Outside the Lines

Editor Michael Haupert

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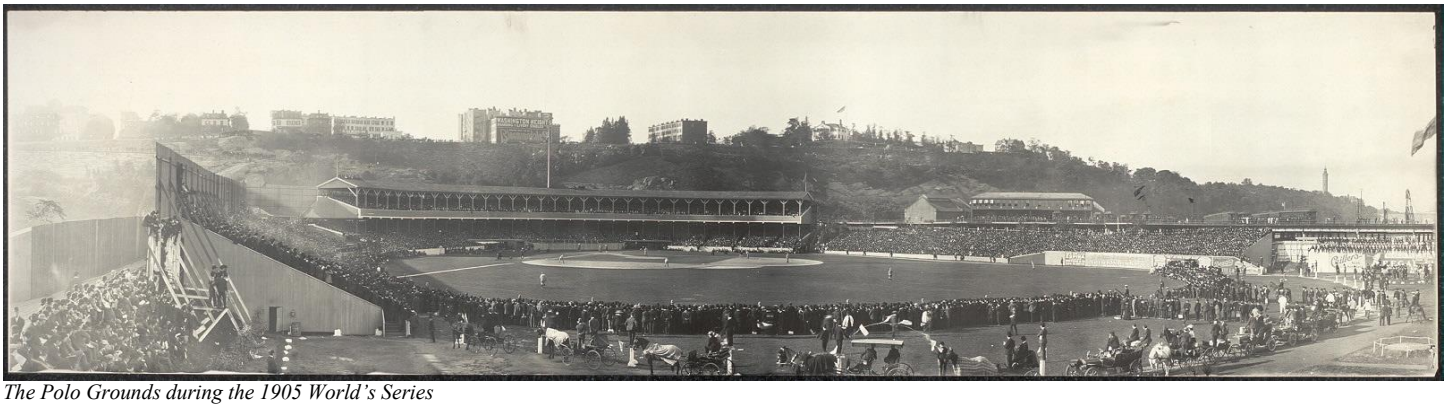


The Polo Grounds during the 1905 World's Series

In This Issue

A History of the New York Giants Franchise
By Bill Lamb

This is the first of three installment of Bill Lamb's history of the New York Giants franchise. The second and third installments will be published in future issues of the newsletter.

The New York Giants ownership history here is part of a joint project between the Business of Baseball Committee and the BioProject site. As they are completed, the histories will appear in this newsletter and be posted permanently in a separate section on the BioProject website. If you are interested in doing a team's history, or part of a team's history, such as the St. Louis Browns years of the current Baltimore franchise, please contact Andy McCue, agmccue44@earthlink.net, who will be coordinating the project. The Dodgers and the New York Giants are done, and writers have been assigned for the Yankees, Red Sox, Cubs and Indians. But that means more than two dozen other existing and extinct franchises still remain!

The histories should be as comprehensive as possible, covering the changes in ownership, the price paid, the makeup of partnerships, the division of responsibilities among the partners, the reasoning of both the buyers and the sellers, and economically significant events within the era of each ownership group. There is no need to talk about events on the field unless they have a direct impact on the bottom line or a change in ownership. It is likely that arguments with cities over stadiums and threatened (or actual) re-locations will play a role in the essays. The histories should be long enough to tell the story, but should be as tight as possible. There is no set word limit. The essays should include endnotes on sources. Heavy detail, such as the holdings of minor partners, might well be left to those endnotes.

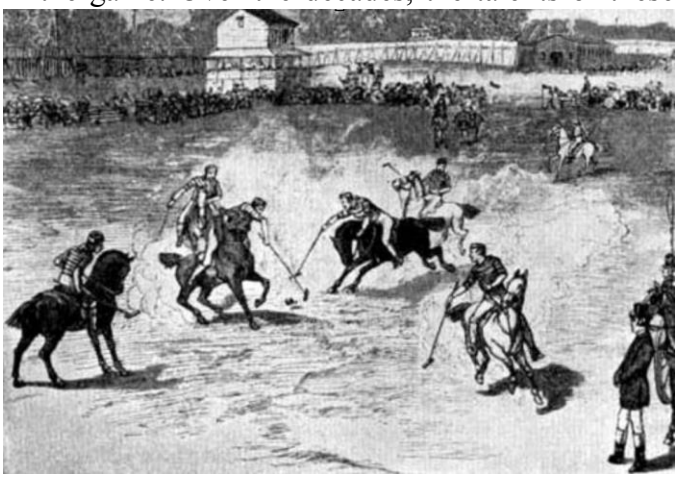
The Business of Baseball Committee Annual Meeting
Thursday, July 28, 2016, 7:30-8:30 am
Miami Hyatt Regency Orchid C/D Room

Research guidance will be available if needed. Over the long run, it will be necessary to keep updating these essays and the original researchers will be given first opportunity to do those updates.

Part I

Introduction

The New York-San Francisco Giants baseball club is among the most storied franchises in the annals of professional sport. To fans, mention of the club's name promptly evokes images of Willie Mays, Christy Mathewson, Barry Bonds, John McGraw, Mel Ott, Juan Marichal, and other towering figures in the game. Over the decades, the talents of these



The Polo Grounds as they were originally intended

and other headliners have propelled the Giants to 23 National League pennants, eight world championships, and more game victories than any other team in major league history.[1] This essay focuses upon the endeavors of less-celebrated but no-less-vital contributors to franchise success: the club's owners, presidents, and other front office executives. Largely by means of biographical portrait, we chronicle the founding of the club in Manhattan in early 1883 and recall its management history, financial ups-and-downs, and ballpark problems through the visionary, if locally traumatic, relocation of the franchise to the City by the Bay in 1958. Thereafter, the Giants' more modern franchise story through it latest World Series title in 2014 is explored. We begin this saga, however, with a man who was neither New Yorker nor San Franciscan, club founder John B. Day.

Endnotes

1. According to statistics compiled through the completion of the 2015 season by Baseball-Reference. The Giants' win total of 10,864 exceeds that of the second-best Chicago Cubs by 156 victories.

John B. Day, the Metropolitan Exhibition Company, and the founding of the New York Giants

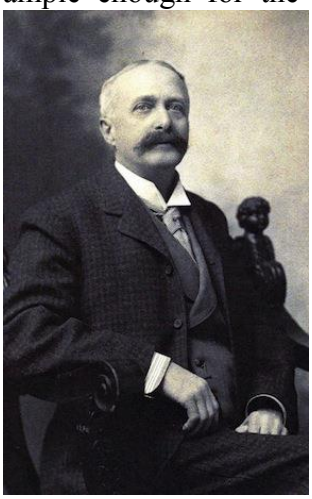
Despite being the nation's largest metropolis, its business and financial center, and a hotbed of 19th century baseball, the City of New York did not host a team in the first professional baseball league, the National Association of 1871-1875. Nor did the City have an entry when the National League was formed in 1876, as the club commonly known as the New York Mutuals made its home in Brooklyn, then a city separate and distinct from New York and America's third-most populous municipality.[1] The man who would bring major league baseball to the city proper was a Connecticut cigar manufacturer and avid amateur ballplayer recently arrived in Manhattan for business purposes. His name was John Bailey Day.

Day was born in Colchester, Connecticut on September 23, 1847, the third of five children born to a prosperous Yankee farmer and his wife.[2] After graduation from prep school in Bridgeport, Day went into the cigar manufacturing business with his brother-in-law Charles P. Abbey. The Abbey & Day firm flourished, with production and wholesale outlets soon placed in several Connecticut locations. In time, the business expanded to New York, opening a large tobacco processing plant on lower eastside Manhattan. To oversee the new operation, Day took up offices near the financial district, while making his home in a Fifth Avenue mansion. He also joined Tammany Hall, the corrupt political organization that controlled the Democratic Party in New York City.

From an early age, Day had been a baseball enthusiast, fancying himself a pitcher. Once in New York, he organized and played on various amateur nines in and around the city. This led to a fateful encounter with Jim Mutrie, an unaccomplished player in assorted New England circuits then at loose ends in Manhattan. Mutrie had energy, a keen eye for baseball talent, and considerable organizational ability. According to popular lore, Mutrie approached Day after coming upon a mid-summer 1880 game in which the wanna-be hurler took a pounding. Pioneer baseball journalist Henry Chadwick, however, maintained that the Day-Mutrie meeting had not been happenstance, but prearranged by the New York baseball press.[3] Whichever the case, Day quickly accepted a Mutrie

offer to scout, sign, and manage a top-flight baseball team for Day, if the well-heeled capitalist would bear the costs. In short order, Mutrie stocked the roster of this new team – formally named the Metropolitan of New York –with first-rate players, many of whom were members of the Unions of Brooklyn or the recently disbanded Rochester Hop-Bitters.

On September 16, 1880, the Mets made a successful debut, defeating the Unions 15-3 on the grounds of the Brooklyn club. Although home playing grounds for the Mets were available elsewhere, Day had his heart set on basing his club in Manhattan. By 1880, however, space in the lower portion of New York ample enough for the erection of a ballpark had long since been gobbled up by tenement housing and commercial buildings. But grounds were available in farther north Manhattan, and soon Day has his eye on an expanse of open field in an affluent neighborhood located just above Central Park. Owned by James Gordon Bennett, Jr., the socialite-sportsman editor of the *New York Herald,* the grounds had been laid out for polo matches among the athletic rich, but were otherwise available for sporting use. On September 29, 1880,



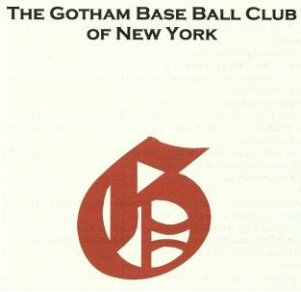
John B. Day, founder of the Giants

professional baseball was inaugurated at the "Polo Grounds," with a Mets victory over the Nationals of Washington before a throng of some 1,000 spectators.[4] Playing an assortment of local semi-pro, college, and amateur nines thereafter, the Mutrie-managed Mets completed an abbreviated first campaign with a commendable 16-7-1 log, which included a 15-6 triumph over Manhattan College in which club owner Day had hurled a complete game. With this modest taste of success, Day was smitten with baseball club ownership and eager to move on to bigger things.

To underwrite his ambitions for the team, Day incorporated the Metropolitan Exhibition Company (MEC), with himself as president and principal stockholder. Tammany Hall cohorts Joseph Gordon,[5] Charles T. Dillingham, and Walter S. Appleton were enlisted as minority MEC shareholders and served with Day on the corporation's board of directors. But in actuality, John B. was in full and unilateral control of club affairs. Once he had secured a long-term lease to the playing field from Bennett, Day began construction of a spacious grandstand and other seating accommodations at the Polo Grounds. Located on 110th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, the new ballpark was an immediate hit with baseball fans, if not with neighborhood residents.

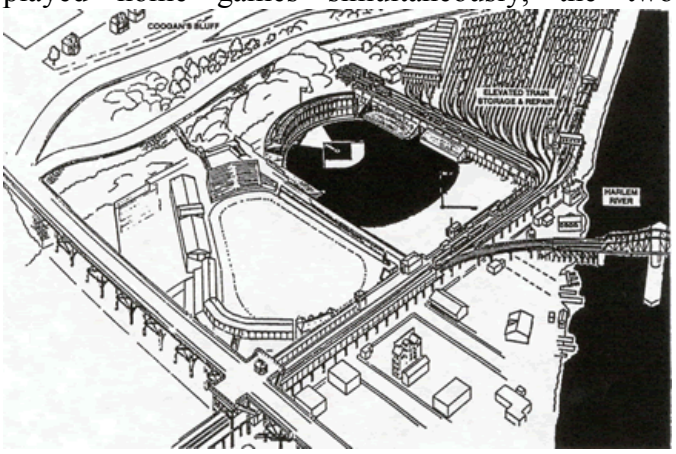
Again piloted by Mutrie, the 1881 Mets played a mixed Eastern Championship League/freelance schedule of 151 games, including 60 contests against National League competition. At season's end, the team's decent 18-42 performance against the NL prompted the organizers of the rival American Association to offer Day a place in their new major league. But for the time being, Day declined. The 1882 Mets schedule would again consist of a mix of games against major league opposition and local nines. And again, the Mets would play the professionals tough, winning 29 of 74 contests against NL foes while taking all but one game against teams of the fledgling AA.

In 1883, John B. Day entered the ranks of major league team owners – and in a grand way. To some surprise, Day declined an invitation to place the Mets in the National League, the longer-established and more prestigious of the two major circuits. Rather, the Mets joined the American Association, with Mutrie continuing as field manager and MEC stockholder/director Gordon appointed team president. Thereafter, Day boldly announced that an entirely new MEC-owned ball club would be placed in the National League. The nucleus of this team, originally called the Gothams, or simply the New-Yorks, would consist of budding stars like catcher Buck Ewing, first baseman Roger Connor, and pitcher Mickey Welsh, plucked from the roster of the recently liquidated NL Troy Trojans. Standout Providence Grays pitcher-infielder John Montgomery Ward would also be wearing a Gothams uniform, while the remainder of the squad would be formed from free agents, cast-offs, and other nonentities. Veteran backstop-



manager John Clapp would do the on-field direction, while Day himself would serve as Gothams team president.

To accommodate the two major league teams that would be using the Polo Grounds, a second diamond with separate grandstand was laid on the property. As accorded with its preferred status as Day's team, the NL Gothams were given the established field on the southeast corner of the Polo Grounds, while the Mets were consigned to a new, landfill-based playing surface situated on the southwest quadrant.[6] When the Gothams and Mets played home games simultaneously, the two



The Polo Grounds Deux

diamonds were separated by only a temporary canvas fence, an awkward arrangement that occasionally required outfielders from one league to chase long hit balls onto the field of a rival circuit.[7] Differences in standing between the two MEC teams were reflected in the gate, as well. The carriage trade sought by Day for the Gothams was charged 50 cents general admission, while the working classes cultivated by the Mets got in for a quarter. Potent liquid refreshment, however, was available at each venue, Day defying the league-wide ban on alcohol sales at NL games.

The aspirations of the MEC brain trust were confounded in 1883. Behind the stellar pitching of 41-game winner Tim Keefe, a Troy acquisition whom management had deemed unworthy of a Gothams' roster spot, and the astute generalship of Mutrie, the Mets finished a respectable fourth (54-42) in the AA race. The Gothams, meanwhile, could do no better than sixth (46-50) in NL standings. Club president Day took mild consolation in the fact that his club had drawn more patrons (75,000) to the Polo Grounds than had the Mets (50,000), but neither club was near the fan attraction of their respective league leaders (NL: Boston Beaneaters, 128,968; AA: Philadelphia Athletics, 305,000).[8] Still, the combined attendance of the two New York clubs would have been good for fourth place (out of 16 major league teams) in a fan patronage race, and with only one ballpark for the MEC to maintain, financial prospects looked promising.

Events continued to disconcert Day during 1884. The Gothams rose no higher than a tie for fourth place in the NL standings, and the MEC was embarrassed by the late-season need to dismiss new club manager James Price, caught for a second time embezzling funds from Gothams' coffers. At the same time, the Mets, banished for most of the season to Metropolitan Park, an ill-situated new ballpark erected amidst factory smokestacks along the East River,[9] rode the hitting of infielders Dave Orr (.354) and Dude Esterbrook (.314), superb pitching by Keefe (37-17) and Jack Lynch (37-15), and the leadership of skipper Mutrie to capture the American Association flag. The Mets balloon, however, was quickly punctured in the post-season. In the precursor to the modern World Series, the Mets were swept by the National League champion Providence Grays in three non-competitive and poorly attended games played at the Polo Grounds.

Events during the off-season manifested John B. Day's intention to make a champion of the Gothams. And to that end, the Mets would be sacrificed. First, manager Mutrie was transferred to the MEC's National League team. Thereafter, he assisted Day in some rule-bending chicanery to bring Mets stars Keefe and Esterbrook over to the Gothams. Shortly before the start of the 1885 season, Mutrie chaperoned the two on a supposed vacation voyage to Day's onion farm in Bermuda. Once Keefe and Esterbrook were safely out to sea, the MEC released them from the Mets roster. While Keefe and Esterbrook were incommunicado somewhere out of country, the ten-day period that other teams had to sign them as free agents elapsed. Once that happened, Mutrie inked the two to Gothams pacts.

