



Society for American Baseball Research

San Diego Ted Williams Chapter

# NEWSLETTER

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## YANKEE STADIUM TO CAMDEN YARDS: Boog, Steve Hamilton, and the Gift of Memory

*by Dan Boyle*

I first saw pictures of Camden Yards that a friend took in 1993, the year the ballpark opened. There was no ballpark like it at the time, and I was highly envious that my friend had gotten to see a game from the right-field bleachers. I had seen my first games in Baltimore at Memorial Stadium in 1992, its last year of existence, and I got to see many ballparks in the ensuing years. In 2012, I attended a conference in Baltimore, and the Orioles were home the Sunday before it began.

I arrived at my Inner Harbor hotel after midnight on Saturday night. Slightly jet-lagged, I mapped out my walking directions to the ballpark over Sunday morning coffee. Incorrect directions, as it turned out – at some point, I wondered how one can NOT find a ballpark. But then I turned a corner and saw the east side of the B&O Warehouse in front of me. I was almost there!

I entered through the B&O building, which is not the typical entrance. Even after all these years, there is still something magical about walking into a ballpark. Here was my first view of the field from the terrace on Eutaw Street:



Despite my misadventures, I arrived in plenty of time to explore. I have a memory of Joe Falls, the Tigers' correspondent for *The Sporting News*, mentioning that he always ate crab cakes in Baltimore, so I wandered toward home plate checking out the various eating options. It wasn't until I consulted a map of food locations that I remembered Boog's barbecue stand. [Boog Powell](#) was the slugging first baseman on the great Orioles teams of the late '60s-early '70s, and had a barbecue place in Camden Yards. And hadn't someone told me that he was sometimes there to greet guests?

Let me backtrack to childhood and first discovering baseball to explain why my heart was suddenly beating faster. I grew up in the Bronx, started following baseball in 1959, and went to my first game at Yankee Stadium in 1960. Unlike all of my friends, though, I did not like the Yankees. I can't even say what it was – maybe I was just stubborn. One day a friend wore a baseball jacket that had the logos of all 16 major-league teams, and I liked the Orioles logo best. So, this kid in the Bronx suddenly became an Orioles fan.

Once I became a baseball fan, I became a baseball fan. I read everything I could about baseball and soon discovered my team's history. The Orioles had only been in Baltimore for a few years, since 1954. Before that, they were the St. Louis Browns and had won exactly one pennant in American League history, fewer than any team in either league (even the Washington Senators)!

Of course, this did not dissuade me. Then, in 1960 the "Baby Birds," with a rotation consisting of two rookies ([Steve Barber](#) and [Chuck Estrada](#)), two second-year men ([Milt Pappas](#) and [Jack Fisher](#)), and one grizzled veteran ([Hal "Skinny" Brown](#)), surprised the baseball world by battling the Yankees for the pennant. I could not believe how cool baseball was.

In mid-September, the Orioles came to Yankee Stadium for a four-game weekend series in a virtual tie for first place. I very carefully did the arithmetic and figured out that they would be four games ahead of the Yankees if they swept!



As most readers know, it didn't work out that way. The Orioles lost all four games and finished eight games back. I like to say that baseball taught me at a young age that life is simply not fair.

Despite that lesson, I was hooked. I knew (with a certainty that only a child can have) that someday my team would avenge that bitter defeat and come out on top. The Yankees proceeded to win the next four pennants, which taught me patience. Along the way, the Orioles called up a left-handed power hitter with a very unusual name, Boog Powell. Power hitters fascinated me – maybe they fascinate all young fans. "Boog"

was the clincher, though. I probably would not have been quite so taken with John Powell.

Back to Camden Yards: heart beating faster, I headed back to Eutaw Street and found **Boog's BBQ**. The food looked good. Suddenly I noticed this big genial guy sitting on a stool to the right.

I apologize if you were one of the fans I cut in front of. My only excuse is that I never saw the line of people waiting to talk to him, I just saw Boog. And I was a kid again. All I had for him to sign was my ticket stub, and he graciously did so.

In that instant, a moment came back to me and I blurted it out to Boog. Orioles-Yankees at the Stadium, mid- to late-'60s, a night game. I was sitting in the reserved seats on the third-base side, behind the visiting dugout. (*Note to young readers: it sounds impossible, but I went to the game on the spur of the moment and bought the ticket 30 minutes before game time. It was different then.*) The Yankee pitcher was struggling, and [Ralph Houk](#) came to the mound to talk things over as Boog approached the plate. You couldn't really see the bullpen in the old stadium, but I was guessing that Houk had a lefty warming up,

probably [Steve Hamilton](#). Houk decided to stay with his right-handed starter, and Boog blasted a home run. The next time through the lineup, Boog came up in a similar situation, and Houk practically raced to the mound, waving his left arm. This time, Boog hit Hamilton's pitch even farther into the night for his second home run.

Boog laughed at the story, and said, "You know, I once beat Steve Hamilton with a bunt! He was so surprised he didn't move off the mound." Wow!

I floated back toward my seat, barbecue in hand (I highly recommend it – it was really good). I called a friend back in San Diego and said, "You've probably never heard me sound like a 10-year-old, but you won't BELIEVE what just happened."

After all that, I got to watch a baseball game! It was a beautiful summer afternoon (see photo) and I had a great seat with a grandfather and grandson in front of me. The grandson reminded me of me: he

knew all the players, had his favorites, and loved the Orioles. Maybe the most interesting thing about the afternoon was that the 2012 Orioles reminded me a lot of that 1960 team, a bunch of good young players coming together to challenge the Yankees. I had lost interest in the Orioles in the free-agent days of the mid-1990s, when [Cal Ripken](#) retired and [Eddie Murray](#) was long gone, but on that Sunday in July I became an Orioles fan again.

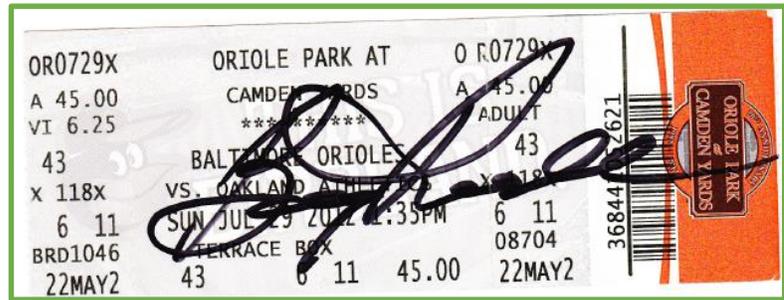
Some months later, I thought back on that day and thought: wouldn't it be great to find the game when Boog beat Hamilton with a bunt? And wouldn't it be great to find the two-homer game, with the second coming off Steve Hamilton? Baseball players and fans have been known to "remember" things that never happened. Were our memories accurate?

## NEXT STOP: RETROSHEET

Let me begin by singing the praises of Retrosheet. I take it for granted as I use it more often, but it is amazing that I can find information on any player, any game, any time. A project like this would have required an incredible amount of leg work in the old days.

I began at [Retrosheet.org](#) by clicking on players and finding Boog. His lifetime stats came up, and I clicked on pitcher matchups to find that he did better against Steve Hamilton (.296/.387/.519 in 27 at bats with two home runs and 13 RBIs) than against lefthanders in general (.268/.320/.393).

I figured that it would be easier to track down the two-homer game than the game-winning bunt, and it was just a click away under Top Performances. Boog hit two home runs in 21 games, but six were



after Hamilton was out of the league. A check of these games quickly led me to July 1, 1969, a Tuesday night at Yankee Stadium. The right-handed starter was [Stan Bahnsen](#) for the Yankees. Here is what happened:

- Top of the first, one out, Orioles ahead 1-0, [Frank Robinson](#) at first: Boog homers.
- Top of the fourth, leading off, 3-2 Baltimore: Boog fouls out to the first baseman.
- Top of the fifth, bases loaded, one out, game tied 4-4: Boog singles to center, driving in [Don Buford](#) and [Paul Blair](#). Houk removes Bahnsen after this at bat, bringing in [Lindy McDaniel](#).
- Top of the seventh, first and third, no one out, 7-6 Yankees: Houk summons Hamilton in relief of McDaniel; Boog homers for a 9-7 lead.
- Top of the ninth, bases empty, two out, 10-9 Yankees: Boog singles to right off [Jack Aker](#). [Curt Motton](#) runs for Boog. [Brooks Robinson](#) grounds into a force at second to end the game.

So, I was close: Boog's first home run was in the first inning, not after the conference on the mound when Hamilton was not summoned. In the fifth, it was a two-run single that knocked the right-handed starter out of the game. Two home runs, seven RBIs, 4-for-5 on the night, all in a rare (for the 1969 Orioles) losing effort.

Now, how to find the bunt single? There is probably a way to call up every at bat of a batter against a pitcher in Retrosheet, but I am not a database guy and I was in too much of a hurry. Instead, I looked up Steve Hamilton, since as a pitcher he appeared in fewer games, and clicked Daily for each year of his career, then looked for games against the Orioles. I started in 1963. It would be hard to imagine this happening when [Earl Weaver](#) was managing!

