



EMIL ROTHE CHICAGO CHAPTER

AUGUST 2019 | VOLUME 10 | EDITION 8

RICH HANSEN, CHAIR - RICHARD SMILEY, VICE CHAIR

DAVID MALAMUT, SECRETARY - PETER YEE, TREASURER - BILL PEARCH, NEWSLETTER EDITOR



Top: Mark Armour in Cooperstown, New York with legendary card collectors Mark Hoyle and Andrew Aronstein. (Photo: Jason Schwartz)

Bottom: SABR Chicago visited Rosemont's Impact Field on August 3. See page 4 for a game summary. (Photo: Bill Pearch)

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INTERVIEW WITH SABR'S NEW PRESIDENT, MARK ARMOUR

BY: JASON SCHWARTZ 

You would have to do a lot of research indeed to find a person who's contributed as much to SABR as Bob Davids Award winner, Henry Chadwick Award winner, and new SABR president Mark Armour. While you may know him as the author of "Joe Cronin: A Life in Baseball," the co-author of "In Pursuit of Pennants," or the founder and longtime director of SABR's Baseball Biography project, my own introduction to Mark was in his recent role as co-chair of SABR's Baseball Cards Research Committee where he was kind enough to accept several of my pieces for publication. I was also fortunate to spend Memorial Day weekend with Mark and other SABR members at the National Baseball Hall of Fame for the opening of the "Shoebox Treasures" baseball card exhibit.

Q: When did you join SABR, and what prompted you to get involved?
I read about SABR in the 1982 Bill James Baseball Abstract and joined soon after. I had just gotten out of college, and it seemed like a perfect fit. I had always been baseball-obsessed, the more obscure the better, and I had studied both math and history in college. I had read enough to know that there was a lot of baseball that I did not know, that there were experts beyond my level. Thirty-seven years later, and there still are!

Q: What are some of the most positive changes you've seen in the organization since then?

In those pre-internet days, getting involved in SABR meant going to local meetings or national conventions, or writing letters to each other. I have tremendous respect for the people who started SABR and kept it going for so many years, but it took a certain kind of personality (and/or nearness to a vibrant local chapter) to get involved with the people doing the work. I'm not saying it was impossible or that the insiders were protecting their turf, I am suggesting that it required more self-confidence and more initiative.

Today, SABR is filled with online communities and you can find your voice and share your opinion much easier. This has its challenges too, but I think it's much easier for talented, smart people to get involved and be part of the conversation and then to do the research that helps SABR and the baseball community.

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BY JASON A. SCHWARTZ

Four cards, one player. Can you guess who?

PATENT PORTAL: BOB REACH AND THE INFLATABLE OVEN MITT

BY: JOHN RACANELLI 

Bob Reach was born in Brooklyn in 1843 and was likely a Civil War veteran. He had a brief career as a Major League ballplayer, appearing in three games from 1872-73 for Washington's National Association team. He collected three singles in 13 at-bats and scored a pair of runs. After his playing days ended, he remained close to baseball and in 1890 was involved in the failed peace talks between the American Association, National League and Players League. Bob's brother, Al Reach, was also a ballplayer who came to own the Philadelphia Phillies and ultimately established himself as a sporting goods magnate.

Although Bob's playing days were long gone, he had a brilliant idea for a glove that would make catching a "ball or other missile" a much less painful affair. He claimed that an inflatable padding in the glove was an improvement over the conventional padding materials—cloth and hair—that made gloves inflexible and awkward to use.

Early experiments revealed that a fully inflated bladder would cause the ball to bounce out of the glove before the fielder could close his fingers around it. Reach countered this result by under inflating the bladder, which led to the right balance between cushion and performance. The patent for his simply named "Glove" was issued on April 21, 1891 and assigned to the American Patents Company. Bob Reach also patented a "Tug of War Belt" and fixture used to secure gymnastics equipment to the floor.