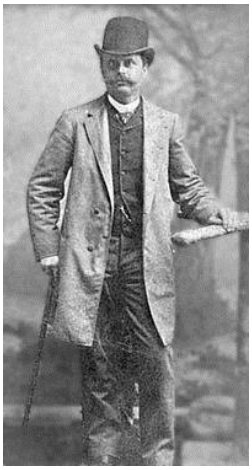
Upon discovery that star players had been slipped out of the league, the American Association howled in protest. But all it could do was ban Mutrie from the league, an empty gesture given that Mutrie had already left for the NL. The AA directors also voted to expel the Mets franchise, but quickly

reconsidered. Instead, the Mets were fined $500 for the manner in which Keefe and Esterbrook had been released. The Mets were also required to post a bond, a sort of guarantee that the club would complete its 1885 AA schedule.[10] When the time came, the gutted Mets team played out the season as obliged but plummeted to seventh place in AA standings. But this was of little concern to Day and his MEC associates. In December 1885, the Mets were sold for $25,000 to amusement impresario and local railroad magnate Erasmus Wiman, who promptly removed the franchise to his St. George Grounds on Staten Island, a ferry ride away from Manhattan.[11]

Fortified by its new acquisitions (which also included future Hall of Fame outfielder Jim O'Rourke, late of Buffalo), the Gothams posted a dazzling 85-27 (.759) record in 1885. But same was only good for second place in the NL, as the Cap Anson-led Chicago White Stockings had been two games better. In addition to a change in fortunes, the New York team underwent a name change, as well. During the early part of the 1885 season, the New York Gothams acquired the handle *Giants,* the moniker by which the team would become famous.[12] More important to the MEC bottom line, the club had become the league's leading draw, with 185,000 fans paying their way into the Polo Grounds,[13] and was well on its way to becoming the National League's vanguard franchise.

The John T. Brush memorial stairway survives today as a reminder of the long gone Polo Grounds

As the standing of his team increased in the NL, the stature of club president Day among his fellow magnates rose with it. With dominant team owners A.G. Spalding (Chicago) and John I. Rogers (Philadelphia), Day was chosen to represent the league on the important Joint Rules Committee of Organized Baseball. He was also appointed to the NL Board of Arbitration and became a heeded voice in executive conclaves. Meanwhile, top salaries, first-rate road accommodations, and bonhomie – John B. was on familiar terms with many of his charges – garnered the New York club boss esteem and good will in player ranks.[14]



Smilin' Jim Mutrie

In 1888, the Giants players rewarded Day's amity by bringing home the National League pennant. And a record-setting 305,455 paid admissions to the Polo Grounds swelled MEC coffers. New York then made its triumph complete by downing the AA St. Louis Browns in a post-season match of league champions. Unfortunately, the club did not fare as well against a different adversary: city planners determined to complete the local traffic grid by running a street through the Polo Grounds outfield. From the beginning, Central Park North residents had resented the intrusion of a baseball park into their upper crust neighborhood, and their political emissaries on the city council had finally pushed through a scheme for removing it – the opposition of Tammany Hall notwithstanding.[15] Rearguard legal action had forestalled the street improvement project from commencing while the 1888 season was in progress, but by early the following year it had become evident that the Giants would have to find a new playing field.

Manhattan-born Joseph Gordon, the real estate-savvy member of the MEC, informed Day that grounds might be available in far north Manhattan. But Day was unable to reach agreement with James J. Coogan, the estate agent for the site's owners, the vastly-propertied Gardiner-Lynch family.[16] Frustrated, Day then placed an extraordinary advertisement in the *New York Times* which solicited an angel to come forth and purchase the property, and then lease it to Day for $6,000 per year.[17] To no great surprise, the needed intermediary failed to materialize, leaving Day's

ball club without a home field as Opening Day 1889 loomed on the horizon.

In desperation, the Giants began the season in Oakdale Park, a decrepit facility in Jersey City. After two games there, the club switched to the St. George Grounds on Staten Island, erstwhile home to the now-defunct Mets. But poor weather and an inconvenient locale proved a serious drag on fan attendance. So the search for a suitable ballpark site continued. In time, Day reentered negotiations with Coogan[18] regarding the Gardiner-Lynch property, a grassy tract located at 155th Street and 8th Avenue, hard by the Harlem River. Although in sparsely populated territory far removed from mid-town and bordered to the north by a 175-foot high escarpment later dubbed Coogan's Bluff, the intended playing grounds were flat, vacant, and most important, serviced by a station on the New York & Northern elevated railway. In early June, agreement was reached on a five-year leasehold. But in a decision that he would soon have occasion to regret, Day declined to rent the entire tract. Instead, he leased only as much property as was needed for the construction of a new ballpark. Within a remarkable three weeks thereafter, the small army of workmen engaged by Day had erected a usable, if unfinished, ballpark on the grounds. When completed that winter, this handsome facility would seat more than 14,000 and be named the New Polo Grounds.[19]

On July 8, 1889, the Giants inaugurated their new home field with a 7-5 victory over Pittsburgh, a harbinger of the second-half surge that would see New York nip the Boston Beaneaters at the wire for the NL pennant. The Giants then successfully defended their world champions title, defeating the AA Brooklyn Bridegrooms behind the hurling of unlikely mound heroes Cannonball Crane and Hank O'Day.[20] Ballpark problems had reduced the season's home attendance to 201,989, but over a five-year span the club had drawn well over one million fans.[21] Counting modest revenues contributed by the ownership and sale of the Mets franchise, the *New York Times* calculated that the operation of their ball clubs had netted Day and his junior MEC partners a profit of $750,000 in the less-than-ten years of the corporation's existence.[22] Doubtless, anticipation of continued profits from his now two-time defending world champion nine prompted Day to turn down the $200,000 offer for the Giants tendered late in the 1889 season by Polo Grounds landlord Coogan.[23] Within months, however, calamitous events would thrust the thriving franchise to the brink of bankruptcy.

Endnotes

1. For most of the 19th century, the City of New York consisted solely of Manhattan, until expanded by annexation of adjoining parts of the west Bronx in 1874. Brooklyn and the other outer boroughs of the current city were not incorporated into New York until 1898.

2. For a more detailed account of Day's life, see the John B. Day profile on the SABR BioProject website at www.sabr.org/bioproj/person/c281a493.

3. The circumstances of the Day-Mutrie meeting are more fully explored in the BioProject profile of Jim Mutrie by 19th Century Committee chairman Peter Mancuso at www.sabr.org/bioproj/person/430838fd.

4. In a first-person newspaper article published years later, Day recalled his anxiety when the Nationals were late arriving and spectators grew restive at the prospect of seeing the Mets play a pick-up team instead. See "John B. Day Tells of Bitter Hour," *New York Times,* February 6, 1916.

5. Reminiscing in the early 1950s, Blanche McGraw described Gordon as Day's brother-in-law. See McGraw, Mrs. John J., with Arthur Mann, *The Real McGraw* (New York: David McKay Company, 1953), 170. A diligently researched history of the early Giants does the same. See Hardy, James D., Jr., *The New York Giants Base Ball Club: The Growth of a Team and a Sport, 1870 to 1900* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1995), 32. But genealogical inquiry controverts the notion that Day and Gordon were in any way related. The two were simply friends whose wives shared a common maiden name: Davis.

6. As per Lowry, Philip J., *Green Cathedrals: The Ultimate Celebration of Major League and Negro League Ballparks* (New York: Walker & Co., 3rd ed., 2006), 148.

7. Authorities disagree on just how often such competing Gothams-Mets games were played at the Polo Grounds. For more, see Thornley, Stew, *Land of the Giants: New York's Polo Grounds* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 16-20.

8. Club attendance figures for the 1883 through 1889 seasons have been taken from *Total Baseball,* John Thorn, Pete Palmer, and Michael Gershman, eds. (Kingston, New York: Total Sports Publishing, Inc., 7th ed., 2001), 74. Beginning with the 1890 season, attendance numbers have been taken from Baseball-Reference.

9. Constructed on a former landfill site, Metropolitan Park was soon adjudged both unplayable and a health hazard. Mets pitcher Jack Lynch reportedly maintained that an infielder could catch malaria just by fielding a grounder there. See Lowry, 149. By mid-season, Mets games were played at Metropolitan Park only when the Polo Grounds were being used by the Gothams.

10. For a more detailed account of the affair, see Nemec, David, *The Beer and Whisky League: The Illustrated History of the American Association – Baseball's Renegade Major League* (New York: Lyons & Burford, 1994), 91-92.

11. As reported in the *New York Times,* December 5, 1885. After two desultory seasons on Staten Island, the Mets player roster was purchased for parts by Brooklyn team owner Charles Byrne. The AA then transferred the franchise hulk to Kansas City.

12. Although widely attributed to manager Jim Mutrie, the nickname *Giants* may actually have been coined by *New York Evening World* sportswriter P.J. Donahue. See the Mutrie BioProject profile, 7-8.

13. In its final year as a MEC asset, the Mets drew 64,000 fans.

14. Years later, former Giants outfielder John Henry recalled that "Day travelled with his men on many [road] trips and nothing was too good for the players." And when he felt "that his players were tired and needed relaxation, [Day] would order champagne and wine for them and do other things for their comfort," as per an unidentified circa 1923 newspaper article contained in the John B. Day file at the Giamatti Research Center in Cooperstown.

15. Although Day himself was little more than a Tammany member, the other Metropolitan Exhibition Company stockholders were heavily involved in local politics – particularly Joseph Gordon, elected to the New York state assembly from a Manhattan district in 1888. But even a Sachem heavyweight like Gordon proved unable to save the Polo Grounds from demolition.

16. Descended from the 17th century settler-soldier Lion Gardiner, the Gardiner clan – for whom New York's landmark Gardiner's Island is named – held vast tracts of Manhattan, Westchester County, and Long Island real estate. William L. Lynch, the late husband of descendant Sarah Gardiner, had been a wealthy tea merchant.

17. See the *New York Times,* April 9, 1889.

18. Irish immigrant James Jay Coogan (1845-1915), originally the co-proprietor of a successful lower Manhattan furniture store, had married into the Gardiner-Lynch family in 1885 (as had his brother Edward the year before). At the time of his dealings with Day, Coogan also served as executor of the estate of his recently-deceased father-in-law William L. Lynch.

18. As published in the *New York Times,* April 9, 1889, and elsewhere.

19. For a fuller account of the events attending the erection of this new Giants ballpark, see the BioProject entry for Manhattan Field, aka the New Polo Grounds at www.sabr.org/bioproj/park/8a2a9a1f.

20. Crane and O'Day posted all six Giants victories in the best-of-ten games series. Future Hall of Famers Tim Keefe and Mickey Welch went winless for New York.

21. Per *Total Baseball,* the New York Giants' total home attendance during the 1885-1889 seasons was 1,144,389.

22. *New York Times,* September 6, 1889.

23. *Ibid.*

The Player's League war, turmoil in the Giants organization, and club take over by the Talcott group

John B. Day's enjoyment of the Giants' second championship campaign was tempered by a sense of foreboding. The 1889 season had been conducted amidst simmering player discontent, longstanding player resentment of the reserve clause having been exacerbated by the imposition of a tight-fisted salary classification scheme, adopted by the National League over Day's objection. Even as the Giants rallied for the pennant, plans for a new major league, one controlled by the players themselves, were taking shape. Ominously, the chief promoters of this nascent rival, from visionary organizer John Montgomery Ward to lead player recruiters Tim Keefe and Jim O'Rourke, all wore a New York Giants uniform.

On November 4, 1889, the players' intention to form a new major league was publicly announced.[1] As New York was the very font of rebellion, Day's Giants would be particularly hard hit by player defections. The Giants quickly lost the team's entire everyday lineup to the Players League, save for aging pitcher Mickey Welsh and outfielder Mike Tiernan. To counteract the attrition, the National League formed a War Committee chaired by the hard-nosed Spalding, with Day and Rogers as the other members. The two leagues then began maneuvering. Ward and his comrades, genuinely fond of Day and eager for a defection in NL ownership ranks, attempted to entice Day to their side by offering him a lucrative position in PL executive offices. Ever the NL loyalist, Day refused and was soon busy trying to lure PL enlistees – notably Giants star Buck Ewing and second baseman Danny Richardson – back to the NL fold. But to no avail.[2] Thereafter, Day adopted a litigation strategy, instituting reserve clause-based suits against Ward, Keefe, Ewing, and O'Rourke. The courts entertaining such actions, however, were uniformly unsympathetic, declining to grant Day relief in any form.

With his roster depleted and the start of the 1890 season on the horizon, Day took the first of the steps that would hasten his departure from the game: he tendered Indianapolis team owner John T.

Brush a $25,000 note in exchange for Jack Glasscock, Jerry Denny, Amos Rusie, and other players under contract to the just-liquidated Hoosiers franchise.[3] Long-term implications aside, the move yielded immediate benefits. Day would now be able to put a presentable nine on the field. And he would need to, for the inter-league competition in New York would be cutthroat. In a display of hubris and disdain, War Committee chairman Spalding had arranged the National League schedule to place his league's teams in direct head-to-head competition with the upstart PL whenever possible. This made the atmosphere in New York particularly fraught, as the circuits' rival clubs would be doing battle in the closest of quarters.

The prime architect of the Players League franchise in New York was Wall Street financier Edward Baker Talcott. Of privileged birth – his lineage descended from 17th century English settler gentry and his father was a wealthy banker and commodities broker – Eddie Talcott (as the sporting press referred to him) was an avid baseball fan and one-time amateur club pitcher.[4] By 1883, the former "boy broker of Wall Street" had become a wealthy 35-year-old and a Polo Grounds regular. When Giants slugger Roger Connor hit a tape-measure home run during the 1889 season, "Eddie Talcott, broker and baseball fan, jumped up and started a collection. … [Spectators who] chipped in [included] Col. [Edwin] McAlpin and [Albert] Johnson. They gave Roger a big gold watch."[5] But Talcott, tobacco company tycoon McAlpin, and street car magnate Johnson were up to more than just taking in ball games together. Each was preparing to assume a pivotal role in the oncoming Players League. Johnson would provide crucial seed money for the new circuit. McAlpin would become league president, and Talcott would chart the course of the PL's cornerstone franchise, the PL New York Giants.

Incorporated in Albany as the New York Base Ball Club Limited, the franchise's chief financial backers were Talcott, McAlpin, Pittsburgh stockbroker (and McAlpin brother-in-law) Frank B. Robinson, and New York City Postmaster Cornelius C. Van Cott. Executive positions were doled out, with Van Cott assuming the post of club president. But Talcott did most of the lifting, including the securing of playing grounds for the PL operation. Despite his pre-existing relationship with John B. Day, New Polo Grounds landlord Coogan had no compunction about leasing the adjoining property to Talcott. And soon, a brand new 16,000 seat edifice (Brotherhood Park) sat directly alongside the New Polo Grounds, the two ballparks separated by no more than their stadium walls and a ten-foot wide alley.[6]

The fan allegiance question was settled on Opening Day when 12,013 attended the debut of the star-laden Ewing Big Giants, while only 4,644 chose to watch Day's Real Giants play next door. As the season progressed, both teams drew poorly, but the NL club suffered more, attracting little more than one-third the fans of the PL Giants. With five major league clubs (NL New York Giants, PL New York Giants, NL Brooklyn Bridegrooms, PL Brooklyn Ward Wonders, and AA Brooklyn Gladiators) playing in greater-Gotham, there simply were not enough fans to keep New York professional baseball viable. Awash in cash only a season earlier, the cost of new stadium construction and expensive litigation had taken a significant toll on MEC finances. And when dwindling gate receipts failed to cover operating expenses, the NL Giants quickly sank into the red.[7] Summoned to a private meeting convened in Brooklyn in mid-July 1890, NL magnates were stunned by the degree of their New York club's fiscal distress. Only infusion of $80,000 would stem franchise bankruptcy. To avert the collapse of the league's flagship franchise, A.G. Spalding orchestrated a financial bailout on the spot, pledging $25,000 to Day in return for stock in the Giants. Boston boss Arthur H. Soden did the same, while Brooklyn owner Ferdinand Abell and Philadelphia co-owner Al Reach made smaller investments in Giants shares. John T. Brush, meanwhile, agreed to convert Day's outstanding $25,000 player payment note into a Spalding/Soden-sized stake in the Giants operation.[8] When word of the arrangement leaked, the press

took to referring to the strapped team owner as John *Busted* Day. And the process through which Day would lose control of the New York franchise had been set in motion. But in the short term, the financial aid had the desired effect, and the NL Giants managed to stagger to the 1890 season finish line, its 68-63 record good for sixth place.