Hamilton was a tall (6' 6"), lanky left-handed pitcher who began his major-league career with two appearances in 1961 with the Indians and then was traded to Washington in May 1962. Hamilton was with the Senators the first two times he faced Boog. Boog struck out on April 8, 1963. Two days later, he drew a bases-loaded walk in the bottom of the ninth to tie a game that the Orioles would win.

After he was traded to New York in late April, Hamilton pitched for the Yankees until late in the 1970 season. Boog and Hamilton were two of the taller players in the American League, along with Frank Howard. Hamilton started for the Yankees against the Orioles on May 11. Boog went 0-for-4 with a strikeout.

The second game of the August 4, 1963, doubleheader was the next faceoff between the two. At the end of two innings, the Yankees had a 7-5 lead. Baltimore tied it in the fourth inning.

Then in the sixth:

Top of the 6th, Orioles Batting, Tied 7-7, Yankees' Bill Stafford facing 2-3-4										
t6	7-7	0	---		BAL	Russ Snyder	Bill Stafford	-15%	35%	Triple to RF
<i>Steve Hamilton replaces Bill Stafford pitching and batting 9th</i>										
t6	7-7	0	--3	R	BAL	Boog Powell	Steve Hamilton	-6%	29%	Single to 1B/Bunt; Snyder Scores
t6	8-7	0	1--	O	BAL	Jim Gentile	Steve Hamilton	3%	32%	Strikeout
t6	8-7	1	1--	O	BAL	Jackie Brandt	Steve Hamilton	3%	35%	Groundout: 2B-SS/Forceout at 2B
t6	8-7	2	1--	RR	BAL	Brooks Robinson	Steve Hamilton	-22%	14%	Home Run (Deep LF); Brandt Scores
t6	10-7	2	---		BAL	Jerry Adair	Steve Hamilton	-1%	13%	Ground-rule Double
t6	10-7	2	-2-		BAL	Dick Brown	Steve Hamilton	0%	12%	Intentional Walk
t6	10-7	2	12-	O	BAL	Herm Starrette	Steve Hamilton	2%	14%	Groundout: SS-1B
<i>3 runs, 4 hits, 0 errors, 2 LOB. Orioles 10, Yankees 7.</i>										

Source: [Baseball-Reference.com](#), [August 4, 1963, Orioles vs. Yankees, Game 2](#)

Boog was right! He dragged a bunt (being left-handed, Hamilton fell off to the third base side of the mound, and it is likely that he never moved to make a play) and [Russ Snyder](#) scored the go-ahead run.

But it was not the winning run. The Yankees came back to win in the bottom of the 10th on a sacrifice fly by pinch-hitter Yogi Berra, 11-10. While Boog did “beat” Hamilton with his bunt, it wasn't enough to beat the Yankees.

Still, how interesting that our basic memories of the events were accurate, although not in all details. In my mind, I switched the first home run and the two-run single. In Boog's mind, the O's won the game on his bunt, as they would have if the bullpen had held the lead. After 50 years, the details are not that relevant. I still get a 10-year-old's grin on my face when I think about swapping stories about Steve Hamilton with a wonderful man on a Sunday at Camden Yards.



**Box score and related newspaper article of the game played in Yankee Stadium on Sunday, August 4, 1963, Orioles vs. Yankees**  
(Game 2 of a double-header)

August 17, 1963, *The Sporting News*, p.25

SECOND GAME											
Baltimore				New York							
ab	r	h	rb	ab	r	h	rb	ab	r	h	rb
Aparicio, ss	6	1	0	Kubek, ss	5	2	1				
Snyder, rf	6	3	2	Richardson, 2b	5	2	2				
Powell, lf	3	1	1	Tresh, cf	4	3	3				
Saverine, cf	0	0	0	Howard, c	5	1	1				
Gentile, 1b	5	1	3	Berra	0	0	0				
Brandt, cf-lf	5	1	2	Bright, 1b	1	1	1				
Robinson, 3b	5	1	2	Blanchard, rf	3	0	0				
Adair, 2b	6	0	1	Pepitone, 1b-rf	3	1	0				
Brown, c	3	1	1	Lopez, lf	5	0	1				
dOrsino, c	0	0	0	Boyer, 3b	4	0	1				
McNally, p	0	0	0	Bouton, p	1	0	0				
Stock, p	0	0	0	Stafford, p	0	0	0				
aValentine	0	1	0	Hamilton, p	0	0	0				
McCormick, p	0	0	0	cMantle	1	1	1				
Starrette, p	1	0	0	Reniff, p	1	0	0				
Brunet, p	0	0	0	Totals	38	11	11				
eSmith	1	0	0								
Miller, p	0	0	0								
Totals	41	10	12								

Baltimore	New York
2 3 0	2 0 3 0 0 0 0-10
4 3 0	0 0 2 1 0 0 1-11

Pitchers	IP.	H.	R.	ER.	BB.	SO.
McNally	2 2/3	3	4	4	2	0
Stock	1/3	1	0	0	0	1
McCormick	1/3	1	3	2	4	1
Starrette	3 2/3	3	2	2	1	1
Brunet	2	1	1	1	0	1
Miller (L. 4-5)	2 2/3	2	1	1	1	4
Bouton	1 2/3	4	5	0	2	2
Stafford	3 1/3	3	3	3	3	0
Hamilton	2	3	2	2	1	1
Reniff (W. 3-2)	3	2	0	0	3	2

aWalked for Stock in second. bPopped out for Bright in fourth. cHomered for Hamilton in seventh. dWalked for Brown in eighth. eStruck out for Brunet in eighth. fHit sacrifice fly for Howard in tenth. 2B—Gentile, Adair, Tresh. 3B—Brandt, Snyder. HR—Robinson, Howard, Mantle. SH—Starrette, Brandt, Stafford. SF—Berra. E—Brown, Bright 2, Pepitone. PD-A—Baltimore 29-11 (two out when winning run scored), New York 30-13. DP—Boyer, Richardson and Pepitone. LOB—Baltimore 12, New York 9. HP—Starrette (Stafford). U—Paparella, Haller, Honochick and Smith. T—3:44. Attendance—38,555.

August 5, 1963, *The Evening Sun* (Baltimore), p.24

**Why...  
Oh, Why?  
Powell's Nightcap  
Bunt On Own**

Why did the Orioles' Russ Snyder, who was on third base, appear to be caught unaware when Boog Powell executed a fine bunt in the sixth inning of the second game with the Yankees in New York yesterday?

It turned out beautifully, since Snyder managed to score, any way.

"No, it wasn't a squeeze play," said Snyder. "I didn't know he was going to bunt."

"That's right," said manager Billy Hitchcock. "Boog was bunting on his own."

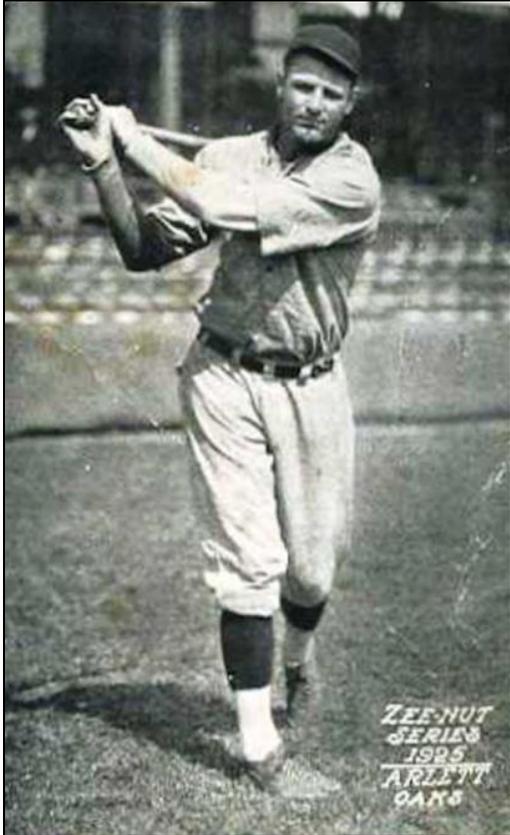
"I thought I'd try something new," Powell said with a smile.



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## “BUZZ” ARLETT: Minor League Star, Major League Stuff

by James D. Smith III



This is my 40th season with SABR. In Boston – as pastor, writing a Harvard dissertation, raising three children – my wife said, “You need a hobby.” She loved me and “didn’t want me to become a boring old man.” So, I contacted [Cliff Kachline](#) and joined! Still unclear whether this prevents senescence, Society interactions remain amazing.

In 1982, for *The National Pastime* (Vol. 2, No.1), I wrote “Bowling Out on Top,” showcasing (pre- Puckett, Boggs, Clark, Gwynn and Ortiz) three dozen players since 1877 who had batted .300 in their final MLB season. Of special interest was San Francisco Bay Area native [Russell Loris “Buzz” Arlett](#) - it was his *only* MLB campaign. Then, in 1985 we moved to Minneapolis, to pastor an urban congregation and teach.