Sources:

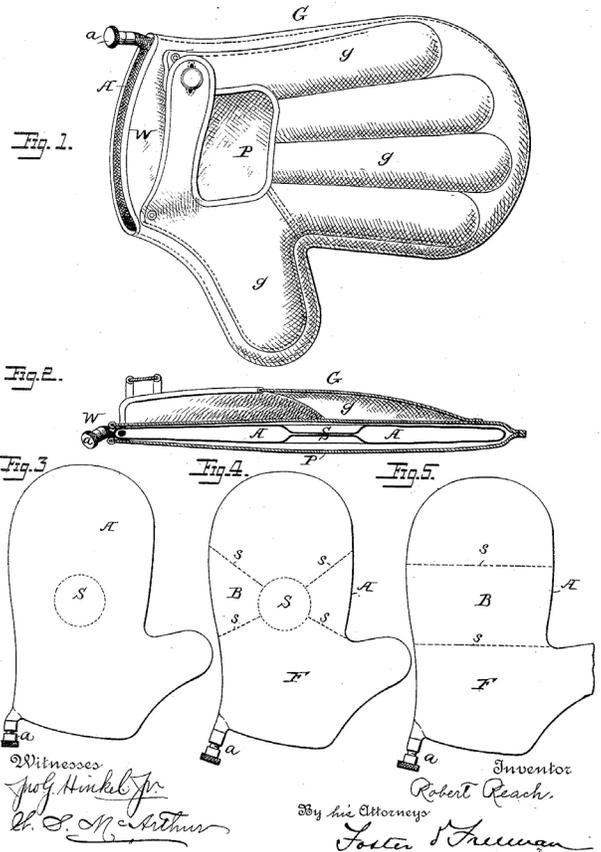
- www.baseball-reference.com
- United States Patent No. 437,821, Issued October 7, 1890.
- United States Patent No. 437,822, Issued October 7, 1890.
- United States Patent No. 450,717, Issued April 21, 1891.
- Multiple authors, "Civil War Veterans Who Played Major League Baseball Research Project," SABR, 9, <https://sabr.org/cmsFiles/Files/Civil%20War%20veterans.pdf>
- "War to the Knife," Philadelphia Inquirer, October 23, 1890, 3.

(No Model.)

R. REACH.
GLOVE.

No. 450,717.

Patented Apr. 21, 1891.



WHAT'S ON DECK?

GET YOUR PENCILS AND SCORECARDS READY

- **PEACH ORCHARD CLASSIC**

August 31, 2019 -
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Beyer Stadium
245 15th Avenue
Rockford, IL 61104

CLICK FOR
DIRECTIONS

- **CHAPTER MEETING**

September 14, 2019 - 1 p.m.
Lisle Public Library
777 Front Street
Lisle, IL 60532

CLICK FOR
DIRECTIONS

- **BLACK SOX SYMPOSIUM**

September 27-29
See page 8 for complete details.

Bob Reach was inspired to create an innovative baseball glove that was more flexible and less painful to use than those available.

GET YOUR BASEBALL RESEARCH PUBLISHED

Are you conducting baseball research? SABR's Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter can help. We are looking for new articles to publish in the Chapter's monthly newsletter and social media outlets. Submit your articles to Chapter Secretary David Malamut via email at david@malamut.net. Submittal deadlines are the 15th of each month for inclusion in the next edition.

NOTE: In our July 2019 issued, we shared a photo from Sports Illustrated that was identified as the 1876 Chicago White Stockings. That image was in fact a photo of the 1886 team.

SABR MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: ABBEY BOTKIN

BY: BILL PEARCH 

Ellis Burton does not have a flag with his uniform number hanging on either of Wrigley Field's foul poles. He does not have a statue erected in his honor outside of the famed ballpark and his name does not appear on any of sidewalk bricks either. "He was a standard 26-year-old nobody," Abbey Botkin said. "Just a typical journeyman outfielder."

Botkin, who joined SABR's Emil Rothe chapter during the mid-1990s, grants Burton full credit for making him a Chicago Cubs fan. Ernie Banks and Glenn Beckert were his childhood favorites, but Burton's performance on August 31, 1963, captivated him. "My family enjoyed a leisurely Labor Day weekend," Botkin said, recalling the scene at Illinois Beach State Park in the northern suburb of Zion. "The Cubs game was blaring on the radio while everyone was swimming in Lake Michigan and grilling."

During the second inning, the Houston Colt .45's grabbed an early 4-0 lead then added an insurance run in the top of the fourth. As the Cubs started to rally, the storytelling of Jack Quinlan and Lou Boudreau hooked the young Botkin. As the game progressed, Botkin played less and less with his friends. Lou Brock singled home Andre Rodgers in the bottom of the fifth to end the shutout. With two outs in the bottom of the ninth, Rodgers singled home Merritt Ranew to cut Houston's lead to 5-2. Burton, a recent acquisition from the Cleveland Indians, stepped to the plate with the bases loaded. He clubbed a Hal Woodeshick pitch for a grand slam that gave the Cubs a 6-5 victory. Botkin hasn't looked back since.

