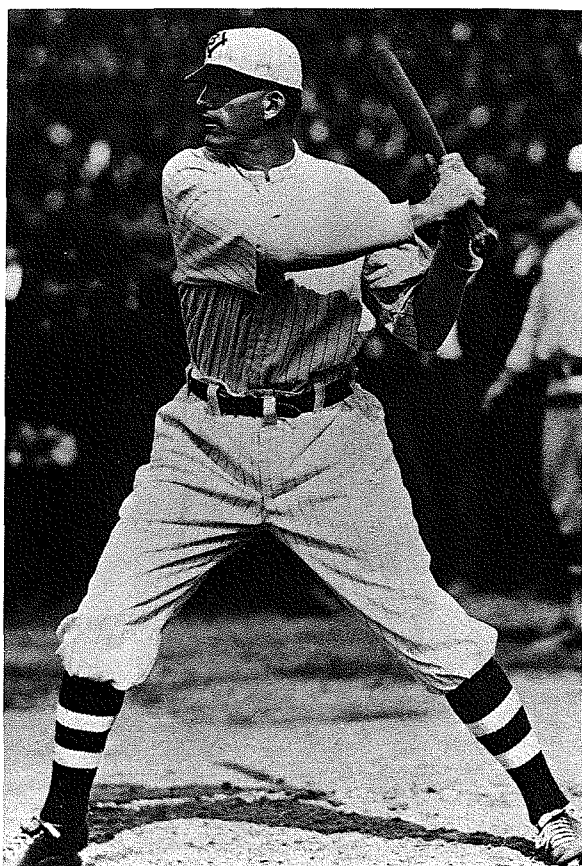
Now, in the comparative table of hits made by Jake Daubert last season, the following percentages are true: Singles, 79.47 percent; doubles, 13.90 percent; triples, 5.29 percent; home runs, 1.31 percent.

In other words, Jake made more singles and fewer extra base hits than the general average right down the line. Jake had a lot of coins in his pockets, but many of them were nickels and dimes. The same percentages in the case of Cactus Cravath show the following extraordinary deviations: Singles, 59.38 percent; doubles, 20.80 percent; triples, 4.69 percent; home runs, 16.12 percent.



*Gavvy "Cactus" Cravath*





Jake "Eagle Eye" Daubert

In other words, nearly half Cravath's hits were for extra bases, and, roughly, one-sixth of them were home runs.

Let us assign to these two cases the comparative value for hits derived from the above estimates.

Jack Daubert made 120 singles. The value of a single is 30 percent of a run; the value of the 120 singles is 36 runs. He made 21 doubles at 60 percent, equalling 12 runs. He made 8 triples at 90 percent, 7 runs. He made two home runs at 1.15 percent, 3 runs. Jake batted, according to revised figures, for a total of 58 runs. He actually scored, oddly enough, 62 runs. Assuming that his work as base runner was affected as much by the batting of his teammates as he affected theirs, the result is approximately correct, bearing in mind that Jake is a very fast man and a good run getter.

Cravath made 87 singles for a value of 26 runs. He made 31 doubles, valued at 19 runs. He made 7 triples, worth 7 runs. He made 24 home runs, worth 27 runs. His total is 79 runs. He actually scored 89, which is another striking confirmation of the approximate correctness of values assigned to the various hits. For 24 times Cravath scored on his own home runs.

Now, for the method of computing averages. Instead of dividing times at bat by the number of hits made, as at present, divide them by the total value of hits, as outlined above. To illustrate. Daubert was at bat 544 times. His batting, assigning to each hit its proper worth, was ap-

proximately 58 runs; his batting average, therefore, according to this suggested new system, would be (dividing times at bat by total value of hits), .106. Cravath's record, according to the same system, would be .151.

New figures are always a bit startling. The system inaugurated by Sec. Heydler of rating pitchers by earned runs was novel on first sight. A system in which a three hundred batting average is reduced to .106 seems radical at first sight. The Baseball Magazine would advocate the retention of the present system as the only method whereby the records of the present may be compared with the records of the past. But it would also advocate the inauguration of a system such as roughly outlined above, whereby the proper value might be assigned to each hit and the comparative batting ability of players thus more accurately shown.

As it appears above, the batting average of Jake Daubert, reckoned on any sane basis, is not equal to that of Cactus Cravath by a very wide margin. In fact, the two are not in the same class. And yet, according to the present system, Daubert is the better batter of the two. It is grotesqueries such as this that bring the whole foundation of baseball statistics into disrepute.

Neither is the argument that hits must be rated on a common basis any longer sound, as the above system clearly indicates how the comparative value of the various hits may be readily ascertained by keeping careful tabs on a season's showing. Let it be hoped that 1916, the dawn of a new day in baseball affairs, will witness as well the dawn of a new day in the outworn method of keeping batting averages. The time has passed when the public will any longer swallow the palpable falsehood that a home run is no better than a scratch single. It knows better, instinctively feels better, and should be told the truth by a presentation of the season's statistics founded upon a sane, workmanlike basis.

#### The National League 1915 Batting Record

Singles.....	7,786	77.44%
Doubles.....	1,488	14.80%
Triples.....	554	5.51%
Home Runs.....	226	2.24%
Total.....	10,054	99.99%

#### Jake Daubert's 1915 Batting Record

Singles.....	120	79.47%
Doubles.....	21	13.90%
Triples.....	8	5.29%
Home Runs.....	2	1.33%
Total.....	151	99.99%

#### Cactus Cravath's 1915 Batting Record

Singles.....	87	58.38%
Doubles.....	31	20.80%
Triples.....	7	4.69%
Home Runs.....	24	16.12%
Total.....	149	99.99%

# ACROSTIC PUZZLE

JEFFREY NEUMAN

1D		2B	3I	4A	5S	6O	7K	8F	9T	10R	11D	12V		13Q	14V		15T	16M	17L		18U	19N	20J	21Q
22D	23C		24V	25N	26F		27E	28O	29T	30M		31A	32E		33P	34D	35H	36U	37T	38G	39Q	40I		41R
42U	43T	44I	45F	46M		47R	48D	49A	50T		51H	52B	53K	54C	55A	56I		57E	58H	59K		60P	61M	62A
63N	64C	65O	66J	67Q	68K		69A	70D	71Q	72R		73A	74F	75N	76L		77Q	78O	79I	80D	81E	82R	83M	84N
85F		86S	87E	88V	89M		90K	91O	92S	93T		94L	95P	96S		97N	98G	99F	10Q		101I	102O		103C
104D		105	106L	107T	108A	109K	110C	111S	112B	113M	114U	115V	116Q	117T		118M	119P	120C	121F	122		123P	124M	
125D	126M	127V	128E	129L	130H		131T	132L	133		134U	135	136D	137F	138V	139M	140L	141C		142A	143L	144O	145C	
146S	147U		148D	149T	150V	151I		152D	153		154U	155O		156B	157S	158O	159C		160I		161B	162V	163F	
164M	165J		166K	167H	168V	169I	170		171F	172		173H	174T	175N		176S	177E	178L	179		180R	181D	182I	183L
	184F		185A	186C	187		188L	189N		190	191T	192M	193		194S	195C	196L	197C						

Fill in the words defined below, one letter over each number. Then transfer each letter to the box which is numbered correspondingly in the acrostic diagram. Black boxes indicate word endings; note that words may spill over at the right, from one line to the next. When completed, the diagram will yield a quotation from a celebrated baseball book; its author and title will be revealed by reading the first letters of the guessed words below.

Answer on page 88.

