

# THE National Pastime

A REVIEW OF BASEBALL HISTORY

**H**arvey Haddix sadly didn't live to celebrate the 35th anniversary of his great game, but we remember it here with Bill Perry's cover art and Steve Stout's lead article. In this year of the resurgent Indians and the opening of Jacobs Field, we've also got a cluster of Cleveland-related pieces. And four authors have contributed articles that focus on baseball during World War II.

A big part of my job is mixing each issue to make sure we have a good mix of eras, topics, teams, personalities, perspectives, and contributors old and new.

Submissions are way up, and this is the largest *National Pastime* we've ever published. The Board has voted to allow even larger issues in the future, if material warrants it. It's up to you to make this happen.

—M.A.

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# “The Greatest Game Ever Pitched”

*Steve Stout*

**T**he 1994 baseball season marks the 35th anniversary of Harvey Haddix’s unprecedented 12-inning perfect game, and with each passing year, additional information about that rainy night in Milwaukee seems to trickle in.

Haddix retired the first 36 batters in a row the evening of May 26, 1959, only to lose the game, 1-0, in the 13th inning.

Adding to the luster of that incomparable achievement, it has recently been revealed the Braves were stealing signs from Pirates’ catcher Smoky Burgess the whole night.

(More on that aspect of the game later.)

To establish the magnitude of Haddix’s feat, consider that the powerful Braves were coming off consecutive World Series appearances, and they would end the ’59 campaign just behind the Los Angeles Dodgers in the National League pennant race.

When you take a close look at the Braves’ potent starting lineup on May 26, 1959, you can begin to understand why Haddix’s feat is called the “greatest game ever pitched.”

Among the Milwaukee starters that evening were a pair of Hall of Famers, Hank Aaron and Eddie Mathews, and the non-Hall of Famers were of All-Star quality—Johnny Logan, Wes Covington, Del Crandall, Andy Pafko and Joe Adcock, who eventually broke the no-hit string with a 13th-inning, game-winning homer that was later ruled a double.

Haddix and his Pirates teammates actually began

that fateful day in Pittsburgh, rising at 6 AM to fly to Milwaukee.

Fighting a cold for over a week, Haddix took a nap in his Milwaukee hotel room in the afternoon and had his traditional steak dinner before heading out to the ballpark.

During the pre-game clubhouse meeting, Haddix and Burgess mapped out plans on how to stifle Milwaukee’s fierce attack.

“When we had gone over the plan a few times—pitch this guy high-and-tight, this one low-and-away and so on—we felt pretty confident,” said Haddix during an interview shortly before his January 8, 1994 death. “Our third baseman, Don Hoak, heard how we were planning to pitch the hitters that night, and Hoakie said, ‘Harv, if you pitch ‘em like that, you’ll throw a no-hitter.’ That broke up the meeting, and we never finished it.”

(Ironically, it was Hoak’s throwing error after cleanly fielding a Felix Mantilla grounder in the 13th inning that ended the perfect game.)

A glance at Pittsburgh Manager Danny Murtaugh’s lineup card that night gave Haddix a shock—standouts Roberto Clemente and Dick Groat were not in the Pirates’ starting nine.

In their place, Haddix found Roman Mejias and Dick Schofield.

“In those days, guys like Clemente and Groat usually played every day—none of this day off after a night game stuff,” said Haddix. “To this day, I still don’t know why Clemente and Groat were out of the lineup. They weren’t hurt, and they were probably the two best hitters on the team. Schofield had been hitting well up to

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*Steve Stout is Sports Editor of the Urbana (Ohio) Daily Citizen, and was a close friend of Harvey Haddix’s during the final years of the pitcher’s life.*



*The opposition—the very tough Lew Burdette.*

that point (.292), so maybe Murtaugh had him in because he was hot. But with Clemente, I have no idea why he was missing.

"When you consider we had 12 hits and couldn't score a run, Groat and Clemente might have made the difference," Haddix added. "Mejias made a base-running mistake during the game that probably cost us the deciding run, but what can you do? Like everybody else, he was trying his best."

One person who had a bird's eye view of Haddix's monumental feat was Braves' pitcher Bob Buhl, who took an "active" role in the game despite the fact that Lew Burdette was the starting pitcher that night.

Buhl contributed to the cause from the bullpen, where he was involved in the theft of Burgess' signs.

"Smoky couldn't bend over very far when he caught, so with binoculars, you could pick up every sign," said

Buhl during an exclusive interview in the spring of 1993, in which he publicly admitted the sign-stealing for the first time. "Back in those days, you stole signs all the time. We'd get them from the bullpen, and a lot of the time, our third-base coach could steal them because catchers like Ed Bailey didn't hide them very well.

"We used a towel system in the bullpen to signal the hitters. Most of our guys took the signs, others thought it would foul them up if they knew what was coming.

"You have to understand that Harvey had such marvelous movement and changes of speed that night that it didn't matter if the hitter knew what was coming or not. If we signaled a fastball, Harvey was often taking a little off the fastball so that it didn't look like one at all."

Haddix said he was amazed to discover 30 years after the fact that the Braves had been stealing his signs.

"I was told that when the guy sitting in the bullpen had the towel on his shoulder, it was a fastball. And the guy would move the towel around if it was a breaking ball," he said. "They even had a jacket laying on the fence in front of the bullpen. They'd never let you do that today.

"The real reason I pitched the perfect game, besides plain old good fortune, was that I had exceptional control and I was ahead of every hitter but one. The ball that Adcock hit out of the park was a mistake pitch. I got it up where I didn't want it to be, and he belted it, like he was supposed to do.

"About them stealing the signs, we all knew that a lot of teams stole signs—it was something teams did to win, because they wanted it so bad. But I really never had any idea the Braves were stealing signs that night. But doesn't that just go to show how the game is so strange and so great at the same time?"

One Braves' slugger who said he didn't take part in the sign-stealing was Adcock, a player who belted 336 homers during a 17-year career.

"I don't know anything about anybody stealing signs that night," said Adcock with a chuckle. "Of course, things like that have been happening since baseball was invented. But I never wanted to know what was coming. It would have thrown me off and made me think too much. But then again, there were obviously a lot of guys who wanted to know."

Not only was Haddix facing an All-Star batting order that night, Burdette was also known as one of the best hitting pitchers in the game.

"Burdette was the last man scheduled up in the ninth

NBL



inning against me, and I knew he'd bat for himself," said Haddix. "Why would (Manager) Fred Haney want to bring in a pinch-hitter for a pitcher who could hit like Lew? I was determined he wasn't going to get a hit off me. He choked way up on that bat, and he thought he was going to get himself a base hit."

Obviously, he didn't.

"I wanted to get a hit in the ninth, but he struck me out...Harvey was just amazing that night," said Burdette, who was the winning pitcher despite giving up 12 hits. "I called him in the visitors clubhouse after the game and told him he shouldn't have bunched his hits, which I thought was funny because he'd only given up that one hit to Adcock. Obviously, I had no right to win that game. But that's baseball for you."

Milwaukee's Warren Spahn, perhaps the greatest lefthanded pitcher of all time, watched in awe from the dugout as Haddix silenced the Braves' bats.

"I was embarrassed for all lefthanded pitchers because he made it look so damn easy," said Spahn. "I don't think he had to throw a whole lot of pitches that night, he threw strikes and we kept popping up and beating it into the ground. It was like, when is this going to end?"

"When the weird things happened in the 13th inning and we all of a sudden had won, our ballclub felt very, very lucky that we came out on top.

"You start realizing after the fact that we weren't

entitled to win that ballgame, but we did. I'll never forget Burdette after the game asking for a raise because the greatest pitched game in baseball history wasn't good enough to beat him."

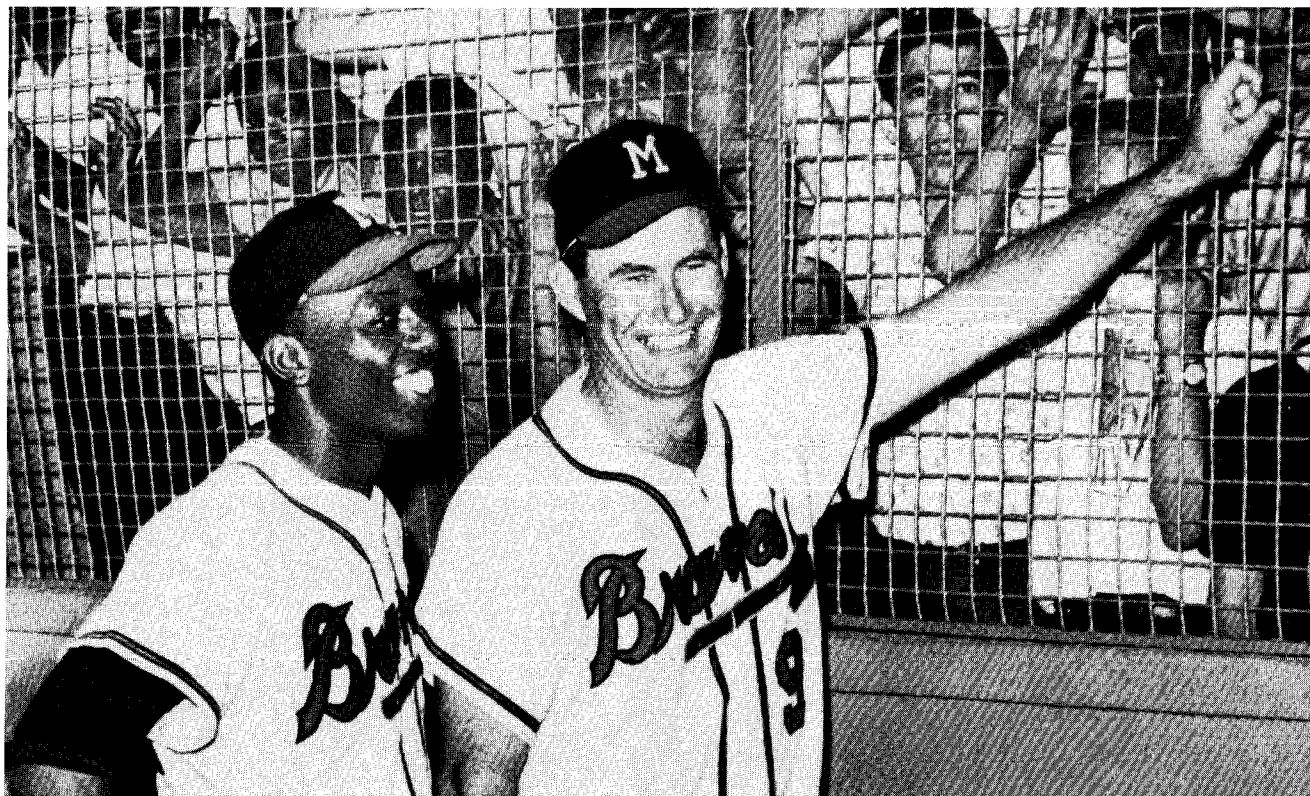
Following the game, telegrams and letters poured in to Haddix from around the country.

Notes of sympathy came from Commissioner Ford Frick, National League President Warren Giles, broadcaster Harry Caray, long-time major-league Manager Jimmy Dykes, the mayor of Pittsburgh, the governor of Pennsylvania and many other notables.

But it was one telegram in particular that put the painful loss in perspective for Haddix.

"It came from some college kids at one of the schools in Texas, I can't remember which one," he said. "It was short and sweet, but it summed up everything pretty well. All it said was 'Dear Harvey, Tough Shit,' and I told my wife, Marcia, 'You know what? That's exactly what it was.'"

"I wish those college guys had included their names and a return address, because I probably would have sent them an autographed baseball or something," Haddix added. "As a matter of fact, our broadcaster, Bob Prince, had that telegram mounted and framed. Those guys summed up in two words what it was all about. Life went on, and losing that game in 13 innings actually may have given me more notoriety in the long run than if I had won it in nine."



*Joe Adcock, right, hit a homerun that wasn't that should have scored Aaron, left, but didn't, and had his team's winning—and only—hit all the same. See "How it Ended" on the next page.*

# How it Ended

As Milwaukee prepared to bat in the bottom of the 13th inning on May 26, 1959, one thought was racing through the minds of the Braves' hitters—let's put an end to this madness.

For 12 innings, Pittsburgh Pirates' pitcher Harvey Haddix had been perfect—36 batters faced, 36 consecutive outs.

"After being held without a baserunner the whole game, we were all starting to get a little antsy," said former Braves' slugger Joe Adcock. "We just wanted to get it over with. None of us truly appreciated the magnitude of what Harvey was doing."

May 26 had turned out to be a miserable night for baseball in Milwaukee.

Lightning flashed across the sky, and a warm, muggy wind was howling for most of the game.

During the 13th inning, the smell of rain was ripe in the air.

Milwaukee's leadoff batter in the 13th, Felix Mantilla, hit a routine grounder to third.

Pirates' third baseman Don Hoak fielded the ball cleanly, but threw a sinker toward first base that Rocky Nelson couldn't handle.

"I swear, I'll always believe I had that ball and that Mantilla was out," said Nelson. "I also think he turned left rounding the base, which would have made him out. We argued, but it was to no avail."

Hoak's throwing error ended the perfect game, but Haddix still had a no-hitter intact.

"At that time, I really wasn't concerned about perfect games and no-hitters, I just wanted to win the darn game," said Haddix.

In a somewhat surprising move, Braves' manager Fred Haney opted to have slugger Eddie Mathews lay down a sacrifice bunt to move Mantilla to second base.

"And let me say this, Eddie Mathews didn't do a whole lot of bunting," said Haddix.

With Mantilla at second and one out, Pirates' skipper Danny Murtaugh called on Haddix to intentionally walk Hank Aaron.

"That was just good, smart baseball," said Haddix. "He was a righthanded batter, and I was a lefthanded pitcher. With two on, if we got a ground ball, we get a double play and we're out of the inning."

With the gale-force wind suddenly reduced to a whimper, a determined Adcock stepped to the plate.

"I wanted to end the game right there," he said. "I wasn't looking for any specific pitch. The way Harvey was throwing, I was just hoping to get the bat on it."

Adcock took the first pitch for a ball, then parked the second offering just over the right-field fence for an apparent homerun.

"In later innings, Harvey had a tendency to start getting the ball up, and that's what happened on the pitch to Adcock, which was a high slider," said Nelson. "The funny thing was, just as Adcock's ball was clearing the wall, it started raining pretty good. If Harvey had wasted a few pitches, the game might have been postponed by rain."

Seeing Adcock's ball land over the fence, Mantilla trotted home from second base.

Believing the ball landed short of the fence, Aaron left the basepath and was passed by Adcock between second and third.

"Hank thought it was short of the fence, and that the game was over when Mantilla crossed the plate," said Adcock. "In the mist that night, it was tough to see."

Haney had Aaron and Adcock retrace their steps, but the umpires ruled that Adcock was out for passing Aaron.

Amid all the confusion, 19,194 fans left County Stadium that night believing the Braves had won the game either 3-0 or 2-0, but National League President Warren Giles later ruled Mantilla's run was the only one that counted and that Adcock would be credited with an RBI double.

In his official ruling of May 27, 1959, Giles wrote, "While the hitter (Adcock) hit a fair ball over the fence in flight, he did not touch all bases legally and cannot be credited with a 'homerun.' Since, in determining the final score, the hitter (Adcock) cannot be treated as having hit a homerun but is recorded as having hit a two-base hit, it is not logical to treat the baserunners as if the hitter had hit a homerun."

"The score shall be determined by disregarding the 'homerun' and recording it as it would be if the hitter (Adcock) had hit a two-base hit, in which case only the run or runs score which are necessary to win the game."

"It didn't matter to me whether it was 1-0, 2-0 or 100-0," said Haddix. "All I knew was that we had lost the game, and that's what hurt me most."

—S.S.

# House of David Baseball

*Richard E. Derby, Jr. and Jim Coleman*

**T**he Israelite House of David religious order was established by Benjamin Purnell in 1903 in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Preachers were sent out to all parts of the United States and to such foreign countries as England, Australia, and Germany to gather the twelve lost tribes of Israel in hope of eternal life. Members were encouraged to contribute all their worldly possessions to the colony, to practice celibacy, give up smoking, drinking alcohol, and shaving. Through the efforts of the preachers and the dissemination of House of David (HOD) literature, the colony grew quite rapidly.

The original colony was on ten acres complete with its own farmland and garden areas, power house, printing office, lumber mill and other workshops. Youngsters growing up in the HOD were afforded the opportunity to learn many skills and trades from members who were experts in their fields. While the vocations they were taught as youngsters proved invaluable during their adult years, there were times when this learning process had other effects. One day a youngster was in the blacksmith shop to learn how to forge metal. The blacksmith handed the youngster a small forging hammer and then he took a pair of tongs, pulled a red-hot piece of metal from the fire, and placing it on the anvil said, "Now when I nod my head, you hit it." The young man, always minding his elders, without questions, waited with poised hammer and

when the blacksmith nodded his head, sure enough, the young man hit it!

As the colony grew (it was 500 members strong by 1905), crowds started to come out of curiosity. At the time, Benton Harbor was a popular weekend resort because of its mineral baths and temperate summer winds from Lake Michigan. So many people came to hear the message and to see the people with long, sometimes braided hair that it became necessary to prepare a place to accommodate them. In 1907 the HOD purchased an additional 30 acres on which an amusement park was gradually built, including a narrow gauge railroad, a miniature auto way and even a zoo. Additional entertainment was provided by the HOD bands.

By 1910, a ballpark was built, primarily for the use of Fitzsimmons' Speedboys, a local semipro team. Up until this time, the HOD youngsters had only played a loosely organized form of rounders, sometimes against local teams. After the ballpark was built, the HOD team became more organized, and it began to provide another source of entertainment for the tourists when the Speedboys were on the road. By the early 1920s, the HOD baseball team had become a major attraction and was charging admission. Initially, all of the members of the ballclub were from the colony and had the customary long hair and beards. As the competition got tougher, it became necessary to recruit ballplayers from outside the colony to maintain the team's reputation.

With the exception of the years around World War II (1941-1948), the HOD fielded one or more teams up to 1956. Then, with the advent of television and increas-

*Richard E. Derby, Jr. is the owner of Yannigan's, a baseball memorabilia store in Westlake, Ohio. Jim Coleman has been an autograph and sports collector for 15 years. Jim grew up within five miles of the House of David, and he has met many of the former players. The authors wish gratefully to acknowledge the assistance and contributions of Mr. Tom Dewhirst to the preparation of this article.*

ing salary and travel expenses, HOD baseball disappeared, much as the minor leagues nearly did at the same time. But through the first half of the century, HOD baseball teams had gained great fame, and had more than held their own against all competition.

**The Traveling Team**—As the baseball team's reputation grew, it eventually started to travel and play games outside of Benton Harbor. At first, it went only as far as Chicago, where it played such teams as Rube Foster's American Giants. Soon, though, it began to travel extensively around the U.S. and up into Canada. After spring training for two or three weeks in March in such places as Mineral Wells, Texas and Hot Springs, Arkansas, the team would barnstorm its way north. It played all through the south and up along the east coast to New Hampshire. The House of David appeared in the Cooperstown region many times. On July 4, 1939, it participated in a baseball centennial celebration, but lost to a team of "Puerto Rican All-stars", 16-15, in 11 innings.

The team was often seen in the Dakotas, and it played its way west through Colorado and Montana and on into Washington State, Oregon, and Northern California. The HOD played north of the border, too, in Quebec, Three Rivers, Montreal, Ottawa, Moosejaw, Sudbury, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver, and Edmonton. It played year after year in the same towns, where the players were always well received and asked to return. In many of these towns stores would close up for the games.

The House of David played up to 180 games per year—many of them doubleheaders and some of them even tripleheaders—first traveling from town to town in a Packard and two Studebakers, then eventually on its own bus. Advance men were sent ahead to the next stop to finalize arrangements and start promoting the next game. The team would arrive as late as 2 AM and sleep until 9 or 10. After breakfast, players would get to the ballpark by 2 PM for practice, and after the game would be right back on the road. This routine was repeated daily through October. By 1932, the tour had become even more rigorous, because the HOD was among the first teams to travel with its own portable lighting equipment to play night games.

The House of David played so many games that at times it seemed there was more than one team on the road—and at times there were. In addition to the "official" team, there were franchised ball clubs that had permission to use the House of David name. Many other squads used the House of David name without permission. In 1937, there was even a team of "bearded colored stars."

**Style of Play**—The House of David team was so popular because it combined good, aggressive baseball with

a flashy, entertaining style. Before the game, for example, several players would start to toss a ball among themselves in front of the stands. They would toss the ball from behind their backs, between their legs and over their shoulders. As the pace increased, even their gloves would be brought into play. Faster and faster would go the ball and gloves, back and forth, around and around. Then, suddenly among the swirling ball, gloves, arms and feet, the ball would disappear. The players, with heads bowed, would look all over the ground for the ball. After a few seconds, a batter would walk up to the group, grab one player by the beard, lift up his head, and out would drop the ball from underneath! The fans would roar with laughter at the spectacular pepper game and give the players a big ovation.

But the House of David could also play good, old fashioned, "inside" baseball. The team specialized in double—even triple—steals. Another highly successful play was what the players referred to as "a hard push bunt." With a man on first base, and a right-handed batter up, the opposition would most likely be looking for either a steal or a sacrifice bunt or some combination of the two. When the pitcher started to deliver the ball the HOD man on first would head for second base. This would cause the other team's second baseman to move toward the bag to take a throw from the catcher. This left a "hole" where the second baseman would normally be. The batter would then push bunt the ball just hard enough to get through the hole and 10 or 15 feet out into the outfield grass. If executed properly, this unusual hit and run play usually resulted in the man on first going not only to second, but all the way to third, and the batter ending up on first with a base hit.

Learning to bunt the ball properly and to place the bunted ball in a certain area of the diamond was a skill that House of David players developed through repeated practice. Three players, each with a glove, would line up about an arms length apart. A fourth player with a bat would face them 10 or 12 feet away. One of the three players would throw the batter a ball which he had to hit, no matter where it was thrown. Not only was he required to hit it back, but he had to do it in rotation to each of the other three. If he failed to hit the ball, or failed to hit it to one of the fielders in the proper rotation, he lost his turn at bat and would have to exchange places with one of the fielders.

Another part of the House of David game was the stand-up slide. This pop-up or bent-leg slide, in which the runner slides into the bag in such a manner as to finish upright, is common today, but was unusual then. This, and other sliding techniques, were learned back in Benton Harbor behind the grandstand, where there was a large sawdust sliding pit.

The House of David had some unique advantages

over its opponents. During home games, the youngsters used to retrieve foul balls hit over the fences and out of the park. These were used for practice until their covers came loose, and then they would be taken to the HOD shoe shop. The cobbler would wax some heavy threads with beeswax and then show the youngsters how to re sew the cover on the ball with seams that would stick up about an eighth of an inch. Being an old pitcher himself, the cobbler could then instruct them in the fine art of throwing curves, drops and knuckle balls.

Broken bats were no problem either. They would be taken to the HOD mill, wrapped tightly with closely wound wire and covered with friction tape. Sometimes the break would be so clean and straight that it would be impossible to repair. Then the lathe turners would make new bats from hickory or ash.

**Stars in the firmament**—Another factor contributing to the popularity of the House of David team was the many big names who traveled with them at one time or another. Among the stars who pitched two or three innings a game were Grover Cleveland Alexander, Elmer Dean (brother of Dizzy and Paul), Sig Jakucki, and even Babe Didriksen.

After leaving the Phillies in 1930, Grover Cleveland Alexander first pitched with Dallas in the Texas League and then spent three seasons with the House of David, for one stretch matching up frequently against Satchel Paige. In 1932, Alex pitched a couple of innings for the House of David in a game played in St. Louis' Sportsman's Park. Although he was still drinking, he always seemed to have it in the clutch. According to Tom Dewhirst, who played with the HOD from 1928-1937, Alex

"liked to take a 'nip of the spirits' now and then. He had many, many friends in the various cities and towns we visited, and he was not averse to having a social drink with each and every one of them. Some days 'Old Pete' would be visited by quite a few of his friends, which resulted in quite a few 'nips'. By game time it was a little difficult for him to bend over, take off his sneakers and put on his baseball shoes. But that didn't deter 'Old Pete'. He would just grab his glove and go out to the mound and pitch with his sneakers on. And let me tell you, for two or three innings he was still a great pitcher and had great control of all his pitches."

Elmer Dean (known as Goober) was a vendor in Sportsman's Park when a HOD scout saw him sail a bag of peanuts around a girder and into the lap of a startled spectator, according to Francis X. Sculley in the Summer 1980 *Leatherstocking Journal*. "But Elmer

couldn't find home plate with a baseball, and without 'ears' on the sphere he was doomed. His curve wouldn't break an inch."

Sig Jakucki played and also pitched for the House of David in the thirties, and once beat the St. Louis Browns 1-0. In 1944, Sig helped lead the Browns to their only pennant.

Babe Didriksen pitched a few innings at a time, mostly in exhibition games for the House of David. According to Newt Allen a star shortstop in the Negro Leagues, she was "pretty good as a pitcher". Pepper Bassett recalled that "she threw overhand and as hard as a man".

Larry Jansen, Frank McCormick and Ossie Orwall were other major leaguers who performed briefly with the House of David. Jansen and McCormick played a few games in Seattle. Orwall played two seasons with the Philadelphia A's before finishing up with the HOD.

**Caliber of Play**—The House of David baseball team played a brand of ball that was on a par with top flight minor league ball. For several seasons, Jack Ryan, a scout for the St. Louis Cardinals, even traveled with the team for weeks at a time, searching for prospects from HOD recruits and opponents.

One way of judging the team's caliber of play is by the quality of its opponents. The House of David frequently played and held their own against teams from the Negro Leagues. Newt Allen indicated that the HOD "had a whale of a baseball club". The Chicago American Giants, Kansas City Monarchs and the Bacharach Giants were among the great teams played by the House of David.

The club once toured for two straight months with the Monarchs of Satchel Paige. Satchel had an old ragged glove that was full of feathers. Every time the catcher would return the ball, feathers would fly everywhere. Whenever he was asked why he didn't get a new glove, Satch would reply "I'm so poor this is all I can afford," and then laugh loudly. On this tour Paige and Alexander faced each other almost daily for two or three innings.

The team also played major league clubs like the Chicago Cubs and Cincinnati Reds. It once played and defeated the Philadelphia A's 9-7. (In 1931, the Yankees and Babe Ruth played an apparently bogus House of David team.)

One HOD team won 48 of 49 games, including 29 in a row. The 1932 team was 116-41 (.739). In 1933 the House of David defeated an integrated team in Bismarck, North Dakota, 11-2, and went on to finish the season 112-37 (.752). In 1934, the team went 142-41 (.776), and capped the season by winning the *Denver Post* tournament.

1934 marked the House of David's third straight appearance in the nineteen-year old Denver tournament.



The HOD won the double elimination event by going 7-0—the first team to go undefeated since 1922. Second place went to the Kansas City Monarchs, at 4-2.

The House of David, managed by Grover Cleveland Alexander, won its opener over the Denver Italian Bakers 16-0 behind Spike Hunter. The next victory was 6-1 over the Eason Oilers. Satchel Paige pitched for the House of David and struck out 14 with a fastball that was “spitting fire.” This was called the finest game ever played in Denver by the “Bearded Beauties.” Satch also pitched the next game for the HOD and struck out 17 in a 4-0 shutout of the Humble Oilers.

The next game proved to be the highlight of the tournament as the HOD played the Monarchs, the field’s only other remaining undefeated team. Never was such interest shown in a baseball game in Denver. The Monarchs included such stars as Turkey Stearnes, Newt Allen, Bullet Rogan, Chet Brewer, and Willie Foster. A record crowd of 11,120, with several thousand more turned away, saw Satchel and the HOD defeat Brewer, 2-1. Satchel struck out 12 while his teammates collected seven hits off Brewer.

Against United Fuel of Denver, the House of David overcame an 8-0 deficit and won 14-13 by scoring six runs in the bottom of the ninth, the final two on a two-out homerun by regular catcher Dewey Hill. (Cy Perkins had been catching when Satchel pitched.) Elam Vangilder, who once won 19 games for the St. Louis Browns and finished with a 99-102 major league mark, pitched for the losers.

After another win over the Humble Oilers, this time 8-2, the HOD clinched the tournament by handing the Monarchs their second defeat, 2-0. Spike Hunter pitched the shutout as Satchel was held in reserve by Manager Alexander in case a second game was necessary. In the third inning, Hunter stopped the Monarchs’ lone scoring threat by striking out Allen, Giles and Stearnes on nine pitches!

While “ringer” Satchel Paige contributed three wins in this important tournament, the other four games, including the finale over the Monarchs, were pitched and won with the regular lineup. Center fielder Mel Ingram won acclaim for his speed and fielding ability. Shortstop Buster Blakeney was the best infielder in the tournament and batted .333. Second baseman Moon Mullen hit .348, left fielder Al (Lefty) Tolles, batted

.385, and several other players hit .300 or better. Regular pitcher Spike Hunter won two games, Lloyd Miller one, and Warren (Lefty) Wierman, one. Only United Fuels scored more than two runs against the HOD, and the Monarchs scratched out only one unearned run in 18 innings.

Perhaps the Greatest House of David team of them all was the 1929 squad managed by Percy Walker. Tom Dewhirst, who played left field, was known as the bearded Babe Ruth for his mammoth homeruns. In one Minnesota game, Dewhirst hit one so far over the outfielder’s head that he reached home before the fielder even got to the ball. In Fargo, North Dakota he hit three homeruns in one game, a feat he often repeated elsewhere. He led the team in homeruns, RBI’s, and batting average for three straight years. Third baseman David Harrison was offered contracts by seven major league clubs one season. Pitchers on that team included Harry Lauder, who once threw three shutouts in one week; former Washington pitcher Dixie Walker (father of the Harry and Dixie who are familiar to most fans), and Spike Hunter and Lloyd Miller, who were also on the 1934 team that won the Denver tournament. Other players included catchers Eddie (New) Deal and Charlie Faulkenstein; first basemen Lefty Tolles and Bill Heckman; Rip Atherton, second base; Pep Brannon, shortstop and A. B. Hipp in center field.

Another way of judging the caliber of baseball played by the House of David is by the number of their stars who either played for major league clubs or were offered contracts. Biff Wysong was 1-3 for the 1932 Cincinnati Reds. Al (Bullet Ben) Benson was 0-1 in two games for the 1934 Washington club. A pitcher named Mooney was reportedly offered a major league contract by the Cubs. Doc Talley, who could hit a baseball into orbit, and John Tucker also were major league prospects, according to Newt Allen.

By whatever measure you care to use, the House of David baseball teams were highly successful and entertaining. The magnificent buildings of the House of David still stand, most of them now empty and taken over by the elements. Less than fifty members remain. Of these, a few, like Tom Dewhirst, played on the bearded teams that so many old fans across the U.S. and Canada remember with fondness.

### A Satisfactory Swap

*The Boston Braves of 1914 won the National League pennant, but played their World Series home games in Fenway Park, then the relatively new (1912) home of the Red Sox. The following year, the Red Sox, taking on the Philadelphia Phillies for the world title, played the Boston end of the series in newly-opened Braves Field, which accommodated 8,000 more spectators than Fenway did. Neither Boston club lost a game to their Philadelphia rivals in the other Boston team’s park.*

—Jim Murphy

# Clutch Pitching Does Exist!

*Robert L. Tiemann*

There have been two articles in past issues of *The National Pastime* on the question, "Do clutch pitchers exist?" One, by Pete Palmer (Spring 1985) concluded, "[C]lutch pitchers do not exist." The other, by Bob Kelly (Winter 1987), concluded "Indeed they do, and we can measure their performance." Well, I say that they are both wrong! Having studied enough baseball to form my own opinion, I have to agree with Bob Kelly that clutch pitchers do exist—but *you cannot measure their performance*.

Let's take a look at the analyses these two esteemed SABRmetricians devised. Palmer starts right off by defining a clutch pitcher as one who "wins more games than expected—based on the number of runs scored and allowed." He then leads us down a path littered with linear weights, ten times square roots, and 2 or 2.6 standard deviations from expected. All of these are figured on career totals. That's right, career totals....

Now I may not know much about standard deviations, but I do know a clutch situation when I see one, and I also know that pitchers don't pitch their entire careers in clutch situations, which makes me question Pete's whole exercise in statistics. Plus (if I've read this right), one of his tables shows that Walter Johnson was the worst clutch pitcher of all 20th century 300+ game winners. Pete "expected" the Big Train to win 435 games instead of 417 because he allowed only 1902 runs while the Senators were "expected" to score 2663 runs, and the square roots times ten business says Johnson should have had enough support to win 18

more games. I am at a loss to figure out how a guy who had a winning percentage near .600 for a team that was about 250 games below .500 when anybody else pitched for them over the course of Johnson's 21-year career should be expected to win even more than he actually did. So I guess you can say that I don't really agree with Pete's analysis.

Bob Kelly begs to differ with Palmer's analytical methods, calling Pete to the carpet for the "fatal error" of confusing clutch pitching with games won. (Fool that I am, I thought that clutch performance has everything to do with winning actual games, not with cumulative stats.) It's better, he says, to analyze how many earned runs a pitcher gave up compared to how many men he allowed to reach base. He then provides a chart, which, like Palmer's, only shows Hall of Famers. Now since there are no real rummies to compare them to, I can't see how you can really draw sweeping conclusions from this.

Luckily, Pete Palmer (of all people) comes to the rescue in the first edition of *Total Baseball* with a "Clutch Pitching Index." This seems to use Kelly's idea, to wit (and I quote here from *Total Baseball's* first edition, page 1187): "Expected runs allowed over actual runs allowed, with 100 being the league-average performance. Expected runs are figured on the basis of the pitcher's opposing at bats, hits, walks, and hit batsmen." This looks like runs scored per runners reaching base, just like Bob Kelly's clutch pitcher article, so the *Total Baseball* index should show nearly the same clutch performance as Kelly's formula. (Of course I may be wrong on this, since all statistical formulas are more or less mumbo-jumbo to me.)

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Mercifully, the CPI was dropped from *Total Baseball's* second edition.

But here once again, our buddy Walter Perry Johnson accrues a paltry 90 (10% worse than average) over his apparently unclutch career. Going over Johnson's season-by-season figures, we find that his worst "clutch" year was 1913, when he cops an anemic 54, which on flipping through the pitcher register looks to be one of the lowest in the history of baseball. Now granted that all seven of Walter's losses that year were to the other three first division clubs (the Senators finished second), but he was still 15-7 against them, and while his 21-0 mark against the second division was not necessarily clutch pitching, I can't see how you can say that the best pitcher in the league was the worst clutch performer in the league. After all, he was named the league MVP by the writers that year.

So you could say that I'm not convinced by either of these statistical methods.

Now, I know you're waiting breathlessly for me to unveil my own magical formula, but the fact is that I don't have one. To my way of thinking, you can't measure clutch performance by using season or career totals. As I said earlier, that would mean that every game, inning, and batter faced is assumed to be a clutch situation. Balderdash! When John Tudor gave the Cardinals two 10-inning shutout stints against the Mets in the heat of the pennant stretch in 1985, it was a clutch performance, no doubt about it. But when New York got to him for two runs on October 2, 1987, after the Cardinals had already clinched the pennant, it really didn't matter as much.

Instead of an esoteric equation, let me give you a rundown on my favorite clutch pitcher, Wild Bill Donovan. He didn't make the charts in either Palmer's or Kelly's articles, and *Total Baseball* rates his clutch pitching as perfectly average (100 career rating). But this guy had some of the greatest clutch games in history during the Tigers' pennant years of 1907 through 1909. In '07, he didn't pitch until the season was six weeks old, but still managed to win 25 games, losing only 4. More to the point, against the Athletics, who battled the Tigers down to the wire, he was 6-1, losing a 1-0 game to Chief Bender on an unearned run. His greatest stint came in the final series between the two contenders in Philadelphia at the end of September. The Jungaleers (too bad they don't use that nickname in the papers anymore) came to town trailing by the hairsbreadth percentage of .00021. In the opener of the scheduled four-game set on Friday, Wild Bill eked out a 5-4 victory by escaping bases-loaded jams in both the seventh and eighth innings. The victory put Detroit back into first place. The Saturday game was cancelled by rain, and there were laws against Sunday baseball, so the Monday doubleheader would be the contenders' final meeting of the season. As it turned out, it was only

one game, since the two teams battled to a 9-9, 17-inning tie. Donovan pitched the entire distance, retiring the A's with the winning run in scoring position in five of the eight extra innings. Both clubs then won five of their last seven, and the Tigers hung on to claim their first pennant ever. Now, Bill's stats for the series in Philly may look unimpressive (33 hits and 13 runs allowed in 26 innings), but when you consider the facts that the Tigers virtually clinched the pennant in the series and that Donovan pitched every inning of the series for them, this has to rank with the greatest clutch pitching performances ever.

In 1908, Wild William again started late, suffered a couple of suspensions, and finished only 18-7. The Tigers were again in a very hot race, this time with Chicago, Cleveland, and St. Louis, and against these contenders, Donovan had a nifty 8-1 record. That included the final game of the season, a winner-take-all battle with the White Sox in which Bill pitched a brilliant 7-0 two-hitter to win the pennant.

In '09, arm miseries limited his work to 140 innings and a modest 8-7 record. But he still had it in the clutch, as he demonstrated in a showdown series with the A's in late August. The Mackmen came to Detroit leading the Tigers by one game. Detroit led the opening game 7-6 in the top of the ninth when Donovan was called in in relief with one out and men on second and third. Bill walked Eddie Collins on a full count, but then fanned Frank Baker and got Harry Davis on an easy fly out to save the victory and put the Tigers into a tie for first place. Then the next day he put them in the league lead for good with a complete-game, 4-3 win. He gave up nine hits, four walks, and a hit batsman but still squeaked through, retiring Collins and Baker with the bases loaded in one inning.

I know that these few episodes may not be enough to convince you statisticians out there that Bill Donovan was a clutch pitcher, but they are enough for me. Let me briefly list some other great clutch pitching performances from each of pro baseball's decades:

- In the decisive final game of the 1871 season, the Athletics' Dick McBride held the White Stockings to their lowest run (one) and hit (four) totals of the season as the A's beat Chicago 4-1 to win the pennant.
- Hoss Radbourn went 26-1 over a 43-day period in August and September of 1884 to lead Providence from a half game behind to 10 games ahead in the NL race.
- In a disastrous four weeks for Pittsburgh in June of 1893, Frank Killen posted a 5-5 mark while the team went just 1-13 in other games and plunged from first place to fifth. Killen fol-

lowed with a 26-4 finish to bring the Pirates back to a strong second in the final standings.

- Mordecai Brown beat both the Pirates and the Giants in the Cubs' final two games of the 1908 season to enable Chicago to win the pennant by one game over both Pittsburgh and New York.

- After spending eight weeks in midseason 1918 as a full-time outfielder-first baseman, Babe Ruth returned to the Red Sox' starting rotation for the final five weeks and went 7-2 to help Boston outdistance Cleveland for the pennant. Ruth also remained the regular left fielder down the stretch.

- The Giants' Art Nehf posted a perfect 7-0 record against the Pirates in 1921 (allowing only nine runs in 63 innings), as New York beat out Pittsburgh by 4 games for the flag.

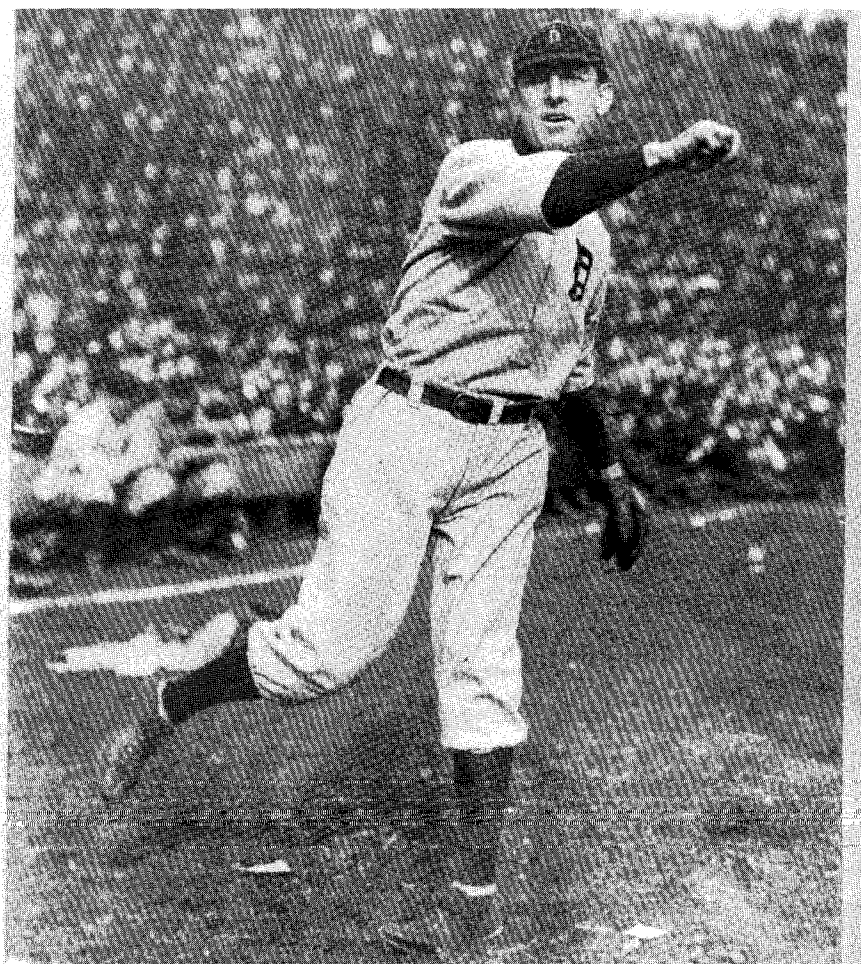
- Bill Lee's record was 6-0 with two saves in September of 1938 to lead the Cubs from seven games behind to the championship. Included were four shutouts in a row.

- Indian rookie Gene Bearden won his last seven starts of the 1948 race, including winning the one-game playoff over the Red Sox pitching with only one day of rest.

- Milwaukee's Bob Buhl won eight games from Brooklyn in 1956. The Braves' other hurlers went 4-9 versus the Dodgers, and the team finished just one game behind the Bums in the final standings.

- When the Yankees won five consecutive pennants from 1960 through 1964, Whitey Ford had a 21-6 record on dates later than June 1 in which the Yankees could have taken or lost the league lead depending on the outcome of that day's games.

- In 13 appearances between August 31 and September 25, 1973, Tug McGraw had a 3-0 record with 10 saves. None of the 11 inherited runners scored, and the Mets rose from last



*Wild Bill Donovan, tiger in the clutch*

place to first. He was charged with two runs, but both scored after New York had built up three-run leads in extra innings.

- LaMarr Hoyt, Richard Dotson, and Floyd Bannister combined for a 40-3 record over the last two and one-half months to lift the White Sox from third place to a runaway division pennant in 1983.

- Dennis Eckersley successfully converted his first 36 save opportunities in 1992 to put Oakland into first place for good by early August.

So I guess my conclusion is not so much that clutch *pitchers* exist as it is that clutch *pitching* has existed and will exist again. And the study of clutch performances should not be done by putting career totals through a computer, but by examining the history of the game's pennant races and championships; not by inventing indices but by marveling at the actual individual performances.

# The Louisville Colonels of 1889

*Bob Bailey*

**H**ow bad can a season be? Lose 100 games? Finish 66 games out? Set a record by losing 26 straight games? Have a players' strike? Get trapped in a flood on a road trip? Any of these events would cause a team to ponder the orientation of the universe relative to the notion that every cloud has a silver lining.

The cliché was reversed for the Louisville Colonels of 1889, for that was the year that every silver lining had its cloud. Every one of the above named disasters visited that feeble squad.

Louisville had been a charter member of the American Association at its inception in 1882. The team had reached its high water mark in 1884 with a third place finish just 7-1/2 games behind New York and a game short of Columbus. It then began a slow decline until it hit what players, management and fans thought must be the bottom in 1888, finishing in seventh place, 44 games behind Charlie Comiskey's league-leading St. Louis Browns. The season's highlight was finishing 3-1/2 games in front of a woeful Kansas City squad.

The Colonels were an average offensive team, with Pete Browning and Hub Collins hitting over .300 and Chicken Wolf tossing in 67 RBIs. These three Louisville natives formed the best hitting outfield in the Association until Collins was sold to Brooklyn late in the season to raise cash for the struggling franchise.

But as a fielding squad they were awful. They led the league in errors by a bushel basket full. They committed 611 errors in 135 games. Their league leading total

was 104 miscues greater than those of the AA's next-worse defensive teams, Kansas City and Brooklyn. The pitching wasn't so good either. Only Scott Stratton and Icebox Chamberlain won in double figures. The staff ERA at 3.25 was comfortably above the league average of 3.06. Chamberlain was having a good season with a 14-9 record and a 2.53 ERA when he was sold to St. Louis.

By the end of the 1888 season, Louisville was playing three rookies—at shortstop, third base and left field—and had two rookies in the pitching rotation. The team had visions of mighty improvement as these players gained experience.

The new year of 1889 dawned with club President Mordecai H. Davidson trying to sign the players for the coming season. Davidson had taken over as President in 1888. He was as tight with a dollar as any of the more prominent robber barons of the era. But his miserly attitude was grounded in the reality that the Louisville franchise was severely short of cash. The owners of the club, while financially comfortable as individuals, were not men of great wealth with excess capital to put into the ball club. Even Davidson was a sort of middle manager in a firm that ran an auction business and served as manufacturer's agent for furniture and carpet suppliers.

Davidson's contract negotiations were going smoothly until late February, when second-year pitcher Scott Stratton refused to sign the standard contract. Stratton was looking to add a clause that would allow him not to pitch on Sundays. He came from a religious family in Taylorsville, Kentucky and was apparently trying to placate his parents.

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He also wanted more money. This was probably the major motivation for his holdout. He originally demanded the league maximum salary of \$2000. He was offered \$1400. He countered with \$1800 and the clause allowing him not to play on Sundays. This process continued from late January to mid-March when Pete Browning decided to ask for more money, too. Browning was enormously popular in Louisville. He had won two Association batting titles (1882 and 1885), and was a happy-go-lucky sort with a wide assortment of friends. He was also one of the more notorious drinkers in the league.

Davidson was not about to cave in when he held a strong negotiating position. The players could either sign or sit out, and with no other real options, Browning signed on April 1 and Stratton two days later. It was never revealed if Stratton got the Sunday-off clause he wanted, but he did not pitch on Sundays that season.

The preseason papers were not full of the usual blather about the home club contending for the pennant. But as the season opener neared, the rhetoric did begin to heat up a little. Davidson, returning from an Association meeting in early March, stated that opposing managers "are almost unanimous in believing that we will make a decidedly better showing this season..." He continued, in what would take on more ominous meaning later in the season, "I will do everything in my power to make the boys play ball together this season."

A few weeks later, team captain Tommy "Dude" Esterbrook took the view that the team might not vie for the championship, "but we have a surprise in store for some of them."

The beat writer for the *Courier-Journal*, after several exhibition wins commented that "the club is not so weak as a majority of the enthusiasts imagined...[t]he club is playing fine ball and the improvement over last season is clearly perceptible."

The season opened two weeks later and this "clearly" improved team lost its first four game series at home to Kansas City, the 1888 cellar dwellers, and its next two home games to St. Louis, before winning the seventh game of the season from St. Louis 17-7.

Even this early in the season the problems on the field were starting to be felt in the clubhouse. Esterbrook was in the habit of dressing down his players in front of the whole team and being rather free with fines. Before the opening game of the St. Louis series, he fined rookie second baseman Dan Shannon \$10 for failing to follow orders during pregame practice. Two days later he got into a shouting match with Chicken Wolf, with the result for Wolf of a \$40 fine.

Wolf took his grievances to Davidson. Whether or not this had any effect is not known. But on April 29 Esterbrook telegrammed Davidson from St. Louis with his resignation as captain. Wolf was elected captain by the players, with Shannon being selected assistant cap-

tain. Esterbrook remained with the team, playing first base and shortstop.

