

Society for American Baseball Research, Rogers Hornsby Chapter

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Clash of titans in that '70s quiz high- lights June meeting



June 2023 Newsletter

By Gilbert D. Martinez

Hornsby Chapter Commissioner

A quiz about 1970s baseball prompted an epic battle between two heavyweights as Bailey Hall and her parents, Nicole Bryan and Brian Hall, hosted the June meeting on Saturday at their lovely home in Old West Austin.

Eighteen chapter members, guests and Bailey's family members joined us for the meeting, which was the 199th consecutive month with a meeting. Brian Hall grilled hot dogs and sausages, accompanied by cole slaw, orzo pasta salad and fruit salad made by Nicole Bryan. We also had delicious brownies for dessert. We are so grateful for their hospitality and generosity in hosting the meeting!



Over the years, Cy Morong and Jim Baker have often clashed mightily in our trivia quizzes, testing their baseball acumen, and Saturday was no different. They played to a 26-point tie, triggering Jan's tiebreaker question. When they tied again on the tiebreaker question (both successfully naming each of the World Series winners in the 1970s), they resorted to lobbing their own questions on the fly.

How many home runs did George Foster hit in 1977, Cy asked. Jim nailed it (52). When was the last walk-off steal of home, Jim asked. We had to turn to Jan Larson, the resident expert on steals of home to end ballgames, for that answer: 1997. When the dust settled, Jim said he conceded to Cy because he had answered one of the questions in his head but didn't write it down.

Usually, the quiz winner writes the next quiz, but Cy passed on that honor to second place finisher Ira Siegel, who had 24 points. Tom Wancho had 22 points, and Don Dingee had 21 points.

Take a swing at Jan's '70s quiz below. The answers immediately follow the questions.

Bailey Hall Goes to Houston

Expanding her presentation at the 17th Annual Bill Gilbert Winter Meeting, Bailey Hall has been invited to the Larry Dierker Chapter's June meeting to talk about a brief history of the use of statistics in baseball and how technology has changed how we watch and analyze the game.

The Dierker Chapter meeting will be at 7 p.m. Monday, June 12, at the Spaghetti Western Italian Café, 1608 Shepherd Dr. in Houston. All baseball fans are invited to attend.

There will also be a Zoom option for those out of town. Please contact Dierker Chapter President Joe Thompson at splendorajoe@gmail.com for details.

Baseball Memories

Chapter volunteers continue to collaborate with AGE of Central Texas in Round Rock to assist Alzheimer's patients, family and caregivers. They've had four successful monthly programs thus far with the next program on June 21.

Jim Kenton and the "Baseball Guys" are active at Kerrville VA Medical Center.

Monte Cely, who manages the chapter's baseball memories program, reports progress in starting a program in San Antonio.

Any chapter members interested in volunteering should contact Monte Cely. For more information about the program, please go to the information page:

<https://www.sabrhornsby.org/about-basebalz/>

Research Spotlight

Last month, I meant to include this nugget noted by Jim Baker, who, among many other things, keeps track of the most productive offensive games in baseball history. One such night was authored by Adolis Garcia of the Texas Rangers in a game against the Oakland Athletics on April 23.

“Totaling it all up, Garcia had five hits, five runs scored, 16 total bases and eight RBI,” Baker wrote in an email to the chapter’s Google Group. “In fantasy baseball, each one of these is worth one point, so he had a total of 29. (This is most definitely *not* sabermetric or deep-dive analysis.) This puts him right outside the top 10 for all-time single-game best performances and ties him for eleventh with Mike Schmidt (1976), Jimmie Foxx (1932) and Phil Weintraub (1944). Please note that a hit by pitch does not result in a point in fantasy, but an argument could be made that it should count in this context.”

More recently, Cy Morong wrote to the Google Group a few weeks ago that he noticed a significant drop in Astros’ right fielder Kyle Tucker’s defensive WAR, from 0.9 last year in which he won a Gold Glove to -0.9 thus far in 2023. Cy wondered if Tucker’s been playing poorly or playing hurt, or if it was a small sample. As a committed Astros fan who’s seen most every game this season, I responded that I hadn’t noticed any poor play by Tucker. Ryan Pollack took a deeper dive into Tucker’s numbers and offered that it could be both that Tucker’s playing more poorly than last year and it’s still a small sample size. “Looking at [Statcast](#), he was consistently 4-5 outs above average for his career,” Pollack wrote. “This year so far he’s -5, a gap of 9-10 outs. The problem is coming primarily from going back on balls. He’s -4 OAA there compared to -1 OAA on going in. So he’s having trouble with balls over his head. He’s also getting less of a Jump (yes, this is a tracked stat that measures how many feet along the best route outfielders cover when reacting to a ball). This year his jump is 2 feet below average whereas before it’s been about average or only slightly below. I wonder if he’s played in unfamiliar parks to start the year, given the new scheduling format. He might be having trouble reading balls off the bat or just getting a good sense of where, in an unfamiliar RF (different walls, foul line distances, foul territory, etc) he should be heading and how far, when a ball is struck — especially on balls he has to go back on. That or he may have a lingering leg injury or soreness.”