## CLUES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Would any pitcher really start 49 games in 1972?</p> <p>B. Nickname for the victim of Maris's 60th</p> <p>C. Undisabled</p> <p>D. Languid; without spirit; listless</p> <p>E. Making bread and taking it easy</p> <p>F. Sounds like a place to display three MVP Awards</p> <p>G. Verdi heroine</p> <p>H. Skeptics; deniers</p> <p>I. Old name for the slider (2 words)</p> <p>J. Saving Face?</p> <p>K. 20th century strikeout king, until Koufax</p> <p>L. First of extras (2 words)</p> <p>M. Beyond the realm of possibility; absolutely not (4 words)</p> <p>N. "_____ the living Dead" (George Romero film; 2 words)</p> <p>O. Noted with a "distinctive mark," as Ford Frick put it</p> <p>P. Tossed; chased; thrown out</p> <p>Q. Only major leaguer to lead the league in 2B, 3B, and HR in the same year; Speaker (but not Tris)</p> <p>R. Narcotic derived from hemp</p> <p>S. No-hit Giant in 1975</p> <p>T. He's last in winning percentage among all 200-game winners</p> <p>U. Frame of mind</p> <p>V. Numerator for slugging percentage</p> | <p>A. 142 55 62 185 4 108 69 49 31 73</p> <p>B. 172 184 52 161 156 112 2</p> <p>C. 195 141 102 120 64 186 54 23 110</p> <p>D. 48 136 80 22 181 148 34 152 104 70 125 1 11</p> <p>E. 87 177 57 32 81 128 27</p> <p>F. 99 131 85 179 8 45 107 171 74 121 26</p> <p>G. 38 103 197 98</p> <p>H. 58 167 163 51 160 173 130 193 35</p> <p>I. 3 101 169 122 40 79 56 105 135 182 44</p> <p>J. 100 20 66 165 190</p> <p>K. 166 53 68 59 109 7 90</p> <p>L. 94 183 132 17 143 188 106 196 140 178 129</p> <p>M. 124 175 164 16 46 139 126 30 118 192 61 151 113 83 89 189</p> <p>N. 19 63 97 25 187 84 75</p> <p>O. 28 155 153 144 78 91 158 6 65 133</p> <p>P. 123 95 119 137 33 117 60</p> <p>Q. 71 13 77 159 145 67 21 39 116</p> <p>R. 180 10 82 72 41 47 170</p> <p>S. 96 176 194 86 157 111 5 92 146</p> <p>T. 37 191 9 149 15 93 50 43 174 29</p> <p>U. 114 147 42 154 76 18 134 36</p> <p>V. 24 162 168 138 12 115 127 88 150 14</p> |
|---|---|

JEFFREY NEUMAN is an editor at Simon & Schuster, where he edits sports books.

*A story.*

# Safe at Home

KARL LINDHOLM

**H**E'S A TOUGH KID, David. The kind of kid you want nine of. Dependable, works hard, listens. He's my catcher. Likes to get dirty. I told him once that a catcher is like a hockey goalie—nothing gets by—and now he's death on low pitches. Sometimes he practices on the other side of the backstop during BP. "Throw me some pitches in the dirt," he yells to a pitcher hanging around shooting the shit as pitchers always do when they should be working out. Half the time he doesn't even put the gear on. He's a beauty. He'll catch the whole batting practice if you give him extra raps at the end. Stays back there for an hour, all sweaty and grimy. Takes personal offense at every ball that gets by him, jumps on rollers in front of the plate, chases fouls, and fires bullets at anybody sleeping in the field—"Get in the game," he yells.

I think there are two kids in the league about as good as he is, but no one who plays as hard. I can't tell yet if he's got a future in the game or not. The bozos in the stands got him in the big leagues already, but I'd like it if he went to college. I played four years in the minors and know how tough it is. All the pitchers are good in pro ball.

Actually, I think David may be out of position. His mechanics are pretty good behind the plate, he's got a real gun, but he doesn't have the personality. He's so quiet. I have to get on him just to yell the out situation in a game. Last summer, I moved him to third for a couple of games. He was terrific, but he didn't like it. Not enough action, he said! I think he hates to play even an inning with a clean uniform. He came up to me in the middle of one game during this experiment and said, "Coach, I'm a catcher." That's all. I said, "You're right, get back there next inning." It helped that the kid behind the plate was a disaster. So now I have the world's quietest catcher.

Asking him to "handle" pitchers is a joke. He just puts down one or two fingers. Pitchers pitch. David catches—and throws out runners stealing, and blocks the plate, and grabs everything that comes his way.

So David doesn't have a great "feel" for the game, but oh my God can he hit! Swings hard at everything and hates to strike out. About the only time I have to get on him is when he flings the bat after he strikes out. I told him that Babe Ruth struck out over a thousand times and David said, "And I bet he was pissed off every time." He bats first for me because we only play seven inning games. He should bat third. Never walks. Never saw a pitch he didn't like. I sometimes make him take the first pitch because he's so anxious up there, and he glares at me every time it's a strike. I first got him three years ago when he was fifteen (he told me he was sixteen) and I turned him around, made him bat lefty, so now he's a switcher. I'm teaching him to bunt for a hit—and he's already got three this summer. He can really run. They tell me he plays football in school, and the coaches love him. Stupid game, football. It'll probably screw up his knees.

What I like to do with David is get him on base in the first inning and have him steal second and third on consecutive pitches. Nobody throws him out stealing at this level. It's a great way to start a game. He even loves to steal home. Once last year the batter, a righty, screwed up and didn't get out of the way when David was stealing home. You should have seen the collision. Even the ump hit the dirt. They called him out for bowling over the catcher (that's a rule). You can bet I protested. "This ain't

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KARL LINDHOLM is a professor and dean at Middlebury College in Vermont.

pool," I said to the ump. "He knocked his own guy down first!" We all laughed like hell on the bench.

We're in first. Last year we won the league in a great championship game. We beat a team we lost to twice with three runs in the last inning. David's double was the big shot. I like coaching these kids—and I think they're getting to like me. Some of the other teams have college kids coaching them who are their "pals" and buy them illegal beer—and our guys have this old fart. But I think they've seen me win some games for them. I try to explain everything I'm doing—why he's playing and you're not and all that. The days when you just pointed and gave orders, like when I played, are long gone. These kids will quit and go to the beach. I try to play everybody. The good players play more. Kids should learn that too. They've also learned that I'm not going to yell at them when they make a mistake. Also, if they don't hustle, they sit. Regardless.

I love the "inside game" of baseball. Maybe more than I should. I love teaching pick-off plays and delayed steals and stuff like that. Our guys can all bunt and we have hundreds of plays off the bunt. We always take the extra base. I'm trying to get David to take the wide turn at a base to draw the throw behind him so he can advance, but that's hard for him. Too subtle. Not many tricks in this kid.

We've already won a game this year on a "double suicide." The kid from second scored standing up! The bench went wild. I think I'm beginning to get some players because of the kind of ball we play. High school coaches call me up about kids on their teams who want to play summer ball. The other night we're playing the Aces, a good team, score's 1-1 in the sixth and they have the bases loaded with two outs. We run this beauty of a timed pickoff and nail the kid at second by a mile. We go on to win the game. There isn't another team in the league that would have tried that pickoff. We're having some fun.

David lives in New Jersey during the school year with his mother and a bunch of brothers and sisters. Dad's dead. He's been coming up here summers to live with his grandmother for a long time. That's the cure for the New Jersey blues—a summer in Maine. Great lady, his grandmother, Mrs. Lynch. Came to all the games, didn't know a thing about baseball. She once cheered after he lined into a double play and he had all he could do not to tell her to shut up. She always thanked me for being "so good to the boys." Kept me in line.

David has a lot of friends. He hangs out with three or four kids he's known for a long time. I don't think he's an "enigma" like some people think—just quiet. Again this summer, he's got a job in Morin's Brickyard. He works with a pretty tough crew and likes his job—"builds me up for sports," he says. His friends are all lifeguards and busboys. They all think he's crazy for working so hard, though you can tell they admire him, think he's John Henry. He is a throwback, this kid. When he's not working

or playing ball, you see him sometimes at the rec park playing hoops. He's a bricklayer there too. Mostly he rebounds. He's not a big kid—5'10", 5'11", maybe 170 pounds, but he'll fill out more. Looks good behind the plate. Athletic, like Fisk.

Basically he's a good kid. He sometimes gets into scrapes because he doesn't take any crap and because his friends are impressed with how tough he is and put him in difficult situations. When he's cleaned up, he always wears the same clothes—high Chuck Taylors (he's got three pairs, different colors), blue jeans, and an immaculate white t-shirt. Looks like the young Brando. And the girls—they ask *him* out. But he's tongue-tied and stammers one-word responses, and they giggle and flirt, and love it. He'll marry the first girl who takes her clothes off and tells him she loves him.

That's just about what happened to me. I met my wife in Utica, when I was in the New York-Penn League. She was home from college. She knocked me out, different from the other girls who came to the park. We had a great summer and got married the following winter. Make a great movie: "The Ball Player and the College Girl." Sad ending though. Inevitable. She left me seven years ago. Smartest thing she ever did. She married just about the first guy to come along after me. I think she did it to keep me from coming back begging for another chance all the time. Drunk. Drunk all the time in those days. She moved to Illinois, 1000 miles away. We have two kids, a girl sixteen and a boy thirteen. With her. I hardly ever see them they're so far away. I've got lousy visitation rights. I was such a jerk around the time we split.