The club returned home after this episode firmly ensconced in last place with a 3-14 record. Things had to get better. And they did—for a moment. In the 13 game homestand they went 5-8. Brooklyn swept three but the home team took two of three from the Athletics, split four with Columbus and won the opener with Baltimore before dropping the final two. Winning the final two from Columbus and the first game with Baltimore gave the squad a three game winning streak. It was to be the longest of the season. And that May 21 win would be the last the Colonels would enjoy for about a month.

With a two-game losing streak ending the homestand, the team set off for an eastern road trip. In Cincinnati, the club lost four straight, three by one run. The first two games of the Columbus series were rained out, but the Louisville newspapers had caught on to the pattern of upcoming games with the headline "RAIN SAVES LOUISVILLE FROM PROBABLY TWO DEFEATS AT COLUMBUS."

The club signed Bill Gleason, recently released by the Athletics, to fill the hole at shortstop. It wouldn't help. Louisville lost four more at Columbus before boarding the train for Philadelphia. The Colonels were scheduled to meet the Athletics on June 3, but they didn't show up. They didn't show up on June 4 either. They had become victims of the Johnstown Flood. For two days there was no word from them. The headline writers had some more fun with a story entitled "LOST AGAIN." It turns out that the flood halted train and telegraph service throughout western Pennsylvania and New York. The team sat for about thirty-six hours at a small station between Erie, Pennsylvania and Buffalo before finally arriving in Philadelphia on June 5.

The break didn't help. Louisville dropped four in Philadelphia before moving on to Brooklyn to do the same. Back home, Davidson was trying to sell the team. He had tried earlier in the season to effect a sale, but hadn't been able to agree with the potential buyers on the \$9000 asking price. While he looked for other buyers he began to devise strategies to raise cash. He released Esterbrook and Phil Tomney (Tomney would later re-sign when no better or cheaper player could be found). Having earlier moved a home series to Cincinnati, Davidson now requested league permission to move all home games to the road. He was skewered in the press for this maneuver, and he ultimately dropped his request.

His only remaining asset was the players. Davidson began to try to sell their contracts. Cincinnati was interested in purchasing Scott Stratton. But the other owners feared that the sales would ruin the Louisville franchise, and they prevailed on the league office not to recognize any sales. Their fears were so strong that

they convened a league meeting on June 14 in New York to question President Davidson about it. Davidson made satisfactory explanations at the meeting and announced that he was in the market for players to improve the club.

Davidson had been traveling with the team and had left them in Baltimore to attend the meeting. But he had left behind a substantial problem. After the June 13 loss to Baltimore, Davidson had fined Dan Shannon \$25 for making a couple of errors and catcher Paul Cook a like amount for "stupid base running." The players rebelled. All but one of them (the holdout's name, maddeningly, was unreported) signed a round robin demanding the fines be dropped or they would not play in the June 14 game. Davidson replied that if the team failed to win its next game, *all* the players would be fined \$25 and any one who didn't show up for the game would be fined \$100. He then boarded the train for New York.

The first players' strike in major league history was on. Six players were no-shows at the June 14 game. They were pitcher Red Ehret, catcher Paul Cook, infielders Guy Hecker, Dan Shannon, and Harry Raymond, and outfielder Pete Browning. The team picked up three local semi-pro players and started against Baltimore before the game was rained out after the second inning.

It began to appear in the press that the fines that set off the strike were but the culmination of a series of fines imposed by Davidson throughout the road trip. Henry Vaughn had been fined \$25 for two passed balls in Columbus. Browning, Wolf and Raymond had

each been fined \$25 for arguing at the train station in Columbus. On that ill-fated trip through the flood waters, Davidson had announced that henceforth anyone committing an error would be fined \$25. In an interview in Baltimore Hecker revealed that the players were, in essence, financing Davidson's cash flow. He said, "Tomorrow [June 16] will be one month and two days since we received our salaries. In Brooklyn, Davidson fined Browning \$100, but he deserved that, and not long ago Mr. Davidson said to us 'I expect to get about \$1000 of your salaries on this trip.'" In reality Davidson had done better, levying fines totaling \$1435.

The players offered to return if all the fines were forgiven. Davidson refused, saying if they didn't play they would get no train ticket home along with another \$100

fine. Further, he announced that if they played, but played poorly, they would be hit with another \$25 fine.

The strikers received much sympathy and support from the sporting press. But while Davidson was universally denounced for his actions, the strikers were upbraided for walking out. They were urged to play and rely on the league office to deliver justice to them. They got the same advice when they turned to Baltimore manager Bill Barnie for help. The players announced they would return for the June 17 doubleheader against Baltimore.

They had missed one game, a 4-2 loss in a rain shortened five-inning affair on June 15. In the opener on June 17, either eager to show their worth or worried over the impending fines, Louisville took a 6-3 lead into the



OLD JUDGE CIGARETTES Goodwin & Co., New York.

NBL

Guy Hecker



ninth. But Louisville pitcher Toad Ramsay couldn't hold on, and Baltimore tied it with three in the ninth and won by scoring four more in the tenth. Louisville was shut out in the second game 10-0.

After one more loss, the team staggered back home, having lost all 21 games on the road trip and having compiled a 23-game losing streak. The first series of the homestand was against the league-leading St. Louis Browns. The Browns took the first three games, extending the losing streak to an all-time record 26 games. The final loss was a 10-inning, 3-2 heartbreaker to Nat Hudson. The streak-breaking win came on June 23. The Colonels scored three in the first and cruised to a 7-3 victory with Toad Ramsay beating former Colonel Icebox Chamberlain. Four errors by Browns captain-first baseman Charlie Comiskey didn't hurt.

The streak had lasted 32 days. The club had been outscored 245-118. But twelve of the losses were by two or fewer runs. Seven were one-run defeats, including the final doubleheader losses to the Browns. In the first game, the Colonels were tied after eight only to give up the winning run in the ninth. The second game went 11 innings before Louisville lost No. 26, 3-2.

While the drama of the losing streak was over, there were still several scenes to be played between the players and Davidson. On June 22, the last day of the losing streak, the players called on Davidson's office to pick up their pay checks. One by one they were called into the office. All checks were net of the fines levied on the road trip. Only four players received full pay. Five of the six strikers owed the club money. Browning owed the most: \$325. Hecker was luckier—he received the munificent total of \$1.95.

Davidson dismissed the players and continued to try to sell the team. It was reported that he refused an offer of \$5000, saying it would not cover his debts. Through late June and the first days of July, the papers carried daily reports that the sale was imminent. But nothing happened, and on July 2 Davidson surrendered the franchise to the American Association. This left the players' grievances over the fines and pay unresolved, and it left the Association with the club's debts.

The league quickly scrambled to broker a deal between Davidson and a local group headed by George Rieger.

On July 6, the Association convened a meeting in Louisville to consider the players' grievances. The owners ordered \$735 of the \$1435 in fines returned. They upheld the \$100 fine for each of the six strikers for missing one game, and also the \$100 fine Browning had received in Brooklyn for "improper conduct."

Davidson decided that if he had to pay back the fines he would have some fun at the players' expense. He was supposed to remit the funds on July 7, but he put the players off until July 9. Then he gave Hecker, spokesman for the players, a check for the entire

amount drawn on a non-existent bank in Maryland. He then refused to make the check good, saying he felt mistreated by the other owners. The papers make no other mention of the incident, so it is safe to assume that the players received their money soon thereafter.

The club's new owners tried to shake things up a bit. For example, they covered all back pay, even though they weren't obliged to do so. It seems to have had some positive effect. The team won nine games in July, only one fewer than their total for April, May and June combined. But in late July, Raymond and Shannon were injured, and by the end of August injuries would remove Hecker, Stratton, Farmer Weaver, and Brown from the lineup.

August was awful. The Colonels 4-23 record rivaled June's horrible 2-24. August's record included a homestand that started with 14 straight losses and ended up 2-15. Louisville won only four games in September and October. On September 22, the team started a 13-game non-winning streak (there was one tie in the run). The September 26 loss was the 100th loss of the season, and it made Louisville the first team ever to achieve this magic mark.

September was unmemorable on the field, but the new owners were sowing the seeds of future, albeit brief, glory. They hired veteran manager John Chapman to run the squad in 1890. Chapman arrived in October and began scouring the minors for new players. The week before Chapman's appointment Pete Browning was "laid off" for the remainder of the season. A week after Chapman's appointment Guy Hecker was released. The youth movement had begun and, with the help of the chaos caused by the advent of the Players' League, would end with Louisville capturing its only major league pennant in 1890.

Louisville finished the 1889 season in last place, with a 27-111-2 record. The Colonels were 66-1/2 games behind Association champion Brooklyn, and 28-1/2 behind seventh place Kansas City. They had won but nine games on the road all season. If the prior season's winning percentage of .356 had been disheartening, imagine how it felt to play at a .196 clip in 1889.

The team's offense was average, and while the fielding had improved marginally from the prior year the defense was still mishandling about one of every ten chances. But it was the pitching that took the Colonels to the depths. Scott Stratton led the team with a respectable 3.23 ERA, but he won only three games all year. Red Ehret led the squad in wins with 10, but struggled with a 4.80 ERA. John Ewing chipped in six wins and a 4.87 ERA, while Guy Hecker ended his career in Louisville with five wins and a 5.59 ERA.

While the 1889 Louisville Colonels *might* not have been the worst team to ever play in the big leagues, with a strike, a flood and a 26-game losing streak, they were certainly the most doom-ridden.

# Smokey and the Bandit

*Larry Lester*

**T**he ball sizzles through the air, explodes into the catcher's leather mitt with a deep, resounding thump. It's the unmistakable sound of baseball smoke, courtesy of Joe Williams—*Smokey* Joe Williams—one of the game's great power pitchers.

Soon after, the umpire calls time, summons the catcher, and inspects the condition of the white missile. He is not surprised to find scratches on the sphere... the marks of a bandit. The scratches on the horsehide were the work of the wily Chet Brewer, one of the baseball's most successful finesse pitchers.

In August of 1930, on a hot, humid summer night in Kansas City, Missouri, two moundsmen, Smokey and the Bandit, engaged in a wild, free-swinging, 12-inning contest that resulted in 46 strikeouts. Neither man blinked, neither let up. Each just kept mowin' 'em down.

Who were these guys?

Both of them were right-handed Negro League legends. Williams, a lanky 6'5" Texan, with the "gift of blur," began his pro career in 1910 with Rubc Foster's Chicago Leland Giants. He joined the Lincoln Giants two years later, and stayed with them until 1923. In 1925, he joined the Homestead Grays and remained there until hanging up his spikes in 1933.

Smokey Joe was part man, part speed machine. His fastballs filled nostrils with the aroma of burnt horsehide. "I knew tough pitchers when I hit against them," a frightened Frankie Frisch recalled. "When you get a

guy that can throw as fast as Smokey, you don't step into it. You have a little respect when you're facing guys like that."

In 1915, Williams beat the National League champion Philadelphia Phillies, 1-0. Williams struck out 10, giving up only three hits in defeating Grover Cleveland Alexander. Four years later, he fired a no-hitter against John McGraw's New York Giants, striking out 20, before losing 1-0 on an infield error.

In New York City, in 1924, his only season with the Brooklyn Royal Giants, he lost a game to the tough and robust semi-pro Bushwicks, composed of former major leaguers and promising youngsters. In the first inning, he relieved teammate Pud Flournoy with the bases loaded, two out, and a full count on ex-Dodger Jimmy Hickman. Williams struck out Hickman, then preceded to strike out the side in the third, fourth, seventh and tenth innings. He finished the game with 25 strikeouts in 11-1/3 innings, before losing in the twelfth, 4-3.

Perhaps Williams' greatest satisfaction was compiling a 19-7 record against white major league teams. Even more remarkable is the fact that two of the losses came at age 45 and two others were by slim 1-0 margins. Overall, he shutout major league teams 10 times.

Chet Brewer was from the Midwest, and at the age of four, he'd lost three toes off his right foot when his home-made scooter ran under a street car. The injury had no effect on his baseball career. Blessed with great control, he never threw anything down the middle. Notoriously tough on left-handed hitters, Brewer threw a sneaky changeup, an overhand drop, and a lively fastball, but he was known as the emery ball express, with a Ph.D. in doctoring. This medicine man pos-

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*Larry Lester is the Research Director of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri. He advocates the election of Chet Brewer and Smokey Joe Williams into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.*



sessed the "gift of deception."

He compiled a 12-1 record (with eight complete games) in his first full season with the Kansas City Monarchs, in 1926. In 1929, he led the league with 16 wins and 15 complete games. That same year Brewer pitched 31 consecutive scoreless innings against league competition. In 1930, he started 15 games and finished every one of them.

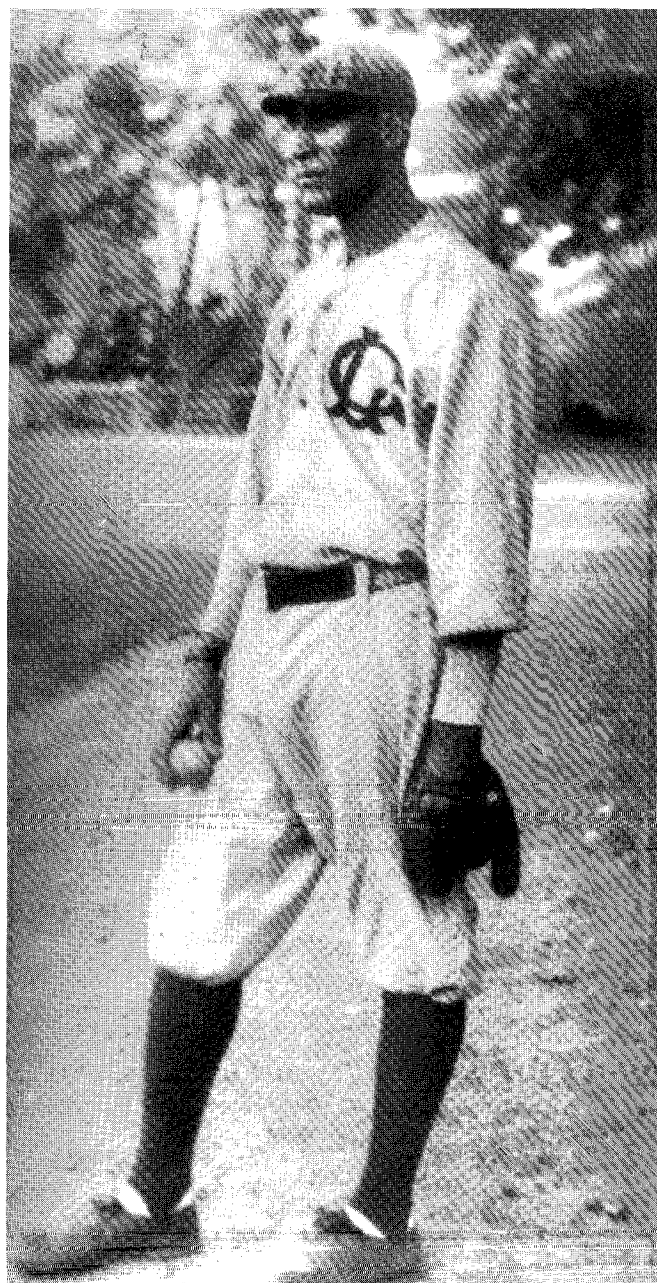
In 1932, Brewer pitched in 38 games and won 30. The next year, he won 34 games in 40 outings. In 1934, after winning 16 games in a row, he was selected to the East-West All-Star game, and he finished the season with 33 victories. In post-season play he beat a North Dakota team that consisted of Doc Cramer, Jimmie Foxx and Pinky Higgins of the A's; Gail Hopkins of the White Sox; Heinie Manush, Red Kress, and Luke Sewell of the Senators; Twitchy Porter of the Red Sox, and Bruce Campbell of the Browns. The bandit struck out future Hall-of-Famer Manush three times to notch an 11-0 win.

Brewer often ventured to the Caribbean islands to play major leaguers, Latin Americans and fellow Negro Leaguers. He played in Cuba for the Havana teams in 1930-32 and later pitched two no-hitters for the 1939 Mexican Tampico Alijadores—setting a record of 40 scoreless innings in the process. One of these gems was a 1-0 victory against Les Galles, a powerful team from Santa Rose. Perhaps Brewer's greatest pitching thrill came in 1935, with a no-hitter against Satchel Paige and the Santo Domingo All-Stars, owned by dictator Rafael Trujillo.

"There was no better teammate than Chet Brewer," recalls former second-sacker Newt Allen. "He wanted to win so bad. He'll do anything to win. All the fellows respect him for that. There's no one like him. There were games he just refused to lose. He was so strong-willed. He had total concentration on the mound."

The classic duel between the two hired guns occurred in 1930. Smokey Joe Williams of the Homestead Grays was 44 years old, but still possessed blazing speed coupled with diamond savvy. Chet Brewer of the Kansas City Monarchs was 23, just coming into his own as a great professional.

The Monarchs of Allen and Brewer ruled the Western division with six-shooter authority. They had pistol-whipped the Negro National League the previous season, winning 62 out of 79 games to capture the league championship. The Grays, a new entry into the Negro American League, included three future Hall of Famers in Oscar Charleston, Judy Johnson and rookie Josh Gibson. Owned by Cumberland Posey, they rode into town on a nine-game winning streak over the Monarchs that had started way back in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Posey's posse, poised to establish a reputation in this part of the country, began the three-game series with a victory the night before.



Larry Lester

*Smokey Joe Williams*

Now, it was high-noon drama, in this overtime Saturday nightcap, with legend Smokey Joe Williams facing bandito Chet Brewer. For seven innings the Monarchs might just as well have remained on the bench sipping their sarsaparilla. They couldn't buy a hit. In the eighth, however, Smokey Joe threw one down the middle of the plate and Newt Joseph got the Monarchs' only hit, a double. Joseph stole third as Williams fanned T.J. Young. John Turner, Monarch first baseman, followed with a soft liner over the infield. It looked like a sure Texas Leaguer, but Grays shortstop Jake Stephens, went back and made a spectacular catch, robbing the Monarchs of a run and possible victory. Brewer ended the inning, down on three swings.

The showdown continued in the seventh, eighth and ninth innings and with the first batter in the tenth, when Brewer whiffed 10 straight Grays. Ten up, 10 down, pick a tombstone. In all, Brewer struck out 19 batters. The Bandit held matters even until the twelfth frame when the Grays squeezed the trigger for a win 1-0. Charleston walked, Johnson popped out, and George Scales grounded out. Then centerfielder Chaney White slapped a leather bullet off the third base bag, bouncing it into foul territory. Charleston rode home from second and the Monarchs bit the dust. As the smoke cleared, Smokey Joe Williams emerged as baseball's mythical top gun. Smokey had struck out 27 batters in 12 innings, walking only one man. Except for Joseph's double in the eighth, he had not allowed a ball to be hit out of the infield, as the Grays took their second victory of the series.



Chet Brewer

## The Boxscore

DATE: August 2, 1930

PLACE: Muehlebach Field, Kansas City, MO.

TIME: 8:15 PM

Homestead	AB	R	H	PO	A	K
Jake Stephens, ss (a)	5	0	1	1	0	2
Vic Harris, lf	4	0	0	0	0	4
Oscar Charleston, 1b	3	1	0	5	0	1
Judy Johnson, 3b	5	0	0	0	1	3
George Scales, 2b	3	0	0	2	0	1
Chaney White, cf	4	0	2	0	0	1
Bill (Happy) Evans, rf	4	0	1	0	0	3
Josh Gibson, c	3	0	0	27	0	2
Joe Williams, p	3	0	0	1	3	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>

Kansas City	AB	R	H	PO	A	K
Leroy Taylor, rf	5	0	0	1	0	5
Deke Mothell, 2b	5	0	0	4	1	3
Newt Allen, ss	5	0	0	1	1	4
Goo Goo Livingston, cf	4	0	0	0	0	2
Wilson Redus, lf	3	0	0	0	0	3
Newt Joseph, 3b	4	0	1	1	2	2
T.J. (Tom) Young, c	4	0	0	19	4	4
John Turner, 1b	4	0	0	9	0	1
Chet Brewer, p	4	0	0	0	4	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>

Grays 000 000 000 001 - 1

Monarchs 000 000 000 000 - 0

(a) Stephens bunted for third strike foul

Errors - Pittsburgh 1 (Gibson), Monarch 1 (Mothell)

Left on Base - Pittsburgh 6, Monarchs 3

Stolen Bases - Evans 2, Williams, Taylor, Joseph, Stephens

Two base hits - White, Joseph

Double Plays - Kansas City, Allen to Mothell to Turner

Base on Balls - off Williams 1 (Redus); off Brewer 4 (Harris, Charleston, Scales 2)

Passed Ball - Young

RBI - Chaney White

Time: 2:00

Umpires: Gholson and Hawkins

Kansas City American, August 7, 1930



*Two great baseball executives battle over accusations of crookedness leveled against a pair of the game's greatest players.*

# Say It Ain't So, Ty

*Mark Alvarez*

If you were like me a few years ago, you kept track of the sad and squalid ruin of Pete Rose more by osmosis than by an eager reading of the depressing daily articles charting his fall. Even so, you probably came across, as I did, occasional references to the so-called "Cobb-Speaker Scandal" of 1926-27. Sportswriters trying to put the Rose matter in context, or searching for an historical perspective, tended to drop a few lines on the ancient scandal into their ruminations on the current one. But none of them seemed to know what he was talking about. The event is pretty hard to pin down for certain six decades later, but the story and its main players are immeasurably more dramatic than the creeps surrounding Rose and the sordid facts that sealed his fate.

The matter hit the headlines—hard—in late December, 1926, seven years after the thrown World Series of 1919, and more than five years since the suspension of the players involved. Since then, Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis had been busy weeding out undesirables, forcing players and owners to break off their associations with gamblers, and trying, with considerable success, to reestablish baseball's image as "the clean sport." But now here he was, announcing that two of the greatest players in baseball history were being thrown out of the game because the American League accused them not just of betting, but of betting on a game they had fixed. "BASEBALL SCANDAL UP AGAIN," the tabloids screamed, but what must really have ruined appetites at breakfast tables around the

country was what followed: "WITH COBB AND SPEAKER NAMED."

Adding to Landis' frustration was the fact that the alleged fixing had taken place in that same awful year of 1919—before he had taken office, and so long ago that it seemed idiotic to bring it up now that the game was back on an even keel.

**The charges**—Ty Cobb, who was later to call this period "a year of agony," had been for years the most hated and feared man in baseball. The drive and combativeness that had brought him over 90 records and credit for 12 batting championships had also made him abrasive, unbending and nearly impossible to get along with. Nonetheless, he was recognized as the game's greatest player, and in 1926, as the 39-year-old playing manager of the Detroit Tigers, he had hit .339. A month after the season ended, he not only resigned his managerial position, but told the Associated Press: "I have swung my last bat in a competitive baseball game."

Tris Speaker had played his entire career in the shadow of Cobb. If it hadn't been for the Georgia Peach, Texan Speaker would have been the dominant player in the American League in the years before 1920. Known in the sporting press as "the world's greatest outfielder," he consistently challenged Cobb's offensive domination, too, finally topping him with a .386 average in 1916. In 1926, as playing manager of the Cleveland Indians, he had batted .304 and had led his team to a strong second place finish behind Babe Ruth's Yankees. Unlike Cobb, he was considered an effective manager, but less than a month after the

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*Mark Alvarez is SABR's Publications Director. Every six days, he and his father or daughter wind the town clock in Woodbury, Connecticut.*

Georgian's resignation, Speaker, too, quit his post, the reasons for his leaving "a profound mystery," according to *The New York Times*.

The mystery had been engineered by Ban Johnson, president of the American League, who had obtained evidence of the fix from Dutch Leonard, a former pitcher whose 1.01 Earned Run Average for the 1914 Boston Red Sox is still a major league record. Johnson had allowed the two players to resign rather than make the affair public. The evidence had been turned over to Landis merely "as a courtesy," according to Johnson, who professed himself shocked at the Commissioner's betrayal of trust and the resulting headlines. The rumor and speculation that seemed to prompt Landis' publication of the charges turned to outrage when fans learned that their heroes had been forced out of the game for crookedness. They simply didn't believe it.

Newspapers ran editorials criticizing Landis and Johnson. Groups and individuals took out advertisements in support of Cobb and Speaker. The suspicion and cynicism that had been spawned by the Black Sox scandal had dissipated over the years, and it never had extended to players like these two, whose fierce competitiveness had been something for disillusioned fans to hold onto.

Nineteen-nineteen had been baseball's nadir. It had been the year of the Black Sox World Series, the year that two other famous players, Hal Chase and Heinie Zimmerman, had left the game under clouds of accusation. It had been a year in which gamblers—flushed from their natural habitat by the wartime closing of the racetracks—could boast that they controlled ball games through bribes and even regular salaries paid to players. And now, if Johnson and Landis could be believed, it had been the year in which Cobb and Speaker, the two biggest names in the game, got together to throw a game between their teams.

The core of Johnson's case against the two players was the testimony and letters he had received from Leonard. The pitcher claimed that he had met under the stands in Detroit with Cobb, Speaker and former pitching great Smoky Joe Wood, who by then was a part-time Indian outfielder. According to Leonard, the Tiger players mentioned that they wanted badly to finish the season in third place, behind the Indians, who had already clinched second, and Chicago, eight of whose players would soon achieve infamy in the upcoming World Series. Leonard (often called "Hub" because of his first name, Hubert, and no relation to the knuckleballing Emil "Dutch" Leonard of the following generation) told Johnson that Speaker had assured the two Detroit players that the Tigers would win the game the next day, and with it a shot at third place money. At that, according to Leonard, they all decided that they might as well profit from the arrangement. According to Leonard, Cobb was to put up \$2,000,

Speaker and Wood \$1,000 each, and he himself \$1,500.

**The evidence**—These two letters, one from Cobb and the other from Wood, were considered conclusive by Ban Johnson. Wood's was the more damaging:

*Cleveland, Ohio, Friday*

*Dear Friend Dutch:*

*Enclosed please find certified check for sixteen hundred and thirty dollars (\$1,630.00).*

*The only bet West could get down was \$600 against \$420 (10 to 7). Cobb did not get up a cent. He told us that and I believe him. Could have put up some at 5 to 2 on Detroit, but did not, as that would make us put up \$1,000 to win \$400.*

*We won the \$420. I gave West \$30, leaving \$390, or \$130 for each of us. Would not have cashed your check at all, but West thought he could get it up at 10 to 7, and I was going to put it all up at those odds. We would have won \$1,750 for the \$2,500 if we could have placed it.*

*If we ever have another chance like this we will know enough to try to get down early.*

*Let me hear from you, Dutch. With all good wishes to Mrs. Leonard and yourself, I am.*

**JOE WOOD**

Wood's calculations indicate that he, Leonard and an unnamed third party shared in the meager profits of the wager. If "Cobb did not get up a cent," and West simply ran the errand, who was the third bettor? Leonard said Speaker was. Wood claimed that it was not Speaker, but another, unnamed, "friend of mine from Cleveland."

Cobb's letter doesn't clarify this point. It does make clear that Cobb knew about the wagering, and that he was involved in trying to place the bet:

*Augusta, Ga., Oct. 23, 1919.*

*Dear Dutch:*

*Well, old boy, guess you are out in old California by this time and enjoying life.*

*I arrived home and found Mrs. Cobb only fair, but the baby girl was fine and at this time Mrs. Cobb is very well, but I have been very busy getting acquainted with my family and have not tried to do any correspondence, hence my delay.*

*Wood and myself were considerably disappointed in our business proposition, as we had \$2,000 to put into it and the other side quoted us \$1,400, and when we finally secured that much*

*money it was about 2 o'clock and they refused to deal with us as they had men in Chicago to take up the matter with and they had no time, so we completely fell down and of course we felt badly over it.*

*Everything was open to Wood and he can tell you about it when we get together. It was quite a responsibility and I don't care for it again, I can tell you.*

*Well, I hope you found everything in fine shape at home and all your troubles will be little ones. I made a this year's share of world series in cotton since I came home and expect to make more.*

*I thought the White Sox should have won, but I am satisfied they were too overconfident. Well, old scout, drop me a line when you can. We have had some dandy fishing since I arrived home.*

*With kindest regards to Mrs. Leonard, I remain,*

*Sincerely,*

TY

Speaker is mentioned nowhere in either letter, and only Leonard's oral testimony casts him as a conspirator.

Unfortunately for both the league president and the former pitcher, Leonard's testimony was considered suspect by many baseball people and journalists, who knew he carried a grudge against Cobb, his manager at Detroit, for releasing him in 1926. Many thought he might also be bitter toward Speaker, an old Boston teammate who had not claimed him for Cleveland when Cobb put him on waivers and let him go. His motives were further questioned when Henry Killilea, attorney for the American League, revealed that he paid Leonard to hand over the letters. Killilea refused to name the purchase price, but it was variously reported in the press to have been \$15,000 or \$20,000. Leonard denied selling the letters at any price, saying that he had turned them over "for the good of the game," and that whatever money he had received had been in settlement of a dispute with the Detroit club.

Bill Evans, an American League umpire who, it was well known, had once mixed it up under the stands with Cobb, minced no words in making it clear that he doubted Leonard was acting from such noble motives: "Only a miserable thirst for vengeance actuated Leonard's attack on Cobb and Speaker...As a pitcher he was gutless...we umpires had no respect for Leonard, for he whined on every pitch called against him...It is a crime that men of the stature of Ty and Tris should be blackened by a man of this caliber with charges that every baseballer knows to be utterly false."

Cobb maintained that the whole affair was "a vile plot" hatched by his enemies, and denied betting on the game of September 25. He claimed that he had just done a favor for Leonard, whom he now labeled "a cur dog," by finding out from Wood after the game how much money had been bet. Speaker denied knowing anything at all about the wager.

All three men—Cobb, Speaker and Wood—angrily denied that the game had been thrown by the Indians. The public, outraged by the suggestion that players like Cobb and Speaker could be involved in such a tawdry affair, backed them up with protests to Landis, telegrams to congressmen and petitions to club owners. Humorist Will Rogers spoke for millions when he said that if Cobb and Speaker had "been selling out all these years I would like to have seen them when they wasn't selling." In a matter of days, Senators were threatening official investigations, and the halls of the Capitol began to echo with sympathetic congressional rumbles of "anti-trust."

**Public reaction**—Sportswriters mostly stuck to the Rogers theme, and didn't—publicly, at least—ask the two questions that were begging for answers. First, if Cobb and Speaker weren't guilty, why had they resigned so quietly in the fall? Initially, the public was told that their resignations had nothing to do with Leonard's allegations. Then the story was that they had resigned in order to spare their clubs embarrassment and expense when the charges became known. Next, they had wanted to shield their families from the stress of scandal. Eventually, the fans were told that, since Leonard had refused to face them at a hearing, Cobb and Speaker had been afraid that an acquittal based on their stories alone would be labeled a whitewash and effectively ruin their reputations. Speaker was also said to have been concerned over what harm publicity might do to his friend and old roommate Joe Wood, who had left the Indians in 1922 to become baseball coach at Yale. The scandal was finally made public because a newspaper had uncovered the story and was threatening to publish what facts it had. At that point, Cobb and Speaker were supposed to have decided that they had no choice but to fight.

Today's skeptical press has learned that this kind of waffling rarely accompanies candor. But the reporters of 1926 were not inclined to hold the feet of a pair of genuine American heroes to the fire.

The second—and far more serious—question was this: if there was no arrangement about the game, just what did Wood mean when he wrote to Leonard, "If we ever get another chance like this, we will know enough to try to get down early."?

Reporters covering the story didn't pursue this issue either. Nor, as we shall see, did the Commissioner of baseball ever publicly address it.

**The defense**—Predictably, Cobb didn't wait around to see what questions would be asked. He went on the offensive. While in the autobiography he wrote 35 years later with Al Stump, he mentioned neither the fact that he resigned nor the existence of the two letters, he repeated two "common sense" points that he had made over and over during the crises. First, "For any trio of men [he was including Wood, who, like Leonard, didn't play that day, so couldn't have participated in any game-throwing] to attempt to rig a ball game is ridiculous on the face of it."

As awkward—and even dangerous—as it may have been to contradict an angry Ty Cobb, it hardly takes a baseball genius to point out that it's not ridiculous to think of three men—or even two—throwing a game if one of them controls the pitching of the team that's supposed to lose. Leonard's version of the meeting under the stands had Indian manager Speaker telling the Tiger players that Detroit would win even if he had to take the mound himself. As it turned out, the Indians used only one pitcher, Elmer Myers, who gave up 18 hits and nine runs. (It was a hitter's day all around, though. Tiger pitcher Bernie Boland yielded five runs on 13 hits.)

Cobb's second common sense argument doesn't stand up to scrutiny, either. "Funny thing about it," he said as soon as the accusations were made public, "was that Speaker got three hits and I got one." This argument was accepted as final, even though every fan of the era must have been all too aware that Shoeless Joe Jackson, the most famous of the Black Sox, had batted .375 in the 1919 Series. It turns out, as the public was soon to learn in another stunning turn of events, that ballplayers who are so inclined throw games in the field.

Despite good reason to be at least a little skeptical of the players' stories, by the time the scandal was a few days old most fans and journalists had lined up behind the two great players, unconvinced either by Leonard's testimony, the letters he produced or the assurances of Ban Johnson, a man Cobb called "an aging, two-faced incompetent," that the game of September 25, 1919 had been thrown and that Cobb and Speaker had helped throw it.

Everyone expected Commissioner Landis to live up to his reputation for tough, decisive action and settle the case quickly. He didn't. In fact, after making the elements of the case public, he said not another official word about it for more than a month, and by then another bizarre incident had intervened.

**Return of the Black Sox**—At the end of December, about a week after the scandal broke, Swede Risberg, the banned shortstop of the 1919 Black Sox, let it be known that in his opinion this Cobb-Speaker business

was nothing. He could name twenty players, he said, some of them stars and many of them still active in baseball in 1926, who were crooked. Landis immediately invited Risberg to Chicago, where he told his story on New Year's Day, 1927. He told the Commissioner that in 1917, the whole White Sox team had paid the Tigers to "slough" (throw) four games to Chicago. Players like second-baseman Eddie Collins and catcher Ray Schalk (both now in the Hall of Fame) were involved, he said, along with manager Clarence "Pants" Rowland and other "Clean Sox," as well as most of the Detroit team. "They pushed Ty Cobb and Tris Speaker out on a piker bet," said Risberg. "I think it's only fair that the white lilies get the same treatment." He went on to say that it was common during the 1917-1919 period for teams to slough games, and he told Landis that it was usually accomplished by the players playing out of position. (Interestingly, Risberg told a reporter that he doubted that Cobb had been involved in this 1917 sloughing. "There never was a better or straighter baseball player than Cobb, or Speaker, either, to my way of thinking," he said.) Landis wired some forty players on the teams involved, giving them the opportunity to travel to Chicago, face Risberg and answer his charges.

Risberg's bitter allegations let loose a deluge of accusations, denials and poison reminiscences. Barney Dreyfuss, owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates, dredged up an old charge against the Giants of John McGraw, whom he hated. Chick Gandil, another of the Black Sox, announced that not only did he know Risberg's story to be true, but he knew a lot more, besides. There was noise about an incident in which the St. Louis Browns were supposed to have thrown games to Detroit in order to hurt Cleveland. Joe Jackson told the press that he could put a lot of things straight if Landis would give him the chance. Baseball was washing its dirty linen in public with a vengeance, and the prestige of the game, on the mend since Landis' stern treatment of Risberg, Gandil, Jackson and the other Black Sox, was on the line along with it. The public, shocked by the steady tattoo of revelation, waited to see what would happen.

The confrontation between Risberg and the men he had accused of dishonesty was held four days after his meeting with Landis. James R. Harrison, who covered it for the *Times*, called it "the most extraordinary hearing that baseball had ever seen," and went on to recount melodramatically that "while Risberg lolled in a near-by chair, a cigarette burning in his fingers, his face sometimes lighted up with a cynical smile," every one of the eighteen accused players who had come to Chicago denied that the games had been thrown.

Eddie Collins and others admitted that money had been paid to members of the Detroit team, but only as a reward for the Tigers' having beaten Boston in some



games that were critical to Chicago's drive for the pennant. Collins claimed that the money hadn't even been collected from the White Sox until a month after the season had ended, and that the rewarding of the players of a second team for doing an especially good job against a third had been common in baseball before 1920.

The meeting was a tense and angry one. At one point, Donie Bush, onetime Detroit shortstop, leapt from his chair and shook his fist angrily at Risberg, a truly rough character whom Joe Jackson called "a hard guy." Later, pitcher Bernie Boland snarled at his accuser, "You're still a pig!" Buck Weaver, the third baseman of the Black Sox, and a player many people feel was wrongly banished from the game by Landis, testified that he knew nothing about the alleged fix, then stepped down from the witness' chair and confronted the Commissioner. "Judge, I don't feel that I owe baseball anything, but baseball does owe me something. I ask you for reinstatement." Landis, taken by surprise, told the former infielder to "drop me a line," and that he would take the matter up. Weaver died in 1956, still trying to clear his name.

The next day, Gandil took the stand in support of his old teammate, Risberg. He denied that the payments to the Tigers had been a reward for their play against the Red Sox. After the session, Harrison of the *Times* voiced the attitude of most of those who had observed the two-day hearing: "It will take more than the sworn testimony of all the eight Black Sox to convict Eddie Collins, and Schalk and Faber and Rowland, as well as Cobb, Veach, Heilmann, Dauss and others of the 1917 Tigers. If the only evidence against these men is the word of the Black Sox of 1919 then the former never will be found guilty."

Landis, though, was known to be puzzled over why Risberg and Gandil would have faced so many hostile men unless their charges were truthful. It was reported that "Judge Landis never does the ordinary thing, and if he thinks there is anything to the Risberg and Gandil charges he will punish mercilessly."

Risberg, in a smarmy statement to the press, said that he was hoping for "a whitewash" because he didn't want to see the players he'd accused expelled from the game.

On Wednesday, January 12, five days after the hearing, Landis cleared the 40 players of Risberg's charges, while scolding them for rewarding players on another team for good play. Paying the Tigers, he said in typical style, "was an act of impropriety, reprehensible and censurable, but not an act of criminality." More important, the Commissioner recommended that four new rules be adopted by baseball to cover the kind of situation that now seemed to be cropping up.

"1. A statute of limitations with respect to al-

leged baseball offenses, as in our State and national statutes with regard to criminal offenses.

"2. Ineligibility for one year for offering or giving any gift or reward by the players or management of one club to the players or management of another club for services rendered or supposed to have been rendered in defeating a competing club.

"3. Ineligibility for one year for betting any sum whatsoever upon any ball game in connection with which the bettor has no duty to perform.

"4. Permanent ineligibility for betting any sum whatsoever upon any ball game in connection with which the bettor has any duty to perform."

Although the last two recommendations addressed issues raised by the accusations against Cobb and Speaker, whose case had been pushed to the back burner by Risberg's sensational charges, they were simply codifications of what Landis already had the power to do. It was the first proposal that seemed to have important implications for the two great players. Many of the matters that had been plaguing the Judge for the past few months had sprung from the period before he had become Commissioner, and he knew that a more unsavory atmosphere had permeated the game until the Black Sox had shown the owners the dangers of running too lax a ship. He didn't want to deal with any more cases from the old days.

Many observers interested in the fates of Cobb and Speaker felt that the acquittal of the players accused by Risberg made Landis' decision in the case of their heroes a foregone conclusion. Some looked at the Commissioner's list of recommendations and thought they could see which way the wind was blowing. Landis, not wanting to face the issue squarely, might just refuse to sanction the dismissal of the two players from the game on the grounds that the alleged offense had occurred too many years before.

**Behind the scenes**—There was, however, another aspect to the case, one that even the most rabid fans were unaware of. Ban Johnson, the founder and president of the American League, had been the dominant voice in baseball since the turn of the century, when he had jammed his circuit's major-league status down the National League's throat and forced the game into maturity. He deeply resented the Commissioner and the power the owners had given him.

From the day that Landis had made the Cobb-



Speaker case public, Johnson had been sniping at him, first for having given the facts to the newspapers, and then for not immediately having sanctioned the action of the American League. Now, in the guise of "one of Organized Baseball's leaders," he blasted Landis in the press on the very day that the Judge's decision in the Risberg matter hit the sports pages. He told the world that regardless of whatever action the Commissioner might take, neither Cobb nor Speaker would ever perform in the American League again. He implied that Landis had been handling the matter poorly, that it was none of his business anyway, and that there was more damaging evidence in the case than had as yet been made public.

Three days later, Landis, knowing full well who was out for his scalp, retaliated. Noting in fine magisterial style that "ordinarily such anonymous assertions do not merit serious consideration," he went on to say that since Cobb and Speaker were "vitally concerned" in the effects of such assertions, he was making his first public statement on the case. He said that he had been aware of the investigation since June, and that Johnson had indicated in November that all of the American League's evidence had been turned over. The Commissioner's office, he said, had no evidence other than that which had been made public. Then, in an attempt to force Johnson's hand, the Judge summoned him and the eight American League owners to meet with him in Chicago on January 24 to "bare all the facts" connected with the case.

On January 18, two days after Landis' statement, Johnson responded, this time openly. As the *Times* had it, "It's a contest now with Kenesaw Mountain Landis, High Commissioner of Baseball, in this corner, and Ban Johnson, President of the American League, in the other." Johnson announced that he did indeed have evidence, in the form of detective reports, that had not been handed over to the Judge, and that Landis would never get them "unless we go to court."

He went on to speak of the players: "I love Ty Cobb...I have had to strap him as a father straps an unruly boy...I know Ty Cobb's not a crooked ball player. We let him go because he had written a peculiar letter about a betting deal that he couldn't explain and because I felt he had violated a position of trust. Tris Speaker is a different type of fellow. For want of a better word I'd call Tris cute. He knows why he was forced out of the managership of the Cleveland club. If he wants me to tell him I'll meet him in a court of law and tell the facts under oath."

He then described the situation as he saw it: "The American League is a business. When our directors found two employees whom they didn't think were serving them right they had a right to let them go. Now isn't that enough? As long as I'm President of the American League neither one of them will manage or

play on our teams."

Johnson didn't stop there. He accused Landis of not having cooperated in the American League's prosecution of the Black Sox in 1920-1921. He questioned the Commissioner's handling of the Risberg case, specifically his spending of \$25,000 without the consent of the Advisory Council. He blamed the Judge for the "cloud of rumor" hovering over the names of Cobb and Speaker, and again expressed amazement that Landis had made the matter public: "The only motive I could see behind that move was a desire for personal publicity." As the *Times* said, "it is a showdown between the Commissioner and Ban Johnson, the settlement for all time of their seven-year feud that began when Johnson so bitterly fought the appointment of Landis."

The battle between the two executives was coming to a head as Johnson maneuvered for leverage and Landis watched for an opening. On Thursday, January 20, Johnson, sensing that many fans and most of his club owners felt that his earlier statement had been too harsh and had done Cobb and Speaker an injustice, tried to soften his position. The two players, he announced, had not been ousted for crookedness, but for incompetence. Cobb had been too violent to be a good manager. Many of his players, poor fellows, had complained. Speaker had been too fond of horse races and too tolerant of similar proclivities among his players. As a result, neither of the player-managers was getting the best out of his team, and the league had decided to let both of them go. Leonard's charges had nothing to do with the league's decision. They had been "inconsequential."

As sportswriter John Kieran wrote at the time: "To anyone who knows baseball, such an excuse for the removal of a club manager by a league President is nothing short of laughable. On that basis the last half dozen managers of the Phillies were in danger of hanging." The once masterful Johnson was clearly not himself. After years of sparring with a man he considered an interloper, suffering defeat after humiliating defeat and watching the league he had founded and nurtured being wrenched from his control, he had become an exhausted, heavy-drinking, and increasingly frantic man. He thrashed and floundered in his desperate attempt to stave off the personal disaster that the press was openly predicting for him.

Landis, holding the whip hand and aware of his rival's inconsistent behavior, had only to sit tight. He didn't have long to wait. The day before the scheduled meeting in Chicago, the American League owners, at a session called by Johnson to organize support for his position, relieved their president of his duties and repudiated his criticism of the Commissioner. They also announced that all of the evidence pertaining to the Cobb-Speaker matter had indeed been turned over to Landis and made public. Johnson, near collapse and in

the care of a doctor who certified that he should take "a much needed rest," was replaced temporarily by Detroit owner Frank Navin. "The American League owners tried a muzzle on Johnson [during another dispute in 1924]," Kieran had written prophetically the day before. "This time they may try a catapult."

**The Commissioner's decision**—If the Judge's dismissal of the Risberg charges and recommendation of a statute of limitations had made a similar decision in the Cobb-Speaker case likely, his victory over Ban Johnson made it inevitable. Pronouncing himself "perfectly satisfied" with the most recent action of the American League, Landis announced that he would "take up" the matter and render a decision "very soon." He indicated to the press "that the case had simmered down to the question of whether the two athletes had thrown a ball game or had merely bet on a ball game," he went on to hint "that he would not expel them" for having bet on a game in which they played. This was an astonishing position for the draconian Commissioner to take, especially in light of his proposed regulations, but it went largely unremarked.

On January 27, more than a month after the scandal had first been made public, and two months after Speaker's resignation had really started the rumors flying, the Judge cleared the two players of the fixing charges and returned them to the reserve lists of their respective teams. In his statement, he merely traced the chronology of the affair, noted that Leonard had refused to come to Chicago to face the men he had accused, and then announced, "These players have not been, nor are they now, found guilty of fixing a ball game. By no decent standard of justice could such a finding be made."

There was no weighing of testimony, no mention of betting, and no explanation of why it had taken so long to arrive at this simple decision. The reasons for Ban Johnson's original finding of guilt were never detailed or specifically refuted by the Commissioner's office.

W.O. McGeehan of the New York *Herald Tribune* suggested gently that other considerations might have obscured the Commissioner's stated passion for "a decent standard of justice."

"Landis made the best of an unfortunate situation" because, McGeehan wrote delicately, the "charges were calculated to do great injury to professional baseball."

The decision was immensely popular, and the players, who early on had claimed to fear a whitewash, declared victory.

**Afterwards**—Joe Wood, who had been given a clean bill of health by Yale three weeks before, wasn't mentioned in the decision because he had left professional baseball in 1922. Smoky Joe coached at Yale until 1942.

Some 25 years later, his chats with Lawrence S. Ritter made up one of the most poignant and inspiring sections of that best of all baseball books, *The Glory of Their Times*.

Dutch Leonard, the villain of the piece in the eyes of most fans, was "too ill" to talk to reporters after Landis' decision was announced. He had steadfastly refused to come to Chicago to confront Cobb and Speaker—even claiming at one point that it was a city in which people had been known to be "bumped off"—and both the Commissioner and the public made the most of his reticence.

Cobb himself, along with Speaker, was officially returned to his club by the decision. Neither of their owners, however, seemed enthusiastic to welcome them back, either as players or as managers. They were both made free agents and given the right to negotiate with any interested American League team. Cobb eventually signed with the Philadelphia Athletics, where he ended his career with what he called "the two happiest years I spent in baseball," batting .357 and .323 for Connie Mack, "the man I most admired in baseball." Speaker moved over to the Washington Senators, where he hit .327 in 1927, before joining his old rival to play his final year in the majors with the A's.

Ban Johnson, of whom Branch Rickey was later to say, "His contribution to the game...is not closely equaled by any other single person or group of persons," amazed everyone by returning from enforced exile and once again taking over the helm of the league he had founded. He was finally forced out, sick and exhausted, a few months later. He lived five more lonely years. His plaque at Cooperstown is only a half-dozen steps away from that of Landis, whom he once called "a wild eyed nut."

Johnson wasn't alone in his estimation of the Commissioner. In 1923, J.G. Taylor Spink, the editor of *The Sporting News*, had called the Commissioner an "erratic and irresponsible despot." The Judge had responded characteristically by calling Spink a "swinc," but that didn't stop other writers from occasionally criticizing what baseball historian Dr. Harold Scymour called Landis' "sanctimonious posture." Nonetheless, the Judge remained Commissioner until he died in 1944, and his legend still serves the game.

