

KELTNER'S HOT CORNER



Ken Keltner Badger State Chapter

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Eddie Mathews with Bob Buege

Joint meeting with the Pee wee Reese Chapter
Zoom - Wed, September 20, TBD



Keltner Fall Chapter Meeting
Tentative, Saturday November 11
J&B's Bar & Grill



**Historic Hinchliffe Stadium
With Donna Muscarella**
Zoom, November 29 @ 7 PM CST
Register in advance [here](#).

Direct questions or comments to:
Dennis D. Degenhardt
bovine9@icloud.com
Cell: 262-339-9968

Welcome New Members Ken Sajdak – Waukesha Raymond Thomson - Sun Prairie

Upcoming Events

Eddie Mathews with Bob Buege Joint Meeting with Pee Wee Reese Chapter Zoom - Wednesday, September 20, Time TBA

Pee Wee Reese Chapter President, Tad Myre, is a big Eddie Mathews fan with fond memories of summers in Wisconsin and games a good ol' County Stadium. And he is also a Bob Buege fan (like the rest of us) and has wanted to have a session with Bob to talk about Mathews. Great idea and we agreed to have a joint meeting. Bob's Mathews stories are always a treat.



We will hold a drawing to win an autographed copy of Bob's book, *Eddie Mathews and the National Pastime*.

Time and Zoom registration instructions will be emailed over the weekend. See you soon!



Hinchliffe Stadium with Donna Muscarella Wednesday November 29, 2023 Virtual Meeting - 7 PM CST



Donna Muscarella is a fourth-generation baseball enthusiast, photographer, mixed-media artist, and baseball card collector. She attended her first professional baseball game at age 2½ but was enthralled by the Game even earlier. While Donna does not limit her photography to baseball, it is her most compelling subject. She has a passion for capturing its sights and shapes with her camera lens, using art to share her love of baseball with the world.

Hinchliffe Stadium, one of the few Negro Leagues ballparks still standing, is a repeat subject of Donna's artwork. In 2021, she released her debut custom trading card set, which combines her photography of Hinchliffe with facts about its Negro Leagues ties, and was featured in an article on *SABR's Baseball Card Research Committee Blog*. Donna's Hinchliffe photography appeared on [Forbes.com](#) and in the third edition of *Turnstyle: The SABR*

Journal of Baseball Arts, was recently requested by the YES Network and is slated for inclusion in the planned museum at Hinchliffe Stadium.

Donna was commissioned by the Staten Island FerryHawks of the Atlantic League to capture their 2022 inaugural season with her lens. A thirty-foot wall at their stadium is now filled with her imagery. Additionally, some of Donna's images of Kelsie Whitmore, the first woman to play in the Atlantic League, are part of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's photography collection.

Another of Donna's creative endeavors is mixed-media baseball artwork. She unites her love of photography and baseball cards with each new piece of artwork she creates. Every one-of-a-kind piece features an image captured by Donna, a hand-cut Allen & Ginter baseball card, soft pastels, and digital overlays. Moments in time are captured, transformed, and preserved, the creative alchemy of the process invigorating Donna.

Donna may be found on X, Instagram, and Threads using the handle @TheLensOfDonnaM. Some of her mixed-media artwork is visible in her online portfolio at Behance.net/TheLensOfDonnaM.

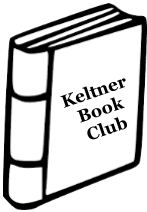
To learn more about historic Hinchliffe Stadium click [here](#). And to see the good work being done by the Friends of Hinchliffe, click [here](#).

To attend this interesting presentation on Hinchliffe, register [here](#).

Thank you, Mary Shea, for arranging this meeting.

Keltner Book Club News

By Mary Shea



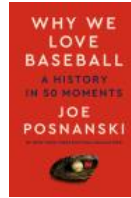
We're hoping to rev up the Keltner Book Club soon, and there are two notable works coming out in September:

[*The 100 Most Important Players in Baseball History*](#), by Lincoln Mitchell

[*Why We Love Baseball: A History in 50 Moments*](#), by Joe Posnanski

Stayed tuned for updates on an October meeting and happy reading.

Mary



Letter to the Journal Sentinel Sports Department

By Ted Perkins

Dear Journal Sentinel Sports Department,

I'm writing again in complete bafflement, as a lifetime baseball fan and four decade long Brewers fan... and a 38 year subscriber to the Sentinel and the and the Journal Sentinel.

In this morning's edition of the Journal Sentinel (9/9/23), I couldn't believe that -- once again -- there was no baseball coverage other than the *day old major league standings* on page 7B.

Other than Curt Hogg and Todd Rosiak is anyone at the Journal Sentinel's affiliate of USA Today aware that the Brewers are in the heat of a pennant race?!

I'm a Packer and Badger football fan and appreciate reading about both teams, but the complete absence of any baseball reporting on a Saturday in September when the Brewers are fighting it out with the Cubs for the Central Division Championship and a chance to play in the playoffs is discounting the countless baseball fans in the state (and we're still out here!!).