I go out there once or twice a year and we try to do things together. They're polite and tell me about school and other things. I'm pretty much a stranger to them. They came up here to Maine last summer for a week but it didn't work. My apartment is small and there wasn't much for them to do. They don't like sports and I was a little embarrassed that I was so absorbed. I think their mother has them down on me. I don't blame her—I was lousy to her for a long time. They mostly wanted to get the visit over and get back to their friends in Illinois. I can't blame them. Still it stinks when you don't know your own kids. I write them regularly and get some nice letters back—but it feels a little like they're writing to sick Aunt Ruth "who appreciates their letters so much." An obligation. "He is your *real* father after all." I try now to go out there when there's some special occasion, a birthday or something. Maybe they'll come to college in the East.

I know they and their mother think my sports stuff is juvenile and pathetic. They don't know. Baseball saved my life. Baseball and AA. I haven't had a drink, even a beer, in four and a half years. The first year I went to an AA meeting just about every night. I still go about once a week. I have some good friends there. I started drinking at sixteen and I think I was an alcoholic by the time I was eighteen. What do you do in the minors after a game in

Winston-Salem? Have a few beers with the guys, talk about the game, and chase girls. The coaches and managers do the same thing—it's a tradition. Half the managers are alcoholics. I was the guy with the great capacity. Drank all night, never got drunk. I drove the guys home who were lucky enough to throw up or pass out. I just kept upping my tolerance levels. I was drunk for fifteen years. And screwed up everything that was ever important to me. 'Til now.

David's grandmother died this summer. She had a stroke. It's been hard for everybody. That's how I got him. David lives with me now, believe it or not. The Odd Couple, Mutt 'n' Jeff, you name it. We're only a couple of weeks into it and it's going all right.

It went like this. We had this game in Biddeford about twenty miles away and we're all waiting in our cars to go down there. David's late. Absolutely uncharacteristic. But I've got a five minute rule, so five after five we hit the road. David shows up at gametime, an hour later. "Sorry I'm late," he says. "We'll talk about it after the game," I say. Hardass, right? You can tell he never sat out a game in his life. He was going nuts. He chased foul balls, warmed up pitchers, played batboy, even coached some first though he could hardly say "get back!" when the pitcher threw over. At the end of the game he walks up to me and says, "It won't happen again, Coach." I say, "What's the story," but he just loads the gear in my car and catches a ride with the O'Sullivans.

The next day O'Sullivan gives me a call at work and tells me that David's grandmother is very sick and in the hospital—and that's why David was late last night. I hang up and I'm really wild with myself and the kid. Why didn't I get him to tell me what the problem was? He's never late—I should have known something was up. I'm thinking "Who knows what happened yesterday, who knows what's going on inside the kid—and I bench him." I had plenty of chances to sit down with him or take him aside and ask him what was up. It's not like the game was life or death. On the other hand, I'm sore at him for not telling me. Who's he think I am, John McGraw? Finally, I can't stand it so I go talk to him at work. I know Morin pretty well so it's okay.

He comes toward me, he's all filthy and sweaty, looks like one of those WPA pictures.

"Your Grandma's sick, huh?" I say. "How bad?"

"Pretty bad, I think.

It turns out he was the one who found his grandmother, collapsed, when he came home from work at three. He had to call the ambulance, go to the hospital, call his mother in New Jersey, and all that stuff. Then he puts on his baseball stuff and hitches to Biddeford—and I sit him down! Getting him to tell me this is like playing "What's My Line."

"Why didn't you tell me?" I said.

"I didn't feel like talking about it."

"It's not fair to me," I said. "I like your Grandma. A lot.

You know that. Besides, I feel like a jerk for not letting you play."

"I shoulda told you," he said. "I'm sorry. But Joey deserved to play. I was late and he was there for pregame and everything. I know I'll play. I just wanted to be with you and the guys." Heavy. I felt like putting my arms around this smelly kid. We talk a little bit more. He tells me he's staying at the O'Sullivans. I make sure he promises to keep me informed. Then he says "Thanks for coming, Coach," and he reaches out and shakes my hand. He turns around, puts on his work gloves and walks back into the brickyard.

His grandmother dies about two weeks later. During the time she's sick we have three or four games. David plays well but everyone is feeling kind of sorry for him and you can tell he hates that. His mother's in town and David is trying to work, play ball, go to the hospital, and be with his mother who was pretty much a wreck. He was just quieter and fiercer than ever in those games. I liked his mother; we had a couple of good talks.

After one practice about the time of the funeral, David asked to speak to me. That was progress. "Can I live with you?" he asks straight out. I was surprised to say the least.

"What's wrong with the O'Sullivans?" I ask.

"I just don't like it there that much."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. All the fuss. It just seems like a big deal all the time."

He had only been there a short time so I said I'd think about it and talk to him after the next game. I figured the O'Sullivans' was a good place for David. They got all kinds of money. Big house. Five kids, mother at home, a real Father Knows Best scene. The son Joey plays outfield for us and backup catcher. I like the dad. He was good to me in my first summer with the team when there was a little stink about my past. I appreciated that.

I called him. I asked him how David was doing. He said he thought David seemed "uncomfortable." He said that David and Joey were doing pretty well but that David didn't seem very happy. Then I got right to the point and told him that David had asked to move in with me. "What's the story?" I asked him.

"You know David," he said. "He's a very private boy. He just doesn't like being the center of attention. My little girls think he's fabulous and pester him whenever he's around. This really may not be the best place for him. It gets pretty zooey around here. Three girls with friends. We like him and are happy to have him but we might drive him crazy."

So I told David he could live with me. But first we had to convince his mother that it was a good idea. I didn't have the greatest references. Would you let your seventeen-year-old stay for six weeks with his baseball coach in a three room apartment?

I took David and his mother to the Gaslight, a classy restaurant in the Old Port area. He sat there uncomfortably in his "formal" attire, a shirt with a collar. I hadn't



noticed particularly what a good looking woman his mother was. She had on a beautiful blue summer dress. Enough of that. I was nervous, didn't eat a thing. David ate everything in sight, ordered one of the most expensive meals on the menu. Thanks a lot. Before dessert, his mother looked at me and said, "Would you excuse us? David, let's go for a short walk." I nodded and they split. God, it seemed like they were gone forever. If I ever wanted a drink, it was then. I had about four cups of coffee instead.

When they came back she made this wonderful little speech. "David has made it very clear to me that he wants to live with you this summer. I appreciate your willingness to take him in with you. So I am entrusting my son to you for the rest of the summer." She went on and talked a bit about David and their life and how it had been hard and so on. She implied that his father had not been awfully good to David and her—and that they didn't have much money. I figured "alcohol" with the dad and that was hard for me. Déjà vu.

When she finished I made my speech. "Mrs. Preston," I said, "I like your son. He'll have a place to stay with me and some rules. But he is seventeen and pretty self-sufficient, so I won't watch him like a hawk. I'm not his father. Only his coach." I figured I might as well tell her everything. "I'll be honest with you. I'm an alcoholic. I ruined my life with alcohol and now I'm putting it back together. I haven't had a drink in years. I'm forty-two years old and I have very modest goals. I want to go to work every day clear-headed, and I want to win the Legion championship again."

David of course about died during this exchange. He looked at his lap, at the ceiling, played with his knife; drank all the water on the table. Two grownups talking about him was almost more than he could bear. When I finished talking, Mrs. Preston touched my arm and said, "I think he'll be fine with you." Emotional stuff. I then took them to my apartment which I had spent three days cleaning so that I hardly recognized it myself. I walked her back to her car and she gave me a little hug. When I came back upstairs David already had the ballgame on the tube and had found the potato chips. He told me later that he had let his mother know on their walk that there was no way he was going back to New Jersey for the summer. He would've slept in the brickyard if he had to. Still, I liked her speech. "I'm entrusting my son to you." Good line.

So here we are, the two of us. I like it. The nights we haven't had a game or practice we've gone down to watch the Maine Guides, the local AAA entry. I try to get David interested in situations: "Think they'll hit and run here?" "Think he'll bring in a new pitcher?" David is more into the physical parts of the game: watching the hitters, evaluating the catcher—how he releases the ball to second and so on. Last weekend, I told him to come in at midnight—and he came in at 10:30 on both nights. On Sunday he was looking over some books I have, mostly

biographies and military history, so I gave him a book on World War II I liked. He actually read it. Some of it anyway. I asked him about it and he said, "It's okay. I can see why you liked it. It's just like sports. All these generals and admirals trying to figure out ways to win."