Three summers later, in July 1988 at SABR’s annual convention there, I loved talking with “Unser” [Joe Hauser](#). He reflected on the 1936 Millers (AA) team, with pals including Arlett, all-time minor league hits leader (and 1938 Padre) [Spencer Harris](#), and others. He encouraged me to respectfully reach out to old timers. In the next 18 months came interviews with early PCL Padres like [Bob Doerr](#), [Ted Williams](#) (1938 Millers), [Jimmie Reese](#), and [Bill Starr](#) – beautifully presented in Bill Swank’s *Echoes From Lane Field*.<sup>1</sup> It also led me to see if “Buzz” (d. 1964) had surviving family in the area. He did, and that brought

heartwarming conversation with his widow of 25 years, Vivian Johnson Arlett.

As noted in Cort Vitty’s excellent SABR Bio Project essay,<sup>2</sup> the couple met in the mid-1930s while she worked in the Millers’ front office. Their Lutheran wedding was in Watertown, South Dakota, on October 26, 1936 – his baseball playing career essentially over. In our 1990 conversations, as a native San Diegan and PCL fan, I honored 13 “Buzz years” with his hometown Oakland Oaks. Vivian knew little of that era, so with pleasure I introduced Zeenut cards and offered some data. Unrequested, she sent back with gratitude Buzz’s last Minnesota driver’s license. Vivian had admired the 6’3” hunk, the star, the player – but entering “retirement” truly loved Arlett’s humor, courage and character. His resilience facing major life transitions deserves a brief review.

A-643-751-546-010		Not Valid until signed by licensee and Commissioner of Highways, numbered, birth date imprinted and postage metered.			
Always Carry This Card With You When Driving					
Signature Write in Ink		Russell Loris Arlett			
Street No. or R.F.D.		2742 Harrett St			
Postoffice		Maple St - Minneapolis			
Date of Birth	Color Hair	Color Eyes	Height	Weight	Expires on Birthday of Licensee
	Light Blue		6'3"	232	
Restrictions					
<b>MINNESOTA DRIVER LICENSE</b> Invalidates any Previous License Issued					

Courtesy of Jim Smith and Mark Macrae

<sup>1</sup> Bill Swank, *Echoes from Lane Field, A History of the San Diego Padres (1936-1957)*, Turner Publishing Co., 1997.

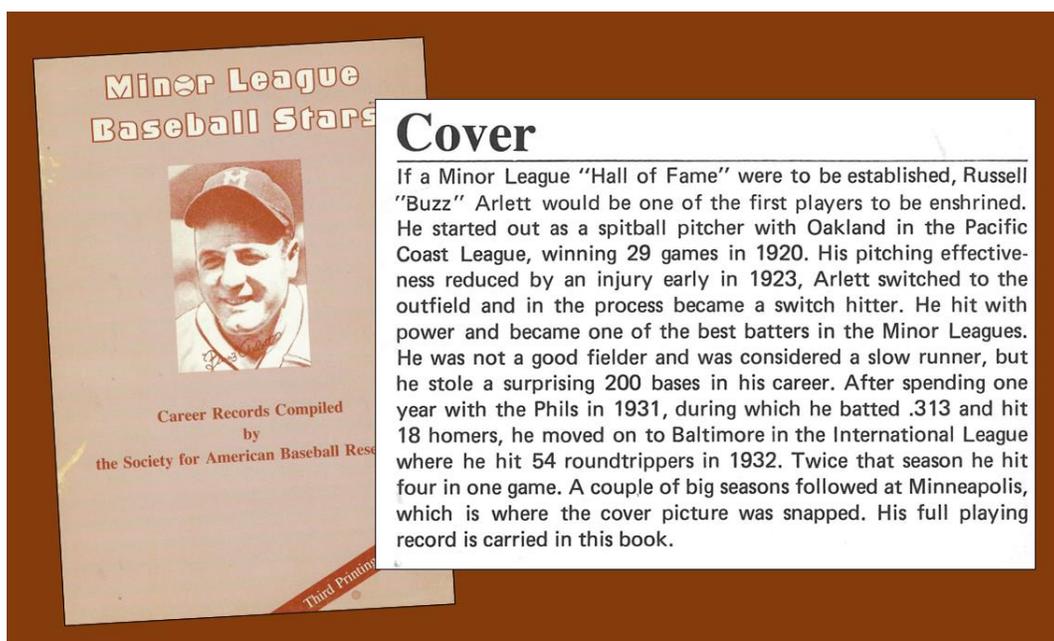
<sup>2</sup> Cort Vitty, “[Buzz Arlett](#),” SABR BioProject.

In 1923, while a star PCL pitcher, Arlett's overworked right arm went dead. Instead of parlaying local celebrity, he moved to the outfield and became a switch-hitter – the first such slugger in baseball history.

In 1930, when confronting temperamental PCL umpire [Chet Chadbourne](#), the ump struck him in the head with his mask – causing severe injury, league suspensions during investigation and public outcry. Given this, and MLB's revised draft policy, the Oaks sold Arlett to the Philadelphia Phillies for the 1931 season. There hobbled and without longtime family and friends he batted .313 in 121 games.

In 1932, waived to accommodate the Phillies' "youth movement," he signed for two years with Baltimore (International League) averaging 46 homers and 145 RBIs, with a .341 batting average – twice hitting four home runs in a game.

Coming to Minneapolis after a brief 1934 Birmingham stay, batting skills remained, but wear and tear reduced playing time. Also, as Joe Hauser would reminisce, Millers' front office shifts meant after 1936 they were *both* gone. A cup of coffee with Syracuse the next spring, and deep love for Vivian (d.1998) as gifted "teammate," confirmed it was time: the sports pub *Arlett's Place*<sup>3</sup> opened and became a favorite Twin Cities local eatery, with a son and daughter blessing their home.



Whether on the cover of SABR's *Minor League Baseball Stars* in 1978 (shown above), or cited among the top 15 minor league all-time all-stars by SABR in 1985,<sup>4</sup> or granted Hall of Fame honors for **both** Pacific Coast League and International League play, the record speaks. So did PCL greats like [Smead Jolley](#) and [Tony Freitas](#), with admiration, during my personal visits. Most touching of all was conversation (per their Lakewood Cemetery marker) with his beloved wife, "Nana" Vivian.

Truly, Buzz Arlett left a generation of coast-to-coast fans – including this one!



<sup>3</sup> His restaurant in Minneapolis was located at 2951 Lyndale Avenue, South.

<sup>4</sup> SABR, *Minor League Baseball Stars*, Volume II, 1985.

**Check out Arlett's career record (below), and note:**

- He was a switch hitter. In 8,001 minor-league at-bats he had a career batting average of .341, had 2,726 hits and slugged 432 home runs.
- He started out mostly as a pitcher with Oakland, 1918-1922. Overall, he won 108 games in his career.
- From 1923 until 1937 he played almost entirely as an outfielder.

**RUSSELL LOUIS (BUZZ) ARLETT**

Born January 3, 1899, in Oakland, Calif. Died May 16, 1964 in Minneapolis, Minn.  
Batted left and right. Threw right. Height, 6.03. Weight: 225.

Arlett was the top switch hitter in the minor leagues. For Baltimore in 1932 he hit 4 home runs in a game on June 1, and again on July 4.

YEAR	CLUB	LEA	POS	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	PCT
1918	Oakland	P. C.	P-2-1	26	71	9	15	4	0	1	8	1	.211
1919	Oakland	P. C.	P	58	144	15	42	8	2	1	19	2	.292
1920	Oakland	P. C.	P-1B	64	178	26	45	5	4	5	26	2	.253
1921	Oakland	P. C.	P	64	128	12	28	5	1	3	14	1	.219
1922	Oakland	P. C.	P-OF	74	174	23	42	9	4	4	21	0	.241
1923	Oakland	P. C.	OF-P	149	445	76	147	31	5	19	101	9	.330
1924	Oakland	P. C.	OF-P	193	698	122	229	57	19*	33	145	24	.328
1925	Oakland	P. C.	OF	190	710	121	244	49	13	25	146	26	.344
1926	Oakland	P. C.	OF-1B-P	194	667	140	255	52	16	35	140*	26	.382
1927	Oakland	P. C.	OF-P	187	658	122	231	54*	7	30	123	20	.351
1928	Oakland	P. C.	OF-P	160	561	111	205	47	3	25	113	10	.365
1929	Oakland	P. C.	OF-1B-P	200	722	146	270	70*	8	39	189	22	.374
1930	Oakland	P. C.	OF-P	176	618	132	223	57	7	31	143	8	.361
1931	Philadelphia	Nat.	OF	121	418	65	131	26	7	18	72	3	.313
1932	Baltimore	Int.	OF	147	516	141*	175	33	4	54*	144*	11	.339
1933	Baltimore	Int.	OF-1B	159	531	135*	182	40	3	39*	146	20	.343
1934	Birmingham	South	OF	35	128	28	42	9	4	7	23	3	.328
	Minneapolis	A. A.	OF	116	430	106	137	32	1	41*	132	8	.319
1935	Minneapolis	A. A.	OF	122	425	90	153	26	2	25	101	6	.360
1936	Minneapolis	A. A.	OF	74	193	55	61	10	4	15	52	1	.316
1937	Syracuse	Int.	PH	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
			Majors	121	418	65	131	26	7	18	72	3	.313
			Minors	2390	8001	1610	2726	598	107	432	1786	200	.341