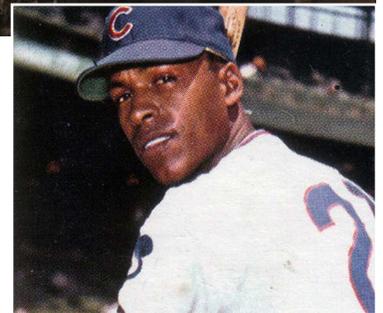
The Cubs faced many losing seasons since that day. After 108 years, the North Siders finally claimed the elusive World Series title. "As a lifelong Cubs fan, the World Series championship in 2016 was wonderful," Botkin said. "But for me, the 2015 season was the one." After six seasons of losing baseball—including 101 losses in 2012—the Cubs won 97 games in 2015. Despite players like Anthony Rizzo and Kris Bryant seizing the spotlight, Botkin was drawn to Javier Baez's inspired glove work and base-running prowess. "You'd need to travel back in time—more than a century—to find a player with Baez's level of base-running mastery in Chicago," he said. "If I had to identify Baez's spiritual baseball ancestor, it would be 'King' Kelly."

Botkin admits that during his youth, he was a solid defender, but perhaps not to the standard of Baez. Growing up, he patrolled first and second base for his high school team as well as for his Shimer College intramural team. "I was a good fielder with a good glove, but I couldn't hit," Botkin said. "No power."

Despite his intense passion for baseball, a career on the diamond never transpired. Instead Botkin's professional aspirations turned to legal matters and he became an attorney. But during the mid-1990s, he joined SABR when the Emil Rothe chapter met at the University of Illinois at Chicago. That decision opened doors to his specific area of interest, baseball's Deadball Era. He found others who were equally interested in discussing The Bill James



Above: Abbey Botkin (left) enjoying Father and Son Baseball Day.



Right: Ellis Burton (Photo: Bleed Cubbie Blue)

Historical Baseball Abstract and the film *Bang the Drum Slowly* starring a young Robert De Niro.

"If I could travel back to that era, take me to the Polo Grounds on October 8, 1908," Botkin said. "That was the make-up game between the Cubs and New York Giants that resulted from the infamous 'Merkle's Boner.'" At the conclusion of the season, the two teams were tied atop the Senior Circuit. Chicago won its third consecutive National League pennant after they knocked around the legendary Christy Mathewson and Mordecai "Three-Finger" Brown earned the win.

While Botkin's research interests harken back to the early 20th century, he supports efforts to speed up today's game. "Umpires should enforce the 30-second rules for pitchers," he said. "Keep them throwing the ball. Let's also limit batters stepping out of the box once per at-bat."

Currently, Botkin is applying the finishing touches to his first novella. It's not about baseball, but it does feature a scene at a baseball game. Even though writing is dominating his time, he regularly shares his baseball insights with SABR's Chicago chapter. Recently, he wondered if the Cubs or Houston Astros—who won World Series titles in 2016 and 2017 respectively—could turn into young dynastic teams. The closest comparison he could find was the St. Louis Cardinals of the 1940s. Perhaps the Cubs are getting too old to fit the classification of a young dynasty, but he'll take a few more World Series titles for good measure.

SABR MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

We all have great baseball stories to share. In each issue, we will highlight SABR Chicago Chapter members. Contact Bill Pearch, newsletter editor, via email at wcpearch@comcast.net to schedule a brief interview.



CHICAGO DOGS RELISH DOUBLE-DIGIT WIN OVER ST. PAUL SAINTS 4

BY: PETER YEE 

On a cool summer evening (August 3rd) with a backdrop of planes taking off from O'Hare International Airport, members of SABR's Emil Rothe chapter took in a game between the St. Paul Saints and the Chicago Dogs at Impact Field in Rosemont, Illinois. The Saints and Dogs are part of the American Association, an independent minor league.

Dan Motl opened the game by getting a single on the first pitch of the game. Michael Lang laid down a bunt that the pitcher, DJ Snelten, misplayed resulting in an error with all hands safe. Motl advanced to third on Brady Shoemaker's fly to center field. Lang then stole second. Both runners scored when Josh Allen singled up the middle. Those were the only runs that the Saints would score for the entire game.