It may be that Tucker's defensive WAR improves as the season progresses, but we'll have to wait and see.

Tracking the Oakland Athletics against worst teams all-time

Chapter member Syd Polk shared with us an effort to track the A's season. "At the end of the year, we can just watch the losses mount up and see where they end up all time," Polk wrote on his blog. "Will they lose 100 games (almost certainly)? 110 (probably)? 117, like the franchise record 1916 Philadelphia Athletics (it could happen)? 120, like the 1962 New York Mets (they are on pace to pass it)? 134, like the 1899 Cleveland Spiders (probably not)?"

Read more and follow along all season at his blog:

<https://sydneyrandall.blogspot.com/2023/05/the-train-wreck-that-is-2023-oakland.html>

Election results and chapter leadership team

As announced in May in the email lists, Jan Larson and Ryan Pollack informed the chapter that Gilbert Martinez was unanimously voted as the chapter commissioner in the chapter's first-ever election. His three-year term began this month. On Saturday, Martinez announced that Jan Larson, Monte Cely, Ryan Pollack and Jerry Miller have been appointed as directors in various areas. Jan will continue to organize chapter outings to ballparks; Monte will manage the chapter's volunteer efforts in the baseball memories program; Ryan will continue to serve as webmaster, manage an annual survey of chapter members and run Awardatron; and Jerry Miller will continue to coordinate the chapter winter meeting. Martinez welcomed Don Dingee to the leadership team; he'll serve as a membership coordinator, looking for ways to expand and retain and expand membership.

Martinez thanked Monte Cely for his work welcoming new chapter members for many years. With the addition of Don, this will allow Monte to focus on the baseball memories program. Many thanks to Monte, Don and the rest of the

leadership team.

July meeting details

Please join us for our July meeting, which will be a big milestone for us! It will be the 200th consecutive month with a meeting, a streak dating to December 2006.

For our 200th meeting, we're going out to see the Round Rock Express host the Reno Aces at 6:05 p.m. Sunday, July 23. If you'd like to attend and sit near us, go to this link to purchase tickets in Section 121, Rows 22 and 23: <https://shorturl.at/cvw28>

Many thanks to Jan Larson for organizing this. He has purchased Seats 12 and 13 in Row 23, so you can look for available tickets close to that.

The 1970s

By Jan Larson

(Note: For this quiz, the decade of the 1970s includes the years 1970-1979 inclusive)

1. This club won two World Series in the 1970s defeating the same opponent on both occasions and has not returned to the World Series since. Name the club, the club they defeated and the years (4 points).
2. Only one player hit 50+ home runs in a single season during the 1970s. Name the player, his club and the year (3 points).
3. One club won three consecutive World Series in the 1970s. Name this club and the years and the teams they defeated (5 points).
4. One of the recognized all-time best clubs played in four World Series in the 1970s, winning two and losing two. Name the club and the clubs that they defeated in their two World Series wins (3 points).
5. How many clubs won back-to-back World Series in the 1970s? (1 point).
6. This Hall-of-Famer executed a walk off steal of home to win a game in the

- mid-1970s. The author has spoken of this feat at length and was in attendance at the game in which this occurred. Name the player that executed the walk off steal of home, his club, the opponent and name the author of this question (4 points).
7. In his playing days, Joe Torre, now a special assistant to the commissioner and former Yankees manager, won the National League MVP and led the NL in batting during the 1971 season. What was Torre's batting average that season (+/- 0.010) (1 point)?
 8. This Hall-of-Fame slugger launched a massive All-Star game home run over the roof at Tiger Stadium in 1971. He went on to achieve greater notoriety later in his career with another club. Name the player, the club he was with when he hit the All-Star home run and the later club in which he achieved notoriety (3 points).
 9. These two players shared the National League MVP award in 1979. Name the players and their clubs (4 points).
 10. This Hall-of-Famer hit a 12th inning walk off homerun to win Game Six of the 1975 World Series. Name the player and his club (2 points).

Tiebreaker: Chronologically name all ten World Series winning clubs in the 1970s.

Answers

1. Pittsburgh Pirates, Baltimore Orioles, 1971, 1979
2. George Foster, Cincinnati Reds, 1977
3. Oakland A's, (1972-74), Cincinnati Reds, New York Mets, Los Angeles Dodgers.
4. Cincinnati Reds (The Big Red Machine), Boston Red Sox, New York Yankees
5. 3 or 4 (if you count Oakland twice): Oakland A's ('72, '73, '74), Cincinnati Reds ('75, '76), New York Yankees ('77, '78)
6. George Brett, Kansas City Royals, Cleveland Indians, Jan Larson
7. .363 (accept .353 to .373)
8. Reggie Jackson, Oakland A's, New York Yankees
9. Keith Hernandez (St. Louis Cardinals), Willie Stargell (Pittsburgh Pirates)
10. Carlton Fisk, Boston Red Sox

Tiebreaker: Baltimore Orioles, Pittsburgh Pirates, Oakland A's (x3), Cincinnati Reds (x2), New York Yankees (x2), Pittsburgh Pirates



Gilbert Martinez / June 4, 2023 / Hornsby News /

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