While the PL Giants had achieved a more competitive third-place (74-57) finish and far outdrawn their NL counterparts at the gate (148,876 to 60,667), the Talcott group had also lost buckets of money. And unlike Day (and silent Giants minority shareholders like Spalding and Brush), the PL club backers were not die-hard lovers of the game, in for the long haul. To the contrary, the Talcott group viewed Players League baseball mainly as a business venture, and expected a prompt and reliable return on their investment. This made them receptive to settlement overtures from their next-door rivals. Preempting larger National League-Players League consolidation talks, Day and Talcott swiftly reached an agreement to merge the two New York teams, cutting out John Montgomery Ward and his Players League directory in the process. Day, a one-time friend of the renegade players, had been adamant that player representatives be excluded from NL-PL merger discussions. Said Day, "The players have nothing to say at all. The capitalists on both sides will do the negotiating. The players will have to do what they are told to do."[9] Talcott concurred, brushing off objections by Ward. "I don't propose to have Mr. Ward or anybody else criticize my business methods," declared Talcott, testily. "Nor shall I allow Mr. Ward to tell me how my financial interests must be arranged. The fight cannot go on another year, for baseball will become a dead sport.

Ward can say what he likes but it cannot alter matters with us a particle."[10] With its New York operation co-opted, the Players League soon passed from the baseball scene, its remaining backers scrambling to reach consolidation or buyout agreements with National League counterparts. By late-November 1890, a triumphant A.G. Spalding could accurately proclaim, "The Players League is as dead as the proverbial doornail."[11]

While it may have been dead, the brief existence of the Players League had exacted a fearsome toll on the fortunes of John B. Day. Competitive pressures had drained MEC coffers and prompted Day to tap his personal funds to keep the Giants afloat. And when this proved inadequate to the task, Day had been forced to seek monetary aid from fellow NL club owners, whose combined investment in the New York franchise now exceeded Day's own. The subsequent issuance of bonds to cover franchise indebtedness reduced Day's ownership share even further.

John Brush eventually found something to smile about

On January 24, 1891, the concerned parties met to reorganize the franchise under the laws of New Jersey. The proceedings were dominated by the Talcott group, which now held slightly over half of the Giants stock. Other NL owners (Spalding, Soden, Brush, et al.) controlled just over one-quarter combined, while the stake of John B. Day and his MEC associates had been reduced to about 15 percent. Former PL organizers Ward, Keefe, O'Rourke, plus a few others held the remaining odd stock lots.[12] The new organization was christened the National Exhibition Company, the corporate handle used for all the ensuing years that the New York Giants would be in existence. The respected

Day was bestowed the title of club president, but executive power would be wielded by Vice-President Talcott and his allies.

An early sign of Talcott ascendency was embodied by the selection of the team's playing site for the 1891 season. Day had built and paid for the New Polo Grounds less than two years earlier and the stadium was a fine baseball venue. But Brotherhood Park was the home base of the Talcott forces, and Talcott himself was responsible for the ten-year lease that the PL Giants had signed with landlord Coogan. With no intention of having an idle ballpark on his books, Talcott had Brotherhood Park renamed the Polo Grounds and designated as the permanent playing field for the New York Giants. Day's adjoining stadium was re-titled Manhattan Field and relegated to hosting college football, track meets, horseracing, and other secondary sports. Day's diminished stature in the new Giants operation was also reflected in the treatment of his old friend and collaborator Jim Mutrie. Although he continued as Giants manager at Day's insistence, Mutrie was shorn of effective command, supplanted in authority by Buck Ewing, the former PL Giants field leader. At the conclusion of the 1891 season, Mutrie was unceremoniously severed from franchise employ, with Day powerless to prevent it. John B. continued to hold the title of club president for another season, but was now little more than a figurehead.

The National League in 1888. The Giants are middle row left

The next season was a trying one for New York, both on the field and at the gate. The 71-80 Giants

of 1892 were mediocre non-contenders, and Polo Grounds attendance (130,566) remained only a fraction of the crowds attracted only four years earlier. Meanwhile, the Talcott group increased its grip on franchise operations by purchasing the bonds that had to be issued to cover club indebtedness.

In February 1893, Day resigned. He was a good man and a lifelong lover of baseball, but deeply-ingrained traits of personal rectitude and institutional loyalty left Day ill-equipped to deal with the fast changing baseball scene of the early 1890s and the cold-blooded entrepreneurs who had entered the game with it. At a farewell meeting of franchise stockholders, John Montgomery Ward, a small-stake Giants shareholder, offered a motion of thanks to the departing club chief. Although he and Day had had their differences, Ward pronounced himself "deeply aggrieved to see Mr. Day retire from the presidency."[13] The motion was thereupon seconded by John T. Brush who added "a glowing tribute to Mr. Day as a baseball president, a companion and a gentleman."[14] Upon unanimous adoption of the testimonial, Day, "overcome with emotion," could do no more than reply, "I thank you, gentleman."[15] And with that, the founding era of the New York Giants passed into history.[16]

Endnotes

1. See the *New York Times,* November 4, 1889. A verbatim reprint of the players' declaration of war and an apt summary of the situation is provided in Roer, Mike, *Orator O'Rourke: The Life and Times of a Baseball Radical* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2005), 169-172. For a more expansive treatment of Players League hostilities in New York, see Hardy, 92-133.

2. The unrequited wooing of Ewing and Richardson received ample press coverage, much to Day's chagrin. See e.g., the *Chicago Tribune,* February 18, 1890, *Boston Globe,* February 18 and 23, 1890, and *Sporting Life,* February 26, 1890. The reported vacillation of Ewing, however, would earn him lasting mistrust in the Players League ranks.

3. Over the strenuous protest of Brush, the weakling Indianapolis (and Washington) franchises had been dissolved by the National League as a preemptive early wartime measure. As Brush was the author of the salary classification scheme that precipitated the Players League strife, irony abounded. But Brush, a resilient and resourceful department store magnate, would soon convert the situation to his advantage, capitalizing on Day's approaching fiscal distress to advance a new Brush objective – control of the New York Giants.

4. One press report described Talcott in his youth as "a pitcher of no mean ability." *Charleston Evening Post,* February 6, 1899.

5. John Kieran, "The Brave Days of Old in Baseball," *New York Times,* January 7, 1931.

6. The extraordinarily close proximity of the two ballparks is illustrated in Thornley, 33.

7. According to one early Giants historian, the club drew the 1,080 spectators needed to meet daily expenses only 12 times during the 1890 season. See Hardy, 122.

8. Seymour, Harold, and Dorothy Seymour Mills, *Baseball: The Early Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 238.

9. As quoted in the *Chicago Tribune,* October 15, 1890.

10. As per the *Chicago Tribune,* November 7, 1890, and *Sporting Life,* November 8, 1890.

11. *Chicago Tribune,* November 22, 1890.

12. Extrapolated from data published in *Sporting Life,* October 17, 1891. New York sportswriter George H. Dickenson calculated that Day's individual stake in the New York Giants constituted less than ten percent of the club stock. Fellow MEC members Joseph Gordon and Charles Dillingham retained even smaller holdings, while the by-now bankrupt Walter S. Appleton was no longer counted among franchise shareholders.

13. *New York Times,* February 10, 1893.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. Shortly thereafter, Day's cigar manufacturing business failed, and he spent the remainder of his life in much-reduced circumstances, eking out an existence on the margins of baseball and commerce. His final years were eased by a small pension granted by the National League. John B. Day died in Cliffside Park, New Jersey on January 25, 1925, age 77.

Next issue: *Darkness at the Polo Grounds: The Freedman years*

Recently Published Research

This column highlights recently published articles on topics that may interest members of the Business of Baseball Committee. If you are aware of a source that publishes articles of interest to the readership, please alert me so that I can monitor it.

Day, Dave, and Wray Vamplew, "Sports History Methodology: Old and New," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol 32, 15 (2015), pp 1715-24

The process of converting the 'past' into 'history' involves engagement with a multitude of different sources and methods, although historical methods have traditionally focused on finding data, judging the validity of the data and then accurately presenting the data through an historical narrative. This normally takes the form of a sequential account, or story, of an event or series of events that organize material chronologically to provide an overview of what happened or of the characteristics of a particular social phenomenon. This storytelling is the means through which the once real past is related by the historian who chooses to present who said what, who did what, makes assumptions about why they did it, what agencies and structures operated, what events were significant and decides what theories and arguments will be applied. However, historians now recognize that there are competing approaches to the-past-as-history and that they make epistemological choices which influence how they choose how to gain knowledge about the past.

Phillips, Murray G., and Gary Osmond & Stephen Townsend, "A Bird's-Eye View of the Past: Digital History, Distant Reading and Sport History," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol 32, 15 (2015), pp 1725-40

Advances in computer technologies have made it easier than ever before for historians to access a wealth of sources made available in the digital era. This article investigates one way that historians have engaged with the challenges and opportunities of this 'infinite archive': distant reading. We define distant reading as an umbrella term that embraces many practices, including data mining, aggregation, text analysis, and the visual representations of these practices. This paper investigates the utility of distant reading as a research tool via three newspaper case studies concerning Muhammad Ali, women's surfing in Australia, and homophobic language and Australian sport. The research reveals that the usefulness, effectiveness, and success of distant reading is dependent on numerous factors. While valuable in many instances, distant reading is rarely an end in itself and can be most powerful when paired with the traditional historical skills of close reading.

McDowell, Matthew L., "Towards a Critical Dialogue between the History of Sport, Management History, and Sport Management/Organization Studies in Research and Teaching," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol 32, 15 (2015), pp 1750-58

This article discusses possibilities for a critical dialogue between the history of sport, management history, and sport management/organization studies. Many historians of sport will find themselves employed in sport management programmes, and these programmes allow the potential to interpret historical perspectives on sport, as well as historical research methods in sport management. This offers possibilities in terms of research as well. However, if historians are to engage in a research and teaching dialogue with sport management, they must also remain critical of some of the discipline's (and practice's) central tenets.

Anderson, Jack, "Methodology in Sports History: Learning from Legal Scholarship?" *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol 32, 15 (2015), pp 1764-68

The brief note aims to illustrate how historical context has contributed to my writing on modern sports law and principally through two pieces of work – the first relating to the historical, *sui generis* origins of the legality of combat or fighting sports, which continues to stretch the boundaries of core principles of criminal law, such as reasonable consent to bodily harm, to their utmost; and second, and more generally, the 'historicalegal' influences on the development of modern sport in mid-nineteenth-century Britain. Before that is done, it is best to give some account of research methodologies in legal scholarship and principally as they apply to legal history.

Taylor, Matthew, "Parallel Fields: Labour History and Sports History, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol 32, 15 (2015), pp 1769-74

This article offers a brief exploration of the historiography of labour history, a sub-field or sub-discipline that shares the same essential methodological base as sports history. It argues that labour history, sometimes derided for being conservative and narrowly focused thematically and methodologically, has actually been a site for considerable forward-thinking research in recent years. It examines some of this new research in two

key areas – the relationship between class and gender on one hand and global, transnational, and comparative approaches on the other. Finally, it suggests that the institutional fragmentation of labour history is not necessarily as negative for the intellectual future of the field as is sometimes portrayed and that this might offer an alternative trajectory for those interested in the future of sports history.

Szymanski, Stefan, "Economics and (Modern) Sports History," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol 32, 15 (2015), pp 1775-77

Economics is an integral part of history and economic methods can be useful to historians, in just the same way as the perspective of the historian is often vital to understanding the economics of a problem. This paper argues that while there exist tensions, economists and historians should see their work as complementary.

Johnes, Martin, "Archives and Historians of Sport," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol 32, 15 (2015), pp 1784-98

Archives and the documents within them are at the heart of the practice of history and the occupational culture of historians. A majority of historical work has been characterized and defined by research in archives of varying kinds. Yet, the material within archives is both partial and political and using it is never straightforward. For historians of sport, the material available in archives can be especially limited but, with some careful reading between the lines, there is still much to learn from and interpret within traditional archives. This paper explores the different kinds of archives and archival material that historians of sport have used and the uses they have been and can be put to. Archives, however, are not static entities and the paper also discusses the impact and implication of digitization processes and programmes to popularize and legitimize traditional archives. Although sport has been seen as one of the ways of diversifying the content and audience of archives, the paper argues that the practical and interpretative challenges historians of sport face in archives are no different to those faced by other historians.

Vamplew, Wray, "In Praise of Numbers: Quantitative Sports History," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol 32, 15 (2015), pp 1835-49

Illustrated by examples of both good and poor practice, this paper makes a plea for sports historians to utilize more statistics in their studies. It accepts that some research is not amenable to a quantitative approach, but suggests that generally counting and basic statistical display can benefit the researcher. Numbers enable comparisons to be made, events to be put in perspective, and the typical to be distinguished from the unusual. However, statistical evidence needs to be rigorously checked for reliability and validity and in undertaking statistical research the quantitative sports historian must not neglect their skills as historians.

Vamplew, Wray, "The power of numbers: a plea for more quantitative sports history," *Sport in Society*, vol 19, 3 (2016), pp 313-20

Illustrated by examples "of both good and poor practice, this paper makes a plea for sports historians to utilize more statistics in their studies. It accepts that some research is not amenable to a quantitative approach, but suggests that generally counting and basic statistical display can benefit the researcher. Numbers enable comparisons to be made, events to be put in perspective, and the typical to be distinguished from the unusual. However, statistical evidence needs to be rigorously checked for reliability and validity and in undertaking statistical research the quantitative sports historian must not neglect their skills as historians.

Vamplew, Wray, "Scottish football before 1914: an economic analysis of a gate-money sport," *Sport in Society*, vol 19, 3 (2016), pp 321-39

On the basis of data collected at club level, it can be suggested that most Scottish elite football teams were not profit-maximizers. The lack of price competition, the existence of free entry for some spectators, the playing of uneconomic friendly and minor cup fixtures, the relative under-utilization of ground facilities, and the employment policies and wage structures of clubs point to utility taking precedence over profits. Even if the clubs had been profit-maximizers, this would have required collusion at the Scottish Football League (SFL) level in order to produce uncertainty of results at both match and championship level, but the members of the SFL seem to have been willing to

tolerate a high degree of inequality in playing success.

Vamplew, Wray, "Still crazy after all those years: continuity in a changing labour market for professional jockeys," *Sport in Society*, vol 19, 3 (2016), pp 378-99

Using the career of a leading modern rider as a focal point, this article examines the changes and continuities in the labour market for professional jockeys over the past century and a half. It looks at the rigours of the job via travel load, risk of injury and, above all, weight watching; at the rewards both monetary and psychic; at human capital formation; at drug and alcohol issues; and at power relations and disciplinary procedures.

Vamplew, Wray, "Successful workers or exploited labour? Golf professionals and professional golfers in Britain 1888–1914," *Sport in Society*, vol 19, 3 (2016), pp 400-24

Golf was one of the fastest growing recreational sports in Britain before 1914. It created a market for professional golfers as shopkeepers, teachers, greenkeepers and craftsmen. A database of 3000 players was used to examine their social and economic experience at club and competitive level, and this experience was then compared to that of professionals in horse racing, cricket and football. Golfers were the first sportsmen to permanently organize themselves with the establishment of the Professional Golfers' Association in 1901, which provided welfare services and promoted tournaments, thus actively and uniquely assisting the development of the industry within which its members worked.

Brennen, Bonnie, and Rick Brown, "Persecuting Alex Rodriguez: Race, Money and the Ethics of Reporting the Performance Enhancing Drug Scandal," *Journalism Studies*, vol 17, no 1 (January 2016), pp 21-38

This qualitative textual analysis considers the US press coverage of Alex Rodriguez for his alleged use of performance-enhancing drugs. It evaluates nearly 500 newspaper, magazine and broadcast reports from 2007 to 2014 on Rodriguez, as well as reader and journalistic responses, and finds issues of overt and inferential racism, stereotyping and symbolic impurity, and a crude emphasis on money in the coverage. This research considers the ethics of the press coverage through a framework of Critical Race Theory and suggests an approach rooted in communitarian ethics to foster greater social justice and balance in sports media coverage.

Kesenne, Stefan, "The Single Entity Status of a Sports League," *Journal of Sports Economics*, Vol 16, 8 (December 2015), pp 811-18

Without dealing with the pure juridical discussions and arguments about a sports league as a single entity, I discuss only the economic consequences of the single entity idea, which I consider only as an attempt to shun North American antitrust laws or E.U. competition laws, in order to monopolize the product market, the player labor market, and the media markets. However, economists know that monopolies are reducing welfare. So who needs that single entity?

Andreff, Wladimir, and Nicolas Scelles, "Walter C. Neale 50 Years After: Beyond Competitive Balance, the League Standing Effect Tested With French Football Data," *Journal of Sports Economics*, Vol 16, 8 (December 2015), pp 819-34

In 1964, Neale suggested, in addition to competitive balance, a league standing effect that was never tested per se with empirical data. A model that explains fan attendance in the French football *Ligue 1* over 2008-2011 is presented. It takes on-board point difference with the closest competitor chasing a different sporting stake, and positive and negative changes regarding the different sporting stakes. Econometric testing exhibits a negative impact of point difference (i.e., a positive impact of the possibilities of changes), a positive impact of positive changes, and no significant impact of negative changes.