These two great executives dominated baseball in succession. Johnson is credited by many with creating modern big league baseball. Landis presided over the game's growth from a mere business toward what modern magnates are pleased to call an industry. The dispute between them that was catalyzed by the Cobb-Speaker affair sprang from the different perspectives their separate roles forced them to take. Johnson, who had battled the established order to create and sustain his new league, had defined "the good of the game" narrowly—combatants slugging it out in the trenches

can't often afford the luxury of standing back and taking the larger view.

Landis, behind his fearsome reputation, tended to treat baseball less as a personal fiefdom and more as a stage upon which he had the great pleasure of playing a role. Despite the dictatorial powers the panicky owners had given him when they signed him on, he displayed over the years a canny flexibility in determining where "the good of the game" lay.

Landis' strong early actions as Commissioner had created for him a valuable reputation as a strict and merciless disciplinarian. Now the game was healthy again, and the drastic treatment that had helped effect the cure could be discontinued. The Judge could afford to be lenient—especially since leniency simultaneously

salved public opinion and confounded his old antagonist.

But this much is virtually certain: if Cobb and Speaker had been named Smith and Jones, or if the affair had arisen earlier in Landis' tenure as Commissioner, they would have joined the Black Sox, Phil Douglas, Benny Kauff, Cozy Dolan, Jimmy O'Connell, et al. in forced retirement. They probably would have done so anyway, if Landis and Johnson hadn't been at each others' throats. The retirement of two aging but still competent ballplayers would have remained a small mystery rather than a great scandal if it hadn't been for the struggle between the Commissioner and the League President.

#### DID THEY DO IT?

What really happened on that September day in 1919? The tough questions weren't asked at the time, so we'll never know for sure. But with the benefit of hindsight we can draw some reasonable conclusions.

First, it's safe to say that players like Cobb, Speaker, and Wood would not have been likely to fix a game they thought meant something. But given the atmosphere surrounding the sport during the teens, it's also easy to believe that there was an agreement—which the players probably considered harmless, if not downright normal in the circumstances—for the Indians, their place secure in the standings, to ease up on the Tigers.

Second, there can be no reasonable doubt that Wood, Leonard and Cobb were involved in betting on the game. And Wood's letter—especially the "If we ever get another chance like this" comment—strongly implies that they were getting their money down on inside information.

It's likely, then, that it dawned on one or more of the group assembled under the stands that they were in a position, at the end of a long season, to make a little extra money before heading home for the winter.

Did they do it? Probably. Not a fix in the classic sense of conspiring in advance to throw a game for money, but an impromptu arrangement that would clearly have been beyond the pale anytime after the Black Sox Scandal.

I had a chance to ask Joe Wood about all this one day in 1975. He was 85, a marvelous, proud and tough old man who had long outlived the other principals. The scandal had been one of the great traumas of his life, and he believed that it had unjustly kept him out of the Baseball Hall of Fame. He would say only two things about the affair. "I didn't do anything wrong," he told me, and paused with an old scrapbook open on his lap. "Things were so different then."

—M.A.



# The Hoak Hoax

*Everardo J. Santamarina*

**I**n June, 1964, *Sport* magazine published a story signed by Don Hoak with Myron Cope bearing the catchy title: "The Day I Batted Against Castro." It was published shortly after Hoak had been released by the Phillies and after he made the comment "I never saw so many doors close so quickly. My phone stopped ringing and I didn't hear from anybody."

In the article, Hoak, who said he was playing the winter of 1950-51 in Havana, ran into Fidel Castro during a student demonstration. Marching straight out to the mound and seizing a glove and ball, Castro toed the rubber and faced Hoak at the plate. After a series of pitches, including some close calls, the "Hoak temper" entered the picture and turning to the umpire, Hoak announced, "Now just get that idiot out of the game."

The story has become part of baseball lore, and has been reprinted a number of times. Charles Einstein printed it in *The Third Fireside Book of Baseball* and later on again in his *Fireside Baseball Reader*. John Thorn included it in his anthology with a preamble, "Incredible But True," and the *SABR Review of Books* noted that the Castro of the piece is Fidel, not Bill. More recently, Tim Wendel referred to the event in *USA Baseball Weekly* (August 1991). No one has ever questioned the validity of Hoak's claim. Not even Babe Ruth's "Called Shot" got such a free ride.

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*Everardo J. Santamarina died in March of this year. A native of Matanzas, Cuba, he was well known among his family and friends for his extensive knowledge and life-long love of baseball. In addition to this article, which he researched and wrote shortly before being diagnosed with brain cancer, his 40,000 baseball cards and book collection testify to the strong vocation he had for Cuban and American baseball's historical archive.*

But the story is simply untrue. Let's look at the evidence.

According to Hoak, the famous "incident" took place as his Cienfuegos team was preparing to play Pedro Formental's Marianao. He also described Castro and Formental (not Formanthal, as Cope spelled it in the *Sport* article) as having a friendly relationship. But the fact is that at the time the story allegedly took place, Pedro Formental was the Havana team's center fielder not Marianao's right fielder. (Formental had originally played for Cienfuegos, but had been traded in the mid-'40s to Havana for Gil Torres, a former Washington Senator utility player during World War II. Torres returned to the Havana team shortly thereafter.) As it happened, Formental was a Batista supporter, not a Castro man, and he later ran for Congress on Batista's ticket during the rigged 1954 elections.

Other people are improperly described, too. The catcher Hoak ascribes to the Marianao team, Mike Guerra, was in fact the player-manager of the Almendares team. Fermín Guerra, as he was known in Cuba, died recently, but his photo appears in the Almendares team championship banner for 1949-50 and in Torres's *La Historia del Béisbol Cubano 1876-1967* in the team's picture for 1950-51.

Perhaps the most jarring element of Hoak's story is his representation of umpire Amado Maestri (not Miastri). Maestri was widely respected as the best umpire in Cuba. In fact, the scrupulous and effective Maestri had been enlisted by Jorge Pasquel in his quest to bestow respectability on his 1946 and 1947 Mexican League adventures. But after ruling against Pasquel's team during play in Mexico City and ejecting



*Don Hoak—he never faced Fidel.*

Pasquel from the grounds when the owner stormed to the plate, Maestri returned to Cuba, where he was hailed a hero for holding his ground. No one who knew or saw Amado Maestri can believe that he would put up with student pranksters holding up a game, or that he would have to be urged to take action by a 23-year-old foreign player.

But these errors and inconsistencies concerning those who supposedly took part in the famous “incident” are the least of the evidence against it. Hoak’s comment in the *Sport* story: “The dictator, Fulgencio

Batista, tolerated (the students)...” can be used to point out one of the story’s fundamental inaccuracies. Any serious book on Cuban history confirms that Batista seized power in a coup d’etat on March 10, 1952, over a year after Hoak claimed he was on the island. And, for the historical record, during the time of Hoak’s alleged visit in 1950-51, Cuba was enjoying the most democratic period of its tragic history under the leadership of President Prío. Fulgencio Batista was then only a senator from Las Villas province, preparing to run for President in the anticipated June 1952 elections. In addition, no serious student disorders occurred until long after Hoak left Cuba—first in December of 1955 and then in 1956 and 1957.

If the 1950-51 dates given in the Hoak-Cope piece aren’t accurate, when could this event have occurred? The article claimed that Castro was demonstrating against the dictator Batista, and this pins the date down to the winter of 1952-53. Batista took power on March 10, 1952, after the end of the 1951-52 winter season. Castro was jailed and arrested on July 26, 1953 for the attack on the Moncada rebellion.

There is a small problem with the 1952-53 date: Don Hoak does not appear in any Cienfuegos roster for the 1952-53 season. He *did* play for

Cienfuegos in 1953-54, as confirmed in a weekly supplement corresponding to the January 14, 1954 issue of the *Diario de la Marina*. At the time, Don Hoak had 199 at bats, 26 runs scored, 60 hits, 4 home runs, 6 stolen bases, 21 strikeouts and 26 walks.

So Don Hoak played in Cuba only during the winter 1953-54. Fidel Castro was not released from the prison on the far-away Isle of Pines until May 15, 1955. The famous “incident” didn’t occur. Hoak never saw the day he batted against Castro.



# Team All-Time Records

Al Yellon

**T**he imbroglio a year ago over whether the San Francisco Giants were to move to the Tampa-St. Petersburg area brought to mind an interesting issue that has not, to my mind, been addressed in any baseball record books, to wit: when a franchise moves, should its records continue, or cease?

Record books disagree. *The Sporting News* record books list records for clubs haphazardly, listing some moved franchises as if they came into existence magically, then disappeared (as the Milwaukee Braves and Kansas City A's); some others, such as the original 1901 American League Milwaukee Brewers and Baltimore Orioles, have their records included with their successor clubs, the St. Louis Browns and New York Yankees (but then the Browns' records "end," and those for the current Baltimore Orioles—the same franchise—suddenly begin). *The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* lists franchises such as the New York Giants, Brooklyn Dodgers and both Senators clubs as "extinct," even though there was continuity from one season to the next with all those franchises, with the exception of their location. The encyclopedias currently available do a good job of listing year-by-year totals, but don't give the overall picture, and they don't explicitly include ties.

What follows is an attempt to unify all the chaotically organized data into what I believe to be an accurate, complete standing of all 28 teams that existed at the end of the 1993 season, including their predecessors, as well as the nineteenth century National League

clubs who competed against many teams that still exist, but are themselves now defunct. I believe this is the first time such a list has been published. Of the 28, 22—all 14 American League teams and eight of the National League clubs (Chicago Cubs, Atlanta Braves, New York Mets, Houston Astros, Montreal Expos and San Diego Padres, Colorado Rockies, and Florida Marlins) have verifiable, complete, continuous histories either from the start of their league (in the case of the Cubs, the Braves, and the eight original AL clubs) or their start as expansion franchises (Mets, Astros, Expos, Padres, Rockies, Marlins, Rangers, Angels, Brewers, Royals, Blue Jays and Mariners). Finally, the other six current NL clubs (Pirates, Cardinals, Reds, Dodgers, Giants, and Phillies) have continuous histories that began before the founding of the NL, but continue to the present day.

## National League

No.	Team	Years	Games	Won	Lost	Tied	Pct.
1.	NY-SF Giants	1883-1993	16863	9034	7673	156	.541
2.	Brooklyn-LA Dodgers	1890-1993	16001	8309	7573	119	.523
3.	Chicago Cubs	1876-1993	17397	8936	8307	154	.5182
4.	Pittsburgh Pirates	1887-1993	16406	8426	7852	128	.5176
5.	Cincinnati Reds	1890-1993	16023	8043	7857	123	.506
6.	St. Louis Cardinals	1892-1993	15753	7892	7734	127	.505
7.	Montreal Expos	1969-1993	3986	1948	2034	4	.489
8.	Bos-Mil-Atlanta Braves	1876-1993	17364	8398	8815	151	.488
9.	Houston Astros	1962-1993	5125	2473	2648	4	.483
10.	Philadelphia Phillies	1883-1993	16791	7778	8902	111	.466
11.	New York Mets	1962-1993	5120	2373	2740	8	.464
12.	Defunct clubs (below)	1876-1992	10605	4710	5702	193	.452
13.	San Diego Padres	1969-1993	3826	1722	2102	2	.450

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Al Yellon is a television director in Chicago.



14. Colorado Rockies	1993	162	67	95	0	.414
15. Florida Marlins	1993	162	64	98	0	.395

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NL TOTALS		161746	80233	80233	1280	
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### American League

No.	Team	Years	Games	Won	Lost	Tied	Pct.
1.	Balt #1-NY Yankees	1901-1993	14438	8061	6287	90	.562
2.	Detroit Tigers	1901-1993	14488	7456	6938	94	.518
3.	Kansas City Royals	1969-1993	3982	2059	1921	2	.517
4.	Boston Red Sox	1901-1993	14466	7331	7051	84	.510
5.	Cleveland Indians	1901-1993	14464	7269	7104	91	.506
6.	Chicago White Sox	1901-1993	14456	7228	7127	101	.504
7.	Toronto Blue Jays	1977-1993	2696	1351	1344	2	.501
8.	LA-California Angels	1961-1993	5285	2553	2728	4	.4834
9.	Sea Pilots-Mil Brewers	1969-1993	3988	1924	2061	3	.4828
10.	Phila-KC-Oakland A's	1901-1993	14423	6877	7459	87	.4797
11.	Wash #1-Minn Twins	1901-1993	14470	6887	7475	108	.4795
12.	Mil #1-Browns-Orioles	1901-1993	14462	6838	7518	106	.476
13.	Wash #2-Texas Rangers	1961-1993	5270	2405	2860	4	.457
14.	Seattle Mariners	1977-1993	2700	1166	1532	2	.432
AL TOTALS			139588	69405	69405	778	

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You may think of the Cincinnati Reds as baseball's first professional club, and you'd be right; but that club disbanded after their 1870 season. The Red Stockings who were a charter member of the National League in 1876 were thrown out after 1880 and not let in again until 1890 (though they played in the then-major American Association in between, as did franchises in Brooklyn, Pittsburgh and St. Louis before they joined the National League). There was, in addition, prior to 1900, one franchise that "moved," though this is not commonly noted. The St. Louis franchise was purchased by Indianapolis interests after the 1886 season, and operated there for three seasons. We're concerned here, though, only with teams in continuous operation in one of the remaining major leagues.

The American League has a less checkered history. No AL team has ever failed, although a number have moved, and not only in the past few decades. I've already mentioned the original AL Baltimore Orioles, who lasted only one year (and had to be operated by the league by season's end) before moving to New York; and the original Milwaukee Brewers, who managed two seasons before becoming the St. Louis Browns, who later became the current Orioles (what goes around comes around). Also combined here are records of the Seattle Pilots and current Milwaukee Brewers, unquestionably the same franchise; the original Washington Senators and the Minnesota Twins, and the second Senators and the Texas Rangers.

The resulting standings are, I believe, unique in baseball record-keeping. They show the relationships between the clubs over the many years they have been in existence, and also show how successful (or unsuc-

cessful) expansion clubs have been. The first (1961-62) expansion clubs have now played nearly one-third as many games as the original sixteen.

I have been keeping these records privately since 1975, and the following items I believe are of interest:

- The Chicago Cubs were second, with a .526 percentage, after 1975. By the end of 1980, they had fallen to third, then fourth (by .000006) after 1983. Their stellar 1984 season, and several decent years while the Pirates were mediocre, bounced them back to third through 1993. Nevertheless, the Cubs have dropped eight percentage points since 1975.

- Cleveland has fallen from .518 and second to .516 and fourth by 1978, and all the way to .506 by 1993, an even larger drop than the Cubs'.

- Toronto was 14th as recently as 1982 (with a .381 percentage). The Blue Jays' 95-win season in 1993 made them the second expansion franchise (Kansas City was the first) to gain a winning all-time record. Another 95-win campaign in 1994 would put them in fifth place, passing both the Indians and the White Sox, no matter how well those two teams do.

- The most successful NL expansion franchise by percentage is Montreal. In fact, the Expos, with their 94-win 1993, passed the Braves to move into seventh place overall despite the Braves' best season ever. The Atlanta franchise has, however, added three percentage points since 1990, remarkable considering the number of games played since 1876.

- The Mets at .464 are the second-worst expansion team (excluding the single seasons of the Marlins and Rockies); but of course they have four NL East crowns, three pennants and two World Championships to show for their efforts.

- By 1995, the Phils became the first franchise to lose 9,000 games, this despite playing 300 games fewer than the Braves, who have more than 200 fewer losses.

- The Yankees became the first American League team to win 8,000 games. The Yankees calculate to more than 600 games ahead of the next closest team, the Tigers, who at a .500 pace will not win their 8,000th game for more than six more seasons.



•The defunct clubs of the old NL managed a better percentage than three current clubs, despite being weighed down by many poor teams. The original NL Baltimore Orioles of the 1890's, winners of three consecutive pennants from 1894-96, help bring the average up. The defunct clubs, which are defined as those that had no successor franchise, are as follows: Cincinnati 1876-80 (125-217-6); Louisville 1876-77 (65-61-4); Hartford 1876-77 (78-48-3); New York 1876 (21-35-1); St. Louis 1876-77 (73-51); Philadelphia 1876 (14-45-1); Indianapolis 1878 (24-36-3); Milwaukee 1878 (15-45-1); Providence 1878-85 (438-278-9); Buffalo 1879-85 (314-333-9); Cleveland 1879-84 (242-299-8); Syracuse 1879 (22-48-1); Troy 1879-82 (134-191-5); Worcester 1880-82 (90-159-3); Detroit

1881-88 (426-437-16); St. Louis/Indianapolis 1885-89 (225-400-9); Kansas City 1886 (30-91-5); Washington 1886-89 (163-337-14); Cleveland 1889-99 (738-764-32); Louisville 1892-99 (419-683-19); Washington 1892-99 (410-697-18); and Baltimore 1892-99 (644-447-26).

Finally, I calculated the percentages by the number of decisions only. Ties are only listed as a matter of interest. I compiled data from several sources, including various editions of *The Sporting News Record Book*, several editions of the Macmillan *Baseball Encyclopedia*, and the first edition of *Total Baseball*. I would also like to acknowledge the help of SABR member Bob Tiemann in resolving some thorny issues regarding some of the nineteenth-century franchises.



### A Gripe

*RTPQ = TPQ (individual)/TPQ (other). Gimme a break! This aging curmudgeon is fed up with arcane statistics and the over-analysis of our beloved sport. It is, despite its subtle nuances, basically a simply game. There is no need to make it into something comprehensible only to thermonuclear physicists.*

*The old familiar stats—AB, H, HR, RBI, BA, W, L, ERA, etc.—are more than enough to satisfy this devoted fan. I have absolutely no interest in how many times Bob Ramazzotti hit into 6-4-3 double plays with runners on first and second in the fourth inning with a 3-2 count in daytime road games in 1946.*

*Analysis and statistics are an integral part of the game, but this obsession with arcane statistics and over-analysis has become a bit much. Are these fanatics really aficionados of our national pastime? Are they able to enjoy the game? Have they experienced the pleasure of sitting in a ballpark or in front of a television set and simply watching the game? Are they able to take a child or a grandchild to a game and sit back and relax while they introduce the child to the sport? Somehow I doubt it.*

*I am grateful that my father brought me to Ebbets Field and introduced me to the game in 1940. He explained the rudiments and, as I grew older, the subtleties of the game.*

*Because of my introduction to baseball, I was fully able to savor the marvelous moment when Pee Wee Reese threw the ball to my boyhood hero Gil Hodges and my "Beloved Bums" won their first and only World Series...with no small assistance from Sandy Amoros and Johnny Podres.*

*My fervent wish is that the youngsters of today and future generations won't become so preoccupied with arcane statistics and over-analysis that they will never know the joy of watching a ballgame for the ballgame's sake.*

—Ed Maher

# Women Umpires as Mirrors of Gender Roles

*Gai Ingham Berlage, Ph.D.*

**C**urrently, there are no women umpires in either minor or major league baseball. Maybe that's not so surprising. After all, baseball is male dominated. There are no women players, coaches or managers either. Yet, at the turn of the century, Amanda Clement was a respected umpire in semi-professional baseball in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Minnesota and Iowa. She umpired from 1905 to 1911 with rave reviews from players, fans, management, and the press. The presence of a "lady" ump was seen as having a positive effect on the game. It was felt that male players and fans would be more circumspect in their behavior. Although most sports-writers did not believe that umpiring would become a popular career choice for women, some predicted that the woman umpire was here to stay. One writer wrote: "what one woman has done another can, and probably will. Doubtless many moons will intervene before there will be [female] umpires in the big leagues, but stranger things than that have happened."<sup>1</sup>

**The rough recent road**—Unfortunately, the prediction about a woman in the big leagues was correct. No women have made it to the majors, and it took almost sixty years before another woman, Bernice Gera, attempted an umpiring career. Based on the acceptance that Amanda Clement received, it is hard to believe the negative reception that Gera encountered. Sexual harassment, threats of bodily harm, and discrimination greeted her decision to umpire.

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When she applied to the Al Somers Baseball Umpires School in Florida in 1967, she was accepted until the school realized that Bernice was a woman. At which point, it rejected her. She then enrolled in the National Sports Academy in West Palm Beach, and graduated with honors.<sup>2</sup> She now had a new problem. Who would hire her? Finally, on July 25, 1969, Vincent McNamara, president of the New York-Pennsylvania Class A League offered her a contract.<sup>3</sup>

Her signing was not greeted with enthusiasm by the press. Tim Hogan of Boston's *Sunday Herald Traveler* wrote: "Within the space of a week man got to the moon and woman became an umpire... You win one and you lose one. I don't know which event is more significant, but I notice that the moon is still going strong. I doubt if we'll be able to say the same for baseball now that milady has got her tootsies in the door."<sup>4</sup>

Hogan need not have worried. On July 31, Philip Piton, President of the National Association of Baseball Leagues, sent Gera a telegram invalidating her contract.<sup>5</sup> The reason given was that, at five foot two, she was too short to umpire. She filed a complaint with the New York State Human Rights Commission. In November 1970, the Commission ruled that the League discriminated against men and women of ethnic minorities of short stature. The ruling was appealed, but was finally upheld in 1972.<sup>6</sup>

On June 24, 1972, Gera umpired her first and only game, in Geneva, New York, between the Auburn Phillies and the Geneva Senators. The night before the game, she received death threats, and the police were called to stop a disturbance at her motel. The day of the game, she was harassed by fans, three of her calls were

disputed, and she left the game in tears. She then resigned.<sup>7</sup>

Christine Wren attempted an umpiring career from 1974 to 1977. When she quit, she had umpired two seasons of Class A ball. She, too, met sexual harassment. Fans taunted her by yelling such comments as "Go home and do the laundry." Players asked, "why...does a nice-looking broad like you want to be an umpire?"<sup>8</sup>

Pam Postema became the first woman to have a career of any length as an umpire in minor league baseball. She spent thirteen seasons from 1977 to 1989 in the minors. Although she was promoted to the highest level, Triple A, she never made it to the majors. Currently, she is suing Major League baseball for sex discrimination. Her suit, filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, seeks compensation for back and future pay, punitive damages, and a position as a major league umpire. The suit contends, "There has been a long standing prejudice against women and an agreement and understanding...generally tacit, but often expressly stated, that women should not be employed as umpires."<sup>9</sup> Postema says that now that she is no longer in baseball, she will no longer be silent about the sexual harassment and discrimination that she met while an umpire.

**One of the boys**—Abuse, swearing, and cussing from players were common occurrences for Pam Postema. Although she ejected players from the game for taking it too far, she accepted abusive behavior as part of baseball. In fact, she felt comfortable responding with four letter words. Rather than seeing herself as a "lady" who deserved special treatment, she considered herself an equal. And to her, equality meant being one of the boys. She shunned any references to her femininity, because she interpreted them as demeaning and sexist. No doubt many such remarks *were* sexist. But she failed to differentiate between those that were and those that weren't. Many men—fellow umpires, players, managers or others—were merely acknowledging that she was a woman.

In her first minor league game in Sarasota of the Gulf Coast League, Postema was understandably nervous and worried about the crowd's reaction to a woman umpire. She did everything she could to blend into the male image. For example, she cut her hair short so that when she wore her cap, mask and black umpire suit,

it was almost impossible to tell if she were male or female. At five feet eight inches, one hundred seventy-five pounds, she didn't have to worry about standing out from the men because of size. When she yelled "play" she purposely tried to lower the pitch of her voice. She said that she did this to "sound more authoritative and more aggressive."<sup>13</sup>

She emphasized rites of masculinity, too. She did whatever she could to demonstrate that she had the same qualities as her male counterparts and needed no different treatment. For example, most Gulf Coast League games were played in the daytime. In the evening, many of the men would gather for a drink at the Beach Club in Sarasota. Postema made it a point to join them. She said, "I thought if I went drinking with the other guys, maybe they'd treat me less like a woman and more as a rookie umpire. I don't know if it worked, but I do know we got drunk as skunks just about every night."<sup>11</sup>

On the field, she demonstrated that she could dish out four letter words as well as any man. An incident with Stan Davis illustrates this. Davis, of the El Paso Diablos, disputed a strike call. He then struck out on the next pitch. As he left he yelled, "You suck. You fucking suck." Postema yelled back, "You're fucking gone" and ejected him from the game.<sup>12</sup>

The naturalness and prevalent use of coarse language is especially evident in her autobiography, *You've Got to Have Balls to Make It in This League*. Her descriptions of her life as an umpire are punctuated with four letter words.

Postema took announcers' references to her at games as demeaning publicity gimmicks. A Florida announcer read off the names of the three umpires and then asked, "Pam, why don't you tip your hat to the crowd." She refused, and her behavior—in this as other instances—was misinterpreted as rudeness. In her book, Postema writes, "I stood there, seething. I know the guy meant well, but I didn't hear him ask Humphrey and Hirschbeck [her partners] to tip their hats. Maybe I was a jerk, but I wanted no special favors or attention, even if it meant just tipping my hat."<sup>13</sup>

This strong and stubborn reaction was the result of insinuations that she was a token female who was hired solely because of her sex. Throughout her years on the field, she was driven to demonstrate that she was just another umpire.



Pam Postema

But she wasn't, and sexist remarks were a constant problem. Fans often made silly remarks. One time, someone in the stands starting yelling, "Kiss the umpire." Soon so many people were yelling it that the announcer couldn't be heard.<sup>14</sup>

Frustrated managers often referred to her domestic skills in order to get her goat. Postema remembers one manager saying, "Shit, you just can't throw out somebody every time they cuss. These guys cuss out here all the time. You're going to have to get out of the kitchen if you can't take the heat."<sup>15</sup>

These kitchen references were common. Once she found a frying pan at home plate. Another time, a player yelled, "You belong in the kitchen. You don't belong here. Go be a cook. You probably can't cook and that's why you're here."<sup>16</sup>

During one game the Chicken, in town for a ballpark gig, came up to her and started pulling scarfs out of her shirt. Attached to the last scarf was a bra.<sup>17</sup> Postema saw all of this as ridicule, not as fun, and it really irritated her.

Postema also took personally many of the comments that she heard on and off the field. Some of them were certainly sexist and personal, but taunting the umpire and the use of verbal intimidation tactics by coaches, managers, and players are a part of the game.

**The ladylike ump**—Amanda Clement's career stands in sharp contrast to those of Gera, Wren and Postema. Clement was accepted by the public, the press, and the baseball establishment. She experienced no sexual harassment and very little criticism of her skills. Few dared to offend or criticize Clement, because semi-pro management and the press would quickly come to her defense. Once, a player named "Toot" Thompson used abusive language in disputing one of her calls during a game in Sioux Falls. Miss Clement walked off the field. The next day, it was reported in the local newspaper that this was the first time an incident like this had occurred. According to the sports writer, Miss Clement left to prevent the poor "chap who was the cause of all the trouble from having the daylights pounded out of him by his team mates."<sup>18</sup>

A few days later, "Toot" Thompson was scheduled to play in Garetson. Clement refused to officiate if he played. Since Thompson was one of Gayville's best players, the assistant manager refused to suspend him. Clement left, and it was announced that she was sick and unable to umpire. The game was played as scheduled. The next day the newspaper told the true story and criticized the manager for siding with Toot. "...the assistant manager evidently preferred the services of Thompson, with all his profanity and ungentlemanly conduct, to those of Miss Clement. Few blame Miss Clement, but the Gayville team is losing prestige by holding up a player like Thompson."<sup>19</sup> Articles like this

reinforced the image that Amanda Clement was a lady and that ungentlemanly conduct would not be tolerated.

In the early part of the century, verbal abuse was the least of an umpire's worries. "Kill the umpire" wasn't always yelled in jest or as an idle threat. Several minor league umpires actually lost their lives, and many minor and major league umps were brutally assaulted by fans.<sup>20</sup> Soda, beer, and whiskey bottles often became lethal weapons when hurled by an angry partisan. At St. Louis' Sportsman's Park in 1907, a bottle fractured the skull of Umpire Billy Evans.<sup>21</sup>

Yet Amanda Clement never had to contend with either verbal or physical abuse. She never felt demeaned on the field. She never thought that she was compromising her femininity by umpiring, nor did she desire to be treated the same as a man. To her, the umpire's job of calling the rules fairly and showing no favoritism to either team was independent of the sex of the officiator. She expected to do the same umpiring job as a man. However, she expected to be treated as a lady. Consequently, she did not experience the role conflict that Pam Postema did between being a woman and being an umpire.

At the turn of the century, definitions of femininity and masculinity were clearly delineated. Men were to be the bread winners and women the homemakers. Women were considered the weaker sex, and they were to be protected by men from the harsher realities of life. To be a lady was to be respected. Proper dress, demeanor and conduct were always expected of ladies. Women were seen as the protectors of the public morality and as embodying the more aesthetic qualities of life.

This strict division of the sexes operated in Amanda Clement's favor. It meant that a woman umpire could play a role a man couldn't. Rowdy behavior, swearing or cursing in front of a woman was seen not only as rude but as unmanly. Consequently, a female umpire received more respect from players, managers, and fans than did a man. Newspaper articles of the time highlight this difference. One headline read, "SHE CAN UMPIRE, THERE ARE NO KICKS." The article went on to explain that players didn't argue because they were gallant.<sup>22</sup> In another article, the writer stated, "Her presence makes it certain the game will be clean of unseemly kicking and the use of questionable language on the part of players."<sup>23</sup>

Amanda Clement considered herself a lady, and she expected to be treated as one. She was a pious Congregationalist who never swore or used any type of foul language. Players respected her courteous manner, and they were polite in return. Clement often remarked about how players said such things as, "Beg your pardon, Miss Umpire, but wasn't that one a bit high?"<sup>24</sup>

Although Clement was an imposing woman at five feet ten inches, she didn't try to look like a man. Since she was the first woman to umpire, she established her own uniform. In the beginning she wore an ankle-length skirt, a white blouse with a black men's tie, and a baseball cap. Extra balls were stored in her blouse.<sup>25</sup> She wore no mask, because as the only umpire she stood behind the pitcher. In later years, Clement abandoned the tie and wore a white blouse with the word UMPS written in capital letters across her chest.<sup>26</sup>

But it was more than her ladylike demeanor and the players' chivalry that made her a good umpire. She was an expert arbiter, who knew the rules and was impartial. Numerous news articles praised her competence. "Miss Clement evidently knows her baseball book and knows it well."<sup>27</sup> "Miss Clement is absolutely fair."<sup>28</sup> "...she thoroughly understands the fine points of the game, is the possessor of an 'eagle eye' and good judgment and in the most exciting plays always keeps her head and decides fairly and impartially. She is especially good on balls and strikes and on bases she has a habit of being right on the spot when the play is made. Altogether Miss Clement is declared to be the equal if not the superior of most of the league umpires."<sup>29</sup> "...her rulings command greater respect and give better satisfaction than those of the best male umpires."<sup>30</sup> "She is so superior to the average run of umpires that for over two months this year she has been constantly employed."<sup>31</sup>

She was so well known for being fair that at one tournament, the crowds booed when the male umpire for the next day's game came on the field. They insisted on having Clement. When the manager pleaded with them that the umpire came at great expense and had already been paid, the crowd took up a collection for the \$15 fee. They then hired a car to pick up Miss Clement, so she could umpire the game.<sup>32</sup>

Clement's umpiring paid for her college education. It was estimated that she made \$15 to \$25 a game and that she had job offers to go East and work for major league teams.<sup>33</sup> By the time her career ended she was reputed to be one of the highest paid umpires in the West.<sup>34</sup> Her income from umpiring was good for her time. Based on an average of \$20 per game for a fifty game summer season, she grossed about \$1,000. In 1910, 96 percent of working families earned less than \$2,000 a year.<sup>35</sup> For Amanda Clement, umpiring was a great part-time job.



Amanda Clement

South Dakota Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame, Inc.

**A good profession for a woman**—Clement believed that women were as capable as men. In later years she held a variety of jobs in many fields. She was a physical education teacher, a social worker, Justice of the Peace, newspaper reporter, city assessor, and coach of all types of children's sports. She set a series of firsts for women. She was the first woman basketball referee; the first woman to pass the police exam in LaCrosse, Wisconsin; and the first woman to teach ballet to football players. She felt no occupational barriers as a woman and experienced no conflict between her occupational, athletic, and female roles.

She was an advocate for women umpires. She felt their presence would make the games more sportsmanlike. She said, "...if women were umpiring none of this (rowdiness) would happen. Do you suppose any ball player in the country would step up to a good-looking girl and say to her, 'you color-blind, pickle brained, cross-eyed idiot, if you don't stop throwing the soup into me I'll distribute your features all over your countenance!' Of course, he wouldn't."<sup>36</sup>

She thought umpiring was a good profession for a woman. She said, "There is no reason why a young woman cannot make a business of umpiring and be a perfect lady. I maintain that it is just as womanly as it is to play tennis. It certainly is healthful, and many a woman in poor physical condition would be benefitted immensely if she could spend a summer out in the sun umpiring."<sup>37</sup>

In one interview, she was asked if she thought she'd like to umpire in the major leagues. She replied, "No, I haven't any ambition to appear as a regular umpire in the National or American Leagues, but for all that I believe women who understand the game could do just as well in these leagues as the men."<sup>38</sup>

Clement combined the independent spirit of the pioneer woman with the demeanor of the Victorian. Her independent spirit was forged from her pioneering parents. Her father had moved to the Dakota territory from Boston in 1869 and acquired one hundred sixty acres of farm land in 1876. Her mother too was from the East, from Cuba, New York. When Amanda was seven, her father died and her mother supported the family by running a boarding house for men working on the railroad. Her mother provided a role model for the independent woman.<sup>39</sup>

Clement was also a product of the turn of the century change in the definition of women's roles. The

"true" woman, whose domain was the home, was now being replaced by the "new" woman, who could participate in the world outside. This change in women's roles was the result of structural changes that were taking place in American society due to massive immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. The contrast between the robust immigrant woman who worked and the frail often sickly middle and upperclass woman who did no exercise caused the medical community to change its attitude toward women's health. Doctors began to recommend that women do non-strenuous physical exercise. Educators who founded women's colleges included physical exercise in their curriculums. Both the founders of the women's colleges and the women's suffragist movement stressed the equality of women with men. By 1890, women had entered the labor market at all levels in large numbers. They represented 36 percent of professional workers, just four percent lower than in 1950.<sup>40</sup> These societal changes and Amanda Clement's early childhood expe-

riences made it possible for her to become a professional umpire.

Pam Postema, like Amanda Clement, was a product of her time and of changing definitions of women's roles. Each woman's style stemmed directly from the gender roles of her time. Postema met much more opposition and discrimination than Clement did, and despite her competence, many people believed her hiring was motivated more by baseball's legal fear of being accused of sex discrimination than by her umpiring credentials. She believes the old boy network did her in—that discrimination was her undoing.

It is ironic that it may be more difficult for a woman to pursue an umpiring career today, when the law prohibits discrimination, than it was at the turn of the century. Covert opposition in the form of the old boy network is difficult to overcome. Pam Postema's case indicates that the male lock on major league baseball may be one of the last to fall.

## Notes

1. "A New First for Women," August 1908, newspaper article, Amanda Clement scrapbook.

2. Irving Leitner, *Baseball Diamond in the Rough* (NY: Criterion Books, 1971), 215.

3. "Girl Ump Hits Baseball with \$25 M Curve," *Record American*, Boston, 16 March 1971, 46.

4. Tim Hogan, "Lady Umps in Majors? - Augghh!" *Sunday Herald Traveler*, 27 July 1969, Sec. 2, 3.

5. "Girl Ump Hits Baseball with \$25 M Curve."

6. Leitner, 215.

7. Pam Postema and Gene Wojciechowski, *You've Got to Have Balls to Make It in This League* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 20-21.

8. David Voigt, "Sex in Baseball: Reflections of Changing Taboos," *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 12 no. 3 (Winter 1978), 396.

9. Qtd. in Timothy Dwyer, "Female Ex-Umpire Files Sex-Discrimination Suit," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 Dec. 1991.

10. Postema and Wojciechowski, 45.

11. Postema and Wojciechowski, 46-47.

12. Postema and Wojciechowski, 77.

13. Postema and Wojciechowski, 50.

14. Postema and Wojciechowski, 80.

15. Postema and Wojciechowski, 76.

16. Postema and Wojciechowski, 70, 80.

17. Postema and Wojciechowski, 218.

18. "Game between Soo Club and Gayville Team - Sioux Falls," newspaper article, Amanda Clement scrapbook.

19. "Miss Clement Did Not Umpire," newspaper article, Amanda Clement scrapbook.

20. John Thorn, *A Century of Baseball Lore* (N.Y.: Hart Pub., 1974), 18.

21. David Voigt, *American Baseball: From the Commissioners to Continental Expansion*, Vol II, (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), 101.

22. "She Can Umpire," Special Dispatch to Enquirer, circa 1907, NBHFL.

23. "Amanda Clement, the College Girl, Who Has Umpired Many Games of Ball," newspaper article, Amanda Clement scrapbook.

24. Qtd. in Sharon Roan, "Yesterday: No One Yelled 'Kill the Ump' When Amanda Clement Was a Man in Blue," *Sports Illustrated*, 5 April 1982, M3.

25. Sam Cohen, title unknown, *Connecticut Herald*, 9 July 1972, NBHFL.

26. John Egan, "Hudson's Clement Distinguished as the Original Female Umpire," *Argus Leader*, Sioux Falls, S.D., March 1982, NBHFL.

27. Minneapolis paper, circa 1906 or 1907, Amanda Clement scrapbook.

28. Newspaper article, Amanda Clement scrapbook.

29. "Amanda Clement, the College Girl, Who Has Umpired Many Games of Ball," newspaper article, Amanda Clement scrapbook.

30. "A Base Ball Game Between Hudson and Canton," Canton, S.D., 9 Sept. 1907, Amanda Clement scrapbook.

31. Newspaper article, circa 1905, Amanda Clement scrapbook.

32. "Champion Lady Umpire of the World."

33. Shari Roan, "The 'Lady in Blue' A long Forgotten First," *Sun-Sentinel*, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 8 July 1981.

34. Roan, "Yesterday," M3.

35. Donald Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality: 1880-1910* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 110.

36. Roan, "Yesterday," M3.

37. Quote from newspaper article, circa 1906 or 1907, NBHFL.

38. "She Can Umpire."

39. Lulu Gourley, Hudson, South Dakota, letter to author, 5 March 1990.

40. William O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave: A History of Feminism in America* (NY: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co., 1971), 148.





# Benny McCoy

*Jay Feldman*

**O**n January 14, 1940, the baseball world was rocked by a proclamation from the office of Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis. After a nine-month investigation, the Commissioner reported the discovery of serious illegalities in the Detroit Tigers' minor league operations. The violations centered around the Tigers' covert control of more than one team in the same league and the improper use of those teams to "cover up" players.

In his ruling, Landis declared ninety-one players in the Detroit organization free agents, a judgment that came to be known in the press as "the Abe Lincoln decision." At the top of the list of "freed slaves" were three players who had spent time with the Tigers in '39—second baseman Benny McCoy, reserve outfielder Roy Cullenbine, and pitcher Paul "Dizzy" Trout—and two others who'd been added to the Tigers' off-season, 40-man roster.

The edict represented the latest and most dramatic of Landis's sanctions against teams using unethical procedures in their dealings with minor league players. Landis believed that players' advancement should be based on performance and ability—which was not always the primary concern of the parent club. A major league team with a strong, young shortstop, for example, would be inclined to keep the rest of its talented shortstops down on the farm, thus blocking their way to the big leagues.

Starting in 1921, when he freed four players and fined the major league clubs that owned them, Landis had been cracking down on teams for holding players back. Of the many players he cut loose in the next two decades, the most noteworthy were Rick Ferrell in 1928 and Tommy Henrich in 1937. Ferrell, an up-and-coming catcher in the Detroit system, signed with the St. Louis Browns for a record \$25,000 bonus, made the club in '29, and stayed in the big leagues for eighteen seasons. Henrich, a Cleveland farmhand, signed with the Yankees for \$20,000 and played his entire eleven-year career in pinstripes.

Major league clubs employed all sorts of chicanery in order to cover up talented minor leaguers. One of the most common ploys was the forbidden practice of controlling more than one team in a league. Aside from the obvious effect of upsetting the competitive balance of the league, this ruse was a way to get around the rules on waivers and options, thereby effectively extending rosters beyond the permitted limits.

"What usually happened was that an independent minor league team would claim to own a certain player, but the guy actually belonged to another team which was a big-league farm club," explains Lee Lowenfish, co-author with Tony Lupien of *The Imperfect Diamond: The Story of Baseball's Reserve System and the Men Who Fought To Change It*. "It was a very widespread practice in the thirties. Branch Rickey, for example, virtually operated all the clubs in the Arkansas State League at one time. On this issue, Landis's heart was in the right place—a player's way to the top should not be grooved through one organization, especially if that organization wants to use the player as fodder for the farm."

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*Jay Feldman writes for magazines, television, and the stage. His new work, A Loud Noise in a Public Place, is a three-act play with music based upon the life and times of George Metesky, a.k.a. the "Mad Bomber" of New York City.*



Floyd McCracken/Feldman

*Benny McCoy with Mr. Mack*

The operative word here is *collusion*. A secret "working agreement" with an independent team allowed a major league club freely to shuttle players back and forth between farm teams. The benefits to the parent club included maintaining absolute control over talented players' careers, keeping them hidden from other organizations, and ensuring the competitive strength of its own farm teams. In Detroit's case, General Manager Jack Zeller had clandestine working arrangements with a number of minor league teams, including Ft. Worth and Beaumont of the Texas League, and Alexandria and Lake Charles of the Evangeline League.

Detroit was not the first organization to feel the sting of Landis's whip on this issue. In 1938, he had freed 74 of Rickey's chattels in the Three-I League, but the Cardinals' farm system still had 600 other players. The

Detroit chain, however, was decimated by Landis's ruling, which left only 43 minor-league players under contract to the Tigers. In addition, the club was ordered to pay a total of \$47,250 to fourteen players formerly in the Detroit system. The total damage to the Tigers was estimated at half a million dollars.

Even before Landis removed Trout's name from the free-agent list a day after the original ruling, the left-handed hitting McCoy was the prize plum of the group. A local product from Grandville, Mich., a suburb of Grand Rapids, McCoy had signed with the Tigers at age sixteen and had been bounced around the organization for five years, always hitting over .300 while playing second, third, short and the outfield. When Detroit second baseman and future Hall-of-Famer Charlie Gehringer got hurt in '39, McCoy was called up and hit a respectable .302 with 33 RBIs and 38 runs

scored in the last 55 games of the season.

His performance made him the obvious successor to the 36-year old Gehringer, so when the Tigers traded McCoy on December 9 along with pitcher George "Slick" Coffman to the Philadelphia Athletics in exchange for outfielder Wally Moses, the move defied logic. It was only after Landis's January 14 edict that the reason for the trade became apparent. "I think it was a set-up," says McCoy, now 75. "The reason they traded me is they had wind of what was about to happen. They thought maybe they could run it through, but of course it had to go across Landis's desk."

Landis's ruling invalidated the trade, and McCoy was free to negotiate with the other major league clubs. A bidding war broke out, as ten of the sixteen existing teams entered the fray, with only the Yankees, Cardinals and Phillies staying on the sidelines. (The Tigers, Browns and Cubs were barred from dealing with McCoy, the latter two for approaching him before Landis's decision was made public.)

The suitors came calling. Those who traveled to Grand Rapids to talk turkey with McCoy included Cincinnati Reds' manager Bill McKechnie, Brooklyn Dodgers' G. M. Larry MacPhail, and Washington Senators' manager Bucky Harris. "They all had the same old story," recalls McCoy. "You call me back and let me know what your highest bid is, and I'll go better than what they said—instead of just coming out and making an offer. Of course, they were all trying to get me as cheap as they could."

McCoy signed with Connie Mack's Athletics for a \$45,000 bonus, a two-year contract at \$10,000 a year, and equally important, the assurance of an everyday job. "Acquisition of McCoy completes what should be a grand young infield," said Mack's son Earle, who had done the negotiating with McCoy, "and we should be pennant contenders by 1941." (The A's finished dead last in '40 and '41.)

With his bonus and first year salary, McCoy became perhaps the highest paid player of 1940—Joe DiMaggio reportedly made only about half as much—and certainly the most publicized. He went from relative anonymity to a household name, as newspapers all over the country played up the story. "In those days, it was quite a deal," he says. "I got a lot of publicity. They made a lot bigger hullabaloo about it than they do about the five-year, \$20 million contracts they put out for these guys today. The reporters were always wanting to get a picture or talk to me."

Not one to seek the limelight but nonetheless an open, friendly man, McCoy gained high marks from the press for his cooperative attitude. Noting how often

the second baseman was stopped by reporters and photographers, James Isaminger of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote, "McCoy is a wonderful showman. He is never out of temper, never short to writers, photogs or strangers."

Responding to those who expressed resentment over his windfall, McCoy was quoted as saying, "Clubs have paid more for ball players than Mr. Mack paid for me, but in my case I simply happened to get the money instead of some club owner. What's wrong with that?" With his bonus money, he bought a home for his parents and invested the rest conservatively.

With the notoriety came the inevitable pressure, and in retrospect, the easy-going McCoy admits that it got to him at times. "The pressure was always there, wherever we went. I tried to throw it off, but it wasn't always easy. A lot of people thought I ought to hit .350 with 30 homers."

In fact, he hit only .257 with 7 homers, 62 RBIs, and 56 runs scored in 1940. Moreover, he led American League second basemen in errors with 34. The next season he raised his average to .271 (61 RBIs, 86 runs) and cut his errors down to 27—respectable numbers and an indication that McCoy, at twenty-five years old, might justify Mack's investment.

Unfortunately, there was a war on, and after the season, McCoy enlisted in the Navy. He was assigned to the Naval Training Station in Norfolk, Va., where he and Phil Rizzuto formed the keystone combination for the base team, which also boasted the outfield services of Dom DiMaggio. Later, McCoy served in the Pacific.

After his discharge in early 1946, McCoy went to spring training with the Athletics. At 30, after four years away from the big leagues, his skills were too rusty, and just before the team headed north, he was cut. He played a couple of exhibition games with the Tigers, but their infield was set. The Portland Beavers of the PCL sent feelers, but McCoy didn't want to move to the West Coast.

He went back to Michigan and became player-manager of the St. Joseph Autos, a semi-pro, industrial league team that included several former major leaguers. After two seasons, McCoy returned to Grandville, where he worked in the frozen food industry until his retirement in 1980.

Today, McCoy reflects on the circumstances which shaped his career. "It was just accidental, really. Maybe I was lucky and maybe not. Who knows what might have happened if I'd stayed with the Tigers? They won the pennant in 1940. And, of course, the war changed everything. But I certainly don't regret the way things turned out. Not a bit."



# A Career in the Minors

*Howard Green*

**A**s participants in one of the most senseless struggles ever to threaten civilization, John Kennedy and I both had dreams of our personal missions in a post-war world. His, as much of mankind came to know, was to enter politics and eventually become president of the United States. Mine was to make a success of professional baseball in my hometown of Abilene, Texas.

His path was tough. Mine might have been tougher. Abilene had a reputation, bolstered by facts, as the ultimate in baseball graveyards.

Between the great wars, this West Texas education and trade center, sprawling in the middle of the Bible Belt, had been tried three times and three times had been found miserably wanting. In 1928, J. Alvin Gardner, who owned the Wichita Falls team in the Texas League, took a page from Branch Rickey's formula for diamond superiority by starting his own farm system. He would begin at Abilene in the Class D West Texas League. What a team he gave them! The entire infield of Irving Burns, Lin Storti, Jim Levcy and Debs Garms would make it to the St. Louis Browns, though Garms moved to the outfield. Later as president of the Texas League, Gardner achieved lasting renown as one of the true giants of the minors. Of this experience in Abilene, Gardner later would say: "I finished first, lost \$25,000 and got out of the farming business."

Abilene had also been tested in the early and late '20s and again in 1939, when the team didn't survive mid-season. As a fledgling sportswriter for the Abilene

daily and assistant official scorer for the ill-fated 1939 effort, I was broken-hearted, and signed a pact with myself that one day Abilene would re-enter the West Texas-New Mexico League and succeed.

That determination was with me as I entered the Air Force, served as a combat gunner over Western Europe, and played on and managed a team in an Eighth Air Force league.