At one of the Guides' games he told me that he had been talking to the Portland High football coach who had suggested that he stay in the area for his senior year and play football and be with his friends. He asked me what I thought. I told him to think about it some more—and to write his mother. Then he said, "I'd want to live here with you, you know. I checked it out. I'd need a legal guardian—and that'd be you. That's all there is to it."

That's David. You're talking about baseball and all of a sudden, when you're least prepared for it, he hits you with this serious stuff.

"Write your mother," I said, "and I'll think about it. I've got to see if I can stand you for just the summer. In another week we might be throwing things at each other."

Meanwhile we're playing some great baseball. Winning games and having fun. The other night we're hooked up in a beauty, 4-4 in the last inning, against South Portland, a good team. Kind of an obnoxious coach, so we like to beat them. They made a racket on the bench, pretty bush stuff. Anyway, David's up with two down, and hits a rope in the gap in right center—and he takes off. He's running the bases like Jackie Robinson, the fans are going wild, the two outfielders are sprinting to chase the ball down, and I'm windmilling my arms at third like a goddam maniac. He hits third going a hundred miles an hour just about as the throw reaches the relay man in short right. It's going to be close—the kid makes a good throw to the plate. The next batter yells "Hit it!" and David does this great slide away from the tag . . . SAFE! The kid never applied the tag, missed him by a foot. But there's the umpire doing his Ron Luciano double pump OUT sign. Unbelievable. I'm running in from third as fast as I can because David is right in the ump's face, screaming. I get between them and order David to the bench—he goes muttering and kicking dirt. Then this Ray Charles in blue says to me, "Don't say a word, Coach. The way I saw it he tagged him before his foot crossed the plate." So I say, "You're the only guy in the place that saw it that way," and walk back to the bench. David is strapping on the gear, still cursing under his breath and carrying on. "Take it easy," I say, "we'll get 'em next inning."

I can see David's jaw working behind the mask as South Portland bats in the top of the inning. He's really giving it to the ump. Finally, the ump calls time, takes off his mask and motion me over. "Coach," he says, "You get your kid to shut up or I'm going to sit him down." So I call David over, to the on-deck circle, put my arms on his shoulders, and look him right in the eye through his mask. "David," I say. "Were you out or safe on that home run?"

"He never tagged me. I was safe. You saw it. We got screwed."

"I guess you didn't hear me. Were you out or safe?"

"Safe."

"Well, what are we doing out here if you were safe? You should be taking a shower right now."

"The ump blew the call, Coach," he insisted.

"I know that, you know that, and everyone in the stands knows it too. The ump himself knows he blew it. But you were *not* safe, you were out. It's history. We've got to play the game." And I told him to go out there and apologize to the umpire and "get in the game." He walks up to the umpire, takes off his mask, tells him he's sorry, and

shakes his hand. I hear him say, "I know you're just doing your job."

We set them down, one-two-three, and get set to rattle some bats and go home with a "W." David comes over to me as I start out to the third base box and says, "I'm sorry, Coach. You're right. I got a bad temper and need to work on it. I don't help anybody ragging on the ump." Then he adds with a smile, "You know, I think he does know he missed it. He gave us the low pitch that whole inning."

God, I like this kid.

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## The Wisdom of Solomon

Back in the old days of baseball,  
To me it still seems like a dream,  
When you had to fight daily with someone  
In order to stay on the team,  
There was never a breath of a scandal—  
I can't help but think that the first  
Took place in a game played in Boston  
And umpired by little Tim Hurst.<sup>1</sup>

The pitcher rapped out a three-bagger  
And Keeler was given his base,  
McGraw ambled up to the platter,  
A sarcastic smile on his face—  
Bergen<sup>2</sup> was doing the catching  
And Nichols was out in the box—  
The Kid was an elegant pitcher,  
With all of the brains of a fox.

Hurst had gone back of the catcher  
So he'd get the play at the plate,  
He figured a hit to the infield  
And the play would be there sure as fate—  
McGraw swinging short on a wide one  
So that Keeler could go on the play  
Tried hard to bump into the umpire  
And otherwise get in the way.

Bergen thought he'd get Keeler,  
So shot one right square to the base,  
As Willie plowed up all the dirt that he could  
By sliding along on his face—  
And Bergen fell back on the umpire  
To keep him from seeing the play,  
So it made rather difficult calling  
When everyone got in the way.

But Timmie barked out his decision,  
Which certainly startled the crowd,  
And it showed quite a bit of fast thinking  
Before he would say it aloud.  
He simply barked out, "It's a foul"  
And prepared to go back to his task—

But he kicked McGraw's shins, sent them back  
To the bags, and gave Bergen a jolt with his mask.

1. The game is set in the mid-1890s.
2. Marty Bergen, Boston catcher

## Marblehead

Now I've often wondered how towns get their names,  
Just why they have names like they do.  
Is it their location, or what they produce,  
Or something they formerly grew?  
You can't kick on Pinehurst, the home of the pines—  
Nor Leadville, from whence came the lead—  
But I've made an effort to figure out why  
They'd call a town "Marblehead."

We all know that marble is very fine rock,  
It is stuff that has never been grown,  
It's scattered so wide that there is no place  
That can claim to produce it alone—  
It's worked up in blocks and is polished and shined  
To make up as stones for the dead,  
But still I can't figure a reason that folks  
Should call a town "Marblehead."

There's no head to marble nor has it a tail.  
I had guessed it was simply a name  
To signify something that came from the town  
And probably nearly the same  
As Redlands, where all of their trees are quite large  
And almost entirely red,  
But when I thought of names with no reason at all,  
I could just think "Marblehead."

I was talking one day with a friend of my youth,  
Who had traveled all over the earth—  
He knew all the towns and what they produced,  
As well as about what they're worth.  
When I spoke of this town, he turned 'round to me  
And slowly and quietly said,  
"These left-handed pitchers must come from some  
place,  
And it's probably 'Marblehead.'"

—DR. LUCIEN STARK

## STATISTICS

# Clutch Pitchers Do Exist

BOB KELLY

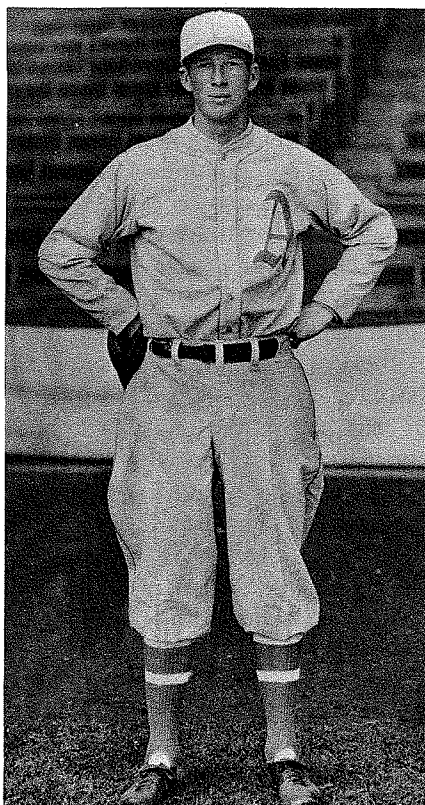
**I**N THE SPRING 1985 issue of *The National Pastime*, we were treated to an article by Pete Palmer titled "Do Clutch Pitchers Exist?" Supported by an impressive array of statistical formulations and charts, Palmer concluded that "although good pitchers allow fewer runs, clutch pitchers do not exist."

Given the enormous amount of research that supported Palmer's article, presumably his formulas and charts proved something. But they did not prove the conclusion he expressed.

Clutch pitching is a relative skill. One who has it will pitch better in pressure situations than one who does not have it. Since it is relative skill, and since the mastery of it is attempted by more than one participant, it *must* exist. Somebody is always better at a task than is somebody else.

In attempting to prove the obvious, Palmer simply demonstrated the inadequacies of a purely statistical approach to the measurement and appraisal of player behavior.

In this particular instance, the biggest problem with the Palmer approach is his definition of a clutch



Robert "Lefty" Grove

pitcher: "A clutch pitcher wins more games than expected . . . because he performs better in close games." It is a fatal error to confuse pitching class with games won.

It is not a pitcher's job to win games. Winning (or losing) is a consequence of a lot of behaviors including, but not limited to, the performance of the pitcher. The job of the pitcher is to keep the other team from scoring. If he succeeds in this to a greater extent than does his pitching opponent, he will win; if he doesn't, he will lose. A pitcher can win or lose with a poorly pitched game. In short, although good pitchers usually end up with a winning percentage over .500, there is no necessary structural relationship between pitching class and equivalent success.