Humphreys, Brad, and Li Zhou, "The Louis–Schmelling Paradox and the League Standing Effect Reconsidered," *Journal of Sports Economics*, Vol 16, 8 (December 2015), pp 835-52

Fifty years on we examine two key propositions in Neale's "Peculiar Economics": The need for competitors in sport to have opponents of similar ability in order to earn large revenues and the effect of frequent changes sports leagues' standings on consumer demand. We develop a consumer choice model under uncertainty, and a structural econometric model, to motivate and test these ideas. Unfortunately, neither receives much empirical or

theoretical support relative to alternative factors affecting consumer choice like loss aversion and home win preference.

Lee, Young Hoon, and Hayley Jang and Sun Ho Hwang, "Market Competition and Threshold Efficiency in the Sports Industry," *Journal of Sports Economics*, Vol 16, 8 (December 2015), pp 853-70

Previous studies of competitive balance (CB) have analyzed the variations in game outcomes that is the second moment of winning percentage. This article differs in two aspects. First, it analyzes market competition with respect to efficiency. Second, it analyzes efficiency distribution (in particular, the third moment of the efficiency distribution and the efficiency bound). It also suggests the efficiency bound as a new measure of market competition. By applying stochastic frontier models to a panel data set of the European football leagues (English Premier League, Spanish La Liga, Italian Serie A, and German Bundesliga), it derives important implications. First, the minimum efficiency estimates seem to reveal information relevant to market competition and additional information from the conventional CB measure. Second, differences in the shapes of the efficiency distribution curves across the four leagues imply that the four leagues faced different environments in terms of market competition.

Millington, Brad, and Rob Millington, "The Datafication of Everything: Toward a Sociology of Sport and Big Data," *Sociology of Sport*, vol 32, 2 (June 2015), pp 140-160

This paper explores the articulations of sport and 'Big Data'—an important though to date understudied topic. That we have arrived at an 'Age of Big Data' is an increasingly accepted premise: the proliferation of tracking technologies, combined with the desire to record/monitor human activity, has radically amplified the volume and variety of data in circulation, as well as the velocity at which data move. Herein, we take initial steps toward addressing the implications of Big Data for sport (and vice versa), first by historicizing the relationship between sport and quantification and second by charting its contemporary manifestations. We then present four overlapping postulates on sport in the Age of Big Data. These go toward both showing and questioning the logic of 'progress' said to lie at the core of sport's nascent statistical turn. We conclude with reflections on how a robust sociology of sport and Big Data might be achieved.

Team Ownership Histories Project -- A subset of Bioproject and the Business of Baseball Committee

By Andy McCue

The Team Ownership Histories project aims to produce a complete history of every franchise's owners and major financial milestones. They will include profiles of owners, managing general partners and other large players. They will discuss both abortive and successful campaigns for new stadiums and possible franchise moves, whether completed or not, and their reasons. They need not include any information about a team's performance on the field except for how it affects the team's financial standing. General information on financial health is desirable, if obtainable.

Full attendance data for any franchise can be supplied and one team history is available as a loose model. If you are interested, there is a list below of the taken and available franchises. Please contact me at agmccue44@earthlink.net.

Here are the teams spoken for….

New York/San Francisco Giants
Arizona Diamondbacks
Seattle Pilots/Milwaukee Brewers
Chicago Cubs
Cincinnati Reds (through 1966 season)
New York Mets
Boston Braves
Philadelphia/Kansas City/Oakland Athletics
Washington Senators I
Chicago White Sox

Detroit Tigers
Cleveland Indians
Boston Red Sox
New York Yankees
St. Louis Browns /Baltimore Orioles

These are the teams which still need an author…..

Atlanta/Milwaukee Braves
Cincinnati Reds (1967 to present)
Colorado Rockies
Florida Marlins
Houston Astros
Kansas City Royals
Los Angeles/California Angels
Milwaukee/Atlanta Braves
Minnesota Twins
Montreal Expos/Washington Nationals
Philadelphia Phillies
Pittsburgh Pirates
St. Louis Cardinals
San Diego Padres
Seattle Mariners
Tampa Bay Rays
Toronto Blue Jays
Washington Senators II/Texas Rangers

This is the team which has been completed…..

Brooklyn/Los Angeles Dodgers

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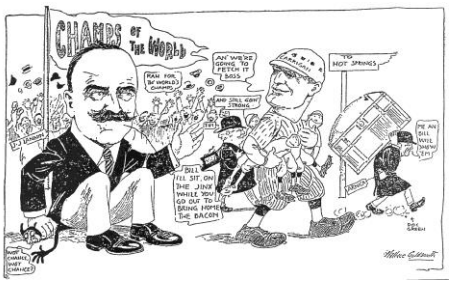
A Call for Submissions

The Business of Baseball Committee has more than 700 registered members. We are sure many of you are doing research that would be of interest to your fellow SABR members. Please consider sharing your work in the newsletter, which is especially well suited to preliminary versions of work you may wish to publish elsewhere. *Outside the Lines* is an excellent outlet for the publication of your research on any topic of baseball that occurs "outside" the playing field. Submissions can be directed to Mike Haupert at mhaupert@uwlax.edu.



Monetary Mound

By

Shane A. Piesik

Errata: the subscript t is missing from the response variables in equations 2 through 6. In equation 7 the term IPPCT should be IP.

Introduction

The smell of freshly cut grass. The pop of the glove when the ball nestles itself into the webbing. The drama that comes before every new dirt stain. Each of these have one thing in common. They capture people. Gripping them like a ball in a glove on a diving play in the ninth inning. The game of baseball is America's pastime, the players are role models to the youth and the pride of their fans. The players are paid at a minimum, $507,500 annual salaries, and maybe, given the mentioned value they provide to the public, the average $3,386,212 salary is justified.

In 1985 the highest paid player, Mike Schmidt, earned 7% of Clayton Kershaw's 2015 salary. Kershaw sits atop the league in annual salary, collecting $30,000,000 from the Los Angeles Dodgers ownership collective, Guggenheim Partners, LLC. Kershaw, a left-handed pitcher, started thirty-three games in 2015. Each time he took the mound he collected $909,091, earning $129,199 per inning he pitched. Put another way, he earned $99,668 per strikeout. Kershaw led the league in strikeouts and was among the league leaders in shutouts, games started, complete games, innings pitched, wins above replacement, and earned run average. Guggenheim Partners, LLC - the global investment and advisory financial services firm that owns the Los Angeles Dodgers - pay Kershaw accordingly. The twenty-seven year old is set to make $215,000,000 over the course of seven years. His salary is nearly sixty times that of the MLB minimum. Such a disparity in salary begs to be justified.

Is Kershaw really contributing sixty times more value than a player paid the minimum salary? In a broader sense, are pitchers such as Kershaw, those paid the league minimum, and every pitcher in between paid according to their marginal contributions to revenue? This measure of marginal contribution was previously constructed by Gerald Scully (1974) in his article *Pay and Performance in Major League Baseball*. The methodolgy begins in estimating how an additional team win marginally

impacts revenue. Once such an increase has been found it should be weighed by the approxmiate impact an individual player had on creating the win. The impact a player has on wins, as measured by performance metrics, allows for derivation of his impact on revenues, i.e., a players' marginal revenue product (MRP).

For a player to earn his MRP he must have full bargaining power over his wages.[1] This has not always been the case. The focus of this study is to

Is Kershaw worth the big bucks?

determine if pitchers today earn their MRP based on performance in the year they became a free agent.

Reserve Clause and Free Agency

MLB operated under the reserve clause from 1879 until it was rendered ineffective by arbitrator Peter Seitz's 1975 ruling. Under the reserve clause system players had only two opportunities to freely bargain for their wages. The first opportunity came before the institution of the amateur draft in 1966. Amateur ballplayers had the right to negotiate with all teams who were interested in signing them to contracts. The only other option for players to negotiate their salary was by holding out. The labor market in baseball during this period of time was a monopsony; owners were the sole purchasers of labor, keeping player wages below equilibrium levels, which would have otherwise been achieved in a perfectly competitive market. Scully (1974) finds that players were exploited under the reserve clause era due to the monopsonistic market for labor. After several appeals, player strikes, court cases, and arbitration hearings, the reserve clause system fell in 1975, moving MLB to the current system of free agency.

While the reserve clause system gave nearly no negotiating power to players, the free agency system restricts players for the first six years of their MLB career. After three years on an MLB roster, a player is eligible for binding salary arbitration, a process that allows a third party to decide between the salary proposals of the player and team.[2] Arbitration is only used when negotiating cannot resolve the wage dispute. Otherwise, the team can pay the player a salary of their choosing, subject to CBA minimums. While players with less than six years of experience have limited bargaining power, free agency gives players far greater power to negotiate wages. Since the implementation of the free agency system, the average salary of MLB players has risen from $51,501 in 1976 to $3,690,000 in 2014. Average annual MLB salary, adjusted for inflation, has risen by 1,622 percent. Over that same period of time owners have seen remarkable growth of team revenue from TV broadcast deals, merchandise sales, ticket receipts, and concessions[3]. The connection between salary and workplace productivity is MRP. It measures the amount of additional revenue a worker contributes to his/her employer. In general it is difficult to distinguish the units of labor themselves, let alone their marginal impact on revenue. In baseball, however, that problem has been overcome.

Literature Review

[1] See Zimbalist, 1992

[2] The collective bargaining agreement (CBA) allows players to become eligible for salary arbitration with only two years of experience. This happens when a player is among the top 17% of all players with two or three years of experience in cumulative MLB playing time.

[3] According to Forbes, the average growth of MLB team revenue was 170.70%, adjusted for inflation.

Michael Lewis introduced the public to the analytics of baseball in 2003 by way of his book *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game*. Analytics are increasingly used across the league and yet paid little attention by casual fans. A goal of *Moneyball* lies in finding a player's value unseen through the common paradigm. The large statistical database available has applications in constructing entire rosters, obtaining favorable pitcher versus hitter match-ups, influencing decision-making, making draft picks, and providing bargaining power in salary negotiations.

Finding MRP of baseball players based on their on-field performance has been studied before. Scully (1974) determined that 78% of a pitcher's salary was determined by his career strikeout-to-walk ratio, innings pitched, and experience. For hitters, 81% of salary was determined by career slugging average, batting average, and experience.

Scully found that team win percentage is determined by team strikeout-to-walk ratio, team slugging average, and three qualitative factors accounting for level of play. Finally, he found that team revenue is determined primarily by win percentage and population. Using these relationships, Scully then estimated individual player MRP by measuring the impact a player's performance has on his team's winning percentage and the impact winning percentage has on team revenues. He found that average players received salaries equivalent to 11% of net MRP while star players were paid 15% of their MRP.

Stone and Pantuosco (2008) studied player salaries across three periods of time from 1961-2005. They found that salaries have shown increasing elasticity to increases in slugging average, player durability, and player consistency, and that the value of player productivity increased over time. In addition, they found population positively correlated with the capacity of a team to pay players.

Another issue of note is the performance of a player during the final year of his contract. The last year of a contract is commonly referred to as a contract year, and that year's performance is referred to as contract year performance. Such studies have a common goal of determining if performance in a player's contract year is beyond his regular performance. In theory, a player will try harder throughout his contract year season in hopes of driving up his value when he reaches free agency. The results of these studies are mixed. Hayward and Patrick (2008) found contract year performance and career performance significant contributors to hitter salaries. Birnbaum (2006) looked at contract year performance of pitchers and hitters from 1977-2001 and found no evidence of any contract year effect on performance. Perry (2006) used 212 prominent free agents from 1976-2000 and found contract year had a statistically significant effect on performance. However, these results may be biased upward due to the number of observations and the use of only prominent players.

Modeling Pitcher Salary

The data for pitcher salary includes performance statistics of MLB pitchers who were under contract in 2015, with each explanatory variable derived from the year before he signed his current contract. For example, Clayton Kershaw signed his current contract in 2014, therefore his salary will be a function of his 2013 performance, contribution, and experience.

For my analysis the dependent variable for a pitcher is his 2015 average annual salary. The natural log of $SALARY_i$ is used to capture non-linear relationships and reduce distribution skewness of the dependent variable. The natural log is commonly used in models including salary as a dependent variable.

The first independent variable in the equation, innings pitched as a percentage of innings played (IPPCT), serves as a measure of pitcher contribution. I approximate total team innings pitched by multiplying 162 games played by 9 innings, using a common denominator of 1458 for all pitchers.

The natural log of IPPCT captures the non-linearity between the measure of contribution and salary. Differences in negotiating power by team executives, agents, superstar capacity, and times of low labor supply contribute to a non-linear relationship in the estimation of the coefficient. Estimating IPPCT logarithmically is commonly done in the literature[4].

[4] In taking the log of IPPCT ratios the values become negative. In order to prevent negative values from obscuring the data a constant of 1 was applied to all pitchers' IPPCT before taking the natural log.

The second independent variable is a pitcher's strikeout-to-walk ratio (SOW). SOW is a statistical measure of performance highlighting a pitcher's capability to do his job regardless of the supporting cast: the eight other defensive players on the field backing up the pitcher. The skill level of a pitcher's defense can impact other statistical measures of pitching performance such as earned run average (ERA), opponents' batting average (OBP), and walks plus hits per innings pitched (WHIP). Previous research has found SOW to be statistically significant in determining pitcher salary. The natural log of SOW is used for the same reasons previously discussed.

The third independent variable used will be years of MLB experience (EXP). Pitchers with more experience provide higher levels of play and/or an intangible asset of knowledge of the opponent's tendencies, situational play, and productive habits, which contribute to team performance. In addition, the CBA imposes maximum annual salary reductions, which leads to downward wage rigidity. The measure of pitcher experience will be the number of years a pitcher has been in the major leagues leading up to the year in which they signed their current contract. For example, $pitcher_i$ who played in the major leagues starting in 2008 before signing his current contract in 2012 will be given 4 years of experience representing his time in the major leagues from 2008-2011. The quadratic function of EXP is used to determine if salary increases at a decreasing rate.

A dummy variable for left-handed pitchers is included to test the hypothesis that southpaw pitchers earn a higher salary than right-handers, ceteris paribus. $LEFT_i$ takes on the value of 1 for every LHP, and 0 otherwise.

Closing pitchers are sent to the mound in the last inning of games when their team is leading by three runs or less in an attempt win the game. Usually when a closer is able to successfully retire the last few outs in a game he will earn a save. Due to the nature of a closer's role, their IPPCT will undervalue their contribution to team performance. $CLOSE_i$ will equal 1 if $pitcher_i$ has 10 saves or more in their contract season alone, 0 otherwise. I hypothesize that pitchers who qualify as a closer will obtain an increase in salary above what they would have otherwise earned, ceteris paribus.

I measure identify a pitcher as a closer by if he has at least ten saves, because not all pitchers who earn saves are designated closers. A standard relief pitcher may earn a save if he is used in a save situation. Other teams may not have a designated closer due to injury, causing a team to juggle who fills the role of closing duties on a game-by-game basis, therefore, pitchers who have less than 10 saves are likely to be relief pitchers and not designated closers. Subsequently, these same relief pitchers would not have been signed to a team with the anticipation of being the closing pitcher. As a result, an increase in these pitchers' average annual salaries will not be observed. If a pitcher has over 10 saves it is fair to assume he is a team's designated closer. In such cases, the increase in average annual salary a pitcher earns from being a closer will be observed.

Double-log, polynomial functional form provides the most accurate measure of the explanatory coefficients. It is expected (log)IPPCT, (log)SOW, EXP, LEFT, and CLOSE will have a positive relationship with $(\log)SALARY_i$. In contrast EXP^2 will be negatively related to $(\log)SALARY_i$ due to salary increasing at a decreasing rate as a pitcher gains experience (and ages). The results of the regression (equation 1) suggest all variables have the correct sign and t-statistics significant at the 1% level, with the exception of the left-handed dummy variable, which is significant at the 5% level.

$$(\log)SALARY_i = 11.78045 + 11.54873\,(\log)IPPCT_i + .2403871\,(\log)SOW_i + .4234688\,EXP_i - .0174348\,EXP_i^2 + .1573556\,LEFT_i + .6647841\,CLOSE_i + \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Under double-log form the coefficients can be interpreted as elasticities. For example, a 1% increase in IPPCT will result in an 11.5% increase in salary. The quadratic form of experience is used to pick up the deterioration in skills as players age. Research shows that the relationship between experience and salary increases at a decreasing rate and eventually begins to decrease at an increasing rate.