Ryan Zimmerman was the starting pitcher for the Saints. David Olmeda-Barrera greeted him with a homer into the right field stands. Keon Barnum doubled and Victor Roache walked, but both were stranded on the base paths.

The second inning provided a delay as the home plate umpire was injured by a foul ball. Motl had an infield hit, but was stranded at first. The Dogs went down in order in the second.

The Dogs exploded for three runs in the third. Olmeda-Barrera was hit by a pitch with an 0-2 count and Edwin Arroyo walked. After Barnum struck out, the runners successfully managed a double steal before Roache launched a deep fly for a home run to left field.

After two were out in the fourth, Olmeda-Barrera hit a ball off the right field wall. It was originally ruled a homer, but upon review, it was called a double. Arroyo singled to center to score Olmeda-Barrera. After Arroyo stole second, Barnum deposited a homer onto the right field concourse.

The Saints made a pitching change in the fifth with Chris Lee relieving Zimmerman. Though the Dogs put a runner on, they failed to score.

In the sixth, Arroyo walked after Olmeda-Barrera struck out and then Barnum lined to right. Roache then hit a homer to deep center for two runs after two were out. Kelly Dugan then singled to right and Jordan Dean deposited a homer into the left field stands extending the score to 11-2.

In the seventh, Mike Aiello relieved Lee and Troy Alexander replaced Motl in center for the Saints. Tony Rosselli replaced Olmeda-Barrera in the top of the inning in center. Gustavo Pierre opened the inning with a triple to center. Rosselli hit a fly ball to right that went off the glove of Michael Lang for an error scoring Pierre with Rosselli ending up on second. He was credited with a sacrifice fly. Arroyo grounded to first advancing Rosselli to third. After Barnum walked, Roache single to left scoring Rosselli.

In the eighth, Harrison Smith came in to pitch for the Dogs. After walking the lead off batter, he retired the side. In the bottom half, Jordan Dean led off with a walk and Trey Vavra followed with a homer to left field. That was the sixth homer for the Dogs.

In the ninth, Justin Goossen-Brown came in to pitch for the Dogs. After a ground out, Goossen-Brown struck out the final two batters. The Dogs won the game, 15-2.

Afterward, the Dogs treated the fans to a fireworks display. A good time was had by all.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

The American Association was a major league in the 19th century often competing with the National League. The league existed from 1882 through 1891. There were seven so-called "World's Series" played



Top: SABR Chicago members and guests enjoyed a Chicago Dogs game at Impact Field. Pictured left to right are Michael Rosenwasser, Peter Yee, Richard Smiley, Jason Schwartz, John Racanelli, Tim Czuba, Bill Pearch and Andrew Aronstein.

Bottom: The Chicago Dogs dominated the St. Paul Saints, 15-2.

between the two leagues. Four of the teams from the AA joined the National League (Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Brooklyn).

The American Association was resurrected in 1902 as a minor league and lasted until 1962 when Major League Baseball's expansion moved into the Association's territory. It was revived, once again, in 1969 when Major League Baseball expanded and there was the need for minor league teams. With MLB's most recent expansion in 1998, the Association teams were realigned with the Pacific Coast League and the International League.

The present iteration of the American Association came into being in 2006 when four teams departed from the Northern League and the Central Baseball League disbanded. The St. Paul Saints were in the Northern League since 1993 and transitioned to the American Association in 2006. The Saints were also a part of the American Association from 1901 to 1960. They were affiliated with the Chicago White Sox (1936-1942) and then with the Brooklyn Dodgers (1944-1957) and the Los Angeles Dodgers (1958-1960).



Armour with Jim and Paula Bouton at SABR 47 in New York.

Q: Many non-members assume SABR is all about stats and formulas. What do you think it will take to change this?

I also hear that we do not do enough with statistics, so its a tough line to walk!

My answer is this: if you love baseball, there are many people in SABR who love baseball the way you do. Will you meet people in SABR who care “too much” about the origins of baseball, or statistics, or baseball cards, or disagree with you about the shift? From your perspective, sure, you might. But you will also meet people who you can go to games with who love what you love.

Personally, I love meeting people in SABR who are passionate about things I know nothing about. The baseball research world is too vast and complicated for me to ever hope to become expert in more than just a few pieces of it, but I still get a kick out of watching people (or reading people) who have found their own niche, who can talk about the Newark Eagles the way I can talk about the Messersmith Decision.