Pitching class + good team + good luck = a relatively good winning record; pitching class + poor team + bad luck = a relatively poor winning record. Compare these two groups of pitchers:

### GOOD LUCK

PLAYER	YEAR	ERA	W	L	%
Feller	1938	4.08	17	11	.607
Roberts	1964	4.81	13	7	.650
Lemon	1950	3.84	23	11	.676
Gomez	1932	4.21	24	7	.774
Ruffing	1934	3.94	19	11	.633

### BAD LUCK

PLAYER	YEAR	ERA	W	L	%
Marichal	1967	2.76	14	10	.583
Gibson	1962	2.85	15	13	.536
Drysdale	1967	2.74	13	16	.448
Hubbell	1931	2.65	14	12	.538
Grove	1926	2.51	13	13	.500

Countless such examples could be displayed to demonstrate that factors other than talent substantially influence the winning percentage of a pitcher.

So we need a better definition, one that we can all understand and deal with easily. We don't want to get involved with standard deviations and statistical norms. An acceptable and useful definition for a clutch pitcher must flow out of a precise understanding of a pitcher's job.

It's the objective of a pitcher to keep

BOB KELLY's book, *Baseball's Best*, is scheduled to be published by McFarland in 1988.

### MODERN HALL OF FAME PITCHERS IN THE CLUTCH

	YRS	CGE*	W	L	%	ERA	BRPG*	CL*
Dean	5	170.0	120	65	649	3.05	10.9	28.0%
Drysdale	12	363.3	199	157	555	2.93	10.3	28.4
Feller	10	321.8	211	118	641	3.11	11.7	26.6
Ford	11	291.1	200	82	709	2.77	10.0	27.7
Gibson	12	360.3	217	136	615	2.77	10.4	26.6
Gomez	8	220.7	150	77	661	3.06	11.5	26.6
Grove	11	332.4	239	100	705	2.75	11.0	25.0
Hoyt	10	269.8	168	109	607	3.58	11.8	30.3
Hubbell	10	305.2	193	108	641	2.85	10.3	27.7
Koufax	5	161.0	115	40	742	2.15	8.6	25.0
Lemon	9	271.8	186	106	637	3.16	11.7	27.0
Lyons	10	281.3	155	150	508	3.76	12.4	30.3
Marichal	11	334.7	208	112	650	2.73	9.7	28.1
Roberts	14	436.8	253	200	559	3.53	10.3	34.3
Ruffing	14	379.3	218	175	555	3.78	12.2	31.0
Spahn	18	547.8	349	227	606	3.00	10.6	28.3
Wynn	15	412.3	252	194	565	3.43	11.8	29.1

\*CGE: Complete game equivalent

\*BRPG: Baserunners Per Game

\*CL: Clutch Percentage

the other team from scoring. To reach this objective, he has two problems: (1) the hitter: keep him off base, and (2) the baserunner: keep him from scoring.

The pitcher who solves these problems best has the lowest ERA.

But ERA is a quality indicator, not a clutch indicator. A clutch pitcher is simply a pitcher who is especially effective—relative to other pitchers—under pressure. But what is “pressure”?

I believe that what counts is how the pitcher deals with baserunners. Even the greatest pitchers can't keep the bases clear. But the degree to which they keep baserunners from scoring earned runs is a practical sign of clutch pitching ability. We can, therefore, derive a useful statistic to measure clutch pitching performance by dividing a pitcher's average baserunners per nine-inning game (BRPG) by his ERA.

If “crises” and “big game” situations could be defined in a universally acceptable way, and if the performance of all pitchers could be tabulated and monitored, maybe we could identify clutch pitchers more accurately. But that's wishful thinking. The ability to keep baserunners from scoring earned runs is easy to chart right now, and it's a good indication of a pitcher's ability in the clutch.

The box shows how this formula works when it's applied to Hall of Fame pitchers born after 1895. (For the sake of accuracy, I've used only seasons in which each of these men pitched the equivalent of 22 complete games—198 innings—because partial seasons tend to distort the performance records of players.) Koufax and Grove lead the pack, as you might have guessed they would based on observation and reputation.

Do clutch pitchers exist? Indeed they do, and we can measure their performance. Comparing any pitcher's clutch percentage (CL) against those on this list of greats will give you a good idea of his performance in the clutch.

### FOUR-DECADE PLAYERS RECONSIDERED

BACK IN 1939, my father stumped the experts on the *Information Please* radio show and won a set of the Encyclopedia and a case of ginger ale with this question: What is the date of the first day of the fourth decade of the 20th century?

The answer to this question has a bearing on a popular piece of sports trivia: Which players have competed in four decades? (A *Washington Post* article recently said that Rick Dempsey hoped to make it to 1990 and become the second major-leaguer to catch in four decades, along with Tim McCarver.)

What sportswriters have either forgotten or never knew in the first place is that a decade begins in a “one” year, because our calendar began with the year One. There was no Year Zero.

Consequently some players (including Ted Williams, and Mickey Vernon, who both quit at the end of the 1960 season) who are credited with playing four decades never made it. And, sad but true, there are a couple of others who deserve the credit and aren't receiving it (Elmer Valo for one).

Why can't we at least ADD the deserving players to the list of four-decade players?

—CONRAD HORN

### “LOOK, MA, NO HANDS!”

HOW CAN YOU GET an unassisted triple play when no fielder touches the ball? The play is continuous, no appeal is involved, and no one bats out of turn.

Though it sounds like a trivia question from a clubhouse lawyer, this stranger-than-fiction play actually happened a few years ago in a softball tournament.

With runners on first and second, the batter hit a high pop fly toward the shortstop, who had trouble finding the ball in the sun, and the umpire called, “Infield fly.” That's one out. The runner on first, seeing that the ball was going to drop, put her head down and ran, passing the runner on second. That's two out. The runner on second, hearing footsteps, advanced a few feet off the base, turned to remonstrate with her over-zealous teammate, and was hit by the ball as it descended.

That's one-two-three, and out. Credit all putouts to the unlucky (?) shortstop.

—JAMES B. CAROTHERS



## RECORDS

# Playing Managers

FRED STEIN

**J**OE CRONIN, a successful major league playing manager for fifteen years, offered the following views on playing and managing at the same time to Anthony J. Connor (in Connor's *Baseball for the Love of It*):

Looking back, I wish I'd been a player first and a manager later, but not both at once. I think player-managing is the toughest job in the world. You just can't win. There's a lot more to the job than just playing and running the ball game. You've got to plan, and handle the men—and every personality is different. You've got to cooperate with the office and cooperate with the press. And it's all in a goldfish bowl.

From the very first I had doubts about it and almost asked to step down after that first year. But I didn't. And looking back, I regret it.

Playing managers go back to the early days of the game. For example, in 1876 when the eight-team National League began operation, five of the clubs were managed by regular players. Pitcher Al Spalding managed Chicago; first basemen Harmon Dehlman and Charlie Gould

ran the St. Louis and Cincinnati clubs, respectively; shortstop Chick Fulmer bossed Louisville; and third baseman Bob Ferguson called the shots for Hartford. In 1894, for another example, six of the twelve National League teams were managed by active players.

As late as 1934, five of the eight National League clubs had player-skipper. The Cardinals were managed by second baseman Frankie Frisch, the Giants by first baseman Bill Terry, the Cubs by first baseman Charlie Grimm, the Pirates by third baseman Pie Traynor, and the Phillies by catcher Jimmie Wilson. When Carl Hubbell struck out five straight future Hall of Famers in the famous 1934 All-Star Game, he was heavily supported by playing managers Frisch, Terry, and Traynor behind him.

The number of playing managers declined shortly after and by the end of World War II, player-pilots had become scarce. Shortstop Don Kessinger of the 1979 Chicago White Sox was the last playing manager before Pete Rose took over the Cincinnati Reds, and despite Rose's considerable

success with his mixed bag of veterans and raw recruits, there are no other likely playing managers on the horizon.

Simple economics is the fundamental reason for the disappearance of the playing manager. Major league clubs did not become large corporate entities, truly "big businesses," until after World War II. Before that time, most clubs had a pressing need to reduce or eliminate salary costs wherever possible, otherwise the club owner could personally feel the financial bite. As a result, it was to the owner's direct benefit to pay one salary to have an individual both direct the team and play one of the positions rather than pay two salaries. Today, in an era in which it is economically feasible to gamble millions of dollars on the chance that a player might become a bona fide star, it makes no financial sense to economize by paying a player to do double duty as a player and a manager. It would be foolish to pay a \$700,000 a year performer an additional \$100,000 and burden him with the additional responsibility of managing.