On furlough at home prior to discharge, I made arrangements with a couple of other veterans, untroubled by the verdict of history, to share the risk of a professional team. I was at Davis-Monthan Field in Tucson, Ariz., obtaining my discharge on the date that the meeting was called to restructure the West Texas-New Mexico League. In my absence, Hal Sayles, my pre-war boss as sports editor of *The Abilene Reporter-News*, made the pitch. Apparently, he threw only strikes, because league fathers, ignoring its disastrous past, gave Abilene another chance. Two days later I was home and got the good news from my dad.

In the beginning, success begat success. Our series of breaks included a working agreement with Rickey's Brooklyn Dodgers, all-out cooperation from the *Abilene Reporter-News*, and an apparent awakening of baseball interest in a place that had become known as a "dead church town." We broke from the gate on top, and after June 17, we were never out of first. Our winning percentage of .708 (97-40) was the best in all of Organized Baseball in 1946.

Exceeding 100,000 in attendance, Abilene had drawn from a wide area, including Ballinger to the south and Sweetwater to the west. It goes without saying that it doesn't make much business sense to create competi-

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*Howard Green was the youngest league president in Organized Baseball history. He is the president of the Hall-Ruggles Chapter, and was the Convention Coordinator for SABR 24 in Arlington, Texas.*

tion in your own backyard, but that's what I decided to do on a trip that fall to cover a college football team. I boarded a bus for a long drive into the West Texas plains country carrying a book about the Detroit Tigers, and read far enough to learn that Jack Zeller, who two decades later was to become general manager of a world championship team in Detroit, had started his career at 21 as the youngest club president in the history of the game. I was 25 at the time. Why couldn't I become the youngest league president? After all, a girlfriend at a little Abilene college had described me as a "crusader for baseball."

Returning to Abilene, I mentioned my grandiose scheme to Sports Editor Sayles, later a league president himself. Except for Abilene and Lamesa, there was a broad expanse of West Texas without professional baseball. Surely these towns would want to take cue from Abilene. They did. Interests in Big Spring, Odessa, Midland and Vernon were to embrace the new circuit, along with aforementioned Sweetwater and Ballinger. Sayles himself would take a fourth of the Sweetwater franchise. Not a park existed in any of the projected six-club Longhorn League towns.

We may have been the last league approved by retiring National Association President, William G. Branham before he handed the reins to George M. Trautman.

"And where did your players come from?" I have been asked on many occasions. They came from the world, from where all ball players come...the farms, factories, mines, big city playgrounds, even the cane brakes of Cuba. Moreover, hope springs eternal in the breasts of many a boy. We had a good look at many youngsters who hadn't quite cut it in the West Texas-New Mexico or other established leagues of that time. Many found employment in our new circuit of opportunity.

Play was relatively slow early in the season, but by playoff time in 1947, the Longhorn had established itself in the family of leagues. The most distinguished graduate of that '47 class was a 17-year-old shortstop, Roy McMillan, who was to become one of the fielding marvels of the National League. He led Ballinger to the league title.

Throughout '47 and '48, I did double duty as co-owner and general manager of Abilene and president of the Longhorn League. After the 1948 season, I opted to sell my interest in Abilene and take a fling as business manager of the Pueblo Dodgers of the Western League. I wasn't happy at all in Colorado, so after one season, I returned to Texas and wound up organizing my second circuit, the Gulf Coast League.

When I got home to Texas, I decided to visit John Reeves in Fort Worth. He greeted me with: "I am so glad to see you. I have a project for you. You know the procedure, having organized and headed a league in

the past, to get a league together in Louisiana with Monroe as the cornerstone. We might call it the Pelican League. All I want is the Monroe franchise and will pay your expenses if you are interested."

In December of 1945, I had signed a working agreement with Reeves, when he was with the Dodgers' ownership club in Fort Worth. He had grown to manhood in North Louisiana, not far from Monroe. He felt that Monroe, which had an acceptable park but had been overlooked by the reorganized Cotton States League, would be ripe for baseball.

I jumped at the chance, and a day or two later I was in Monroe. I contacted baseball people that I knew in Texas towns without pro ball, and enthusiasm grew. We were on track and ahead of schedule. Then came the heartbreaking news that Bonneau Peters, who operated Shreveport in the Texas League, had offered his Helena, Ark., Cotton States League franchise to Monroe. He would operate a club in an established league, he told them, adding that the new league would not likely get off the ground, and if so, probably wouldn't finish the season. Of course, Monroe took the logical offer.

I was devastated, but when I broke the bad news to Reeves, he surprised me by saying: "Howard, you have done a wonderful amount of spade work. I think you can organize a league without Monroe. You are not an expensive guy—I'll pay your expenses to see the league through." A few thousand miles and some months later, the Gulf Coast League became a reality...Port Arthur, Galveston, Jacksonville, and Lufkin in Texas, and Lake Charles and Crowley in Louisiana.

Again there were some who wondered where the players would come from. Again I said: "From the world." And they came. The Gulf Coast started as a Class C league in 1950, and the next year it merged with the Rio Grande Valley circuit to rate a B classification.

The best performance of my life was seeing the Gulf Coast succeed. The problems were many and never-ending. We even had to move Lufkin to Leesville, Louisiana, but we weathered the storm. As something of a reward for my efforts, I was chosen in the fall of 1950 to succeed the legendary J. Walter Morris as president of the wealthy, if embattled, Big State League. My offices were moved from Abilene to Fort Worth, which has been my hometown now for 42 years.

In 1954, I was elected to the executive committee of the National Association to represent the 23 B, C and D leagues, but a year later resigned as Big State president to make a stab at Texas politics—beginning a career in 1956 that lasted 22 years. Previous connection with the game contributed to my political success.

I served throughout its life on the bi-county sports

commission formed in 1958 for the express purpose to pursue major league baseball. In the legislature, I was principal author of a statute, never used, to allow the sale of revenue bonds for required major league standards.

Eventually, I had the pleasure and distinct honor of working with Tom Vandergriff in making Texas Rangers out of Washington Senators. All the credit, however, goes to Vandergriff, who labored with enthusiasm and design for 14 long years. The Rangers' original park, first known as Turnpike Stadium, was

constructed and owned by Tarrant County. As the titular head of county government here, I arranged for the sale of all the properties, including real estate, to the City of Arlington, which Vandergriff, as mayor, headed. He had the political clout to enlarge the stadium in accordance with American League specifications.

It has been a pleasant journey—perhaps more accurately described as “a pleasant misery.” Some of us are lucky, but as Branch Rickey said: “Luck is the residue of design.”



### A Philadelphia Memory

*At 78, I wonder where the years have gone. As a youngster, I was fortunate to be reared in a good, hardy, South Philadelphia neighborhood where Protestants, Catholics, and Jews blended and played together to become lasting friends.*

*There was a sort of discrimination during our time as the Jews had their Jewish League, and the Protestants and Catholics had their church leagues. But we also had our own teams where we all played together. We all counted on our friends and our friends counted on us.*

*I grew up in the time of the great Athletics, with my all time hero, the pulverizing Pole, the Duke of Milwaukee, the Foot in the Bucket, Al Simmons. As I am rounding third, my boyhood memories of those fabulous years still center on my hero, Harry Aloysius Szymanski.*

*When I was 14, a friend named Joe Naccio, down at the rec on 4th and Shunk Streets, teased me about Simmons. I had a short fuse in those days, and I sprang on Joey with both fists pounding, blackening both of his eyes. Nobody could say anything negative about my idol while I was around to defend him.*

*Fifteen years later, I was in the service, and a member of the Fort Totten, New York baseball club, which on this particular day was playing the Philadelphia Athletics in an exhibition game at 3 PM.*

*About 11 AM, while walking to the library, I bumped into a civilian who happened to be my old friend Joe Naccio, who was a member of the barnstorming A's club. Immediately, he mentioned with a big laugh my fury at 4th and Shunk when we were kids.*

*We went to my quarters where I showed him a picture of the 1927 A's hanging in my locker. He left with the comment, “see you at the ballpark.” When I came onto the field, a voice appeared to come from the sky, shouting, “Hi, Sammy.” It was Al Simmons. Naccio had told him I was a big fan, and even related the incident at the recreation center. I was very excited, but I just waved sheepishly. The game turned out to be my greatest day on a baseball diamond, as I had two hits, a stolen base, and seven putouts. But the real thrill came in the ninth inning when Al pinch-hit. He hit a hump-back liner to direct centerfield. I gave it my best effort, but it fell just in front of me. It was the only time in my life that I was glad I didn't make a catch.*

*After the game, Al ran out to centerfield to shake my hand and say that he would see me at the banquet. The army officers had arranged the meal, and the head table consisted of the officers and the A's coaches. The regular tables were divided between the big leaguers and the army, but Al Simmons told the Captain that he wanted to sit with Sammy Bernstein. It was without doubt the most exciting day of my life.*

*When the A's were leaving on their bus, Al gave me a ball, and wrote “to my friend Sammy Bernstein...Al Simmons—Fort Totten 1944.” He said that he would leave two tickets for me at Shibe Park when I got out of the army. He hugged me, shook my hand, and got on the bus.*

*When I went overseas, I sent the ball to my brother, but to my dismay, it somehow got lost. That day, though, a boy's dream came true. I've cherished the memory for fifty years. I met and became friendly with the best player I ever saw—a true Hall-of-Famer who was also a very great guy. Al, thanks for joys, pleasures, and memories.*

—Sam “Leaden” Bernstein



# The Night the Indians Rabbit-Punched the Yankees

*Lenore Stoaks*

**S**ome baseball games are won by hitters' bats, some by pitchers' arms. But one night more than forty years ago, a game was won by rabbits' feet.

It was June 4, 1951, and the New York Yankees, dominating the American League as they always did in those years, were putting their reliable left-hander Ed Lopat on the mound to open a series at Cleveland Stadium.

Junk-ball throwing Lopat was usually bad news for the Cleveland Indians. In eight years, he'd compiled a 30-6 record against the Tribe, and they hadn't beaten him in eleven straight starts—nearly two entire seasons.

Coming into the series, Lopat was hot. Steady Eddie was 8-0 in nine starts so far on the season, and the whole town was looking for a way to beat him. So intense was local feeling that the old *Cleveland Press* had run a contest: send in your best idea for the way to Beat Ed Lopat.

A fan, a local sandlot umpire, suggested handing out rabbits' feet. The *Press* bought the idea, the front office bought fifteen thousand rabbits' feet, and when 20,217 fans took their seats to watch the Indians face Lopat and his Yankee teammates, three-fourths of them were armed with the good luck charms.

The game began as Yankee games did back then: New York scored twice off Indians starting pitcher Mike Garcia in the top of the first inning. Then Lopat and catcher Yogi Berra came out to warm up. Four

decades later, Lopat hadn't forgotten what happened next. "I'm taking my tosses to start the inning, and I got this feeling that someone is trying to sneak up on me. I turn around, and this individual is coming toward me, he'd come over the third base rail, with this grey kitten, three, four months old, in his hand."

The Yankee catcher started toward the mound, but the intruder got to Lopat first. "He walks up on the mound, and he throws that kitten right at me. I raise my hand—I don't want the claws at my face—and the kitten hits me in the chest and hangs there for a few seconds. I brush him off, and by that time the ushers came by and walked the guy off the field, and the game got started again."

With two out in the bottom of the first and Tribe infielders Luke Easter and Al Rosen on base, Bob Kennedy came to bat, and fifteen thousand good luck charms worked their magic. Kennedy hit one of Lopat's pitches over the center field fence to put the Indians ahead 3-2. Two more runs were scored before the inning was over, one more in the bottom of the second, and by the third inning, Lopat was gone. Veteran left-hander Tommy Byrne finished the game, giving up one run in the fifth and another in the sixth, but Kennedy's three RBIs were all that Mike Garcia would need as he held the Yankees scoreless for eight innings to win by a final score of 8-2. Even the Yankee Clipper couldn't help—Joe DiMaggio went hitless against the Tribe that night for the first time in the 1951 season.

The game was over and the Indians had won, and we could thank the rabbits' feet...couldn't we? Mike Garcia didn't think so. After the game, the Big Bear took one out of his pocket and told his interviewer he'd

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*Lenore Stoaks is an advertising writer and Cleveland Indians fan who is currently writing about Mel Harder, Jim Hegan, and the 1954 Indians pitching staff. This piece was taken from her article, "Trusting to Luck," which appeared in Indians Game Face Magazine for 1991.*



*Eddie Lopat, the very definition of "crafty left-hander."*

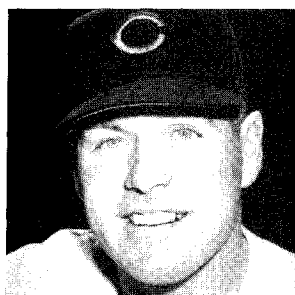
forgotten all about it, and anyway runs are what win ballgames.

Mel Harder, longtime Tribe pitcher and pitching coach, had watched everything from the dugout that night. Harder agreed with Garcia: it was bats, not bunnies, that did the job. "I suppose at the time they gave the rabbits' feet a lot of credit. But I don't think it had much to do with whether we could beat Lopat or not.

He got beat by a bunch of base hits."

And what did Ed Lopat have to say? Did the wily hurler blame the rabbits' feet for tripping him up? After forty years, Ed still laughed at the suggestion: "No, it didn't bother me. It was just one of those things, they beat me that night and that was all there was to it." But what about your eight-game winning streak? No rab-





Do you know me—and my friends below?  
If you do, you've taken the first step toward solving ...

*Bob Carr*

# Baseball's Magic Square

Identify these big leaguers and figure out why they're here and why they're positioned this way. In other words, what's magic about the magic square? Answers on page 112.

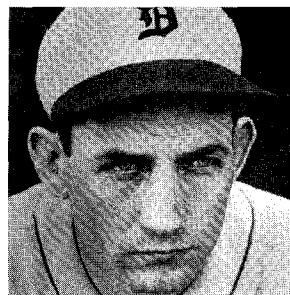
*Dale Mitchell (4)*



*Whitey Ford (6)*



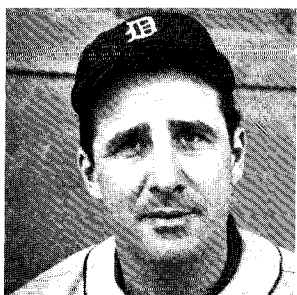
*Earl Averett (3)*



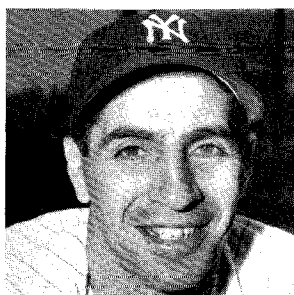
*Charlie Gorn (2)*



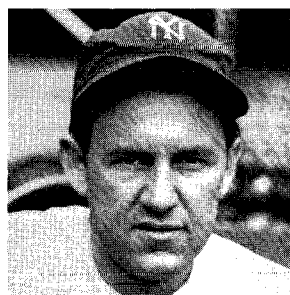
*Ralph Branca (13)*



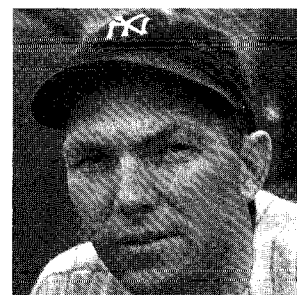
*Hank Egan (5)*



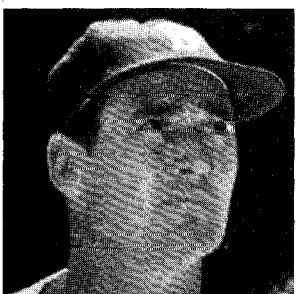
*Phil Rizzuto (6)*



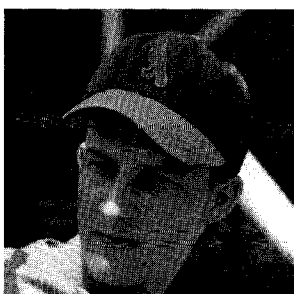
*Lefty Gomez (11)*



*Bill Dickey (8)*



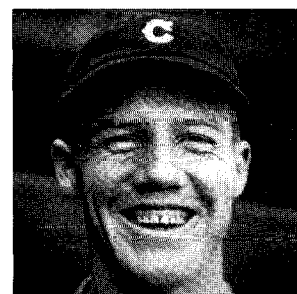
*Ted Williams (9)*



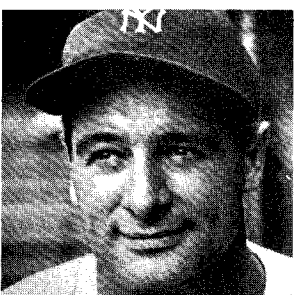
*Stan Musial (5)*



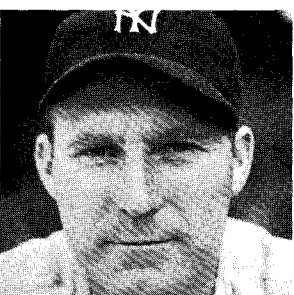
*Joe Mauer (1)*



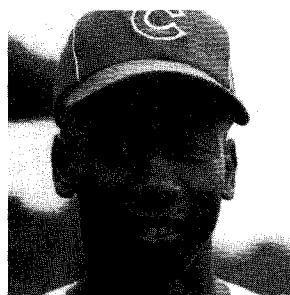
*Willis Hudlin (12)*



*Lou Gehrig (10)*



*Red Ruffing (15)*



*Ernie Banks (14)*



*Bobby Abba (1)*

# Bid McPhee

*Ralph C. Moses*

**J**ohn Alexander McPhee, dubbed "King Bid" by his adoring Cincinnati fans, was unquestionably the top defensive second baseman of the nineteenth century. Playing bare-handed for most of his 18 seasons, McPhee established records for keystone wizardry that, a century later, remain virtually unequaled.

McPhee led American Association and National League second basemen in putouts eight times, assists six times, double plays 11 times, total chances per game six times, and fielding percentage nine times.

To put these incredible fielding marks into perspective, let's borrow an imperfect but useful method of measuring defensive abilities from the book *Players' Choice* by Eugene and Roger McCaffrey. They suggest a process that goes like this: Bid McPhee led the AA and the NL 40 times in the five categories mentioned above, and he was Cincinnati's regular second baseman for 18 years. Multiply the 18 years times the five categories, divide 40 into that and his "league-leading percentage" is .444, the best for any player at any position in baseball history!

**Slow progress**—McPhee was born on November 1, 1859 in Massena, New York, near the Canadian border. When he was seven, his family moved to the Mississippi River town of Keithsburg, Illinois, a small hamlet of 1,700 inhabitants. Keithsburg was the birthplace of Parke Wilson, a catcher for the New York Giants from 1893 to 1899. Wilson's father was running a dry goods store in the town, and McPhee was for some time an

all-around helper in the store. Both Wilson and McPhee played with a local team called the Ictorias.

McPhee was a catcher then, and he was good enough to leave home and sign a contract with Davenport in 1878. He batted .333 with 65 hits in 39 games. He returned to Davenport the following season, playing second base as well as right field and catcher, but batted only .229 with 19 hits in 20 Northwestern League games.

In 1880, perhaps discouraged by his lack of success in pro ball, McPhee secured a position as a bookkeeper in Davenport. He made more money keeping books than playing ball, and he apparently liked the job.

In the summer of 1881, though, McPhee was induced to go to Akron, Ohio, where he played second base for an independent team of that town. Although no records exist of his play at Akron, he must have blossomed, because Cincinnati of the American Association signed him for their inaugural season of 1882. McPhee continued doing bookkeeping in a business house in Akron, and it took considerable persuasion by Cincinnati to get McPhee to put down his books and continue his career on the diamond.

McPhee was lauded in the Cincinnati newspapers as an "honest man and the best second baseman in the world." However, in his and his team's first game against Pittsburgh on May 2 at Cincinnati, McPhee made a very poor showing. McPhee later referred to his own play as "rotten" and he provoked hoots and jeers from the Cincinnati fandom, who suffered through a 10-9 loss. After the game, McPhee boarded a street car, unknown to the local "kranks" in his civilian attire, and leaning against the rail of the rear

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*Ralph C. Moses lives in Chicago, where he is a social worker, a teacher, and a long-suffering Cubs fan.*



**OLD JUDGE CIGARETTES**

Goodwin & Co.,  
New York.

NBL



platform, endured their abusive comments in silence, sadly in full agreement with their views.

**Early success**—McPhee recovered quickly from his inauspicious beginning to help Cincinnati win the American Association championship. While he batted only .228, McPhee gave his early detractors a hint of his fielding prowess, leading the league's second basemen in putouts, double plays, and fielding percentage. The Red Stockings' major stars of their pennant-winning season were left-handed third baseman "Hick" Carpenter (.342), catcher-manager "Pop" Snyder (.291), and pitching ace Will White (40-12).

Although his Cincinnati teams would never again finish on top, McPhee went on to establish himself as the class of all nineteenth-century second basemen. McPhee led American Association second basemen in double plays every season the Red Stockings played in that league. In six out of eight seasons, McPhee led in fielding percentage.

As a hitter, McPhee was a consistent leadoff man with surprising power. He led the American Association in home runs with seven in 1886. The following season, McPhee batted .289 with a league-leading 19 triples.

When Cincinnati joined the National League in 1890, McPhee had perhaps his greatest day at the plate on June 28th when he hit 3 triples in a game against New York's future Hall of Fame pitcher, Amos Rusie. (Another future Hall of Famer, slugger Jesse Burkett, relieved Rusie midway through the contest, won by the Reds, 12-3.)

**The old pro**—McPhee continued his mastery at second base in the National League while still refusing to don a fielder's glove. In an 1890 interview with the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, McPhee stated, "No, I never use a glove on either hand in a game. I have never seen the necessity of wearing one; and besides, I cannot hold a thrown ball if there is anything on my hands. The glove business has gone a little too far. It is all wrong to suppose that your hands will get battered out of shape if you don't use them. True, hot-hit balls do sting a little at the opening of the season, but after you get used to it there is no trouble on that score."

Standing 5' 8" tall and weighing just 152 pounds, the dapper-looking McPhee, complete with classic handlebar moustache, was particularly adept at double-steal attempts with men on first and third. His quickness and savvy allowed him to decide whether to nail the man coming to second or return the ball to the catcher for a play on the man coming from third.

Earlier in McPhee's career, "batsmen" were permitted to choose whether they wanted the pitcher to deliver a high or a low ball. As a result, McPhee and other infielders found it relatively easy to tell where the ball would be hit. When this practice was ended in 1887, McPhee used his skills and knowledge to determine proper positioning for each batter.

Like Fred Pfeffer and Fred Dunlap, the two other outstanding defensive second basemen of the nineteenth century, Bid McPhee possessed great range. The trio of bare-handed marvels all had career range factors around 6.33, marks which remain unsurpassed by their twentieth-century counterparts.

On the field and off, McPhee was a gentleman. He was never fined or ejected from a game, and he was always sober and in playing condition. An 1897 ankle injury, the only serious one of his career, kept McPhee out of action for three months. Cincinnati fans and sportswriters staged a special benefit that raised \$3,500 for him.

When he opened the 1896 season with an injured finger, McPhee finally broke down and started to use a fielder's glove. The result was his major league record fielding percentage of .978, not topped until 1925, when Sparky Adams fielded .983.

McPhee retired from active play after the 1899 season. He managed the Reds to a last place finish in 1901 and resigned in July of the following year. He continued to scout for the Reds until 1909.

McPhee moved to Ocean Beach, California and lived there in quiet retirement. The great second baseman passed away on January 3, 1943 in San Diego.

Bid McPhee's fielding records still rank high among the greatest second basemen of all time:

Category	Record	Ranking
Games	2125	5th
Putouts	6545	1st
Putouts Per Game	3.1	1st
Assists	6905	4th
Assists Per Game	3.2	9th
Total Chances	14241	2nd
Total Chances Per Game	6.7	2nd
Double Plays	1186	11th
Range Factor	6.33	2nd

Bid McPhee was a consistent hitter (.272 lifetime) and a fine baserunner (528 stolen bases), but when fans of long ago or baseball historians of today recall his exploits, it is his remarkable fielding records that they marvel at. "King Bid" truly deserves a place in Cooperstown. Certainly his glove would already be there—if he had worn one!





# Almost Perfect

*Jim Sumner*

**I**n 1929 New York Yankees pitcher Tom Zachary won a dozen games without suffering a single loss. This remains the major league record for total victories in a season without a loss. Several pitchers have mounted serious challenges to this mark. Many fans remember Pittsburgh relief ace Roy Face, who won his first 17 decisions in 1959 before suffering a late season loss; Face finished 18-1. As close as Face came to Zachary's mark, he could not match Johnny Allen for drama. In 1937 Allen took a spotless 15-0 record into the last day of the season, only to suffer a heartbreaking defeat.

Johnny Allen was born in Lenoir, North Carolina in 1905. When Allen was eight, his father died. Allen's impoverished mother sent him and his two younger siblings to a Baptist orphanage in the furniture town of Thomasville, about 100 miles to the east. Allen played on the orphanage high school baseball team but admitted that "we were not so hot because we didn't have the benefit of coaching and had to pick up what we knew the best we could." Of course, according to Allen, baseball was a low priority at the orphanage. "You know, there were 500 kids to feed at that place and we had 600 acres of land to do the job with. I feel like I was brought up on a farm... We had 90 head of cattle and the fun began at four o'clock in the morning."

The example of Babe Ruth notwithstanding, the young Allen gave no thought to a professional baseball career. Following graduation from the orphanage high school he took a job as an assistant clerk at Greensboro's O'Henry Hotel. He liked the work, and

prepared for a hotel career. In 1926, he found himself working in a Sanford, North Carolina hotel when he was asked to try out for the Baptist Sunday School team. One thing led to another, and soon Allen was starring for a local semi-pro club. He was so emboldened by his success that he wrote Greensboro Patriots (Piedmont League) skipper Charlie Carroll for a tryout. Carroll signed him, but sent him to Fayetteville of the Eastern Carolina League for more seasoning. Allen played outfield when he wasn't pitching, but soon began to specialize in the hurler's art. After he won 20 games for Asheville's 1929 Sally League team, Allen's contract was purchased by the New York Yankees. A superb 21-win season for Toronto in 1931 put him in the big leagues the following year.

Allen was an immediate sensation for the Yankees. There was no Rookie-of-the-Year award in 1932 but had there been, Allen would likely have captured the honor. He won 17 and lost only 4, and his winning percentage of .810 led the league. He followed his inaugural season with a fine 15-7 mark in 1933. He missed much of the 1934 campaign because of an infected wisdom tooth, but did go 5-2 in 13 outings. He recovered well enough to go 13-6 for New York in 1935.

A player with Allen's talent would seemingly have been set for years in New York. Yet his tenure with the Bronx Bombers was controversial and tumultuous. A fiery competitor, Allen was likely to lose his temper at even the slightest provocation. Teammate Lou Gehrig observed: "That guy thinks he should win every time he pitches, and that if he loses it's a personal conspiracy against him." Opponents, teammates, umpires,

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even his own manager—no one was immune from the Allen temper. He argued about not being used enough, and he argued about salary. Opponents would complain to the home plate umpire that Allen was throwing a spit ball—not because he was, but simply to watch his temper boil over every time the ump checked the ball. Allen sealed his fate when he blew up at manager Joe McCarthy following a late-season 1935 loss. After the season he was traded to Cleveland for pitchers Monte Pearson and Steve Sundra. Cleveland officials were warned that they had acquired “the worst disposition in the American League.”

It was business as usual for Allen in Cleveland. He went 20-10 for a fifth place Indian club in 1936. He also added to his reputation as a firebrand when he went on a rampage in a hallway of Boston’s Brunswick Hotel, throwing a fire extinguisher and wrecking some plaster after giving up five runs in the seventh for a 6-2 loss to the Red Sox.

Nonetheless, he did win games, including his final two decisions in 1936. At the time, these two wins were important in enabling Allen to reach the coveted twenty-win mark. As the 1937 season progressed, they took on added significance. Allen’s 1937 season began inauspiciously, however. Cleveland was plagued by early season rainouts and Allen had trouble getting into a rhythm. He had only one decision in the first month of the season, a 9-2 win over St. Louis in Cleveland’s April 23 home opener. Several weeks later, Allen blew a golden opportunity for a win against Boston. He took a 5-0 lead into the third inning against the Red Sox, but was yanked after giving up four runs in the third. Cleveland went on to pound the Bosox 16-5, but reliever Willis Hudlin got credit for the win. (In previous years Allen might have received credit for the victory. A rule change prior to the 1935 season gave the official scorer more leeway and in this case the official scorer credited Hudlin with the win.) Fate evened out for Allen several days later when he left a game against Philadelphia trailing 4-1. Cleveland rallied for an 8-6 win, however, taking him off the hook.

At this point, no one was associating Allen with a lengthy winning streak. Considerable attention was being focused on New York Giants standout Carl Hubbell, whose two-season winning streak passed 20 early in the season. Hubbell reached 24 before he lost 10-3 to Brooklyn on the last day of May. Ironically, Hubbell lost four straight before righting himself. His record has never seriously been challenged.

Allen began to hit his stride about the same time Hubbell slumped. He recorded his second win on May 29, throwing a complete game 15-3 win over Chicago. A week later he handled his old Yankee teammates 5-3, aided considerably by the slugging exploits of Earl Averill, who homered, doubled, singled, and scored three times. On June 8 Allen suffered an inexplicable

collapse. Leading 8-2 in the ninth against Boston, he gave up a walk and three successive singles. He was removed for a reliever, and the bullpen collapsed. Joe Heving took the agonizing 10-8 loss. Allen recovered enough to win his next start 2-1, over Philadelphia, with a six-hit complete game. Veteran Earl Whitehill won the second game of the doubleheader 2-0, also with a complete game.

Allen’s last start for a while took place on June 18 against Boston. He left after four innings, trailing 3-2. Cleveland tied the game in the sixth, only to fall 5-4. Two days later Allen fell ill with a stomachache. It was diagnosed as an attack of appendicitis and Allen had his appendix removed.

While Allen recovered, he watched his team fade further into mediocrity. The Indians had challenged the potent Yankees for a few weeks before reality hit. By the end of June the Indians had fallen into fifth place and trailed the Bronx Bombers by 8-1/2 games.

When Allen had his appendectomy, he carried a 4-0 record into the hospital operating room. As he sat out the entire month of July, his season looked like a repeat of his disappointing 1934 campaign. Certainly no one thought he was in line for one of the most exceptional individual stretch runs in major league history.

Allen returned to action on August 4, mopping up in a lost cause against Boston. Another relief appearance followed before he got his first post-operation start. On August 14, he nipped Chicago 4-3. For one of the few times in the season, he needed relief help. Allen went seven and Whitehill finished up for the save. Five days later, Allen handled St. Louis with ease, not an especially difficult task, winning 9-1. This ran his record to 6-0.

The hard-throwing righthander put together one of his best performances on August 24 against Boston. In this game, he was matched against Lefty Grove, still an outstanding hurler at age 37. Allen carried a 3-1 lead into the top of the seventh, only to see Boston tie the game with single runs in the seventh and eighth. Grove and Allen matched goose eggs until the bottom of the thirteenth, when a pinch-hit RBI single by Roy Hughes gave Cleveland a hard-earned 4-3 win.

Allen finished August with an 11-4 victory over Washington. He gave up 13 hits in winning his eighth decision but had so many runs to work with that he was never in danger of defeat. Added to his two wins from the previous season, Allen now had a ten game winning streak. As the season entered its stretch run Allen entered one of those rare twilight zone streaks when a pitcher is virtually unhittable. On September 3, he fell behind St. Louis 3-0 after one inning but settled down for a complete game, 15-3 win. Five days later, Allen threw a complete game seven-hitter in defeating Detroit 6-1. On September 12 he gave up only four hits in beating St. Louis, also by a 6-1 margin. Another four-



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*The irascible Johnny Allen*

hit complete game followed on September 17. Boston fell this time, by a 4-1 margin. A three-run homer by third baseman Odell Hale broke a 1-1 tie in the top of the seventh and propelled the Tribe to victory. By the time this game ended, Allen had allowed only 3 runs in his last 35 innings.

By this time Allen had a 14-game winning streak and was 12-0 on the season. His 12 wins without a loss equaled the 1929 mark set by Zachary. More importantly, at least to Allen's thinking, he was bearing down on the American League record for consecutive wins, held at 16 by Walter Johnson (1912), Joe Wood (1912), Lefty Grove (1931), and Schoolboy Rowe (1934). All

four of these pitchers accomplished their feat in the course of a single season.

Allen captured one of his most dramatic victories on September 21. He gave up three runs in the bottom of the third inning against Washington to fall behind 3-1. The lead held until the top of the fifth when Hal Trosky came to bat with the bases loaded. He hit a sinking liner which centerfielder Mel Almada went after. Almada's attempted shoestring catch came up empty, the ball rolled to the wall, Trosky had an inside-the-park grand-slam homer, and Allen had a 6-3 win. He was now 13-0 for the season.

Allen's next start was delayed one day by a rainout.

He recovered nicely, handling Detroit 9-3 in the first game of a twin-bill. Eighteen-year-old teammate Bob Feller won the nightcap 4-3. As usual, Allen went all the way, scattering 10 hits. This gave him a record-tying 16 straight (over two seasons). With the season winding down, Cleveland skipper Steve O'Neill announced that, at Allen's request, he would give the hurler two more starts in an attempt to equal the American League record of 16 consecutive wins in a single season. On September 30, Allen defeated Chicago 6-4 in one of his shakier efforts. He led 6-1 before tiring, but did manage another complete game. Nonetheless, Allen now held the American League record, with 17 consecutive wins over two seasons.

Allen went after his perfect season on the schedule's final day, October 3. He desperately wanted his sixteenth straight single-season victory. Over 22,000 fans came to Tiger Stadium to watch an otherwise meaningless game and see if he could pull it off against the Tigers. The result was a pulsating contest. Allen was matched against another Tar Heel, Morehead City's Jake Wade, who entered the game with a 6-10 record and an earned run average well over five. Detroit got on the scoreboard in the bottom of the first when Pete Fox doubled and Hank Greenberg drove him in with a hot shot past third baseman Hale for RBI No. 183. Unfortunately for Allen, this was all Detroit would need. Wade was untouchable that day. He allowed only a solitary hit, a seventh inning single by Trosky. Cleveland came to bat in the top of the ninth trailing 1-0 and desperate for a run. Lyn Lary walked and was bunted to second by John Kroner. Trosky came to bat with two outs. Detroit elected to pitch to the young star, who had driven in 128 runs for the season. Allen had benefitted from Trosky's slugging all season, but not this day. With the crowd on its feet and roaring with every pitch, Trosky struck out. By a heartbreaking 1-0 margin, Allen was a loser for the only time that year.

Allen's reaction was predictable, if unfortunate. *The New York Times* called him "a picture of woe" and observed that "words of sympathy couldn't soothe him as he berated his ill luck. The temperamental star allowed himself only a few tender words—to a small bulldog that played at his feet." In the dugout, Allen attempted to go after Hale, whom he felt should have fielded Greenberg's RBI single. Allen had to be restrained by manager O'Neill. Given time to reflect, Allen was more gracious. "I just happened to run into a fast one," he told a North Carolina newspaper a few days after-

wards, "and they beat me, that's all. You can't win all of 'em and Detroit is a tough ball club."

Later that year, *The Sporting News* awarded Allen its coveted Player of the Year award. The final stats show this was a defensible decision. Despite missing six weeks with his appendectomy, Allen went 15-1. Eleven of his wins came in a period from August 15 to September 30, an extraordinary six weeks. Only Lefty Gomez and the ill-fated Monte Stratton bettered his 2.55 earned run average.

Several things stand out about Allen's streak. Clearly, it was no fluke. Only twice did Allen leave a game while trailing. He needed little relief help, throwing complete games in 14 of his 20 starts. Unlike Johnson, Wood, Grove, and Rowe, Allen ran up his streak while pitching for a non-contending mediocre team. It's also interesting to speculate on how his season might have gone had he not developed appendicitis. Maybe he would have suffered several losses had he not missed six weeks. On the other hand, considering how well he pitched after his surgery, it's entirely possible that Allen might have had an even better season and gone after Hubbell's mark.

Allen maintained his stature as one of the game's best pitchers in 1938. At one point early in the season, he won twelve straight. In the All-Star game that year, however, he hurt his arm pitching to Joe Medwick. This was only one season after Dizzy Dean had suffered his more famous All Star Game injury, the broken toe that led to his career-ending sore arm.

Allen later recalled, "I felt a sharp twinge of pain in my right arm. I didn't think too much of it at the time...but after that game I never was the same pitcher." Allen finished the season only 14-8. Bothered constantly by his sore arm, he hung around until 1944, playing for the St. Louis Browns and Brooklyn before finishing his career back with the Yankees. In a colossal irony, Allen, long the bane of umpires, actually umpired in the minor leagues during the 1940s and 1950s. He died in 1959.

Allen's sore arm possibly prevented him from a Hall of Fame career, although his volatile temper might just as easily have done him in. Still, Allen's 142-75 record and .654 winning percentage compares with the marks of Dean (150-83, .644) and Sandy Koufax (167-85, .655), Hall of Fame pitchers whose careers were cut short by arm injuries. Regardless, Allen's record-setting 1937 season stands as a tribute to a fiery competitor who, for one year at least, was almost perfect.



# Mark Twain and the Great Base Ball Match

*Darryl Brock*

**O**ne spring morning in 1875, when baseball still was written as two words and newspapers were clucking over scandals in the Grant administration and releasing lurid details from Reverend Henry Ward Beecher's adultery trial, the *Hartford Courant* carried the following ad:

TWO HUNDRED AND FIVE DOLLARS REWARD—At the great base ball match on Tuesday, while I was engaged in hurrahing, a small boy walked off with an English-made brown silk UMBRELLA belonging to me and forgot to bring it back. I will pay \$5 for the return of that umbrella in good condition to my house on Farmington avenue. I do not want the boy (in an active state) but will pay two hundred dollars for his remains.

SAMUEL L. CLEMENS

The *Courant*, edited by Charles Dudley Warner, Mark Twain's neighbor and co-author with him of *The Gilded Age*, ran the ad without comment on Thursday, May 20. Previously the paper had mentioned neither Twain nor his umbrella in its coverage of the sporting event, a contest which drew "the largest audience ever assembled in New England [to see] rival base ball nines."

The game was the dream match-up of the young '75 season, a long-anticipated clash of undefeated clubs. In near-miraculous fashion, the hometown Hartford Dark

Blues had shaken off their National Association cellar finish the previous season and catapulted themselves to a 12-0 start. Coming to challenge them on their home diamond was Boston's perennial juggernaut, the champion Red Stockings, sporting a gaudy 16-0 record of their own.

Twain, America's reigning humorist and budding literary superstar—just then he was putting final touches on *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*—set out to walk to the ballpark from his mansion at 351 Farmington Avenue, into which he had moved with his wife and daughters only eight months before. The three-story, 19-room phantasmagoria, with its Gothic turrets, pilothouse balcony, riverboat-deck veranda and polychrome tile roof, testified to Twain's grandly eclectic sense of style—and to his success. Costs for the great house would total \$122,000—a staggering figure in a depression year. The boy from rural Missouri had come a long way.

Accompanying Twain was his closest friend, the Reverend Joseph H. Twichell. A vigorous, likable 36-year-old (Twain himself would turn 40 in November), Twichell, back in his Yale years, had pulled an oar on the eight-oared crew and won a coveted writing prize. During the Civil War he'd served as chaplain in a rugged New York Zouave regiment.

"Preachers are always pleasant company when they are off duty," Twain once wrote. Twichell admirably proved his point. The two, who would remain close all their lives, hiked together most Saturdays and often attended ballgames. Twichell, center fielder on the Men's Club team, made the perfect ballpark companion.

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They strolled along wide, oak-lined lanes that spring afternoon, cherry and peach trees in blossom around them. Hartford possessed "the broadest, straightest streets," Twain commented during his first visit to the city, "that ever led a sinner to destruction." The air was mild after a morning frost, but New England's fickle weather might have accounted for Twain bringing his umbrella; it was a happy reminder of his recent stays in England, where, unlike in his own country, he was lauded as a serious artist. Then too, the souvenir served as a sartorial prop, and Twain rarely balked at adding a bit of dash to his public figure.

On the street they encountered Bret Harte, Twain's former mentor and collaborator. Writers frequently visited Hartford, then a major publishing center. Harte, small and dandified, made a disappointing impression on Twichell. Years later Twain would deliver the scathing judgment that Harte was so hopelessly affected as to lack a sincere fiber in his body, but at this time they were still friendly, and engaged in cordial conversation before going on their ways.

The center of town enjoyed a holiday atmosphere. Thousands thronged the avenues as businesses, including the famous Colt Arms Company, let workers out early to attend the game; their numbers were swelled by incoming excursion trains. The crowds headed in one direction—toward the Ball Club Grounds, a wood-fenced park down on Willys Avenue near Dutch Point, four blocks from the Connecticut River.

For weeks, a 75-cent reserved seat in the new wooden Pavilion had been the region's hottest ticket. Now the covered structure was a veritable silk jungle of women brandishing fans and parasols while their frock-coated escorts knowingly explained the game's finer points. Across the diamond, the 50-cent open "bleaching boards" overflowed; around the park, a special detail of eight beleaguered cops tried to prevent armies of small boys from scaling the fences. By three o'clock, some 9,000 people had crammed inside, the great majority standing behind ropes ringing the ballfield.

To a roar from visiting Boston contingents, the Red Stockings emerged from the clubhouse and began warming up, their red and white uniforms flashing over the grass. They were big (for that era), well-muscled men: top-paid star shortstop George Wright (he and older brother Harry, the Red Stocking manager, later would be the first siblings to enter baseball's Hall of Fame); six-foot-one pitcher Al Spalding (future sporting goods magnate); "Deacon" Jim White, rifle-armed catcher; Ross Barnes, smooth fielding second-sacker and league's top batter; "Orator Jim" O'Rourke, third baseman, a clubhouse lawyer blessed with prodigious vocabulary and a huge bristly mustache sufficient to excite every boy's envy.

And then, to a bellow from the stands, the Hartfords took the field, natty in their navy blues. Cries sounded for local favorites: sparkplug second baseman "Black Jack" Burdock; slugging outfielder Tom York; willowy ballhawk Jack Remsen; teenage fireballing "change" pitcher and outfielder Tommy Bond. The loudest came for the Dark Blues' captain and third baseman Bob Ferguson, a 30-year-old veteran whose \$2,500 season salary topped the club's payroll. Ferguson's fielding ability had earned him the nickname (at least in the press), "Death to Flying Things." His short-fused irascibility—as an umpire Ferguson later would break a player's arm for challenging his honesty—resulted in the moniker "Fighting Bob" and no doubt other less complimentary tags. Ferguson and Harry Wright were old adversaries. Five years previously, playing for the Brooklyn Atlantics against Wright's famed Cincinnati club in an extra-inning contest, Ferguson had scored the run that snapped the Red Stockings' 84-game win streak. Although not a bearer of grudges, Wright was hardly one to forget.

At three-thirty, Captains Spalding and Ferguson met for the coin toss. Boston won and sent the Hartfords to bat. Spalding marched out to the pitcher's box, 45 feet from home, where he peered in at Doug Allison, the Dark Blues' catcher and leadoff man.

The game witnessed by Twain and the assembled thousands, although recognizable to today's fans, would strike them as peculiar in certain vital respects. The most obvious difference was the absence of gloves or other protective equipment; gnarled fingers were the proud badges of a ballplayer. Catchers played as far as 40 feet behind the plate, moving up close only with runners on. They took everything, even foul tips, barehanded. That season, for the first time, a Harvard backstop would draw attention—much of it scornful—by trying out a birdcage-like mask.

As play began, other remarkable differences soon would be evident. Spalding pitched *submarine* from the shorter distance—and only after the hitter had called out where he wanted the ball, high or low. Consequently, strikeouts were few and offensive production could be prodigious, particularly among players less sure-handed than these pros. Bases on balls also were scarce. During this contest nobody would walk, and the solitary umpire—one Alphonse "Phoney" Martin (known as "Old Slow Ball" back in his pitching days), a New Yorker agreed on by both clubs—called only 14 balls all afternoon.

Excited cheers broke out when Allison swung on Spalding's first pitch and looped the ball over second—a sure hit. But Barnes raced into right field to make a fine going-away catch. The cheering faded to groans. If the Bostons, favored for their slugging ability by New York pool sellers (\$100 over \$70) were going to field like *that*, the afternoon might be long indeed.



Alternating cheers and groans continued as Burdock slashed a single, only to be gunned down by Deacon White on a steal attempt. Shortstop Tom Carey followed with another hit. Then, in a sequence baffling to a modern observer, he was ruled out for not returning quickly enough to first on a foul; in those days a runner had to get back before opponents could relay the ball via their pitcher to the base.

The Hartford "nutmeg nine" had been blanked, whitewashed, goose-egged—all popular contemporary terms carrying far greater humiliation than now—in their opening frame.

Things didn't get much better.

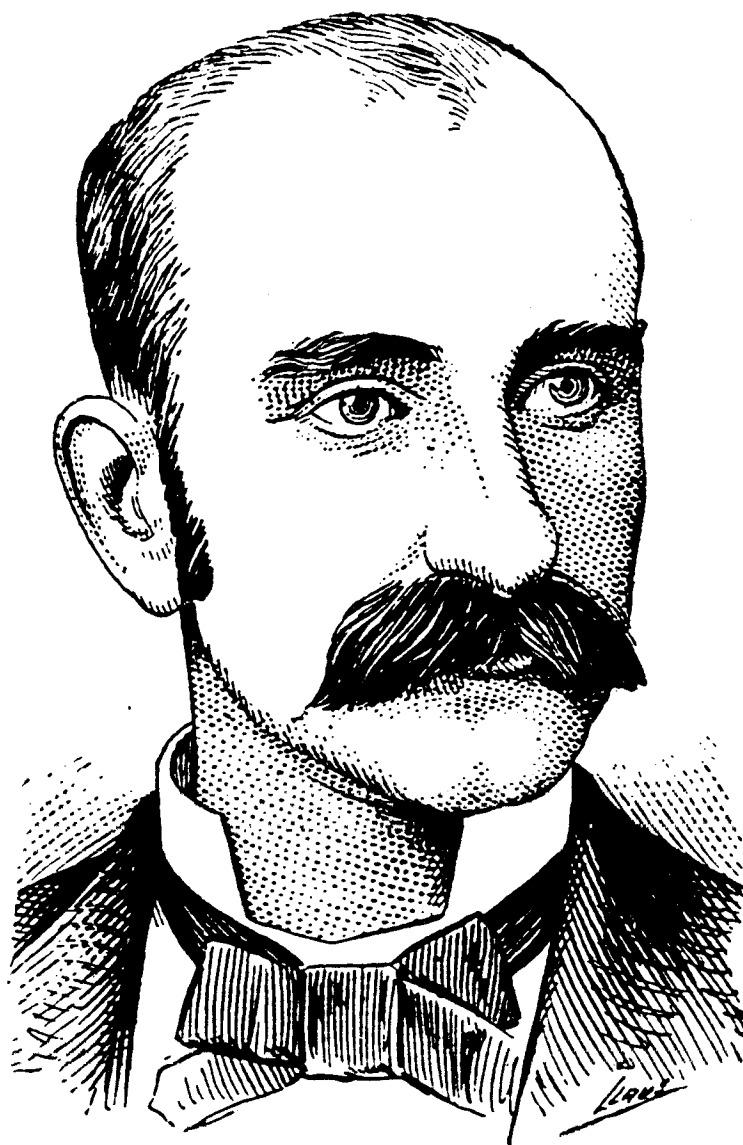
George Wright stepped in against the Dark Blues' diminutive hurler, William "Candy" Cummings. In contrast to the giant Spalding, whose straight pitches came at varying speeds, Cummings had developed a pitch that broke away from hitters. He has, in fact, been credited as the inventor of the curve ball, having—he claimed—stumbled on his technique a decade previously while tossing clam shells. Technically illegal, the surreptitious wrist-and-finger snap was soon mastered by others.

Cummings's benders didn't fool the Boston hitters this day. Wright singled, then Barnes drove one deep that rookie Bond, retreating in right, took on the fly. O'Rourke hit sharply through the infield, and Red Stockings danced off first and second. A dribbler came to Cummings for the second out, and the crowd began to hope. When shortstop Carey fielded the next ball cleanly, a joyous sound erupted—and died abruptly as first baseman Everett Mills fumbled the cross-diamond throw, allowing Wright to score. Spalding then roped a hit to left, bringing the other runners home. White went down on a foul-bound—the rules said that fouls caught on the first bounce were outs—and the inning was ended. But already Boston led 3-0.

