



Outside the Lines

A publication of the Society for American Baseball Research Business of Baseball Committee

Volume X, Issue 4

Fall 2004

Expos/Nationals

What Do You Mean There's No Instant Replay in Baseball?

As we prepare to go to press, the saga continues in Washington, D.C. The done deal was undone. District Council Chair Linda W. Cropp won't budge from her demand that private funds go into building the new stadium. MLB won't budge from its demand that socialism reign.

We'll point you to your own seat from which to watch this sausage get made. The Business of Baseball Committee's website committee's website at <http://www.businessofbaseball.com> tracks all the breaking news.



DC Stadium Site

At our discussion group, breaking news is reported and analyzed by knowledgeable members. If you are a member of the Committee and want to join, go to <http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/BusinessofBaseball/> or send an e-mail to BusinessofBaseball-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

While waiting, you should read our series of articles on the Expos move by BOB Co-chairs Gary Gillette and Maury Brown on the website at <http://www.businessofbaseball.com/series.htm>.

[Relocation Series](#)

- [The Tab for MLB's Mont-Royal Hangover](#)
- [The Story of the Also-Rans: Northern VA](#)
- [The Expos Move to DC Doesn't Mean the A's Get into San Jose](#)

General Managers Project

We had reported in the *Summer 2004 OTL* "The target date for publication of [information on General Managers for the complete history of 19 AL & NL teams] on the committee Website is sometime in October."

We have been unable to get John Matthew to report on or turn over the data compiled to date.

Therefore, we are requesting that those who had compiled and submitted information for the project resubmit that to Gary Gillette so that we can complete this project and post it to the website. We understand those to be: Steve Boren, Philippe Cousineau, Charles Johnson, Andy McCue, Randy Mudarri, Rodger Payne, Dave Stevens, Dann Stupp, Neal Traven, and David Vincent

Anyone having information on the GMs for teams listed below, or on Federal League GMs--or anyone wanting to help with researching these teams--should contact Gary at GGillette@247Baseball.com.

- Cardinals (before 1954)
- Cubs (before 1934)
- Giants (before 1902)
- White Sox (before 1915)
- Browns (before 1950)
- Yankees (before 1945)

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Call For Presentations—SABR 35

All members are invited to make a research-based oral presentation at SABR 35 in Toronto. Presentations are limited to 20 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of questions-and-answers. Poster presentations also are very much encouraged.

Subjects on all aspects of baseball are encouraged. Summaries should be no more than 400 words and should describe what the presentation adds to the area of research and how previous research has been examined. All submissions will be evaluated by blind review. Though it is not mandatory, we prefer that summaries be submitted electronically, either as plain text-mail or standard word processor. The best research presentations will receive the Doug Pappas Award, courtesy of USA Today Sports Weekly for best oral presentation and The USA Today Sports Weekly Award for best poster presentation. Submission deadline is March 1, 2005.

Direct all article, photo and presentation submissions to: John Matthew IV, 260 Queens Quay West, Suite 2905, Toronto, ON M5J 2N2 or by email at john.matthew@rogers.com.



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A View from Japan by Yoshihiro Koda *A New Team Saves Two-League Structure*

On October 25, the Pacific League Seibu Lions won the Japan Series, defeating the Chunichi Dragons in seven games. The win completed a 2004 Japanese baseball season marked by a weekend player strike over proposed contraction of the Pacific League to 5 teams following the merger of the Osaka Kintetsu Buffaloes and the Orix Blue Wave.

On November 2, Nippon Professional Baseball owners approved the entry application from the newly organized Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles. The club is owned by internet shopping mall operator Rakuten Inc. Adding the new club preserves for 2005 the nearly-half-century-old structure of Japanese Professional Baseball, two leagues with six clubs each. The reorganization talk triggered by the merger of two of Pacific League clubs ends for the present.

Despite a population of over a million people, the northern city Sendai, home to the Eagles, has never hosted a professional team. Following the movement of the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters from Tokyo to Sapporo in 2004, profes-

sional baseball has filled baseball holes in the north of Japan with Pacific League clubs. Now based in Sapporo, Sendai, Chiba, Tokorozawa, Osaka and Fukuoka, the Pacific League runs through the country from North to South. Creation of regional rivalries underlies the plan to revive the Pacific League.

But prospects for the business of Japanese baseball still look difficult. Television viewership for the 2004 Japan Series was not good, including the worst ratings ever for a Japan Series night game in the Tokyo Metropolitan area. A lot of stadium seats were vacant.

Despite these prospects, the Eagles' owner reported receiving 8,000 applications for 20 positions at the newly organized club within a week. A lot of people still believe in the potential of the business of baseball.