**PITCHING RECORD**

YEAR	CLUB	LEA	G	IP	W	L	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA	
1918	Oakland	P. C.	21	153	4	9	150	60	46	43	34	2.70	
1919	Oakland	P. C.	57*	348	22	17	315	172*	116	112	79	3.00	
1920	Oakland	P. C.	53	427*	29*	17	430	162	137	134	105	2.89	
1921	Oakland	P. C.	55	319	19	18	371	180	155	115	101	4.37	
1922	Oakland	P. C.	47	374*	25	19	396	171	115	112	128	2.77	
1923	Oakland	P. C.	28	125	4	9	182	106	84	47	34	5.76	
1924	Oakland	P. C.	2	4	0	0	9	7	6	3	0	13.50	
1925	Oakland	P. C.	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0.00	
1926	Oakland	P. C.	5	14	2	0	13	2	2	3	4	1.29	
1927	Oakland	P. C.	1	9	1	0	10	6	3	4	4	3.00	
1928	Oakland	P. C.	7	27	1	0	19	2	2	8	7	0.67	
1929	Oakland	P. C.	17	61	1	4	83	46	40	17	17	5.76	
1930	Oakland	P. C.	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	1	0	9.00	
			Minors	297	1868	108	93	1982	917	709	601	513	3.42

Source: SABR, *Minor League Baseball Stars*, 1978, p.24



3

## COMPARING THREE TWO-WAY PLAYERS: Babe Ruth, Shohei Ohtani ... and Buzz Arlett

by Tom Larwin

Two interests led me to undertake research into two-way players. One interest was the exceptional performance by Shohei Ohtani this season playing in the Los Angeles Angels’ starting lineup as a both a starting pitcher and, at other times, as a non-pitcher.

The second interest was as a result of Jim Smith’s article in this newsletter introducing (or, reintroducing) to us Buzz Arlett. One of Arlett’s accomplishments was to have several seasons as a two-way player, albeit in the minor leagues. I was curious as to how the seasons of Ohtani and Arlett compared.

This curiosity about Ohtani and Arlett led me to further wonder how they both would compare to the greatest of all two-way players, Babe Ruth.

So, that’s the subject of this essay, a comparison of three of the best two-way players. Not necessarily to rank them but simply to put them side-by-side and compare the three. The comparison allows for the fact that Arlett’s numbers are at the minor-league level (albeit, the highest level), and Ohtani’s include several years from Japanese professional leagues.

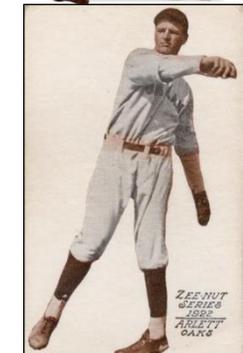
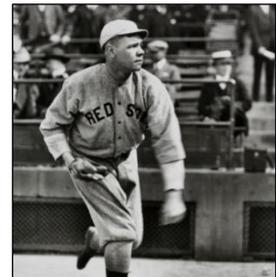
For purposes of the analysis, I defined the qualifications for a “two-way” season to include: (1) seasons in which they pitched in at least 10 games **and** (2) had at least 10 games as a non-pitcher (i.e., played at a non-pitching position in the field, or as DH).<sup>5</sup> or as a pinch hitter/runner. I examined only those seasons where the player had a significant number of games pitched. The results are shown in Table 1: two two-way seasons for Ruth, five for Ohtani (3-Japan, 2-Angels), and three for Arlett. A summary of each player’s two-way seasons follows.

**Babe Ruth.** He broke in as a 19-year-old pitcher in 1914 with the Boston Red Sox and then transitioned to being an outfielder during his fifth season with the Boston Red Sox (1918). His two-way seasons were 1918 and 1919. In 1920, as a New York Yankee, Ruth had become a full-time outfielder. In essence, Ruth had three separate careers: full-time pitcher (1914-1917), two-way player (1918-1919), and full-time outfielder (1920-1935). In both years as a two-way player, he led the American League in home runs and in 1919, he also led the league in both RBI (113) and OPS (1,114).

**Table 1. TWO-WAY SEASONS**

Season	Games Played				2-way
	DH	In Field (non-P)	PH/ PR	P	
<b>RUTH-MLB</b>					
1915	-	0	11	32	
1916	-	0	24	44	
1917	-	0	11	41	
1918	-	72	5	20	✓
1919	-	115	1	17	✓
1920	-	142	0	0	
<b>OHTANI-Japan</b>					
2014		63		24	✓
2015		48		23	✓
2016		83		21	✓
2017		66		6	
<b>OHTANI-MLB</b>					
2018	82	0	22	10	✓
2019	91	0	15	0	
2020	39	0	4	2	
2021	126	7	9	23	✓
<b>ARLETT-Minors</b>					
1918	-	5		21	
1919	-	1		57	
1920	-	11		53	✓
1921	-	9		55	
1922	-	27		47	✓
1923	-	121		28	✓
1924	-	191		2	

Legend:  
XX Satisfies criterion of 10+  
✓ Satisfies criteria for a two-way season



Arlett-1922 ZeeNut Courtesy Mark Macrae Collection

<sup>5</sup> Games as pinch hitter and pinch runner were not used as qualifying games. However, in the cases of Ohtani in Japan and Arlett, I made the assumption to qualify any of their aggregated non-playing totals that were 10 or more games.

**Shohei Ohtani.** With the exception of two years with the Angels when he had surgeries, his professional career to date has been as a two-way player. Certainly in 2021 Ohtani demonstrated exceptional offensive and pitching skills—one for the history books.

What lies ahead we don't know for certain, but given his age (27) and record there is a good probability that more comparable years will be added to his MLB résumé.

Ohtani's 9-2 pitching record for the 2021 season resulted in a respectable ERA of 3.18 and WHIP of 1.09, along with a ratio of 10.8 strikeouts per nine innings. On the offensive side he started 126 games as the team's DH. Finally, there were nine games where he served as a pinch hitter. His offensive numbers were 46 home runs and 100 RBI, and an OPS of .965, which ranked 5th in MLB for 2021. Due to surgeries Ohtani played almost entirely as a DH in 2019 and 2020. In 2018 he did pitch in 10 games and had a 4-2 record and respectable 1.16 WHIP.

Prior to joining the Angels in 2018 Ohtani's experience was almost entirely based upon his play in Japan's professional leagues, 2013-2017. In each of those five seasons he both pitched, and was in the lineup in games in which he did not pitch.

**Buzz Arlett.** His career track is reminiscent of Babe Ruth's: an initial part as a full-time pitcher (1918-1919), a transition part as two-way player (1920-1923), and a third part as a full-time outfielder (1924-1937). Like Ruth, Arlett developed into a home run hitter and held the minor league home run record of 432 career home runs for many years.

In Arlett's three years as a two-way player (1920, 1922-1923) he averaged 309 innings per year, and won an average of 19+ games. In his initial years as a pitcher and part-time hitter, Arlett's batting skills did not capture attention as did Ruth's at a comparable stage. Still, in his three two-way years he had a batting average of .294, led in 1923 with a .330 clip and 20 home runs. His home run prowess had emerged.

**Comparison of the Three Players.** A summary of key pitching and batting statistics for each of the players during their two-way seasons is provided in Table 2. Also, at the conclusion of the article Table 3 offers a detailed year-by-year summary of individual player statistics for batting and pitching for each player's two-way years.

Table 2. COMPARISON SUMMARY				
	Ruth	Ohtani		Arlett
<b>Career Information</b>				
Years	1914-1935	2018-2021	2013-2017	1918-1937
Number of Seasons Played	22 <sup>(2)</sup>	4 <sup>(2)</sup>	5 <sup>(3)</sup>	19 <sup>(1)</sup>
Seasons Pitched in One or More Games	10	3	5	13
Seasons as Played at Both Pitcher and Other Positions in Same Season	6	3	5	10
Games as a Pitcher (Career)	163	33	92	297
<b>Pitching Record, Two-Way Years</b>				
Seasons	2: 1918-19	2: 2018, 2021	3: 2014-16	3: 1920, 1922-23
Won-Loss Records Two-Way Seasons	1918 13-7	2018 4-2	2014 11-4	1920 29-17
	1919 9-5	2021 9-2	2015 15-5	1922 25-19
			2016 10-4	1923 4-9
Average Wins/Season	11	6.5	12	19.3
Average Games Pitched /Season	19	23	17	43
Average Innings Pitched /Season	137	91	153	309
Average Innings Pitched/Game	8.1	5.5	6.7	7.2
WHIP [(BB+H)/IP]	1.27	1.11	1.02	1.40
<b>Batting Record, Two-Way Years</b>				
Average Games Non-Pitcher/Season <sup>(4)</sup>	94	113	68	53
Batting Average	.312	.268	.286	.294
Average Home Runs/Season	20	34	12	9
OPS (On-Base%+Slugging%)	1.052	.950	.889	n/a

(1) -Minor League Seasons Only

(2) -MLB Seasons Only

(3) -Japan Professional League Only

(4) -Non-pitcher includes games as pinch hitter, DH, or in the field at non-pitcher position

Based on comparison of the two-way season performances for each of the players here are my conclusions:

- **First, Babe Ruth deserves his acclaim as the best ever two-way player.**

Over the course of his two-way seasons, 1918 and 1919, between pitching and playing a field position he was in the starting lineup for the Red Sox in 215 games, which amounts to 82% of the team's games.