Q: What goals do you have for SABR over the next few years?

I should point out first that I am one member of a strong eight-person Board of Directors and that we have a very capable CEO (Scott Bush). One of my major goals is to provide more opportunities for SABR members to write online, both by supporting more committee or chapter blogs (modeled after the wildly successful Baseball Cards blog), and by providing true online publishing on the SABR website.

More importantly, I want to help make SABR more inclusive for all, and easier for newcomers to break into.

Q: If someone had traveled back in time and told a 10-year-old Mark Armour that his name would someday be on a plaque at the Hall of Fame's new baseball card exhibit, what would he have said?

Good question—I might have believed it, in the sense that the future was so cloudy that basically anything was possible. Twenty-year-old Mark would not have. Ten-year-old Mark was obsessed about baseball, baseball history, and certainly cards. If someone had told me that, it would have helped me feel less like a weirdo.

But seriously, this is yet another thing I can thank SABR for. I helped start and subsequently ran the Baseball Cards Research Committee for a few years, so when the Hall of Fame was looking for advisors to help them create this exhibit, I was one of the guys they called. I have met a lot of people in the past few years that know just as much as I do, and more about certain parts of the card world, but I was the guy the Hall called. The takeaway: if you have something you want to work on, something that you wish SABR was doing that we are not doing, speak up.

You want to create a website of annotated fan photographs taken at every Big League stadium? Raise your hand, create a community, get SABR's help, and praise shall rain down upon you. I just made that idea up—you probably have a better one. Step right up—SABR does what its members want to do. So what do you want to do?



Mark pointing out his special thanks from the Baseball Hall of Fame.

CHICAGO RANDOM TANDEM

HAROLD BAINES AND LEE SMITH

Harold Baines (left) and Lee Smith (right) were inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York on July 21, 2019.

Logos: Sportslogos.net
Photos: The Associated Press and Getty Images

CLICK HERE TO PLAY
CAN YOU NAME THE MLB PITCHERS
WITH THE MOST STRIKEOUTS
EACH DECADE?

THE IMPACT FIELD EXPERIENCE: A MIXED BAG IN ROSEMONT

BY: TIM CZUBA 

Attending our latest SABR chapter outing on August 3 at the Chicago Dogs/St. Paul Saints ballgame, one has to be impressed with the convenience and modern look of Impact Field, home of the Dogs. From the easy access off I-294, to the parking structure right next to the park and the clean lines of the stadium, it is definitely the ultra-modern version of fan friendly.

Impact Field is the latest addition to the vibrant Rosemont entertainment complex. Located just across the tollway from Parkway Bank Park, the Rosemont Theatre and the mall, Impact Field is a very modern concrete structure. Opening in 2018, the park has a seating capacity of 6,300 with no lawn seats that so many minor league ballparks have. The park, however, does have six private seating areas, none of which seemed to be in use that night. The large open concourse area behind home plate houses all of the concessions, restrooms, along with a team store. Being that our group sat in the cozy, right field grandstand, making the trek to use any of the concourse facilities was a bit inconvenient, as there was nothing available in the outfield.

The ambiance of the stadium is a mixed bag. Being new and concrete, the park lacks a certain kind of baseball charm that one expects when going to a minor league game. However, I felt the same way about the Kane County Cougars' stadium when it opened, and now I find the stadium rather charming. Perhaps adding amenities and the weathering of time will do the same for Impact Field.

I really enjoyed the ballpark food. The pizza was excellent and of course the park had several choices of hot dogs, of which I sampled the Chicago Dog. All the right ingredients (no ketchup) made the dog delicious! All the menu items were reasonably priced. The same could be said for the team store as they had a sale on caps that night. Being in close proximity to O'Hare International Airport, the park has constant airplane traffic going overhead, sometimes very loudly. Personally, I thought it took away from what ambiance the park now holds. However, if you are a New York Mets fan, you might experience a small hint of nostalgia.

I enjoyed the organ music during the game and the outfield dimensions are a bit quirky with a 294-foot right field line, accented by a Pesky-esque pole in front of the corner, and a 312-foot left field line with large netting in front of the tollway. With smallish dimensions, many home runs were hit, making the game exciting. The sightlines are excellent with no bad seats. Our outfield seats put us right in on the action.