At least one important investor also believes in the sport's future in Japan. Online business giant Softbank bought the Fukuoka Daiei Hawks from the Daiei supermarket chain.

I will just watch what happens to the business of baseball in Japan and write here again in the next year.



Golden Gate Crashers or Giant Killers?

Does Baseball's History In The Bay Area Offer Any Lessons For Baltimore/Washington?

By Gary Gillette and Stuart Shea



The interminable process of relocating the Montreal Expos to Washington felled whole forests of pulpwood in Quebec. Among the recurrent themes the pundits hammered at was baseball's experience of having two franchises located in the Bay Area for the past 38 years.

Part of the interest in this chapter in baseball history is, of course, because the Giants and the Athletics are currently at each other's throats over the South Bay. Part of it is because the Bay Area seems like a good match to the Baltimore-Washington metro area in terms of size and wealth.

Fair enough. What actually was the effect of Charlie Finley's move to Oakland in 1968? Why did the Athletics play to sparse crowds and fail to sell out postseason games, even with some of the greatest clubs of the postwar era?

One of the reasons that the A's struggled to draw big crowds in the 1970s and 1980s is that they have always been second in the hearts of East Bay residents to the NFL's Oakland Raiders. Al Davis and his Raiders preceded Finley's A's by eight years; while the Raiders were truly horrid during the early days of the AFL, Davis's feared and loathed crew had established an incredibly loyal fan base by the time the Athletics arrived.

The Raiders won their first AFL championship in 1967. While Oakland lost to Green Bay in Super Bowl II and lost the AFL championship game in each of the next three years, they still served as a symbol of a blue-collar city struggling to retain its pride and relevance in an era of massive social change. The Raiders' success certainly made the A's task substantially more difficult.

The Kansas City A's slunk out of Missouri after a horrible 13-year run in which they finished last or next-to-last ten times and never had a winning season. Their swan song in K.C. was a last-place finish in 1967, 29½ games behind Boston. The team had been a running joke since the mid-1930s, and even the joy of getting a big-league team in Oakland was tempered by the club's wretched history. The Raiders weren't any good in their early years, but at least they weren't dragging around three *decades* of losing baggage.

Does that sound somewhat similar to the Orioles' early experience in Baltimore? When the refugee Browns arrived

on the shores of Chesapeake Bay in 1954, they were coming off a 54–100 last-place season, resting a stunning 46½ light-years behind the Yankees. In the eight seasons after World War II, the Browns had finished last or next-to-last all but once. The Browns were so pathetic that they finished *above* .400 only twice in that time, never less than 31 games behind. In its ignominious 52-year history in St. Louis, the American League entry had won only one pennant.

In their first six years in Baltimore, the Orioles weren't much better. They never had a winning season, finishing sixth or lower in the eight-team AL all but once. Finally, the O's pulled themselves above water, finishing a respectable second and third to the Yankees in 1960 and 1961 before relapsing to seventh in 1962. Still, however, the Birds didn't win a pennant till 1966, their 13th year after moving. By that time, the Colts were the talk of every diner, bar, social club, and street corner in Crabtown.

NFL football arrived one scant season before big-league baseball in Baltimore when a new Colts franchise started play in 1953. (The original NFL Colts went bankrupt after transferring from the failed All-American Football Conference in the 1950 season, in which they went 1-11.)

The more important date, however, was December 28, 1958, when the Colts defeated the Giants in overtime for the NFL championship in what many call the greatest pro football game every played. While that point can be argued, the fact is that the 1958 NFL championship game put the NFL on the big-league sports map. The Colts made Baltimore a big-league city instead of a Triple-A city, and Baltimore's citizenry never forgot that.

After repeating as NFL champs in 1959, the Colts lapsed into mediocrity for four years before winning the NFL Western Conference championship in 1964. Baltimore lost the Western Conference playoff game in overtime to Green Bay in 1965 on the eve of the Orioles first championship season. The Colts won another NFL championship in 1968, with an almost-perfect record, before being upset in Super Bowl III by Joe Namath and the New York Jets. While the Colts sagged in the 1970s, the love affair between Maryland and its blue-collar gridders wouldn't end till the team skulked away in the middle of a winter night in 1983.

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A Few Words From the Front Office: An Interview with Dan Walker, President/General Manager, Boise Hawks

by Anthony Salazar, Outside the Lines contributor

Up until late October of this year, Dan Walker was the president and general manager of the Boise Hawks, the Northwest League (Short-Season A) affiliate of the Chicago Cubs. Recently, I caught up with Walker at a game at Boise's Memorial Stadium. This past season, the Hawks took home the 2004 NWL championship.