Ruth's best years as a pitcher were prior to 1918 during which he averaged 22 wins between 1915 and 1917. Still, in 1918 and 1919 he averaged eight innings every game he pitched, averaged 11 wins each year, and had a 2.55 ERA.

Those same years he had an overall batting average of .312 and OPS of 1.052. Good, really good...but also league leader in several offensive categories: home runs (11 in 1918 and 29 in 1919) ... plus in 1919 he led in runs scored (103), RBI (113), and OPS (1.114).

- **Secondly, with another two or three seasons like 2021, Shohei Ohtani could conceivably deserve acclaim as the best ever two-way player.**

In contrast to Ruth and Arlett, Ohtani's early career years were as a two-way player, not as a full-time pitcher. And, excepting for surgeries, he has continued in the two-way role. The other difference from Ruth and Arlett, is that Ohtani's non-pitching role (at least with the Angels) has been as a designated hitter, rather than playing at a field position. The DH role would be expected to be a benefit, physically, as compared to having to be in the field every inning.

When it comes to performance, Ohtani's 2021 numbers generally demonstrate above average pitching and batting. His batting average (.257) was mediocre but his power numbers were in the elite category: he led the American League in triples (8) and finished with second-most home runs (46) and OPS (.965). Plus, Ohtani's 26 stolen bases indicate a facet of offense that neither Ruth nor Arlett matched. On the pitching side he started in 23 games and had a 9-2 record with an above-average WHIP (1.09) and ERA (3.18).

- **Third, Arlett, despite being a minor league player, deserves credit for having several very good years as a two-way player.**

Arlett's performance will not receive the attention of MLB player performances, but his four years played at the highest level of minor league baseball were very impressive.

Compared to Ruth and Ohtani, in his two-way seasons, Arlett generally pitched in more games and played in the field less. His performance over the three years evaluated as a two-way player showed an average of 43 games, 19 wins, and 7.2 innings per game.

On the offensive side Arlett's numbers were not noteworthy until 1923 when arm troubles forced him to curtail his pitching as Jim Smith reported. He still pitched in 28 games for Oakland that year, compared to 121 games in the outfield. Arlett's 1923 season showed the first indication of his batting skills, with a .330 batting average, 19 home runs, and 101 RBI. Over the remaining 13 years of his career he would go on to average nearly 30 home runs a season, not including the 18 he had with the Philadelphia Phillies in 1931.



Table 3. BATTING AND PITCHING STATISTICS FOR EACH PLAYER'S TWO-WAY YEARS																											
Seasons	Batting																Pitching						Seasons				
	G	AB	R	H	1b	2b	3b	HR	RBI	BA	BB	HBP	SF	SLG	SB	OBP	OPS	W	L	W-L%	G	IP		H	BB	WHIP	
<b>RUTH-MLB</b>																											
1918	95	317	50	95	47	26	11	<b>11</b>	61	.300	58	2	-	.555	6	.411	<b>.966</b>	13	7	.650	20	166.3	125	49	1.05	1918	
1919	130	432	<b>103</b>	139	64	34	12	<b>29</b>	<b>113</b>	.322	101	6	-	.657	7	<b>.456</b>	<b>1.114</b>	9	5	.643	17	133.3	148	58	1.55	1919	
Totals=	225	749	153	234	111	60	23	40	174	.312	159	8	-	.614	13	.438	1.052	22	12	.647	37	299.7	273	107	1.27	=Totals	
<b>OHTANI-Japan</b>																											
2014	87	212	32	58	30	17	1	10	31	.274	21	0	1	.505	1	.338	.842	11	4	.733	24	155.3	125	57	1.17	2014	
2015	71	109	15	22	13	4	0	5	17	.202	8	0	2	.376	1	.252	.628	15	5	.750	23	162.7	102	48	0.92	2015	
2016	104	323	65	104	63	18	1	22	67	.322	54	1	4	.588	7	.416	1.004	10	4	.714	21	140.0	89	45	0.96	2016	
Totals=	262	644	112	184	106	39	2	37	115	.286	83	1	7	.525	9	.365	.889	36	13	.735	68	458.0	316	150	1.02	=Totals	
<b>OHTANI-MLB</b>																											
2018	104	326	59	93	48	21	2	22	61	.285	37	2	1	.564	10	.361	.925	4	2	.667	10	51.7	38	22	1.16	2018	
2021	155	537	103	138	58	26	<b>8</b>	46	100	.257	96	4	2	.592	26	.372	.965	9	2	.818	23	130.3	98	44	1.09	2021	
Totals=	259	863	162	231	106	47	10	68	161	.268	133	6	3	.582	36	.368	.950	13	4	.765	33	182.0	136	66	1.11	=Totals	
<b>ARLETT-Minors</b>																											
1920	64	178	26	45	31	5	4	5	26	.253	-	-	-	.410	2	-	-	29	17	.630	53	427.0	430	134	1.32	1920	
1922	74	174	23	42	25	9	4	4	21	.241	-	-	-	.408	0	-	-	25	19	.568	47	374.0	396	112	1.36	1922	
1923	149	445	76	147	92	31	5	19	101	.330	-	-	-	.551	9	-	-	4	9	.308	28	125.0	182	47	1.83	1923	
Totals=	287	797	125	234	148	45	13	28	148	.294	-	-	-	.488	11	-	-	58	45	.563	128	926.0	1008	293	1.40	=Totals	

Note: Numbers in ***Bold-Italic*** means led league

### Postscript

To further explore the subject of two-way players, here are three very good references to start with:

SABR, "Great Pitching-Hitting Combinations," *Minor League Baseball Stars*, 1978, p.12.

This is all about minor-league stars and while a bit out-of-date, provides a summary discussion of two-way minor-league players who had notable seasons.

Uzarowski, Leon, "Pitcher-Player: Two-Way Players in the Major Leagues," *SABR Baseball Research Journal*, 1983.

Here's how he introduces his subject:

*"One of the theories advanced by opponents of the designated-hitter rule is that, because of the DH, major league baseball will never discover another Babe Ruth. That is, because pitchers in the American League, the minors and college ball have little or no opportunity to bat, we'll never know how good a hitter the pitcher could become."*

Uzarowski goes on to evaluate the 33 major-league players he found between 1920 and 1982 who have both pitched in at least 20 games and also played the field in 20 games. Most of these players were not two-way during a season but had careers that were divided, essentially with one part as a pitcher and another part as a non-pitcher.

Krabbenhoft, Herm, "Day-In/Day-Out Double Duty Diamonders: 1946-60," *SABR Baseball Research Journal*, Fall 2020.

This is a relatively current article on the subject of two-way players and acknowledges Ohtani's 2018 two-way season. Krabbenhoft covers major-league players from 1918 to 2018 and evaluates the extent to which each player was a full-time two-way player during a season. He concludes that "none of the players—including Babe Ruth—were simultaneously truly full-time pitchers and truly full-time batters." His research goes further and contains a thorough evaluation of minor-league two-way players for the period 1946-1960.



## 4

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE SULLIVAN FAMILY BASEBALL RESEARCH CENTER

by Pete Miesner

Service Area Manager – Art, Music, and Recreation – San Diego Central Library

In March 2020, the San Diego Public Library was closed to the public due to the COVID-19 outbreak. As library staff came back to work prior to opening to the public, we had the opportunity to spend time on some projects that needed attention. For libraries everywhere, this “downtime” primarily meant addressing the physical collection – inventorying, weeding, filling gaps in subject matter, and so forth.

The San Diego Public Library did indeed address its collection in this fashion. But in the Art, Music, and Recreation Section of Central Library, there was an additional collection project. Due to our longstanding partnership with the San Diego Ted Williams Chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research, we had acquired sometime back an enormous collection of baseball materials from statistician, historian, and longstanding SABR member William J. Weiss.

Though we have had this collection available for baseball researchers for some time, and had much cataloged, we were still in the process of cataloging the material to make it “discoverable” through the library’s [online catalog](#). Boxes and boxes of Major League Team Yearbooks (largely from the ‘50s and ‘60s), Organizational Sketchbooks, Media Guides, Minor League materials, Foreign Leagues, and much more still had to be cataloged. In short, there was a silver lining to our having to close our doors temporarily. Our Cataloging staff was pressed into service – and they delivered! And, I should also mention that, though we were closed, we were still receiving our normal steady inflow of new baseball titles.

