

## *The Squibber*

### THE BOB DAVIDS CHAPTER E-NEWSLETTER

May 2014

This newsletter is produced by the Bob Davids Chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research ([SABR](http://sabr.org)), which serves members in Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia and parts of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Visit the chapter's official website at <http://chapters.sabr.org/bobdavids/>.

Submissions for future editions can be sent to Squibber editor Walt Cherniak at [wcherniakjr@aol.com](mailto:wcherniakjr@aol.com). Keep sending us those squibs, and those ideas for squibs!

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**TRIVIA QUESTION:** *Name the four players the Washington Senators received from the Dodgers along with Frank Howard in their December 1964 trade. (See answers below).*

1. **BOB DAVIDS CHAPTER IN-SEASON MEETING:** *June 7 Event Features Orioles Game, Speakers and More*

Be sure to mark your calendar for Saturday, June 7. That's the date of the annual in-season meeting of the Bob Davids SABR Chapter, which is being held this year at Oriole Park at Camden Yards.

In addition to tickets to that evening's game between the Baltimore Orioles and the Oakland A's, the program will feature presentations by representatives of the Orioles; the Maryland Sports Legends Museum at Camden Yards; and the Babe Ruth Museum.

Festivities begin at 3:30 p.m. at the Maryland Sports Legends Museum, where Shawn Herne, Curator of the museum, as well as the Babe Ruth Museum, will address the group. At 4:15 p.m., Mike Gibbons, Executive Director of the two museums, will follow Shawn to the podium.

Representatives from the Orioles (names not finalized yet) will speak between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. The ballpark gates will open between 5 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. That night, the Orioles will present Manny Machado bobbleheads to the first 25,000 fans age 15 and over.

At 6 p.m., we'll move to our seats on the left field Porch Club level, which is an all-you-can-eat buffet seating area. The buffet dinner is included as part of the program.

If you're interested in scheduling a walking tour of Camden Yards, they can be individually arranged between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. For more information, contact:

<http://baltimore.orioles.mlb.com/bal/ballpark/tours/index.jsp>.

Cost for the program, which includes tickets to the game, and the dinner served by the Orioles, is \$50 for SABR members and their guests. If you're interested in attending, please contact David Paulson at [d2244p@yahoo.com](mailto:d2244p@yahoo.com). We'd appreciate prompt notice to help determine how much food we'll need.

## **2. TALKIN' BASEBALL: *Upcoming Talks Scheduled, by Dave Paulson***

Thom Loverro, writer of "*Orioles Magic*," will speak at the next meeting of the Talkin' Baseball group on June 7.

The meeting will be held at 9 a.m. at Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia, Md. Come and bring a friend.

Here is a tentative list of other upcoming speakers and programs:

July 5: Dave Zirin, "*Game Over: How Politics Has Turned the Sports World Upside Down*"

Aug. 2: Jimmy Keenan: "*The Lystons: A Story of One Baltimore Family and Our National Pastime*"

## **3. 'PLAY BALL' FILM SERIES": *It Was a 'Reel' Good Time, by Mark Pattison***

I took in several films from the American Film Institute's "Play Ball" film series. It wasn't anything like the 40 or so movies I would see over the course of a year in my young and single days in the 1990s, but when the AFI has 25 films spread out over a two-month period showing at a theater a mile from my house, I'm going to make a concerted effort to go.

Of course, even with those advantages, I didn't see a majority of the movies offered. That was especially the case with others from the Bob Davids Chapter who didn't have the same built-in advantages I do. Even though the box-office for first-run features droops on weekdays,

attendance for the “Play Ball” movies I attended was surprisingly paltry throughout. To hear one SABR-ite describe the turnout at the chapter-pushed screening for “*Eight Men Out*,” there were more in the conspiracy than there were in the audience. Despite this, an AFI programming type said they were looking for some way to have a baseball-themed series on an annual basis.

Now, I didn’t see any movies that I’d already seen (or at least remember seeing). So here are some capsule reviews of the flicks I took in, along with the ambiance.

“***The Jackie Robinson Story***.” I saw it with chapter vice president Dave Raglin, who informed me the movie started two hours later than I had imagined. It was the first film in the series, and it was a free screening (five of the 25 were being shown at no charge). It was shown in the original Silver Theatre, a wide-screen movie house from 1938, as were most of the titles I viewed.

As it turned out, it could have been shown in one of the box-like theatres that are now part of the Silver. Just a few dozen were in attendance. Maybe the price scared them away. Jackie Robinson played himself, and it was evident by 1950, when the film was made, that he had put on a few pounds. Scenes of him playing basketball for UCLA made me wonder how he ever got off a jump shot with that flabby midsection. Not only that, he was unsettlingly meek throughout the movie. Ruby Dee played his girlfriend-wife, and the two never kissed once -- not even a smooch -- although there was a scene when she gave him a rubdown because it seemed the Brooklyn trainer didn’t want to knead muscles underneath black skin.