At the 1983 SABR Annual Meeting John McCormack discussed other reasons given by baseball executives for their widely-held view that playing managers will not return to the major league scene. McCormack, who expressed disagreement with some of the reasons given, reported them as follows:

First, player problems are far more complicated today than they were when playing managers were prevalent. Second, dealing with the media takes much more time than in the past. Third, salaries paid players have risen far above those paid managers, making it more difficult for managers to maintain discipline. Fourth, if a player fails as a manager, the team may well lose the services of a star player. Although McCormack

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FRED STEIN is the co-author of *Giants Diary*, and also wrote *Under Coogan's Bluff*.



# **SOME OUTSTANDING PLAYER-MANAGER PENNANT-WINNING SEASONS**

PLAYER-MANAGER	TEAM	LEAGUE	YEAR	GAMES PLAYED	BATTING AVERAGE	RBI
Cap Anson	Chicago	Natl.	1880	86	.399	82
Cap Anson	Chicago	Natl.	1882	82	.362	83
Cap Anson	Chicago	Natl.	1886	125	.371	147
Fred Clarke	Pittsburgh	Natl.	1903	104	.351	70
Tris Speaker	Cleveland	Amer.	1920	150	.388	107
Rogers Hornsby	St. Louis	Natl.	1926	134	.317	93
Bill Terry	New York	Natl.	1933	123	.322	58
Joe Cronin	Washington	Amer.	1933	152	.309	118
Frank Frisch	St. Louis	Natl.	1934	140	.305	75
Mickey Cochrane	Detroit	Amer.	1934	129	.320	76
Lou Boudreau	Cleveland	Amer.	1948	152	.355	106

PITCHER-MANAGER	TEAM	LEAGUE	YEAR	WON	LOST	PERCENTAGE
Al Spalding	Chicago	Natl.	1876	47	13	.783
Clark Griffith	Chicago	Amer.	1901	24	7	.774

concedes the validity of some of these concerns, he concludes that on balance there is still room for a playing manager with the requisite intelligence, drive, maturity, leadership, and aggressiveness.

The legendary Adrian "Cap" Anson was the foremost playing manager of the pre-1900 period. The burly 200-pounder from Marshalltown, Iowa joined the Chicago White Stockings in 1876 and became an immediate success as a third baseman. He took over as manager in 1879, installed himself at first base, and improved the club's performance. He also proved that managing did not affect his performance on the field, raising his batting average from .341 in 1878 to a league-leading .396 in 1879. The durable Anson hit over .300 in sixteen of the following eighteen seasons while managing Chicago to five pennants and four second place finishes.

Anson was a perfect field leader for his time in at least one respect—he was the largest man on his club and he was not above enforcing player rules with his fists. A teetotaler himself, Anson was credited with instituting the practice of having his players report well before the season to "dry out." Cap did have at least one weakness as a manager, though. He played cards with his players for big stakes. There was the time Anson and

his third baseman, Ned Williamson, almost got into a violent brawl over a poker game. It seems that Anson, with a hand of four jacks, lost a sizeable pot to Williamson, who held four kings. Convinced the game was not on the-up-and-up, Anson refused to pay. The enraged Williamson responded by grabbing a metal water pitcher and preparing to split Anson's skull down the middle. Fortunately the would-be combatants were pulled apart before any blows were struck. Later Williamson gave a vintage, if ungrammatical, critique of player-manager Anson, grumping, "Cap's all right as a player but he don't count for cornstalks as a man."

Most of the playing managers have been infielders or catchers, presumably because of their closer involvement in the game action. But there have been outfielders who managed successfully. Pittsburgh leftfielder Fred Clarke had winning seasons in all twelve of the campaigns in which he ran the Pirates during the 1900-1911 period. Clarke reached the peak of his dual effectiveness from 1901 to 1903, when he won successive pennants while hitting .324, .321, and .351. Center Fielder Jones was a playing manager with the Chicago White Sox from 1904 to 1908, and is remembered best for winning the 1906 flag with his "hitless wonders." He fit right in, with a meager .230.

Hall of Famers Ty Cobb, Tris Speaker, and Mel Ott were other great players who managed from the outfield. Cobb was only fairly successful as a playing manager, with four first division teams in six seasons but without a pennant win. The inimitable Georgia Peach, well along in his playing career when he managed the Detroit Tigers from 1921 through 1926, did not falter as a hitter despite his managerial responsibilities, hitting .389, .401, .340, .338, .378, and .339 during the six year period.

Speaker had a successful managerial career, finishing in the first division in four of six full years, during which he was also one of the American League's top stars. Spoke had his best year as a playing manager in 1920 when his Cleveland Indians won the World Championship, and he led his club in hitting with a sparkling .388 average.

Mel Ott had an unhappy career as a playing manager. He replaced Bill Terry as Giants manager five days before Pearl Harbor and moved his nondescript club up to a surprise third place finish, largely through his own league-leading home run hitting. But that was Ott's high point as playing manager and he played out his active career through World War II, unable to carry the club's offense as he had done for so many years.

Several catchers were effective playing managers. Mickey Cochrane was the most successful, directing the Detroit Tigers to a pennant in 1934 and the World Championship in 1935, as he hit .320 and .319. Cochrane represented a classic case of a talented, inspirational leader who was able to spark his club as an active player but who seemed to lose the touch when he managed from the bench. "Black Mike" became a part-time player in 1936 and the Tigers slipped to second place behind the powerful Yankees. Cochrane came back as a fulltime player in 1937 and had his team well up in the race until he was beamed seriously. Mickey's playing season and career ended abruptly and the rudderless Tigers

finished behind the Yankees again.

Gabby Hartnett, the great Cubs catcher, replaced manager Charlie Grimm in midseason of 1938 with the Chicago Cubs in third place. Tomato-faced Gabby pulled his surging club into a late-season, first place finish with his dramatic "homer in the gloaming," a two-out-in-the-ninth drive at dark Wrigley Field off Pittsburgh Pirate reliever Mace Brown.

Part-time catcher Bill Carrigan managed the Boston Red Sox from 1913 through 1916, finishing second in 1914 and winning pennants the following two seasons. Connie Mack, a journeyman catcher from 1886-1896, had a lackluster career as a playing manager, although he made up for it after retiring to the bench. Mack managed Pittsburgh from 1894 to 1896, finishing in the second division each year while hitting for an overall .200 batting average over the three years.

The most successful first baseman-managers were Anson, Terry, Grimm, Frank Chance, and Jake Stahl. Chance was nicknamed "The Peerless Leader" for good reason. The big Californian took over as manager in mid-season of 1905, his eighth year with the Cubs, and he directed the club to four pennants and two second place finishes over the next six seasons. He was the regular first baseman the first four seasons and sporadically after that. Not a powerful, long-ball hitter, Chance gained most of his playing fame for his participation in the Tinker-to-Evers-to-Chance double play combination.

Chance, or "Husk" as he often was called, was one of the toughest competitors of his time and a man who could not help bringing the game's pressures home with him. On one occasion the recently married Chance came home after the Cubs had lost a heartbreaker. His bride met him at the door with a cheery, "Hello, dear, I'm sorry you lost today but at least you've got me." The inconsolable Chance snapped back at her, "Yeah, and I'd have traded you

for a base hit when we needed it in the ninth inning." Later in the season he returned home after another tough loss. His wife said to him brightly, "Hello, honey, how did things go today?" The smoldering Chance glowered at her and responded angrily and without explanation, "Look, you do the cooking and I'll do the managing." But, sour-natured or not, Chance ranks as one of the best of the playing managers.

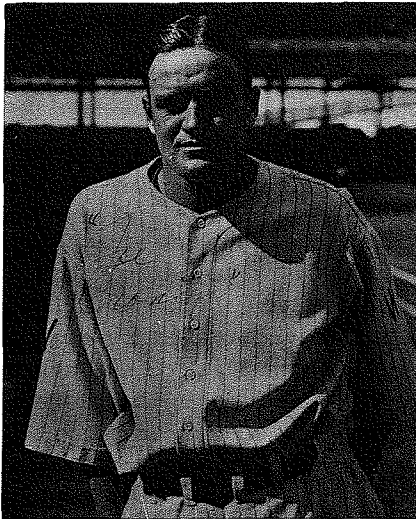
Giants first baseman Bill Terry was a fine player, as reflected by his .341 lifetime batting average and his heralded fielding artistry. He was also a talented on-the-field strategist. He took over a disorganized, last place team from John McGraw in June 1932, and maneuvered the club into

an unexpected World Championship in 1933, helped considerably by his own powerful hitting. The Giants barely missed winning pennants in 1934 and 1935 as Terry led his club in batting with robust .354 and .341 averages.