OTL: During the past 14 years, the Boise Hawks have seen over 100,000 fans a year come through your turnstiles. What do you attribute this success?

DW: We had a really good start here. The stadium was built in 1989. The previous ownership, Diamond Sports did an excellent job promoting minor league sports. It was the only game in town back then. They did exceptionally well. Their average led the league for many years. It was around the mid-1990s when attendance started to trail off. Since we purchased the team in 1999-2000, our attendance has been pretty good, but it's not where we would like it to be.



Photo: 2004 Northwest League Media Guide

OTL: It looks like you're averaging about 2,300 fans a games these past few nights.

DW: Actually we're averaging 3,000 fans this season. That doesn't necessary mean anything because of the schedule. We have a lot of Friday and Saturday nights at home. Overall, we think we're heading to that 100,000 mark. We have a lot of things that we're doing. We've kind of changed the show, so to speak . . . We're in the entertainment business. Minor league baseball is about marketing and promotions. We've added a number of different events, and put in a big kids park along the right field side, with batting cages, inflatables and a whiffleball stadium. So, we're taking a pretty traditional baseball-winning town, and turning it into a fun minor league kind of show.



OTL: The Hawks have been affiliated with the Cubs since 2001.

DW: Right, we had the [Anaheim] Angels here before then. That was a decision based on a lot of different factors. The one thing, I think, that is overriding is that minor league baseball is not so much about affiliation as it is about fun family entertainment. I couldn't be happier with the Cubs affiliation. That's not to say I wasn't happy with the Angels affiliation; there were some situations with the Angels that we undesirable and I decided to make that move. The Cubs wanted [Boise], and it's demonstrated in our rosters because we've got good kids.

OTL: I noticed quite a bit of Cubs merchandise in your gift shop. I understand that it's selling at a good clip.

DW: Cubs merchandise will sell anywhere. That's my theory. There are Cubs fans everywhere. When I first made this move (affiliating with the Cubs), people on the street would come up to me and say, "Go Cubbies." Cubs fans are die-hards, which is good for us, because Cubs merchandise sells. I don't think we can stock enough of it.

OTL: How long is the affiliation agreement?

DW: The agreement ends in September, but we've already extended it. We're be with the Cubs for as long as they want us.

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A Few Words From the Front Office (Continued from page 4)**OTL: How are you marketing the team to the Treasure Valley community?**

DW: Boise is a heavy media market, with no shadows, like Everett and Eugene. We've done radio, television and billboards in the past. We tried direct mail. You know, you try it all. With radio, there are 30 signals in this market and so purchasing radio is a challenge to get an effective response.

Most of all, we do a lot of outreach into the community. For example, we just had four or five players go out to the local hospital and see the patients. Those are good things, and the Cubs want to see us do the community events. And that's one of the reasons why the Cubs wanted in this market, so that their kids could not only learn how to play baseball, but to learn how to appreciate the fan. We want to be good community partners. We do a reading program with the libraries, where we give a free ticket to kids who read six hours during the summer. According to the library system, that's going to be about 10,000 kids, which is great!

We're helping to build our fan base, because the kids will bring their parents to the games. We just try to do as much as we can for the good of the community, and at the same time, promote the business.

GOLDEN GATE CRASHERS (Continued from page 3)

Bay Area football, at least of the pro variety, predates major-league baseball by a significant 11-year margin. The 49ers were charter members of the AAFC in 1946, moving to the NFL in 1950 when the AAFC collapsed. For more than a decade, the 49ers were the only major league franchise in the Bay Area (although the Pacific Coast League also claimed major status). As a result, the football club built up a massive following which it has never lost, even when Stoneham's boys moved west and almost immediately began a ten-year contending run.

One unmentioned reason for the collapse of the Giants' fan base in the early 1970s was the rise of the NFL's 49ers. The 49ers won three consecutive NFC Western Division titles from 1970–72, though they then slumped for the rest of the decade before returning to win their first Super Bowl in 1981 and becoming a perennial NFL power. Playing in the same stadium as a team that won five Super Bowls between 1981–1999, won its division 13 times, and went to the playoffs all but three times, the Giants didn't exactly compare very well in the public's eye.

One hint at the popularity of those 49er teams is the national TV ratings for Super Bowl XVI in 1982, when San Francisco beat Cincinnati for its first NFL championship. Super Bowl XVI received a 49.1 rating on CBS, a record for a sports broadcast that stands to this day. The NFC championship game won by the 49ers over Dallas earlier that month—a game forever defined by “The Catch”—remains the 22nd-highest rated program of all-time, and the only top-25 sports broadcast not a Super Bowl or Olympics.