SCOREBOARD

MLB				WNBA			
Team	W	L	GB	Team	W	L	GB
NATIONAL LEAGUE				EASTERN			
Cincinnati	50	52	0.0	Atlanta	22	17	22.5
Los Angeles	49	53	1.0	Charlotte	18	23	26.5
St. Louis	47	55	3.0	Washington	18	23	26.5
San Francisco	45	57	5.0	Indiana	10	31	34.5
Arizona	44	58	6.0	Phoenix	10	31	34.5
Chicago	43	59	7.0	Orlando	10	31	34.5
Philadelphia	42	60	8.0	Connecticut	10	31	34.5
San Diego	41	61	9.0	Seattle	8	27	38.5
Colorado	39	63	11.0	Minnesota	8	27	38.5
San Antonio	38	64	12.0	Los Angeles II	7	28	39.5
Washington	37	65	13.0	MEMPHIS			
Atlanta	36	66	14.0	Chicago II			
Los Angeles I	35	67	15.0	Charlotte II			
San Diego	34	68	16.0	Washington II			
Arizona	33	69	17.0	Atlanta II			
Philadelphia	32	70	18.0	Indiana II			
Chicago	31	71	19.0	Phoenix II			
San Francisco	30	72	20.0	Orlando II			
St. Louis	29	73	21.0	Connecticut II			
Los Angeles II	28	74	22.0	Seattle II			
San Antonio	27	75	23.0	Minnesota II			
Washington	26	76	24.0	Los Angeles III			
Atlanta	25	77	25.0	MEMPHIS II			
Los Angeles III	24	78	26.0	Chicago III			
San Diego	23	79	27.0	Charlotte III			
Arizona	22	80	28.0	Washington III			
Philadelphia	21	81	29.0	Atlanta III			
Chicago	20	82	30.0	Indiana III			
San Francisco	19	83	31.0	Phoenix III			
St. Louis	18	84	32.0	Orlando III			
Los Angeles IV	17	85	33.0	Connecticut III			
San Antonio	16	86	34.0	Seattle III			
Washington	15	87	35.0	Minnesota III			
Atlanta	14	88	36.0	Los Angeles IV			
Los Angeles V	13	89	37.0	MEMPHIS III			
San Diego	12	90	38.0	Chicago IV			
Arizona	11	91	39.0	Charlotte IV			
Philadelphia	10	92	40.0	Washington IV			
Chicago	9	93	41.0	Atlanta IV			
San Francisco	8	94	42.0	Indiana IV			
St. Louis	7	95	43.0	Phoenix IV			
Los Angeles VI	6	96	44.0	Orlando IV			
San Antonio	5	97	45.0	Connecticut IV			
Washington	4	98	46.0	Seattle IV			
Atlanta	3	99	47.0	Minnesota IV			
Los Angeles VII	2	100	48.0	Los Angeles V			
San Diego	1	101	49.0	MEMPHIS IV			
Arizona	0	102	50.0	Chicago V			
Philadelphia	0	103	51.0	Charlotte V			
Chicago	0	104	52.0	Washington V			
San Francisco	0	105	53.0	Atlanta V			
St. Louis	0	106	54.0	Indiana V			
Los Angeles VIII	0	107	55.0	Phoenix V			
San Antonio	0	108	56.0	Orlando V			
Washington	0	109	57.0	Connecticut V			
Atlanta	0	110	58.0	Seattle V			
Los Angeles IX	0	111	59.0	Minnesota V			
San Diego	0	112	60.0	Los Angeles VI			
Arizona	0	113	61.0	MEMPHIS V			
Philadelphia	0	114	62.0	Chicago VI			
Chicago	0	115	63.0	Charlotte VI			
San Francisco	0	116	64.0	Washington VI			
St. Louis	0	117	65.0	Atlanta VI			
Los Angeles X	0	118	66.0	Indiana VI			
San Antonio	0	119	67.0	Phoenix VI			
Washington	0	120	68.0	Orlando VI			
Atlanta	0	121	69.0	Connecticut VI			
Los Angeles XI	0	122	70.0	Seattle VI			
San Diego	0	123	71.0	Minnesota VI			
Arizona	0	124	72.0	Los Angeles VII			
Philadelphia	0	125	73.0	MEMPHIS VI			
Chicago	0	126	74.0	Chicago VII			
San Francisco	0	127	75.0	Charlotte VII			
St. Louis	0	128	76.0	Washington VII			
Los Angeles XII	0	129	77.0	Atlanta VII			
San Antonio	0	130	78.0	Indiana VII			
Washington	0	131	79.0	Phoenix VII			
Atlanta	0	132	80.0	Orlando VII			
Los Angeles XIII	0	133	81.0	Connecticut VII			
San Diego	0	134	82.0	Seattle VII			
Arizona	0	135	83.0	Minnesota VII			
Philadelphia	0	136	84.0	Los Angeles VIII			
Chicago	0	137	85.0	MEMPHIS VII			
San Francisco	0	138	86.0	Chicago VIII			
St. Louis	0	139	87.0	Charlotte VIII			
Los Angeles XIV	0	140	88.0	Washington VIII			
San Antonio	0	141	89.0	Atlanta VIII			
Washington	0	142	90.0	Indiana VIII			
Atlanta	0	143	91.0	Phoenix VIII			
Los Angeles XV	0	144	92.0	Orlando VIII			
San Diego	0	145	93.0	Connecticut VIII			
Arizona	0	146	94.0	Seattle VIII			
Philadelphia	0	147	95.0	Minnesota VIII			
Chicago	0	148	96.0	Los Angeles IX			
San Francisco	0	149	97.0	MEMPHIS VIII			
St. Louis	0	150	98.0	Chicago IX			
Los Angeles XVI	0	151	99.0	Charlotte IX			
San Antonio	0	152	100.0	Washington IX			
Washington	0	153	101.0	Atlanta IX			
Atlanta	0	154	102.0	Indiana IX			
Los Angeles XVII	0	155	103.0	Phoenix IX			
San Diego	0	156	104.0	Orlando IX			
Arizona	0	157	105.0	Connecticut IX			
Philadelphia	0	158	106.0	Seattle IX			
Chicago	0	159	107.0	Minnesota IX			
San Francisco	0	160	108.0	Los Angeles X			
St. Louis	0	161	109.0	MEMPHIS IX			
Los Angeles XVIII	0	162	110.0	Chicago X			
San Antonio	0	163	111.0	Charlotte X			
Washington	0	164	112.0	Washington X			
Atlanta	0	165	113.0	Atlanta X			
Los Angeles XIX	0	166	114.0	Indiana X			
San Diego	0	167	115.0	Phoenix X			
Arizona	0	168	116.0	Orlando X			
Philadelphia	0	169	117.0	Connecticut X			
Chicago	0	170	118.0	Seattle X			
San Francisco	0	171	119.0	Minnesota X			
St. Louis	0	172	120.0	Los Angeles XI			
Los Angeles XX	0	173	121.0	MEMPHIS X			
San Antonio	0	174	122.0	Chicago XI			
Washington	0	175	123.0	Charlotte XI			
Atlanta	0	176	124.0	Washington XI			
Los Angeles XXI	0	177	125.0	Atlanta XI			
San Diego	0	178	126.0	Indiana XI			
Arizona	0	179	127.0	Phoenix XI			
Philadelphia	0	180	128.0	Orlando XI			
Chicago	0	181	129.0	Connecticut XI			
San Francisco	0	182	130.0	Seattle XI			
St. Louis	0	183	131.0	Minnesota XI			
Los Angeles XXII	0	184	132.0	Los Angeles XII			
San Antonio	0	185	133.0	MEMPHIS XI			
Washington	0	186	134.0	Chicago XII			
Atlanta	0	187	135.0	Charlotte XII			
Los Angeles XXIII	0	188	136.0	Washington XII			
San Diego	0	189	137.0	Atlanta XII			
Arizona	0	190	138.0	Indiana XII			
Philadelphia	0	191	139.0	Phoenix XII			
Chicago	0	192	140.0	Orlando XII			
San Francisco	0	193	141.0	Connecticut XII			
St. Louis	0	194	142.0	Seattle XII			
Los Angeles XXIV	0	195	143.0	Minnesota XII			
San Antonio	0	196	144.0	Los Angeles XIII			
Washington	0	197	145.0	MEMPHIS XII			
Atlanta	0	198	146.0	Chicago XIII			
Los Angeles XXV	0	199	147.0	Charlotte XIII			
San Diego	0	200	148.0	Washington XIII			
Arizona	0	201	149.0	Atlanta XIII			
Philadelphia	0	202	150.0	Indiana XIII			
Chicago	0	203	151.0	Phoenix XIII			
San Francisco	0	204	152.0	Orlando XIII			
St. Louis	0	205	153.0	Connecticut XIII			
Los Angeles XXVI	0	206	154.0	Seattle XIII			
San Antonio	0	207	155.0	Minnesota XIII			
Washington	0	208	156.0	Los Angeles XIV			
Atlanta	0	209	157.0	MEMPHIS XIII			
Los Angeles XXVII	0	210	158.0	Chicago XIV			
San Diego	0	211	159.0	Charlotte XIV			
Arizona	0	212	160.0	Washington XIV			
Philadelphia	0	213	161.0	Atlanta XIV			
Chicago	0	214	162.0	Indiana XIV			
San Francisco	0	215	163.0	Phoenix XIV			
St. Louis	0	216	164.0	Orlando XIV			
Los Angeles XXVIII	0	217</					

Sure, the article about Craig Counsell in Friday's paper written by Curt and Todd and the piece about William Contreras by Curt a few days ago were interesting and welcomed, but don't you have the sports writing moxy to generate excitement about the pennant race on a daily basis??!!

In my humble opinion, there isn't a day that goes by in September -- in the midst of pennant race -- where there shouldn't be something in the Journal Sentinel Sports page (paper edition) that reflects the fan excitement and enthusiasm for our hometown/home state team.

How I long for the days when the morning Sentinel would have coverage of the game from the night before. And yes, I know that it's a different world and I can go to the Journal Sentinel online edition as well as MLB and ESPN and other sources for timely baseball reporting, but *come on*, it's inexcusable that there was nothing about the Brewers in this morning's paper (9/9/23)

And finally, I also know that there are more important issues in the world than what happens on the baseball diamond and in the wider sports world, which is why I appreciate the ongoing reporting in the paper about local issues -- especially issues related to the care of creation -- which is probably the main reason why I continue to support the paper. Baseball coverage often a day late, if at all, isn't holding me.

With thanks for Curt and Todd's baseball reporting when it happens ...

I Remain "Bewildered in Milwaukee!!"

Tim Perkins
Milwaukee



Women's Baseball Recap By Mary Shea

All-American Girls Professional Baseball League 2023 Reunion



The women who inspired director Penny Marshall to create *A League of Their Own* have reunited almost every year since 1982, 10 years before the beloved movie debuted. In early August, nine of these legendary players attended a reunion in Kenosha, Wisconsin, along with league associates, family, and friends. Considering the more than 600 women who played professionally for the AAGPBL, the occasion was bittersweet but also an amazing convergence of the past, present, and future of women's baseball.

The festivities included a welcome reception, including baseball trivia, and a banquet featuring a slideshow presentation by Grassroots Baseball photographer Jean Fruth. Also in attendance were SABR member, author, and graphic designer Gary Cieradkowski, and his fabulous wife, Andrea. Gary has a fantastic baseball blog, <https://studiogaryc.com/>. He's done a lot of design work for

[Teambrown Apparel](#) and also created the amazing logo for our reunion.

Besides all of us getting together and catching up, the highlight of the reunion was a game played between two women's teams, the U.S. Women's National Baseball Team and American Girls Baseball, a team formed by an offshoot of the AAGPBL. The day before, the U.S. WNBT had played a game at historic Beyer Stadium in Rockford, Illinois, where the Rockford Peaches played. This game was played at another historic ballpark, Simmons Field in Kenosha, the former home of the Kenosha Comets, also an AAGPBL team. We were able to sit in the old grandstand and watch some impressive baseball, as these women have played high school, college,



and even pro baseball. The U.S. WNBT would travel on to Minnesota for a practice, and then to Canada for a Women's Baseball World Cup tournament. Later that evening, we attended a Northwoods League Kenosha Kingfish game, where the AAGPBL

players were honored before the game. The giveaway was a Kingfish bobblehead featuring a Comets uniform; yes, a goofy fish in a little green dress.

There's hope that there might be one more reunion next year, so we can get together again and share memories, and create new ones.

To see more pictures from the reunion as well as many additional photos from the AAGPBL album, visit [here](#).

Women's Baseball World Cup

Most baseball fans don't realize that the U.S. has a women's national baseball team that competes against other national teams from around the world in the Women's Baseball World Cup. Organized by the WBSC, the World Baseball Softball Confederation, the World Cup has been held every two years from 2004 to 2018, and Japan is actually the powerhouse, as they have a women's professional league in Japan.