I am able to explain 69% of salary variation in 2015. There are two key differences between Scully's 1974 estimation (his R^2 was 78%) and this model, which account for the difference. Scully

uses career measures of performance for his observations. I use only a player's signing year statistics to explain salary. Additionally, the reserve clause allowed for no negotiating power on behalf of the player, this causes salaries to remain low and become a product of performance, whereas currently, salaries are driven upwards due to teams outbidding each other to acquire players. Under the reserve clause teams were able to protect their players from other teams raising the market value of labor by increasing demand. This prevented owners from overpaying in order to keep talent on the roster. Thus, performance deviating from salary occurred less than under the current free agency system. In concluding, the falling of the reserve clause served to allow the salary to performance ratio to increase. What is more, the theory for including each of the predictive variables are further justified and re-enforced with these results.

Modeling Wins

In order to find the determinants of team wins, I built a model inspired by Scully. The model in this paper uses team data from the 2014 and 2015 MLB seasons. The dependent variable is the number of games won for each team in 2014 and 2015.

The predictive variables will represent team offensive performance and team pitching performance. The two measures of team performance used will be team slugging average (TSA) and team strikeout-to-walk ratio (TSW). Both of these performance variables should be positively related to wins. Two qualitative variables will also be used. CONT is a dummy variable identifying playoff contending teams. CONT will be equal to 1 for contenders and 0 otherwise. Contenders will be defined as any playoff qualifying team or team that finished three games or less from qualifying. OUT is a dummy variable equal to 1 for teams that finished twenty games or more behind the winner of their respective division, 0 otherwise. The reason for inclusion of these variables was influenced by Scully who used the same variables with success. According to Scully:

> A large number of games in the majors during the season are won by one run. In these instances, player hitting performance per se will make less difference in the outcome. It is here that team play, hustle, the quality or managerial and on the field decision making, all of which is determined by team morale, will substantially determine which team wins a higher share of these one-run games (p. 918).

It is the intangible assets mentioned by Scully that CONT and OUT attempt to measure. Any level of play above and beyond what would have been achieved if the team was not competing for a playoff spot will be captured in the coefficient of CONT. Conversely, OUT will capture all play below the standard due to lack of motivation, lackadaisical play, and bad decisions, typical of habitually losing teams. We see exhibits of this quite often, for example, the 2004 Boston Red Sox, "Why not us?" and "Cowboy Up" reflect team chemistry, while the bravado of the 2013 Red Sox "*#GetBeard*" campaign propelled them to another World Series.

Due to teams having potentially severe heterogeneity, controlling for time-invariant differences across teams is necessary. To give examples, these differences include but are not limited to strategy, roster, and geography. A fixed effects model removes such differences across teams and captures the remaining effect of the independent variables impact on the number of team wins. Assuming no team operates under the same exact circumstances, time-invariant characteristics are specific to each team. In order to account for these characteristics, fixed-effects regression allows the error term and the constant term to be uncorrelated with the other teams. This provides improved accuracy of the coefficients of the independent variables.

Under the fixed effects model the rho value indicates there is a 36.8% variance across teams, however by using fixed-effects this variance is unable to change the coefficients of the predictive variables (Torres-Reyna 2007). I find that over the course of the 2014 and 2015 seasons team slugging average has an insignificant effect on team wins, team strikeout-to-walk ratio has significantly impacted wins, winning cultures foster nearly nine more wins than their non-contending division opponents (significant at the 1% confidence level), and habitual losers win nearly five games less than

non-habitual losers (significant at 5%). The model explains 75% of the variance in team wins.

TSW is significant at the 5% level. The coefficient tells us that if TSW was improved by one point, e.g. from 1.5 to 2.5, holding everything else constant, team wins would improve by approximately seven-and-a-half games. With a fixed number of regular season games, this means a team would then lose seven-and-a-half less games, causing a swing of 15 games in regular season year-end standings. To put this shift in perspective, a fifteen game swing would have been enough to move five of the six third place teams into first place in 2015. The Boston Red Sox, who finished with the worst record in their division, would have tied for first place. The results of the regression are found in equation 2.

$$Wins_i = 53.92 + 10.16\, TSA_{it} + 7.56\, TSW_{it} + 8.661\, CONT_{it} - 4.98\, OUT_{it} + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

Modeling Revenue

In building an equation for revenue, I followed Scully and adjusted for aspects that have changed how teams have generated revenue over time. A key assumption of my model is that owners and team executives are operating with intention to maximize profit.

The dependent variable for this model is team revenues from 2001-2014 for all U.S. based teams. The data were provided by *Baseball-Reference* (2015) and *Forbes* (2015). All dollar values are adjusted for inflation using 2014 as a base year. Team revenue is generated by television, licensing, ticket sales, and stadium revenues.

I hypothesize that team revenue is a positive function of star power (PAY), population (SMSA), offensive performance (TSA), pitching performance (TSW), and bandwagon fans (WINS). The stochastic error (ϵ) term is included in this regression equation to account for unaccounted errors in the independent variables.

I use team payroll (PAY) as a measure of the star power a team employs on their player roster. In order to use PAY to measure a team's star power, I assume team management is not making questionable decisions when allocating payroll resources. Furthermore, I assume more spending will bring more talent and this talent will attract more fans. In baseball, talent worthy of large portions of team payroll is delivered in the form of majestic 450-foot homeruns, sliding catches, and 98-mph fastballs. Such feats and abilities are quite literally *worth* watching.

Standard metropolitan statistical area ($SMSA_i$) is used to measure the population of the surrounding area in which $team_i$ plays. The SMSA of an area is used to represent the number of potential ticket buyers. Additionally, a larger SMSA yields a larger pool of potential TV viewers, which will attract lucrative broadcast deals for the team or make a team-affiliated network more profitable.

Team strikeout-to-walk ratio (TSW) and team slugging average (TSA) will determine how offensive performance and pitching performance impact revenue. High-powered offensive performance and effective pitching performance will increase consumer surplus of fans watching games, which increases revenue by increasing viewership and gate receipts. Additionally, an increase in either of these measures of performance corresponds with an increase in the probability of a competitive team. Such teams will give more consumer surplus to fans due to increased satisfaction with the product, which leads to a further increase in revenue.

Team win-percentage (WINS) represents the number of wins a team accomplishes over the course of a season. Scully showed that as team win percentage increases it will cause an increase in team revenues. My estimation operates under a fixed effects regression model, which allows for team and year-specific deviations from the mean to have no impact on the coefficients of the explanatory variables. Rather, such impacts are reflected in the coefficients of the panel variables. (Torres-Reyna 2007).

The results suggest significant positive relationships between revenue and PAY, SMSA, and TSW. The model predicts a one million dollar increase in PAY will lead to a $5.73 million increase in team revenue. Although it is clear there is a positive correlation between PAY and revenue, it would be a mistake to propose every dollar spent on payroll will yield a return of nearly six dollars. Suggesting this to baseball operations executives would lead to laughter and directions to the airport. While there is a correlation between the two variables, it is more accurately captured with PAY on the left side of the

equation. After dropping PAY from the list of independent variables, I use a slightly altered revenue model displayed in equation 3.

The subtraction of PAY is not the only structural change in this model. In the original model, WINS was statistically insignificant in predicting revenue. In this equation WINS has been replaced with WINSLAG, which represents the number of wins lagged one season. Using wins from the previous season, in theory, allows fans to become more excited about a team heading into a new season coming out of a previous season in which they were successful. Their excitement should lead to more tickets sold, games watched, and shirts and hats purchased. However, the coefficient is not significantly different from zero. The other insignificant variable in each of the models is TSA. The only significant variables in both of the models are TSW and SMSA, which are each significant at the 1% level. This new model is able to explain 77% of the variation in revenue, as opposed to 80% in the original equation.

3) $$revenue_i = 29.14 + 37.11\, TSW_{it} - 280.21\, TSA_{it} + .00003\, SMSA_{it} + .25\, WINSLAG_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

Insignificant values of WINS and WINSLAG is inconsistent with previous research. However, for an additional win to raise revenues it must raise them above what would have been otherwise earned. Teams experienced average revenue growth of 170.70% adjusted for inflation from 2001-2014. Team revenues have gone up over time no matter how they have performed. Increases in broadcast revenues and revenue sharing across the league have allowed revenue to increase steadily over time. Separating revenue into accounts receivable before the season started and revenue generated during the season would lead to a different conclusion.

Estimating wins, TSW, and TSA will create bias in the coefficients of the two performance metrics. One could predict wins quite well using TSW and TSA, which can be both assumed and empirically measured in equation 2. Therefore, using all three measures as independent variables with revenue on the left side of the equation will bias the performance metrics downward. To test this hypothesis, I use a fixed effects regression model to establish the downward bias likely as a product of multicollinearity between the three variables. The first equation (4) measures attendance per game as a function of TSA and TSW. Attendance per game data is taken from the same time period as revenue data. I use attendance per game as a proxy for game day revenue. The second equation (5) is the same as the first other than the addition of wins as an independent variable.

The results indicate using wins does in fact produce downward bias to the coefficients of TSA and TSW. The impact of the performance metrics is absorbed by wins, which becomes a statistically significant predictor of attendance when included. Using the second equation leads to unreliable estimates of team performance variables on revenue, which is proxied by average attendance.

This is not a suggestion that wins have no underlying connection to influencing attendance, rather, the impact of wins is lagged. To account for the impact of wins and its slower than expected impact I use wins from the previous season (winslag) in place of wins in the second equation (5) in order to create a third equation (6). Using winslag generates less downward impact on the coefficients of TSA and TSW, does not displace their significance, and is significant itself. The final equation (6) also explains 74% of the data, which is slightly better than either equations 4 or 5. Correlation measures indicate performance metrics are less correlated with winslag than with wins.

4) $$average\ attendance_i = \beta_0 + 3283.462\, TSW_{it} + 59034.88\, TSA_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

5) $$average\ attendance_i = \beta_0 + 1078.909 TSW_{it} + 18496.94\, TSA_{it} + 163.852\, Wins_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

6) $$average\ attendance_i = \beta_0 + 1557.959\, TSW_{it} + 39210.15\, TSA_{it} + 185.7084\, Winslag_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

For wins to impact revenue a single win would have to show team revenue above and beyond what would have been otherwise achieved. In today's market, baseball has a large audience - the majority of which view it as entertainment. The crowds of families, groups of friends, season ticket holders, associates, couples, tourists, and *some* true fans are not a win elastic bunch. Baseball games are social

events where people may not care who wins the game, nor know every pitcher's best pitch or their "favorite" player's alma mater. These groups of people will not be likely to change their consumption of baseball due to an additional win. Furthermore, TV contracts, which provide substantial revenues to teams, do not fluctuate immediately from an additional win. Separating TV revenue from all other revenue may allow wins to be a significant factor in determining revenue, but such separation cannot be done with my data due to lack of public information.

To develop a causal relationship between wins and revenues, any additional revenue generated from a win must represent revenue that would have been otherwise absent. This phenomenon is more likely to occur in the long run if team executives and owners display an appetite for success by way of consistently making the playoffs and winning World Series Championships.[5] Nonetheless, in the short-run it is irrational to expect winning more games will cause enough fans to spend a significant amount of money they did not otherwise intend on spending, which would be required to observe increased revenue.

Scully found that winning games was a statistically significant predictor of wins. These results, based on team data from 1968 and 1969, suggest a team was able to generate more income by increasing their frequency of winning. The platforms available for consuming baseball games are much greater now than they were in 1968. A family of four could watch 24,300 games on a flat-screen high-definition TV for the cost of attending six games.[6] I know, "there is nothing like being at the ballpark." While I do not disagree with this, I do note that "there is nothing like the comfort of your own home." Point being, in the current market wins no longer significantly drive revenue.

Furthermore, population is statistically significant at the 1% level. The coefficient suggests that each additional person increases a team's revenue by $30.80 (equation 3). Interpreting the coefficient of TSW, a one-unit increase will increase revenues by $37,114,500.

Moving to a city with a relatively high SMSA or a city with high population growth will result in increased team revenue. Lastly, improving team pitching in terms of TSW will result in improved revenues. In conclusion, teams with a talented pitching staff, playing in a highly populated area will have the highest statistical probability of consistently generating the most income[7]. Given the statistical insignificance found, no causal relationship between team wins and team revenue is present. This impedes the original framework for calculating MRP. Due to the impediment, the model for wins becomes irrelevant to explaining MRP. However, using the impact pitching performance has on team revenue I present a new methodology for MRP calculations.

Marginal Revenue Product

The framework for calculating the MRP of a pitcher is done by estimating his impact on team revenue using $pitcher_i$'s performance measured in terms of SOW_i. The key to this framework lies in the coefficient of TSW derived from the team revenue model in the preceding section. The method of calculation begins in determining how $pitcher_i$ impacted his team's TSW. To find the impact I multiply SOW_i by the contribution of $pitcher_i$ measured in terms of $IPPCT_i$. The number derived represents the impact $pitcher_i$ had on his team's TSW. This impact on TSW is then multiplied by the coefficient of TSW derived in the revenue regression, which produces the MRP of $pitcher_i$ (equation 7).

$$7)\quad MRP_i = \left[\frac{IPPCT_i}{1458} * SOW_i\right] * 37114500$$

To calculate if $pitcher_i$ is paid above or below his MRP, his contribution to team revenue (MRP) is placed in the denominator, his average annual salary in the numerator (equation 8). The rate of pay will be greater than 1 if $pitcher_i$ is paid more than his MRP, less than 1 if paid less than his MRP, and

[5] Ambiguity arises as to the number of years of lag time a winning tradition takes to establish.

[6] According to MLB Team Marketing Reports, the average cost for a family of four to attend an MLB game stood at $211.68 in 2015. This cost, multiplied by 6, equals $1,272. A flat screen TV goes for about $627 and at current prices, a five-year subscription to MLB.TV costs $645.

[7] This refers only to the 2001-2014 time period observed in the data. Any conclusions about previous years are better supported with corresponding data. Predictive conclusions about future revenues are possible using this model, assuming all else is constant. However, such an assumption is potentially false. The comparison between the results of this model and Scully's model serves as evidence.

equal to 1 if paid exactly his marginal revenue product.

8) $\frac{SALARY_i}{MRP_i} = rate\ of\ pay_i$

The results of the MRP calculations are first broken down to determine whether exploitation exists under the free agency system. On average, pitchers with average annual salaries of less than $1,000,000 are paid 37% of their MRP. This means owners are yielding an average 63% return on these pitchers. Pitchers with average annual salaries equal to or greater than $1,000,000 earn 81% of their MRP. For this group, owners are yielding an average return of 19%. These results depict exploitation likely caused by the limited bargaining power of pitchers with less than six years of MLB service time. Pitchers who are paid salaries equal to $1,000,000 or greater are more likely to have negotiated a salary without limited bargaining power, thus earning a greater portion of their MRP.

To determine if level of contribution impacts the portion of MRP a pitcher is paid I separated the pitchers[8] by level of contribution, assumed to be based on talent,[9] and looked at the average MRP paid to the pitchers at each level. The levels are defined by contribution, measured in terms of IPPCT. Pitchers with IPPCT less than .06 are considered mediocre. Those with IPPCT between .06 and .13 are considered stars, and those with IPPCT greater than .13 are superstars. The results show that on average mediocre pitchers earn 73% of their MRP, star pitchers 39%, and superstars 60%.

The relationship between groups is a function of the demand for each level of contribution and play owners seek. Pitchers who are mediocre, by definition contribute less either by lack of skill or lack of opportunity. This does not mean they are not in demand. Teams have large bullpens of pitchers and they need to fill those roles. The demand for pitchers who have contributed at the mediocre level is high. In addition, not every pitcher on a team can be paid top-dollar. Owners are operating with scarce resources influenced by revenue sharing if nothing else. Superstars see less effective demand for their labor from teams who lack the finances to pay market value for pitchers who contribute at this level. Due to lower demand in the market for superstar pitchers their average annual salaries represent a smaller portion of their MRP.

Star pitchers may suffer from a further intensified lack of demand. If an owner's interest should be more inclined to gravitate toward mediocre pitchers or superstars it would account for this result. An owner's interest moves toward superstars because they are established high-level contributors. Conversely, their interest moves toward mediocre players because they have the highest potential for unexpected upside and – on average – the lowest cost. Star pitchers are likely to be the most inconsistent group, having potential for upside equivalent to that of a superstar. As a result, demand tends to shift away from the star pitchers, leaving their salaries representing a smaller portion of their MRP.

Bargaining power is another factor that can lead to exploitation when it is absent, and push wages up against MRP when present. In this case, bargaining power refers to the ability of a pitcher's agent to negotiate on his behalf without limitations as to how much the team is obligated to pay him. The free agency system gives no bargaining power to players with less than two years of MLB service time (EXP) and limited bargaining power to players with less than six. This essentially puts a cap on the capacity of the average annual salary a player with less than six years of EXP can earn. Given this institutional structure, team owners who have no obligation to pay a pitcher his MRP will exploit pitchers with less than six years EXP. Taking the observations from the pitcher salary model, I separated pitchers with less than six years of experience (206 observations) from those with greater than six (163). I find players with EXP less than six earn, on average, 24% of their MRP, while pitchers with full bargaining power earn 71% of their MRP.