In gloomy succession, the next six Dark Blues went down. Boston padded its lead in the third, scoring twice on three hits and an error. 5-0. The crowd, growing sullen, took to greeting Umpire Martin's calls with "ungentlemanly conduct," elaborated by the *Courant* as, "hissing, booing, and continued insults."

A prolonged dispute was triggered in that inning after Ferguson tagged O'Rourke standing on third base, claiming he'd lit out from second before play officially resumed after a time-out. Agreeing, Umpire Martin gave O'Rourke the thumb. Then, in the words of the *New York Clipper*:

A delay of fifteen minutes followed, during which time Martin, assisted by Spalding, was



"Death to Flying Things" Bob Ferguson, Hartford captain

perusing the book of rules to see whether O'Rourke was out or not. The crowd became impatient, meanwhile, and cries of 'Read it out loud!' 'Pass it around, and let us all read it!' 'Take it home and read it!' etc. were heard. The umpire finally decided O'Rourke should go back to second, as he could find no rule on which to put him out.

The Red Stockings, it seems clear, hadn't won three consecutive pennants by not knowing how to use the rule book to their advantage.

Nonetheless, the fourth inning brought a rousing Dark Blue turnabout. Allison led off with a single. Burdock bounced a double-play grounder to O'Rourke at third, but the latter's throw sailed past Barnes into the outfield, the runners sprinting to second and third. A pop-up hushed the home stands, but Allison scored on

Cummings' fly, and Tom York, the Dark Blues' highest-average hitter (and solitary lefty), smacked a Spalding pitch into right, scoring Burdock. Moments later the crowd's exultation soared anew as York alertly took second on a passed ball.

"The Bostons became demoralized in this innings," the *Courant* reported, "and twice Spaulding [sic] stopped to rest in order to allow his men to collect themselves." Only Boston could get away with such a ploy, the sportswriter charged; it "would not have been countenanced in any other club by any umpire."

He probably had a point. Manager Harry Wright, universally respected at the time and recognized now as "The Father of Professional Baseball," had been instrumental in the formation of the Association and carried enormous clout in its operations. His sideline presence, added to Captain Spaulding's aggressive on-field personality, customarily guaranteed the Bostons an edge in intimidation.

In any case, the Dark Blues were not finished. Ferguson lifted the crowd to new ecstasies with a hit that scored York. He took third on a muff of Remsen's fly ball. Mills then atoned for his first-inning error by slamming the ball into an outfield gap, both runners scoring. Bond ended the rally by flying out, but the hometown lads had knotted the score against the champions, 5-5. The throng was beside itself, derbies and straw boaters soaring over the field, Twain at that point no doubt "engaged in hurrahing" to his utmost.

Unfortunately for Dark Blue rooters, that proved to be the afternoon's highwater mark. Aside from a sparkling running catch by York and a drive "prettily taken" by Remsen, that "model fielder," the locals failed to show much the rest of the way. Shortstop Carey suffered the ignominy of striking out, while his mates managed only three scattered hits. Boston, meanwhile, blended solid hitting with another error by Mills, tallying five more times to win pulling away, 10-5.

The Dark Blues had played "a creditable game," concluded the *Courant* reporter, but "lacked the nerve and coolness" shown in previous contests, "evidently being a trifle afraid of their opponents."

That season, Boston would zoom to its fourth consecutive pennant—a process that hastened the breakup of the Association and the inauguration of the National League the next year—defeating Hartford no fewer than nine times in 10 contests, and shutting them

out on three occasions.

During the waning innings of that opening contest, according to the *Courant*, "The vast assemblage, seeing that the game was the Bostons', began to leave and crowded in upon the field, spite [sic] of all efforts of the policemen and officers of the club to keep them off."

But the fans would be back each time the hated Bostons appeared, to cheer on their stalwart Dark Blues against all odds. Although Philadelphia's Athletics eventually nosed them out for second place, Hartford finished third with a solid 54-28 record. All considered, a fine season.

And of course there would be next year.

As for Twain, baseball's idiom duly found its way into his writing.

"Step to the bat," his protagonist challenges Merlin the Magician in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, "it's your innings." At the end of the novel, after teaching knights the game and grouping them on rival ballclubs, the Yankee bemoans the death of Sir Gillimer in combat with these sentiments: "The very best man in my subordinate nine. What a handy right-fielder he was!" Even more he mourns Sir Kay as, "My peerless short-stop! I've seen him catch a daisy-cutter in his teeth. Come, I can't stand this!"

In April 1889, at Delmonico's in Manhattan, Twain and Twichell attended a banquet welcoming home a traveling band of pro players, led by Spaulding, who had taken the National Game to countries around the world. The menu was organized into nine "innings," each replete with the obligatory long-winded toasts of the time.

Twain, bushy hair by then tinged with gray, drew laughs with his quip that "the boys" had "plowed a new equator round the globe stealing bases on their bellies." Baseball was, he remarked during his short comic talk, "the very symbol, the outward and visible expression of the drive and push and rush and struggle of the raging, tearing, booming nineteenth century!"

One wonders if he composed the tribute with anything in mind of the great Hartford base ball match fourteen years before. Or if he and Twichell thought that evening to remind Spaulding, then far past his playing days, of the distant afternoon when he had faced their unbeaten home nine.

Or if the umbrella ever was returned.



# The Manila Dodgers

*Irvin K. Kawarsky*

**T**he colorful team that came to be known as the Manila Dodgers was born in August of 1945, when Brooklyn pitcher Kirby Higbe, now a lowly PFC, was asked by former teammate Freddie Fitzsimmons to manage an all-star service team from other Philippine islands. Higbe agreed, and was formally given the job by General Burton Reynolds, who was an enthusiastic baseball fan. Reynolds wanted a team to entertain the troops, now that the war was ended and morale had to be maintained among those who couldn't be shipped home immediately.

When Higbe held tryouts, 200 hopeful players showed up. The competition was tough: among those present were Early Wynn, Max Macon, Joe Garagiola, Jim Hearn, and Joe Ginsberg. Vern Bickford and Roy Partee joined the squad soon. The players Higbe chose got orders to report to so-called Base "X", a Special Services camp at Manila's Rizal Stadium. Their first uniforms, made from mattress covers, were very heavy, hot, stiff and almost impossible to play in. Nonetheless, the team was on the field in a week.

The team was something of an experiment at an overseas base, a group whose main army duty was to entertain the troops by offering them a high grade brand of baseball. The team turned out to be a huge success, and it was said that they drew more G.I.s to Rizal Stadium than any other entertainment that the

army sponsored.

At first, players lived in tents across from the stadium, but they eventually moved into individual rooms built for them inside Rizal, which was the third-largest athletic plant in the world, and the largest in the Orient. It included a football field, a track, a swimming pool, a boxing arena, and facilities for basketball, softball, and baseball. Rizal had been a Japanese strong point only a few months before, and Wynn can still describe the appearance of the stadium, with its seats all shot out and its many bullet holes filled in with concrete. To get the stadium ready for play, the army repaired a gaping hole in the right field wall, fixed the backstop, repaired the drainage, and leveled and resurfaced the field. The Dodgers played many night games, when there wasn't an electrical failure, which was a common problem at first.

The team was first named the Base "X" All-Stars, and was sometimes called the Army All-Stars, but Higbe began calling his squad the Manila Dodgers in late October, when it began taking on tough competition. It was a great PR move, because it gave G.I. fans something familiar to sink their teeth into, and it made the team popular among a whole range of service personnel. Not everybody was happy about the new nickname, though. Early Wynn, an American League stalwart who'd been running his own team on Balau, wasn't altogether happy with either the Senior Circuit moniker or the transfer of talent—including himself—to Higbe's outfit. Wynn was mollified, though, and played a major role with the Dodgers, including acting as their third manager.

Garagiola was the Dodgers' catcher until December

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of 1945, when he broke his thumb. He was replaced in the lineup by the 19-year-old Ginsberg. One of the things Garagiola recalls is that he hit the first post-war home run over the outfield wall at Rizal, and that his name was painted on the barrier near those of pre-war fence-clearers Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and Earl Averill. He also remembers that when he returned with the Cardinals during a Far-East trip in 1957, his name had been removed.

Jim Hearn, who later pitched for the Cards, Giants, and Phillies, was assigned to the Base "X" squad early on. He and Kent Peterson—later of the Reds and the Phillies—handled most of the team's mound duties during the first few months. Hearn and Peterson had earlier met as opponents. Before either of them had been assigned to Higbe's squad, Peterson played for the 5th Replacement Depot team. Hearn, who had just arrived, had been asked to pitch for a pickup team against the 5th in a Sunday afternoon game.

"It happened that Saturday night I got grossly sick on something I ate and was flat on my back in my cot when the truck came by to pick me up for the game," remembers Hearn. "I could hardly get up, I felt so bad, but they insisted and I went. I pitched the entire game against Kent Peterson and lost 1-0 in the last of the ninth on a walk forcing in the winning run. I pitched a two-hitter and Kent pitched a no-hitter."

Months later, when Hearn was about to be shipped home, he and Peterson hooked up in another special exhibition. Hearn pitched for a Filipino All-Star team, while Peterson took the mound for the Dodgers. In another pitcher's duel, Peterson triumphed again, 1-0, on his own inside-the-park homerun.

While they were together on the Base "X" team, Hearn and Peterson formed a potent pitching punch. Hearn once struck out 23 men in a night game, and Peterson once whiffed 21 during the day. Neither Wynn nor Higbe pitched much. Wynn was a strong-armed shortstop who loved to hit (and did it well), and Higbe made occasional trips to the mound, where he featured a knuckleball. NL hurler Max Macon didn't pitch at all, playing almost exclusively at first base. Other fine Manila pitchers included Ted Wendt, Jerry



*A newspaper print of one roster of the Manila Dodgers. First row—Tom Williams (Equipment Manager), Minor Scott, Kent Peterson, Joe Garagiola, John Stowe, Ted Wendt, Zig Emery, Joe Janet; second row—Lt. Warner Jones (officer in charge), Frank Smith, John Newman, Wally Borden, Frank LaManna, Kirby Higbe, Jim Hearn, Early Wynn, Dick Cohen.*

Staley, and Bickford.

Another sports notable was connected with Manila baseball. One of Jim Hearn's friends was a tech sergeant named Chick Hearn. The men weren't related, but they told everyone that they were brothers. Hearn, who later became the voice of the Los Angeles Lakers, began his broadcasting career at Rizal Stadium, where he

handled P.A. chores from a little box on top of the stadium roof behind the plate. Not content to announce batters by name, however, Hearn often announced the game pitch by pitch.

In the first inter-base series in the Philippines, the Base "K" team beat Higbe's Base "X" boys in November, which gives some indication of the level of talent available to the services right after the war. By December, though, the Manila Dodgers were firing on all cylinders, and they beat Base "K" for the Philippine Championship. The following month, they won the Pacific Olympic Championship.

The best available records credit the Dodgers with winning 250 games and losing 15—five of those to a touring National League All-Star squad in January of 1946. In that series, which the NL won 5-2, Higbe's players were on edge. The veterans found themselves performing before many of their old big league buddies, and the youngsters were trying to impress such baseball men as Brooklyn's coach, Charlie Dressen, who led the team, and also Brooklyn manager Leo Durocher, who was passing through with Danny Kaye and a U.S.O. show. The result was some uncharacteristically erratic play that cost them three of the games the National Leaguers won.

A long succession of capable managers and Grade A replacements kept the Dodgers on top for a solid year. Johnny Stowe took over the team when Higbe went home in early 1946. He was followed a few months later by Early Wynn, who turned the team over to Max Macon. Through mid-1946, as players were rotated home, other good ones took their places. Finding high-caliber players became gradually harder, and the Dodgers had lost their dominance, and their vital importance as morale boosters, long before the team played its final game on January 3, 1948.

# Dodgers End Hubbell's Record Streak

*William Curran*

**O**n May 27, 1937, Carl Hubbell, the New York Giants' ace left-hander, beat Cincinnati 3-2 by pitching two innings of relief. It was his 24th consecutive victory, compiled over two seasons, and his first appearance in relief since the previous September. In those years it was not uncommon for a staff ace to act as closer. Future Hall of Famers like Lefty Grove and Dizzy Dean sometimes led their league in saves.

Two weeks earlier, on May 13, in a complete game win over Pittsburgh, Hubbell had chalked up consecutive win No. 21 to pass the record set in 1912 by another Giant left-hander, Richard "Rube" Marquard. Marquard won his last start in 1911 and his first 19 in 1912. Once having passed Rube, Hubbell stood to set a new major-league record every time he took the mound.

King Carl, as he was affectionately known in New York, was scheduled to try for No. 25 on Monday the 31st, in the first game of a Memorial Day doubleheader against the weak but not always acquiescent Brooklyn Dodgers. Because the actual holiday fell on a Sunday, it was celebrated on Monday. The doubleheader was one of three officially scheduled holiday twin bills played by all major league teams, on Memorial Day, July Fourth, and Labor Day. It meant that New Yorkers had known well in advance of the season that the interborough rivals would play two big ones on May 31.

Well before the great day an ad by Leblang-Gray's ticket agency at 42nd and Broadway had urged affluent

New Yorkers to nail down their reserved and box seats for the "Decoration Day Doubleheader." Decoration Day, now an old-fashioned term, was the common idiom of the period, a reminder that the holiday had been established for decorating the graves of those who had fallen in "the war." By that was meant the Civil War. So the holiday largely remained, since most of the doughboys killed in the World War of fresh memory lay buried in France.

Early on that sultry Monday, eager fans streamed toward the venerable Polo Grounds by subway, elevated train, streetcar, bus, taxi, even a few on foot. None would have come by private car even if they had been affluent enough to own one. Parking at the ballpark was barely sufficient to accommodate the mayor's limousine and the cars of one or two club officials.

This was the unadorned Polo Grounds of legend. No unsightly light towers cluttered the upper deck, no ugly high rise apartments stood next door. The elegant apartment buildings atop Coogan's Bluff to the west of the park were of modest height and tasteful 1920s design.

Like most kids, I was determined not to miss a minute of batting practice and so I left my home in Queens by mid-morning, sensibly provided with a Boy Scout canteen of cold water and an ample lunch. The lunch I carried in what was then termed a "knapsack," actually a canvas shoulder bag used for carrying a gas mask during the World War and widely available at Army and Navy surplus stores.

The idea never crossed my adolescent mind that it might be difficult to get a general admission ticket at

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*William Curran is writing a book on pitchers to be titled, The Man Who Struck Out Casey. It is due for release in 1995.*

eleven in the morning. As it turned out, I was lucky to get past the turnstile. When Noel Hynd wrote in *The Giants of the Polo Grounds* that "...the standing-room crowd was bulging at all the barriers along the outfield grandstand. Some fans were actually nestled into the rafters of the upper deck..." he did not embroider the truth. With every seat occupied by the time I arrived, except boxes and the reserved section, the best I could manage was to squeeze into what looked like the last square foot of standing room in the upper deck on the first-base side. I spent the entire day on my feet, hunched over the last row of seats right under the sheet steel of the roof. By early afternoon the upper deck would turn into a colossal solar oven. Although I can't recall whether the back wall of the park was louvered, the fact that I survived the day suggests that it was.

Officially, the Polo Grounds seated a scant 55,000. And so shortly past noon, nervous New York Fire Department officials forbade further ticket sales and doubtless prayed that nothing would spark a panic in the overloaded ballpark. The police, skilled in such matters, later estimated that at least 25 thousand late-comers had had to be turned away. The disappointed thousands did not even have the solace of listening to the games at home or at a tavern because in those days the three New York teams imposed a ban on broadcasts. For daily scores, most fans used to wait for the bulldog edition of the morning papers, which reached the newsstands at about 8:00 PM. New Yorkers who owned a radio—not everyone did, believe it or not—might catch the evening sports roundup at 6:30: Dick Fishell on WMCA or Paul Douglas (later a movie star) on WABC at 6:35.

Unofficial attendance for the Monday doubleheader was announced as 61,756 of whom 60,747 had paid, the second largest crowd in the history of the Polo Grounds. I was reluctant to accept the figure because it seemed evident that half the Borough of Brooklyn was present, and that should have put the count closer to a million. Anyway, however many they were, the Brooklynites made the noise of a million. It retrospect it seems clear that the wily burghers of Flatbush and Canarsie sensed history in the making.

Frankly, I could have kicked myself for a teenage naif. A season earlier I had "worked" as a juvenile gofer at the sports department of the tabloid New York *Daily Mirror*, which closely resembled the more famous *Daily News*. My reward had been to see most of the home games of both the Giants and the Yankees from the press box although I sometimes had to leave early to run errands. But in 1937, there had been some problem of school schedule, and I didn't pursue the job again. Still, if I had had the gumption to phone sports editor Dan Parker or chief photographer Izzy Kaplan in advance, I might have been able to finagle my way into

a corner of the cramped semi-circular press box to watch the games blessedly separated from the raucous hordes out of Brooklyn. On the other hand, there was the risk that the *Mirror* men might chase me off on an errand to the city room on East 45th Street just as the Giants loaded the bases and had Mel Ott at bat. On balance, I concluded, it was probably safer to suffer in the rafters.

Just eight months earlier, on September 13, 1936, 64,471 had squeezed into the Polo Grounds for a Sunday doubleheader against the St. Louis Cardinals. This remained the largest crowd to see a National League game until the Los Angeles Dodgers briefly occupied the anomalous Coliseum in the late 1950s. Then on Memorial Day, 1938, the Yankees would pack 83,533 into the Stadium for a doubleheader with the Red Sox—the second largest crowd in the history of that ballpark, and the biggest paid attendance ever at a New York baseball game. In part, I think, the record crowds of the late 1930s may be taken as evidence that America was at last emerging from the Great Depression and was poised for better times, a prosperity that would be stimulated, regrettably, by gathering war clouds in Europe.

On that May morning in 1937, a 17-year-old Isaac Asimov had crossed the river from Brooklyn to see his first big league ball game ever. In his splendid autobiography, *In Memory Yet Green*, Asimov reveals that he had been an avid Giant fan from an early age, forced to keep his guilty passion secret while growing up in enemy territory. Isaac's choice of teams, I submit, stands as irrefutable early evidence of the brilliant intellect he would exhibit as an adult.

For years, Carl Hubbell had been Asimov's particular hero, but the boy had been confined to following King Carl's luminous career through newspaper accounts and in his imagination. The reader is left to infer that not until 1937 was young Isaac able to scrape together the \$1.10 needed to see Hubbell in action. The Depression was indeed that deep for many Americans.

At about 1:15, Hubbell emerged from the Giants' dugout to warm up on the first-base side of home plate. Carl was always easy to identify from his custom of wearing his pants low, about midway up the calf, in contrast to contemporary baseball fashion of just below the knee. His belt also tended to slip low on his lanky frame. In a characteristic gesture on the mound, Hubbell would hitch up the belt periodically, often a signal that he was about fire his baffling screwball past some helpless batter. With the Giants' "Meal Ticket" standing 8-0 on the season and having pitched five complete games, I was supremely confident he would take the measure of the fifth-place Dodgers and extend the streak to 25.

In 1937, Dodger blue had been temporarily abandoned. Brooklyn's gray traveling uniforms were



trimmed in a garish Kelly Green. Perhaps the McKeever family, principal owners of the club, hoped that the luck of the Irish might rub off on their charges. It was not to be. On Opening Day at Ebbets Field, former Brooklyn manager Casey Stengel, being paid to sit out the year while Burleigh Grimes shepherded the team, had remarked wryly that the new uniforms fooled him for a while. "But I recognized the boys in the late innings," he added. The Flatbush Fusiliers had blown an apparently safe lead with some inauspicious fielding and lost the opener to the haughty Giants.

Historians of New York baseball do not exaggerate. Never in the history of the game has there been a rivalry to equal the interborough clash between the Giants and the Dodgers—for intensity, for color, romance and pure baseball entertainment. The much-heralded feud between the Yankees and the Red Sox was by comparison a ladies' club contretemps. The point is, the Yankees were almost always victorious over star-crossed Boston. Not so with Brooklyn and New York. You dared not bet the farm on any meeting between the two.

Brooklyn fans hated the Giants with a ferocity matched only in civil wars in Central America and the Balkans. Giant fans, for their part, tended to look upon the Dodgers with contempt. It seemed an appropriate response to a team that had spent most of the twentieth century in the second division.

In particular, Brooklynites detested the Giants' acerbic manager Bill Terry. Scrappy shortstop Dick Bartell ranked a close second. But there was an exception to Flatbush's hostility—Mel Ott, known in Brooklyn as "M'lot." Even on occasions when Master Melvin had pumped a game-winning homer over the right-field screen at Ebbets Field and

onto Bedford Avenue, Bleacher Bums would grin affably and say, "What can you do wid dat M'lot? Some kinda hitter, huh? But what a nice guy." Hubbell, too, escaped much Brooklyn disapproval, since he was quiet and unassuming and, more important, he had traditionally experienced problems subduing the Dodgers.

A bit more than a year later, a distraught Dodger fan would actually shoot and kill a Giant follower, who had been kidding him about the ineptitude of the Beloved Bums. And in 1943, when Brooklyn traded its slugging first baseman Dolph Camilli to the Giants, Camilli, a robust 36-year-old and only two seasons removed from being the league homerun champion, chose to retire



*Carl Hubbell*

NBL

rather than report. Dolph's succinct explanation to the press for preferring unemployment to donning the foreign "NY" logo: "I hate the Giants." It was that bad.

Once the game had started it didn't take the skill of a Coney Island palm reader to discern that Hubbell was off his feed that hot afternoon. He walked the leadoff batter, 29-year-old rookie center fielder Gilbert "Gib" Brack, who was headed for a brief and undistinguished career in the majors. Walking a lightweight like Brack would have been alarming enough, but when one of Hubbell's pitches sailed all the way to the backstop Giant fans loosed a collective gasp. Brooklyn zealots scented blood.

Third baseman Joe Stripp, a Brooklyn favorite, followed with a single to deep short. Bartell's excellent barehanded stop on the grass kept Brack from advancing to third. But the aged Heinie Manush, the Dodgers' right fielder that day, skillfully moved the runners along with a sacrifice bunt, and when lyric tenor and sometime first baseman Buddy Hassett, "The Bronx Thrush," grounded to second, Brack scored. Today that would be called "manufacturing" a run. Against Hubbell in 1937, it resembled a rally.

The initial worries of the Giant faithful intensified when Dodger left fielder "Long Tom" Winsett, who had had so many trials in the majors without sticking that he must have suffered from coffee nerves, belted one to deep left center that sailed over the head of Jimmy Ripple, the Giants' swift-footed center fielder, and hit the bleacher wall on one short bounce. A reasonably fast runner would have had an inside-the-park homer on the 450-foot shot. The lumbering Winsett was content to pull up at third.

Nearby, a gravelly New York voice shouted, "Hey, Winsett, you can tell that to your grandkids. It's all you'll have to tell." It was too true. Such a blow by a left-handed batter, one destined for a .237 lifetime average, seemed incontrovertible evidence that it was not Hubbell's day. Stunned and limp scarcely describe the condition of New York fans.

Hubbell finally got Dodger second baseman Cookie Lavagetto on a ground ball, and unnerved Giant fans settled back. After all, 2-0 was not an insuperable lead, especially against the Bums, whose only good pitcher, Van Lingle Mungo was nursing a sore arm. One had to hope that the Giants' artillery, Joe Moore, Dick Bartell, Jimmy Ripple, Mel Ott, Harry Danning—all batting over .300—would get to 33-year-old Fred Frankhouse, never more than a journeyman right-hander despite the widespread conviction that he used an illegal spitball.

Alas, in the top of the third more mischief was afoot. Stripp opened with a single. When King Carl retired Heinie Manush on a fly ball, it looked as though the great left-hander might escape damage as he had in the second inning. Unfortunately, he hit Buddy Hassett on

the wrist, a very un-Hubbell thing to do. When the dangerous Cookie Lavagetto popped up, I felt that Hub was home free. But then Carl walked the newly menacing Winsett. Not to worry, I thought. It sets up a play at any base for the third out. Coming to bat was rookie catcher Paul Chervinko, starting his first major-league game. If Hubbell couldn't get this guy, who probably had feet of lead, King Carl was indeed in trouble. Carefully following the script for that fateful day, Chervinko rifled a single to right, one of the 11 hits he would collect in his major league career. Two runs scored and a pall settled over the Giant faithful.

New York got the two runs back in their half of the inning when the ever-reliable Mel Ott followed singles by Joe Moore and Jimmy Ripple with a booming double. I can't speak for the other loyalists, but my hopes refused to die. At 4-2, the game was still not out of reach.

The pesky Brack led off the fourth with a double, and after Hubbell had retired Joe Stripp for the first time that afternoon, Manush singled sharply to right to score Brack. Heinie's hit was the *coup de grace* for King Carl. When Terry signalled for right-hander Dick Coffman to hurry in from the bullpen, Hubbell began the long trudge to the clubhouse in center field, his first such retreat as a loser in almost a year. He received a roaring ovation, joined—I must admit it—by many Brooklyn fans. The self-effacing Carl remained low on their hit list.

In my heart, I refused to acknowledge that Hubbell's streak had come to an end. Surely there was a chance that the Giants' sluggers could salvage the game in the late innings, especially against Brooklyn's stumblebums. It was classic adolescent denial. In fact, the aroused Dodger batters tattooed a succession of Giant relievers to nail down the victory, 10-3. I had witnessed the close of one of the great achievements in baseball history.

Of the terrible moment Asimov writes, "I didn't know whether to be indignant over having missed twenty-four victories in order to be treated to a defeat, or fearful that it has been my own presence that had 'jinxed' him."

In compiling the streak, Hubbell had pitched 19 complete games, won three in relief and was saved only twice, never earlier than the seventh inning. He would go on to win another 14 games in 1937, lead the league in winning percentage, and help the Giants to a second consecutive pennant.

I suppose that there was a touch of irony in the fact that between games Hubbell reappeared to accept an award as the National League's Most Valuable Player. Presenting the plaque was the instantly recognizable Babe Ruth, wearing what seemed to be his conventional summer attire, a tan Palm Beach suit and dress shirt open at the neck. Two years earlier, from almost

the same section of the stands, I had watched Babe take his final turn at bat in this, the park he loved, where he had hit his first major league homerun back in 1915, and where he was to evolve into a national idol. On that gray day in 1935, Babe, wearing an unfamiliar and ill-fitting Boston Braves travel uniform, had been almost unrecognizable. He was ill, overweight, discernibly dispirited. Sad to say, the Sultan of Swat was called out on strikes. On this sunny afternoon, however, Babe looked great, though he still appeared very much overweight.

By the time the first game ended, the temperature under the roof had risen to punishing heights. If it was as reported 85 degrees outside the park, it must have been 110 under the metal roof. Each time I ventured a discrete swig from my canteen, haggard faces and haunted eyes turned in my direction. Fellow sufferers sensed or perhaps even smelled that the canteen contained water. Caterer Harry Stevens's vendors of soda pop had not been diligent that afternoon in servicing of the far reaches of the upper deck, and in any case no volume of soft drinks can rival the quenching powers of even a sip of water. There must have been a few water fountains under the lower deck of the Polo Grounds. My memory is not clear on that. But under the circumstances no seat-holder dared leave for a drink lest he be forced to battle a weary squatter on his return, perhaps one from a rival borough.

Suddenly, in desperation, a man nearby offered me money for a drink of water. I don't recall how much he offered or whether he coveted most of the contents or just a couple of swallows. It was moot, since there was the problem of how to convey the water to his lips, there being no cups anywhere in sight. Although I count myself a compassionate person, to this day I recoil at the thought of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation unless it be to succor Sophia Loren or Catherine Deneuve.

There was brief discussion of fashioning a cup from a page of a scorecard, but in the end I poured the water into the man's cupped palms and he lapped up the life-restoring liquid like a grateful dog as envious bystanders looked on with swollen tongues. It was a scene straight from a Gary Cooper French Foreign Legion movie. I look back upon the episode with clear conscience, however, because I did not accept his money.

Late in the afternoon, in numbing anticlimax, the Giants fashioned an undeserved win in the second game with a bottom-of-the-ninth rally. Brooklyn's legendary iron gloves had reverted to form and kicked the game away.

In a sense, the events of that Memorial Day signaled one of the most notable reversals of fortune in the history of baseball. The pennant of 1937 would be the last

for the Giants until the miraculous, quirky playoff victory of 1951. After more than a third of a century of almost uninterrupted success under John McGraw and later Terry, the proud New Yorkers were destined to spend much of the coming decade in the second division, twice finishing in last place. In 1938, Hubbell would develop elbow problems, a prelude to the end of his great career.

In contrast, the Dodgers, for decades baseball's lovable clowns, stood on the brink of a period of glory exceeded only by that of the Yankee dynasty of 1921-1964. In the spring of 1938, under the new and dynamic leadership of general manager Larry MacPhail, Brooklyn would install lights at Ebbets Field—the first in New York—precisely in time for Cincinnati's Johnny Vander Meer to pitch the second of his consecutive no-hitters. This promotional *coup de theatre*, accidental though it was, gave attendance at Brooklyn a much-needed boost.

In the following year, MacPhail would breach the New York ban on broadcasting and hire the incomparable Red Barber to handle play-by-play for 1939 on Station WOR. The move forced the Giants and Yankees to follow suit and bring in Mel Allen and Arch McDonald to air their weekday home games on WABC. No longer would New Yorkers experience that suspenseful evening wait by the newsstand for the dreaded line score, which might reveal that your favorites had blown yet another game or were trailing hopelessly in the late innings.

MacPhail, moreover, complemented brilliant marketing decisions by recruiting player talent so that there would be plenty of action on the field for Barber to report. It was MacPhail's good fortune that just months before his arrival, Brooklyn had obtained from the Cardinals, for a passel of highly expendable baseball flesh, the fiery and slick-fielding shortstop Leo Durocher. The astute general manager lost little time in naming Durocher field manager for the 1939 season. From the Phillies, MacPhail bought slugger Dolph Camilli, from the Yankees speedy outfielder Ernie Koy, from the Tigers outfielder Dixie Walker, soon to become "The Peepul's Cherce." Then the resourceful Scot reached into the minors for two apparently failed right-handers, Whitlow Wyatt and Hugh Casey. Both became stars. Soon Brooklyn would pioneer air travel in the majors to spare their newly acquired talent the long, tiring train trips.

Gone were the green uniforms. Gone the confused baserunners and the outfielders who tried to gather in fly balls with the heads. Within two years, attendance at Ebbets Field would double, within three the Bums would move from seventh place to first. It was the dawn of a new era. Thereafter, the Giants would be the bums.

# They Come From All Corners of the USA

*Charlie Bevis*

**F**rom Augusta, Maine to Pearl City, Hawaii, from Sarasota, Florida to Kirkland, Washington, eleven- and twelve-year-old youngsters from 231 teams across the United States have participated in the Little League World Series over its 46-year history through 1993.

Youthful competitors from 137 teams from Canada, Latin America, Europe and the Far East have also competed in this annual international event held at Williamsport, Pennsylvania during the waning days of August.

Teams from the USA have won 25 championships since the tournament began in 1947 (see accompanying box). This success is overshadowed, though, by the recent dominance of the Far East squads which have won 20 of the past 26 titles.

Last year, Long Beach, the 1992 and 1993 champion, became the 32nd team from California to have qualified for the tournament, the most of any state. California has also produced more champions than any other state: five.

Pennsylvania dominated the Little League World Series during its first 14 years, when teams from the Keystone State won four titles. The title string began with the 1947 inaugural tournament, a mostly local affair with 11 Pennsylvania participants and one New Jersey squad, that was won by the Maynard Little League team from—no surprise—Williamsport.

Sixteen other Pennsylvania teams since 1947 have also participated, most before the Vietnam War era,

when teams from the Northeast and from urban areas in general dominated Little League World Series play.

During the 1950s, urban teams such as Birmingham, Alabama, Schenectady, New York and Hamtramck, Michigan won the championship.

Connecticut had two titlists in the 1950s: Stamford and Norwalk. In the 1960s a Connecticut team from Windsor Locks, a suburb of Hartford, won the title and launched a trend towards more suburban squads in the Little League World Series.

Every American championship team during the past 25 years has hailed from a suburban location. Trumbull, Connecticut (1989), is a suburb of Stamford. The 1983 champion Marietta, Georgia is outside Atlanta, while Kirkland, Washington (1982) is a suburb of Seattle. Both 1970s champions are from New Jersey—Lakewood, the 1975 champion, is near the Jersey Shore, while 1970 champion Wayne is outside New York City.

The other trend that began in the late 1960s was the dominance of warm weather states in producing Little League World Series qualifiers.

California had a brief dynasty in the tournament when three Golden State teams won titles in consecutive years from 1961-63. A hotbed of success was the town of Campbell, outside of San Jose, which produced tournament qualifiers in 1970, 1976 and 1979.

Another warm weather state, Florida, has seen 16 teams qualify for Williamsport, although curiously no Florida entry has ever won the championship.

Florida does boast Tampa, where such major league stars as Dwight Gooden and Wade Boggs learned to play, and the most prolific location in the nation for

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Little League World Series qualifiers. Seven teams from Tampa advanced to Williamsport between 1967 and 1989, two from the West Tampa Little League (1967, 1969), four from the Belmont Heights Little League (1973, 1975, 1980, 1981) and the 1989 team from the Northside Little League.

Additionally, five other teams from within 30 miles of Tampa have also qualified for Williamsport: St. Petersburg (1948), Lakeland (1954), Sarasota (1982, 1986), and Dunedin (1991).

Only two non-Tampa locales have qualified from Florida. Pensacola made the trip three times from 1949-51 and Altamonte Springs, a suburb of Orlando, got to Williamsport in 1984.

Kankakee, Illinois is runner-up to Tampa in appearances at Williamsport, with four. Kankakee's Jaycee Little League produced qualifiers in 1958, 1962 and 1966 while its Lions Little League did so in 1950.

Houston is one of a dozen cities in addition to Campbell and Pensacola that have had three teams qualify for Williamsport. Aside from Long Beach, with its back-to-back wins, the Texas city is the only locale

to have repeated as a Little League World Series champion. Its National Little League squad won the title in 1950, and its Westbury American Little League team came home with the title in 1966.

Other locations that have sent three teams to the championship tournament are Little Rock, Arkansas; Bridgeport and Stamford, Connecticut; Chicago, Illinois; Schenectady and Staten Island, New York; Hamtramck, Michigan, Hammonton, New Jersey, and Richmond, Virginia.

Two states have experienced a 100 percent championship success rate when its locales qualified for the tournament. Marietta, Georgia, in 1983, and Roswell, New Mexico, in 1956 won the title in their states' only appearances at Williamsport.

More USA teams qualified for the Little League World Series in its earlier years than today, when only four make it to Williamsport each year. Thus, it is much more difficult for a particular city or town to qualify teams more than once. Small towns, like Brooklyn, Michigan, population 1027 (1990), have become rare, too.

## US Little League World Series Champs

**California** (5) El Cajon (1961), San Jose (1962), Granada Hills (1963), Long Beach (1992, 1993)  
**Connecticut** (4) Stamford (1951), Norwalk (1952), Windsor Locks (1965), Trumbull (1989)  
**Pennsylvania** (4) Williamsport (1947), Lock Haven (1948), Morrisville (1955), Levittown (1960)  
**New Jersey** (3) Hammonton (1949), Wayne (1970), Lakewood (1975)  
**New York** (2) Schenectady (1954), Staten Island (1964)  
**Texas** (2) Houston (1950, 1966)  
**Alabama** (1) Birmingham (1953)  
**Georgia** (1) Marietta (1983)  
**Michigan** (1) Hamtramck (1959)  
**New Mexico** (1) Roswell (1956)  
**Washington** (1) Kirkland (1982)

Source for both lists: Little League Baseball Museum, Williamsport PA

## US Team Representation by State

32 California  
 27 Pennsylvania\*  
 16 Florida  
 15 Connecticut, New York  
 13 Illinois  
 11 New Jersey  
 10 Indiana, Texas  
 8 Michigan  
 7 Alabama, Hawaii, Virginia  
 6 Ohio  
 5 Massachusetts  
 4 Iowa, Maryland, Tennessee  
 3 Arkansas, Arizona  
 2 Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Washington  
 1 Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Oregon, West Virginia  
 0 Alaska, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, Wyoming

\*Includes 11 participants in 1947 tournament

# Elmer Gedeon

*Joseph D. Tekulsky*

**T**wo major league ballplayers were killed in action in World War II—catcher Harry O'Neill on March 6, 1945, and outfielder Elmer Gedeon on April 20, 1944. Born a few weeks apart in 1917 (O'Neill on May 8 and Gedeon on April 15), both played briefly in the American League in 1939.

Harry O'Neill appeared in one game for the Philadelphia Athletics, filling in for Frank Hayes without coming to bat in a 16-3 loss to the Detroit Tigers on July 23.

Elmer John Gedcon (sometimes called "Jack" or "Ged") played in five games for the Washington Senators in September, batting .200 with 3 hits in 15 at bats. His namesake, Elmer Joseph (Joe) Gedeon, a cousin of his father, had played for Washington during a career as an American League infielder from 1913 to 1920.

A rare multi-letter man in big time college athletics, Gedeon received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from the University of Michigan in March, 1940. Six feet four inches tall, weighing 196 pounds, he was a football end, ran the high hurdles, and batted .320 as a first baseman. A fellow Michigan athlete described him as "a super guy, very, very humble." Gedeon was a teammate of Tom Harmon on the 1938 football team that tied for second in the Big Ten, losing by only one point to Minnesota, the conference leader ranked fourth in the nation. He sometimes played baseball and ran the high hurdles for Michigan on the same day.

In 1938 and 1939, Gedeon won the Big Ten indoor 70-yard and outdoor 120-yard high hurdles for

Michigan's Big Ten track champions. He placed third to Fred Wolcott, probably the best hurdler of his day, in the 120-yard event at the 1938 national outdoor intercollegiate meet, won by Southern California, with Michigan finishing third. Gedeon did not enter the 1939 outdoor intercollegiates; he was then playing professional baseball.

After the 1939 college baseball season, Gedeon signed with the Washington Senators. Farmed out to Orlando in the Class D Florida State League, he hit .253 in 67 games.

Making the big jump from Class D late in the 1939 season, Gedeon played five games for the Senators: September 18, 19, 20, 21 and 23. His three major league hits came in a 10-9 victory over the Cleveland Indians on September 19. *The New York Times* reported, "Elmer Gedeon who stepped from Michigan's campus to big league baseball...hit safely three times in four tries and made a beautiful catch on his only chance in center field."

After going to spring training with Washington in 1940, Gedeon spent the season with Charlotte, North Carolina, in the Class B Piedmont League, batting .271 in 131 games.

The Senators recalled Gedeon for the 1941 season, but in March, 1941, nine months before the United States entered World War II, he was inducted into the Army, serving in the cavalry and then as a pilot in the Army Air Forces. He was in a crash of a bomber flown by another pilot at Raleigh, North Carolina, in August, 1942. Despite broken ribs, severe burns and shock, that would necessitate several months hospitalization, Gedeon returned to the burning plane to rescue a

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member of the crew. In February, 1943, he received the Soldier's Medal for heroism. According to the citation, the crew member, "helpless" due to a broken back and broken leg, "would have been burned to death had it not been for the unselfish action of Lieutenant Gedeon."

Gedeon went overseas to England as a medium bomber pilot. He was reported missing in action over German occupied France on April 20, 1944. In May, 1945, shortly after the war in Europe ended, it was confirmed that Captain Gedeon had been killed in action near the town of St. Pol.

#### Elmer John Gedeon

Batted right. Threw right.

Year	Club	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	BA	PO	A	E	DP
1939	Orlando	67	237	33	60	6	4	4	27	23	47	15	.253	151	14	5	8
	Wash.	5	15	1	3	0	0	0	*	2	5	0	.200	17	0	0	0
1940	Charl.	131	468	70	127	20	9	11	61	62	92	14	.271	311	16	15	2

\*The record books show 1 major league RBI. The box scores reported in *The New York Times* and *The Sporting News* do not show an RBI.



#### The Day the Cooley Lost His Cool

*Pittsburgh was on its way to its second straight National League flag in 1902. Charles Louis (Deacon) Phillippe, the fiercely competitive flamethrowing righthander of the Pirates was on the mound the afternoon of August 15th, against the Boston Braves in a 2-2 ballgame.*

*The man who led off for Boston in the top of the seventh was Duff (Sir Richard) Cooley, a bench-jockey par excellence, one of the greatest needlers of his contemporaries in the history of baseball.*

*"You're tiring Deke. Don't try to fog one by me," Cooley, taunted, as he tapped the plate with his bat.*

*Phillippe accepted the challenge, He unloaded a fireball. But the hop had left his hummer. The lefty-swinging Cooley connected, and the ball rocketed to right center.*

*The Pirate center fielder that day was none other than Honus Wagner, who went barreling back and to his left, into the highlight and shadows of late afternoon. As he neared the fence, it looked as if the bowlegged ballhawk might not be able to make the catch. The Boston coach at first gave the go-go sign, and Cooley lowered his head and turned it on, sprinting all out for an inside-the-park homer.*

*Pongo Joe Cantillon, the butt of many of Cooley's jibes and a famous baseball prankster himself, was serving his only year as a National League umpire. He decided to get into the act.*

*The impish ump picked up Cooley at first base and circled the bases with Cooley on an inner arc, shouting encouragingly, "make sure to touch second!" and "Don't miss third!"*

*As the two of them came pounding into the stretch for home, Pongo panted, "Hook the plate when you slide, don't hurt the catcher."*

*Cooley complied completely. He hit the turf in a swirling cloud of dust, as Cantillon's right arm jerked skyward. "You're out, you bum," Pongo Joe bellowed. "You've been out since Wagner caught the ball!"*

—Howard A. Lavelle

# The Pan-American Series of 1958

*Tito Rondon*

**T**he 1979 AAA Inter-American League was not the only noble experiment that failed in Latin American professional baseball. The 1958 Pan-American Series went largely unremarked, and was the only one of its kind ever played.

In the late '50s, enthusiasm for pro ball was running wild in the Dominican Republic and in Nicaragua. Colombia had its winter league, and Mexico's Pacific Coast League was already a going concern. In fact, there were two leagues in Mexico at the time. Many felt that some sort of championship was needed for the whole area. But the Caribbean Series among the reinforced champions of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Panama had been highly successful since its inception in 1949, and the people who ran it were not about to change its format.

The outsiders decided to set up their own tournament, aiming to have in the next few years a sort of Super Series between the two champions, and eventually to seek a merger.

The Dominicans, however, refused to participate, because they were afraid of never being admitted to the Caribbean Series. (It was not until 1970 that they got their wish, under the new format that survives to this day.)

Colombia, Mexico and Nicaragua had surprising champions; in the first two cases they had to come from behind to win (Vanytor over Kola Roman and the

Mazatlan Deers over the Poza Rica Oilers), and in the third because Leon beat a highly favored 5 Estrellas team that featured Marv Throneberry, George Washington Wilson and Lee Tate, among others.

Leon had Cubans Luis Zayas at second and Isaac Seoane catching, both from the Mexican League, and Rogelio Alvarez, shunted to right field to make way for Throneberry at first. Future major leaguer Leo Cardenas was at short. Pitchers Manuel Montejo and David Jimenez were from Cuba, too.

Leon also had two outstanding fielders in natives Artilio Lopez at third and Duncan Campbell in center.

The Mexicans had lost all their American players when they left for home after the season came to an end, but they still had stars like Epitacio "La Mala" Torres (Hector's father) and Felipe Montemayor.

The Colombians were led by Ted Narleski, (Ray's brother), who was the manager and second baseman; catcher Ken Retzer and pitchers Charles Kolakowski and Jim Peete.

On Wednesday, February 12, 13,404 fans crowded the National Stadium in Managua to watch the first game, between Colombia and Nicaragua.

The fans went wild from the first inning, as Throneberry homered after Cardenas had walked. Jimenez had to relieve Montejo, but Leon broke the game open with a four-run fifth, and Cardenas belted a four bagger. The locals had their first win, 10-3.

The Mexicans arrived the next day, so it was no surprise that that very evening they fell to the Colombians by a 7-5 score. Retzer homered and Kolakowski struck out eight batters.

Seven thousand fans were frustrated on Friday as

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*You may have caught Tito Rondon broadcasting Dodger games in Spanish during the 1990 season. He has covered baseball on radio, on TV, and as Sports Editor for the daily Nicaraguan newspaper, La Prensa. His biggest thrill was doing the delayed broadcast for Nicaragua of Dennis Martinez's perfect game.*

Leon hammered 14 hits, including homers by Throneberry and Alvarez, but still lost to Mazatlan by 7-6.

Miguel Sotelo hurled a complete game, which he also won with an RBI single in the eighth. Montemayor almost had two homers, but Campbell robbed him of one with the best catch of the Series.

In Saturday's double header, Colombia's Enrique Castillo beat Mexico in relief of Canadian Dave Wegerek, 7-5, despite Daniel Rios' home run.

Then Nicaragua beat Vanytor 9-3 as David Jimenez struck out 14. Zayas and Colombian Inocencio Rodriguez homered.

The stage was set for Sunday's game, where Leon was heavily favored to beat Mazatlan for the championship.

The Nicaraguan team banged out ten hits, including home runs from Throneberry, Zayas and Alvarez. Mexican shortstop Alfredo Rios helped the Nicaraguan cause by committing three errors in one inning, but still Leon lost 11-9. The pitching went sour as it allowed 11 hits, and the visitors scored five runs in the eighth, taking advantage of walks, to earn the win.

All contenders were tied 2-2.

It was decided that one team would draw a bye, waiting to play on Monday against the winner of Sunday's night game. Leon won the raffle, and Colombia would play Mexico that same day. But a snag developed.

As allowed by their contracts, Vanytor's North American players had left, including their manager, Narleski. Marv Throneberry, in the same situation, decided to stay. The Colombians took desperate measures. They "borrowed" one of Leon's catchers, Panamanian Calvin Byron. They activated their 26-year-old batboy, Padilla. They put two pitchers in the

outfield. Another player, Antonio Torres, was named manager.

And still they beat Mexico.

Once more, "Quique" Castillo went to the mound. He allowed homers in the first two innings (Humberto Guerrero and Torres), but he pitched a complete game. The Colombians rapped out 17 hits. Rodriguez went four for five, and Byron had two doubles and a triple. They won 8-2.

On Monday, though, Vanytor ran out of miracles. Leon took the championship, beating the Colombians 13-2. Vanytor managed to score a couple of runs in their first at bat, on three walks and an error, but Jimenez got his control back and pitched a two-hitter, striking out eleven. He also hit a homer, as did Cardenas.

The Nicaraguans had beaten the Colombians three times. The Colombians had done the same to the Mexicans. The Mexicans had also beaten the Nicaraguans twice.

Leon was lucky, but also good, as they hit .330 (61 for 185) in the Series, leading as well in doubles (15) and home runs (10). Throneberry had three of them, and he led in RBI with 10. Leo Cardenas was the best hitter at .500 (11 for 22), ahead of Duncan Campbell (.450).

Marv Throneberry had rounded out the greatest season any hitter has ever had in Nicaraguan baseball history. He took the batting championship in the regular season (.344), he had led in homers with 16, and he had hit six in the play-offs for a grand total of 25, or 65 since the beginning of the 1957 season.

But in spite of all the great deeds, the Pan-American Series was never played again.