“***The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings***.” I brought my wife and 10-year-old daughter to this flick, featuring Thelma Houston singing a ragtime-y theme reminiscent of Diana Ross’ “*Last Time I Saw Him*” from a few years before -- no surprise, since this was likewise produced by Berry Gordy and Motown. There are fine performances all around from the likes of Billy Dee Williams, James Earl Jones and Richard Pryor, but there was also a lot more caricatures than characterizations from the actors playing supporting roles. The film featured former big leaguer Leon “Daddy Wags” Wagner as part of Bingo Long’s team. It also featured a lot more swearing for a film rated PG than you’d ever hear in a movie with that rating today -- “*Frozen*,” for instance. My daughter assured me, “Daddy, I’ve heard all those words before.” Again, a few dozen patrons.

“***Take Me Out to the Ballgame***.” This was the first movie I’d seen in the series in a black-box theatre, where the crowd was even smaller. Much to my surprise, it was an Italian print. All of the opening and closing credits were in Italian, such as “*produzione*” for “production.” And, during the songs in this musical featuring Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra, Esther Williams and Betty Garrett, the lyrics included Italian subtitles. One unwelcome feature was the lack of sound during the credit sequences and also a couple of minutes into the film.

Set in 1909, Kelly and Sinatra are the double-play combo for the American League’s Wolves of no particular city -- only that it’s not Cleveland, Chicago, Washington or Philadelphia. There’s a clambake scene that sets up the plot for the rest of the movie, bringing back the ugly specter of gambling to the game. But Kelly’s choreography and Busby Berkeley’s direction makes this movie a winner. *Bellissimo!*

**“Damn Yankees.”** This was the first “organized” invite-the-chapter movie in the series. We’re back in the original Silver, and the audience numbers all of six. At least chapter treasurer Dave Paulson was in line ahead of me. I’d seen high school productions of the Broadway musical and I own the original cast album, but it was nice to see some of these stars, like Tab Hunter, Gwen Verdon, Ray Walston and James (“Jimmie” here) Komack, go through their paces.

**“42.”** Just released last year, this looks the most authentic of the series, given how stadiums can now be re-created digitally. Even so, I’d love to have the time to scour Retrosheet to see how closely the dramatic timeline matched the actual 1947 season. Chadwick Boseman is impressive as Jackie Robinson, but Harrison Ford still seems a bit to Harrison Ford-ish as Branch Rickey. But at least “42” isn’t anywhere near as stilted as *“The Jackie Robinson Story.”*

**“Sugar.”** If it’s authenticity you want, then this is it. *“Sugar”* tells the story of a Dominican pitcher impressive enough to be invited to the Kansas City Knights’ spring camp in Arizona, who then performs well enough stateside to land in A-ball in Bridgetown (really, Davenport), Iowa.

The pitcher, nicknamed “Sugar,” is terrific to start, but gets injured, then gets hammered upon his return to the field. Losing his confidence, he swallows too many PED pills, which backfires on him in his next game and gets him exiled to the bullpen, replaced by another Dominican. He bolts from the team with a few weeks to go in the season, heading to New York City to look up yet another Dominican who had been cut from the club for subpar play. It’s there he has to confront what to do with his life.

Layered into this is the language issue. More than half of the film is in subtitles. While I can understand a little Spanish, the speed of the Dominican dialect and the ambient noise just about everywhere made it tough for me to pick out anything beyond single words and simple phrases. This is mirrored in Sugar’s own culture shock, where most English speakers he encounters are drawling Southerners, and having a pious Presbyterian farm family as his “host” family in Bridgetown. This is well worth looking up.

**“Rare Films from the Baseball Hall of Fame.”** The “Play Ball” series finale, this might have been the best-attended feature from the series. The bar was set pretty low, of course, but a few dozen folks --- including chapter members Eric Johnston and Don Pollins -- in a black-box theater that seats 180 instead of the cavernous 425-plus original Silver makes a big difference. Dave Filipi, director of the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State, has pieced together clips from both the poorly data-based Hall of Fame archives and the well-data-based UCLA archives for a decade, debuting a new collection each year.

This was his first stop in Washington, so he chose his 2009 collection, which featured more clips of the original and expansion Senators (including a lot of Calvin Griffith). Highlights included old Gillette commercials, newsreel footage, Major League Baseball promotional and educational films -- including a rap session from 1972 featuring the Orioles’ Pete Richert at an inner-city Baltimore school -- Ted Williams’ pregame hitting preparations circa 1946, and a 1968 interview with Bill Leinhauser, one of the “replacement players” who took the field for the Detroit Tigers when the real Tigers struck in 1912 over Ban Johnson’s suspension of Ty Cobb for beating up a heckling amputee in New York. A lovely way to spend an evening.