Pitchers negotiating contracts with full bargaining power should earn wages close to their MRP. This means that a player's market value will be equivalent to his MRP because owners will be willing to pay up to the point at which the pitcher is contributing an equal amount to team revenue. Any

[8] The pitchers used in this exploration are taken from the data set used in calculating determinants of pitcher salary (equation 1).

[9] Superstar pitchers should appear more than mediocre pitchers because managers are likely to use their best players more often.

deviation of salary above that of a pitcher's MRP will represent either tremendous salesmanship on the pitcher's behalf, incompetence of the general manager, high expectations about future performance, limited supply of pitchers available, and/or high levels of demand for pitchers. Deviation of salary below the MRP of a pitcher is a product of the opposite. Alternative explanations of salary deviations from a pitchers MRP exist. These are likely a product of intentions not congruent with profit maximizing, for example, winning at all costs. Alternatively, salaries below MRP may be the result of willingness on behalf of the pitcher to take a pay-cut. Instances such as this may arise in return for job satisfaction from a preferred city or an increase in perceived probability of winning a World Series.

I applied the algorithm to the superstar pitchers who signed new contracts during the 2016 MLB offseason. I used each pitchers' IPPCT and SOW from the 2015 regular season as the input. Their estimated market value (EMV) and the *actual* annual value (AAV) of the contracts are as follows. Johnny Cueto's EMV is $20,647,943 his AAV is

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$21 million. Yovani Gallardo's EMV is $8,339,045 his AAV is $11 million. Zack Greinke's EMV is $28,281,351 his AAV is $34.4 million. Ian Kennedy's EMV is $14,318,572 his AAV is $14 million. Colby Lewis's EMV is $17,569,464 his AAV is $6 million. David Price's EMV is $30,538,194[10] his AAV is $31 million. Jeff Samardzija's EMV is $18,121,385 his AAV is $18 million. Jordan Zimmermann's EMV is $21,537,402 his AAV is $22 million.[11]

Conclusion

The methodology established serves to measure an MLB pitcher's MRP. The reliability of the algorithm depends on the theory of MRP holding. If it does hold, players with full bargaining power over their wages should be earning what the algorithm produces. Support stems from the fact that superstar pitchers with such full bargaining power earn actual salaries within 4% of their projected value as a group. Given the strong correlation between projected and actual salary, when full bargaining power is present, which is the only time MRP should be expected to hold, the algorithm's product is validated. Therefore, pitchers who have their wages diminished due to the CBA will obtain the product of the algorithm when they achieve free agency.

In an analysis of Stephen Strasburg's contract (the most recent superstar pitcher to sign) the algorithm estimates an amount relatively close to his actual salary. The most accurate prediction uses Strasburg's 162 game average. This is an example of the details which must be specified on a player by player basis. The decision to use Strasburg's career statistics is made given his lack of consistency due to injury and injury prevention strategies. Doing so results in a predicted value of $24,167,699. The average annual value of his new contract is $25 million.

Finally, is Clayton Kershaw's salary of 60 times the league minimum explainable? As it turns out, Kershaw's performance does justify the value of his average annual salary. Applying the algorithm, including the left-handed pitcher bonus, results in an estimated market value of $31,009,857, against his average annual salary of $31 million.

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[10] Calculated using the left-handed pitcher bonus (equation 1).

[11] According to Ken Rosenthal and league sources Colón agreed to a rare "hometown discount." He opted to accept less money to stay with the New York Mets. This is an example of a pitcher having full-bargaining power but not exploiting it. In this situation Colón is deriving utility from playing for the Mets as opposed to strictly monetary compensation. Colón's MV is $28,029,695 his AAV is $7.25 million. This estimate does not account for EXP (equation 1).

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50 Years Ago

Marvin Miller takes the helm

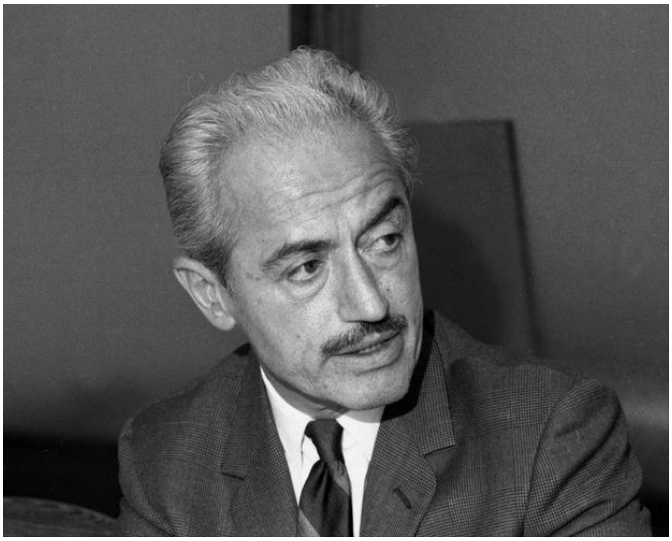
By Michael Haupert

> *"We were looking for someone smart and tough to lead us out of the woods, because we didn't even know where the woods were."* - Dodger outfielder Al Ferrara on Marvin Miller

On April 12, 1966 the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) announced the fourth executive director of what had been, up to that point, a largely ineffective association. At the time it was unclear just what effect the newly elected Marvin Miller would have, but his uncle recognized his potential when he urged him to "give those baseball bosses hell!"

Marvin J. Miller was born April 14, 1917 in the Bronx, but grew up in Brooklyn rooting for the Dodgers, eventually graduating from New York University with a degree in economics. Prior to taking over the leadership of the MLBPA he worked for the National War Labor Board, the International Association of Machinists, the United Auto Workers (UAW), and the United Steelworkers of America (USWA). By the time he took over the MLBPA his negotiating skills were finely honed, and his devotion to labor causes was well established. When he first arrived on the scene he was an unknown to the general public, but in labor circles his skills were well respected.

He joined the USWA as a staff economist in 1950, ultimately rising to chief economist and assistant to the president. In these roles he also served as a member of the union's basic negotiating committee – the front lines of labor negotiations that prepared him for his future work in baseball. In 1950 the USWA, along with the UAW, were considered the two pillars of union strength in America.



Marvin Miller

Miller's path to baseball began unexpectedly. In early 1965 the USWA concluded a bitter presidential election that resulted in the ouster of David McDonald, Miller's boss and mentor, which led Miller to begin looking about for alternate employment. After exploring opportunities with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and a faculty position at Harvard, he was asked if he would be willing to interview for the executive directorship of the MLBPA. Miller was unenthusiastic about the position, but when he learned that Robin Roberts was heading the search committee he agreed to an interview out of deference to his heroic on-field accomplishments.

When asked how he could have turned down a position at Harvard for the ballplayer's fledging union, Miller explained that he thought academic jobs were likely to come along again, but the chance to build a union was a once in a lifetime opportunity. In addition, he reasoned that because the MLBPA was totally ineffective, anything he did would be a big improvement. He loved baseball and a good fight, and considered the players to be the most exploited workers in the country while at the same time being the most irreplaceable in relation to their work. It seemed like a natural fit.

Player unions before the MLBPA

The MLBPA was the fifth attempt by ballplayers to organize themselves. Until the introduction of the reserve clause prior to the 1880 season, players could shop their services to multiple teams. The reserve clause, however, altered the labor market, tipping the salary negotiation scales heavily against the players. Their first attempt to level the playing field occurred with the formation of the Brotherhood of Professional Baseball Players in 1885. The Brotherhood eventually created its own league, the Players League, which collapsed, taking the Brotherhood down with it, after its only season in 1890.

The next attempt at unionization occurred during the heat of the AL-NL war. The League Protective Player's Association had a brief run, but faded into insignificance when the leagues settled their differences. Attorney David Fultz then established the Baseball Player's Fraternity in 1912 and it survived until 1918. It died after he returned from the war and accepted the presidency of the International League. In 1946 the short-lived American Baseball Guild was organized by Robert Murphy, a Boston attorney. It lasted one year, and is perhaps most famous for an aborted mid-season strike by the Pittsburgh Pirates. Murphy's lasting legacy is a spring training per diem for players, known to this day as "Murphy money."

Though Murphy and the Guild quickly disappeared, his efforts were not totally in vain. In an effort to ward off any future attempts to unionize, the owners worked with a player representative from each team and established a minimum salary of $5500 with a maximum salary reduction of 25% from one year to

the next. The biggest prize in the eyes of the players was the creation of a pension. It was originally funded by player contributions and proceeds from the sale of World Series radio and television rights. Eventually revenues from the All-Star game became a central source of pension funds. The players took the pension plan very seriously, but it was not well funded, and by 1949 had become insolvent.

The formation of the MLBPA

The underfunded pension became the grain of sand that irritated the players into action. It might have been the most important thing that ultimately led to the hiring of Marvin Miller. In 1953 players began to question the fund, wanting more information and the ability to monitor it. Management stonewalled this request, but eventually relented to meet with the players on the issue. Each club selected a player representative to do so, but there was no formal organization to actually do anything. The only real benefit of being a player rep was a free loan of a Chrysler automobile.

In August of 1953 the player reps took matters into their own hands and hired attorney Jonas Norman Lewis to accompany them to the pension committee meeting to serve as their liaison with the owners. Lewis had been with a law firm that represented the New York Giants for many years, and one of his clients was the Harry Stevens concession firm. His selection was an indication of the naiveté of the players in all matters legal. In an April 1954 article in the *Labor Law Journal* Lewis described himself as "a lawyer primarily interested in labor cases from management's side," and opined that strikes were an unfair labor practice. He defended baseball's reserve system and the antitrust exemption baseball enjoyed, as well as expressing the opinion that ballplayers should feel lucky to have their jobs and enviable wages.

When he arrived for the meetings the owners refused to allow him in the room. Over the next few years Lewis was kept on retainer and the players turned to him for advice on various issues. Despite his background, Lewis fought hard for the ballplayers. In May 1955 he issued his first report to the MLBPA, highlighting the major gains for the players, which included a substantial pension improvement and an increase in the minimum salary to $6000.

Robert Feller, first president of the MLBPA

In December 1953, while the owners held their winter meetings in Atlanta, the players gathered there as well, though separate from the owners, and formed the Major League Baseball Players Association, chartered in New York. Lewis filed the paperwork and Bob Feller was elected the first president of the MLBPA, holding the position until 1959.

Though Lewis was devoted to the players, he was not a full time employee, and resisted becoming one. As a result there was no central office, off season communication was sparse, and the MLBPA languished. While Lewis was committed to the players, he did not feel they reciprocated that commitment to their own cause, citing their reluctance to pay union dues. The players fired Lewis in February 1959, grousing about his lack of commitment to their cause and complaining that he refused to tour the spring training camps to meet with them.

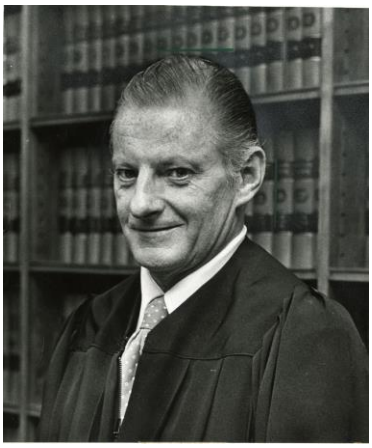
Later that year Feller stepped down, and the association hired Frank Scott on a part time basis as executive director to oversee its trivial operations. Scott had previously served as the traveling secretary for the Yankees. He developed relationships with many players in that role, and after leaving, he served as a go-between, an early iteration of an agent, for some of them to secure endorsements and paid guest appearances.

In 1960 Scott proposed that the players create a central office for their association, staffed by a full time position that he would fill. The players agreed and Scott set up headquarters in a New York hotel where he also ran his agent business. For the first time, the players saw an active role for themselves, describing the purpose of the central office as an instrument for ball players to register their views and opinions on matters pertaining to Association policy or player welfare. Scott's first major initiative was to hire a legal advisor. The players stated that their most pressing interests in the new attorney were to protect the pension and give them a voice in complaining about playing conditions. Judge Robert C. Cannon got the job ahead of a list

of candidates that included former commissioner Happy Chandler, future owner Edward Bennett Williams, and Richard Moss, the man who would hold the position under Marvin Miller.

Judge Cannon

Cannon certainly had the pedigree for the job. His father, an attorney, once represented Shoeless Joe Jackson, and had previously attempted to unionize the players. The younger Cannon was strongly advocated for by Bob Friend, the influential Pirates player rep. However, he was another hire that exposed the players' weak grasp of labor relations. Upon his appointment, Cannon voiced with pleasure that he was well received by baseball authorities and club owners. He also admitted in his application that he was not an authority on pensions, but espoused his belief that baseball was an important influence on American youth and as a result players should set a good example on and off the field. At one meeting with owners he told them that his primary concern was for the best interests of baseball, and his secondary concern was what was best for the players.



Judge Robert Cannon

What Cannon was more concerned with than leading the players, was leading the owners. He coveted the commissionership. In positioning himself for the job, he once described Ford Frick as a good man who did not have the training to be commissioner. He felt that a judicial background was necessary to be a successful commissioner, along with a love of baseball - a description of his own qualifications. When Frick retired in 1965, Cannon, still serving as legal advisor to the players, launched an unsuccessful bid for his office, falling to retired Air Force General Spike Eckert. This should have sounded alarm bells with the players. Instead, they believed his cozy relationship with ownership was an asset to their cause.

Electing a new leader

It was pensions, not salaries, which were the primary concern of the players in 1965. By then the MLB pension fund was accruing $1.6 million per year. Players were making annual contributions of $344 apiece, and teams added 95% of the All Star ticket sales and 40% of the broadcast fees from the All Star and World Series games. Robin Roberts and Jim Bunning, two of the more vocal player reps, voiced a suspicion shared by many that the owners were under-valuing the media revenues in order to reduce their pension obligations to players. This was easy enough to do since the rights were sold as a package, bundled with the Game of the Week broadcasts. In order to level the playing field, the players felt it best to hire a professional labor negotiator as their leader.

But the search was complicated by the underlying hostility that ballplayers had toward unions as a result of a very effective propaganda campaign run by the owners and fostered by the press. Players had been taught that baseball was a game, not a business; the owners were sportsmen, not businessmen; the commissioner was there to serve the game, not work for the owners; and that the players should feel privileged to be able to play for a living. Unions, they were reminded, meant work stoppages, mafia involvement, and violence.

Miller was approached about interviewing for the baseball job by renowned labor advisor George Taylor, a faculty member at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business. Taylor, who was assisting the MLBPA in identifying potential leaders, had originally approached Lane Kirkland, a high ranking official (and eventual president) of the AFL-CIO, but had been rebuffed. Miller was his second choice, but a solid one, given his background and accomplishments with the steelworkers.

The search committee consisted of Roberts, Bunning, Harvey Kuenn, and Bob Friend. The other candidates interviewed for the job included Judge Cannon (Friend's favorite – so much so that he declined to attend the interview of Miller), Detroit attorney Tom Costello (Bunning's early choice), and Bob Feller, who actively campaigned for the job.

Miller nearly sabotaged his own candidacy. During the interview he strongly argued against the suggestion that his legal advisor could be former Vice President Richard Nixon. He told the players that because the MLBPA was such a small

organization, it could not afford that kind of incompatibility in a union with just two professionals. He urged them to let their director, whoever that may be, pick his own legal counsel.

After meeting with the committee, Miller developed a strong desire for the job. He wrote to Roberts expressing his interest by pointing out the near perfect fit between the players' needs and his skills. He sought to soothe the fear that a labor leader like himself would bring teamster tactics and mafia connections to the game by assuring Roberts how important it was that harmonious relationships prevail without any sacrifice of player interests.

Despite Miller's outstanding credentials, the committee recommended Judge Cannon, and in January of 1966 at a player rep meeting overseen by Commissioner Eckert and his aide Lee MacPhail, the nomination was seconded, and on the second ballot he was unanimously recommended. All that remained was a *pro forma* vote of the rank and file. Ten days later, before his election could be held, his swift unraveling began.

Cannon had campaigned for the position, but then had second thoughts when he realized how much money he would lose in his foregone judicial pension if he switched jobs. Instead of turning down the job, he sought to renegotiate the contract, asking for a raise to cover his lost pension, and resisting the requirement that he relocate to New York. The players, including Friend, were turned off by what they viewed as blatant greed, and withdrew the offer. With tail between their legs they turned to Miller, who, with wounded pride, initially rebuffed them. After intense personal lobbying by Roberts and Friend, he ultimately agreed to take the position if the players elected him.

