



La Prensa del Béisbol Latino

Vol. 1 No. 2

Fall 2004

Latino Baseball Fans Mourn the Loss of Roberto "Beto" Avila

by Carlos Munoz, Jr.

Roberto "Beto" Avila passed away in the early morning of October 27, 2004, in his beloved hometown of Veracruz, Mexico. He had been fighting diabetes and lung disease but he believed he would win the struggle. He was called "Beto" by adoring Mexican baseball fans and Bobby by his teammates and fans in the United States during the eleven years he played in the Major Leagues. He was a three-time All-Star and the 1954 batting champion in the American League when he led his team, the Cleveland Indians, into the World Series to face Willie Mays and the New York Giants.

I had the pleasure of interviewing him in Cleveland two months before his death at the age of 80. Already extremely in poor health, he had made the long trip from Veracruz and arrived at Jacobs Field in a wheelchair pushed by his son, José. He had come to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his 1954 World Series team, where he was joined by two other teammates of that team: Hall of Fame pitcher Bob Feller and infielder Rudy Regalado. He shared some of his fondest

baseball memories with me.

"Beto" was largely known for his hitting and fielding excellence. But, he wished to also be remembered for being a speedster on the base paths. He stole home several times to win games for the Indians. But, he was proud of the time he scored all the way from 1st base on Willie Mays during the 1954 World Series. He was running toward second when Mays caught up with Avila's base hit between right and center field. Instead of holding on at 2nd, he kept running because he sensed Mays was thinking he was indeed going to hold up. Mays leisurely threw to the cut off man, but by that time, Avila was rounding third. By the time the

see Avila, page 6

ESPN Deportes to Call Dominican Games, Marichal Joins Booth

by Anthony Salazar

In November, ESPN Deportes, the Spanish language arm of sports network, ESPN, announced an agreement to broadcast games for the Dominican Baseball League.

The agreement gives ESPN Deportes the rights to telecast Dominican baseball games to Puerto Rico and the United States. The rights include 30 regular season games and all post-season games.

The network already broadcasts games for the Mexican Summer and Winter Leagues.

In addition to the agreement, Hall of Famer

See ESPN Deportes, page 8

INSIDE

<i>Latinos Mourn Loss of Avila</i>	1
<i>Marichal Joins ESPN Deportes</i>	1
<i>At the Mike: Interview</i>	2
<i>Beisbol Trivia Challenge</i>	3
<i>Hall of Fame Considerations</i>	4
<i>Latino Baseball Business News</i>	5
<i>2004 Latino Leaders</i>	6-7
<i>Editor's Note</i>	8

At the Mike with Beto Villa

by Anthony Salazar

Beto Villa is one of the Spanish broadcasters of the New York Yankees. His booming voice has been heard by Latino fans of the Bronx Bombers since 1986. He is not only a student of Latino baseball history, his love for the game comes through every syllable as he seeks to educate his listeners to the every facet of the game.

How did you get started in broadcasting?

I started in the broadcasting business on July 22, 1980. That was my first broadcast. That was my rookie year, and it was a very exciting day for me. I was very happy. The game I was calling was broadcast to Mexico and Venezuela.

Have you always followed baseball?

Oh yes, all my life, ever since I was a little boy in Venezuela. There, baseball is the number one sport.

How did you follow as a kid?

It was not [Chico] Carresquel, but he was with the opposite team in Magallayas. I followed a guy by the name of Camarron Garcia. He was a third baseman. He was a little mestizo. At that time it was kind of hard for the Latino players, so he played in Cuba for the Triple A team there, the [Havana] Sugar Kings. He also played in Mexico, where he played most of his career. He was an outstanding third baseman. He was my favorite player. And of course, Carresquel, too.

In the last issue of La Prensa del Beisbol Latino, we laid out a case for Concepcion as a Hall of Famer. He's been overlooked for so long. You look at the voting over the past several years, and notice that they have not been very consistent. What's your opinion on his candidacy?