A Pool A tournament was played in Thunder Bay, Ontario, August 8-13. This pool included teams from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Australia, Hong Kong, and Korea. Newcomer Mexico started their World Cup play with a bang with some impressive play and punching their ticket to play in the World Cup Finals next August in Thunder Bay. Also advancing are the U.S., who ran the table by winning all five of their contests, and Canada. The U.S. team seemed charged up by their motto to "rule the entire f-ing world", but they'll have to contend with the formidable Japan and Chinese Taipei teams, ranked first and second respectively.

There will be a Pool B showdown in Japan in September, with more national teams battling for spots in next year's World Cup. More information can be found on the [WBSC website](#).

Unfortunately, these games cannot be viewed on ESPN or another sports network, but fans can subscribe to watch tournaments through [Gametime](#).

MLB published a number of good articles on this tournament:

<https://www.mlb.com/news/usa-canada-mexico-advance-to-women-s-world-cup-finals>

<https://www.mlb.com/news/usa-women-baseball-16-year-old-star-naomi-ryan>

<https://www.mlb.com/news/zoe-hicks-is-canada-softball-and-baseball-national-team-star>

And check out [these sick plays](#) by Team Mexico's shortstop Samaria Benitez:

The future of baseball is female!



Ayami Sato, world's most dominant woman on the mound, leads Japan into World Cup

By Michael Clair, [MLB.com](#), September 12, 2023



"I liked to throw since I was a child and I also didn't like to lose," Samurai Japan ace pitcher Ayami Sato said through interpreter Sho Kurematsu over Zoom ahead of the WBSC Women's [World Cup Group B](#) that begins this week in Miyoshi City, Japan. (Group A recently finished in Thunder Bay, Ontario, with the United States, Canada and Mexico [advancing to next year's finals](#).)

It is a sentence that describes how she first became interested in the sport, but is perhaps also a motto for her work on the mound, too. That's because Sato just may be the most dominant female pitcher in

baseball history. She's represented Samurai Japan for the last five World Cups -- Japan, the No. 1 women's baseball team in the world, has now won six world championships in a row heading into this year's tournament -- and has won three consecutive MVP Awards. Armed with an upper-70s fastball, a curveball and a darting slider which she learned in college from former Seibu Lions pitcher Hiroshi Shintani -- she [claims it's her best pitch](#) -- Sato's pitched 61 2/3 innings, struck out 56 batters and given up just six runs over the last four tournaments.

Suffice to say, the next player to win the MVP Award will need to pry it from Ayami's grasp because she's not done yet.

"I think what I've been able to achieve is fairly unique, and I'm very happy about this," Sato, now 33 years old, said. "But something that I would like to achieve as a pitcher is throwing a no-hitter. At the same time, I feel that as a baseball player, it's not just what I achieve on the field, but I also want to deliver excitement, deliver passion and also give courage to other girls playing baseball."

You would think it would be easy for someone with Sato's skills to carve out a life on the baseball field. But even for someone as naturally gifted and feverishly committed to the sport as Sato is, there was still resistance. Like most young girls around the world, Sato grew up playing baseball alongside and against boys teams. She had watched her brothers playing baseball, and [while she played basketball](#) on girls teams, what she really wanted to do was be out on the mound.

"Playing amongst boys, it was a matter of figuring out how to throw faster or how to create movement in order to beat them," Sato said. "I remember throwing a ball against the wall and kind of testing it to see how it can get better, how it can get better movement, how it can get better speed while still having fun."

Her drive to succeed and desire to win no matter the odds may have helped her out on the field, but even then, there were demands that she switch sports and take up softball.

"There's always been that kind of pressure [to change sports] growing up," Sato said. "I felt that when I was going from elementary school to middle school and also middle school to high school. There was just the lack of an environment to play girls baseball, while changing schools or moving up in schools at every stage."

There were no role models for Sato to follow, no women to look up to that said, "You can do this, too." Sato dreamed of playing in the Koshien or taking the field for an NPB team, but that simply wasn't an option for her.

"There was no environment for me to play baseball," Sato said. "When I moved to middle school, it was just by chance that the teacher overseeing the team said 'OK,' and allowed me to play for the team and play in games. Luckily, I was able to find a high school with a girl's baseball team and in Grade 11, and for the first time in the country, a girl's baseball team made it to Shobi University inside Saitama prefecture. All the way throughout my baseball life, I was able to find my own way."

Though Sato had to often go it alone, things are changing these days. There are more girls and women's baseball teams than ever before in the country. Though the Japan Women's Baseball League folded in 2019 -- naturally, Sato [dominated there](#), leading the league in strikeouts in three of the last four seasons while posting a 2.31 ERA -- NPB teams have begun adding women's clubs alongside the men's teams (Sato now plays for the Seibu Lions Ladies, though official games between teams are still a ways off).

According to Hiroko Yamada, president of the Women's Baseball Federation of Japan, there are now 23,000 women's baseball players in Japan, with [The Yomiuri Shimbun reporting](#) that there are now 102 women's baseball teams spread across the country -- an increase of 40 since 2015 -- while "high school teams have doubled over the past five years and now number more than 50." There's now a women's Koshien, too, taking part just before the boys teams begin play in August. Compare that to the United States, which has no formal women's baseball programs and you can see why Japan has the distinct advantage in World Cup victories over the last decade-plus.

"It's growing so fast, we can't catch up," Yamada said. "There are three NPB teams now, the Seibu Lions, where Sato is playing, the Tokyo Giants and the Hanshin Tigers. We're trying to stimulate our neighbor, the CPBL [Chinese Professional Baseball League], to start a women's team as well."

After making her debut as a 20-year-old, Sato has seen a changing of the guard over the past five years since the last time Japan's women's team competed. (COVID canceled the 2020 tournament in Mexico.) She's played against the best women's baseball players in the world and come out on top nearly every time.

She points to her first tournament in 2010 as the moment that gave her the confidence to succeed. Facing the United States, she came into a no-out, bases-loaded situation and had to face Tamara Holmes, one of the greatest power hitters in women's baseball history.

"I had a lot of nerves at that time. I really just threw without thinking. I just had to do my best in that situation," Sato said, getting Holmes to ground into an inning-ending double play. "I came out on top in that



Sato on the mound at the 2018 World Cup.
© SAMURAI JAPAN

experience, which gave me a lot of confidence moving forward."

Now, though, Sato must be the veteran leader for Samurai Japan as it looks to defeat No. 2-ranked Chinese Taipei and come out on top of Group B before playing in the finals next year. The baton has been passed to her and she takes that role seriously.

"At this point, I need to think about not how do I build a strong career, but how do I build a strong team?" Sato said. "How do I create an atmosphere where younger players can succeed? So, in that sense, my mindset as a player on the national team has changed."

Her dreams of playing in the Koshien may not have come true, but it's now a possibility for the women coming behind her. She looks back on her career with pride and sees a bright future for herself, Samurai Japan and any young woman who wants to play baseball.

"I would have loved to play in the Koshien. I would have loved to be able to play as an NPB player, but I knew from the very beginning that was something I had to give up," Sato said. "But looking back on my career, I didn't expect to be able to play for Team Japan. I didn't expect to be able to carry the flag and represent my country and be able to play against international players. I'd like to use the platform I have now to give courage to kids in any circumstance or environment that are able to play baseball. I want to make sure they have hope to do something similar in the future.



Peter Witt Completes Black Sox Grave Goal

April 2022, [Get to Know victim, Peter Witt](#), who also spoke at our last Chapter Meeting before the 26 month COVID hiatus on February 29, 2020, achieved his goal of visiting the graves of the eight Black Sox. As Peter told us at that meeting and we included in the GTK, he had two graves to go and checked them off his list this year.

From the June [Black Sox Scandal Research Committee](#) Newsletter:



SABR member Peter J. Wilt recently completed his quest to see all eight Black Sox gravesites on a trip to Northern California, visiting the final resting places of Chick Gandil (left) at St. Helena Cemetery in the Napa Valley and Swede Risberg (right) at Mt. Shasta Memorial Park near the Oregon border. Wilt's journey began in 1984 when he first visited Shoeless Joe Jackson's grave in South Carolina. He is also credited with the discovery of Lefty Williams' unmarked grave in Anaheim, California. [Click here](#) to read Wilt's article in the December 2021 issue of the Black Sox committee newsletter. (Courtesy of Peter J. Wilt)

Keltner Hot Corner Archives

You can now view or download past copies of the Keltner Hot Corner at: [Ken Keltner Badger State Newsletters](#)

Use of Links

Links in the *Keltner Hot Corner* are used to enhance the articles with the majority going to players SABR [BioProject](#) and [baseball-reference.com](#) as well as other related sites.

Who is Ken Keltner? See his SABR [Biography](#).

Notes from DDD



Did summer go as quickly for you as it did for me? As you may recall, I was going to take the summer to work on a project for SABR. How did it go? What project? My spouse, missing grandkids and a new great-grandson, really wanted to return to Wisconsin. So we tried to see if we could sell our home in Sun City expecting months to do so; it took days. But with a very tight market in Wisconsin, we had to return back in two moves as finding a home was a challenge. But we are finally getting settled in back in West Bend after three hectic months.

With the frenzied schedule, I apologize for the late newsletter. And planning for meetings is behind, too, so watch for more activity soon. Looking ahead, I am thinking of holding our Fall Meeting on Saturday, November 11th, after the World Series. Keep that date in mind or let me know if there are reasons to avoid that day.