### When Tiny Baker Met the Mighty Cobb

*Jesse "Tiny" Baker, a five foot, four inch shortstop, made his major league debut for Washington on September 14, 1919. Baker's big league career lasted less than an inning and a half, thanks to Detroit's superstar Ty Cobb. In the top of the second inning of a game played in Washington, Cobb walked and promptly stole second. Baker was spiked when he tried to tag the Georgia Peach. He had to leave the game, calling Cobb a lot of harsh names. That was the extent of Baker's major league career. He never got to bat in the majors, although the 1993 Total Baseball credits him with a run batted in. The RBI probably belongs to Frank Ellenbe, Baker's replacement, who drove in a run with a sacrifice fly in the fourth inning. Detroit won the game, 9-4.*

—Al Kermisch

*Four decades ago*

# The Day the Indians Pocketed a Pennant

*Bruce Dudley*

**T**hroughout the summer of 1954 the Cleveland Indians played at a blistering .700 pace, but Casey Stengel's defending champions continued to breathe down the Tribe's back. By Labor Day, the Indians began to put more daylight between themselves and the Bronx Bombers. On Sunday, September 12, New York visited the city on Lake Erie for a doubleheader in the last scheduled meeting between the two clubs. With only two weeks remaining in the season and trailing by 6-1/2 games, the Yankees desperately needed a sweep to keep alive any hope of capturing their sixth straight pennant.

A sunny sky and Indian Summer weather brought out the largest crowd the major leagues had ever seen. Some 86,563 fans filled gigantic Municipal Stadium to the rafters, with 12,000 customers jamming the aisles and standing behind the outfield fences. Most were there to be in on the kill and see the vaunted Bronx Bombers humbled. They were not to be disappointed on this balmy afternoon. It would be a day long remembered by die-hard Cleveland loyalists.

In the first game, Bob Lemon and Whitey Ford nearly matched pitches for six innings. With the score tied at 1-1, Whitey injured his shoulder and Stengel called on 39-year-old Allie Reynolds to take over on the mound. The Indians quickly got to Reynolds for two runs when outfielder Al Smith bunted safely, second-baseman Bobby Avila walked, and Al Rosen brought both runners home with a double to left-center field. Cleveland picked up an insurance run in the eighth

inning after two were out, thanks to a single by Avila and two Yankee errors. Lemon (22-6) pitched a superb game in tossing a six-hit, 4-1 win. Taking plenty of time and using his baffling sinker ball to perfection, Lem struck out Mantle three times as he mowed down New York easily over the final three innings.

Lemon's fine hurling in the opener all but eliminated the Yankees, and Early Wynn pounded the final nails into their coffin during the nightcap. After spotting the Bronx Bombers a 2-0 lead in the first-inning on a Yogi Berra home run, the gruff righthander limited the world champions to a scratch single the rest of the way. Wynn pitched one of the best games of his long career, as he struck out 12 batters on this memorable Sunday. Early concluded the afternoon in grand fashion by fanning the side in the ninth. Mantle, experiencing one of his worst days ever, went hitless and struck out three more times in the finale.

The Tribe scored all of its runs off Tommy Byrne in the fifth inning. After two were out, Wynn rammed a hit through the box, and Smith and Avila followed with singles of their own. With one run home and runners on second and third, the stage was set for Wally Westlake's most dramatic hit of the season. The burly outfielder, who had taken over for an injured Larry Doby in the second inning, blasted a Byrne delivery into left field to clear the sacks and give Cleveland a 3-2 lead.

"He hung me a curve ball," remembered Westlake, "and I hit it off the left-center field fence." Wally then paused for a moment before he related the most interesting part of his story. "As I swung out to make my turn, Red Kress, the coach at first, yelled several times,

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'you can't make it!' But I looked up and the ball's bouncing off the fence, so I kept going and got down there to second base." It was then, as he was standing on second with 86,000 looking on, that Westlake realized that he hadn't touched first base. "So anyway, I'm out there on second base, and I'm dying," continued Wally. "I'm saying Hail Marys, saying please Lord make Byrne throw a pitch. It turned out, he cranked up and Hank Majeski popped up. Then I really got a good jolt as I was going to the outfield after that third out. I went to the dugout and got my glove. And old Honochick was the first-base umpire. As I ran by him he says, 'Hey pal, next time you come by, you better touch that thing!'"

Neither the Yankees or anyone else (Honochick excepted) noticed that Westlake had missed the bag as he rounded first with his game-winning hit. That was the kind of day it was for the Indians—plenty of good fortune, and the breaks going their way. The games were no means blowouts, but they had the same effect. Although it would be a few more days before Cleveland clinched the pennant, for all practical purposes the Tribe was now a cinch to be making a World Series' appearance.

The Yankees were bitter in defeat and refused to talk with newsmen afterwards. "Don't let nobody in. I don't want nobody in here," yelled Stengel to stadium policemen as his team filed dejectedly into its dressing room. In the Indians' clubhouse pandemonium reigned. Following Hal Newhouser's cue, the celebrating Tribesmen chanted, "Yeah, we choked up. Yeah. Tell the world we choked up." Manager Al Lopez best expressed the ultimate satisfaction felt by the exuberant ballplayers who continued to laugh and roar with happiness. "This was the way we wanted it," he said calmly. "We wanted to beat the Yanks ourselves. This was the



*Wally Westlake is tagged out at the plate by Al Lakeman of the Tigers in a 1954 game*

way we wanted to win the pennant."

Long before the final out of the afternoon, writers in the press box were busy composing obituaries for the fallen world champions. Some Cleveland scribes approached the task with undisguised glee, but it was Arthur Daley of *The New York Times* who best described the reaction of the baseball world to New York's defeat. "The Yankees are ready for interment and funeral services will be held any day now. Their demise will be accepted throughout the country with dry-eyed restraint. It's a good thing for baseball that the pennant-winning monopoly is being brought to a close. The Yankees have been hogging the spotlight much too long and they did little to endear themselves to the public with their cold, mechanical efficiency, especially in the front office."

There were no games scheduled in the Junior Circuit the day following Cleveland's big doubleheader victory. The Yankees, licking their wounds, moved on to Detroit for two games with the Tigers. Savoring the aftermath of their most important win of the year, the Indians looked down the road toward the Fall Classic. None of the Tribesmen anticipated the cruel fate awaiting them in the team's approaching World Series debacle against the New York Giants.

# Alliteration and Initials

Frank Keetz

**O**ne of the rewards of doing turn-of-the-century baseball research is the enjoyment of early baseball writing. It's clever, antiquated, colorful, Victorian—certainly different from today's reporting. BILLY BARNES DEAD, a headline might shout, THE VETERAN CALLED OUT BY THE GREAT UMPIRE. When catcher Tom Kinslow died at an early age, the press reported "This once famous catcher has joined the Great Majority." A slugging outfielder was called a "knight of the stick." "High ales got the better of him" explains the release of a pitcher. Mordecai "Three Finger" Brown was described as "the man with missing digits." Outfielders were frequently called "suburbanites."



Interesting writing like this appeared in small town as well as large city newspapers, but no more so than in the headlines of *Sporting Life*, which once competed with *The Sporting News* for the right eventually to bear the title "baseball bible." *Sporting Life*, first appearing in 1883 (vol. I, No. 1—April 15, 1883), had a three-year headstart. It was published weekly in Philadelphia and sold for five cents a copy. The first issue (vol. I, No. 1) of *The Sporting News* was printed in St. Louis on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1886. It too was a five-cent weekly. While both papers emphasized baseball, they originally had other sections covering a

myriad of sporting topics such as boxing, racing, trap shooting, billiards and "theater."



Both papers chronicled much of baseball's bygone happenings, front office maneuvers and legalities, as well as ballfield conflict and shenanigans, minor league as well as major league. The two papers supplemented each other to a large degree. *Sporting Life*, located in Philadelphia, is often a better source for East Coast minor league information, while *The Sporting News*, published in Missouri, was a better source for western leagues. Competition between the two journals was intense, often fierce, from the start. Merciless *Sporting News* editor Alfred Spink led the charge with page one headlines as early as 1886 like, FANS AND PLAYERS ATTACK THE EDITOR OF THE PHILADELPHIA SEWER! After only two months of publication, Spink publicly claimed "the largest circulation of any sporting paper published west of Philadelphia."

Both papers editorialized in much of their reporting. While both papers supported the Players League in 1890, they parted company when the upstart American and Federal Leagues challenged organized baseball. *The Sporting News* enthusiastically aided and encouraged Ban Johnson in his struggle to establish the American League. Fred Lieb, among others, reported that *The Sporting News* had a "reputation for being strongly pro-American League." *Sporting Life* was more pessimistic about American League success and, while reporting developments, offered little open support. The two papers were again in disagreement

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*Frank Keetz has spent some of his free time during the past 25 years driving between his home in Schenectady, New York and the National Baseball Library in Cooperstown.*



concerning establishment of the Federal League. *Sporting Life* said, "We are strongly of opinion that there is both demand and room for a third major league." Meanwhile, *The Sporting News* was hostile to the Feds, using such descriptive terms as "hypocrites" and "outlaws." The papers were often in disagreement over personalities such as John McGraw. Regardless, both papers are, with some caution on the researcher's part, prime sources of information.

*The Sporting News*, with major changes bemoaned by most researchers, continues to this day. *Sporting Life* competed with *The Sporting News* for more than three decades, finally folding in 1917. Francis C. Richter had been the only editor during its 34-year lifespan. Richter, who was also a long time editor of the *Reach Baseball Guide*, died in 1926. Richter's *Sporting Life* left a rich heritage of baseball information—and alliterative headlines.



Constant use of alliteration was common a century ago. One form of alliteration is defined as the "recurrence of a consonant sound at the beginning of adjacent words" or "repetition of the same first letter or sound in a group of words." For example, "the sun sank slowly" or typical terrifying tyrannical torment."

Page after page, issue after issue, year after year, hundreds—actually thousands—of alliterative headlines appeared in *Sporting Life*'s coverage of major league teams. "Pleased Philly" (first place finish), "Phillies Proud" (of second place) or simply "Philly Pointers" and "Quaker Quips" headline various stories about the National League team. "Plucky Pirates" could offset "Pained Pittsburgh." "Serene St. Louis" brought better news than "Sad St. Louis." Team fortunes rose and fell: "Detroit Duly Delighted," "Detroit Doings," and "Detroit Doubt." There was "Cleveland's Cheer" as well as "Cleveland Chatter." Team summarizations simply appeared as "Louisville Lines," "Baltimore Bulletin," "Giant Gossip," "Brooklyn Briefs," "Washington Whispers," or "New York Nuggets." Boston had "Boston's Bulky Budget" and "Boston Briefs" but also "Hub Happenings." "Cincinnati Chips" also appeared as "Redland Retrospect." "Champions Cheer" (Pittsburgh banquet after pennant clinching) or "Losers Lament" could cover any team regardless of initial consonant letter.



With so many more teams, minor league headlines offered an endless list of alliteration possibilities. Weekly team updates ranging from success to failure appear regularly. "Happy Hazelton" and "Happy Hartford" were balanced by "Hapless Harrisburg." "Milwaukee

Mad" and "Wilmington Weary" (quitting a league) are offset by "Memphis Merry" and "Chattanooga Cheery" (attendance up). There were "Merry Millers" (Minneapolis), "Denver Delight," and "Elated Evansville" but also "Worcester's Wail" and simply "Satisfied Syracuse." "Frisco Facts" appears with "Atlanta Affairs," "Bridgeport Boys," "Buffalo Bits," "Jacksonville Jets," "Nashville Notes," "Peoria Points," "Rochester Ripples," "Schenectady Scraps," "Utica Utterings," and "Wilkes Barre Whispers." There were "Tacoma Tips" and "Terre Haute Tips" but "Toledo Topics" and "Toronto Topics." The "Crescent City Chat" covered the New Orleans ball team.



Great examples of alliteration headlines appear in *Sporting Life* when reporting on baseball personalities. Some examples with brief explanations follow.

- "Chadwick's Charge" (against umpire baiting),
- "Donlin's Desserts" ("Turkey Mike" sentenced to jail for six months),
- "Dreyfuss Dumped" (Pittsburgh ownership change?),
- "Griffith's Grouch" (over pennant loss),
- "Hopeful Hanlon" (Baltimore manager's prediction),
- "Johnson Justice" (suspends McGraw for rowdiness),
- "Mad Mack" (loss of protested game to Minneapolis),
- "Mullin's Muddle" (control problems of a leading pitcher),
- "Passing of Pulliam" (suicide of National League president),
- "Robinson's Revenge" (becomes Brooklyn manager),
- "Rusie's Return" (famed pitchers' comeback),
- "Selee Shifted" (tired as Boston Braves' manager),
- "Sockalexis' Sorrows" (misfortunes of dying Indian player),
- "Wagner's Woes" (injury while hunting),
- "Wilson's Wisdom" (U.S. president agrees with an umpire's decision).



initials" and their use in *The Sporting News* were just as clever and colorful as the writing and headlines in *Sporting Life*. Many *Sporting News* pages were equally interesting and attractive in appearance due to frequent use of these clever little boxes. Like alliteration titles in *Sporting Life*, these "initials" often

bring a smile to the reader's face. One definition of "initial" is "a letter of extra size or ornamental character used at the beginning of a chapter or other division of a book." Readers of old *Sporting News* issues were "treated" to a decorated or ornamental first letter at the start of many important articles.

The first letter of the first word (often the name of the city from which the article originated) was simply enlarged and had a baseball player (or players) superimposed on the letter. The possibilities of such art were almost unlimited since the artist could use any number of potential player poses or plays. It could be a right-handed (or left-handed) batter before the pitch, in midst of swing, or at end of swing. It could be any of innumerable fielding positions—a first baseman snaring a routine throw, infielder letting the ball go, a leaping outfielder. It could be any phase of a left-handed (or right-handed) pitcher's motion. It could be an umpire. It could be a fielder trying to tag a sliding runner. It could be a catcher in crouched position. During the second decade of this century, it was often happy, rollicking, humorous player poses.



oxing ("The Ring"), cycling, and racing ("The Turf") articles were the first in *The Sporting News* to open with "initials," during 1894. The "initial" was first used on a baseball article in the April 27, 1895 issue. But these early baseball articles with the "initial" were *inside* (pages 2, 3, 4, etc.) articles. On

October 3, 1896, the "initial" appeared for the first time on page one at the start of two baseball articles (as well as four inside baseball articles). From then on, for nearly half a century, use of the attractive decorative first letter was common, frequent, and often elaborate.

The early issues of *The Sporting News* used a large seven-column format. It stayed this way until July 1, 1943 when it assumed the current tabloid, then five-column appearance. The paper had been "streamlined for greater enjoyment," the first change in page size in 57 years. *The Sporting News* defined its new appearance as a "more compact, livelier, easier-to-read style...a style designed to give you an even brighter, more interesting paper." It was "another step by *The Sporting News* to keep "pace with the progress of baseball." But with the new smaller page, the use of "initials" disappeared. They have not been seen in *The Sporting News* since June 24, 1943.

For me, one of the great, simple, and inexpensive perks of baseball research is enjoying such minor pleasures as "alliteration" and "initials" in the old issues of the two great competitive sporting papers.

**SPALDING MAJOR LEAGUE CATCHER'S MITTS**

Facing the other 9 players, the man behind the bat has the most important job "on the lot." By far the greater percentage of all balls pitched must be caught by the catcher. The catcher's mitt, therefore, is called upon for yeoman service. The best quality leathers obtainable, together with the best quality asbestos hand quilted pad and workmanship are included in each of the mitts described on this page.

**101 Bill Dickey.** This model has been made to the particular requirements suggested by this famous catcher of the World Champions New York Yankees. Made of finest quality Spalding Marvel Tanager leather, especially selected for catcher's mitts because of the extra pliability. Rolled leather bound crotch, oil treated palm. Padded the "big league" way, with a heavy layer of wool felt as a foundation and built up with layers of wool asbestos, quilted for long life. Shearling padded adjustable back strap across wrist. Made to stand up under the punishment of big league pitching. Each, \$17.50

!Pat. Pending.

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"...a job in the daytime...."

# The Adirondack Stars

*Scott Fiesthumel*

**P**erhaps the best time to be a baseball player was in the pre-depression years at the beginning of this century. Wherever there wasn't a professional team, a semi-pro club existed. As Archie "Moonlight" Graham said in "Field of Dreams," "They say every town out there has a team, and that they'll find you a job in the daytime so you can play ball at night and on weekends. Thought I'd give it a try." One such team was the 1920 Adirondack Stars in Harrisville, NY. They were the Champions of Northern New York, sponsored by the Diana Paper Company and led by player-manager Nick Stiefvater.

The players who wore the maroon sweaters of the Stars were mostly in their late teens and early twenties. Some were in college, and throughout the season several minor league and major leaguers played for the Stars. My grandfather, William Markis, then 19, of Utica, NY, was their official scorer and kept a journal and newspaper clippings of the events of that summer.

The players were given odd jobs at the paper plant, but their main job was taking care of the diamond, practicing and playing baseball. As Bill Markis wrote, "This job of painting is a farce, but we won't kick. And practice in the afternoon is pretty much a lark too, just a bunch of kids enjoying themselves. Always ice cream at Joe Simons' store after practice." For this he was paid \$35 a week and utility man Joe Kellmurray made \$50.

Harrisville is located about 35 miles from Canada, so several games were played "north of the border".

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*Scott Fiesthumel is writing a book on the history of baseball in Utica, New York.*

Here's how Bill Markis described the Stars' first road trip of the season.

May 29: "Up at 5 AM and on our way to Kingston, Canada. Arrived at Cape Vincent 8:30. Joe Ladouceur [2nd baseman] and I took a 'putt-putt' across from here to Kingston, going via the canal thru Wolfe Island. And boy was I glad to put my feet on land! It was a ride I'll never forget for I never thought we would make it. The rest of the gang went across in a large motor boat. We arrived in Kingston about noon.

"Had dinner at the finest Hotel there and got 'hooked' proper. I proceeded to buy a pack of cigarettes, but they only wanted 45 cents for 15 cent smokes, eased out of this 'hooking' by buying a pack of Canadian cigarettes and took another 'hooking,' they were worse than dried leaves. Joe and I stopped in a joint for a glass of beer at 25 cents a glass! It was lousy, but we liked to get 'hooked' by now. Then to the ballfield where we took on the Triple Links of Kingston.

"The field was hard and smooth, made of clay. It proved to be very fast and dangerous. Well, the game broke up in an argument in the 9th inning after Nick Stiefvater's homerun drive had put us ahead 7 to 6. 420,000 Royal Mounted Police didn't interfere as the crowd threw everything they could as we left the field refusing to give in to their unjust demands. They even went so far as to steal 3 or 4 gloves and a couple of bats on us.

"All this after Eddie and Jack Nolan and Vern Shean had thrilled the crowd with their big time vaudeville act! An act the three had played for years in Keith Vaudeville all over the U.S.. But what can you expect in

a foreign land? When we left Canada everyone who had any Canadian money in their pockets promptly threw it in the St. Lawrence River. Joe Kellmurray left his 'card' on the Government building steps as a gentle reminder of his feelings. In other words, he took a crap on the steps of the Customs Office. And got away with it too.

"Curtis (Slim) Scoville of Syracuse U. reported today and pitched his first game. We left Kingston about 6:30 in a large motor boat on return trip, reaching Cape Vincent 10:30PM. Drove to Carthage, reaching there 2:30AM, went down to the police station and got the night "copper" to open a window in the Union Hotel for us. We climbed in and slept in the big arm chairs until dawn. What a day this has been and what a nite for good measure."

About a month later they returned to Canada to play Brockville. Markis had this to say about it. "Started for Brockville at 8 AM, arrived at noon. Beat the Brockville team of the Canadian League 7 to 0. Scoville pitched a wonderful game, allowing only 1 hit and striking out 8. Tommy Wilson, speedball pitcher, and best in Eastern Canada opposed him on the mound. At the start of this trip I was made Official Scorer by Mr. Nolan [Martin W. Nolan, general manager of Diana Paper Co.] and Joe was made utility man.

"We also received Maroon sweaters, making us regulars. While in Brockville I bought a K of C ring for \$15, but took it back for a refund when 'Guts' McBride [Colgate University catcher] advised me I got 'gypped'. Just a glutton for a 'hooking' in Canada. We left Brockville at 7:30 and arrived in Gouverneur, NY at 10, where most of the gang went to a dance. And did the girls fall for the 'Red Sweaters' of Harrisville. Back home at 2:30 AM."

A couple of weeks later Tom Wilson would pitch for the Stars in one of the two games they won while representing Brockville in the St. Lawrence River League. In August, Nick Stiefvater pitched for the Ogdensburg Pastimes at a field day in Prescott, Canada and beat "Pop" Watkins' Negro League Havana Red Sox, 9-7.

Back in the U.S., prohibition was just getting started. But that certainly wouldn't mean much to places that close to Canada. After winning on July 3rd, most of the team paid a visit to the "well" near Messena, NY. "Where the bottles of Black Horse [Canadian beer] are kept both hidden and cold at the bottom of a well. Also paid a call at the Boundary Hotel at St. Regis Indian Reservation. The place where one room is in the U.S. and you can step thru a door and be in Canada. We practically 'lit up' Messena when we got back for we were all 'shining' brightly. Jimmy Nolan nearly had us pinched when he threw a 'thundermug' out the window at a policeman, only the quickness of our 'getting to sleep' saved us."

Later in July, the Stars played their first game of the season against their main rival, the St. Regis paper

company of Deferiet. Here's Markis' description of that day. "In the afternoon, Ogdensburg enjoyed probably the best ballgame ever played there, for it was the first game of a 'grudge' series between the Stars of Harrisville and the St. Regis club of Deferiet. 'Stubby' Kernan of Rome, Yale's first string catcher and leading hitter, reported to take over the catching and be field captain, moving McBride to 2nd base, a position he played in college. But it was 'Stub' Kernan's wild heave that lost the game for Harrisville.

"In the 2nd inning, Wilson, first man up for Deferiet, singled. Gorman (Princeton) got a scratch single. Coughlin (Syracuse) then sacrificed both men and when Kernan tried to catch Gorman off 2nd, he heaved the ball into center field allowing Wilson to score the only run of the game. Nick Stiefvater, pitching for the Stars, allowed only three hits and struck out 6, while Homer Jenkins of Deferiet let the Stars down with only 2 hits. What a pitcher's battle! And what a heartbreaking game to lose.

"Rumor had at least \$1500 bet on the game, I went for a \$10 spot myself. The teams' supporters were so sore at Kernan for making that costly heave that they demanded his release, but I guess he would have gotten it anyway."

On August 22nd, Lester Daniel 'General' Sherman joined the team and won 6-2 over the Alco's of Messena. He would go 5-1 with an ERA under two for the Stars. Sherman had pitched in the New York State, International and Federal leagues. He was known as 'Babe' in the Federal League and also was known as 'Dan' and more colorfully "The Connecticut Moistballer".

Four days later, the Stars beat the Pyrites 3-0 at the Canton Fair before a huge crowd that included a very interested Col. Theodore Roosevelt. Said Markis, "At dinner, Col. T.R. sat directly to my right at the next table. I could have swiped his soup, was I thrilled!! This sure was a big day for the people of Canton, having both Col. T.R. and the Adirondack Stars the same day!"

The next day they were on their way to play Deferiet when Mr. Nolan told them that if the Stars won the season series from Deferiet, he would send them to the World Series in the fall. That was some incentive and the Stars won 19-0 as Stiefvater gave up only 2 hits.

Again betting was heavy, with Markis winning \$7.50.

The beginning of September saw the Stars split two games with Deferiet, winning 10-1 and losing 6-5. The series now stood at 4-2 in the Stars' favor, and newspapers were proclaiming them the best team in northern New York. On September 8th, they beat Carthage 11-10 in a game that produced 31 hits. Ten were ground rule doubles caused by the large overflow crowd in the outfield.

On September 11th, Virgil Barnes reported from Rochester of the International League and pitched a

3-0 no-hitter, with 16 strikeouts, over Deferiet before 1,200 fans. The win meant the trip to the World Series. The box score listed Barnes as Baird, but opposing players were skeptical and the newspapers referred to him as the "mystery hurler" and "Baird???" in their coverage of the game. Virgil "Zeke" Barnes would go on to compile a 61-59 record with a 3.66 ERA in 9 seasons in the National League with New York and Boston.

The Stars next big games were with Carthage at the Malone Fair. "Sept 16th: After a few hours sleep, we appeared at the Fair Grounds along with about 20,000 others. This was the biggest crowd we played to this season. With Sullivan, another International League pitcher, on the mound and Wid Matthews [192 major league games, .284 average]—Rochester International player in left field, Marlette—Rochester 3rd baseman, we tied a 7-0 defeat to Carthage, who were also 'loaded for bear'. With an International battery of Clifford pitching, Ross catching, 'Dell' Capes, 'Shorty' Long and 'Red' Johnson—all International Leaguers in the outfield. Sullivan let them down with 4 hits while striking out 15. What a man!

"Wid Matthews remained with us, but Marlette and Sullivan went on.

"Our supporters 'cashed in' plenty today for we were the 'underdogs.' I managed to find \$10 of it. At night, the 'Red Sweaters of Harrisville' were hailed wherever they went. Most of us going to the dance and having a 'bang up' time."

Sept 17th: "Noon sure rolls around fast these days. Before we knew it we were back at the Fair Grounds playing before a crowd even larger than yesterday. Estimated at 22,000. And they were treated to one of the most exciting games ever played in the North Country. An odd feature of this game was the use of nine men by H'ville and ten by Carthage, although only nine appeared in the Carthage lineup! The 10th man being "Umpire" Joe Lechich!

"Carthage today had Wilson, Johnson, and Byrnes of the International League, 'Smokey' Joe Klinghoffer pitching. Harrisville had Wid Mathews, Del Capes (who played with Carthage yesterday) and Virgil Barnes of the International League. Barnes allowed only 4 hits and struck out 15 in 8 innings, yet lost. He had to reckon with Joe Lechich, Carthage hero of the day!

"Twice Lechich called 'Swats' Byrnes out at first and 22,000 people called him a bum. Either time, a safe

decision would have meant a Harrisville victory, instead of Carthage 5, Harrisville 4. We're not sore losers, but we don't like plain robbery with 22,000 witnesses. Barnes won a \$100 bet by striking out 6 of the last 8 men to face him, one of those he deliberately 'walked' as he was a dangerous hitter, the other received a walk as a gift from Joe Lechich. Dewey broke up the game for 15 or 20 minutes while he chased a 'peach seller' off the field and challenged anyone in the crowd to a fist fight! What a day!

"I could go on and on with happenings of this wild afternoon, but will end it here. 'Guts' got 3 out of 3 today. Another dance at night and believe me, Joe Lechich saved his life by not showing his nose."

On September 19th, Bobby Heck reported from the International League and pitched the Stars to a 9-4 victory over Pyrites. Heck would go 3-0 and allow only 7 runs. Four days later, two more I.L. players, Eddie Moore and Mike Konnick, helped in a 9-1 win over Pyrites. Moore would later have a .285 average in 748 big league games while Konnick had eight at bats with Cincinnati in 1909-10. Konnick hit a grand slam his first time up for the Stars to give Stiefvater his 20th win against three losses.

The 29th was the last game of the year. It was called in the sixth inning because of rain, with the Stars leading Carthage 3-1. Barnes had given up only one hit and left after the team banquet that night for the New York Giants. The Stars had finished the season 46-9 (.836) with 14 shutouts. They were 11-0 at home and 35-9 on the road.

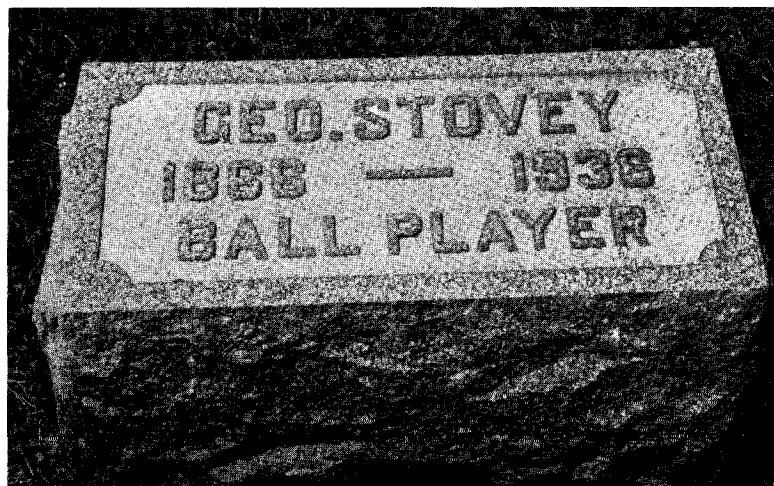
A three-game series against Buffalo of the International League was proposed, but Buffalo had disbanded for the season and couldn't get enough players together. New York Yankee pitcher Alex Ferguson was contracted by the Stars to pitch one game in the series. His train was met at the Utica depot and he was given \$200 for his time. He caught the next train to Boston.

The teams' last 'games' were the World Series. The players left Utica by car at 1:00 AM on October 5, and arrived in New York at 9:30 AM. After riding around seeing some sights, they went to Ebbetts Field for the first game of the Cleveland-Brooklyn series. They saw the first three games of the series, but decided it was too expensive to follow the teams to Cleveland. They left New York for home at 9:00 AM on October 8 and stopped in nearly every town over two blocks long, finally arriving in Utica at 1:00 AM. The Stars' season was officially over.



# George W. Stovey

*Lou Hunsinger, Jr.*



**B**uried in the shadows of a grove of trees in the Wildwood Cemetery in Williamsport, Pennsylvania is George W. Stovey, whom baseball historian Jerry Malloy has termed "the greatest African-American pitcher of the nineteenth century." Malloy is an acknowledged expert on Stovey and black baseball before Jackie Robinson and this writer is indebted to him for providing much of the information contained in this article.

Stovey's burial location in the shadows of those trees may be a metaphor for his own life. Our knowledge of this outstanding pitcher is, in fact, shadowy and spotty. Stovey was probably born in Williamsport in 1866. His father was white and his mother was black. In the words of former Lycoming County Sheriff Joe Mertz, who befriended Stovey and perhaps knew him better than any other man, "He was freely accepted by white boys whom he made his companions...From his earliest youth he was recognized as a pitcher with marvelous speed, great cunning and boundless energy...He was also a champion marble shooter, an incomparable sprinter, and a harmonica player the like of which you have never seen."

Stovey played amateur ball in the early 1880's and may have played with the great Mike Tiernan on Williamsport's nine in the old Pennsylvania State League in 1884 or 1885. Unfortunately, no contemporary newspaper accounts in Williamsport mention

Stovey's play for these teams. According to Mertz, Stovey was so anxious to play for Williamsport that he offered to act as groundskeeper in return for a place on the team.

Sometime in 1885, Stovey played for a team in Elmira, N.Y., where he apparently made quite an impression. There is a conflict about what happened next. Sheriff Mertz said that Stovey's Elmira appearance impressed a scout from Jersey City of the Eastern League (later to become the International League), who offered him a \$50 signing bonus and \$150 a month. According to Mertz, Stovey's first move upon signing was to return to Williamsport and to blow the entire bonus with his boyhood baseball pals.

However, the *Trenton True American* of June 21, 1886 reported that Stovey was pitching for an unidentified white team in Canada when he was signed by the all-black Cuban Giants of Trenton, N.J. After pitching only one game for them he jumped to Jersey City in what was described as "a daring midnight raid."

Pat Powers, Stovey's manager at Jersey City, described the circumstances of the raid to the *Cleveland Gazette*. He said that Jersey City was short on pitching and was in the thick of a pennant fight with Newark when he thought of a pitcher playing for Trenton who might help Jersey City. The pitcher was Stovey. He telegraphed a friend to meet him in Trenton and the two

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*Lou Hunsinger, Jr. is writing a history of minor league baseball in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, from 1877 to the present. He is president of the Williamsport Cubs Booster Club. The Cubs are Williamsport's most recent entry in minor league baseball as a member of the NY-PENN League.*



went to Stovey's house, roused him from his sleep, and got him to sign a Jersey City contract. Meanwhile, some Trenton people got wind of what was going on and summoned the police to prevent Stovey's departure. Powers said, "I became desperate. I worked a member of Trenton's finest all right and hired a carriage and amid a shower of missiles drove Stovey to the train station and left for Jersey City."

Powers continued, "I gave Stovey \$20 to keep up his courage and dressed him in a new suit of clothes...I then put him to bed and waited for the game."

In 31 games for Jersey City that season, Stovey held opposing batters to a .167 batting average, second best in the league. In one game against Bridgeport, he struck out 22 batters but incredibly lost the game.

At the end of the 1886 season, the New York Giants almost signed Stovey to bolster their pitching staff in their stretch pennant fight with Cap Anson's Chicago White Stockings. But Anson's opposition to black players had been well-known since 1883, when he had vigorously protested Fleet Walker's presence in an exhibition game in Toledo, and his prestige was so great that his racist views were sufficient to quash the Giants' plans. Stovey and Walker would have more distasteful dealings with Anson the following year.

Pat Powers, who went on to manage Buffalo to the International League championship in 1891 and to be president of the International League for sixteen years, had this to say about Stovey: "Personally, I do not care for Stovey. I consider him one of the greatest pitchers in the country, but in many respects I think I have more desirable men. He is head-strong and obstinate, and consequently hard to manage."

Stovey left Powers' tutelage in 1887 to join Newark, also in the Eastern League. There he and Fleet Walker formed Organized Baseball's first all-black battery. This was to be Stovey's season in the sun. He won 34 games for Newark, a record that still stands in International League annals and one that is not likely to be broken.

According to the *Newark Daily Journal* of April 8, 1887 the New York Giants offered to buy both Stovey and Walker, but Newark declined the offer. Major League baseball would not again come this close to desegregation until the advent of Jackie Robinson.

Stovey's fine 1887 season was marred in mid-July when he was placed in the glare of unwanted controversy. Newark scheduled an exhibition game against Anson's great White Stockings. It promised to be a rare opportunity for Stovey to showcase his abilities against the very best that baseball had to offer. Tragically, Jim Crow in the person of Cap Anson intervened to keep Stovey and his batterymate Walker from showing their talent.

The Newark evening newspaper reported that Stovey did not play against Anson's White Stockings

"because of illness." A Toronto newspaper, *The World*, was more truthful when it reported that "Hackett intended putting Stovey in the box against the Chicagos but Anson objected to him playing on account of his color." Walker too was barred from playing.

On the very day that Stovey and Walker were humiliated by Anson—July 14, 1887—the directors of the International League were meeting about franchise matters, but the race issue was also discussed. They decreed that "no more contracts with colored men be approved." It is unknown whether this decision was tied to actions earlier in the day. There were certainly enough of Anson's racist brethren present among International League players to put the kind of pressure on the directors to produce this rule.

At the end of 1887, the greatest season that an International League pitcher had ever had, Stovey's contract with Newark was not renewed. His friend Sheriff Mertz remembered, "This ruling barring colored men broke Stovey's spirit for a time and he came back to Williamsport for a short time...."

1888 found Stovey plying his trade with Worcester of the New England League. *The Sporting Life* characterized him as "a great acquisition for the pitchers of the New England League." However, he must have endured a stormy time in Worcester because the *Worcester Spy* reported that he was not being treated fairly by the other members of the league. He was released by Worcester in August of 1888 not "due to his color as has been intimated," reported the *Spy*, "but to his own bad habits." Those "bad habits" may have been the mercurial and turbulent nature that Pat Powers found so distasteful. Stovey finished 1888 and spent 1889 with the Cuban Giants, who dominated black baseball in its formative period.

In 1890, he played with a Troy, N.Y. team, and 1891 found Stovey back in black baseball with the Big Gorhams of New York. Sol White, a black baseball pioneer who published his "History of Colored Baseball" in 1907, regarded the Big Gorhams as the greatest black baseball team of the 1890's. In 1891, the Big Gorhams played 100 games and lost only four of them. Stovey was still pitching for the Cuban Giants into the 1893 season. He then retreated back into the shadows and returned to his native Williamsport. As late as 1897, the Williamsport City Directory lists his occupation as "ballplayer", but it remains unknown where he played.

Stovey pitched intermittently for local amateur teams until he was in his early fifties. On one occasion in a City League game in Williamsport he pitched a shut-out for seven innings against the league champs. The pitcher who relieved him gave up some runs but Stovey still got the win. In that game he showed some of the old flashes of talent that had prompted a Binghamton N.Y. newspaper in 1887 to describe him as

"the fellow with the sinister fin who has such a knack of tossing up balls that they appear as large as an alderman's opinion of himself, but you can't hit with a cellar door...."

Stovey also umpired frequently after his return to Williamsport, from sandlot, amateur, and semi-pro games to games in the Pennsylvania State League. His umpiring was described this way by the *Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin* of May 1, 1902: "Stovey's fog horn voice sounded natural as he called out balls and strikes."

His judgment was regarded with respect. "Players have learned that they can not 'work' Stovey in decisions. What he says goes, without any arguments." His umpiring abilities were also respected by out-of-town teams when they came to Williamsport. According to the *Williamsport Gazette and Bulletin*, the manager of the Penn Park team of York opined that "Stovey's umpiring was very satisfactory to the Penn Park team and that it was the best that his team had encountered on the road all season."

Stovey umpired Williamsport's very first baseball game played under the lights, on May 14, 1902. The Williamsport professional team played an exhibition game against a team from Milton, Pa., a community about twenty miles down the Susquehanna River.

He tried to make his living the best way that he could. He worked as a laborer in a sawmill, also possibly as a barber, and did other odd jobs. Stovey ran afoul of the Prohibition laws in 1926. When he appeared in federal court to answer these charges, former Williamsport Mayor Archibald Hoagland, who was there to represent some other clients, spoke on Stovey's behalf: "George Stovey has more friends in Williamsport than any other colored man..." Hoagland's remarks apparently had some good effect for Stovey, because he was given a suspended sentence and a small fine.

Stovey was a modest man in his later years, and he apparently overcame his petulant and hot-tempered nature. Mayor Hoagland's observations about Stovey seem accurate. Ted Walters, a 91-year-old retired Williamsport policeman remembers that his colleague, Charlie Clay, one of the first African-Americans on the Williamsport Police Department, would bring errant black youths who appeared to be heading down the wrong path to see Stovey. Walters observed that Stovey was "a very quiet and modest man, who was one of the most respected members of the black community in Williamsport."

Williamsport's African-American community was proud of Stovey's athletic accomplishments. Williamsport native Rich Washington, who as a boy came to Stovey for baseball tips, said that Stovey never spoke of his days in baseball. He was always trying to organize baseball games among the neighborhood



Jerry Malloy

—George Stovey—  
actually, photo is of FLEET WALKER

kids. Although Stovey's temper would occasionally flare with impatience when a youngster would not follow his instructions properly, Washington remembered that "he left a good impression on me and was a real nice guy."

The man one newspaper described as "being able to throw a ball at a flag-staff and make it curve into a water pail" died at the age of 70 on March 22, 1936, a refugee of the worst flood in the history of Williamsport.

This great African-American baseball pioneer, like pioneers of other fields, suffered a life of hardship and bad luck. He had the misfortune of being born too soon, before American society evolved to a point where a man like Stovey would not be barred from excelling in the sport that he loved simply because of the color of his skin.

George Stovey was initially buried by Williamsport's Poor Board for ten dollars in an unmarked grave in Wildwood Cemetery. His friend, Sheriff Mertz, felt that this was too anonymous an end for such a fine athlete, and in 1937 he purchased a headstone for Stovey's grave. The inscription is eloquent in its simplicity:

GEO. STOVEY  
1866-1936  
BALL PLAYER

The stone lies in a lonely spot, off to itself apart from the other graves, much as Stovey lived in life, struggling for notice and recognition.

# Sunday Baseball Comes to Boston

*William E. Brown, Jr.*

**T**he advent of Sunday baseball in the major leagues contributed to the sport's rapid advance on the American social and entertainment scene. Sunday baseball facilitated increased attendance at games and provided greater revenues for owners. Today, many people would argue that the presence of major league baseball on Sunday afternoons is an inalienable right of every American citizen. In the 1920s, however, the issue of Sunday baseball served as a lightning rod for baseball magnates, local politicians, religious leaders, working class fans and the media.

The concerns of local politicians regarding the introduction of Sunday baseball offer an interesting perspective on urban politics and the development of baseball as a full-fledged business enterprise, one fully immersed in the fiscal, political, and social fabric of our cities. In Boston, the debate concerning professional baseball on Sunday provided the opportunity for politicians and baseball owners to engage in a spirited debate and controversy, fully reflective of the city, the sport, and the times. Baseball and politics are as much a part of Boston as Bunker Hill and the Tea Party. Politics and baseball each thrive on the interest and participation of the local citizenry, and as politicians and ball players in Boston know all too well, winning and losing is everything.

Bostonians are known for the ability to endure the trials and tribulations associated with their local ball clubs and politicians. Local residents and fans can attest to one overriding parallel between the two

institutions, and that is a consistent record of futility, disappointment, and illogical behavior demonstrated at the expense of the emotional well-being of Bostonians.

**The Sunday Sports Ordinance**—The political debate on Sunday baseball in Boston centers on provisions of legislation entitled, "An Ordinance Concerning Professional Outdoor Sports on the Lord's Day," more commonly referred to as the Sunday Sports Ordinance. This particular act had its origins within a state referendum of November 6, 1928, in which a Sunday Sports Act passed with a majority of about 3 to 1. The local ordinance, a product of the Boston City Council's Committee on Sunday Sports, was submitted to the City Council on January 28, 1929. The surrounding debate and vote exemplifies the best and worst of Boston politics and baseball.

In 1929, the political climate for professional baseball teams in Boston was troublesome. Fans and politicians were still smarting from the sale of Babe Ruth to the hated Yankees. Owners, particularly those not viewed as natives of Boston, operated on particularly thin ice.

The Sunday Sports Ordinance, in its original form, outlined twelve requirements for "...the regulation and restriction of athletic outdoor sports or games on the Lord's Day and the licensing of privately owned premises to be used for such sports or games...."

The ordinance focused on finances. Section Two included restrictions on the sale of concessions, articles, or merchandise except "at a reasonable and fair scale of prices approved by a vote of the Council." Section Four required the licensee to "furnish such sufficient facilities for free drinking water on said premises as

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shall be approved by the Health Commissioner." Section Five required the charge for any seat on said premises "shall in no case be greater on the Lord's Day than on each week day," and Section Six required that "a minimum of thirty-five per cent of the seating capacity shall not be in excess of fifty cents per seat."

Section Eight set licensing fees for privately owned parks or fields, with the figures pro-rated to the seating capacity of the facility:

Capacity	Fee
40,000+	\$2,500
30,000+	1,750
20,000+	1,000
10,000+	500
1 - 9,999	100

**Protecting the public**—In presenting this ordinance before the City Council, Councilor Dowd reported upon the many concerns and issues raised in the course of the Committee's deliberations. Dowd summarized these concerns to include the protection of the public from "those financially interested" and to see that "no repetition of what happened in other cities occur in Boston." Dowd proceeded to criticize local ownership of the Braves and Red Sox, because "not one official word has been received from those interested in and desiring permits by our committee regarding prices."

As Dowd read the ordinance into the City Council Minutes, he elaborated upon the rationale for selected sections. With regard to Section Two, he referred to a state investigation of the previous year which reported that tonic (soda pop) sold at Boston's major league parks for 15 cents per bottle cost owners 2.5 cents per bottle; hot dogs, also sold for 15 cents each cost owners 3-5/8 cents each. The intent of this section, Dowd concluded, was to prevent "the multi-millionaire Stevens [concessionaire—and New Yorker—Harry Stevens] to have a contract to systematically rob the people of Boston." The necessity for Section Four (free drinking water) also concerned Dowd. "It is really no wonder that they sell such a great amount of tonics in the ball parks," Dowd observed, "because to get a decent drink of water you have to walk half a mile and then you don't know where to find it."

The councilor also stated his concern regarding the increase in ticket prices for Sunday contests. Although the Corporation Council advised the Committee that the Council had no authority to fix ticket prices, Dowd observed that "I wonder if there is any man in this Council who is going to vote to allow a permit to these baseball magnates, controlled by Stoneham of New York [Giant owner Horace Stoneham], unless there is sufficient guarantee that the price shall not be changed." Braves Field, he said, with seating capacity

for 45,000 patrons, had only 2,300 seats (a little more than four percent of capacity) available for fifty cents. This was in comparison to the Red Sox, who offered 7,700 of Fenway's 28,035 seats at fifty cents.

The primary target for Dowd's wrath was Judge Fuchs, owner of the Boston Braves. Dowd defied Fuchs to deny the assertion that no other National League club had so low a percentage of fifty cent seats. He charged Fuchs with running a self-serving radio and newspaper campaign that falsely claimed to place the needs of the workingman above financial profit.

The Committee, Dowd affirmed, was the better guardian of the workingmen of Boston. He noted that the clubs would incur no greater expense in playing Sunday games, and that neither team had any expensive players. If they had, Dowd observed, "the New York Giants would have them by now." He also reminded local ownership that the Braves had not played to a capacity crowd for the past six years, and they should welcome the opportunity to fill some of the 15,700 (thirty-five per cent) seats at fifty cents each.

In concluding his remarks to the City Council, Dowd focused on the "fifty cent seat" issue. He questioned the logic and fairness behind the Braves' admission prices, noting that "when they now throw you into the 50-cent bleachers on Braves Field you need a spyglass to see the game in a decent manner."

Councilor Wilson rose to observe that "90 percent of the voters who comprised the 3 to 1 majority in favor of the Sunday sports law...so voted because first and foremost they believed they were authorizing Sunday semiprofessional ball games on the public parks and playgrounds of the city where collections might be taken." The innovation of Sunday professional baseball, Wilson stated, "was foisted on a gullible public on the 6th of November last...and the public swallowed the argument that Sunday is the one day out of seven when a workingman can gratify a long-felt desire to renew his youth, and sit out in the fresh air and sunshine to watch a ballgame, even a ballgame between two New York teams." Wilson strongly recommended following the lead of Chicago, which assessed a licensing fee of some \$4,000 for Sunday baseball. Wilson, too, was committed to see that the workingmen of Boston would be entitled to "not only get inside the fence, but near enough the playing field to distinguish which New York players are still in Boston uniforms."

**A piccolo player**—The political debate began in earnest when Councilor Parkman rose and recommended the striking out of clauses two and six, relating to prices on concessions and the availability of fifty cent seats. These two points were the only areas of disagreement among the Council Committee, and the clauses were of dubious constitutional authority. Councilor Dowling was next to speak. His description of the

two local owners is quite direct, "one (is) a piccolo player and the other a ten cent grocery man...they don't know anything as they stated three or four weeks ago, except fixing sports or bagging prize fights." The compromise that followed this colorful characterization was surprising. Dowling moved to reassign the regulation for two weeks, to give the Council time to investigate the implications of existing law.

Councilor Ward rose to include the observations of one local newspaper, the *Boston Post*, which saw fit to devote an editorial to the topic. The *Post* noted, "The City Council has no more power to fix the price of admission to Sunday baseball games than it has to settle the price of Ford cars." He continued his remarks, and drew attention to the "smoke screen" created by Councilor Dowd to defend the questionable provisions of the Sunday Sports Ordinance. Councilor Arnold rose to the occasion, with hyperbole truly befitting the Boston City Council, as he offered the comment that for the people he represents "It is not always a question of your wanting to buy a bottle of tonic, for instance. It is a question of choking to death or paying 15 cents for a bottle of tonic."

It was in this public setting of debate and demagoguery that the City Council attempted to resolve the issue of Sunday baseball in Boston. As individuals both pro and con continued their diatribes against the respective opposition, selected councilors maintained their efforts to have this otherwise unexciting issue tabled for a legal ruling on the Council's powers to mandate Sections Two and Six of the existing ordinance. The debate was not yet over, however.

As so often happens among teammates on the Boston Red Sox, fellow councilors questioned the personal

integrity and political motivations of their compatriots. Mr. Dowd stated that repeal of Sections Two and Six would permit "the baseball magnates of Boston once again a chance to systematically rob the public and bunco them as they have done for the last six or eight years." Councilor Fitzgerald rose in opposition to the hearing process that preceded the creation of the ordinance, noting that "the hearings and meetings were conducted behind closed doors and that newspapermen were barred." He summarized the process as "a positive disgrace to the citizens of this city and every red-blooded man." The forces at work on this issue, Fitzgerald charged, were powerful. "There was the Lord's Day League on one side, with all its legal talent, trained talent...that coerced members of the Legislature and ruined their private and public character...They are the ones who haunted the halls of the Legislature, the same swine, the same cattle."