#### **4. REMEMBERING CLAUDE OSTEEN: *Nats Lefty Pitched Among Giants, by Jeff Stuart***

Drafted by the Cincinnati Reds in 1957, left-hander Claude Osteen was traded to Washington for Dave Sisler in November 1961 and established himself as the best pitcher on a weak team.

In November 1963, Gil Hodges told Ben Olan of the Associated Press that he had high hopes for the 24-year-old Osteen. "He has all the tools to be a 15-game winner for us," Hodges said. "He has matured as a pitcher and with a little improvement could be a star.

Osteen posted a 9-14 mark for last-place Washington in 1963. "He hardly pitched at all for the first couple of months," explained Hodges, who took over as the Nats manager on May 22 of that year. "Sid Hudson, our pitching coach, and I worked with him a lot and tried to build up his confidence. He has the right mental attitude now and should be a whole pitcher when he sharpens up his curve."

In 1963, Osteen did not win his first game until June 11, when he shut out the New York Yankees, 1-0, defeating Jim Bouton in Washington. He beat the Yankees again in Washington on Aug. 6. This time the loser was Whitey Ford. Osteen also shut out the hard-hitting Boston Red Sox on five hits in Boston on Aug 30. He had eight complete games, striking out 109 in 212 1/3 innings and walking only 59.

In 1964, Osteen made Hodges' prediction come true, going 15-13 on a team that lost 100 games. Only Dick Bosman, who won 16 in 1970, won more games in a season in the history of the expansion Nats.

In December of 1964 the lefty was traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers as the centerpiece of a deal that brought slugger Frank Howard to Washington.

"In the baseball business," wrote the Washington Post's Shirley Povich at the time, "Osteen's kind is rarely for trading, especially by a team that must dip down to Buster Narum, a mere nine-game winner, for its next best starting pitcher. Into the decision by the Senators brass to trade off Osteen could be read brassy contempt for the tenet that pitching wins most ball games."

Though traded, Osteen continued to make off-season public appearances at Peoples Drug stores throughout the area along with pitcher Steve Ridzik and Coach Eddie Yost selling Christmas gift ticket packages to Senators games. He was urged to go through with the off season sales job by General Manager George Selkirk.

"I'm joining a great pitching staff and I started thinking whether I was good enough to be part of them," Osteen told Gregory Wolf of SABR in 2011 for the Biography Project. At spring training in Vero Beach, Fla., in 1965, new teammate Dick Tracewski dubbed him "Gomer" because he resembled Jim Nabors. But though he grew up playing baseball in rural Caney Springs, Tenn., Claude was no "Gomer." "That Osteen is a serious fellow and a real pitcher," Manager Walter Alston told *The Sporting News*.

In the 1965 World Series against Minnesota, Dodger Hall of Famers Don Drysdale and Sandy Koufax lost their respective starts in the first two games. Osteen was matched against former Senator favorite Camilo Pascual in Game 3. "I was a nervous wreck," said Osteen. "But my teammates had confidence in me."

Osteen pitched a shutout, throwing nine brilliant innings and winning 4-0. The victory changed the momentum of the series before a record Dodger Stadium crowd of 55,934. Osteen never lost to the Twins, the original Washington Senators, in his days with the expansion Nats.

Osteen's best year in Los Angeles came in 1972, when he finished with seven complete-game victories in his last nine starts. That year, he was 20-11 with a 2.64 ERA.

Prior to the 1974 season, the Dodgers traded Osteen to the Houston Astros for outfielder Jimmy Wynn, who helped the Dodgers win the 1974 NL pennant. "I'm not sure which is more insulting, being offered in a trade or having it turned down," said Osteen at the time. He need not have been insulted. His trades always brought value for value.

When he was released by the Cardinals in April of 1975, Osteen had 156 National League wins and 36 shutouts. Both marks were second only to Bob Gibson among active pitchers at the time. He won 20 games twice with the Dodgers and played in two World Series, posting an ERA of 0.86, and was a three-time All-Star. Osteen played his final game on Sept. 27, 1975 with the White Sox.

For his career, Osteen compiled 196 wins, 1,612 strikeouts, and a 3.30 ERA. As a batter, Osteen had a .188 average with 8 home runs and 76 RBI. He later became a pitching coach for the Cardinals, Phillies and Rangers.

Born on Aug. 9, 1938, Osteen is 74.

## **5. CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA ROUNDUP: *York Revolution Makes a Different Kind of History, by Barry Sparks***

The York Revolution became the first professional baseball team to accept Bitcoin, online digital currency, as a means of buying game tickets for the 2014 season. The Revolution partnered with Crypto Coin Consulting in York.