Head Counts

Much of the speculation about the future effects of a two-team market centers on what will happen to the crowds at Camden Yards. The lessons of history offer us much better guidance than do forward-looking surveys commissioned by potential ownership groups in Washington and Northern Virginia; such projects can be discounted for obvious reasons.

While memories of their great New York teams have now faded, it is a fact that the Giants were the most successful NL franchise for the first half of the twentieth century. Even after Brooklyn's rise in the 1940s, the Giants were the only real competition in the league for the Dodgers in the 1950s. Prior to crossing the Hudson, the Giants won five World Championships and 15 NL pennants in 57 years. Since changing coasts, the Giants haven't fared nearly so well, winning only three pennants and no World Series in 47 seasons.

Despite Horace Stoneham's famous valedictory remark about the lack of fans at the Polo Grounds, Giants attendance in New York was above average two thirds of the time from 1945–56. From 1958–67, attendance in San Francisco remained above the major league average; after that, it rose above the big-league average only twice before Pacific Bell Park opened in 2000.

The temptation to blame that change in attendance on the arrival of the A's across the bay is strong. Certainly, Oakland's team had an effect. Nevertheless, to attribute the empty seats at Giants games solely to being in a market too

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GOLDEN GATE CRASHERS (Continued from page 5)

small to accommodate two teams would be both simplistic and misleading.

The fact is that San Francisco attendance had already peaked in 1962–63 and was on a sharp downward trend when the A's arrived. Even though the Giants finished second for three consecutive years from 1965–67, their turnstile count plummeted 25 percent in 1967—with no competition across the bay. Attendance plummeted another 33 percent in 1968 despite another second-place finish. What was really keeping the fans away from Candlestick was the decline and ultimate departure of the legendary duo of Willie Mays and the Bay's favorite, Willie McCovey—as well as the foolish trade of popular first baseman Orlando Cepeda to St. Louis. Cepeda, never a favorite of mid-60s skipper Alvin Dark, went to the Cardinals (for disappointing pitcher Ray Sadecki) and promptly won the '67 NL MVP, leading St. Louis to a World Title.

In 1971, when the aging Giants won their first NL West crown, the club saw an almost 50 percent increase in attendance. In midseason 1972, the “Say Hey Kid” was shuffled off to the Mets. After a last hurrah in 1973 (third place in the AL West), fan favorite “Stretch” McCovey was sent packing to San Diego, and the Giants settled into more than a decade of mediocrity (or worse). From 1974–86, San Fran never finished higher than third, contending only twice in the NL West. When they were good, they drew reasonably well. When they were bad, they drew poorly: exactly the experience of many other MLB teams in single-franchise markets.

While the Giants were struggling on the field, the A's finally hit their stride in the 1970s. After two second-place finishes in 1969–70, Oakland broke through for five consecutive AL West titles and three World Championships between 1971 and 1975.

Oakland's weak gate in the 1970s offers a much better argument for the “too small to support two teams” theory than does the Giants' humdrum attendance. Even during their glory years of 1972–74, the A's drew fewer fans than the league average, and, after Finley sold off his stars, attendance dropped off a cliff for five years after the divisional title in 1975.

The A's, however, were not the only AL team in trouble. AL owners were so panicky about stagnant attendance that they instituted the designated hitter rule in 1973, after a three-year stretch when the Junior League's attendance was substantially less than three quarters of the Senior Circuit's. Frankly, the AL's slow-footed, swing-from-the-heels sluggers were out of fashion in a game where speed had re-

turned to the baseball, primarily in the NL. While the DH rule helped, it wasn't until the 1980s that AL attendance again consistently reached 90 percent of the NL's.

One reason for this intense growth in AL attendance is simply the increased market size of some of the loop's cities. The fastest-growing metropolitan areas from 1980-90, as indicated by the 1980 census, were Washington/Baltimore, New York, Boston, Miami, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle; six AL teams and just three NL clubs currently do business in those areas.

By the time the A's dynasty of the late 80s and early 90s rolled around, attendance in Oakland was well over the AL average, and in San Francisco (where the Giants won the 1989 NL crown) crowds were just below NL average despite playing in an outmoded ballpark in a relatively inaccessible area.

Other Factors

While some might point to the relatively small size of the city of Baltimore as a disadvantage to running the Orioles, the Washington/Baltimore metropolitan area is already slightly larger than that of the San Francisco/Oakland market, as rated by the 2000 census, and it is growing at a much faster rate than the Bay.

Back in the 50s, the combined metropolitan areas of Baltimore/Washington area ranked 12th in the US in total population, ranking behind St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland/Akron. But the city of Baltimore was a solid American town in those years, and Major League Baseball was correct in moving a team there from the declining St. Louis market.