After a tour of all spring training sites, Miller was nominated and then officially elected shortly before the 1966 season began. The process, however, did not go smoothly. Judge Cannon and MLB executives were actively working behind the scenes to squash Miller's election. Before he even had a single meeting with the rank and file, newspaper articles appeared quoting players antagonistic to the idea of a professional labor man leading their association.

Miller's first meeting was with the Angels at their spring training site in Palm Springs. After a brief presentation he received the silent treatment. It wasn't until he pointed out the simple fact that because their pension plan had not kept up with inflation, it had actually eroded in value, that he got any response. He also assuaged their fears by imploring them to become active in their association so that they, and not he, would dictate its direction and the issues they wanted to address.

While the players were unfamiliar with Miller, the owners were not. They feared him and ran a smear campaign to foil his election. It was effective in the western camps, but failed out east. The day before Miller met with the Dodgers, Buzzie Bavasi visited the clubhouse. He warned the players that they should be afraid of unions, reminding them they had families to feed, and unions meant strikes, which meant no work and no paycheck. Cannon was also deployed, distributing pamphlets to every clubhouse warning the players against hiring a labor man who would bring racketeering and goon squads to the game. The approach backfired. In the end, the players decided that if ownership was so against the union, it must be good for the players.

Miller countered the owner's propaganda blitz by pointing out that despite its name, the MLBPA was already a union by legal definition. Furthermore, he emphasized that they, not he, would set the tone. While he did not promise that he would never lead them out on strike, he enumerated the advantages of a well-timed strike if the stakes were worthwhile.

From Palm Springs, Miller headed to Arizona to meet with the Giants, Cubs and Indians, and received an equally tepid reception. Each club held a vote after his visit. Miller was not informed of the vote totals at that time, which was probably good for his morale, since the players in the Cactus League rejected him overwhelmingly: 102-17 against, with the Giants unanimously opposing him.

Things went better in Florida, despite similar attempts by owners. They sent representatives to Miller's meetings to spy and disrupt them. The owner's public position had always been that baseball was not a business, but a national institution, which they were graciously providing to America, despite the unabashed greed of the players, who expected to be paid commensurate with their productivity. The players, they argued, should be thankful that they had earned the right to

play baseball when most Americans had to *work* for a living.

In the western camps the votes were conducted publicly by managers. In Florida, the player reps took control and saw to it that the players ran the elections, conducted as secret ballots. The difference was staggering. In the east Miller was supported by a vote of 472-34. On April 12, 1966 Marvin Miller was introduced as the new executive director of the MLBPA. Baseball would never be the same.

The first hurdle

Having failed at their attempt to prevent Miller's election, the owners changed strategy, attacking on two fronts. While he may have been elected, Miller was not yet under contract, a situation they sought to exploit. Additionally, the owners had intimate knowledge of MLBPA finances, especially their weaknesses. Once again they deployed Judge Cannon.

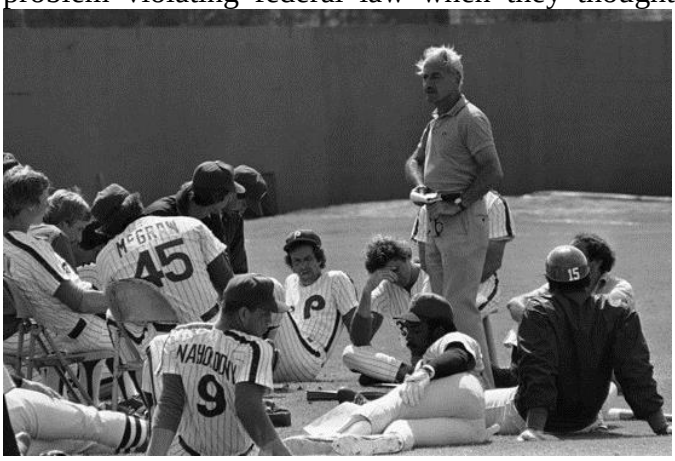
The Judge was assigned to draft the newly elected executive director's contract. On its face, this seemed reasonable, since he was the legal counsel for the MLBPA. However, he was also the jilted suitor whose real desires lay in serving the owners, not the players. Not surprisingly then, the contract Cannon originally produced was refused by Miller.

Miller and the players had agreed on a five year deal with a July 1, 1966 start date at $50,000 per year with an annual expense account in the amount of $20,000. But Cannon proffered a two year contract with a starting date of January 1, 1967. The later date was significant because it meant Miller would not be representing the players during negotiations over the pension contract, which was about to expire.

The contract also included a three-day-notice termination clause if Miller was accused of public ridicule or moral turpitude. The vagueness of this clause was troubling enough, but the fact that there were no directions in the contract on how his expense account was to be managed opened him up to a virtually infinite number of moral turpitude charges. Miller insisted that the contract spell out reimbursement requirements, include the same good-conduct clause that appeared in player contracts, and begin on the original agreed-upon date. He compromised on length, signing a 30 month pact.

At the same time they were trying to outflank Miller with the contract, the owners applied pressure to the association's weak finances. When Miller was hired the association's assets totaled $5700 and some used furniture in a rented office. The primary source of MLBPA income came from the owners. Player's paid $50 in annual dues, which was not nearly enough to cover the costs of running the association. The owners enhanced the amount with funds from their own coffers (sort of: the funds actually were diverted from the amount owners had agreed to contribute to the pension fund). This was a blatant violation of the Taft-Hartley Act, but neither the owners, their legal advisors, nor Judge Cannon seemed to be concerned.

When Miller was elected, instead of Cannon, as MLB had expected, the owners suddenly became aware of the Taft-Hartley act and announced they were legally prohibited from providing any funds, thus starving the association of cash. They had no problem violating federal law when they thought



Miller made a regular habit of touring spring training facilities

Cannon would get the job, but suddenly got religion when Miller was the new hire. Miller, who was familiar with the Taft-Hartley act, readily supported MLB's decision. However, it meant he had a serious cash flow problem. MLB's refusal to fund the union was less about the law than it was about putting a financial stranglehold on the union. However, it turned out to be a legal blunder. By admitting they were prohibited from funding the position by federal law, they had *de facto* conceded that MLB was a business, it was engaged in interstate commerce, and that the MLBPA was indeed a union as defined under federal law, all of

which would come back to haunt the owners in the future.

To fund the association in his first year Miller negotiated a group license agreement with Coca Cola to put player images on the underside of their bottle caps. The owners sought to scuttle the plan by refusing to license team logos. In reply, Coke simply airbrushed the team logos off of the baseball caps and proceeded with the plan. The result was a $60,000 infusion of cash, more than enough to tide over the office. During his career Miller would negotiate several such licensing agreements for the players, which produced substantial amounts of ancillary income.

Pension negotiations

The final salvo fired by the owners was to employ delay tactics on the negotiations over the soon-to-expire pension agreement. They scheduled a June 6th meeting to discuss the pension. Holding such a meeting during the season was extraordinary, apparently signaling its importance. However, when Miller and the players showed up, no effort was made to negotiate. The owners initially refused to allow Miller to participate, since he was not yet under contract. Commissioner Eckert changed his mind, however, when Miller informed him that if he was not invited, none of the players would attend.

Having failed to exclude Miller, management sought to outflank the union altogether by announcing the new pension plan they had unilaterally decided upon, and then prepared to attend a press conference to unveil it. Miller was initially stunned by the owner's chutzpah, but recovered in time to pull Commissioner Eckert aside and point out to him that they were about to violate federal labor laws.

The owners called off the press conference and set up a series of meetings to discuss the pension plan. The old plan had allocated 40% of the national TV money for the All Star game and World Series to the pension. As TV rights rapidly escalated, MLB did not want to share that wealth. Instead, they proposed to contribute $4 million per year. Miller wanted to review the television contract, but the owners refused.

Miller proposed that the players' contribution to their own pension be eliminated, commensurate with the way private pension plans were evolving (the steel industry, for example, eliminated worker contributions in 1949). The $344 that players had previously contributed to the pension would instead be converted to dues. The $50 in dues they had been paying would revert to the players. Thus, players would see a $50 increase in their take home pay without losing either their pension or union membership. The owners had to approve the dues check off and agree to transfer those funds to the union, which they eventually did. All but two players signed up for the dues contribution. The degree of support stunned the owners and was a delightful surprise to Miller.

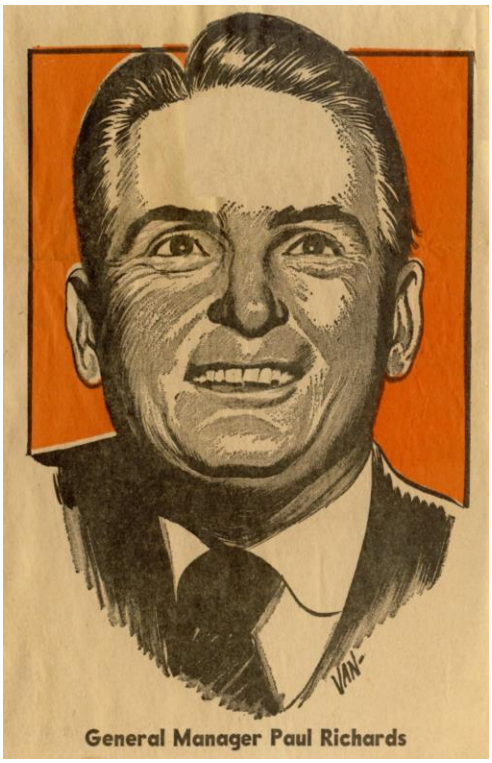
Negotiations got nowhere until Miller learned that MLB had previously broken the law by withdrawing $167,440 from the pension fund to redistribute among the owners. Using this as a bargaining chip, he finally closed the pension deal. The owners approved the elimination of the player contribution and the players accepted the fixed pension contribution. Miller was criticized for this concession, but he concluded that a straight cash contribution was better for the players, since it was impossible to enforce the 40% clause without access to the contract.

The owners had hoped that by stalling, they would force Miller, who at the time still had no clear plan for funding his office, to abandon the cause. Instead, it enraged the players, and they consolidated their support behind Miller. In retrospect, the owners probably could not have done anything to better galvanize union support.

By the end of 1966 Miller's biggest victory was the pension plan, but the most important one was solidifying the union. He provided leadership and expert counsel with the addition of Richard Moss, his former colleague from the USWA, and put the union on firm financial footing with the dues check off (which cost the players nothing) and the Coca Cola money. More importantly, the union no longer depended on the owners for funding, and their leader, Marvin Miller, was anything but their shill. Quite to the contrary, Miller was more pro-player than many of the players were. And while some took a while to trust him and buy into the idea that baseball players needed a union, they all backed him in time.

Miller's legacy

In his first six months on the job Miller delivered a new pension plan for the players. Remarkably, it was the first negotiated labor agreement in the history of American sports. In his second year he went one better, negotiating the first basic agreement in professional sports, signed in February 1968. But the best was yet to come. Before he retired in 1982 the players had gained the right to arbitration for disciplinary issues and salaries, overturned the reserve clause, increased the size of their pensions, and saw salaries rise by nearly 2000% - all without the Armageddon predicted by the owners.



General Manager Paul Richards

"This will be the end of baseball as we knew it," lamented Braves GM Paul Richards in reference to the dangers of *negotiating* (my emphasis) a collective bargaining agreement with the players. Richards was right, it was the end of baseball as the owners knew it. He just had no idea how much better things would get. Player salaries skyrocketed, attendance boomed, television revenues soared, franchise values exploded, and state of the art, publicly funded, stadiums sprouted like mushrooms. The owners are very protective of their financial records, but there is no evidence to support the claim that the rise in power of the MLBPA harmed the owners. They have been forced to share a bigger piece of the revenue pie, but the pie has grown exponentially since Marvin Miller arrived on the scene, allowing both sides to grow rich far beyond anything they could have imagined a half century ago.

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The Winter Meetings

The 1916 Winter Meetings: The Minors and Players Are Restless

By Rich Bogovich

The Business of Baseball Committee is currently writing a book on the history of the winter meetings. This is an excerpt from that book.

Major-league attendance surged nicely in 1916 without Federal League franchises competing with six NL and AL teams in four cities, Chicago, St. Louis, Brooklyn, and Pittsburgh. The combined attendance of 6.5 million – up from 4.8 million in 1915 – was only returning to 1911 levels, but major-league magnates had to be relieved that the recovery occurred promptly. Though the Cardinals'

attendance slipped slightly, the other five major-league teams in Federal League cities – the Cubs, White Sox, Browns, Robins (Dodgers), and Pirates – saw their combined attendance increase by about 775,000, or close to half of the total increase in major-league baseball. In addition, the two teams bought by Federal League owners, the Cubs and Browns, saw their attendance more than double. Nevertheless, there were several significant controversies and threats looming over Organized Baseball as the leagues' annual meetings drew near in November and December.

New Orleans hosted the annual conclave of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues (NAPBL) for 1916, from November 14 through 16. The *Boston Globe* had the benefit of a preview provided by its own Tim Murnane, who doubled as the NAPBL's vice president, elected a year earlier by virtue of his league leadership in the Northeast. Murnane began by focusing on a big negative. He noted that in 1914 the major leagues had paid $300,000 into the minor-league treasury for purchasing and drafting its players. Complications caused by the Federal League's existence apparently prevented any such deposit in 1915, but during the fall of 1916 the payment was less than $100,000, due to the many signings of former Federal Leaguers in the AL and NL, in place of minor leaguers, to round out rosters.

Murnane highlighted a second potential agenda item that involved the two major leagues: making a minor-league representative a fourth member of the National Commission, the body that had governed baseball since 1902. There was also talk of a fifth member who would represent the players. The National Commission had always consisted of the AL and NL presidents plus a member on whom they mutually agreed. From the onset, that third member was Cincinnati Reds president August "Garry" Herrmann. American League President Ban Johnson, however, was reportedly finding it difficult to work with National League President John Tener, who was finishing his third year in that position. The elimination of the Federal League must not have changed the relationship between the AL and NL at its core, as Murnane declared, "No matter how pleasant everything may look on the surface, the fact is that the magnates of the two major leagues look on each other with suspicion." Murnane also commented that in recent years the NL, AL, and NAPBL had "worked together in the most friendly manner."[i] The implication was that, assuming no desire by the NL to replace Tener on the commission, adding a minor-league representative may have been the most promising cure. It wasn't until he wrote a shorter preview two days later that Murnane brought up an aspect of the NAPBL discussions likely to be of greater interest to fans, under the headline, "Many Trades Are Expected," but he didn't elaborate in the article.[ii]

NAPBL President Michael Sexton circulated a letter shortly before the meeting that was reminiscent of his call for frugality during his opening remarks a year earlier. As it turned out, a family illness kept him back home, so Murnane served as chairman. That afforded him the opportunity to refer to himself in the third person in his account of the first day. At the time of the NAPBL meeting a year earlier, its membership consisted of 22 leagues, and it had grown to 26 by the time of the gathering in New Orleans. However, a few had experienced or were continuing to cope with complications, most notably the Canadian League. Its teams didn't play at all during 1916 due to Canada's participation in the Great War across Europe. In fact, the league would never resume play.