Fans can make Bitcoin purchases by scanning the York Revolution QR code with their mobile devices. This can only be done in person at the club's Apple Chevrolet ticket office at Santander Stadium. Joe Blanschan, president and co-founder of Crypto Coin Consulting, said using Bitcoin is like text messaging money. He said consumers use Bitcoin to avoid online transaction fees.

The York Revolution generated more than \$215,000 in charitable fundraising for the 2013 season. Since 2010, the club has either donated or helped raise more than \$1 million for local causes and non-profit organizations.

### **WOYK Purchase Completed**

The York Revolution also completed its purchase of York radio station WOYK, Sports Radio 1350. The York Revs Hot Stove Talk Show will debut this winter. It will cover all the signings and deals of the Revs and the rest of the Atlantic League.

### **Hendrickson Seeks Return to MLB**

Former Baltimore Orioles reliever Mark Hendrickson is attempting to get back to the major leagues. The 39-year-old southpaw starting pitching sidearm last season while with the Triple AAA Norfolk Tides. Hendrickson has appeared in 328 major league games, including 166 starts. He has played for the Blue Jays, Devil Rays, Dodgers, Marlins and Orioles. He also played for five NBA teams from 1996-2000. As of May 10, Hendrickson had posted a 1-0 record for the Revs in five relief appearances.

### **Towering Twirlers**

Most major league pitching staffs don't have much over the York Revolution when it comes to height. Revs' pitchers include: Mark Hendrickson (6-9); Stephen Penney (6-7); Rommie Lewis (6-6); Mike McClendon (6-5) and Beau Vaughan (6-5).

Steve Bumbry, son of former Baltimore Oriole Al Bumbry, is playing for the Revs. He was drafted in the 12th round in 2009 out of Virginia Tech by the Orioles. Bumbry played for the Delmarva Shorebirds in 2010 and 2011.

### **6. REPORT FROM BETHESDA: *Big Train Prepares to Kick Off 16<sup>th</sup> Season, by Bill Hickman***

The Bethesda Big Train is about to begin its 16th season at Shirley Povich Field. The first Ripken League game will take place on Friday, June 6 as the Big Train takes on the Vienna River Dogs at 7:30 p.m.

The Big Train hopes to continue its pattern of successful League play. The team took the Ripken League championship in 2009, 2010, and 2011. It won the regular season championship in 2013, and went all the way to the final game in the playoffs before losing.

This year's team features some promising players once again. First baseman Chris Lewis was the Western Athletic Conference Freshman of the Year as he led the Sacramento State University freshmen team with a .396 batting average in 2013. Shortstop Ryne Willard, who is headed for North Carolina State in the fall, hit .290 with 7 homers for Tallahassee Community College this spring. Outfielder Logan Farrar, of Virginia Commonwealth University, hit .292 for that school. Outfielder Cody Brown of Mississippi State batted .280 with 2 homers and 13 RBI.

The pitching staff packs some arms as well. Bo Logan had a 4-1 record with one save and a 1.55 ERA for Florida Atlantic this spring. Tim Yandel went 0-0 with one save and a 0.55 ERA for Tulane. Tyler Warmoth, a junior at Stetson University, was 3-3 with seven saves and a 2.95 ERA. Brandon Rhodes was 3-0 with a 3.32 ERA for Florida Atlantic University.

On the alumni front, we have three former Big Train players in the major leagues at present. Brian Dozier is having a fine year as the Minnesota Twins' leadoff man, with a .354 OBP and 8 home runs, while playing excellent defense at second base. Cody Allen has been a reliable reliever for the Indians, chalking up a 2-1 record with a 1.88 ERA in 17 appearances. He has only yielded earned runs in one of those 17 games. Michael McKenry started the year with the AAA Colorado Skysox and hit .300 for them in 13 games with two homers and 11 RBI. He recently received his promotion to the Colorado Rockies as a backup catcher, and has played in just a couple of games with them thus far.

The full schedule of Big Train games may be seen at the following URL:

[http://www.bigtrain.org/schedule/calendarview/?act\[v\]=graphical&frm\[d\]=2014-06-01](http://www.bigtrain.org/schedule/calendarview/?act[v]=graphical&frm[d]=2014-06-01)

The schedule includes the Ripken League All-Star Game, which will be hosted at Povich Field on July 16.

**TRIVIA ANSWER:** *In addition to Howard, who would slug 237 homers during his seven years in Washington, the Nats received third baseman Ken McMullen, right-hander Phil Ortega, left-hander Pete Richert and a player to be named later. Eleven days later, the Dodgers sent first baseman Dick Nen to Washington, completing the trade. L.A. received left-hander Claude Osteen, infielder John Kennedy and \$100,000.*