With the move back, the good news is the prez of the AZ Chapter no longer lives 19 miles closer to Milwaukee than the WI chapter's president.



New Oral History Interviews: Adam McCalvy and Mike Bauman



Although the *Hot Corner* was on hiatus this summer other Keltner Chapter members were busy with their projects. Larry Baldassaro competed two SABR Oral Histories with two of Milwaukee's favorite writers; Adam McCalvy, MLB.com's beat writer for over 20 years and former *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* reporter and MLB.com columnist Mike Baumann.

This month, you can listen to Larry's interview [here](#) conducted on June 13, 2023 with Adam McCalvy who has been a terrific guest on two virtual meetings; a great opportunity to learn more about Adam. I thoroughly enjoyed the interview while working on the newsletter and other stuff and hope you will as well.

Next month, we will have Larry's talk with Mike Baumann.



AN ANONYMOUS EVALUATION OF WORLD CHAMPIONS

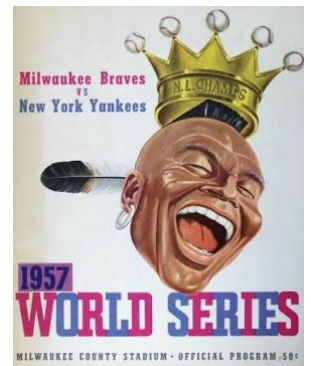
By Francis Kinlaw

Until statistical analysis became the accepted method of evaluating athletic performance, sportswriters and fans seldom hesitated to express personal views regarding the strengths and weaknesses of major-league players. In September of 1957, *Sport* magazine disseminated candid opinions about National League players by publishing comments from the files of one unidentified National League club that compared every regular position player to his peers. The qualities of each club's pitching staff and utility players were also ranked from best to worst, but by team rather than individually.

Fans in Wisconsin were naturally most interested in how those wearing Braves uniforms were perceived by at least one opposing National League organization--- unless the player ratings had happened to be obtained from Milwaukee's front office (the odds of which were obviously one in eight in the eight-team circuit). To place the ratings in context, the Braves had finished in second place in 1953 and third in 1954, before regaining runner-up status in 1955 and 1956. They were destined to capture a world championship in 1957 and another National League pennant in 1958.

The comparative ratings, as well as comments appearing in the rating club's summaries, were the following:

First base – Joe Adcock ranked fourth behind Gil Hodges of the Dodgers, Stan Musial of the Cardinals, and Ted Kluszewski of the Reds. “When Adcock is hot, he’s as tough as any hitter in the league. However, his value to the club is somewhat impaired because of the terrible slumps that strike him from time to time. Because he is



such a 'streak' hitter, he has to be taken out of the lineup occasionally. His height (6-feet, 4-inches) helps him on thrown balls, but overall he is an inadequate fielder. His replacement, Frank Torre, is a fine defensive first baseman but does not have Adcock's power."

Second base – Red Schoendienst was considered to be the best second sacker in the league. "Despite his age (34 years), Red is still the class of the league. He is a consistent .300 hitter who doesn't hit many homers, but is always on base and can keep a rally going by executing the hit-and-run. It's tough to get a pitch past him because he uses a 'cheater's bat'---one with a thick handle---and so always gets a good piece of the ball even when it's well in on him. Defensively, he has the surest hands in the business and is an intelligent player who can quietly take charge when the situation demands it. If he has any weakness, it is that he sometimes gets over to second base a little late in a force situation. His trade in June (of 1957) to the Braves from the Giants could mean a pennant for Milwaukee this year."

Third base – Ed Mathews was judged to be the best at the hot corner. "One of the authentic sluggers of our day...In addition to his power, he has a good arm and is faster on the bases than he is generally given credit for being. This speed makes him tough to double up on ground balls. He is only fair defensively; his hands are not too sure and he is often uncertain going after a grounder. Despite his running speed, he doesn't cover much ground at third."

Shortstop – Johnny Logan ranked fourth behind Roy McMillan of the Reds, Pee Wee Reese of the Dodgers, and Alvin Dark of the Cardinals. "He must still be rated below Reese and Dark because he hasn't lived up to his potential. He has the equipment, including some power at the plate, and on occasion looks like one of the best shortstops in the game."

Catcher – Del Crandall was rated third, behind the duo of Ed Bailey and Smokey Burgess of the Reds and Roy Campanella of the Dodgers. "Although he has never developed as it once seemed he would, he is an excellent receiver and his arm, which had troubled him, has come back strong. He is a shrewd signal caller and has some power at the plate, but he lacks hitting consistency."

Left field – Wes Covington ranked seventh out of eight left fielders. He trailed Frank Robinson of the Reds, Frank Thomas of the Pirates, Del Ennis of the Cardinals, Rip Repulski of the Phillies, Gino Cimoli of the Dodgers, and Bobby Thomson of the Giants. "A strong hitter who always had some defensive flaws. Covington worked hard this spring to improve his fielding. Called back to the Braves after the Thomson trade with the Giants that brought Schoendienst to Milwaukee, he looked adequate in the field, and his big bat was a distinct help." [Author's observation: Although he was no wizard in the field, Covington's performance was much more than adequate on two crucial plays in the 1957 World Series. He made a backhanded catch of a line drive off the bat of the Yankees' Bobby Shantz in the second inning of Game Two, and a leaping grab of Gil McDougald's potential home run in the fourth inning of Game Five.]

Center field – Bill Bruton ranked sixth among a strong contingent of men who patrolled the middle of National League outfields. He was considered to be less proficient than Willie Mays of the Giants, Duke Snider of the Dodgers, Gus Bell of the Reds, Bill Virdon of the Pirates, and Richie Ashburn of the Phillies. "Bruton is a poor hitter, but once he gets on base, he can upset the opposition with his great speed. Like Ashburn, he can go a long way for a fly ball, and he has a better arm than Richie. He should use his speed by bunting more often."

Right field – While his fellow outfielders received relatively weak ratings in left- and center-field, Henry Aaron (to no one's surprise) nailed down the best possible rating among right fielders. "Aaron is supplanting Stan Musial as the most consistent hitter in the league. He has great wrists and power to all fields. He has average running speed and is just a fair outfielder, but he should improve there with more experience. At 23 years of age, he has a brilliant future."

Pitching staff – Ranked second behind the Dodgers. "The Braves have a strong group of starters, but are not deep in relief. Warren Spahn, while a fine pitcher, cannot be rated tops because he doesn't beat (and is almost never even used against) the Dodgers---the club the Braves must beat. Bob Buhl beats the Dodgers, but often has trouble with the weaker clubs. Lew Burdette is always tough; even if he doesn't throw the spitter, he has the hitters thinking about it. Gene Conley has not come along as the Braves hoped he would. Juan Pizarro could have a great future ahead of him. Ernie Johnson and Red Murff can be tough in relief." [Author's note: It is true that Spahn seldom faced the Dodgers. He did not go to the mound against Brooklyn in 1955, and his only outing against the Dodgers in 1956 resulted in a brief and unimpressive performance. He pitched once against Brooklyn during the 1957 season, in a relief appearance of less than one inning.]

The bench – Ranked sixth among the eight National League teams behind (in order) the Reds, Dodgers, Phillies, Giants, and Pirates. *“Lack of suitable replacements could cost the Braves the pennant. They have further weakened their bench this year with the addition of two bonus players, thereby depriving themselves of a couple of experienced men for the stretch run. Only Andy Pafko can be considered a strong pinch-hitter.”*

For a team that would win a World Series championship soon after publication of the article in *Sport*, these ratings by position are surprisingly modest when viewed cumulatively. Only three individuals placed at the top of their position’s list. One player ranked third, two were fourth, one came in sixth, and the other was assigned the seventh spot. The organization’s ranking of the pitching staff as runner-up to the Dodgers may be deemed understandable, but the criticism leveled at the Braves’ utility players must be considered off-base if for no other reason than the fact that “Hurricane Bob” Hazle provided significant (and unexpected) offensive punch after Bill Bruton was injured in the month of July.

If the ratings of Milwaukee’s players had been converted into numbers with the best player at each position receiving a “1” and the worst an “8,” the average score for the eight Braves regulars would have been 3.375 and the average attained by a combination of the pitching staff and reserves would have been 4.00. If the ratings of the eight position players had been combined with those of the pitching staff and frequently used reserves, the cumulative score would have been 3.50. These figures may be considered high for a pennant-winning group, but the talent exhibited in 1957 by many stars on other National League teams must be factored into these calculations.

It can be claimed, of course, that every fielding position is not of equal importance and that some roles should be assigned a greater weight than others. If differing weights are given, the positions receiving “extra credit” might very well be those in the middle of the diamond (catcher, second base, shortstop, and center field). The average rating for Braves players at these four fielding positions would have been 3.50.

Before concluding this review of the information in the unidentified club’s files, another exercise should be conducted.