Also, during this last year, SDPL took possession of the Joseph Murphy Baseball Autograph Collection, a 10-volume private scrapbook collection of baseball-related materials accumulated primarily in the 1930s with some additions thereafter – authentic autographs, correspondence, stat sheets, and biographical clippings. There are over 1,200 items in the collection, including autographs of Baseball Hall of Fame members such as Babe Ruth, Ted Williams, Lou Gehrig, and Honus Wagner. This collection can be viewed by appointment or in its digital form in the [San Diego Public Library’s online Digital Archive](#).

The screenshot shows the San Diego Public Library website. The header includes the City of San Diego logo, weather information (69°), and a search bar. The main navigation bar lists various services like Leisure, Resident Resources, Doing Business, Library, Public Safety, and City Hall. Below this is a large banner for the Public Library. The main content area features a section for the Sullivan Family Baseball Research Center, located on the eighth floor of Central Library. It includes a description of the collection, a photo of the center, and a list of links for more information. The sidebar on the right lists various library services and programs.

As of March 2021, most of the San Diego Public Library locations are fully open to the public. This includes the Sullivan Baseball Research Center at the Central Library, 330 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92101. The current hours of operation are Monday/Tuesday 11:30 am – 8:00 pm and Wednesday-Saturday 9:30 am – 6:00 pm. Currently we are not open on Sundays.

Some of the wonderful baseball research material that have now been cataloged are shown in the two following pages.



MLB Team Yearbooks

MLB Team Organizational Record Books

MLB Newsletters and miscellaneous news releases

Unique Baseball Reference Publications



**MLB Team Media Guides**

**The Elwood Scharf  
Chicago Cubs Scrapbook  
Collection (covering  
years 1876-2003)**



**Spanish language materials  
(including material on Mexican,  
Cuban, and Venezuelan leagues) and  
Japanese Baseball (material in  
English and Japanese)**

**Minor League  
Materials including  
Record books, Sketch  
Books, Players  
Guides, Media Guides**



5

## A LOOK BACK: MARCH 1971—CALLING ALL “BASEBALL STATISTORIANS”!

*An Invitation from L. Robert Davids*

4424 Chesapeake Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. (20016)

William J. Weiss:

March 19, 1971

This letter is being addressed to about 25-30 persons interested in baseball history and statistical research (I use the term "statisticians"). You are an addressee because I have seen your name in the Sporting News in past years, appended to an interesting historical or statistical article, or your name has been passed on to me by Ray Nemeo, Bob McCormell, Leonard Gettelson, or Cliff Kachline.

There may be many more than 25 or 30 baseball statisticians around the country. We don't really know, but I thought some effort should be made to organize this "motley crew" into a more formal group. For that reason we plan to hold an organization meeting at Cooperstown, New York on August 10-11, 1971. Cliff Kachline, Hall of Fame Historian, has kindly invited us to meet in the museum library. The Hall of Fame Baseball game and induction ceremonies will be held on Monday, August 9. Why don't we meet then on August 7-8? Impossible, says Cliff. The place is busier than Washington on Inauguration Day. You could come on August 9, take in the induction festivities and get a motel room that night, but not before, and then be available for meetings the next day.

What would be accomplished at the Cooperstown meeting? From general to specific, your attendance would provide an opportunity (1) to see Cooperstown and the always changing Hall of Fame Museum; (2) to meet and exchange first hand views with other statisticians; (3) to review specific areas of baseball interest to avoid duplication of effort; (4) to establish an informal group primarily for exchange of information; or (5) to establish a formal organization with officers, dues, a charter, annual meetings, etc.; (6) to consider the establishment of a publication in which our research efforts could be presented; and (7) to take up additional matters which you may suggest in response to this letter.

What do you do now? You should send me a note saying something along the lines of (1) "Your idea of a get-together of the baseball statisticians sounds great, I would like to attend; (2) I am interested in your efforts to organize the group, I would like to be included but cannot get away for a meeting at Cooperstown this summer; or (3) your plans for an organization are completely impossible; take me off your mailing list, quick." I would also hope that you would include in your response the names of additional baseball "nuts" who might qualify or be interested.

The next step then would be for me to send to those of you who could make the meeting this summer the information on hotels and motels which you would need for the night(s) of August 9 and 10; August 10 only; or August 10 and 11, depending on your travel plans.

I hope to hear from you

*L. Robert Davids*  
L. Robert Davids

*It's March 1971, 50 years ago...*

*What if you were one of the "baseball nuts" who received this letter (to the left) from Bob Davids?*

*Would you (could you?) attend a 2-day meeting in Cooperstown immediately following the date of the 1971 Hall of Fame induction ceremonies? (For who was in the 1971 Induction Class, see below)*

*Would you favor establishment of an "informal group primarily for the exchange of information"? Or a "formal organization with officers, dues, a charter, annual meetings, etc."?*

*Well, Bill Weiss was unable to attend that first meeting on August 10, 1971, and was not one of the 16 "founding members" of SABR, but he did become member #34 soon after.*

*"Baseball nuts"! Really?*

### 1971 INDUCTION CLASS

Four inductees were present at the August 9, 1971 induction ceremony: Satchel Paige, Chick Hafey, Harry Hooper and Rube Marquard. Of the other new members, Dave Bancroft and George Weiss were in poor health, and the Hall of Fame enshrined Jacob Beckley and Joe Kelley posthumously. The Veterans Committee or Negro Leagues Committee inducted all eight new members, as the BBWAA failed to elect anyone. Paige, listed as 65 years old, quipped, "people thought when I broke in with Cleveland in 1949 I was 65 then, and when Bill Veeck got me I was even too old to vote. They got my age mixed up in Cleveland and never did straighten it out." Heywood Broun, who wrote for numerous New York publications and founded the American Newspaper Guild, was honored with the J.G. Taylor Spink Award for meritorious contributions to baseball writing.



6

# BOUNCE HOME RUNS (d.1931)

by Tom Larwin

It started with doing research into the 1913 San Diego Bears. You might not remember them ... or, more likely, never heard of them. They were one of four teams in the Southern California State League (D). The league didn't quite make it, but you would have been proud of our home team that year. They finished in first place, but the season ended prematurely in mid-July. Yet, it's there as part of San Diego's baseball history: the 1913 San Diego Bears were de facto crowned champion. The 1913 Bears are another story, however, for another day.

This story is about a particular home run hit by Bears' catcher Bill Gleason<sup>6</sup> in game one of a July 4 holiday double header. The games were played at Athletic Park, the prime baseball venue at that time here in San Diego.<sup>7</sup> Our neighbors to the north, the Long Beach Wave Riders, were in town for a series.

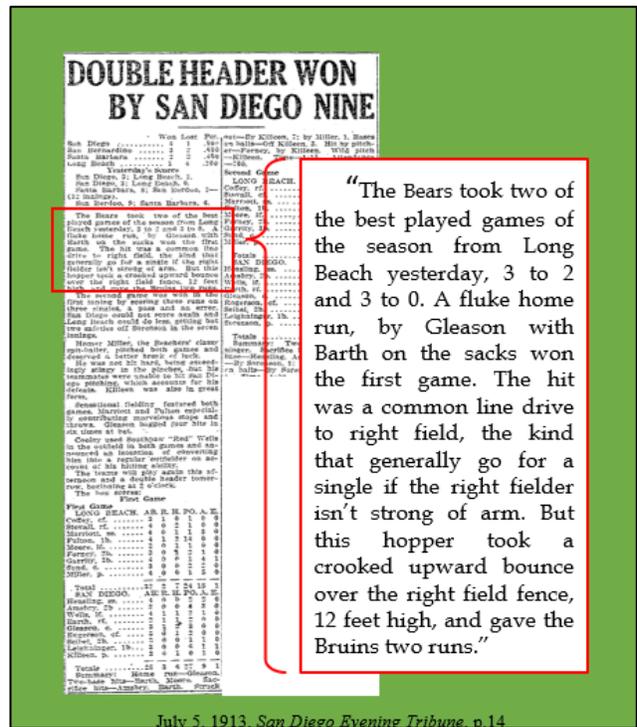
What caught my interest about Gleason's home run was the following from the next day's newspaper account shown in the figure to the right. In the article it was referred to as a "fluke" and "the kind that generally go for a single..." The article went on to say "...this hopper took a crooked upward bounce over the right field fence, 12 feet high, and gave the Bruins two runs."

A fluke home run...one that bounced over the outfield fence. It piqued my curiosity, and after checking into the matter I learned something new: bounced home runs were allowed back then. Only in the minor leagues, right? No...in the majors, too. Really? Really!

So, for those of you like me who didn't know about this rule, read on.

**Evolution of Home Run Rule Changes.** First, here's the spoiler: the rule was changed to what it is today after the 1930 season. "Bounce home runs" were allowed for nearly 60 years of major league baseball history. Another spoiler: there were no bounce home runs included in Babe Ruth's 714.