Murnane also framed some labor intrigue scheduled for the next day, in the form of a presentation by major leaguer-turned-attorney Dave Fultz, leader of the four-year-old Fraternity of Baseball Players. "It is well known that all the minor league players have signed an agreement to withhold their signatures from new contracts until after March 1 or until notified by Fultz that all is well," Murnane wrote. "The minor league magnates will not worry very much if they are forced by the players to close their ball parks until Memorial Day. It would cost the leagues nearly $20,000 each season to meet the demands of Mr. Fultz, who has asked the convention to make it a law requiring the clubs to pay for the transportation of players to and from home."[iii]

Fultz did prove to be the big story of the second day, and as a result the specter of a strike surfaced. The NAPBL's leaders voted unanimously to table indefinitely each of four demands presented by Fultz, essentially rejecting them. Those demands were to prohibit certain contractual clauses that allowed teams to stop paying injured players, to

permit unconditionally released players to sign immediately with other clubs, to provide players with travel money to attend spring-training camps, and to revise procedures of the minor leagues' National Board when it heard claims filed by players. NAPBL Secretary John Farrell, its only paid employee, asserted that the first demand had been met three years earlier but argued against the other three demands.[iv]

Dave Fultz tried to organize the players, but was half a century too early

Decisions on the NAPBL's third and final day included submitting a request to the two major leagues to form a second National Commission that would include minor-league representation and act only on appealed rulings of the minor leagues' National Board. As formulated, the new panel would have two minor-league and two major-league slots, plus a member selected by the other four. According to Murnane, "many baseball men" favored offering that fifth seat to federal Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis of Chicago, who in 1914 had been assigned to preside over the Federal League's injunction suit against the NL and AL. An internal decision made was to a repeal the year-old regulation under which the NAPBL set player and salary limits for all of the minor leagues. As a result, each league would again set its own limits.[v]

The NAPBL apparently didn't take seriously a major proposal floating around Organized Baseball at the time: to form a new American Association as a third major league. At a minimum, the plan was endorsed by AL President Johnson. The idea was to combine Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Toledo, and Louisville of the existing American Association with Baltimore, Buffalo, Newark, and Toronto of the International League. One vision for a reformed International League had existing franchises in Providence, Rochester, and Montreal joined by Syracuse, Albany, Utica, and Binghamton, with Jersey City possibly supplanting Richmond. IL President Ed Barrow rejected the concept upon his return from New Orleans, though it had been discussed.[vi]

On November 23, about a week after the NAPBL's labor decisions, Dave Fultz responded publicly:

> The National Association simply must grant these requests; that is all there is to it. We have pledges from virtually all our players not to sign contracts unless they get word from officers of the Fraternity.
>
> I am more sure than ever that we have the majority of the players behind us on this issue. Since the minor leagues conference ignored our requests in New Orleans, I have received letters from dozens of players asking that we "sit tight."[vii]

That, in turn, provoked a prompt warning from none other than NL President Tener:

> Should the major league players declare a sympathetic strike because of the refusal of the National Association to grant certain requests of the Baseball Players Fraternity it will be a strike not against the National Commission but against the very game of baseball itself.
>
> I cannot conceive that young men like our players can talk of attempting to tie up their business over such a trivial matter as is involved in the dispute between the Players Fraternity and the minor leagues. A strike of this kind would simply mean that big league players would have to bear the entire brunt of it. The Class AA and A minor leagues could easily pick up 16 men for their teams, while the big leagues were idle.
>
> Everything that has been accomplished for the benefit and advancement of the player has come through the national commission. Mr. Fultz says the commission has always been fair and just. I will go farther than that and say that in disputes between the players and club owners the commission always has leaned toward the player.[viii]

Fultz, on behalf of a Fraternity membership reported at 1,215, publicly rebutted Tener about two weeks later and took issue with a particular adjective that the NL leader used:

> These minor league matters are not trivial and are of as much importance to major league players as they are to the men in the minors. There are about 5,000 minor league players and only 360 major leaguers. And sooner or later every one of those 360 men will drift back to the minors or retire from the game. That is why the failure of the National Association to recognize the Fraternity's just requests involves the major league player as well as the minor league player and why he is willing to go to any length to support the minors. Furthermore, of what use would the Fraternity be if its members failed to band together in such times as these?"[ix]

Meanwhile, on November 24 it was announced that a special meeting of the National Commission was called for December 1 in Chicago, on changes to the form of players' contracts. Tener's fellow members both had public comments to offer. "There will be no renewal of high salaried 'war' contracts," Ban Johnson said a few days before the meeting,

Garry Herrmann and Ban Johnson, two thirds of the National Commission

alluding to the inflation caused by competition with the Federal League.[x] That position couldn't have come as much of a surprise to observers of the game.

After the meeting, Garry Herrmann's public comments mentioned Fultz at least three times. "The new contract, adopted today, means that a player, if injured, will be paid in full and the contract cannot, under any circumstances, be terminated until it expires. The clause is the most beneficial that could possibly be arranged for the player, and I am sure it will more than satisfy the contentions of the Players' Fraternity," Herrmann concluded.[xi]

On November 23 *The Sporting News* had printed a long editorial about these labor issues that was critical of Fultz, but in other commentaries, both before and after the November 23 piece, the paper instead blasted the NAPBL on the governance issues it was pushing. In the first, the weekly predicted doom for any continued effort to add a minor-league representative and a players' counterpart to the National Commission: "Quick to denounce Dave Fultz and his Fraternity for manufacturing 'grievances,' the minors themselves with an inconsistency that is amazing to those who have followed baseball administration closely, conjure up 'grievances' of their own against the majors and the Commission that are as baseless as anything Fultz ever imagined in his most radical nightmare." In the other editorial minor-league magnates were scolded for not stomaching the National Commission's ability to set aside rulings of the minors' National Board.[xii]

It may be that these stances influenced subsequent coverage, and made at least some sportswriters view the NAPBL's positions as a bigger deal. An extreme example came out of the New York bureau of the *Los Angeles Times* on December 11, the day of the International League's annual meeting in New York: "Organized baseball peace is once more seriously threatened," the dispatch said. "The minor leagues are ready to secede and rid themselves of the yoke of the national commission."[xiii]

Thus, there was plenty for National League magnates to discuss at New York's Waldorf Hotel from December 12 through 14, and for AL leaders in Chicago on the latter date. On the NL's first day, President Tener made his annual report, in which he endorsed Herrmann's idea of diverting some of the World Series money currently allocated to the pennant winners' players to all of the other players in the two leagues. Secretary John Heydler's report followed, and it included the calculation that 14,744 baseballs were used during the season, an increase of 1,526 over the previous year.[xiv] After these talks

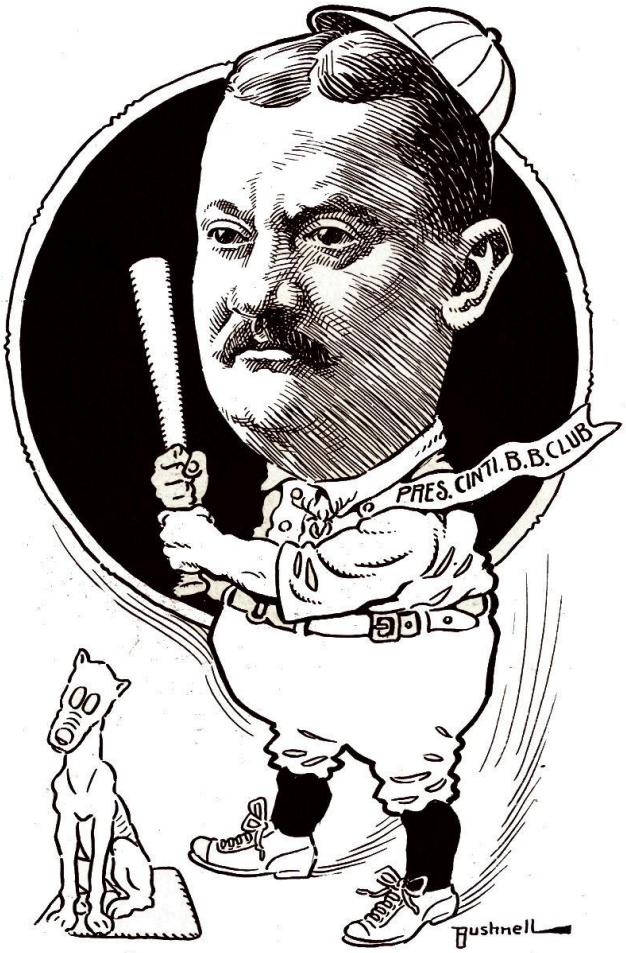
the league took some action regarding roster limits, abolishing the "disability list" and increasing by one, from 21 to 22, the number of players that a team could carry from May 15 to August 31. The Cubs and Giants were the lone votes in favor of increasing rosters to 25 during that span.[xv]

The magnates then heard three representatives of the NAPBL press their case for a new counterpart to the National Commission. The trio consisted of Murnane, Pacific Coast League Vice President J. Cal Ewing, and Eastern League President Dan O'Neil. Afterward, the presidents of the three Double-A leagues—Edward Barrow of the International League, Thomas Hickey of the American Association, and Allen Baum of the PCL—requested that drafting players from their leagues be eliminated. The NL leaders decided to wait two days before taking any action on these matters.

On the second day the NL leaders discussed and debated but did little deciding. Pittsburgh's Barney Dreyfuss was largely successful in fending off attempts by the Giants to allow exceptions to the 22-player limit, though the issue was ultimately referred to the Committee on Constitution. Similarly, though a suggestion by Phillies' president William Baker to prohibit trades after August 1 was popular, the alternative date of August 15 advocated by Brooklyn's Charles Ebbets caused the matter to be sent to the same committee. It was expected to make recommendations in time for another league meeting in February.

Two hours on the third day were spent discussing possible rule changes. Boston Braves president Percy Haughton advocated changes that would increase scoring, including awarding a walk after three pitched balls and banning the spitball. Various suggestions were referred to the Joint Rules Committee. The magnates referred the two requests from the minor leagues to the National Commission, though according to *Sporting Life*, the NL delegates announced their endorsement of a new counterpart to that board.[xvi] The National Commission was also asked to address a concern about the contractual framework it had developed on December 1. Someone noticed that it contained a clause that allowed a player to appeal his salary directly to the commission, which owners argued would place far too much authority in the commission's hands.

The NL added a fourth day of discussions, and an early controversy was Dreyfuss' unsuccessful attempt to push Herrmann off the National Commission in favor of someone unconnected to Organized Baseball. The league later sent to the National Commission a new scheme for drafting minor leaguers. The major change supported was to give the earliest picks to the poorer performing clubs rather than those at the top of the two leagues' standings.



AUGUST HERRMANN

Only one significant deal was made between teams during the NL's conclave, but it was an unusual one. In an effort to replace Joe Tinker as manager, the Cubs traded outfielder Joe Kelly plus cash to the Boston Braves for coach Fred Mitchell, who became Chicago's new skipper.

In the meantime, the American League was able to confine its meeting to December 14. One new

policy approved applied to World Series games played in AL parks. The price of tickets could only be doubled, meaning that bleacher seats would cost no more than 50 cents. An exception allowed for a $5 tax on box seats.

Like the NL, the AL's leaders permitted two groups of minor-league representatives to speak about the same requests. The club owners empowered Ban Johnson to decide the matters, presumably through the National Commission. "President Johnson, however, did not give the minor league applicants any positive answers," according to the *Sporting News* account. "Rather he questioned them, debated with them and gave them pointers on his own ideas of the needs of baseball as a whole—then sent them on their way pondering and with ideas on new propositions expected to develop later."[xvii] Other than approving the contractual framework submitted with minor modifications, no other major decisions were made during the AL's day.

Those looking for decisive action on the more important lingering issues had to wait until the National Commission met in New York on February 15, 1917. The commission did make some adjustments to how players would be drafted from the minors, but they didn't grant the bigger wishes of the three Double-A presidents. The commission also rejected the creation of a counterpart for handling appeals of decisions by the minor leagues' National Board, though it did decide it would involve the National Board's secretary and the minor leagues' president when such cases were brought before it. "This really therefore makes a board of five and gives the minor leagues representation on the Commission in all cases affecting them," concluded *Sporting Life.* Alas, Tim Murnane was no longer around to comment. He had died of a sudden heart attack eight days earlier, at the age of 64.

The other major decision made on that mid-February day was a clear statement on labor matters. About a month earlier, Dave Fultz had emerged from a Fraternity meeting in Chicago to announce a potential strike on February 20. He called it off just before the National Commission meeting, but the trio still adopted this resolution: "Resolved by the National Commission that the action of the National and American Leagues, in severing relations with the Players' Fraternity and abrogating the agreement entered into with said Fraternity, under date of January 6, 1914, be and same is hereby ratified and approved, with the understanding that the status of all interests in Organized Base Ball, club owners, and players alike, is the same as it was before the agreement hereinbefore referred to was entered into, having in mind the preamble of the National Agreement adopted in 1903, under which the game has advanced to the position of the national institution to which we point with pride today."[xviii] As a result, the Fraternity gradually disintegrated, and there wouldn't be a new surge of unionism among baseball players for about five years.

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[i] T.H. Murnane, "Minor Leagues Meet Next Week," *Boston Globe*, November 12, 1916: 57.
[ii] T.H. Murnane, "Many Trades Are Expected," *Boston Globe*, November 14, 1916: 6.
[iii] T.H. Murnane, "Minors Balk on $20,000 Outlay," *Boston Globe*, November 15, 1916: 9.
[iv] "Minor Leaguers Table Demands of Fraternity," *Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 1916: III1.
[v] T.H. Murnane, "Minors Want New National Commission," *Boston Globe*, November 17, 1916: 6.
[vi] "Barrow Against Third League," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 21, 1916: 10. Directly above that article was one in which Johnson endorsed the scheme. The concept was detailed in the first story of *The Sporting News* on November 16. Subsequently, Columbus was named in place of Milwaukee in order to form a more compact circuit, according to "Third Major League Is Still Probability," *Washington Post*, December 8, 1916: 8.
[vii] "Players to Refuse to Sign Contracts," *Hartford Courant*, November 24, 1916: 17.
[viii] "Statement Is Given by Tener on Strike Talk," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 25, 1916: 18.
[ix] "Fultz Calls Strike One of Principle," *Hartford Courant*, December 6, 1916: 17.
[x] "To Cut Players' Salaries," *New York Times*, November 29, 1916: 8.
[xi] "Concession to Ball Players," *Boston Globe*, December 3, 1916: 17.
[xii] "Minors' Plan Will Fail" and "Saved From Own Folly," *The Sporting News*, November 23, 1916: 4.
[xiii] "Minor League Magnates to Start Revolution," *Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 1916: III1.
[xiv] "The Meeting of the National League," *Sporting Life*, December 23, 1916: 4.
[xv] "Player Limit Only Increased by One," *New York Times*, December 13, 1916: 12.
[xvi] "Concession to Ball Players."
[xvii] "American League Declares for Reducing Baseball Cost," *The Sporting News*, December 21, 1916: 3.
[xviii] "Important Action by the National Commission," *Sporting Life*, February 24, 1917: 2.

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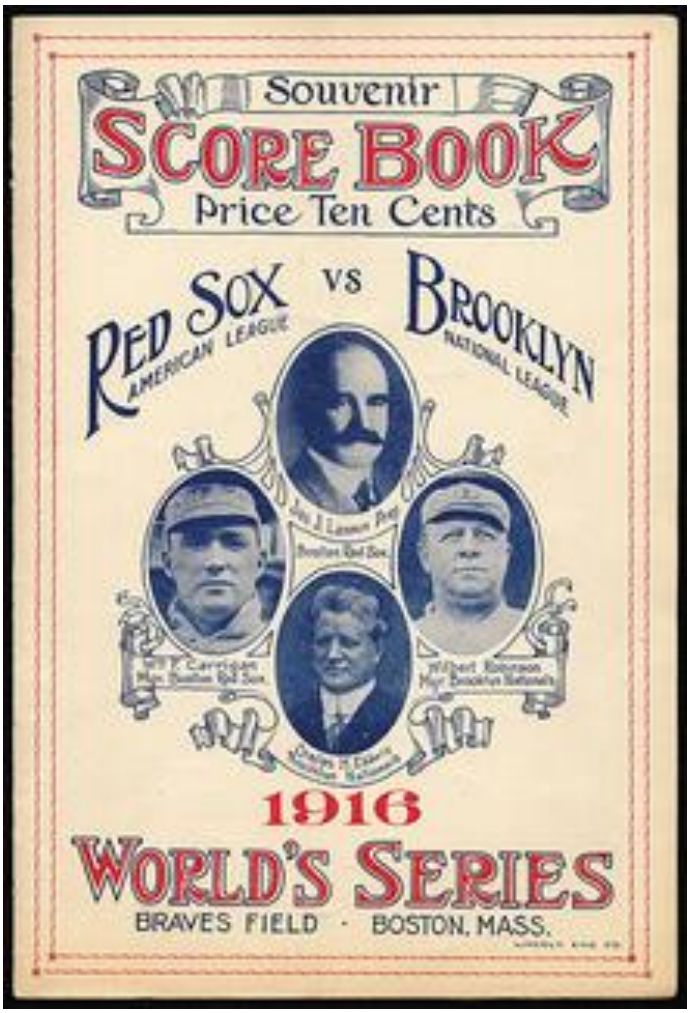
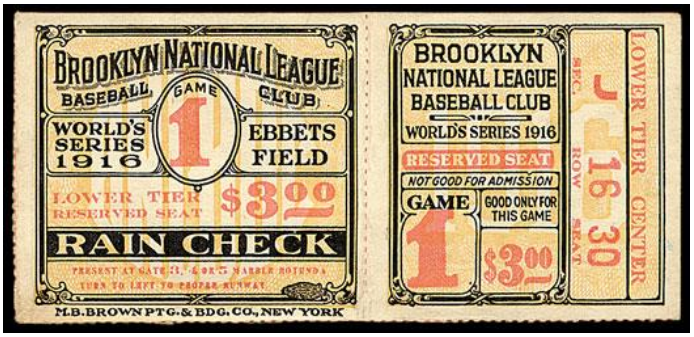
Additional authors are needed for chapters for the forthcoming volume on the 20th century winter meetings. If you are interested, contact Bill Nowlin for more information at bnowlin@rounder.com.





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