

## The Squibber

### THE BOB DAVIDS CHAPTER E-NEWSLETTER

December 2012

This newsletter is produced by the Bob Davids Chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research ([SABR](http://sabr.org)), which serves members in Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia and parts of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Visit the chapter's official website at <http://chapters.sabr.org/bobdavids/>.

Submissions for future editions can be sent to Squibber editor Walt Cherniak at [wcherniakjr@aol.com](mailto:wcherniakjr@aol.com). Keep sending us those squibs, and those ideas for squibs!

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#### **1. ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULED: Kurkijan, Forman, Wendel Headline Feb. 2 Program – By Bruce Brown**

*"To me, baseball has always been a reflection of life. Like life, it adjusts. It survives everything". -- Willie Stargell*

Help us make the hot stove season a little warmer as we anticipate the 2013 season with our annual get-together.

The 39<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Bob Davids Chapter, the first chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research, will be held Saturday, Feb. 2, 2013, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Rosslyn Key Bridge. The event is open to SABR members and guests.

The hotel is located at 1900 North Fort Myer Drive, Arlington, Va. The hotel's phone number is 703-807-2000. For more details, see [www.holidayinn.com/hotels/us/en/waswp/hoteldetail](http://www.holidayinn.com/hotels/us/en/waswp/hoteldetail)

Tickets are \$31 for SABR members and guests; \$16 for students. The price includes a luncheon buffet. You may pay by check or PayPal. Checks can be mailed to chapter treasurer Dave Paulson at 6285 Cardinal Lane, Columbia, MD 21044-3801.

Ticket requests should be postmarked before midnight Jan. 30, 2013. Admittance after that date, including at the door, is \$35. We can't guarantee seating or meals for registrants after Jan. 30. Usually, we have room, but why take the chance?

After midnight Jan 30, please do not mail registration forms and check; rather, please bring the registration form and a \$35 check per person to the meeting and send an e-mail message to [d2244p@yahoo.com](mailto:d2244p@yahoo.com) with intent to attend.

The meeting serves as the chapter's official annual business meeting, with the election of officers, but we'll keep business to a minimum. In addition to the annual meeting, Bob Davids Chapter members and guests will help celebrate National SABR Day, as chapters around the world will be meeting on this same day.

Featured speakers will include:

[Tim Kurkjian](#), television baseball analyst on ESPN's *Baseball Tonight* and *SportsCenter*. He contributes to *ESPN The Magazine* and *ESPN.com*, and is a frequent guest on the *Mike and Mike in the Morning* radio show;

[Sean Forman](#), founder and president of [baseball-reference.com](http://baseball-reference.com), the definitive on-line baseball reference site, and;

[Tim Wendel](#), author of nine books, including *High Heat*, *Summer of '68* and *Castro's Curveball*.

The program also will feature research presentations by chapter members Paul Haas and Bill Hickman, with additional research presentations pending.

In addition, there will be baseball trivia, which is always fun, especially if you know the answers; vendors of baseball books and related materials, with several authors available to autograph books; and, most important, camaraderie. Mingle with your SABR friends. Make new ones.

There also will be a raffle, which helps the chapter stay in the black. Go home with baseball books and other hard-to-find items. Tickets are still only \$1 each or 10 tickets for \$5. This year's selection will be extra special because of numerous items donated from the Bob McConnell estate.

## **2. CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA UPDATE: Barnstormers Fall Short – By Barry Sparks**

Despite all of their team and individual heroics, the Lancaster Barnstormers lost the Atlantic League championship to the Long Island Ducks, 3 games to 3. The Ducks won the final game, 5-4, in dramatic fashion. With runners on second and third and the score tied 4-4 in the bottom of the ninth, Dan Lyons dropped a perfect bunt down the third base line to score Matt Esquivel with the winning run.

After setting an Atlantic League record with 88 wins for the 2012 season, the Barnstormers captured three major post-season awards and had seven players named to the league's first team on the post-season All-Star squad.

Butch Hobson was named Manager of the Year; outfielder Blake Gailen was selected as Player of the Year; and Dwayne Pollok was picked as the Pitcher of the Year. Lancaster was the first team in the league's 15-year history to sweep the three major awards. The Barnstormers also became the first team to lead the league in hitting (.297) and team ERA (3.60) since the 1999 Bridgeport Bluefish.

Gailen also was named by *Baseball America* as the Independent League Player of the Year. The 27-year-old native of West Hills, Calif., completed his first season in the Atlantic League. He won the league batting title with a .338 mark, slugged 22 homers and drove in 89 runs.