**Down to business**—The City Council, after this lengthy, emotional, and mostly irrelevant and comical debate, voted on the question of striking Sections Two and Six from the original ordinance. The final tally was 12 in favor of striking the sections and seven opposed. The vote then proceeded on the question of the revised ordinance. The result was also 12 to seven majority for passing the amended version of the ordinance. The City of Boston had its Sunday Sports Ordinance, local baseball owners had the opportunity to enjoy the profits of broader fan support at games, the workingmen of Boston were now able to suffer the misfortunes of their favorite teams on the Sabbath, and the Boston City Council, having pleasantly exercised its talents, could return to weightier concerns.

#### Legal Sunday Baseball

The battle for legal Sunday baseball was fought city by city and state by state across the country. The National League itself prohibited Sunday games until its merger with the American Association in 1892. The American League never had a prohibition. From 1900 through 1902, the Tigers circumvented local ordinances by building a special Sunday park outside the Detroit city limits. Brooklyn tried staging "free admission" Sunday games in 1904 and 1905 using the subterfuge of requiring the purchase of a scorecard. In 1917, the Yankees, Giants, and Dodgers all staged benefit Sunday games for World War I troops. In 1926, the Athletics played one Sunday game when they obtained a temporary injunction against enforcement of the state law. In Boston, the Red Sox had to play their Sunday games at Braves Field from 1929 through June 1932 because Fenway was too close to a church. Here is a list of the first legal Sunday games played by the 16 long-established big league clubs in their regular home parks:

National League	
St. Louis	4-17-1892
Cincinnati	4-24-1892
Chicago	5-14-1893
Brooklyn	5-4-1919*
New York	5-4-1919*
Boston	5-5-1929
Pittsburgh	4-29-1934
Philadelphia	4-29-1934

American League	
Chicago	4-22-1900
St. Louis	4-27-1902
Detroit	8-18-1907*
Cleveland	5-14-1911
Washington	5-19-1918
New York	5-11-1919*
Boston	7-3-1932*
Philadelphia	4-22-1934*

\*Played one or more Sunday games prior to this date (see above).

—Bob Tiemann

# The Dream Come True

*Patrick Morley*

**I**t was not quite as I had imagined it, the first time my bat connected with the ball and I headed for first base. I couldn't claim much credit for hitting the ball. I'd only managed to connect at the third attempt off an easy lob intended to give the infielders some practice. And the basepath was a distinctly uneven piece of rough grass, so uneven that I almost tripped and fell humiliatingly after a few strides. Recovering, I pounded towards first, which suddenly seemed a long way off. As I got near, my 60-year-old legs, unaccustomed to such exercise, began to buckle. But somehow I made it and, panting, realised I'd actually beaten the throw. Suddenly, I felt wonderful. It wasn't really a base hit—all right, not a base hit at all. But it was me playing baseball nearly 50 years after the day I first decided I must.

Recovering slowly, I looked around me. Hardly Yankee Stadium; simply a corner of a vast school playing field, the base paths marked by a wavering line of white chalk, the pitching mound a makeshift pile of earth and the bases not even fixed to the ground. My dreams said it should be some great and crowded ball park: if not the home of the Yankees then the long vanished Polo Grounds or Ebbets Field. I became aware of someone shouting. The next "batter" had connected somewhat more efficiently than I had and was already halfway to first. Hurriedly, I tottered off in the direction of second, grateful that there were no outfielders and the second baseman was way out in center field chasing the ball.

I had gone to a practice session for the Bristol Black Sox, one of the handful of clubs in the struggling collection of amateur leagues beginning to blossom in England. I had no thought of actually taking part: I recognised I was too long in the tooth and too inept to play in any position. I had some thoughts of offering my services as umpire since I had been following baseball for more years than most of the players had been alive. Theoretically at least, I knew a good deal more about the rules of the game than they did. But my umpiring ambitions speedily evaporated when, for the first time in my life, I stood behind the catcher and saw the ball hurtling straight for me at terrifying speed. With no mask and no chest protector, this was clearly no place to be. I suggested I could fulfill my duties as home plate umpire from the safety of second base. But the kindly view was that I would be just as useful helping with batting and fielding practice, which was how I came to be standing on second, not umpiring behind it.

Fly balls kept dropping in the empty outfield, and I was soon deputed to attend to them. I ambled out to deep center and instantly became aware what a vast distance it was from home plate. A man could get lost out here, I reflected. As I stood, feeling remarkably lonely, I heard the far-off crack of bat on ball. Looking up, I saw a dark object soaring high then beginning to descend straight toward me. What a golden moment if the grey haired old guy could pluck this one out of the sky. What a shout would go up. But suppose the clumsy old fogey dropped it, or suppose a baseball was as hard as a cricket ball—harder even.

Carefully, I lost the ball in the sun. As it dropped a yard in front of me there was a chorus of sympathetic

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noises from my teammates. The ball bounced over my head and I scampered after it. I caught it neatly on the second hop, turned and hurled it back into the infield. It flew straight and hard, to the surprise not only of the second baseman but myself as well. I smiled a satisfied smile. Not bad for an overweight bespectacled pensioner who even in the bloom of his youth had never been good enough to play for the lowliest cricket eleven.

On that high note I decided soon after it was time to go. Increasing shortness of breath and a few spots floating in front of my eyes encouraged my departure. As I walked back to my car across the windswept waste of the high school playing field, I glowed with the pleasure of a dream come true, albeit not in the precise form I had envisaged. No matter, I had taken part, however peripherally, in my first experience of baseball as a player. I had handled a baseball, worn a mitt, swung a bat, almost caught a fly ball. Simple pleasures that every American boy takes for granted I had finally managed to achieve at the age of 60. If only there had been baseball in Britain when I was a lad 50 years before....

**Gary Cooper dreams**—My passion for baseball began with the film *Pride of the Yankees*. I watched mystified but entranced as Gary Cooper, alias Lou Gehrig, tried to fulfill his promise to a crippled child to hit three home runs in the same game. The crouching man in the mask snarling exultantly every time Cooper swung and missed was clearly the villain of the piece—more evil than Basil Rathbone as Sir Guy of Gisborne in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. But what was it all about? Why didn't Gary Cooper belabour the squatting growling figure by his side with his bat? I must know more about this fascinating ritual.

I began listening regularly to AFN, the American Forces Network set up in England for the growing army of Yanks flooding into the country for the invasion of Europe. AFN transmitted live or recorded commentaries on major league games most days and I listened to them avidly. I got the general drift of what was going on but most of the details escaped me. Equally baffling were the baseball reports in the American newspapers we occasionally got to see, with their incomprehensible box scores. I wrote to the Office of War Information at the American Embassy in London for enlightenment. Considering there was a world war on, they were remarkably helpful.

My search for knowledge was spurred on by watching a real live baseball game. The venue was the home of Derby County, "the Rams," the league soccer club in the town where I lived. As every visiting American discovered with surprise,

the ground where they played was known as the Baseball Ground. It got its name in the 1890s after a local businessman had visited America and become as enamoured of the game as I now was. But unlike me, he'd had the money and the means to do something about it. He'd introduced the game to Britain and set up an English baseball league. It was he who had built the Baseball Ground, and the Derby team, with his money and enthusiasm behind it, had not only topped the league but apparently beat several major league visitors from across the Atlantic.

After a few years the public lost interest, but the game lasted long enough for the name to stick. Now the Baseball Ground was home to baseball once more. It was an exhibition game between two teams of American servicemen. And they did it in style. There was a full military band, an informed, radio-style commentary over the loudspeakers and even popcorn and chewing gum dished out free. I was enthralled. Every now and then, as I sat there I'd close my eyes and imagine I was in Yankee Stadium. When I opened them again I'd see not the usual grimy factory chimneys but the skyscrapers of New York.

**Pen pals and poetry**—That was the last live baseball game I was to see for 35 years. Meanwhile, though, my search for knowledge continued. I wrote to my aunt, then living in New England, and she put me in touch with a boy of my own age. Patiently, he answered all my eager queries, sent me newspaper cuttings and magazines and occasional copies of *The Sporting News*. My knowledge of baseball blossomed. Soon I could identify Stan the Man, the Splendid Splinter, Hammering Hank, Jolting Joe and all the other big stars now returning from the wars. I knew why a batter was walked intentionally, understood the need for a sacrifice fly, comprehended the subtlety and danger of the squeeze play.

Of course, there was plenty I remained hazy about because listening to endless ball games on the radio is no compensation for never actually seeing one. Still, I was learning—and not just baseball strategy. Of all the fragments of baseball knowledge at my command I was perhaps most proud of the fact that I could recite *Casey at the Bat*—every line of it—probably the only English schoolboy capable of doing so. I displayed my command of that epic poem once at a school gathering. The audience was impressed by my feat of memory but remained impervious to the sense of what I was reciting.

With the war over at last, big sport was back in Britain. Filled with my baseball enthusiasms, I decided the game had something we English could learn from. I wrote to a national newspaper suggesting that given our weather, cricket followers would benefit from the introduction of the rain check. The not unreasonable

response was that considering how much rain we had in the summer, every cricket club in the country would go bust if we went down that road. My other idea was playing soccer under floodlights: after all, baseball had had night games since 1935. The suggestion was dismissed as un-British. Who would want to watch soccer at night—and the cost would be prohibitive: silly idea. Today, of course, no soccer ground in Britain is without floodlights.

To have absorbed so much baseball knowledge was an achievement of a kind. But frustratingly, I had no one to communicate it to, no one to share it with. My American pen friend, a Brooklyn fan, was heard from no more after the Dodgers lost a desperate 1947 World Series to the Yankees. So I turned to *The Sporting News*. They published a letter I wrote and I was soon flooded with baseball pen friends from all over the States. Some I corresponded with for years before finally losing contact as I moved around the country and immersed myself in earning a living.

Being a baseball follower in Britain then meant being a member of just about the loneliest sporting fraternity on earth. The English newspapers ignored the sport and American papers and magazines were hard to come by. Those were the days of the dollar shortage. I wanted an up-to-date baseball encyclopaedia, unobtainable over here. So I applied to the British Treasury for permission to purchase the necessary United States currency. I filled in three forms and waited two months. Finally I was solemnly informed that my application had been refused "because of the need to conserve the nation's dollar reserves."

Lacking news of contemporary events I immersed myself in the great names of the past who figured in the books I had been sent by pen friends, books like *My Greatest Game in Baseball*, with box scores from the early 1900s onwards. As a result, I found I knew as much, and often more, about such legends as Ty Cobb and Walter Johnson as the average American.

Happily, there was still the American Forces Network. Through them I kept in touch, on and off, with happenings in the baseball world. Through them I heard some of the dramatic games that decided pennants and won World Series. And as the British economy improved, newspapers like *The International Herald Tribune* became available outside London. From its pages I learned with disbelief of the Great Betrayal, the departure from New York of both the Giants and the Dodgers. My enthusiasm waned after that for a while, but I still maintained an interest. If I was ever unwise enough to mention it to my friends, I was regarded with the pity usually reserved for the hopelessly insane or the terminally ill. So for 30 years I ploughed a lonely furrow, furtively almost, like some sexual deviate with a shameful secret fetish.

**Easy access at last**—Only in the last two or three years has all that changed. The covert baseball fan can come out of the closet at last. The main daily papers have weekly columns giving the league standings and report the World Series as a serious sporting event. We have three regular baseball publications in Britain and in London there is a well-stocked baseball bookshop. And at long last we can actually watch games on TV via satellite. Now I can see games, my one outstanding impression is how overweight, not to say fat, so many players are. I had visualised them always as being like Gary Cooper, tall and lean.

Something of all this went through my mind as I drove home from my outing with the Bristol Black Sox. I wondered, as I had so often, why it was that of all other games baseball has largely remained incomprehensible to the British mind. "It's rounders, isn't it?" people say. They can't take it seriously. Kids play rounders, not grown ups. Given their love of cricket, you would think the English might have taken to baseball, with its speed and grace and moments of drama. Yet it is the clodhopping brutal clumsiness of American football that has inexplicably captured their attention.

I reflected, too, on the Bristol Black Sox. They at any rate were lean—and hungry too in terms of equipment and expertise. Absurdly lacking in the basic tools of the game, with only the most rudimentary coaching and a handful of supporters, they had nothing to sustain them but enthusiasm and a love of the game. What a contrast with their counterparts at the other end of the spectrum. I thought of the major leagues of today, with their endless hype and spoiled overpaid superstars. I can sit at home in England now and watch them live on television. But do I want to? Is this game played on artificial turf in indoor stadiums mostly at night, the game of the designated hitter and the shrunk strike zone, the same sport I fell in love with all that time ago? In my mind's eye (which is how I mostly saw it), baseball is a game played on green grass, in the hot sun under blue skies; a game played by long-vanished clubs—the St. Louis Browns, the Washington Senators, the New York Giants—in long demolished ballparks: Ebbets Field, Sportsman's Park, the Polo Grounds.

Then I reflected that nostalgia is easy and deceptive, especially for one who only partook of that supposedly golden past by proxy from a distance of three thousand miles. And that despite the hype and the greed, baseball still serves up games that set the pulses racing, that make it difficult to sit still in one's chair as the drama unfolds. And in a very small way today I had become an active participant in the world of baseball.

My wife made her views clear as I returned home. "A grown man playing at rounders," she laughed and shook her head in amused disbelief. I maintained a dignified silence. A man can afford to when he has realised, however imperfectly, a long cherished dream.

# Tri-Cornered Game

*Tom Knight*

**B**y far the most unusual game I've seen in half a century of watching was played at the Polo Grounds on Monday night June 26th, 1944. It was the first three-team game ever played. The Brooklyn Dodgers, the New York Giants and the New York Yankees battled before over 50,000 fans, including 500 wounded servicemen.

The idea for the game belonged to Stanley H. Oshen, who was chief of the sports section for the War Finance Committee. Tickets were obtained by purchasing a War Bond. I still have the rain check. It reads, "In the event of postponement, the ticket will NOT be good for any championship game." Fortunately, the weatherman cooperated, and we in the crowd saw an interesting, though strange, game.

Before the contest began a group of old timers from all three teams were introduced to the crowd. The Dodgers were represented by Zack Wheat, Nap Rucker and Otto Miller. Moose McCormick, Roger Bresnahan and Hooks Wiltse were the old Giants, and Herb Pennock and Wally Schang appeared for the Yanks. Retired umpire great Bill Klem joined the group as they posed for a photo.

Here's how the game, sponsored by the War Bond Sports Committee, was played. Each team would take six turns at bat and six turns in the field. The Dodgers faced Yankee pitching for three innings and Giant pitching for three innings. The Dodger pitchers faced the Yankee hitters for three innings and Giant hitters for three innings, and so forth.

Each team had six half-innings to do nothing but watch the other teams play. It worked out to a nine-inning game. The Dodgers and Yankees were jammed into the visitors dugout while the Giants enjoyed the comfort of their own bench.

The managers were Leo Durocher for Brooklyn, Joe McCarthy for the Yankees, and Mel Ott for the Giants. The umpires were George Barr and Jocko Conlan of the National League and former Yankee pitcher George Pipgras and Ernie Stewart of the American League.

The Dodgers scored first in the opening inning. Goody Rosen got the first hit in the initial tri-cornered game, off Yankee pitcher Al Lyons. Augie Galan and Dixie Walker followed with singles as Goody came across the plate. In the second inning, the Dodgers faced Giants righthander Johnny Allen. They greeted their ex-teammate with two more runs. Mickey Owen walked, Eddie Stanky doubled him in, and then scored on a single by Frenchy Bordagaray. The Brooks added two more in the eighth against the Giants righthander Frank Seward.

Brooklyn righthanders Hal Gregg, Les Webber, and Ralph Branca held their opponents scoreless. The Yanks scored one run against Giant pitcher Crip Polli. Brooklyn won this three-way battle of the locals by the score of Dodgers 5, Yankees, 1, and Giants, 0. The War Finance Committee announce that it made over five million dollars on this imaginative—and for a Brooklyn boy, unforgettable—event.



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*Appointed the Official Baseball Historian of Brooklyn in 1976, Tom Knight authors Diamond Reflections, a baseball nostalgia column that appears in several weeklies.*

# The 1950 Boston Red Sox

*Ed Dramin*

**T**he 1950 Boston Red Sox illustrate the validity of baseball's Golden Mean: pennants are won by a balance of good offense and good pitching, not by overwhelming hitting. But the '50 Red Sox are noteworthy because they were the last major league team to bat .300 and the last to score 1,000 runs in a season. A throwback to the 1930s, the 1950 Red Sox scored 1027 runs and had a .302 batting average. Their league leading .464 slugging percentage included 287 doubles and 161 homeruns, first and second in the American League in those categories.

The attack was highlighted by batting champion Billy Goodman, who hit .354, and Rookie-of-the-Year first baseman Walt Dropo, who batted .322, clubbed 34 homeruns, and drove in 144 runs, sharing the league RBI leadership with teammate Vern Stephens. But there were no weak spots in the starting lineup, as every regular contributed. Shortstop Stephens belted 30 homeruns and hit .295 to go along with his 144 RBIs. Batting one-two at the top of the order, centerfielder Dom Dimaggio and third-baseman Johnny Pesky hit .328 and .312 respectively. Right fielder Al Zarilla batted .325 and catcher Birdie Tebbetts .310.

Almost obscured in this barrage were the performances of Bobby Doerr and Ted Williams. Doerr drove in 120 runs with 27 homers and a .294 average. While seemingly below his performances of previous seasons, Williams contribution was still remarkable: the Thumper recorded 97 RBIs and 28 homers in half a season (along with a batting average of .317 and a

slugging percentage of .647), totals abbreviated by a fractured elbow suffered in the All Star game.

Boston manager Joe McCarthy, winner of nine pennants with the Cubs and the Yankees, fielded a starting lineup in which five regulars scored more than 100 runs, three drove in over 100 runs, and seven hit better than .300. Every regular had a slugging percentage of at least .450, while four starting players had slugging percentages of over .500. The bench was also prolific, with five substitutes hitting .294 or better. With good glove men at each position, the '50 Red Sox also led the American League in fielding with a .981 mark. The offense powered Boston to 94 wins and a .610 won-lost percentage, good enough to win in most seasons. But despite their overwhelming attack, the Red Sox finished only in third place, four games behind the league-leading Yankees.

There are, of course, other awesome offensive squads that didn't win pennants: the Tigers of 1921 and 1929, the Phillies of 1929-30, the Yankees of 1930-31, the Indians of 1936, and the Twins of 1964, to cite a few examples. But the '50 Red Sox are unique. First, they dominated offensive statistics even more completely than most non-winning slugging aggregations of other seasons, leading both leagues in runs scored, batting average, slugging percentage, RBIs, doubles, and at-bats, while coming within three of leading the league in homeruns. Second, they came closer to winning than comparable powerhouses, staying in the pennant race later in the season than non-winning, heavy-hitting squads usually do. With all these assets, the question arises: why did the powerful 1950 Red Sox, the best hitting team of the last 57 years, in the

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pennant race until the final days of the season, finally finish only a close third?

There was a lack of speed: just 32 stolen bases, third worst in the American League, and fourth worst in both leagues. But lack of aggressive baserunning can be discounted as a major problem. The running game was not a major weapon for pennant winners in the early '50s. Another explanation is the superior performances of first place New York and second place Detroit. But significant disparities between Red Sox offensive production and their rivals'—Boston's team batting average was 20 points higher than the Yankees' and the Tigers', the Bosox scored 113 more runs than New York and almost 200 more than Detroit—imply that the Sox were appallingly weak in a vital area where their rivals were strong.

The great flaw of the '50 Red Sox was the traditional Boston problem: abysmal pitching. The team ERA of 4.88 was third worst in the AL, fourth worst in the majors. Living by the sword but also dying by it, Boston saw its pitching battered throughout the summer. After Mel Parnell, who lead the staff with 18 wins and an ERA of 3.61, the starting pitching was pathetic, with nine other pitchers shuffling in and out of the rotation all season, their ERA's reading like a sad litany of ineptitude: 4.17, 4.26, 5.11, 5.19, 5.65, 6.06, 6.71, 8.22, and 9.38. The main cause of these unfortunate ERA's was 748 walks, the worst total in both leagues, 132 more than the NL leader, the lowly Pirates.

Dreadful pitching, almost a caricature of this perennial Red Sox shortcoming, was the decisive reason for the '50 Bosox disappointment. But a disparity between potent offense and weak pitching has been a standard Red Sox feature since the late 1930's. Moreover, in view of their exceptional production, the most productive offense since the '36 Yankees, I wondered whether there were ancillary contributing reasons unique to this particular team in this specific season. I was curious, for example, about the effect of Williams' long absence. I also wanted to try to pinpoint the precise problems with the pitching.

The Red Sox began 1950 with virtually the same starting lineup that lost pennants on the last day of the '48 and '49 seasons. Confidence in their heavy-hitting lineup allowed Boston to go through spring training and the early season with no trades, and no player purchases. The Sox assumed that additional power would be supplied by rightfielder Zeke Zarilla, who was expected to fulfill the promise he had shown with the Browns before the Sox acquired him in 1949. Though the Red Sox front office was aware of young slugger Dropo's potential, the Big Moose from Moosup spent all of spring training with Boston's Louisville farm team.

Recognizing that pitching was a problem, Red Sox management nonetheless made only a few perfunctory

moves to bolster the mound corps. Unheralded minor leaguers—George Mueller, Bob Gillespie, Charlie Schanz, George Copeland, and Charlie Quinn—were briefly elevated to the spring training roster. Boo Ferris, a 25-game winner in '46 who had pitched only 6 innings in 1949, was allowed to attempt a spring training comeback. Conversely, Jack Kramer, who had won 18 games for Boston in 1948, was sold to the Giants, for whom he would record an ERA of 3.52 (fourth best on the team and well below the National League median of 4.14). Prophesying Red Sox failure due to weak pitching, Kramer added another theory for Boston's inability to win in a *Sporting News* story of March 8: "McCarthy was wholly responsible for the Red Sox failure to win the pennant in the last two seasons. He is the most ornery man I know. He's plain vindictive. Let him take a look at his staff without me. He hasn't got a lot left. He'll regret the day he let me go."

Though such remarks, along with Williams' record \$125,000 contract, may suggest underlying conflicts, the Red Sox were heavy preseason favorites to win the pennant. Sixty per cent of the Baseball Writers of America picked Boston to finish first, compared to 20 percent for the Yankees. The Red Sox had "the greatest run-making machine in the game" and were "the strongest club in the majors," according to J. G. Taylor Spink. Counting on the Sox's powerful offense to repeat, writers and Bosox management agreed on the other three ingredients that Boston needed to win. Parnell and Ellis Kinder must approximate their '49 form (25 and 23 wins respectively). Promising lefties Chuck Stobbs and Mickey McDermott must develop into reliable starters. (Dan Daniel wrote in *The Sporting News* on April 26 that McDermott, a "precocious youngster bearing the tag of a second Lefty Gomez, could win the pennant for Joe McCarthy".) Finally, the team needed a fast start, unlike the slow openings they'd experienced in '48 and '49. Since 18 of Boston's first 26 games would be played at hitter-friendly Fenway Park (where they had won 61 games in 1949), it was expected that the Red Sox would indeed break from the gate quickly.

This neat paradigm was blown apart by the realities of actual competition. The Red Sox's tumultuous season opener against arch rival New York encapsulated, with eerie portentousness, the major themes of Boston's entire season. Before hometown fans, Boston exploded to a 9-0 lead after five innings and led 10-4 after seven. But in the eighth the Yankees blasted five Red Sox pitchers for nine runs and went on to win 15-10. Tying the league record for most pitchers used in an inning, Boston hurlers gave up 15 hits and 13 walks, negating the 15 hits registered by Red Sox hitters. In the nightcap of next day's Patriot's Day doubleheader, Red Sox hurlers surrendered seven runs in the eighth, losing to New York 16-10 and foreshadowing specific

pitching flaws that would hurt Boston's pennant chances during the entire season: difficulty with contenders and nightmarish breakdowns in late-innings.

Boston's hitting, though, rose to a higher level and the team began to win after an injury to a key member of the offense. Billy Goodman—able to play six positions and indispensable to Boston as motivator and leader, somewhat as Phil Rizutto was for the Yankees—fractured an ankle beating out a bunt in a doubleheader against the A's (April 30). The Sox won both games (including a 17 hit, 19-0 victory) and called up Walt Dropo from Louisville to replace Goodman (May 1). Dropo had an immediate impact, batting over .400 and clubbing 10 homeruns during the first three weeks of his recall. After sweeping a doubleheader against the Browns (despite the 14 walks issued by Boston pitchers in the opener, May 7), the Red Sox moved into a first place tie with Detroit by beating the Tigers on May 9.

Off to a better start than in '48 and '49, Boston nonetheless couldn't avoid controversy. Booed by Fenway fans after committing a crucial error (May 11), irascible Ted Williams responded with the most salient incident of the egregious conduct that periodically marred his brilliant career. Steve O'Leary, in *The Sporting News* of May 24, called Williams' behavior "a series of vulgar gestures...an unspeakable exhibition of derision toward the fans." A *Boston American* editorial referred to the Thumper as "a dirty little man." Williams advocate Dan Daniel referred to Ted as, "still the Kid at 31, a problem child...an embittered player, given to gusts of strange reaction."

In May and June, Red Sox hurlers honed their habits of vulnerability to contenders and bad-dream late innings, the problems often coalescing. Dropping the opener of a doubleheader to Detroit 13-4 on May 11, Sox pitchers surrendered five runs in the last two innings of the 5-3 nightcap. On May 30, Boston's two best hurlers failed before 74,000 fans at Yankee Stadium in a Memorial Day doubleheader. Parnell was knocked out in the first inning of the opener, as the Yankees won 11-7; Kinder lost the second game 5-3 when Joe Collins homered in the eighth.

But in the kind of roller coaster season that can accompany teams dependent mainly on hitting, Red Sox sluggers revived Boston hopes with one of the most awesome offensive displays in major league history. The bombardment began on June 4, when the Red Sox pounded out 21 hits in defeating Chicago 17-7, and resumed the next day as Boston scored 12 more runs against the Chisox. The shelling intensified two days later when the Red Sox pounded out 23 hits to defeat the St. Louis Browns by the football score of 20-4. But this production was merely a preamble.

The next day, Thursday, June 8, alleviating frustrations of the previous two months and epitomizing their offensive capability, Red Sox batters erupted for the

highest single-game run total by one team in major league history. Defeating the Browns 29-4, the Sox pounded out 28 hits—including 17 extra-base shots and seven homeruns—good for 60 total bases, and set or tied seven major league single-game team batting records. Scoring eight runs in the second inning, five in the third, and seven in the fourth, the Sox attack was paced by Doerr's three homeruns and Zarilla's four doubles. Williams and Dropo each homered twice, while Pesky and Zarilla had five hits each.

In seven games against the Indians, White Sox, and Browns from June 2 through June 8, Boston totaled 104 runs on 119 hits. At the end of this rampage, each of the eight regulars was hitting over .300, and the Red Sox seasonal team batting average was .313. However, there is as much pathos as glory in this hitting frenzy. The seven-game spree in itself accounted for more than a tenth of Boston's run production for the entire season. After the rampage, Boston was only in third place, four games behind New York, exactly where they would be at the end of the season. And Red Sox satisfaction with their big bash was brief.

The team experienced an immediate, precipitous reversal, a horrendous let-down which, by itself, cost Boston the pennant. On June 10, giving the Red Sox a taste of their own medicine, first-place Detroit rocked Boston pitchers for 21 hits to win 18-8, breaking the game open with three runs in the seventh and pounding Walt Masterson for eight runs in the ninth. In a doubleheader sweep the next day, the Tigers plated four runs in the last three innings to win the opener and rattled starter Parnell and the Sox for 17 hits in the 14-inning nightcap. After the 29-4 victory, Boston lost 11 of its next 13 games and each of six crucial games with Detroit. Descending to fourth place, 8-1/2 out, Boston bottomed out on June 23.

On that date, worn down by worry over Red Sox vicissitudes and failure to fulfill expectations, manager Joe McCarthy resigned. Having won seven World Series in 24 major league seasons, McCarthy now suffered from flu and pleurisy and described himself as "over-tired and weary." In a *Sporting News* interview printed on July 5, McCarthy articulated his frustrations with the Red Sox: "I'm disgusted after three years of beating my brains out. I've had enough and don't want to go on anymore. When a man can't help a ball club, it's time to quit. I feel much better mentally already now that the strain is off."

Perversely regenerated by McCarthy's resignation, the Red Sox went on a seven-game winning tear under replacement Steve O'Neil. This resurgence was highlighted by another offensive blockbuster when the Sox outslugged Philadelphia 22-14 on June 29 to help set a league record for runs scored by two teams in one game. The Sox and the A's clubbed 21 singles, nine doubles, three triples, and one lonely homerun, good



for 34 hits and another record. The two teams' 21 walks and 21 runs in the first two innings also set records. But Boston offense was again negated by the pitching staff's late-inning ineffectiveness against contenders. Stobbs surrendered four runs in the eighth to hand the Yankees a 9-6 win on June 30. Boston lost 5-2 to New York when Red Sox hurlers gave up 3 runs in the last three frames on July 7.

With Boston in fourth place at the half-way point, Red Sox fans could derive solace from the presence of Williams, Dropo, and Doerr in the AL's starting All Star Game lineup. From Boston's viewpoint, the 14-inning game was memorable mainly for Williams' fracturing his elbow by crashing into Comiskey Park's left field wall while making a fine first-inning catch. Though he played in great pain until the ninth, afterward, with seven bone fragments removed from his arm, Ted was lost for most of the remainder of the campaign.

The Red Sox began the second half of the season with the wild fluctuations of a team whose greatest problem was a lack of consistent pitching—particularly a reliable bullpen—not the loss of its best hitter. Able to beat first-place Detroit 12-9 with 17 hits on July 18, the next day Boston lost to the Tigers 9-5 when Red Sox pitchers gave up six runs in the eighth and ninth innings. The Red Sox could still display a prodigious offense. Bombarding the White Sox 13-1 three days after Williams' injury, Boston scored 11 runs in one inning, repeating the total that they had recorded against the A's on April 30. Furthermore, Williams' absence gave super-sub Billy Goodman the chance to play regularly. Taking the lead among AL hitters with .363 on July 26, Goodman proceeded to beat out George Kell for the batting title.

Most important, Williams' injury had no adverse effect on Boston's ability to win. When Ted was hurt on July 11, Boston was in fourth place, eight games out, with a 42-35 record and a .551 winning percentage. On September 12, with Williams still absent, the Red Sox had moved to within one game of first, while their 86-51 record comprised an improved winning percentage of .628. Without Williams, from July 11 to September 13, Boston was 44-16 with a winning percentage of .733.

The Red Sox themselves were astonishingly blunt in expressing what statistics show—that they could get along without the Thumper, that they were even playing better without him. In a dialogue reported in *The Sporting News*, after one anonymous Boston player stated, "[Williams] hasn't hurt us by being out," a second Red Sox player replied, "He's probably helped us by being out. What could he have done that Goodman hasn't done? I'm wondering if he could do as much." A third player added: "I hope Goodman wins the batting title just to show Mr. Big who the MVP is on this club."

Without Williams, the Red Sox pulled together to produce the most torrid run in the majors in 1950.

Sparked by a five-game sweep of the A's (Aug. 15-17, on 50 runs and back-to-back doubleheader victories), the Red Sox racked up 16 wins in 17 games. Though Masterson gave up four runs in the ninth inning to hand Detroit a 8-6 victory, ending an 11-game Boston winning streak on August 26, instead of falling apart, the Red Sox showed resiliency and firepower from less heralded sources: the next day, they came back from a seven-run deficit to defeat the Indians 11-9 on Clyde Vollmer's grand slam. The following day, they overcame a 12-1 Cleveland lead to win 15-14 when Zarilla homered in the eighth. Their August record of 24-6 thus put the Red Sox within striking distance of the flag, 2-1/2 games out, at the beginning of the September stretch run.

Boston didn't lose the pennant as dramatically as in '48 and '49. Playing .593 (16-11) in the final month, the Red Sox would have had to win at a .777 clip (21-6) to overtake the Yankees. Initially appearing as if they might achieve that improbability, Boston continued to win and was within one game of first with two 3-2 victories over Detroit on September 17 and 18, Kinder shutting down ninth-inning rallies to save both wins in relief. Finally wising up, the Sox belatedly had found the answer to their season-long problem by using Kinder as a late-inning stopper. From September 1 through September 18, Kinder had five saves in eight relief appearances; during this stretch, the Red Sox were 11-4.

Having won 27 of 32 games, in second place, one game out, Boston hit its apex on September 18. Over eight days from September 20 through September 27, roughly coinciding with Williams' return to fulltime play, the Sox dropped six of eight games to lose the pennant. In two fatal losses to the New York Yankees, Boston's pitching faltered and its devastating hitting, when needed most, was stifled by Eddie Lopat's five-hitter (an 8-0 loss on September 23) and by Vic Raschi's six-hitter (a 9-5 loss on September 24). Instead of being tied, Boston was four games behind New York with one week to go. This pair of losses epitomized Boston's failure to play .500 against contenders: records of 9-13 against New York, 10-12 versus Detroit, and 10-12 versus Cleveland also cost Boston the pennant.

The blatant ineffectiveness of Red Sox pitching after the seventh inning—when disasters struck with the painfully absurd repetitiveness of a bad dream—evokes wonderment about Boston management's failure to respond to the team's obvious need. In 1950, for the first time, relief pitching decided both pennant races—Jim Konstanty's 22 saves, Joe Page's 13, and the nine saves of Tom Ferrick, whose mid-season acquisition by the Yankees could have proven instructive to a Boston front office seemingly mesmerized by Red Sox heavy cannonading.

# Fame Forgotten

*Joseph Skrec*

**T**he moment Joe Medwick would have liked to forget forever is one many baseball fans always remember: the commissioner of baseball removing the future Hall of Famer from a World Series game for his own safety. That's if baseball has bothered to remember anything at all about the last player to win the Triple Crown in the National League.

Since 1878, only 14 players have blended batting skill with power and run production to lead their league in the three most recognized offensive categories, batting average, runs batted in, and home runs. By comparison, 15 players have pitched perfect games.

Medwick won the Triple Crown in 1937 and was named the National League's Most Valuable Player. Yet that rare accomplishment, which hasn't been equaled in either league since 1967, and even his long-awaited inclusion in the baseball Hall of Fame, are not what most baseball fans remember of Medwick. Rather, fans remember the man known as "Ducky" (for his waddling walk) to fans and "Muscles" (for his bulging biceps) to teammates for a single play 58 years ago.

With his St. Louis Cardinals leading the Detroit Tigers, 8-0, in the sixth inning of Game 7 of the 1934 World Series, Medwick walloped a shot to right center for a sure two-base hit. He dashed all the way to third and slid hard into the bag, safely ahead of Marv Owen's tag.

As Owen fielded the throw, he stepped on the sliding Medwick's foot. Medwick kicked at Owen and the two

prepared to slug it out. The play triggered a brawl and caused a 34-minute delay. When Medwick returned to left field, Detroit fans pelted him with anything they could find, including garbage and bottles.

Despite vehement objections from Medwick and St. Louis player-manager Frankie Frisch, Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis ordered Medwick out of the game for his own safety. It was the first ejection of a player during the World Series since Frank Chance had gotten a much less dramatic heave back in 1910. "I wonder what the judge would've done if the score had been 0-0," Medwick said after the game. He left the game just one hit shy of tying the World Series record of 12.

Medwick's short-term safety was preserved, but the incident overshadowed a Hall of Fame career. "I don't want to be remembered as the guy who got thrown out of a World Series game," Medwick said in 1963. "I don't want to be remembered as some kind of freak, like Wrong Way Corrigan or the guy who ran the wrong way in the Rose Bowl. I want to be remembered as Joe Medwick, the ballplayer."

He's only been forgotten. In this day of statistical junkies and rotisserie-league devotees, fans will find Medwick's offensive numbers comparable to some of the game's all-time greats.

However, it's taken a Triple Crown-type season by the San Diego Padres' Gary Sheffield to dust off the memory of Medwick to a new generation of baseball fans. Like Sheffield, Medwick was never a power hitter so much as a powerful hitter who happened to have a great home run year, when he smashed 31 dingers, drove in 154 runs, and hit .374. It was the only season

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Medwick led the senior circuit in hitting and homers. Medwick never hit more than 23 round-trippers any other year; until 1992 Sheffield never hit more than 10. Like Sheffield, Medwick lived in St. Petersburg, where he died of a heart attack on March 21, 1975.

And like Sheffield, Medwick wasn't afraid of a run-in or two with teammates or management, engaging in nasty battles regarding his salary (often with general manager Branch Rickey). He never admitted purposely throwing a ball into the stands behind first base, like Sheffield did in Milwaukee, but "Joe could be a horse's ass," said 74-year-old retired *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* sports editor Bob Broeg. "Joe had a mean streak in him. He could be a very surly person."

Medwick's hostility often manifested itself on the diamond, especially during his days with the rough-and-tumble Gas House Gang. It wasn't uncommon for Medwick to fight with his own teammates, especially the Dean brothers, Dizzy and Paul.

In Pittsburgh, Medwick let a ball drop for a three-run double and Dizzy Dean, who was pitching, was furious at the outfielder. In the dugout, Dizzy and his brother came marching, shoulder-to-shoulder, at Medwick, who grabbed a bat and said something about "separating the Deans forever."

Medwick wouldn't let any possible mental advantage slip by, as former St. Louis sports writer Ray Gillespie found out when he spread hairpins in front of the Cardinals' dugout so that slumping Pepper Martin would find the supposedly good omens. Medwick, just as superstitious as Martin, came to the scene first and Gillespie protested that the hairpins were for Martin, to help Pepper get untracked in the heyday of the Gas House Gang. "The heck with Martin and his slump," Medwick told the writer, scooping up the treasure. "Let Martin find his own base hits."



*The play that caused the riot. Medwick would rather have been remembered for the Triple Crown.*

The 1934 Cardinals assured themselves of a place in baseball history by winning the World Series, but the 1934 St. Louis club is still remembered today because of its nickname: the Gas House Gang. "I don't think you'll ever be able to assemble a group like that again," said Medwick, the Gas House Gang's left fielder and cleanup batter. "There have been better teams, but they didn't have the character, the never-die spirit we had in those days."

After his club's 11-0 loss in Game 7 of the 1934 World Series, Detroit manager Mickey Cochrane said, "Where, oh where, do they grow fellows like that," wondering about where the Cardinals found 23-year-old outfielder Joe Medwick. The answer is Carteret, N.J., where Medwick was a four letter man his freshman year, excelling in football, basketball, track, and baseball. (Today, there's a Joseph Medwick Memorial Park in Carteret, which also named a division of its Little League after Medwick.)

Medwick, who played fullback, then quarterback, could kick a football 55 to 60 yards, and pass an equal distance with ease. He was the team's passer, punter, and key runner. Medwick was just as adept at basketball. In the days of a jump ball after every basket, when teams usually combined to score about 40 points, Med-

wick scored all of Carteret's points in a 48-12 win over rival Perth Amboy.

He graduated from Carteret in 1930, turning down a football scholarship from Notre Dame to sign a professional baseball contract with the Cardinals. But he didn't use his own name when he signed. Medwick began his professional baseball career under an alias, Mickey King, to protect his amateur status in football. Medwick's parents also had to sign his first contract—which called for him to earn \$225 a month—because he was a minor.

When Joe Medwick stepped to the plate in the big leagues, opponents knew no lead was safe. A memorable Medwick at bat in the 1930s proved how much the opposition respected him. Philadelphia manager Jimmy Wilson ordered Medwick intentionally walked—with the bases loaded and the Cardinals trailing by four runs in the ninth inning.

With two outs, Medwick trotted to first, forcing in a run. The next batter, Dan Padgett, struck out to end the game. "No game is ever won until Medwick is out in the ninth," said Brooklyn pitcher Van Lingle Mungo.

Often, the only way to walk Medwick was intentionally. He may have been the greatest bad-ball hitter of all time. If you rank Medwick as the second best out-of-the-strike-zone hitter, then he used to buy his papers from the boy who turned out to be the best.

"I sold newspapers and Joe Medwick was one of my regulars," said Hall of Famer Yogi Berra, a St. Louis native. "He gave me a nickel every time he bought a paper and the paper was three cents. He said, 'Keep the change.' But that's not the reason he was my idol and my favorite ballplayer: You could tell just by the way he moved he was good."

With a better knowledge of the strike zone, he could've even been better. "I just wonder," Frankie Frisch said, "what Medwick would have hit if he didn't go for all of those bad pitches."

A scary thought—almost as scary as what happened to Medwick during the 1940 season. On June 12, 1940 Medwick was traded to Brooklyn, a deal that nearly ended his career. Six days after the trade, the Dodgers faced the Cardinals in the second game of a series at Ebbets Field.

A pitch from Bob Bowman, Medwick's former teammate, sailed high and tight and Medwick was hit behind the ear. He fell to the ground as if shot. The beaning of Medwick caused a near-riot on the field, charges and counter-charges, and even an investigation by William O'Dwyer, the district attorney in Brooklyn. Bowman was absolved of all charges, but the incident did accelerate the development of the batting helmet.

Although suffering from a concussion, earaches, and

blurred vision, Medwick returned to the lineup just a few days later and battled his way through the season. Despite hitting for a batting average greater than .300 three of the next four seasons, Medwick was never again the feared slugger he had been for a decade.

The numbers, from his prime, are impressive. Medwick hit 40 or more doubles in seven straight years (1933-39) and holds the National League record with 64 in 1936. He attained more than 1,000 hits in his first five seasons. From 1934 to 1938, Medwick scored and drove in more than 100 runs each season.

A career .324 hitter, Medwick batted more than .300 during each of his first 12 seasons, and 15 out of 17 overall. He had six seasons with at least 100 RBIs.

Medwick produced Hall of Fame credentials, but after a career of antagonizing sports writers Medwick suffered some payback. He wasn't inducted into the Hall of Fame until 1968, his 15th, and final, year of eligibility. If the Baseball Writers Association of America hadn't elected Medwick, he would've been forced to wait five years before becoming a candidate before the Veterans Committee.

"Maybe the oldtimers will elect me someday, but I don't want the plaque presented to my widow," Medwick said in 1965. "I want the thrill of getting in myself while I'm still around to enjoy it."

Like a politician, Medwick eventually campaigned hard for election. It wasn't a landslide, but Medwick finally won and was inducted into the Cooperstown shrine on July 22, 1968. "This was the longest slump of my career," he said in his Hall of Fame speech. Medwick's campaign was orchestrated by well-known sports cartoonist Amadee Wohlschlaeger. "I had gone 0-for-20 before, but never 0-for-20 years," Medwick said. "Now, my life is complete."

Well, almost. Twenty years was nothing compared to the wait Medwick endured to clear his name of any wrongdoing in the 1934 World Series.

Before the ejection, Judge Landis called Owen and Medwick to his box and asked both players if Medwick slid into Owen purposely. "You're damned right I kicked him," was the reply Medwick related later. "Owen didn't answer," according to Medwick—until 25 years later.

At a Detroit banquet honoring the principals of the 1934 World Series, the voice of Marv Owen was piped in from Los Angeles. Did Medwick slide into you purposely, Owen was asked. "No," Owen told the diners via an amplified telephone hookup. "It was my fault. I was on the bag, faking as if the throw coming was coming to me and Joe did what any good runner would do."

Medwick was absolved, a fact most of baseball has forgotten. Just like baseball has forgotten the National League's last Triple Crown winner.

# Hall-of-Famers on the Early Gridiron

*Stew Goodwin*

**T**he only instance when two baseball Hall-of-Famers played both professional baseball and football in the same year occurred in 1902. Christy Mathewson and Rube Waddell each played in the major leagues during the baseball season and played professional football that fall.

Pennsylvania was the cradle of professional football. The first game had been played there in 1895. There were many teams in the state in 1902, the most successful of which paid good money—\$500 to \$1000 for two to three months of effort. The two best Philadelphia teams were backed by their baseball counterparts, the Nationals and the Athletics. Both the baseball and football Athletics were owned by Ben Shibe and managed by Connie Mack. In 1902 they won the Philadelphia Championship and then arranged to play Western Pennsylvania's best, a team from Pittsburgh. The contest was scheduled for Thanksgiving Day in Pittsburgh.

Christy Mathewson, 20 years old in 1902, was a full-back on the Pittsburgh team. He had been a three-sport athlete at Bucknell, and had played pro football as early as 1898, for the Greenburg team. Mathewson's major league baseball career began in 1900 with the New York Giants. In 1901 he had won 20 and lost 17 for a seventh place club in an eight-team league. But 1902 was a year of change. Not only were the Giants headed for an eighth-place finish but two different managers experimented with Mathewson at first base and shortstop before a third, John McGraw,

took over in mid-season. McGraw returned his prime prospect to full time mound duty, where he wound up 14-17 with a 2.11 earned run average. This was Mathewson's last losing record for thirteen years.

In 1902 Rube Waddell was 26 years old. He had been a major leaguer for all or part of five seasons, but this had been his first for the A's of Connie Mack. It was also his first as a 20-game winner. His 24-7 mark (with a 2.05 earned run average) for the American League champion A's was the first of four straight 20 victory seasons. It also established him as baseball's preeminent lefthander and power pitcher. However, Waddell suffered from serious mental and emotional problems which made him a difficult player to manage. In an attempt to keep a closer eye on his star pitcher Mack convinced Rube to play for his football team. He became an interior lineman of reasonable ability, playing mostly at tackle.

In preparation for the big Thanksgiving Day football game, Connie Mack took his team on the road for a series of three exhibition games. One of them, in Elmira, N.Y. on November 21, was the first football game played at night. By Thanksgiving, the weather had turned bad, cold and rainy. This, plus a college game being played across town between the University of Pittsburgh and Washington and Jefferson, held down the crowd. The muddy field held the score to a 0-0 tie. A rematch was held two days later, with the A's winning 12-6.

But the gridiron confrontation between Mathewson and Waddell never took place. Rube had been out late on Thanksgiving Eve watching a billiards match between Willie Hoppe and Pedro de Oro. He had

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gambled heavily on the loser (de Oro). When confronted by Mack upon his return to the team's hotel he reached in his pocket for a handkerchief. A revolver came out with it. It hit the floor and discharged, firing a bullet into the wall near Mack's head. There was a limit even to calm Connie's patience. Rube was sent home forthwith and didn't play in the next day's game.

Ironically, two years later these same players had another, more significant, non-confrontation. The occasion was the 1905 World Series. The Giants faced off

against the Athletics. Both pitchers, now firmly established as superstars had enjoyed great seasons. Mathewson went 31-8 with a 1.27 earned run average. Waddell was only slightly behind at 26-11 and 1.48. In early September, while riding on the team train, Rube started roughhousing with Andy Coakley and hurt his left shoulder. He missed the entire series. Mathewson didn't, leading the Giants to a 4-1 victory with three shutout wins.



### Jeff Heath vs Bob Feller The slugger against the speedballer

Outfielder Jeff Heath made his major league debut with the Cleveland Indians on the September day in 1936 that 17-year-old Bob Feller tied the American League record with 17 strikeouts in a single game. From 1936 to 1945, Heath made 1,040 hits and hit 122 home runs while his speedballing Cleveland team-mate pitched a no-hitter and set records for strikeouts; but Jeff never had to bat against "Rapid Robert". In 1946, when he was traded to Washington, Jeff Heath found out what it was like to bat against the fastest pitcher in baseball. Here are the results:

May 17	Feller 14 strikeouts	Heath 0-2
June 4	Feller 14 strikeouts	Heath 0-4
July 3	Feller 10 strikeouts,	Heath 0-4
Aug. 10	Feller in relief	Heath 0-1
Sep. 8	Feller 8 strikeouts	Heath 0-4
1946 totals:		Heath vs. Feller, 0-15

After going hitless in 15 times at bat against Feller in 1946, Jeff Heath had several hits against the Cleveland Ace in 1947, including a home run.

Here is how they fared:

Apr. 22	Feller 10 strikeouts	Heath 0-3
May 9	Feller 6 strikeouts	Heath 0-1
May 23	Feller 7 strikeouts	Heath 2-4
July 1	Feller 3 strikeouts	Heath 0-1
Aug. 10	Feller 3 strikeouts	Heath 1-4
Sep. 1	Feller 8 strikeouts	Heath 1-4
		Solo Home Run, 2nd inning.
Sep. 24	Feller 5 strikeouts,	Heath 4-1
1947 totals:		Heath vs. Feller, 21-5
		One home run, four singles, three rbis.