Selection of starting lineups for the 1957 All-Star Game in St. Louis was to be based upon fan voting but, when an organized campaign in and around Cincinnati succeeded in the election of seven of the Reds’ eight regular position players to starting roles, Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick ordered the replacement of outfielders Gus Bell and Wally Post by Henry Aaron and Willie Mays. Therefore, while the validity of the National League’s starting lineup in the “Midsummer Classic” can be reasonably questioned due to biased voting by many loyal followers of the Reds, it is nevertheless interesting to observe the degree to which the organization’s evaluations matched the National League’s starting lineup in the All-Star game. (All-Star managers Walter Alston of the Dodgers and Casey Stengel of the Yankees completed their respective rosters and chose their pitchers, so no “complicating issues” existed in that process.)

With the exception of Aaron patrolling left field, no Milwaukee player appeared in the opening inning of the All-Star Game. However, the Braves team was well-represented on the National League’s roster as Mathews, Schoendienst, Logan, Spahn, and Burdette watched from the dugout or bullpen.

Burdette became the first of those five players to enter the game when he replaced the Phillies’ Curt Simmons on the pitching mound in the second inning. In four innings of work until being replaced by Jack Sanford of the Giants in the sixth inning, he surrendered two hits but no runs.

Mathews pinch hit for the Reds’ Don Hoak in the fifth inning and then played third base for the remainder of the game. He was hitless in three plate appearances.

Schoendienst hit for Johnny Temple of the Reds in the seventh inning and stayed in the game until its end. He made two unsuccessful trips to the batter’s box.

Logan and Spahn did not appear in the game.

Neither the mysterious organization’s written notes nor results of voting by thousands of baseball fans can or should be considered definitive. However, designation of three regular players as the best at their positions, the solid ranking of the pitching staff, and---most of all---the 1957 world championship provide convincing evidence of the high quality of the Braves’ club. And, after the swirl of controversy surrounding the selection of the National League’s All-Star team, it should be noted that six Milwaukee players---the same number as those wearing Cincinnati Reds uniforms---were granted the honor of representing their league in All-Star competition!

Schabowski's Super Stumpers

By Rick Schabowski
September Trivia

A summer off for Rick hasn't slowed him down as he offers five interesting and challenging questions. Don't ask me how I did.

1. Only four shortstops since the Gold Glove award began in 1957 have been age 35 or older. Name them.
2. Miguel Cabrera hit his 509th career HR to move into a tie with Gary Sheffield for 26th all-time. Which Hall of Famer is next up on the list?
3. Who is the youngest player ever inducted into the Hall of Fame?
4. Who was the first player elected to the Hall of Fame to start the majority of his games (57%) as his team's designated hitter?
5. Who was the first big leaguer to lose a hit due to an illegal bat based on having pine tar too far up the handle?



Do you have a baseball trivia question or two, to stump Our Stumper? If so, send your questions to [Rick](#) to see if you can trip him up and he'll include it in a future *Keltner Hot Corner* giving you credit - bragging rights - for your stumper(s).

Trivia Answers are [here](#)



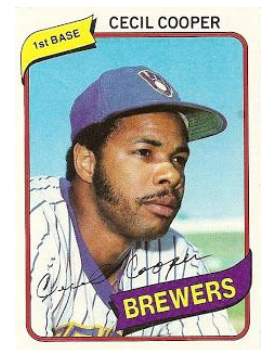
August 22, 1978, Game Project

When Keltner members have an BioProject or Games Project article published, we publish the article in the newsletter. If you have such an article, please let [Dennis](#) know so he can get it into the *Hot Corner*.

Following is my Game Project article that will appear in an upcoming book about pitchers with only one victory. This is a companion story to the SABR Bio on West Bend's Willie Mueller who is one of the pitchers featured in the book due out in November or December of this year.

August 22, 1978: Cecil Cooper stars, rookie Willie Mueller earns first win for Brewers This article was written by [Dennis D Degenhardt](#)

With a 3-2 victory over the Cleveland Indians in the first game of a doubleheader on Tuesday, August 22, 1978, the Milwaukee Brewers won their 70th game for only the third time in their nine major-league seasons.¹ A 12-4 record in eight twin bills (five sweeps, two splits, swept once) played a role in their success. Milwaukee previously swept Cleveland and had a split in two June doubleheaders. For the 54-69 Indians, this was their 12th doubleheader of the season. They had split eight, and were playing the second game to make it nine.



After both teams started left-handers in the first game, they started right-handers in the nightcap. [Paul Reuschel](#) made his first start for the Indians after being claimed off waivers from the Chicago Cubs in June. In three-plus seasons in the major leagues, he had only two starts in 175 games (12 appearances since joining Cleveland). The home-team Brewers had [Eduardo Rodríguez](#) toeing the rubber. Earlier used mostly in relief, he was making his seventh start of the season.² Versus Cleveland, the Puerto Rican was 0-1 in two starts, a complete-game loss in 1976 and a 1977 six-inning no-decision.

The first two innings were quiet, six up, six down for the Indians without a ball leaving the infield and three batters striking out. The Brewers had a single in each frame, by [Don Money](#) and [Sal Bando](#), but a double play in the first and a fielder's choice in the second kept them scoreless.

In the third, the first two Indians reached base, on a single by [Bernie Carbo](#) and a walk to [Jim Norris](#), but Rodríguez got out of the trouble with a force-play grounder at third and a double-play ball by [Rick Manning](#). The Brewers broke the ice in the bottom of the inning, scoring two runs on a one-out double by Money that plated [Gorman Thomas](#) and [Buck Martinez](#), who led off with singles.

The Indians scored once against Reuschel in the fourth. [Duane Kuiper](#) led off with a ground-rule double, moved to third on [Buddy Bell](#)'s grounder to second, and scored on a single to left by [Andre Thornton](#). Thornton stole third, but Reuschel retired the side on a pop foul and groundout, then held the Brewers to singles by [Cecil Cooper](#) in the fourth and Money in the fifth.

The Indians tied the score in the fifth on singles by Norris, [Tom Veryzer](#), and Kuiper, then got to Rodriguez for two more runs in the sixth on two-out singles by [Gary Alexander](#) and Carbo, and a triple to left field by Jim Norris that ended Rodriguez's night after 5²/₃ innings during which he gave up nine hits for four runs, all earned, while fanning three and walking one.

Coming out of the Brewers bullpen was 21-year-old rookie [Willie Mueller](#), who grew up 35 miles north of Milwaukee in West Bend, Wisconsin.³ Promoted earlier in the month, the closer for the Double-A Holyoke Millers⁴ was making his second appearance for the Brewers. It was his first in [County Stadium](#), with family and friends in attendance. He worked quickly to squelch the rally, coaxing an inning-ending pop foul to the catcher by Veryzer, the first batter faced. Cleveland now led 4-2.

After giving up the lead, the Brewers threatened in the bottom of the sixth, knocking Reuschel out of the game. With one out, left-handed-hitting Cooper walloped an opposite-field double to left and Bando walked, bringing Cleveland skipper [Jeff Torborg](#) to the mound to summon righty [Dan Spillner](#). Obtained from San Diego in a June trade, Spillner was making his 24th Indians appearance with a 2-1 record, one save, and a 3.38 ERA. Spillner got [Jim Wohlford](#) to hit a force-play grounder to short and fanned Thomas to end the inning without yielding a run. In his first start since 1976, Reuschel hurled 5¹/₃ innings, with eight hits, two earned runs, and two K's.

Mueller returned to pitch the seventh and got two grounders for outs. An error by catcher Martinez on a short grounder put Bell on first. Mueller walked Andre Thornton but got [Johnny Grubb](#) on another groundball to end the inning with the Indians leading 4-2. From that point, neither team threatened until the home half of the ninth.

Jim Wohlford led off the bottom of the ninth with a single to center but was forced at second on Thomas's fielder's choice. Milwaukee's first-year manager [George Bamberger](#) pinch-hit for Buck Martinez with left-handed-swinging [Dave May](#), who kept the home fans' hopes alive with a single to right that advanced Thomas to second.⁵ Although Spillner had worked three solid innings, Torborg decided to bring in reliever [Jim Kern](#), his closer and the losing pitcher in the first game. With two runners on base and one out, Kern got [Robin Yount](#) to fly out to center, but Money followed with his fourth hit of the game, loading the bases with two outs.

Needing to get only one out, righty Kern walked the next two batters, [Ben Oglivie](#) and Hisle, each on five pitches,⁶ forcing in two runs and tying the game. With three hits in four at-bats, Cooper stepped to the plate.

Kern had struck Cooper out the previous four times he faced the Brewers first baseman. "I don't think I have ever got a hit off of him," Cooper commented after the game.⁷ Cooper took the first two pitches for strikes, took a ball, then fouled off a pitch. On the next pitch, Cooper slashed an outside fastball to left field for his fourth hit, sending Money home for a comeback 5-4 victory, his second four-hit game with a walk-off single in the 1978 season.⁸

Milwaukee's rookie pitcher Mueller earned the win, his first in the majors. Excited with the victory, Mueller said, "I'll never forget it. I didn't have my very best stuff. I was pitching wild." His manager thought differently, saying he was "fantastic."⁹ It proved to be his only big-league decision. On the other side, Jim Kern had a tough day, garnering two losses, evening his record at 8-8.