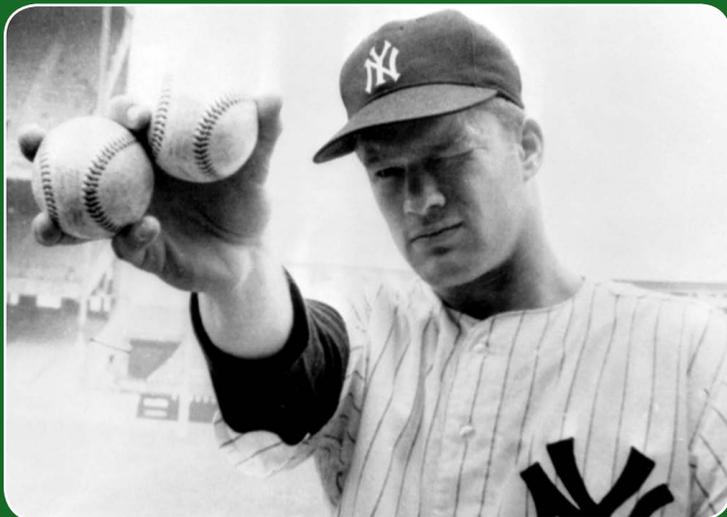
All in all, the experience at Impact Field is average, but with time, could improve. I just get the feeling that the Village of Rosemont wanted



Top: A young fan views the action from behind Impact Field's Pesky-esque foul pole in right field.

Bottom: The Chicago Dogs mascots, Squeeze (left) and Ketchup (right) entertain fans of all ages. (Photos: Bill Pearch)

a field closer to a multi-purpose major league park than a small, endearing minor league park. We all know how well the multi-purpose stadium lasted.



PASTIME PASSAGE...

“YOU SEE, YOU SPEND A GOOD PIECE OF YOUR LIFE GRIPPING A BASEBALL AND IN THE END IT TURNS OUT THAT IT WAS THE OTHER WAY AROUND ALL THE TIME.”

— JIM BOUTON

Ball Four: Twentieth Anniversary Edition, (New York: Wiley Publishing Inc., 1990), p. 398. Photo: The New York Times

ZEMAN'S ZINGERS: AUGUST 2019

BY: DAVE ZEMAN 

Here are five questions to test your baseball knowledge. We will share the answers to this month's questions in the September 2019 issue. Ready? Play ball!

1. What two hitters amassed at least 600 doubles, 100 triples, and 300 home runs?
2. What pitcher won World Series games for three different franchises?
3. Three hurlers tossed complete-game shutouts in the World Series since 2000. Who are they?
4. Who was the most recent American League pitcher to win a complete-game shutout in the Fall Classic?
5. Name the only batter to have a 200-strikeout season in each league.

WHITE SOX HISTORIAN TO DISCUSS THE "BLACK SOX"

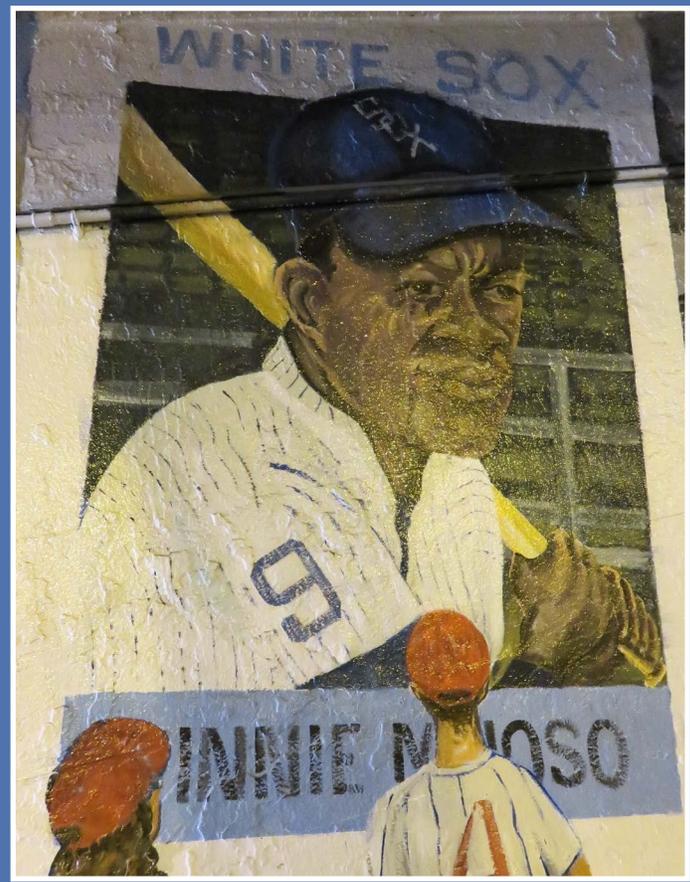
"Eight Men Out: The 100-Year Anniversary of the Black Sox Scandal"