Gailen won his second consecutive batting title. He batted .406 to capture the American Association crown in 2011. Pitcher Dwayne Pollok (14-4) and designated hitter Ryan Harvey (.302 batting average, 27 homers) were also named to the *Baseball America* first team of independent league All-Stars.

### **Southern Maryland to Host 2013 All-Star Game**

Wednesday, July 10, 2013, will be a big day for Southern Maryland, as the Blue Crabs host the Atlantic League All-Star Game at Regency Furniture Stadium in Waldorf. Visit [www.somdbluecrabs.com](http://www.somdbluecrabs.com) for more information.

### **York's Etchebarren Retires**

The York Revolution failed in its attempt to become the first team to win three consecutive Atlantic League titles. Manager Andy Etchebarren, 69, ended his long career in baseball on a disappointing note, as Lancaster swept York in three games in the opening round of the playoffs.

Friend and former Baltimore Orioles teammate, Brooks Robinson was on hand at Sovereign Bank Stadium for the farewell ceremonies for Etchebarren, who was extremely popular with the fans. During his 15-year major league catching career, Etchebarren played with the Baltimore Orioles, California Angels and Milwaukee Brewers.

### **Atlantic League Attendance Tops 2 Million**

The eight-team Atlantic League drew 2.3 million fans for the 2012 season. League attendance was boosted by its newest entry, the Sugarland Skeeters in Texas. The Skeeters led the league in attendance with 465,511. Total attendance for the other teams include: Long Island (377,473); Somerset (350,295); Lancaster (307,431); York (293,648); Camden (231,987); Southern Maryland (231,989); and Bridgeport (132,139).

### **3. BASEBALL ARTIFACTS PRESENTATION: Ceresi, Thomas to Present in April**

Bob Davids Chapter Member Frank Ceresi, one of our chapter members, a professional appraiser, historian and baseball writer (*Baseball Americana: Treasures at the Library of Congress*) will discuss baseball artifacts and collectibles on April 3, 2013 as part of the Smithsonian Associates Program.

He will be joined in his presentation by fellow historian Hank Thomas, grandson of Senators great Walter Johnson. Thomas is a noted memorabilia collector and dealer as well as the author of a his grandfather's biography, *The Big Train*

The exact location and time of the event have not been announced, but you can reserve a space by contacting the Smithsonian Associates Offices at 202-633-3030. You're invited to bring along of your special sports artifacts, with the possibility that your treasures will be included within the presentation.

Ceresi also is working on a project involving the original snapshots and/or video of the Washington Senators from any era. If you have photos or video and would like to participate, please contact Frank at [Frank.Ceresi@gmail.com](mailto:Frank.Ceresi@gmail.com) or call him at 703-558-3699.

### **4. CATCH AND THROW: Top Nats Web Gems-- By Jeff Stuart**

*"A good friend of mine used to say, 'This is a very simple game. You throw the ball, you catch the ball, you hit the ball. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, sometimes it rains.' Think about that for a while." – Tim Robbins, as pitcher Nuke LaLoosh in the movie Bull Durham.*

Sometimes the game is on the Line. Sometimes it is not so simple. Washington Nationals players have made great defensive plays under many different circumstances.

#### **The Catches**

On Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2012 in Houston, with two outs and two on in the bottom of the 12th, the Nats led 3-2. Brett Wallace of the Astros hit Tyler Clippard's fourth pitch toward the gap in deep left-center. Roger Bernadina flew after the hooking fly ball on the run, momentarily disappearing behind a padded outfield support pillar and crashing into the

outfield fence. When he emerged, he showed the ball. He had made the catch. He was unhurt.

"In that moment, you don't think about it," Bernadina told *The Washington Post*. "You just go for it. Whatever it takes to get an out."

Perhaps the first of the Nats' "Web Gems" catches was made by rookie left fielder Ryan Church in their inaugural season on June 22, 2005 at PNC Park in Pittsburgh. Washington led 5-4 in the bottom of the ninth.

Seeking his 23rd save, closer Chad Cordero retired Jose Castillo on a fly ball to center and struck out Jack Wilson. Then, Pirate catcher Humberto Cota launched a drive deep to left. Church raced back, made a twisting catch and crashed into the left field wall.

He fell in a heap at the base of the wall, but the ball was safely nestled in his glove. It took about a minute for Church to get off the ground and join his teammates in celebration. Breathing with difficulty, he needed help from Jamie Carroll to pull his shirt over his head. The entire team waited more than a minute at midfield for Church to get off the ground and join the celebration.

The play saved the game, but it cost Church three weeks on the disabled list. At the time Church was hitting .325 with 28 RBI. For the rest of the season, he hit just .231.