Terry was involved in an amusing incident that indicated that playing managers were given special consideration when challenging an umpire's decision. The 1933 Giants met the Cardinals in an important, late-season game at the Polo Grounds and, with the Giants leading in a late inning, Card second baseman-manager Frankie Frisch sent a high-bouncing "Baltimore Chop" to Terry at first. Bill grabbed the ball and dashed to the bag, arriving there just

#### MAJOR LEAGUE PENNANT WINNERS MANAGED BY ACTIVE PLAYERS

TEAM	LEAGUE	YEAR	MANAGER	POSITION
Chicago	Natl.	1876	Al Spalding	Pitcher
Providence	Natl.	1879	George Wright	Shortstop
Chicago	Natl.	1880	Cap Anson	First base
Chicago	Natl.	1881	Cap Anson	First base
Chicago	Natl.	1882	Cap Anson	First base
Boston	Natl.	1883	John Morrill	First base
Chicago	Natl.	1885	Cap Anson	First base
Chicago	Natl.	1886	Cap Anson	First base
Pittsburgh	Natl.	1901	Fred Clarke	Left field
Chicago	Amer.	1901	Clark Griffith	Pitcher
Pittsburgh	Natl.	1902	Fred Clarke	Left field
Pittsburgh	Natl.	1903	Fred Clarke	Left field
Boston	Amer.	1903	Jimmy Collins	Third base
Chicago	Natl.	1906	Frank Chance	First base
Chicago	Amer.	1906	Fielder Jones	Center field
Chicago	Natl.	1907	Frank Chance	First base
Chicago	Natl.	1908	Frank Chance	First base
Pittsburgh	Natl.	1909	Fred Clarke	Left field
Chicago	Natl.	1910	Frank Chance	First base
Boston	Amer.	1912	Jake Stahl	First base
Boston	Amer.	1915	Bill Carrigan	Catcher
Boston	Amer.	1916	Bill Carrigan	Catcher
Cleveland	Amer.	1920	Tris Speaker	Center field
Washington	Amer.	1924	Bucky Harris	Second base
Washington	Amer.	1925	Bucky Harris	Second base
St. Louis	Natl.	1926	Rogers Hornsby	Second base
Chicago	Natl.	1932	Charlie Grimm	First base
New York	Natl.	1933	Bill Terry	First base
Washington	Amer.	1933	Joe Cronin	Shortstop
St. Louis	Natl.	1934	Frank Frisch	Second base
Detroit	Amer.	1934	Mickey Cochrane	Catcher
Detroit	Amer.	1935	Mickey Cochrane	Catcher
Chicago	Natl.	1938	Gabby Hartnett	Catcher
Cleveland	Amer.	1948	Lou Boudreau	Shortstop



Joe Cronin

as Frisch dove in. Umpire Ted McGrew motioned Frisch safe and the usually calm Terry blew his top.

Terry charged McGrew and was emphatically ejected with the traditional jerk of the arbiter's arm. Memphis Bill responded by flinging his cap and glove to the ground and kicking them several feet. The fans contributed to the frenzied protest by throwing pop bottles onto the field. When order finally was restored, McGrew surprisingly ordered peacemakers Mel Ott and Giant coach Tom Clarke off the field but permitted Terry to remain in the game. After the game New York writer Garry Schumacher said to Ott, "Mel, what in the world went on out there?" Ott drawled, "Garry, you're not going to believe this. McGrew told Terry, 'I can't take that, you're out of here.' Bill shouted back, 'You can't throw me out. I'm the only first baseman we've got and besides that I'm the manager.' So, I'll be darned if McGrew didn't turn on me and Clarke, who were only trying to calm Bill down, and shout, 'O.K., Terry stays but you guys have to go.'"

Chicago Cubs first baseman Charlie Grimm, just as happy-go-lucky as Terry was all business, led the Cubs to a pennant in 1932 after replacing Rogers Hornsby in August of that year. Well past his playing prime, Jolly Cholly still hit .307 and batted in 80 runs as he moved his club to the

flag. Grimm completed his playing career in 1933 and 1934 as his club finished in third place both years.

Part-time Boston Red Sox first baseman Jake Stahl hit .301 in 1912 and managed the Sox to the World Championship. George Sisler, who ranks with Terry as a hitter and fielding first baseman, managed the St. Louis Browns in 1924, 1925 and 1926. His most successful year came in 1925 when he hit .345 with 224 hits as his Browns finished in third place.

First baseman Hal Chase managed the 1911 Yankees to a sixth place finish while he hit .315. "Prince Hal," one of the more disreputable figures the game has produced, had the nasty habit of bad-mouthing his players publicly. His teammates disliked him intensely. It was rumored that they tried to make Chase look bad, deliberately making off-line throws to first base. Significantly, the brilliant-fielding Chase led all American League first basemen in errors in 1911.

Frankie Frisch, Rogers Hornsby, and Bucky Harris were the most effective of the second basemen who doubled as managers. The scrappy Frisch was the playing skipper of the St. Louis Cardinals from 1933 through 1937. He took over the fifth place Cards in midseason of 1933 and did not improve their performance although he hit .303 as the regular second baseman. The colorful "Gas House Gang" came to full flower in 1934, taking the World Championship as Dizzy Dean, Pepper Martin, Joe Medwick, et al. nearly drove Frisch to distraction with their antics both on and off the field. Even with these headaches, Frisch hit .305 in his last full playing season.

The Cardinals had a promising young catcher named Sam Narron in training camp at St. Petersburg the following Spring. Narron had never been in a training camp before and, at loose ends, he asked Frisch what to do. Frisch told him, "Pick out a regular and copy everything he does. When he takes fielding practice, you do the same. After he hits, follow him

in the batting drill." A few days later playing manager Frisch, having worn himself out in practice, leaned against the batting cage watching his charges hit. He noticed Narron also was leaning against the other corner of the cage watching the hitters.

"Hey," snapped the irritated Frisch, "Why aren't you hustling? I thought I told you to pick out a regular player and do what he does."

"I did, Mr. Frisch, I picked out a player like you said."

"And who did you pick?"

Narron said, "I picked you, Mr. Frisch."

A speedster in his youth, Frisch played his last major league game in 1937. He was on second base with speedy Terry Moore at first when the next hitter smoked a drive to right field. The aging Frisch started for third and Moore took off from first. The erstwhile Fordham Flash creaked past third, practically feeling Moore's hot breath on his back. The throw came in and Frisch slid home safely, nipping a corner of the plate, followed closely by Moore who slid into another corner of the plate. Frisch climbed slowly to his feet and dusted himself off, then walked slowly to the Cards' bench shaking his head. As he settled on the bench he proclaimed, "When they start climbing up the back of the old Flash, it's time to quit. I'll never play again." And he never did.

Rogers Hornsby succeeded Cardinals' Manager Branch Rickey early in the 1925 season when the Rajah was only 29 and still in his playing prime. Hornsby inherited a last place club and brought it up to fourth place, in large part through his own efforts—a .403 average, 39 home runs, and 143 runs batted in. Hornsby managed the 1926 Cardinals to the World Championship although his average dipped to .317. He had the adoring St. Louis fans eating out of his hand but he had a falling out with Cardinals owner Sam Breadon over his salary. (Hornsby claimed that he had received no additional salary for managing the Cards in 1926).

Breadon, never one to raise a salary if a trade could be negotiated, traded his player-manager to the Giants for Frisch. Returned to player status exclusively, Hornsby hit .361 for the 1927 Giants but he was traded to the Boston Braves after alienating the Giants' front office. He took over as manager of the pitiful Braves in 1928, hitting a league-leading .387, but was unable to improve the seventh place club he inherited. Traded to the Chicago Cubs, Hornsby played part-time and managed the club to third place in 1931.

Bucky Harris, a playing manager with the Washington Senators from 1924 through 1928, was an immediate success, as he won pennants in his first two seasons while hitting .268 and .287 and fielding competently. But the performance of Harris and his players slipped after that and Harris moved to Detroit in 1929, his playing career over.