Acknowledgments

This article was fact-checked by Bruce Slutsky and copy-edited by Len Levin.

Sources

In addition to the sources cited in the Notes, the author consulted Baseball-Reference.com and Retrosheet.org.

<https://www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/MIL/MIL197808222.shtml>

<https://www.retrosheet.org/boxesetc/1978/B08222MIL1978.htm>

Notes

¹ The franchise was in its 10th season, having started as the expansion Seattle Pilots in 1969 and going 64-98. The Brewers won 74 times in 1973 and 76 in 1974. In both years the 70th win occurred in September.

² Rodriguez was making his sixth consecutive start and was 2-2 in the six previous starts. He made 19 earlier appearances out of the bullpen and would have one start after this game and five relief appearances.

3 Mueller turned 22 eight days later, on August 30. He was the Brewers' fourth Wisconsin-born player, preceded by [Gene Brabender](#) of Black Earth, Wisconsin; [Jerry Augustine](#) of Kewaunee; and [Jim Gantner](#) of Eden.

4 Mueller was 7-5 with the Millers, leading the Eastern League with 15 saves in 96 innings pitched with 74 strikeouts and 39 walks.

5 May was traded to Atlanta in late 1974 for [Henry Aaron's](#) swan-song return to Milwaukee. The Brewers purchased May's contract from the Braves in May 1978 and used him primarily as a DH or pinch-hitter. He was batting .190 with 12 hits, 2 homers, and 8 RBIs entering the August 22 game.

6 Mike Gonring, "Cooper, Brewers a Big Hit." *Milwaukee Journal*, August 23, 1978: 9.

7 Gonring.

8 Cooper's first four-hit game of the season was on May 21 in a 2-1 victory versus California with another game-winning single.

9 Lou Chapman, "Brewers Pull Off a Miracle," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, August 23, 1978: Part 2, 1.

Box Score + PBP:

- [Retrosheet](#)
- [Baseball-Reference](#)

Contribute to the Keltner Hot Corner

Do you have an article or topic you would like to publish in the newsletter? If so, that's great. Please contact [Dennis](#).



Monthly Wisconsin Born Players SABR Bios

Currently there have been 255 Wisconsin born major leaguers with the 2023 debuts of Alec Marsh of Holmen and Milwaukee's Taylor Kohlwey (More info to follow after the season is completed). Of these, 93 have SABB Bios written on them. So, you can get to know these guys better, we will include a SABR Bio monthly starting from the oldest with a completed bio to the most recent. Yes, that will take over eight years to complete, and longer as new bios are finished. If you are interested in seeing the entire list of these players, or if there is a Wisconsin born player that interests you needing a SABR Bio, contact [Dennis](#).

This month's Wisconsin bio is on Milwaukee born Lave Cross who is the 1,170th big league player, 16th from Wisconsin. It was a different time in his day and I guess you could chase your manager with a brick. Then again, the skipper had ways to get even.

Lave Cross By [Phil Williams](#)

A nimble catcher before becoming one of the finest defensive third basemen of his era, Lave Cross spent most of his long career with four Philadelphia franchises.¹ First came stints with the American Association's Athletics and Players' League's Quakers, before a half-dozen seasons with the talented but underachieving mid-1890s National League Phillies. His fortunes then hit a nadir with the infamous 1899 Cleveland Spiders. A renaissance, notably as captain of [Connie Mack's](#) first two pennant-winning Athletics clubs in 1902 and 1905, came late in his career.

He was born as Vratislav Kriz on May 12, 1866. His parents, Joseph and Mary, emigrated from Bohemia and settled in Milwaukee.² Joseph worked as a peddler and a laborer, while Mary managed a teeming household. Three other boys, [Joseph](#) (born in 1858), [Amos](#) (born as Emil in 1860), and [Frank](#) (born in 1873), had brief major league careers of their own. (Not related: future Athletics teammate [Monte Cross](#).) The family moved to Cleveland during Lave's childhood. By the time his baseball career launched in the mid-1880s, he had taken the name of Lafayette Napoleon Cross.³



To Pg 1

His semipro career began in Sandusky, Ohio, in 1885.⁴ The next year he made his professional debut with Altoona, where his catching attracted major-league attention. To be close to his ailing brother, Amos, then with Louisville, Lave signed with that American Association team in October 1886.⁵ (Amos died of consumption in July 1888.)

With the Colonels in 1887, Cross hit .266 (with an OPS+ of 80), yet his fielding percentage and range per nine innings were considerably higher than league averages for catchers. Moreover, in an era when set pitcher/catcher batteries were the norm, his handling of Louisville's ace **Toad Ramsey** drew positive reviews. Possessing one of the most "deceptive drop balls" of the day, the hard-drinking pitcher was also notoriously "cranky of disposition." Yet a Cleveland scribe noted in June that Cross "handled Ramsey's erratic delivery like a veteran."⁶

His fine work with Louisville continued into 1888, but catching in this era was a perilous business. The often-injured Cross only appeared in 100 games (81 as a backstop) over both seasons. Louisville's AA rivals, the Philadelphia Athletics, purchased Cross for \$2,500 that October.⁷ Immediately after the deal, 22-year-old Cross eloped with the teenaged Emma Hyberger of Louisville.⁸ Despite her parents' objections, the young couple stayed together.

In 1889 Cross again earned praise for his handling of an ace, Philadelphia's hard-throwing and wild **Gus Weyhing**. That May, a local sportswriter opined, "The splendid catching of Lave Cross alone made it possible for [Weyhing] to pitch with so much effectiveness."⁹ That November, Cross signed a brotherhood contract, and spent the 1890 season with the Players' League's Philadelphia Quakers.

Between injuries and positional competition, Cross's playing time was limited in 1889 and 1890. He remained a limited offensive threat, although his defense continued to impress. "The way little Lave Cross recovers himself after snatching a wild pitch beats all the cat-like agility ever seen in these parts," a *Philadelphia Press* correspondent gushed, "He is the lightest man on his feet that has ever stood behind the plate. He backs up first base, and nearly climbs up on the grand stand after foul flies."¹⁰ Years later another sportswriter recalled how Cross maintained that "the base runner watches the direction in which the catcher points his left foot on the throw and that the throw almost invariably goes where that foot points." Thus, in double steal attempts with runners on first and third, Cross would step "with his left foot toward third base to drive the runner back to that bag while actually throwing to second to catch the runner going down."¹¹

With the demise of the Players' League, Cross returned to the AA's Athletics. He started the season splitting catching duties with **Jocko Milligan**, with both players among the team's top offensive weapons. As the 1891 campaign progressed, he increasingly played the outfield and, for the first time in his major league career, third base. Appearing in 43 games as a catcher, 43 as an outfielder, plus 24 games at third, he hit .301 (with an OPS+ of 133).

The American Association went out of business following the 1891 season. Cross landed with the National League's Phillies. None of his previous teams had possessed the firepower to seriously compete. But the Phillies featured an outfield of **Ed Delahanty**, **Sam Thompson**, and **Billy Hamilton**. In the catching ranks, Cross again found himself behind a strong hitter: **Jack Clements**.

Determined to keep Cross in the lineup, manager **Harry Wright** made him into Philadelphia's chief utility man. In 1892 Cross appeared in 140 games (65 at third base, 39 catching, 25 in the outfield, 14 at second, and five at short). In 1893 he appeared in 96 (40 catching, 30 at third, 10 each in the outfield and at short, and six at first). His offensive production returned to league averages, but his defensive work was stellar. In 1892 his fielding percentages of .969 (catching) and .921 (third base) were higher than the eligible league leaders. In 1893 his .974 (catching) and .922 (third base) percentages almost repeated this feat, but Boston's **Billy Nash** achieved a .923 mark playing third.

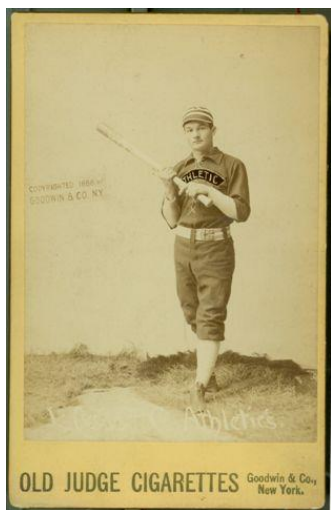
Despite their firepower, the Phillies finished in fourth place in both 1892 and 1893. Before the 1894 campaign, ownership replaced manager Wright with **Arthur Irwin**. With the pitching distance moved back to 60'6", and the pitcher's box eliminated in favor of a rubber slab, the Phillies' already-potent offensive attack reached new levels, scoring almost nine runs per game. Irwin made Cross Philadelphia's everyday third baseman and usually placed him fifth in the batting order, behind Delahanty and Thompson. He responded with career highs in hits (210), runs (128), RBIs (132), and BA/OBP/SLG (.387/.424/.526). His OPS+ of 132 ranked sixth on the team, behind the three Hall-of-Fame outfielders, reserve outfielder **Tuck Turner**, and catcher Clements. Yet Philadelphia again landed in a distant fourth place.