The Bay Area has always been considered one metropolitan area since the Census defined them for the first time in 1950. That is not so for Baltimore and Washington, whose metropolitan areas were only combined by the U.S. Census in 1990. Furthermore, both Nielsen and Arbitron still define Baltimore and Washington as separate broadcast markets.

The census now rates Baltimore/Washington as the fourth largest metropolitan area in the country, and it continues to grow appreciably. The Orioles have benefited from this in the last twenty years, and the Beltway/Balto market is now large enough and economically strong to support two major league clubs—certainly in a far better position to do so than in the 1950s and 1960s.

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GOLDEN GATE CRASHERS (Continued from page 6)

A huge difference between Baltimore-Washington's future and baseball in the Bay Area in the 1970s and 1980s is the ballparks. Both San Francisco and Oakland spent the 1970s playing in unattractive parks designed primarily to accommodate football; the Orioles play in one of the greatest ballparks of all time, while the Nationals will presumably get a luxurious gem of a new park for themselves after serving their apprenticeship in RFK Stadium.

Yet another point of diversion between Baltimore/Washington and San Francisco/Oakland is in ballpark location. Old Memorial Stadium in Baltimore, Camden Yards in Baltimore, and RFK in Washington are stadia located in the populous areas of their cities and sport good public transportation access.

Meanwhile, first-rate mass transit to Candlestick/3Com/Monster Park, never a fun place to watch a ballgame anyway, is nonexistent. A train service along the Peninsula stops nearby, with bus connections.

On the other hand, BART has served the Oakland Coliseum since 1972. Football fans would not find the lack of mass transit a big issue, since almost all 49ers games are on weekends, when traffic snarls would be minimal. But baseball fans would find driving to Candlestick for weekday games a hassle, whether leaving after a day game during rush-hour traffic or fighting rush-hour traffic on the way to a night game. This certainly has been a factor in Bay Area baseball attendance.

So, then, if the city of Baltimore is growing along with the rest of the metropolitan area, why don't the Orioles still consistently sell out Camden Yards? Part of this may be because of the success of the NFL's Ravens, and some may be due to the novelty wearing off their beautiful ballpark.

But clearly, while the Orioles continue to draw higher than the AL average, they haven't continuously sold out Camden Yards because the team isn't winning.

In Oakland, the newly competitive Athletics have inched their attendance up to league average; this is quite a feat after years of franchise devaluation, mediocre play, unattractive stadium renovations primarily for the benefit of football, constant rumors of franchise movement, and an inert and penurious front office.

In both the Bay Area and in Baltimore, the historical trends have shown that winning baseball brings in fans. The novelty value of a new ballpark cannot be discounted, but new parks in most every major-league city aren't enough to maintain high attendance if a club doesn't win. While the Orioles are among tough competitors in the AL East, the club has won in recent years and clearly can do so again.

Look homeward, Mr. Angelos. The experience of the Giants and the A's in the 1970s and 1980s offers *no* guidance other than an exhortation to play to win. The Orioles' wounds in recent years are self-inflicted, and Baltimore retains the resources to put a winning team on the field again whether it has a National League neighbor in Washington or not.

Will the presence of the Nationals hurt the Orioles? Somewhat; certainly the monopoly the Birds have enjoyed for decades is preferable, from their viewpoint, to having serious competition.

Is it likely that Baltimore and Washington will reprise the experience of Oakland and San Francisco from the late 1960s through the late 1990s? No. The factors that are similar are far outweighed by compelling reasons to believe that Washington and Baltimore have more than enough fans, TV households, and discretionary income to handsomely reward both franchises—assuming they put a good product on the field.

Business of Baseball Committee

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The committee's website is at <http://www.businessofbaseball.com>. The Committee's discussion group, BusinessofBaseball, is on YahooGroups. If you are a member of the Committee and want to join, go to <http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/BusinessofBaseball/> or send an e-mail to BusinessofBaseball-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.



Got Business of Baseball Research?

We rely on our members for content. We publish material covering both contemporary and historical business of baseball topics. As you can see from this edition, we don't restrict ourselves to MLB.

The length of pieces has ranged from 300 words to 2,700 words. We are happy to edit copy. Illustrations, charts, graphs and tables are very welcome.

The Winter 2005 edition of *Outside the Lines* will be published in early March. The deadline for submission of material is February 28, 2005.

If you have something you'd like to submit, please contact me.

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Thank You to Our Contributors

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Outside the Lines is published quarterly. Future contributions should be sent to jruoff@bellsouth.net.

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