You know it's funny that you mention that. The reason why I have not spoken too much about Concepcion is that he's Venezuelan. I didn't want people to think that because I'm Venezuelan, too, that that's the reason why I would be pushing for him. I've been rooting more for Luis Tiant, who got a better record in

certain categories than Catfish Hunter and Jim Bunning. And those guys are in the Hall of Fame. Tiant's only received 11% of the votes, when you need 75% to get in. Why is that?

The number of Latino Yankees have grown over the years. Who are some of your favorites?

Oh yes, Bernie Williams. He's a great man. He's a man who's always been with this team, and with all the very important games that he has played. He's the one who should have been named co-captain of the team. I spoke about it on air. Then, you have someone like Luis Sojo, my countryman, who's a wonderful wonderful guy. And then, Mariano Rivera, who I think has been the heart of this team. He's got around 330 or so saves for the Yankees in his career. When he fails, the Yankees fail.

What is the New York Latino community like, and how do they respond to your broadcasts?

They love the way we broadcast. They love the way we keep them informed. We have had great feedback from the fans. In fact, if I have to take a taxi, the drivers will want to take me. The people know my voice, and they know who I am. I've been very lucky. I mingle with the people, and they ask me questions, and I learn from them, too.

You've been at this for a number years.

What have been your favorite moments?

I would have to say, the perfect games of first David Wells, then David Cone. That was something amazing. It was unbelievable!



BÉISBOL TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Avila, from page 1

1. What Latino was named Manager of the Year in 1994?

- a. Tony Perez
- b. Felipe Alou
- c. Carlos Tosca
- d. Tony Pena

2. Tony Oliva was elected the American League Rookie of the Year in:

- a. 1964
- b. 1965
- c. 1966
- d. 1967

3. Luis Aparicio played for the following teams except:

- a. Chicago White Sox
- b. Baltimore Orioles
- c. Washington Senators
- d. Boston Red Sox

4. What was the first year Sammy Sosa made the All Star team?

- a. 1994
- b. 1995
- c. 1996
- d. 1997

5. Juan Gonzalez was a leader in 1992 and 1993 with a total of how many home runs?

- a. 85
- b. 101
- c. 92
- d. 89

cut-off man threw home, Avila had safely slid across home plate.

He was extremely fond of Ted Williams and remembers the latter sharing his Mexican heritage with him. Williams confided in Avila that he had a Mexican mother long before it became publicly known. When Avila was in a batting slump one year, Williams went out of his way to help him work out of his slump. He credited the batting tips Williams gave him to his winning the batting title in 1954.

I asked him who he thought was the best and toughest outfielder he ever faced. He answered that he loved Willie Mays for the aggressive way he played the game. But that Joe DiMaggio was the best he ever played against.

He believed that he could have played longer than the eleven years he played in the majors, but his wife found it difficult to travel back and forth between Cleveland and Veracruz. So, he retired from baseball because he told me he could not live alone in the United States without his wife and children. He returned to Veracruz as a Mexican national hero and icon. He entered the political arena and won election as mayor of Mexico's "Heroic City" as Veracruz is known throughout the Mexican nation. He later won election to Mexico's National Assembly, the equivalent of our U.S. Congress.

Avila also left a proud legacy for Mexican Americans and other Latinos in the United States. He was the first Latino in the major leagues to achieve superstar status. Like Roberto Clemente after him, he was fiercely proud of who he was and where he came from. As a dark skinned Mexican, he overcame the racism prevalent at that time against African American and Latino players in professional baseball by underscoring his pride in his heritage and concentrating on becoming a player equal or better than the best white

Trivia answers: 1) b; 2) a; 3) c; 4) b; 5) d

RESOURCES TO CHECK OUT

www.GoldenBaseball.com
www.CubaBaseballTours.com

Breton, Marcos and Jose Luis Villegas. "Home is Everything: The Latino Baseball Story."
Price, S.L. "Pitching Around Fidel: A Journey into the Heart of Cuban Sports."
Rucker, Mark and Peter Bjarkman. "Smoke: The Romance and Lore of Cuban Baseball."