In two seasons batting against Bob Feller, Jeff Heath had five hits in 36 times at bat, a batting average of .139.

After the 1947 season, Heath was sold to the Boston Braves of the National League. Jeff batted .319 for the Braves and helped them win their first pennant since 1914. He looked forward to batting against Bob Feller and his former Cleveland team-mates in the 1948 world series. It never happened. Exactly one week before the season ended, Jeff Heath broke his ankle sliding into home plate against Roy Campanella and the Dodgers. He watched the World Series as a spectator.

—Jim Shearon



# A Tribute to Burt Shotton

*David Gough*

**B**urt Shotton's professional baseball career spanned four decades. He played, coached, managed and scouted in an age of heroes. As a player he was mentioned on all-star teams with players like Ty Cobb, Tris Speaker, Babe Ruth and Walter Johnson. He coached for Branch Rickey, Rogers Hornsby and Lou Boudreau. And he managed players like Chuck Klein, Grover Cleveland Alexander and Jackie Robinson. He piloted the Brooklyn Dodgers to National League pennants in 1947 and 1949, narrowly missing a third in 1950. He distinguished himself in every post he held, and yet to this day the name of Burt Shotton is known only to the most astute baseball fan.

As a favor to his long-time friend Branch Rickey, he was coaxed out of retirement in 1947 at the age of 62 to manage the Dodgers. It was a critical year for the club and for all of baseball. Less than a week before the start of the season, baseball commissioner Happy Chandler had suspended feisty Leo Durocher, Brooklyn's incumbent manager, "for consorting with gamblers, and for conduct detrimental to baseball." To add fuel to an already inflamed set of circumstances, Rickey had just announced the signing of major league baseball's first modern-day black player, Jackie Robinson. It was at the last minute and into this far-less-than-ideal situation that Shotton stepped.

Despite being referred to by some less-than-accurate baseball historians as merely a "yes-man" to the autocratic Rickey, Shotton proved to be the right choice to quell the impending turmoil in the Dodger clubhouse

and on the field. Refusing to don a uniform, saying that he preferred to manage the team from the dugout (a la Connie Mack), he defused a highly volatile situation and led the team to the pennant before losing one of baseball's most exciting World Series in seven games to the New York Yankees.

It would have been difficult for Shotton to refuse Rickey's request to manage the Dodgers. The two went back a long way. In 1913, when Shotton was distinguishing himself as one of baseball's premier centerfielders with the St. Louis Browns, Rickey was named the team's secretary. By the next year Rickey was managing the Browns on the field, but because of his religious convictions refused to attend Sunday games. In his stead he selected "Sunday managers," the most frequent and successful being Burt Shotton. He assumed a similar role several years later when the pair were reunited with the St. Louis Cardinals. The friendship endured throughout their lives.

Like Rickey, Shotton was an Ohio native, born of French and Irish descent in 1884. He grew up near Lake Erie in the small farming community of Brownhelm, and began playing ball in high school and on factory teams. He caught the eyes of major league scouts because of his lightning speed. It was said that he would outrace barnstorming sprinters who passed through the area, earning him the nickname "Barney" after famed race-car driver Barney Oldfield. It was a title which stuck throughout his baseball career.

**Big league stardom**—In the summer of 1908 Shotton signed his first professional contract with Erie of the Ohio-Pennsylvania League for the grand sum of \$125 a

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month. But only three weeks into the season he was drilled on the right elbow by a pitch and sat out the remainder of the season. By the next year, his contract had been purchased by Steubenville and it was from here that he earned his first ticket to the big leagues. In 112 games he collected 154 hits and led the Ohio-Pennsylvania League with a .347 batting mark. By mid-September he was in a Browns' uniform. In December he and his bride Mary, whom he had met in Steubenville, were married.

Following another summer in the minors, Shotton was in the majors to stay in 1911. Despite playing for some very bad ball clubs, he was considered baseball's best leadoff hitter through the 1916 season, averaging nearly 40 stolen bases and hitting .284 over a five-year stretch (1912-16). A freak clubhouse injury the following year slowed him for the remainder of his playing days. In 1917, he was traded to the Washington Senators, where he established a unique baseball record by playing an entire 18-inning game without recording a single outfield chance!

The next year, with Shotton's playing career heading downhill, his contract was purchased by Rickey who by now was directing the St. Louis Cardinals. Putting in four more partial playing years, Shotton resumed the role of Rickey's "Sunday manager." Finally, in 1923 he laid down his bat after 14 seasons, with a .270 lifetime mark.

**On to Philadelphia**—He stayed with the Cardinals through the '25 season, even though by then Rickey was no longer manager, and was rewarded with his first managerial job at one of the organization's top farm clubs in Syracuse. Despite winning 102 games in 1927, the Stars finished second. But the great season did not escape the notice of Philadelphia Phillies' owner William F. Baker, who offered Shotton the opportunity to manage his team. It has been suggested that, understanding the tight-fisted ways of Baker, Rickey encouraged his friend to turn down the Phillies job and wait for something better. Shotton however, anxious to return to the majors, accepted Baker's offer.

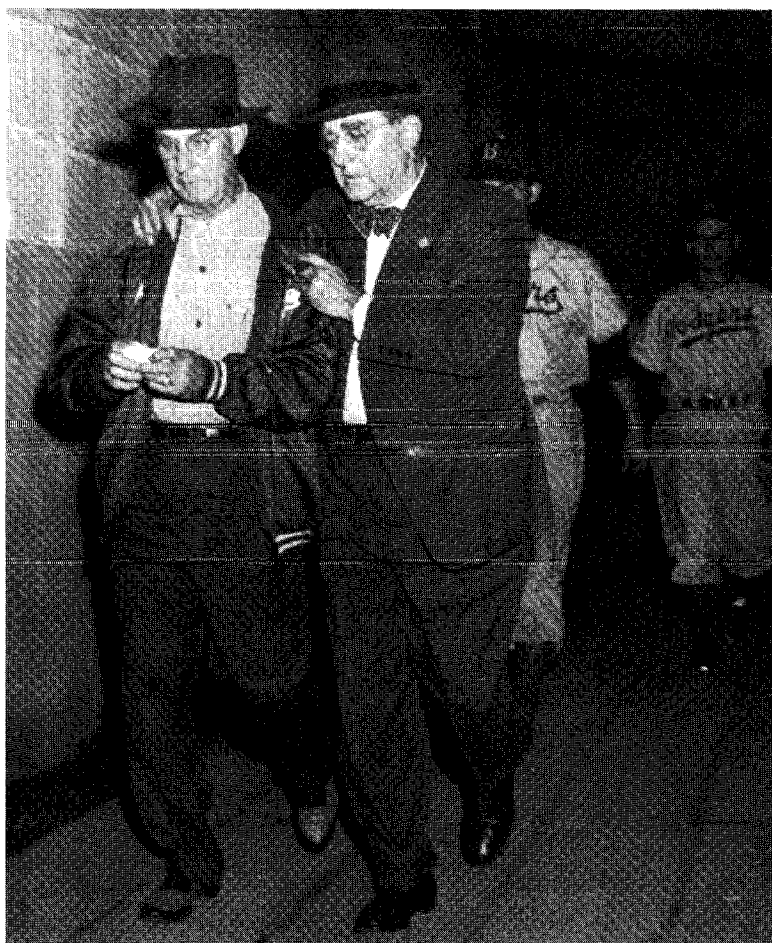
Through six mostly frustrating years in Philadelphia, Shotton's teams finished only once in the first division. That they fared as well as they did was a tribute to him, given the inept and ridiculous actions of Baker and subsequent owner Gerald Nugent. Despite being blessed with some of the most feared hitters in baseball (including Chuck Klein and Lefty O'Doul), the Phillies could never win with consistency because of horrible pitching. Baker and Nugent both sold the team's best young arms in order to make payroll. The 1929 Phillies led the ma-

jors with a team batting mark of .309, but the pitching staff had an unbelievable 6.13 earned run average—in spite of the defense's 191 errors!

To make matters worse, the Phillies played their games in ancient and dilapidated Baker Bowl. It took a hefty shot to hit a homerun to left or center, where the dimensions were 341 feet and 408 feet. But it was only 280 feet to right, where a forty-foot corrugated tin wall was often dented and even burst through with line drives. Even though the wall was eventually raised to sixty feet, it whetted the appetites of every left-handed power hitter in the league.

Finally, after six seasons and increasing personality differences with Nugent and his interfering wife, Mae, Shotton was fired after the 1933 season with two years remaining on his contract. The Philadelphia experience had been difficult for him, whitening his already gray hair. Nonetheless, his had been the longest tenure of any Phillie pilot, a record that stood until Gene Mauch's nine-year regime in the '60s.

**Happy in the bushes**—Baseball minds of the day still valued Burt Shotton. He was mentioned as a candidate for several managerial jobs during the winter, but de-



*Branch Rickey consoles Shotton after loss to Yankees in 1947 Series*

New York Post

cided on a coaching stint under Bob O'Farrell with the Cincinnati Reds. O'Farrell was fired in the second half of the season and replaced by Charlie Dressen, who decided not to include Shotton as a part of his staff. Interestingly, Dressen would reappear as Shotton's managerial replacement with the Dodgers following the 1950 season.

Branch Rickey once again tapped the shoulder of his trusted friend in 1936, asking him early in the season to manage the Cardinals' Rochester club. Shotton had intended to take the year off, wanting to spend time with Mary and their two rapidly-growing sons at their Florida home. But Rickey needed his help. Following that season, he was asked to take the job at Columbus, which was in close proximity to his boyhood Ohio home. Later he would describe the experience as "the happiest time of my life." It was from Columbus, after six years (1936-41), two pennants, a Little World Series title and being named *The Sporting News* Minor League Manager of the Year (1941) that he earned his ticket back to the major leagues.

During his years at Columbus, Shotton developed the reputation of having an astute eye for baseball talent and being a strong developer of young players. Among his players who went on to big league stardom were Enos Slaughter, Harry "the Hat" Walker, Murry Dickson, Harry Brecheen, and Preacher Roe. Though quiet and businesslike, Shotton knew when to praise and when to scold. He rarely allowed his emotions to control his actions. He played the percentages long before most baseball men were aware of them. He was called a genius with pitchers, knowing how to get the most out of a staff and when to make a pitching change. He had a "quick hook", but would sometimes leave a pitcher in the game "on instinct." His record shows his hunches were correct more often than not.

**Wartime call-up**—With the Second World War now involving American troops on both the European and Asian fronts, baseball faced a serious personnel shortage. In a bold move, Cleveland Indians owner Alva Bradley named his 24-year-old phenom shortstop Lou Boudreau to manage the club. Logic demanded that Bradley surround his young manager with the wisdom of older baseball minds, and Shotton was among three veteran coaches named to the staff.

Many observers felt that Bradley was merely covering his own tail. In the event the youngster failed, a suitable replacement could step right in. But Shotton immediately laid such rumors to rest when he told the press, "All I want is to see this boy successful. If I can help him win that's all I'll ask of baseball. How can anyone feel otherwise toward a fellow who plays the game like Lou does?" The pair developed an instant rapport,

Boudreau later telling him, "If I had a father, I know he'd want me to grow up to be just like you."

**Glory in Brooklyn**—After four seasons with the Indians, Shotton announced his retirement from baseball after the 1945 season, vowing never again to put on a baseball uniform. And he never did. Mary's health required hospitalization and his own sciatica made it difficult for him to walk. They were now grandparents, and they felt that the time had come to settle down. He had the satisfaction of knowing that he had always given an honest day's work for his pay, and he felt he had a rest coming.

But Branch Rickey had other plans for him. Having directed the operations of the Brooklyn Dodgers since 1943, Rickey convinced his old friend to do some part-time scouting for the club in Florida beginning in 1946. But a year later to everyone's surprise—most of all his own—Burt Shotton was back in the majors, guiding the strife-ridden Brooklyn Dodgers to the 1947 National League pennant.

The return of Leo Durocher following his suspension signaled yet another "retirement" for Shotton. But by the all-star break in 1948, the Dodgers were floundering, and Durocher was forced out by Rickey. Shotton was back. It was reminiscent of Cincinnatus, who twice in times of national crisis was summoned from the plow to be ruler of Rome. A second pennant followed in 1949, Shotton's first full year as manager, and another was lost to the Phillies on the final day of the 1950 season.

The four years at Brooklyn were like a resurrection for Shotton. They included the material of which dreams are made, and yet he is so seldom remembered. It is unfortunate that his and Rickey's departure from the Dodgers after the '50 season were not under better terms.

Walter O'Malley assumed control of the club, ran off Rickey and failed to acknowledge Shotton's contributions to the Dodger organization. Never openly bitter at the cruel end of his forty years in the game, Shotton withdrew to a life of solitude near his Winter Haven home. Family, hunting and fishing occupied his final years. When death came in 1963, his funeral was a private affair.

Burt Shotton will never be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, but he has left a legacy from a day when the size of a player's heart was more important than the size of his contract. He was a model of stability, neither sensational nor self-seeking. The press never considered him "good print" because he spoke with his life rather than with his lips.

He was a gentle breeze on a summer afternoon in an era now long past.

# Major League Baseball During World War II

*Jered Benjamin Kolbert*

**M**ost of us know about the diminished level of play that occurred during the summers of World War II. However, the decreased standard of play is just one aspect of how the game was transformed during the war. The major leagues had to alter their operations in many ways, and they made significant contributions to the war effort.

At the outset of the war, many felt that it would be unjust if some people could continue to enjoy or play big league ball while servicemen and women abroad were making tough sacrifices. Others thought that the resources expended on major league baseball should go to the war effort. President Roosevelt, though, came out in favor of the game's continuance, declaring that it was healthy for morale both at home and abroad. He stated that baseball could proceed as long as it didn't use "healthy young men," who should be in the service, and if it scheduled more night games so that war production workers could attend.

Congress also favored keeping baseball during the war. Most politicians felt that the game would provide relaxation for workers, enhance physical fitness by promoting amateur baseball, and improve morale. During the debate over whether baseball should continue, players and umpires who had barnstormed in Japan pointed out that to cease major league play would have represented an admission to the Japanese that their actions were having serious consequences on the American way of life and thus would have greatly boosted our enemies' morale. In Congress, Senator

Scott Lucas of Illinois proclaimed that the "treacherous Japs dropped baseball because it is an American game."

The resulting governmental position concerning baseball was that it was a morale booster, but not an essential war industry. Major league baseball players were to receive no special treatment from their draft boards. The one special leeway granted to major league baseball in terms of manpower was that, while there existed prohibitions against workers in war industries from arbitrarily changing their jobs, baseball players who worked in war industries during the off season were allowed to return to their teams.

Politicians' favorable stance toward baseball was reflected in opinions of the home public. In a Gallup poll taken in April, 1943, 59 percent of the public supported baseball's continuation with 28 percent opposing. Most of those surveyed said that they thought major league baseball boosted morale and that it provided relaxation. Among baseball fans, 80 percent desired the game's continuance. This thoroughly pleased baseball officials who had declared that the American people should decide the fate of baseball.

As the war progressed and more men were needed, draft boards began taking players who had been passed over before. Still, there were many who felt that athletes were getting special treatment, and in January of 1945, the War Department began reviewing the cases of baseball players who had not been drafted for physical reasons. The policy was changed so many of these athletes would be taken into the service or forced to perform in some other war role. Also beginning in 1945, foreign players were subject to the same

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draft procedures as any other American citizen, significant since the number of foreign players had increased as a measure to fulfill the player shortage.

**Manpower**—Probably the greatest effect the war had upon the game was the manpower shortage it created. In 1941, there were 5,298 players on baseball's reserve list. This number decreased to 1,753 by 1944. The major leagues entering the 1945 season had 565 players on their active lists while 509 players were in the services. 54 percent of the players active in 1941 were in the armed services by 1945. To fill this manpower shortage, the major leagues witnessed a great influx of 17- and 18-year-olds, a slight increase of foreign players, and older players who would have been released but now remained due to the lowered standard of play. As Joseph Reichler, editor of the 1988 Macmillan's *Baseball Encyclopedia*, put it, "The ranks of baseball were drained by the call to arms, but the veterans too old for active military duty and the youngsters still not of age for the service provided the personnel necessary to keep the game going." Some suggested that with desegregation major league baseball could fill the manpower shortage. However, Commissioner Landis absolutely refused to discuss the issue, and the National League rejected Bill Veeck's attempt to buy the Philadelphia Phillies and stock the team with black players.

Bill James in his *Historical Abstract* estimated that only 40 percent of the wartime players were of major league caliber. Only twenty-two of the sixty-four National League starters of 1945 were to be regulars in 1946. All players active in 1944 were exempt from the service for one reason or another. Despite the noticeably decreased standard of play, the manpower measures employed by the game worked quite well, and by the 1945 season the major leagues had more players than any of the prior war seasons.

**Travel**—Manpower wasn't the only area affected by war and government policy. Travel changed, too. Basically, the government, by way of the Eastman Report, offered suggestions about how baseball could reduce its traveling, and baseball voluntarily complied. Baseball cut all barnstorming tours, held spring training close to their home cities, and the season's schedule was altered so that there were more four-game series and fewer of the customary three-game series. Beginning in 1943, the number of spring training games was reduced from the norm of 40 to 10 to 15 games and the number of each team's West-to-East trips were decreased from four to three. The game voluntarily reduced traveling by a projected 25 percent in 1945 by reducing the team roster when on the road, suspending the All-Star Game, and canceling all exhibitions that were not played on the home field of either team.

In fact, at the beginning of the 1945 season, the World Series was initially canceled. It was rescheduled when the war ended in August.

The directors of the Office of Defense and Transportation claimed professional baseball helped conserve fuel resources because people wouldn't be traveling during the time they were at the ballpark.

**Deadball?**—The war required additional sacrifices from baseball. New materials to produce baseballs substituted for the lack of high grade rubber and cork. This had the effect of 'deadening' the ball, and partly accounts for the decrease in offense during the war years. Statistics seem to bear out hitters' complaints of a deadened ball. Run production for the average game the combined four years prior to the war was 8.7 in the National League and 10.3 in the American League. For the four combined war seasons, the average in the National League was 8.3 and 8.1 in the American League. During the following four seasons, the National League's average rose to 8.8 and the American's to 9 runs per game. Both league's batting averages and home run totals decreased, only to increase again after the war. Yet Spalding, the maker of major league baseballs, forced to substitute balata for rubber and cork, denied any decrease in the ball's liveliness. Fallen offensive statistics may have been the result of better pitching in comparison to hitting with the influx of untested players filling in for the departed players in the service.

**Night ball**—Despite FDR's earlier request for more night games, baseball under the lights had to be banned in coastal cities during 1942 and 1943, since it contributed to sky glow, which allowed enemy submarines to see the outline of ships. Attendance dropped in these cities, since night games had higher average attendance than weekly day games. This was readily apparent by the attendance decrease of 6 percent for the American League and 8 percent for the National League for the 1943 season. General attendance during the war years stood slightly lower than the late-'30s average, and then skyrocketed in the latter half of 1945 with the end of the war. To avoid the dim-out order, several clubs scheduled games at twilight hours, representing one of the few times a baseball team did not show complete adherence to government requests. The night blackout rule was eventually rescinded and clubs were able to hold an unlimited number of night games in 1944 and 1945.

Following the war, the number of night games remained at this higher level, and thus World War II speeded up the process of more night games. The Chicago Cubs did not schedule any night games, since their owner had donated the lights he had intended to install in Wrigley Field to the government on Decem-

ber 8, 1941, the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

**Air raids and player trades**—Like the dim-out order, baseball had to conform to another military consideration, that of what to do in the event of an enemy air raid. While this may sound ridiculous to us now, most of the clubs drew up air raid contingencies. It was decided that in the case of such an attack, the game could continue, since the steel and concrete stands offered great protection. Air raid wardens were trained for such an event and directions were placed on the back of each stadium seat. Even such interior cities as Detroit and Cincinnati devised raid precautions.

An indirect consequence of the war was the lack of trading among teams, since the draft status of players was so uncertain. Most trades that did occur involved players who were classified as physically unfit or who were exempt because they were the sole support of dependents.

The numerous changes in players' draft status and military service requirements meant that there was a lot of coming and going. In 1944, the major leagues adopted transaction policies that reflected this high mobility. Players returning from the service could remain on the roster for thirty days without affecting the club's roster limit. Also, returning players could not be traded or demoted to the minors for thirty days. The reserved lists were increased from forty to forty-eight players, and the rosters from twenty-five to thirty players.

**War bonds**—Baseball made numerous financial contributions to the war effort. The initial war contribution program was instituted by the Commissioner's Office. In March of 1942, the Commissioner's Office established a program through which all baseball officials donated 10 percent of their salaries to the purchase of war bonds, and recommended that the players do the same. The Commissioner's program specified that each club would hold at least one benefit game a season for the remainder of the war, of which all proceeds would go to an Army or Navy Relief Fund of that team's choice. The Commissioner's Office cut a deal in which special event games, such as the All-Star Game and World Series, contributed significantly to the war effort.

Each club made additional donations to the war effort and some were quite innovative. As Tom Knight details elsewhere in this issue, the three New York teams held an exhibition game on June 26, 1944, in which the three teams played each other, a rotation of two teams per inning. Each of the 50,000 fans who attended this game had to purchase a war bond, their seat being assigned according to the amount of the war bond. In addition to this unusual game, a variety of special skills competitions were held. Dodger rookie Cal

McLish won the fungo hitting contest, driving a ball 420 feet. Many former New York players were honored at the festivities including Zack Wheat, Nap Rucker, Otto Miller, Wally Schang, Herb Pennock, Moose McCormick, Roger Bresnahan, and George Wiltse.

New York also had a War Bond League in which players promoted the sale of war bonds by speaking before schools, factories, clubs, etc. When fans purchased war bonds they chose their favorite New York player and a tally was kept to spur competition among the players to sell bonds, with Brooklyn's Dixie Walker—"The Peepul's Cherce"—garnering the most votes for the 1943 season, Mel Ott finishing second, and Dolph Camilli third. Many teams held games where each fan was required to purchase a war stamp or bond upon admittance. The players made such financial sacrifices as voluntarily relinquishing their cut of the radio money from the World Series. In all, major league baseball contributed over three million dollars to the war effort from the proceeds of All-Star games, the World Series, and special exhibition games. (This doesn't include the many millions more that were taken in as the result of baseball-promoted bond sales.)

**Morale**—The continuation of baseball was greatly supported among servicemen, and baseball made direct contributions to those in uniform. Each team devised a program for the admittance of servicemen. In 1942, the three New York teams instituted a program by which 600,000 servicemen could attend games for free.

Baseball was also active in overseas programs. The major leagues permitted Western Union to transmit play-by-play accounts of games to the south Pacific. The Office of War Information and the Army broadcasted games from 1943 on and OWI sent scores throughout the world. A hundred and thirty copies of a 1944 World Series highlight film were sent overseas at the expense of baseball.

Baseball figures toured the fronts, too. Frankie Frisch, Stan Musial, Cardinals outfielder Danny Litwhiler, Dixie Walker, and Yankees pitcher Hank Borowy toured the North Pacific from December of 1943 to January of 1944. (When asked why he was the only junior circuit member on the tour, Borowy stated, "I guess they figured one American Leaguer can hold his own with four National Leaguers.") They entertained the troops with baseball highlight films, answering servicemen's questions, and giving out uniforms and baseballs. (SABR San Diego Chapter President, Robert Boynton remembers that when he attended games in Cleveland during the war, fans were requested to return foul balls which were then placed in the "red, white and blue" barrel, which were supposedly shipped to servicemen. He always suspected that they were used for batting practice the next day.)

In the fall of 1944, Mel Ott, Frankie Frisch, Bucky



Walters, and Dutch Leonard made a two-month tour of European Army camps. The group conducted a question and answer program, distributed autographed baseballs, told stories, and chatted with the troops. At times the group was only a few miles from the front lines. They appeared before audiences of servicemen as large as 3,000, but the Army was concerned that large concentrations would attract enemy artillery, so

most of the gatherings were held to the hundreds.

Like most everyone else, baseball had to make certain alterations in its operation in order to help the war effort. Some of these changes, like the increase in night play, stayed with us. Beyond the game on the field, though, major league baseball made significant financial, personal and morale contributions to the war effort.



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MacPhail

# Larry McPhail and Dolph Camilli

*Al Figone*

**F**orget the Philadelphia Park. I submit for your consideration that the records prove that Camilli was a fine hitter on the road; that he hit better than Medwick, Mize, Ott, and Hartnett both at Ebbets Field and in the league's biggest parks and that, in addition, he hit for about as many extra bases in other parks as he did in Philadelphia. So maybe after all, Dolph will help the Dodgers. We Brooklynns are still in the league.

Larry McPhail  
Executive Vice President  
Brooklyn Dodgers

*I don't see how we can miss having a pretty good team. I don't see a single department which the Dodgers haven't improved. Look at Camilli—I wouldn't trade him for anyone in the league.*

Leo Durocher  
Manager, Brooklyn Dodgers

*I would say Camilli is one of the best first basemen in the majors. He is just a natural. I never had to show him a thing. Dolph instinctively knew how to do things. He practiced a lot,*

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*had infielders throw in the dirt and to the right and left of him so he could learn how to handle those chances.*

Charlie Grimm  
Manager of the Chicago Cubs

**Double-barrelled impact**—Shortly after Larry McPhail, rejuvenator of the Cincinnati franchise, became Executive Vice President of the Brooklyn Dodgers, his first move was to inform the Board of Directors that he needed a first baseman. "He will cost us—this first baseman—about \$50,000," he said. The first baseman he wanted was Dolph Camilli who had spent almost four seasons with the Philadelphia Phillies.

From 1934 to 1937 Camilli had established himself as one of the premier players in the major leagues. His last two years as a Phillie in 1936-37 he batted a solid .315 and .339 and drove in 102 and 80 runs, respectively. Ironically, in 1937 Camilli had held out until mid-May yet finished with his all-time highest batting average (.339), and had one of his better homerun years (27), while playing just 131 games.

To understand McPhail and Camilli's impact on the Brooklyn Dodgers, it is necessary to examine the hard times that had befallen the franchise since it had last won a pennant in 1920 under the astute leadership of Uncle Wilbert Robinson. The team had fallen on hard times in the 1930's, much as the rest of the depressed nation, as front-office ineptitude mirrored incompetence on the field, resulting in dwindling attendance

figures. The club had become mired in the second division, and seemed destined to stay there.

McPhail and Camilli's impact on the Dodgers would be experienced on the proverbial bottom line, a perspective that directly affected Dodger owners and players, and indirectly front office employees, and other ballpark workers.

McPhail, the P. T. Barnum of baseball, used radio broadcasts of the games and night baseball, both in violation of "gentlemen's agreements" with the Giants and Yankees, who had long been the main baseball attractions in New York City. McPhail galvanized the Brooklyn public by hiring Red Barber away from Cincinnati to sing the praises of the Dodgers on every radio in the boroughs, night baseball was packing Ebbets Field on the seven nights it was scheduled, and the nucleus of the still living "Flatbush Faithful" was being born.

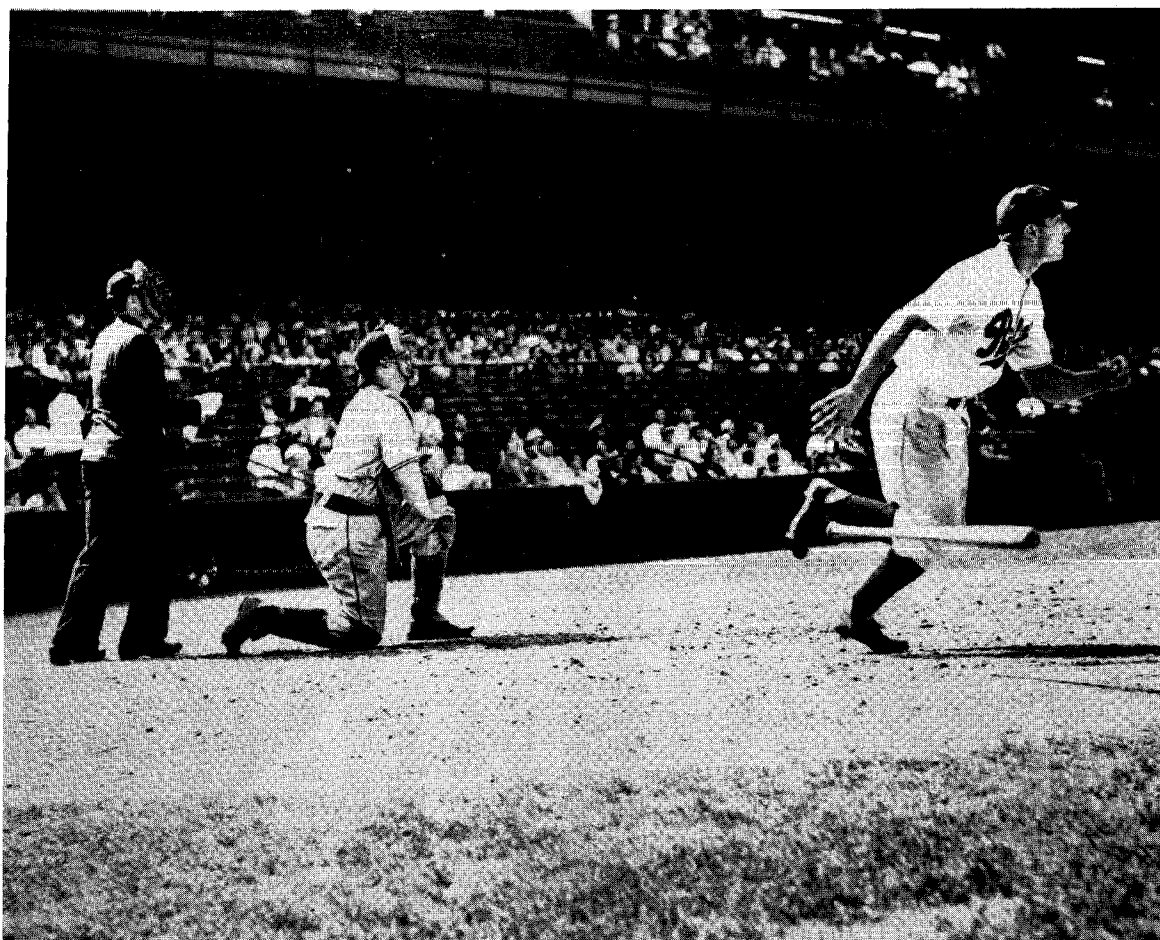
The Dodgers had scored an early public relations coup when they hosted Cincinnati in Ebbets Field's first night contest. Reds' sensation Johnny Vander Meer pitched his second consecutive no-hitter as 38,748 jammed Ebbets Field to watch. Vander Meer got Buddy Hassett to open the ninth, but then he walked

Babe Phelps, Cookie Lavagetto, and Camilli. It was the third pass of the game for Camilli, who throughout his career was among league leaders in free passes. Lew Riggs hit into a force at the plate and Leo Durocher lofted a lazy fly to centerfielder Harry Craft for the last out.

Just four days later, McPhail signed Babe Ruth as a coach. Ruth spent the season on the coaching lines, but a hassle with Durocher and Manager Burleigh Grimes' animosity made McPhail change his mind, and the Babe was released at the end of the season despite some speculation he was being groomed as a replacement for Grimes.

McPhail's reorganizational plan was so successful that by July 31, 1938, the Dodgers had boasted attendance over 500,000. In 1937, they had drawn only 480,000 all season. During a three game home-opener series with the hated Giants, they outdrew the Yankees, who had 83,000 in their first home series, with an attendance total of 95,709.

On August 2, a yellow ball (contrary to popular belief, Charlie Finley was not the first to experiment with this new idea) was used in the first game of a double-header with St. Louis. Camilli belted a pair of



*Camilli shows why McPhail wanted him, rapping one for the Phillies.*

*Mac*

homeruns in the second game and had an RBI in the first game as the Dodgers won 6-2 and 9-3.

Camilli hit .251, a drop of 88 points from 1937, but slammed 24 homeruns, drove in an even 100 (a category in which he perennially excelled), and scored another 106 runs. His .485 slugging average was seventh in the league and he led the loop with 119 walks.

Dodgers attendance boomed to 663,000 in 1938. McPhail was methodically setting the foundation for the Dodger franchise with Camilli as the first building block. The team would eventually convert the entire borough of Brooklyn, and part of the rest of the world, into one of baseball's most loyal group of followers. The love affair they shared with the Dodger team exists to this day.

Stated Camilli after his election to the Dodgers Hall of Fame in 1984, "I only wish I could receive the Dodgers' Fans Hall of Fame plaque in front of all those great fans who supported me during my stay in Brooklyn. All they cared about was their family, their job, and the Dodgers. And, I don't know which one was the most important. They were great. I loved those fans."

**Camilli's influence**—While the signing of Camilli helped the entire franchise, his most important role was the way he influenced his teammates. As a team leader, Dolph seemed to thrive on hard work. In September, 1939, the Dodgers were 23-13, playing an incredible 36 games, something the Players' Association would never allow today. Camilli, who was having a banner year, hit in 24 of the games. He always finished strong during the last two months of a season and attributed his superb physical conditioning to working on his cattle ranch in Laytonville, California during the off-season. (He had always contended he could play within one week after arrival at spring training.) Camilli could also bunt when the situation dictated, and steal bases (he once stole home during the 1942 season). As a polished and complete player, Camilli earned the respect of his teammates by his conduct on and off the field and unselfish team play. He refused to do beer commercials for fear the fans would criticize him.

Camilli finished the 1939 season with a .290 average, 26 homers and 104 runs batted in. He led the National League in games played, with 157, and in bases on balls, 110—the second consecutive year he led in free passes. Dolph broke the Dodger record for first basemen with a remarkable 129 assists. The Dodgers finished in third place and drew 985,000 fans, beating the Giants by 200,000 customers.

Following his stellar 1939 season, Camilli expected to sign for \$15,000, a \$1,000 raise from the previous season. Arriving at Clearwater, Florida and expecting to sign for \$15,000, Camilli soon learned McPhail had lowered the offer to \$14,000 and was fining him \$100

for working out with the team unsigned.

When McPhail and Camilli met to iron out the contract dispute, the meeting became heated. He wanted \$1,000 to cover the traveling expenses of bringing his wife and kids to spring training. McPhail responded by shouting that he wasn't running a children's home, and wasn't responsible for Camilli's "eight kids."

Leo Durocher now manager of the Dodgers and an observer of this exchange described what he observed in his book *Nice Guys Finish Last*: "Camilli was a quiet, gentle man who richly deserved the raise he wanted. He was far and away the best fielding first baseman in baseball. He was strong as an ox and nobody knew just how well he could fight because quite frankly, nobody had ever wanted to find out. Nobody, anyway, before McPhail. Every time McPhail said eight kids, Camilli corrected him, and every time he had to correct him, he got a little madder."

Dolph finally received his \$1,000 raise and enjoyed another banner year in 1940. He hit at a .300 clip the final two months of the season and finished at .287 with 96 runs batted in. This was the only full season he spent in Brooklyn in which he didn't produce 100 RBIs. The Dodgers had a 20-year old future Hall of Famer, Pee Wee Reese, at shortstop who was experiencing throwing problems, especially to first base. Camilli took the rookie aside and explained that any throw to a 12-foot wide and eight-foot high area at first base would be enough for him to catch. Reese quickly improved his throwing and went on to become one of the great shortstops of all-time and a Hall of Famer. Attendance hit 977,093, and the Dodgers finished second, playing before another 746,000 on the road.

Frank McCormick of the Reds was selected the National League's Most Valuable Player. McPhail observed, "I'd have to do a lot of thinking before I'd trade Camilli for McCormick. McCormick is younger and perhaps a steadier hitter, but he hasn't anything like Camilli's power, and the first baseman never lived who was a better fielder than our man."

McPhail's observations were prophetic. In 1941, Camilli, as team captain, led the Dodgers to their first pennant in 21 years. He led a Dodger sweep of the Most Valuable Player selections, garnering 300 points and becoming the first player to be named on all ballots. He led the league in homers (34) and in runs-batted-in (120). He hit .285, and was second only to Pete Reiser in slugging percentage, .556 to .558. Both Camilli and Reiser were placed on the Sporting News All-Star Team. The Dodgers drew 1,200,000 fans at home and another 1,000,000 on the road.

Dolph quietly signed his 1942 contract. Despite winning 104 games, the Dodgers lost to the young and red-hot St. Louis Cardinals who won 106. Camilli, hitting a dismal .231 at the All-Star break, picked it up a bit in the second half, hitting .266 with 14 homers and

66 RBIs. His average was .252 for the season, and he slammed 26 homers and drove in 109 runs. He was eighth in the Most Valuable Player balloting at the end of the season.

With McPhail joining the Service in 1942, Branch Rickey was hired as the new General Manager. Although Camilli's salary was \$22,000 in 1942, he wrote a letter to Rickey indicating he wanted to manage in the Pacific Coast League and would not be back in 1943. Later, Camilli agreed to join the Dodgers after finding someone to manage his California ranch. He struggled over the first half of the season, and Rickey traded him to the Giants on July 31 along with Johnny Allen, for Bill Lohrman, Bill Sayles and Joe Orengo.

Durocher claimed in his book that "It was the toughest assignment of my life. I'd rather have told any other 20 men they were finished with us than have to tell that to Dolph on Saturday morning."

Camilli, who refused to report to the Giants, left the Dodgers owning the club home run record of 139. He was fourth all-time in runs-batted-in (572) and he also scored 540 runs during his stay in Brooklyn.

**The "Flatbush Hero" as self-made man**—When Camilli was signed by the Dodgers in 1938, a flurry of writers covered the event. Not surprisingly their reports celebrated the actual signing, chronicled the career history of the first baseman and speculated on his potential impact on the Dodger franchise. Also not surprisingly, these reports informed readers about the personal side of Camilli. They focused on his work ethic, his love of his California ranch, and his family orientation.

Camilli's eight-year apprenticeship in the minor leagues exemplified the hard work which piqued the interests of writers. After signing with the Pacific Coast League San Francisco Seals in 1926, he enjoyed good seasons with both the Seals and their Logan, Utah farm club. Refusing to take a demotion in 1928, he was released by the Seals and signed a one-year contract with Salt Lake City, which, like Logan, was in the Utah-Idaho League. After a stellar .333 season, Camilli sold himself to the Pacific Coast League Sacramento Solons, for a \$1,000 signing bonus and \$500 a month. For the next five years Dolph hit a composite .293, and averaged 16-17 homeruns and 103 RBIs for the Solons, in one of baseball's biggest parks.

After his year in Salt Lake City, Camilli had a chance to sign with Cleveland but, believing he needed more daily playing experience in the fast PCL, decided to sign with Sacramento. In late July, 1929 Camilli broke his leg so severely sliding that doctors feared he would never be able to walk normally again. The determined Camilli refused to believe the prognosis and in the off-season ran several miles each day over the San Francisco hills to rehabilitate his leg. He reported to

spring training the next season completely healed. After five years with Sacramento, he was signed by the Chicago Cubs for the tag end of the 1933 season, and in 1934 put in a solid rookie year (.267, 16 homers, 87 RBIs) splitting time with the Cubs and Phillies.

Baseball was not just a game to Camilli, it was a passion, a total challenge that evoked his finest efforts—physical, mental, and spiritual. Spending eight hard working years in the minors honed Camilli's determination to excel in the majors, and he played more for pride than for money. After being traded to the Giants Camilli told reporters: "I don't want to take any money under false pretenses and I can't play ball any more."

A teammate Fred Fitzsimmons, commenting on Camilli's slump during the early part of the 1943 season, observed, "Camilli was one of the most conscientious players I ever saw. He actually worried himself into physical sickness when he wasn't hitting. He'd take long walks at night alone, worrying. He felt he was a drag on the team."

*The Sporting News* editorialized, "To the man on the outside, Camilli's decision to quit seemed strange. He could have collected \$7,000 for the remainder of the season. But those who knew Camilli realize the decision was in keeping with his character."

"Among first sackers, Camilli was one of the best. In the field he was matchless. At the plate, he had a runmaking proclivity that established him as one of the most dangerous hitters of the past 20 years. As with all other veterans, the time came when Camilli no longer had it. But there was a difference—Camilli was not content to slip to mediocrity and take the winding trail down the minors to the end of the road."

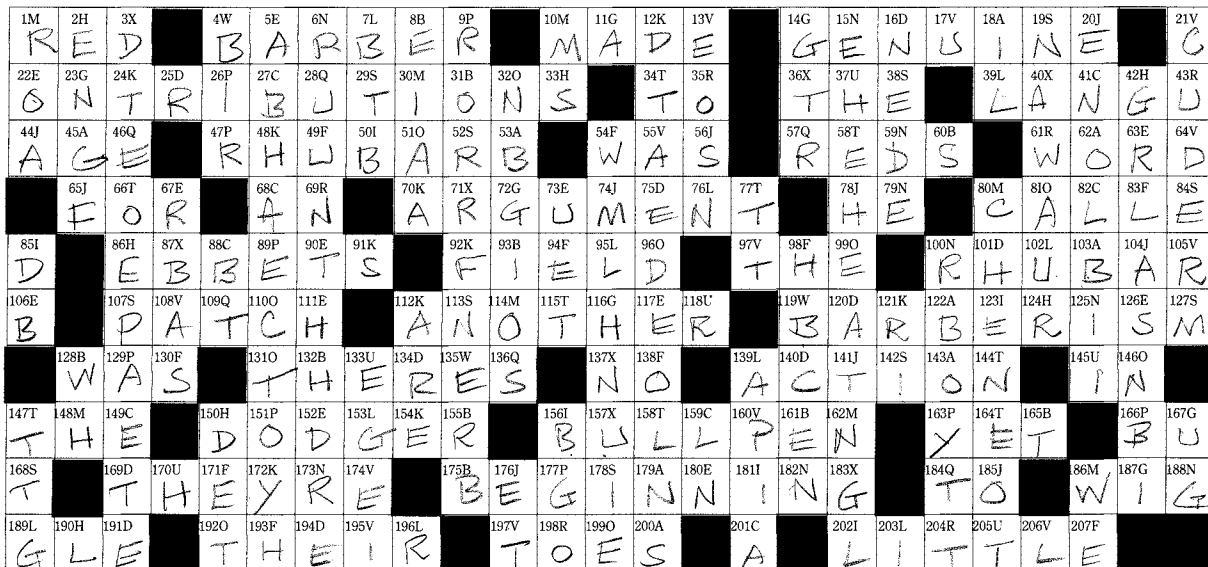
"Fans may regret Camilli's retirement, but they respect his sincerity and honesty."

In 1942 Camilli, the father of seven children, was selected as the "Outstanding Father in Sports" and was given a gold medal on Father's Day in Ebbets Field ceremonies. The presentation was made by Jean Cagney, sister of James Cagney. By his own admission Camilli should never have become a ballplayer, because he hated leaving his family to go on the road. Nonetheless, Dolph, a good student at Sacred Heart High School in San Francisco, passed up a college scholarship to St. Mary's College in California to play professional baseball after earning All-City honors in football and baseball. But he and his late wife, Ruth Wallace of Sacramento, made sure their seven children didn't miss the opportunity for a college education.

Camilli, a San Francisco native, was inducted into the Bay Area Sports Hall of Fame in 1993. Today he swims 45 minutes a day in San Francisco Bay. What would he be worth today? Probably somewhere around today's average \$1,200,000 salary. But remember, Dolph was 86 on April 23.

# Acrostic Puzzle

Jeffrey Neuman



Fill in the words defined below, one letter over each number on the lines at right. 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 book; the first letter of each answer at right, reading top to bottom, provides the author and title of the book. Note: "full name" means full *baseball* name—"Babe Ruth," not "George Herman Ruth." The answer is on page 112.

- A. His 1.89 career World Series ERA is more than half a run out of the top ten (min. 25 IP) [full name]
- B. Under different circumstances; in all remaining respects
- C. Weapon of baseball war
- D. He caught 36 straight World Series shutout innings
- E. One of two with six straight NL slugging titles [full name]
- F. Power zone; helmsman's enclosure from which a ship is steered
- G. "...safe at second, and Flynn \_\_\_\_\_ third." (Thayer, *Casey at the Bat*)
- H. Frank Robby's team, in the '50s
- I. He has posted the four best single-season rates of strikeouts per nine innings in baseball history (min. 100 Ks)
- J. 1948 funerary hymn to Babe Ruth; 1962 film with Mantle and Maris [three words]
- K. Holiday on which Jim Bunning pitched perfect game [two words]
- +L. Robert De Niro's 1980 Oscar winner [two words]
- M. Larva of any geometrid moth, it moves by bringing the rear end of its body forward, then advancing the front end
- +N. He's second to Rixey on Cincinnati's all-time NL win list
- O. Positive record set by the '93 Rockies
- +P. His leap marked Series perfection [full name]
- Q. 1979 NL Cy Young winner
- R. Triumphed; emerged victorious; a good time to steal third (or so it sounds) [two words]
- S. Not showing proper respect; saucy; irrelevant *Irreverent*
- T. The only catcher in major-league history with three straight 30 home-run seasons (min. 50 games caught/season)
- U. Yon partner
- V. Repeated briefly, as in an outline; summarized
- +W. Recede, like songwriter Kander's partner
- X. Speedster's batting play performed in a dress? [two words]

Jeff Neuman edits sports books at Simon and Schuster.

- A. B O R G I S S O N
- B. O T H E R W I S E
- C. B E A N B A L L
- D. E T C H E R B A R R E N
- E. D A N B R O U T H E R S
- F. W H E E L H O U S E
- G. A H U G G I N
- H. R E D L E G S
- I. D I B B L E
- J. S A F E A T H O M E
- K. F A T H E R S D A Y
- L. R A G I N G B U L L
- M. I N C H W O R M
- N. D E R R I N G E R
- O. A T T E N D A N C E
- P. Y O G I B E R R A
- Q. S U T T E R
- R. W O N O U T
- S. I M P E R T I N E N T
- T. T E T T L E T O N
- U. H I T T E R
- V. R E C A P I T U L A T E D
- W. E B B
- X. D R A G B U N T

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	Uniform Top (XXL)	XXL		\$83.49	\$6.50 each	
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## Acrostic

A. BobGibson  
B. Otherwise  
C. Beanball  
D. Etchebarren  
E. DanBrouthers  
F. Wheelhouse  
G. AHuggin  
H. Redlegs

I. Dibble  
J. SafeAtHome  
K. FathersDay  
L. RagingBull  
M. Inchworm  
N. Derringer  
O. Attendance  
P. YogiBerra

Q. Sutter  
R. WonOut  
S. Impertinent  
T. Tettleton  
U. Hither  
V. Recapitulated  
W. EBB  
X. DragBunt

Bob Edwards: *Friday with Red*

"Red Barber made genuine contributions to the language. 'Rhubarb' was Red's word for an argument. He called Ebbets Field, 'The Rhubarb Patch'... [Another Barberism was,] 'There's no action in the Dodger bullpen yet, but they're beginning to wiggle their toes a little.'"

## Magic Square

The first step in solving the puzzle of the Magic Square is identifying the players shown and then recalling (or researching) the numbers they wore.

After you plot all the numbers in the square, the next questions are: Why *these* players? Were's the magic?

If you recognize Dale Mitchell, (number 34) at the top, you're rounding third and heading home...because the numbers in every column, every row, every diagonal add up to 34.

The Magic Square appeared in a medieval manuscript. No ballplayers. A millennium later it resurfaces to challenge SABRites.

Answers to puzzles on pp. 47 and 110 (no peeking!)



It's been many a year,  
And many a crown,  
Since our pinstriped lads  
Were in Bucco town.  
Sure they've got Friend,  
Vernon Law and Roy Face,  
But what they lack's  
A "Perfesser" named Case.

In 1960, the morning the World Series was about to begin, I came into the kitchen, and my wife, who listened to the John Gambling show on WOR, excitedly told me that Gambling was looking for jingles and poems on the Series, and was reading a few on the air. Before I could have some breakfast, she said, "write something and I'll call it in." Over coffee and toast, I wrote the lines below. Before I'd left the house, John Gambling was reading it on the radio. A true story. (The Pirates went on to beat the Yankees in seven games on Bill Mazeroski's famous homer. Casey Stengel was fired.)

—Ev Parker

# Ode to Casey Stengel