The early rules were not descriptive about home runs. By 1889 minimum distances were prescribed and any "fair ball hit out of the field of play less than 210 feet from home base" was a double. That established a minimum distance for a home run as 210 feet. In 1892 the distance was extended to 235 feet. Then, in 1926, the distance was further extended to 250 feet. That is where the distance remains in today's rules.



<sup>6</sup> Gleason kicked around the minor leagues in California and the northwest from 1911 to 1921. For the Bears he was the team's primary catcher and batted .308 in 70 games. His home run on July 4 was his only one that season—and the only one that could be found in his career records.

<sup>7</sup> Athletic Park was used for baseball between 1906 and 1916. It was located in today's Barrio Logan neighborhood in the block bordered by Main Street, Sicard Street, Newton Avenue, and 26<sup>th</sup> Street.

As for going over the fence, or wall, there was no change or clarification until 1931.<sup>8,9</sup> In the rule changes that year there was a simple addition to “Rule 41. Balls Batted Outside the Playing Field” that added a new subsection that read:

*“A fair hit ball that bounds into a stand or over a fence shall be a two-base hit.”*

Since then the rule has been amended over the years to include more detail, e.g., related to passing through, over, under, and getting stuck in vines or a scoreboard. The rule as currently written is covered in Rule 5.05 of the *2021 Official Baseball Rules*. The last page of this article contains a chronological outline of the evolution of the rule through to the present. There you can also read the wording of Rule 5.05 as it refers to batted balls that bounce out of play.

It all boils down to this: From 1889 until 1931 a batted ball that bounced in fair territory, at some minimum distance from home plate (gradually extended from 210 feet to 250 feet), and then into the stands or over, through, or under a barrier, was considered a home run. Commonly, short poles were erected on the foul lines to indicate the required minimum distance. There was at least one known case where a ball hit to the third baseman (in fair territory) was deflected into the stands beyond third base and was ruled a home run.<sup>10</sup> From the 1931 season through to today such a batted ball would be ruled a double—a “rule book double” and not a “ground rule double.” Ground rules vary from park-to-park and deal with unique elements related to the park, and the bounced double is consistently applied to all ballparks based on Rule 5.05.

The concluding section provides some facts related to the bounce home runs looking at the period from 1901-1930.

**Bounce Home Run (BHR) Statistics.** The SABR Home Run Log contains substantial data on bounce home runs, who hit them, and where and when.<sup>11</sup> Recorded data exists from 1876 through 1930.

From 1901 through 1930 of the nearly 19,000 home runs that were hit, 807 BHRs were recorded, which represented 4.3% of the total. Table 1 shows the number of BHRs through the 30-year period.

The first 19 years, 1901-1919 is considered the Deadball era and the 1920s ushered in an era, led by Babe Ruth, where home runs were taking a larger role and increasing in numbers. The number of BHRs spiked in 1922-23 at 6.5% of the total home runs hit.

In the last year that BHRs were allowed, 1930, the ratio of BHRs had dropped to 1.3%. Some of this reduction reflected the American League ballparks changing their ground rules to prohibit BHRs.

Table 1. Number of Bounce HRs (1901-1930)			
Seasons	Total Home Runs (MLB)	Bounce HRs	Bounce HRs as % of Total
1901-1910	3,207	178	5.6%
1911-1919	4,170	268	6.4%
1920	630	24	3.8%
1921	937	43	4.6%
1922	1,055	69	6.5%
1923	980	64	6.5%
1924	896	28	3.1%
1925	1,169	28	2.4%
1926	863	20	2.3%
1927	922	21	2.3%
1928	1,093	11	1.0%
1929	1,349	33	2.4%
1930	1,565	20	1.3%
1920-1930	11,459	361	3.2%
<b>Total 1901-30</b>	<b>18,836</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

<sup>8</sup> The American League ballparks changed their ground rules to prohibit bounce home runs for its 1930 season, one year before the MLB rule was officially changed.

<sup>9</sup> Brief discussion is provided in: SABR, *Baseball's Business, The Winter Meetings, Volume, 1, 1901-1957*; Chapter by Gary Levy, “1930, The Judge and the Mahatma Debate the Chain Store System,” p. 212.

<sup>10</sup> October 1, 2021, email communications with Ron Selter.

<sup>11</sup> Thanks to Ron Selter, who provided the database.

As is the case today, each of the MLB ballparks in the 1920s had different field configurations and physical features, with variations among outfield dimensions, fence/wall heights, screens, railings, and signs and/or scoreboards affixed to the walls/fences.

Table 2 shows the five ballparks where most BHRs were hit (in the 1920s). Two of the parks, Brooklyn’s Ebbets Field and Philadelphia’s Baker Bowl, accounted for almost half of all the BHRs hit during the decade. Contributing to the higher incidence of BHRs at both Ebbets Field and Baker Bowl was construction of additional bleachers in left field, which shortened the distance from home plate to the wall. Another contribution at Baker Bowl was the new bleachers had a short three-foot wall.<sup>12</sup>

The four players with the most BHRs are shown in the Table 3. Topping the list was Gavy Cravath (from north San Diego County, by the way), who played for the Philadelphia Phillies at the time. In fact, three of the top four BHR hitters played for the Phillies. Cravath’s 10 BHRs were all hit during the Deadball era. He was one of major-league baseball’s first recognized home run hitters, and in the decade 1911-1920, he hit 117 home runs, the most in baseball. Cravath led the major leagues in home runs in four separate seasons, 1913, 1914, 1915, and 1917.

As noted earlier, none of Babe Ruth’s home runs was by virtue of a bounce. However, there were a number of Hall of Fame players, listed in Table 4, who had BHRs. Casey Stengel, not known for his power, had five BHRs, or 8.3% of his career home runs via a bounce.

Hall of Fame Yankees’ first baseman Lou Gehrig only had two BHRs in his career, but one was a grand slam that he hit in a game played on July 23, 1925, in Yankee Stadium I. To the right is how it is described in Retrosheet.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 2. Ballparks Where Most Bounce HRs Hit (1920-1930)**

Ballpark	Home Team	Bounce HRs	Bounce HRs as % of MLB Total
Ebbets Field	Brooklyn	94	26.1%
Baker Bowl	Philadelphia (NL)	85	23.6%
Yankee Stadium	New York (AL)	39	10.8%
Redland Field	Cincinnati	32	8.9%
Wrigley Field	Chicago (NL)	30	8.3%

**Table 3. Players With Most Bounce HRs (1901-1930)**

Player	Bounce HRs	Total Career HR	Team(s)	Period When His Bounce HRs Hit
Gavy Cravath	10	119	Philadelphia (NL)	1913-1919
Fred Luderus	9	84	Philadelphia (NL)	1912-1916
Dode Paskert	8	42	Cincinnati (1) Philadelphia (NL) (6) Chicago (NL) (1)	1908-1918
Johnny Moman	8	32	Philadelphia (NL)	1922-1925

**Table 4. BHRs of Some Hall of Fame Players**

Player	Bounce HRs	Career		
		Total HR	% BHR of Total HR	Years Played
Home Run Baker	3	96	3.1%	1908-1922
Ty Cobb	3	117	2.6%	1905-1928
Lou Gehrig	2	493	0.4%	1923-1939
Rogers Hornsby	2	301	0.7%	1915-1937
Tris Speaker	5	117	4.3%	1907-1928
Casey Stengel	5	60	8.3%	1912-1925
Honus Wagner	3	101	3.0%	1897-1917
Hack Wilson	4	244	1.6%	1923-1934

YANKEES 7TH: Ward walked; Ruth walked [Ward to second]; Meusel was hit by a pitch [Ward to third, Ruth to second]; Gehrig homered [Ward scored, Ruth scored, Meusel scored]; **BOUNCE HR; hopped into the pavilion on the first bound.** NYT: Slapped a high drive into LF close to the line. Goslin and Scott raced toward it which looked as if it was going to drop into the foul territory of the open stand. But it was fair by a couple of feet, bounded high off the sun-baked ground, and hopped into the stand. W.Post: Ordinary fly; Goslin misjudged it after a long run and had to let it drop, but it bounced sharply into the stands. Lucky HR; Dugan singled; Bengough singled [Dugan to

<sup>12</sup> Ron Selter, “Bounce Home Runs Rules and Ground Rules,” rev. 2015; and “Bounce Home Runs & MLB Ballparks, Part 4: Baker Bowl,” undated; both unpublished.

<sup>13</sup> This is actual copy and a good example of how Retrosheet.org added a note that a HR is a BHR.