Making a case for Luis Tiant, Hall of Fame Candidate

by Beto Villa, Special to La Prensa del Beisbol Latino

Comparing the career of Luis Tiant and two current Hall of Famers:

Comparison between Jim "Catfish" Hunter and Luis Tiant

	W	L	ERA	G	CG	PCT	SHO	IP	BB	SO
Jim Hunter	224	166	3.26	500	181	.574	42	3,449	954	2,012
Luis Tiant	229	172	3.30	573	187	.571	49	3,486	1,104	2,416

Comparison between Jim Bunning and Luis Tiant

	W	L	ERA	G	CG	PCT	SHO	IP	BB	SO
Jim Bunning	224	184	3.27	591	151	.549	40	3,760	1,000	2,855
Luis Tiant	229	172	3.30	573	187	.571	49	3,486	1,104	2,416

Luis Tiant Career Highlights

1. Won 20 or more games four times
2. Led the American League in shutouts three times
3. had two of the 12 lowest single-season ERAs in the major leagues during the 16-year era (1961-1976)
4. Won two games in the 1975 World Series against the 'Big Red Machine,' one of the greatest teams in history. Tiant shut out the Reds in one game and started all three games won by the underdog Red Sox in that memorable Fall Classic
5. Struck out 32 batters over the course of two consecutive games(1968) to set a record later tied by Nolan Ryan (1974), Dwight Gooden (1984) and Randy Johnson (1997)
6. Holds the all-time record for lowest opponents' batting average in a single season (.168 in 1968)
7. Had 49 career shutouts, which rank him in a tie for 21st on the all-time shutout list, the other 20 are all in the Hall of Fame
8. Won 10 or more games 13 times
9. Hurlled 187 complete games
10. Defeated Whitey Ford in his major league debut at Yankee Stadium in 1964 by shutting out the four-time defending American League champion Yankees, 3-0, striking out 11 and scattering four hits
11. Struck out 19 Minnesota Twins in a 10-inning game (1968)
12. His 1.60 ERA in 1968 was the lowest in the American League since Walter Johnson's 1.49 in 1919
13. His 1.91 ERA in 1972 was the first sub-2.00 ERA for a Boston Red Sox pitcher (Fenway Park) since Carl Mays in 1917
14. Second all-time to Nolan Ryan for fewest hits allowed per game in a season (5.3 hits per game in 1968)

As you can see, the comparisons prove very favorable to his selection to the Hall of Fame. The only difference is that Jim "Catfish" Hunter and Jim Bunning threw three perfect games. But the members of the BWAA must ask themselves : why is it that Hunter and Bunning are deemed worthy of election but only 11% of the BWAA members deemed Tiant worthy in 1999?

Random Numbers: 40 HRS in a Season, 3rd Basemen

by Lee Collin

YEAR	NAME	AB	HR	AB/HR	RBI	AVG	GMS	GMS	OBS
							@ 3d		
2004	Adrian Beltre	598	48	12.46	121	0.334	156	155	1017
1980	Mike Schmidt	548	48	11.41	121	0.286	150	149	1004
1953	Eddie Mathews	579	47	12.31	135	0.302	157	157	1033
2000	Troy Glaus	563	47	11.97	102	0.284	159	156	1008
1959	Eddie Mathews	594	46	12.91	114	0.306	148	148	963
1998	Vinny Castilla	645	46	14.02	144	0.319	162	162	951
1949	Mike Schmidt	541	45	12.02	114	0.253	160	157	950
1999	Chipper Jones	567	45	12.6	110	0.319	157	156	1074
1994	Matt Williams	445	43	10.34	96	0.267	112	110	926
1959	Harmon Killebrew	546	42	13	105	0.242	153	150	870
1955	Eddie Mathews	499	41	12.17	101	0.289	141	137	1014
2000	Tony Batista	620	41	15.12	114	0.263	154	154	926
2001	Phil Nevin	546	41	13.31	126	0.306	149	145	976
2001	Troy Glaus	588	41	14.34	108	0.250	161	159	898
1954	Eddie Mathews	476	40	11.9	103	0.290	138	127	1026
1970	Tany Perez	587	40	14.67	129	0.317	158	153	990
1983	Mike Schmidt	534	40	13.35	109	0.255	154	153	923
1996	Ken Caminiti	546	40	13.65	130	0.326	146	145	1029
1996	Vinny Castilla	629	40	15.73	113	0.304	160	160	891
1997	Vinny Castilla	612	40	15.3	113	0.304	159	157	903
1953	Al Rosen	590	43	13.93	145	0.336	155	154	1035

Béisbol Network Expands to Chicago & Philadelphia

by Anthony Salazar

The Boston-based Spanish Béisbol Network has announced that they will add Spanish language baseball broadcasts for the Chicago White Sox and Philadelphia Phillies.