Listed at 5-foot-8 and 155 pounds, the right-handed Cross was typically labeled as “short and stoutly built,” suggesting this height may have been slightly overstated.¹² His most noted physical characteristic was his bow-leggedness; sportswriter Charles Dryden referred to him as the “human parenthesis.”¹³ An avid racer of homing pigeons, he also maintained a menagerie of dogs, chickens, and other pets at Philadelphia’s vacated Forepaugh Park.¹⁴ “One of the best behaved players in the league,” Cross was a non-drinker and exhibited little of the rowdiness that exemplified baseball in the 1890s.¹⁵ “A player whose style is infectious, who likes to play,” locals nicknamed him “Kid.”¹⁶ A Philadelphia scribe wrote that Phillies fans “adore Cross, and he is as popular to-day as was the lamented [Charlie] Ferguson.”¹⁷

Yet nothing distinguished Cross, as he transitioned to third base, more than the catcher’s mitt he brought with him. A moment from a July 7 match at Pittsburgh is illustrative: “Cross saw [a liner off the bat of Jake Stenzel] coming and threw up his hand, which was protected by a catcher’s glove. The ball struck the pillow with so much force that Cross was knocked down, but he recovered himself in time to throw [Jake] Beckley out at second.”¹⁸ Cross was not the only repositioned catcher using a mitt in the infield — Boston’s Frank Connaughton and Pittsburgh’s Joe Sugden did as well — but he was easily the most prominent.¹⁹

Critics called this usage “unscientific and unsightly.”²⁰ NL magnates met in February 1895 and modified existing rules to permit catchers and first basemen to “wear a glove or mitt of any size, shape or weight” yet other players were “restricted to the use of a glove or mitt weighing not over ten ounces, and measuring in circumference around the palm of the hand not over fourteen inches.”²¹ Cross found a mitt within these specifications and continued to comfortably snag flies and knock down liners.²²

“Lave Cross is not in the least inconvenienced by the abolishment of the big glove for infielders,” a Pittsburgh reporter observed early in the 1895 season.²³ Indeed, although his offensive output tumbled (an OPS+ of 76) his work at third remained top-notch. After again trailing only Billy Nash in third base fielding percentage (with a .916 mark) and leading the circuit in range per nine innings (4.41) in 1894, his .940 fielding percentage easily led all third basemen in 1895, while his 4.25 range per nine innings trailed only rookie Jimmy Collins. The Phillies, meanwhile, modestly improved, finishing in third place. Nonetheless that November, owner John Rogers acquired third baseman Nash, in an ill-advised trade for Billy Hamilton, to manage the team.



Often displaced by Nash, Cross returned to a utility role in 1896, playing 37 games at short, six at second, two in the outfield, and one at catcher in addition to 61 games at the hot corner. While his glove work remained first-rate, his hitting slump continued (an OPS+ of 74). Elements of the local press turned on him, with the *Philadelphia Times* declaring, “We think Cross a good man, but not for Philadelphia” and Ernest Lanigan opining “Cross hasn’t been using any science in batting.”²⁴ Yet other Philadelphia sportswriters pleaded for Nash to limit himself to managing from the bench, and re-establish Cross as the permanent third baseman.²⁵ And Lanigan questioned Nash’s usage of Cross, while commenting upon the team’s general slide into a dissipating, dysfunctional mess.²⁶ After Philadelphia’s 62-68 campaign sputtered to its conclusion, Rogers recruited the relatively unproven George Stallings to skipper the team in 1897. “How will Clements, Lave Cross and the other ancients and honorables in the Quakerburg ranks relish a minor leaguer as a captain?” wondered an onlooker.²⁷

The answer, Phillies team secretary Bill Shettsline suggested years later, came when “one day Lave Cross chased [Stallings] down Lehigh Avenue with a brick.”²⁸ The timing of this alleged incident is unclear, the possible causes many. That spring, Stallings tried to deal Cross to Louisville.²⁹ In July, as the club departed for a lengthy road trip, Stallings left him in Philadelphia. “Lave Cross was dead sore over being left at home, and asked for his release,” Francis Richter reported, “Of course he didn’t get it.”³⁰ Finally, coaching third during an August 10 game in Washington, Stallings pushed Senator third baseman Zeke Wrigley with such force that he violently collided with baserunner Cross, knocking both players out.³¹

That November, the Phillies traded him to the St. Louis Browns, along with Clements, Tommy Dowd, and Jack Taylor, for Monte Cross, Red Donahue, and Klondike Douglass. Lanigan thought Philadelphia the winner in the deal, content to see the “hard-working, but utterly useless Lave Cross” depart.³² More charitably, an anonymous Phillies magnate suggested Cross was “about played out in Philadelphia.”³³

Chris Von Der Ahe’s Browns were cellar-dwellers and, at various junctures in the 1898 season, the team fell into “a state of effervescent mutiny” when pay days arrived late.³⁴ Yet a rejuvenated Cross was again a full-time third baseman. On May 8 in Chicago, he “set the great crowd afire by a wonderful catch in the seventh” that

helped seal a rare Browns win. “[Tim] Donahue was on first when [Danny] Friend squeezed up a foul near the stands. Cross, by a desperate run, hauled in the fly while falling, and, recovering, threw out Donahue, who was stealing on the catch.”³⁵ Cross finished the season as the Browns’ most valuable player, contributing a plus offensive season (an OPS+ of 114) for the first time since 1894 and again leading third basemen in fielding percentage (.945) while only slightly off the range per nine innings lead.

Once the 39-111 campaign concluded, trade rumors swirled, but Cross remained in limbo. By late March 1899 it was apparent that Cleveland owners Frank and Stanley Robison, who had just purchased the Browns (then rebranded them as the Perfectos) and were primarily interested in its fortunes, would assign Cross to Cleveland as its player-manager. (Reportedly, Cross sank his chances for earning a spot with the Perfectos by angering its newly-appointed manager, Patsy Tebeau, with his salary demands.)³⁶ The haphazard Cleveland squad finally launched with an abbreviated spring training, then began to lose regular-season games.

Meanwhile, in St. Louis, the aging Ed McKean struggled at shortstop. Thus, on June 5, the Perfectos ‘traded’ pitcher Creed Bates and catcher Ossee Schrecongost for Cross, installed him at the hot corner, and shifted their young third baseman Bobby Wallace to short. Cleveland, 8-30 under Cross, went 12-104 the rest of the way. St. Louis, 26-17 before Cross joined its lineup on June 7, went 58-50 down the stretch. Cross produced an average offensive season (an OPS+ of 95) and continued his noteworthy glove work. His .959 fielding percentage at third set a major league record, which stood until Harry Steinfieldt achieved a .967 mark in 1907 with the Cubs.

After the 1899 season was marred by syndicate baseball, the NL contracted to eight teams and, in March 1900, third baseman John McGraw was one of several players from the abandoned Baltimore team sold to the Perfectos. Cross had become “the idol of the St. Louis fans,” and as McGraw hesitated to join the team that spring, they voiced their opinion on who should play third by chanting “We don’t want Muggsy” when Cross came to bat in an exhibition game.³⁷ Yet when McGraw arrived in early May, and Brooklyn manager Ned Hanlon made an offer for Cross, St. Louis sold him. Cross signed a two-year contract with the Superbas.³⁸

Weeks later a St. Louis sportswriter savaged the departed Cross for making sweeping tags of base runners instead of fearlessly blocking the bag as McGraw did. He also blasted Cross for “the habit of picking up a bunt and tossing it in the air to fully inform the stands that it was a base hit, with no chance on earth to get the runner.” Finally, he suggested Cross too often relied upon shortstop Wallace to chase after “nasty” flies behind the left side of the infield.³⁹ More charitably, in 1899, another St. Louis observer thought that “Lave is a wonder at fielding hard hits, but he is rather slow when he is called upon to take care of the bunts and the slow bouncing grounders.”⁴⁰

Such criticisms were the exception to the rule. In 1905, a correspondent reporting from New York found Cross “as fast as lightning on those slow, tantalizing hits which the locals generally beat out.”⁴¹ Others praised Cross for his “remarkable quickness” in recovering from, and throwing to bases, liners he knocked down with his mitt.⁴² His arm allowed him “to throw the ball to first while resting on one knee.”⁴³

The one third baseman in this era consistently considered Cross’s superior was Jimmy Collins.⁴⁴ In particular, Collins was praised for aggressively going “after everything that comes within hailing distance of the third bag.”⁴⁵ Collins and Cross both became full-time third basemen in their mid-20s in the mid-1890s, and each played approximately 1,700 games at the position for another dozen-plus seasons, Collins’s lifetime range per nine innings at the position (3.67) barely edges Cross’s (3.64). At bat, Collins was Cross’s superior, amassing a lifetime OPS+ of 113, versus Cross’s 100.