## 7

## **LOSERVILLE: HOW PROFESSIONAL SPORTS REMADE ATLANTA—AND HOW ATLANTA REMADE PROFESSIONAL SPORTS**

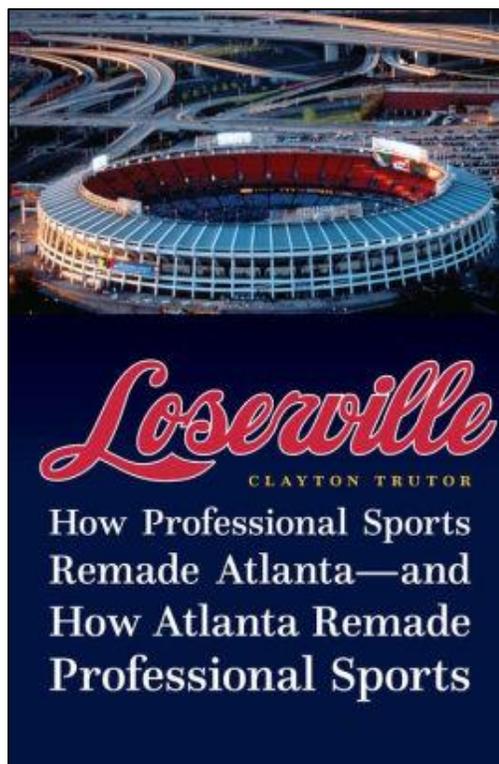
A New Book by Clayton Trutor

In July 1975, the editors of the *Atlanta Constitution* ran a two-part, front-page series entitled “Loserville, U.S.A.” Lewis Grizzard, the morning newspaper’s special assignments editor, who later made a name for himself as an up-market Southern humorist, authored both pieces. The provocatively titled series detailed the futility of Atlanta’s four professional sports teams in the decade since the 1966 arrival of its first two major-league franchises, the Atlanta Braves of Major League Baseball’s National League and the Atlanta Falcons of the National Football League.

Two years later, in 1968, the Hawks of the National Basketball Association relocated to Atlanta from St. Louis, becoming the city’s third major professional sports franchise. In 1972, the Atlanta Flames, an expansion team in the National Hockey League, began play, making Atlanta one of only nine North American cities with franchises in all four major professional sports leagues and the first Southern city to achieve this distinction. The excitement surrounding the arrival of four professional franchises in Atlanta in a six-year period gave way to widespread frustration and, eventually, widespread apathy toward its home teams. All four of Atlanta’s franchises struggled in the standings and struggled to draw fans to their games. “Atlanta’s decade long involvement with major-league sports,” Grizzard wrote, “has been a major-league flop.”

1975 proved to be the nadir of a decade marked by the unmet expectations of the region’s big league franchises. That July, the Braves were in the midst of their franchise’s worst season in nearly a quarter-century, eventually falling 40 1/2 games behind the Cincinnati Reds in the NL West. The Braves had the league’s second-worst attendance that season, averaging just 6,600 fans per game at Atlanta Stadium, a facility that could accommodate nearly 53,000 for baseball. In Fall 1974, the perennially hapless Falcons broke single-game and season-long NFL records for no-shows: fans who purchased tickets to a game, but chose not to attend. 143,488 tickets, or 35.1% of those sold by the Atlanta Falcons for the 1974 season, were purchased but went unused in their seven home dates. During their 1974-1975 season, the Hawks drew slightly more than one-half of the NBA’s per-game average attendance while finishing 29 games out of first place. The 1974-1975 Flames finished last in their division and drew the second worst average home attendance in their conference.

My new book *Loserville* examines the pursuit, arrival, and response to professional sports in Atlanta during its first decade as a major-league city (1966–1975). It scrutinizes the origins of what remains the primary model for acquiring professional sports franchises: offers of municipal financing for new stadiums. Other Sunbelt cities like San Diego, Phoenix, and Tampa that aspired to big league stature



adopted Atlanta's approach. Like the teams in Atlanta, the franchises in these cities have had mixed results—both in terms of on-field success and financial stability.

Longtime San Diego sports fans will find much they can relate to in *Loserville*, a book that delves into the story of other aspirant Sunbelt sports markets like San Diego in great detail. In significant ways, the cities of the American South and West that have joined Atlanta in major professional sports over the past half-century share a common set of market dynamics and a common set of outcomes in their respective quests to become “big league.” In each instance, the corporate and political classes in a Sunbelt boomtown made a top-down push to acquire major professional sports teams. A combination of desires among civic elites, namely a yearning for big city amenities, novel attractions in the center city, and a wellspring of regional unity, led them to push for substantial municipal investments in the form of stadiums for professional sports teams just as the national marketplace for such franchises became increasingly flexible. In each instance, the cluster of professional sports franchises that settled in a Sunbelt city failed to live up to many of the local elite's expectations.

The tendency of cities to acquire several teams in succession left markets oversaturated long before any one of the teams developed a steady fan base. Often, the owners of Sunbelt franchises were new to the sports business and mismanaged their franchises into the bottom rungs of their respective leagues. Most significantly, professional sports franchises in Sunbelt cities often failed to connect with the constituent populations in these new metropolises. Many locals held firm to the recreational and spectator pastimes they enjoyed in the absence of the major leagues.

Most newcomers did not become stalwart supporters of the new, unfamiliar teams and, sometimes, unfamiliar sports being marketed to them in the local media. Sunbelt newcomers proved more likely to take up the warm weather recreational pursuits of their new neighbors than to become die-hards of the new local professional sports franchises, a passion that proved more contingent on a set of experiences common to the urban north than many Sunbelt investors had anticipated. Much but not all of this was true of San Diego's experiences as a “major-league city,” as I discuss in the book. I hope you will consider checking out *Loserville*, which is an origin story for the modern sports business and available for pre-order from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and other online retailers.

*Clayton Trutor holds a Ph.D. in US History from Boston College and teaches at Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont. He is the chairman of SABR's Vermont Chapter and the author of Loserville: How Professional Sports Remade Atlanta—and How Atlanta Remade Professional Sports, available for pre-order from the University of Nebraska Press. He'd love to hear from you on Facebook or Twitter: @ClaytonTrutor*



### **San Diego Ted Williams SABR Chapter Steering Committee**

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*For information on our chapter or to  
check out past Chapter newsletters go to:  
[SDTW SABR Chapter](#)*



## 8

**RECAP: COLLECTING WITH JEFF FIGLER**

News of Our Chapter Meeting Held via Zoom  
Saturday, October 9, 2021

On Saturday, October 9, 2021, our chapter hosted a morning talk given by Jeff Figler, a nationally-recognized collectibles expert.

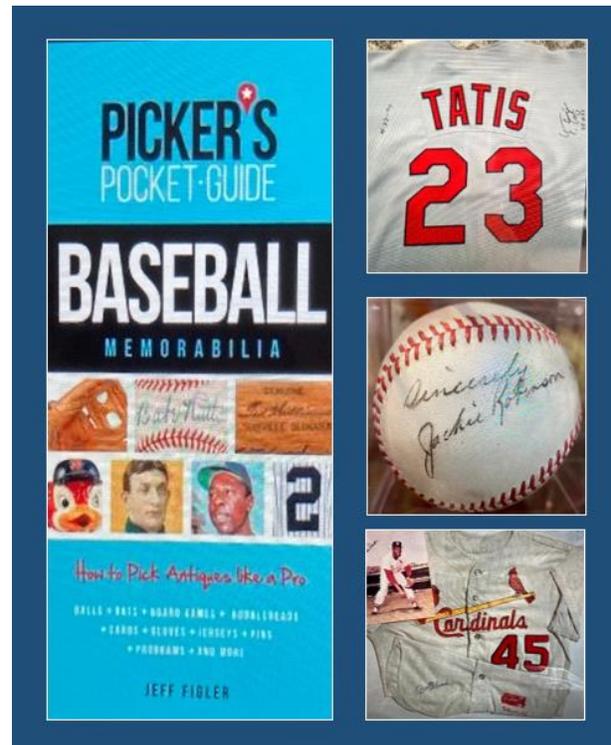
Figler is the author of six books on collectibles, and his latest book, *Picker's Pocket Guide to Baseball Memorabilia*, published by Krause Publications has been a best-selling book on Amazon. He has written more than 600 magazine and newspaper articles on collecting. Figler has been a syndicated radio talk show host through Sports Byline, heard by millions of people in 173 countries on the American Forces Network as well as on KMOX in St. Louis, which is an CBS affiliate.

This was our chapter's first hosted Zoom meeting. Dan Boyle expertly emceed the session and Jeff delivered! It was an informative and entertaining hour-plus filled with facts, stories, and collecting tips based on Figler's 35 years in the sports memorabilia business.

Born and raised in St. Louis Jeff now is a San Diego County resident living in Poway where he maintains a personal museum of his collections. He showed off his Honus Wagner T206 card, Hartland Figurines from 1958-62, and baseballs autographed by notable people in history ranging from baseball's Jackie Robinson to Elvis Presley, past U.S. Presidents, and the Three Stooges. Jeff also displayed a Tatis jersey—this one from Fernando Sr. worn for St. Louis on April 23, 1999, when he hit two grand slam home runs in one inning against the Dodgers.

On the practical side he offered advice on when you might need an appraisal, or when you should have insurance, as well as desirable conditions in the room where you display your memorabilia.

To contact Jeff: call at 858-218-3160 or email to [Becky.collectingwithjeff@outlook.com](mailto:Becky.collectingwithjeff@outlook.com)

**LAST WORD!**

We are always looking for articles from our chapter members. Submit your ideas to Geoff Young via email at [gyoung858@yahoo.com](mailto:gyoung858@yahoo.com).