On June 1, 2011, at Nationals Park, Washington led the Phillies 2-1 in the sixth inning with two out and the bases loaded. Philadelphia's Domonic Brown laced a 1-0 pitch from Doug Slaten to left-center. It looked like a double in the gap. But left fielder Laynce Nix sprinted to his left, dove, sprawled out and snagged the ball. From a prone position he held the ball up in this gloved hand to show the umpire.

"I knew the ball was a long way from me off the bat," said Nix. "And I knew the way he hit it was going to slice back a little bit and I just had a good bead on it and felt like I could get there. Sometimes when you play the game a long time you just get gut feelings on things. You're just relieved that it's in the glove and they don't score two, three runs right there. "The Nats won the game, 2-1.

On April 10, 2010, the Nationals beat the New York Mets 4-3, at Citi Field in New York. With two outs and the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth inning, Rod Barajas laced the first pitch from Nationals closer Matt Capps, to left field. It looked like the ball was going to drop in for a base hit, but left fielder Willie Harris came on at a dead run and made a sensational diving grab to end the game.

It was the third great catch Harris made against the Mets since joining the Nationals. On May 15, 2008, Harris made a diving catch at the left-field line on a Ryan Church liner to preserve a 1-0 win at Shea Stadium.

On Sept 16, 2008, Harris made a leaping catch on a David Wright drive at Nationals Park. Wright, came to bat in the sixth inning. With two outs and two on and ripped a liner toward the left-field fence. Harris, just 5-foot-9, leaped and grabbed the ball about a foot over his head. Rounding first, Wright dropped to his knees and slammed his helmet in the dirt.

In Baltimore on June 25, 2010, the Orioles beat the Nats, 7-6. In the bottom of the third, it looked like Corey Patterson had hit a home run off J.D. Martin, but Nyjer Morgan climbed the wall to rob the former Nat of a home run. Patterson, who tipped his helmet toward Morgan after the play, ranked the catch among the best he's ever seen.

"It was a good play," Patterson said. "I thought I had enough to get it out, but he climbed up there, and it was a great catch. He does a great job for them, had a great game today." Morgan ended up going 4-for-5 with three runs scored.

### **The Throws**

On, April 16, 2012, at Nats Park, Houston's Carlos Lee flied out in the sixth inning of a 6-3 Nationals victory. The bases were loaded with none out. Nationals center fielder Rick Ankiel fired a throw home. Houston's speedy Jordan Schafer never considered tagging up and trying to score from third base.

Ankiel's throw never touched the ground before reaching Wilson Ramos. The home crowd gave Ankiel a standing ovation. Ankiel, who gave up pitching because of control problems, had thrown a strike from 300 feet away.

On April 28, 2012, in his major league debut in Los Angeles, Bryce Harper showed off his tremendous throwing arm. With runners on first and second and one out, A.J. Ellis singled to left field.

Harper made a perfect throw to the plate, but catcher Wilson Ramos dropped the ball, allowing Jerry Hairston to score the tying run. Hairston appeared to swipe the ball out of Ramos' glove. "He smacked the ball. He is out," said Manager Davey Johnson, "We couldn't get any help from the umpires. They obviously didn't see it."

On May 1, in his first game at Nationals Park, Harper again launched a throw that brought the crowd to its feet. In the seventh inning, Harper settled underneath John McDonald's fly ball. The runner at third base crouched. The ball landed in Harper's glove. "I thought I had a shot," Harper said. "I reared back and gave it my all."

Home-plate umpire Jeff Nelson called McDonald safe on a close play. The replay showed McDonald was tagged on the leg before he touched home plate. "He's a talented kid, no doubt about it," D-backs catcher Miguel Montero said about Harper. "He's got a great arm. I didn't know that."

On Sept. 1 in Washington, the Nats edged the Cardinals, 4-3. And Harper finally did throw out a runner. Stephen Strasburg, who pitched six scoreless innings, faced is only

trouble in the fourth. With runners on first and third with one out, Bryan Anderson hit a fly ball to Harper in right field.

Harper caught the ball and threw out Allen Craig at the plate to end the inning. The crowd of 31,096 roared its approval.

"What I was impressed with about that throw was Harper didn't try to airmail it all the way," Johnson said. "When he first got here, that would've been all the way in the air. He actually had a chance to hit the cutoff man there, which was outstanding. But he's got a great arm. Charged the ball well, and he didn't have to look up. He knew he was going home all the way."

It happened again on Sept. 7, in a loss to the Marlins at Nats Park. The Marlins tried to take the lead in the ninth inning with Drew Storen on the mound. With one out and runners on first and third, Rob Brantley hit a fly ball to Harper, who caught the ball on the run and came up throwing with Greg Dobbs tagging from third.

The 250-foot throw, a perfect strike to Suzuki, was right on line and nailed Dobbs at home with seconds to spare.