Wednesday, September 11 - 6:30 p.m.
Chicago Public Library - Austin-Irving Branch
6100 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago | (312) 744-6222
<https://www.chipublib.org/location/austin-irving-events/>

In observance of the 100th anniversary of the 1919 Black Sox Scandal—a watershed event in baseball history and a defining moment that forever altered the fortunes of the Chicago White Sox—author and White Sox historian Rich Lindberg provides an inside glimpse of the scandal, its aftermath and its tragic impact on the South Side team.

GET SOCIAL WITH SABR'S EMIL ROTHE CHICAGO CHAPTER

THERE ARE FIVE EASY WAYS TO INTERACT WITH CHICAGO CHAPTER MEMBERS. CLICK TODAY AND START TALKING BASEBALL.



TOP 10 CUBAN-BORN CAREER OPS LEADERS (MINIMUM 2,500 AT-BATS)

RANK	PLAYER	AT-BATS	OPS
1	RAFAEL PALMEIRO	10,472	.885
2	JOSE CANSECO	7,057	.867
3	JOSE ABREU*	3,331	.856
4	MINNIE MINOSO	6,579	.848
5	TONY OLIVA	6,301	.830
6	YOENIS CESPEDES*	3,160	.826
7	YASIEL PUIG*	2,833	.824
8	TONY PEREZ	9,778	.804
9	YASMANI GRANDAL*	2,613	.793
10	KENDRYS MORALES	4,856	.780

* THROUGH JULY 31, 2019

REGISTER NOW FOR 2019 SABR "BLACK SOX" SCANDAL CENTENNIAL SYMPOSIUM - UPDATE

Registration is now open for the SABR Black Sox Scandal Centennial Symposium on September 27-29, 2019, in Chicago. The SABR Black Sox Scandal Research Committee will host this once-in-a-century event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1919 World Series. Here are a few updates from SABR's Jacob Pomrenke.



- More than 125 people are now signed up to attend our Black Sox Centennial Symposium on Saturday, September 28 at the Chicago History Museum. Thanks to all of you for such a tremendous response so far! If you're interested in joining us in Chicago, you can find the schedule and registration details at the link included above.
- **Deadline 1:** Our White Sox ticket block for Friday, September 27 will close in just one week. After that, you'll be on your own for tickets! The start time is now 3:40 p.m. and your ticket is good for two games instead of one, since it'll be a traditional doubleheader against the Tigers. Purchase your tickets no later than Wednesday, August 14 if you want to join us: <https://sabr.org/2019-black-sox-symposium>
- **Deadline 2:** There are only 2 rooms left for Friday night (9/27) and 3 rooms left for Saturday night (9/28) in our courtesy room block at the Palmer House Hilton on Friday night, September 27. If you want to take advantage of our special discounted rate of \$179/night there, you'll need to register for the Black Sox symposium first to get the booking link!
- **Deadline 3:** Only 10 spots remain for the Chicago Baseball History Walking Tour on Sunday, September 29. The Friday walking tour has been sold out for weeks, but you can still take our guided tour of historic baseball sites in the downtown Loop on Sunday morning. You can sign up for the walking tour at the same time you sign up for the symposium.



Eight members of the Chicago White Sox players implicated in the scandal of fixing the 1919 World Series against the Cincinnati Reds. Photo: History.com



BOOK DISCUSSION: INFIELD FLY RULE IS IN EFFECT

On Thursday, August 8, SABR Chicago members were pleased to attend a book discussion at After-Words New and Used Books, 23 E. Illinois in Chicago. Author Howard Wasserman discussed his new book, "Infield Fly Rule is in Effect: The History of Baseball's Most (In)Famous Rule," with attendees. Look for an interview with Wasserman in an upcoming issue of the Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter newsletter.