Although neither player’s equal defensively, McGraw was the best leadoff hitter of his era. Yet soon after Cross’s St. Louis critic praised McGraw for blocking the bag, Jack Doyle’s spikes put him out of the lineup for a critical stretch of games.⁴⁶ “Now, would it not be as well to have a man shirk the runner a bit and stay in the game than get at him and stay out half his time?” a St. Louisan asked.⁴⁷ The Cardinals (as the Perfectos were now known) eventually finished in fifth place. Brooklyn captured the pennant. “While there are some third baseman who are showier players than he,” a grateful Brooklynite stated of Cross, “it is doubtful if any of them contributed as much in winning games.”⁴⁸

Connie Mack, and a \$3,000 salary, induced Cross to jump to the upstart American League’s Philadelphia Athletics in March 1901.⁴⁹ Another popular former Phillie, Nap Lajoie, captained the squad. The new franchise stumbled badly out of the gate, sinking well below .500.

“I said to Larry [Lajoie] one day, ‘Larry, when are we going to win a game?’” Cross recalled, “‘Never with this bunch,’ the big fellow replied and then he and I and [Bill] Bernhard decided unless Connie Mack did something to strengthen the team, we would quit. Connie got the players, however, and then everything was

lovely.”⁵⁰ Among Mack’s in-season recruits: **Harry Davis** and **Eddie Plank**. The Athletics bounced back to finish 74-62 in their inaugural campaign. Cross, although banged up with injuries, turned in strong offensive (an OPS+ of 122) and defensive efforts in the 100 games he played.

Court injunctions in April 1902 prevented Lajoie from playing in-state with the Athletics, and he eventually signed with Cleveland. Mack appointed Cross as the team’s new captain. In this role, among other responsibilities, he inspected grounds before games, warmed up pitchers, and helped direct defensive strategies.⁵¹ When Mack traveled to recruit players, as he did to land **Rube Waddell** (in June) and **Danny Murphy** (in July), Cross ran the team. The Athletics captured their first pennant that September. Lanigan stated that Cross “has proved a magnetic leader and his new honors have not interfered with his play.”⁵²

Topsy Hartsel and **Dave Fultz** led off for Philadelphia in 1902, with Davis batting third, Cross cleanup, and **Socks Seybold** batting fifth. Cross hit .342 (with an OPS+ of 122). He became the only post-1900 major leaguer to amass over 100 RBIs (108) in a season without any home runs.⁵³ If he didn’t drive in runs, he propelled the offensive attack forward. “He had the rare knack of hitting the ball in back of the baserunner,” Mack recalled in 1935, as he labelled Cross the best hit-and-run artist to wear an Athletics uniform to that point.⁵⁴ If an open base presented itself, he remained an able base stealer, taking a career-high 25 with his distinctive headfirst slide.⁵⁵

Philadelphia stayed in the 1903 and 1904 pennant races before fading in the final stretches. Cross didn’t miss a game either season and turned in a .292 average (an OPS+ of 94) in 1903 and a .290 average (and OPS+ of 113) in 1904. Age was finally limiting him defensively. His fielding percentage at third remained above league norms, but his range metrics fell below average for the first time in his career.

Fighting off injuries, Cross began the 1905 season hitting only .229 through 40 games, while the Athletics started 23-17.⁵⁶ Yet beginning on July 31, Philadelphia won 12 of 15 games — with Cross hitting .345 (19 for 55) — to move into first place. The Mackmen held off the White Sox the remainder of the way to capture their second pennant. Cross finished the season batting .266 (an OPS+ of 98) and posting average defensive metrics.

In the resulting World Series matchup against the Giants, **Christy Mathewson** shut out Philadelphia three times as New York triumphed in five games. Cross’s performance was, sportswriter William Koelsch opined, “decidedly poor.”⁵⁷ At the plate, he produced only two inconsequential singles in the series. In the field, his greatest test came in the critical Game Four. In the bottom of the fourth inning, with **Sam Mertes** on second, **Billy Gilbert** grounded to third. Some accounts suggest the ball took a “wicked jump” past Cross.⁵⁸ But Francis Richter wrote that he “let the ball go clean through him” for an “inexcusable error.”⁵⁹ (It was scored as a hit.) Mertes scored the game’s sole run, and New York took a commanding three games to one lead.

Cross was 39 years old. The strains of captainship, upon his own game and in relations with teammates and ownership, wore upon him.⁶⁰ Yet, even as he sought a younger third baseman, Mack was grateful for Cross’s contributions.⁶¹ Consequently, he allowed Cross to come to an agreement with Washington, then released him to the Senators with no compensation in return that December.

Although Washington had finished in seventh place in 1905, and their promising young shortstop **Joe Cassidy** died before the 1906 campaign launched, the Senators played .500 ball through the first month. Cross started well, hitting .333 and scoring 16 runs through Washington’s first 21 games.⁶² But the team soon sank out of contention, and finished seventh again. Cross contributed a .263 average (an OPS+ of 100) and led AL third basemen in fielding percentage, although his range metrics were below average.

Two months into the 1907 season, Cross was hitting only .199 (an OPS+ of 63) and was “not thoroughly in accord with the policies” of new manager **Joe Cantillon**.⁶³ His two-year contract prevented Washington from selling him, instead requiring them to grant him an unconditional release.⁶⁴ Consequently, once the Senators let him go, he struck a two-year deal with the Southern Association’s New Orleans Pelicans. Cross lasted in New Orleans until they released him early in 1908.

Cross then returned to Pennsylvania to become Shamokin’s player-manager. Next he served Charlotte in the same capacity. In 1912, in his 27th professional season, at age 46, he managed the New England League’s Haverhill Hustlers while playing 126 games at third. A couple years later he coached Ohio Wesleyan’s baseball team, before finally retiring from the game.

In 1910 Cross divorced Emma. It was reported the couple had no children; there was passing mention of a baby seven years earlier.⁶⁵ In 1911 he married Monna Long; the couple had one daughter, Laura. The family settled in Toledo after Cross’s baseball career, where he was employed at the Willys-Overland automobile factory.

Walking to work, on September 6, 1927, he suffered a fatal heart attack.⁶⁶ Lave Cross was buried in Toledo's Woodlawn Cemetery.

Acknowledgments

This biography was reviewed by Rory Costello and Norman Macht and fact-checked by Mark Sternman.

Sources

In addition to the sources noted in this biography, the author also accessed Cross's file from the National Baseball Hall of Fame, the *Encyclopedia of Minor League Baseball*, and the following sites:

ancestry.com

chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers/

genealogybank.com

newspapers.com

Notes

- 1 Per Baseball-Reference's 'multiple franchises/teams' page, it appears the only other player in MLB history to play with four different franchises from the same city was **Lou Say**, who played for four Baltimore outfits from 1873 through 1884. Also: through 2019, only seven players have exceeded Lave Cross's 1,581 major-league games in a Philadelphia uniform: **Mike Schmidt** (2,404), **Jimmy Rollins** (2,090), **Richie Ashburn** (1,794), **Larry Bowa** (1,739) **Jimmy Dykes** (1,702) **Tony Taylor** (1,669) and **Del Ennis** (1,630).
- 2 The 1859 New York Passenger and Crew Lists shows the family's arrival. 1860 and 1870 US Census Records show the family in Milwaukee.
- 3 For additional background on his name, see David Nemac and Dick Thompson's entry in *Major League Baseball Profiles, 1871-1900, Volume 2* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 338-9. Also see Bill Carle, SABR Biographical Research Committee's **July/August 2010 newsletter**, for recognition of Cross as Kriz.
- 4 "Louisville's Players," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, April 1, 1888: 10. Some sources also mention him playing with a Findlay, Ohio, team in 1885. For this see his profile in *The Sporting News*, November 20, 1897: 5.
- 5 "Lave Cross Caught in the Louisville Nine," *Boston Journal*, November 9, 1905: 9.
- 6 "Cleveland 4—Louisville 3," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, June 19, 1887: 6.
- 7 "Base Ball Notes," *Philadelphia Times*, October 14, 1888: 15.
- 8 "Catcher Cross' Escapade," *Chicago Tribune*, October 27, 1888: 3; "Gossip of the Ball Field," *New York Sun*, December 23, 1888: 8; "Where is Emma?" *Louisville Journal-Courier*, September 14, 1887: 6.
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- 11 "Uncle Ezra's Sport Corner," *Zanesville (Ohio) Times-Signal*, June 23, 1940: 4.
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- 18 "Few Hits and No Runs," *Pittsburgh Press*, July 8, 1894: 8.
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- 20 "Gossip of the Game," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 18, 1894: 2.
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- 22 For an advertisement of a glove used by him, see *Reach's Official 1900 Base Ball Guide* (Philadelphia: A. J. Reach, 1900), 153. For his thoughts, expressed later in his career, see "Lave Cross Prefers a Mitt to a Glove," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 30, 1902: 39.
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- 27 "General Sporting Notes," *Louisville Journal-Courier*, December 11, 1896: 6.
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Schabowski's Super Stumpers

September Answers:

1. Luis Aparicio, Ozzie Smith, Omar Vizquel, and Derek Jeter.
2. Mel Ott (25th all-time with 511 homers)
3. Sandy Koufax at age 36 elected to the Hall of Fame on his first ballot.
4. Frank Thomas
5. On July 6th, 1975, Davy Lopes of the Dodgers.

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