SBN, which broadcasts ball games in Spanish for the Boston Red Sox, agreed to a six-year deal with the White Sox and a four-year deal with the Phillies.

According to published reports, SBN is currently considering expanding efforts one day into Tampa Bay, FL and perhaps Pittsburgh, PA, St. Louis, MO and Washington, DC.

Golden Baseball League Signs Tijuana Affiliate as Charter Club

by Anthony Salazar

The Golden Baseball League, a new independent baseball league, has announced an affiliation agreement with Los Toros de Tijuana, which becomes the league's eighth charter team.

Los Toros were previously affiliated with the Mexican League, drawing over 640,000 fans last season. The joint operating agreement gives the GBL, which will commence their inaugural season next May, a presence in Mexico, giving them wide opportunities to reach Latino fans.

The club will pay a operating fee to the league to support league-wide operations.

The Major Leagues Go Latin

By Edwin Fernández and Henry Martínó

When the 2004 baseball season finished it was full of major achievements for Latino players. Some were expected, and some very unexpected.

The kind of baseball players Latin America is producing lately, are those who are very talented and smart. Just looking at some of the most recent superstars like Pujols, Beltrán, Ramírez, Beltré, Pedro, Miguel Cabrera and Alex Rodríguez, give us the impression they are a massive reproduction of Latinos of yesteryears such as Cepeda, Marichal, Cedeño, Aparicio, Clemente and the Alou's among others.

This time, they are more equipped and have more recognition with better paychecks, and play with less worries about discrimination, the language, and overall treatment from management and fans.

But this is not a coincidence, there are many factors that contribute for all this to happen. One that can not be hidden is the breach being opened during the last forty years by the continuous and growing performance of those players, which have succeeded against all

odds, barriers and difficulties to become the premier protagonists in the mecca of baseball, the Major Leagues.

It says a lot about the character, wit and perseverance of the players from this area, that at least, are born and fit to play baseball. And what a show they have put together this year. Take a look at this:

- There are, already, over 1,210 Latin and Caribbean players that have played in the majors since 1871, when the Cuban Esteban Bellan played for the Troy Haymakers. This number includes those Latino descendants.

- In 2004, 307 Latino and Caribbean players played in the Major Leagues.

- They are distributed as follows: 184 position players and 123 pitchers.

- Representatives of 11 countries: Aruba 1, Colombia 3, Cuba 21, Curacao 2, Dominican Republic, Mexico 29, Nicaragua 1, Panamá 7, Puerto Rico 55, Venezuela 63 and Virgin Islands 1.

Latino Power, from page 7

OF-Manny Ramirez, Boston Red Sox

DH-David Ortiz, Boston Red Sox

National League

1B-Albert Pujols, St. Louis Cardinals

3B-Adrian Beltre, Los Angeles Dodgers

OF-Bobby Abreu, Philadelphia Phillies

P-Livan Hernandez, Montreal Expos

MLB PLAYERS OF THE MONTH

American League

April 2004---Carlos Beltran, Kansas City

Royals

May 2004---Melvin Mora, Baltimore Orioles

June 2004---Ivan Rodriguez, Detroit Tigers

September 2004---Vladimir Guerrero,

Anaheim Angels

National League

September 2004---Adrian Beltre, Los Angeles

Dodgers

MLB PITCHER OF THE MONTH

American League

July, August, September 2004---Johan

Santana, Minnesota Twins

National League

September 2004---Carlos Zambrano, Chicago

Cubs



Latino Power: The 2004 List

By Tony Menendez

American League

Batting

Home Runs---Manny Ramirez, Boston Red Sox (43)

RBI---Miguel Tejada, Baltimore Orioles (150)

Runs---Vladimir Guerrero, Anaheim Angels (124)

Total Bases---Vladimir Guerrero, Anaheim Angels (366)