Joe Cronin and Lou Boudreau were the foremost shortstop-managers. Cronin became manager of the Senators in 1933, his eighth year as a player. Appointed by his future wife's uncle, Senators owner Clark Griffith, Cronin won the pennant in his first season as a pilot, and hit .309 with 118 RBIs to lead the club's offense. The square-jawed San Francisco native was sold to the Red Sox for a record-breaking \$250,000 after the 1934 season and continued as player-manager through the World War II years. His Red Sox teams finished second four times during the period but did not win a pennant until 1946, the year after Cronin's retirement as an active player.

Cronin had the instincts of a showman and he used his position as playing manager to give the fans a special kick out of the game. Baseball writer Ed Linn in an article on Cronin, "The Irishman Who Made His Own Luck," wrote:

His [Cronin's] productions starred himself. . . after he had become a pinch-hitter deluxe late in his career. Joe, who dearly loved the clutch, would wait for a key spot late in the game. Time would be called.

The batter would trudge back to the dugout. There would follow perhaps 30 seconds of almost total inactivity on the field and a thickening of tension in the stands. Nobody doubted that Cronin would be coming up, of course, and that a great roar would arise as, at last, he came hulking up out of the dugout, swinging half-a-dozen bats which he would strew behind him as he strode to the plate.

Cronin's hitting feats justified his histrionics. He was a renowned clutch-hitter whose best-remembered feat came on June 17, 1943, when he belted pinch hit home runs in both games of a double-header, two of five pinch homers he hit that year.

Shortstop Lou Boudreau took over as the Cleveland Indians' playing manager in December 1941. The University of Illinois product had been a regular Indians shortstop for only two full seasons and at 24 he was the second-youngest manager in American League history. Boudreau was the regular shortstop for all of the period (1942-1950) that he managed the Indians. A .295 career hitter, he led the league in 1944 with a .327 mark. Boudreau, unlike Cronin, was a superb shortstop, who compensated for his slowness of foot by his quick reflexes and skill at positioning himself for hitters. His best year came in 1948 when he led Cleveland to a World Championship and had a .355 average. Lou topped off his spectacular season with a brilliant four-for-four performance at the plate as the Indians defeated the Red Sox in a one-game playoff to decide the pennant.

Leo Durocher, a well-traveled shortstop with an excellent glove but weak bat, was traded by the Cardinals to the Brooklyn Dodgers before the 1938 season, and Lippy Leo took over as Dodgers manager in 1939. He was the regular shortstop, his .219 average notwithstanding, when he led his club to its first finish in the first division since 1932. Actually, Leo was only keeping the position warm for young Pee Wee Reese, who joined the Dodgers in 1940. Leo played a handful of games in 1941 and during



*Bucky Harris and Lou Boudreau*

the World War II years. Durocher's most memorable appearance as a playing manager came in 1940 when he inserted himself as a pinch hitter in a bases-loaded, ninth inning situation against Chicago and squeezed in the winning run.

Vest-pocket-sized shortstop Walter "Rabbit" Maranville, renowned for his basket catch and his drinking exploits, was appointed manager of the last-place Cubs on July 7, 1925. The well-oiled Rabbit celebrated the occasion by waking up his sleeping players in the Pullman berths, pouring ice water on them and shouting at the top of his lungs, "There will be no sleeping on this train under Maranville management." Not surprisingly, the Maranville regime ended only 53 games after it started, with the Cubs still mired in last place. Hall of Famer Maranville's reign as one of the league's best-fielding shortstops lasted for another ten years.

Third basemen have not been particularly successful playing managers. Hall of Famer Jimmy Collins, who played for and managed the Boston Red Sox from 1901 to 1906, had the best record, winning pennants in 1903 and 1904 while hitting .296 and .271 as the Sox' regular third baseman. The great John McGraw, a .334 lifetime hitter, was no ball of fire as a playing manager, finishing fourth with the depleted Baltimore Orioles

of the National League in 1899 and fifth with Baltimore's American League entry in 1901. The Little Napoleon's playing days were virtually over when he took over as manager of the Giants in July 1902.

Third baseman Jimmy Dykes took over as White Sox manager during the 1934 season, and moved his last-place club up to fifth place as he hit .288. The "Little Round Man" had his best season as a playing manager in 1936, when the Sox finished third and Jimmy hit .267 in his last season as a regular. Hall of Famer "Pie" Traynor's Pittsburgh Pirates finished fifth in 1934, Pie's first year as manager, as he hit .309. But Traynor was unable to lift the Pirates above fourth place in the next two years, after which the third sacker ended his great playing career.

Pitcher-managers have been scarce indeed. Clark Griffith managed and pitched in the American League from 1901 to 1906 (he had only one pitching decision after that) and had his best season in 1901 with the Chicago American League club when he had a 24-7 record as his team won the pennant. Moving to the brand-new New York Highlanders in 1903, the "Old Fox" had a 14-10 log as his team finished in fourth place. Griffith's pitching slipped after that, although his club had a second place finish in 1904. Several other pitchers managed while still active (among them Christy Mathewson, Freddie Fitzsimmons, and Fred Hutchinson), but pitching and managing have proved to be essentially incompatible field activities.

Playing managers naturally have been closer in age to their players than have bench managers, and this has presented a potential personal relationship problem, particularly when playing managers have been promoted from within the ranks. A case in point was outfielder Billy Southworth, who was elevated to managing the Cardinals in 1929. The 36-year-old Southworth, who attempted to establish his authority by treating his players tyrannically,

lasted only half of the season before being deposed. Southworth went back to the minors as a manager, learned to handle his players with fairness and understanding, and returned years later to become a successful major league manager. By comparison, playing managers Pie Traynor and Mel Ott were often considered "too nice" to be successful managers. (Leo Durocher was referring to playing manager Ott and his last-place Giants when the Lippy One made his "Nice guys finish last" crack in 1946.)

Just as in any other boss-employee relationship, boosting a player to a managerial role changed his relationships with his teammates. Bill Terry held a press conference immediately after taking over as Giants manager. Just before the conference broke up, Terry asked the writers, "By the way, have any of you fellows seen my roommate, [pitcher] Hal Schumacher? As soon as he heard about my being the new manager, he took off out of our room as though he was scared to death of me and I haven't seen him since." On the other hand, Giants third baseman Freddie Lindstrom received the news of Terry's promotion with bitter disappointment because he felt that he had been promised the job by the departing John McGraw. As a result, Terry had little alternative but to trade his old friend after the season came to a close.

Jimmy Dykes refused to take over as White Sox manager until Owner J. Louis Comiskey convinced him that Chicago manager Lew Fonseca was being fired whether or not Dykes took the job. But Comiskey was unable to contact Fonseca to tell him of his dismissal before the next day's game.

#### ANSWER FOR P. 75

"... A knuckleball ... is not unlike the game of baseball itself: slow, static, and delivered with deft precision. ... Also like the game, (it) is unpredictable, quick to change, and dramatic when it does. ... It is also a joy to watch—if you don't have a bat in your hand." W[ILLIAM] F. ALLMAN, *Newton at the Bat*.

Before the game it became apparent to Dykes that something had gone awry and that Fonseca had not been told the news. So manager Dykes, keenly aware of his teammates' as well as Fonseca's sensibilities, went out and played third base for ex-manager Fonseca without saying a word until Comiskey met with Fonseca after the game. Jimmy gained added respect from his new charges for this tactful handling of a ticklish situation.

A fundamental problem of playing managers was to maintain their field performance despite the pressures of managing. To followers of the New York Giants in the 1940s, it was obvious that Mel Ott found his playing manager role extremely stressful. The little outfielder always had a nervous habit of tapping the grass in right field with his toe as he stood in the outfield. But by midseason of his first year as manager, the harassed Ott had reduced a large patch of Polo Grounds right field sod to dirt with his nervous foot tamping.

Also Ott admitted that he often became so engrossed in planning on-the-field strategy that he almost forgot that he was an active game participant. He told writers after a tough game with the Dodgers, "Remember that fly ball that Pete Reiser hit out to me in the seventh inning? Well, I was so busy thinking who I should send up to pinch hit the next inning that I nearly forgot where I was. I actually froze for a second when Pete hit the ball. Then, my reflexes took over and I moved over to make the catch."

Frank Robinson was one of the last of the playing managers before Rose, hitting .237 as Cleveland Indians' designated hitter in 1975. No one ever accused Robby of failing to pay close attention to the game, but other DH's have complained of "not feeling part of the game" and therefore having trouble maintaining their concentration. So perhaps there may be a solution to the problem of maintaining mental alertness of such players—just make them playing managers!