On-Base Pct.---Melvin Mora, Baltimore Orioles (.419)

Slugging Pct.---Manny Ramirez, Boston Red Sox (.613)

Pitching

20 Game Winner---Johan Santana, Minnesota Twins (20-6)

ERA---Johan Santana, Minnesota Twins (2.61)

Strikeouts--Johan Santana, Minnesota Twins (265)

National League

Batting

Home Runs---Adrian Beltre, Los Angeles Dodgers (48)

RBI---Vinnie Castilla, Colorado Rockies (131)

Runs--Albert Pujols, St. Louis Cardinals (133)

Total Bases--Albert Pujols, St. Louis Cardinals (389)

Pitching

Saves---Armando Benitez, Florida Marlins (47)

Complete Games---Livan Hernandez, Montreal Expos (9)

Innings Pitched---Livan Hernandez, Montreal Expos (255.0)

AWARDS

American League MVP---Vladimir Guerrero, Anaheim Angels

American League Cy Young---Johan Santana, Minnesota Twins

World Series MVP---Manny Ramirez, Boston Red Sox

American League LCS MVP---David Ortiz,

Boston Red Sox

National League LCS MVP---Albert Pujols, St. Louis Cardinals

All Star Game MVP---Alfonso Soriano, Texas Rangers

Hank Aaron Award (American League)---

Manny Ramirez, Boston Red Sox

Roberto Clemente Award---Edgar Martinez, Seattle Mariners

American League Reliever of the Year---

Mariano Rivera, New York

Yankees

American League Designated Hitter of The Year---David Ortiz, Boston Red Sox

OTHER AWARDS

MLB CHOICE AWARDS

American League Outstanding Pitcher of The Year---Johan Santana,

Minnesota

Twins

American League Comeback Player of The Year---Orlando Hernandez, New

York

Yankees

GOLD GLOVES

American League

C-Ivan Rodriguez, Detroit Tigers

National League

2B-Luis Castillo, Florida Marlins

SS-Cesar Izturis, Los Angeles Dodgers

OF-Andruw Jones, Atlanta Braves

SILVER SLUGGER

American League

C-Ivan Rodriguez, Detroit Tigers & Victor Martinez, Cleveland Indians

(tie)

2B-Alfonso Soriano, Texas Rangers

SS-Miguel Tejada, Baltimore Orioles

3B-Melvin Mora, Baltimore Orioles

OF-Vladimir Guerrero, Anaheim Angels

see *Latino Power*, page 6

A Note from the Editor

by Anthony Salazar

The contents of this newsletter tell us quite a bit about the strength and influence of Latinos in baseball. Consider the fact that Latino ball players led a large number of baseball's categories and awards.

Latino pioneers made the news as well. First we lost Beto Avila, a personal favorite. We are fortunate to have an interview with Avila from committee member, Dr. Carlos Muñoz, Jr, who may have been the last person to interview him. Look for Juan Marichal, who will be seen on the air calling games for ESPN Deportes. In other broadcast notes, the Spanish Béisbol Network will expand their efforts into two more markets.

Latinos in baseball continue to make great strides in the sport. Thanks go out to contributors Lee Collin, Dr. Muñoz, Edwin Fernandez and Henry Martino, Tony Menendez and special contributor, Beto Villa. ¡Gracias!

ESPN Deportes, from page 1

Juan Marichal, the Dominican Dandy, has agreed to join the network as a commentator and analyst.

Marichal joins play-by-play veteran announcers Kevin Cabral and Carlos Jose Lugo and field reporter Carolina Cruz.



Latin American Baseball Committee

Eduardo Valero	Chair
Edwin Fernandez	Co-Vice Chair
Anthony Salazar	Co-Vice Chair, Editor

La Prensa del Beisbol Latino is a newsletter published quarterly by the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR). Inquiries and submissions should be directed to Anthony Salazar at salazar8017@yahoo.com.

© Copyright 2004, by the Society for American Baseball

La Prensa del Beisbol Latino

Latin American Baseball Committee, SABR
2400 NW 80th St Ste 141
Seattle, WA 98117

www.sabr.org
latinobaseball-subscribe@yahoogroups.com