

## Society for American Baseball Research, Rogers Hornsby Chapter

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# Chapter's first election, quiz on longest-living ballplayers and ball- game highlight May meeting



MAY 2023 NEWSLETTER

By Gilbert D. Martinez

## Chapter Commissioner

A dozen chapter members and guests gathered at Mister Tramps Sports Pub in North Austin for an afternoon of baseball chatter, bar food and a game on the big screens on Saturday.

We watched the Tampa Bay Rays race to a 6-0 lead on the New York Yankees, who battled all the way back to win 9-8, bringing great joy to the Yankees fans among us.

Jim Baker brought a quiz inspired by his contemplation of his own mortality, challenging us to name the longest-lived ballplayers. Cy Morong took first place with 11 points, followed by Jerry and Jan with 10 points each for a second-place tie. Don't waste any time taking a stab at this quiz, dubbed "Tales of the Super Aged," below. The answers immediately follow the questions.

A frequent quiz winner, Cy declined a prize, but Jerry and Jan split a set of baseball cards for their second-place finish.





Jan's selection of cards for his prize



Jerry's pick of cards for his prize

It was nice to see Bailey Hall and her dad, Brian Hall, join us on Saturday. She's been busy with her high school volleyball team, causing her to miss recent meetings. She also shared that she's working part-time with the Round Rock Express doing a variety of things around the ballpark. She'll go full-time once the school year ends (which can't come soon enough for Bailey! Hang in there, Bailey! It'll be over soon!).

Speaking of Bailey and her parents, they have graciously offered to host next month's meeting on June 3 at their home in Central Austin. We'll share more details and ask members to RSVP soon.

We talked about how the Rays, despite the loss at Yankee Stadium on Saturday, have been dominating MLB and what's happened to the St. Louis Cardinals. Some Houston Astros fans among us are more optimistic about the team's chances, despite the team hovering around .500 for most of the season thus far. We also talked about the impact of the new baseball rules. Most of us like the new pitch clock rules and the faster pace of play, but we appear split on the shift ban.

This was the 198th consecutive month in which the chapter has met, a streak dating to December 2006.

### **SABR 51 in Chicago**

With the annual convention in Chicago in July, SABR will welcome the 20,000th attendee to a national convention. To celebrate, all attendees will be automatically entered to win free attendance and hotel accommodations at the next five annual conventions! More information about the raffle and SABR 51 at this link:

<https://sabr.org/latest/celebrating-20k-win-free-registrations-to-the-next-5-sabr-conventions/>

### **First Chapter Election**

Jan Larson and Ryan Pollack with the Hornsby Chapter leadership team announced the results for the chapter's first-ever election for the commissioner position. In an election that concluded on May 12, Gilbert Martinez was elected as commissioner of the Rogers Hornsby SABR Chapter for the 2023-26 term. Gilbert received 27 of 27 votes for a 100% vote share. Turnout was 34.6%. Anyone who wishes to see the summarized, anonymized results may contact Ryan ([ryan9379@gmail.com](mailto:ryan9379@gmail.com)).

### **Baseball Memories**

Monte and Linda Cely led a baseball memories session at AGE's Thrive Social & Wellness Center in Round Rock on May 3. Chapter members Ira Siegel, Jerry Miller and Mike Dillon also volunteered their time to connect with and support

Alzheimer's patients and their families and caregivers by using their memories of baseball for therapy care. This was the fourth session by Hornsby Chapter volunteers at AGE of Central Texas. Monte also shared that he's in touch with SABR members in San Antonio and elsewhere who are interested in starting their own baseball memories program in their communities.

For more information about our baseball memories program, please see the About page at this link: <https://www.sabrhornsby.org/about-basebalz/>

### **Rest in peace to Deacon Jones**



We were sad to learn of the passing of former Major League player and coach Deacon Jones (pictured above at the 14th Annual Bill Gilbert Winter Meeting in 2020) . He filled the room with stories of his playing days with the Chicago White Sox and coaching days with the Houston Astros. May he rest in peace.

## **Jan's Ballpark Quest**

Jan Larson told us that he continues his lifelong ambition to visit all Major League ballparks. He's planning to add Truist Park, home of the Atlanta Braves, this week, the last park he needs to complete all current 30 MLB stadiums. It would bring his overall total to 59 ballparks.

## **Predictatron**

Jim Baker reported changes atop both divisions in the Predictatron contest, with Ryan Pollack securing the overall lead and Jim himself taking the top spot in his division. Meanwhile, last year's division winners (Chuck Kaufman and Gilbert Martinez) find themselves in last or tied for last in their respective divisions. The most recent report of May 7 covers 21.3 percent of the season. Participants eagerly await the weekly updates to learn if fortune favors or spurns us.

## **Awardatron**

Ryan Pollack sent his first update in May after the first month of the season. He noted that Shohei Ohtani is having another solid season on the mound and at the plate, accumulating 2 WAR (FanGraphs), more than any other AL player except for Gerrit Cole. Not only is Ohtani on his way to another MVP, Ryan writes, but he may receive a record-setting contract when he becomes a free agent this offseason (or prior, if he wants to sign an extension). Ryan also gave updates on favorites for a variety of awards, such as Ronald Acuña Jr. and Pete Alonso, favorites for NL MVP; Cole and Ohtani (quoting Ryan, "What can't the man do? Sheesh") for AL Cy Young; and Spencer Strider and Zac Gallen for NL Cy Young. Some of the participants are already anticipating the All-Star break when competitors can switch one (and only one) award prediction to bolster contest chances.

## **June meeting details**

As mentioned earlier, we're happy to accept the generous offer from Bailey Hall,

Nicole Bryan-Hall and Brian Hall to host next month's meeting on Saturday, June 3. There will be baseball on the screens inside and outside at their Central Austin home. They'll grill food and provide salads, veggies and snacks. Please bring beverages to share with the group. There's also a pool, so attendees are welcome to bring swimwear and towels. Please RSVP to Jan Larson ([jan.a.larson@gmail.com](mailto:jan.a.larson@gmail.com)) by May 30 if you plan to attend. Jan will share the address and Nicole's cell phone number with attendees. Hope to see you there!

## TALES OF THE SUPER AGED

By Jim Baker

*(info as of May 13, 2023)*

### Part 1. The Centenarians

1. This player was a four-time All Star and later went on to be the GM of the Atlanta Braves. The highlight of his career, however, was being guest speaker at the Hornsby Chapter annual meeting. He lived to be 100 years and 293 days and passed away in Bastrop in October of 2021.
2. Silas Simmons played for the Lincoln Giants in 1926 and is considered the longest-lived man in major league history. Within two years, how old was he when he passed away?
3. The longest-lived player who played in either the American or National Leagues was pitcher Red Hoff. He broke in at the age of 20 with the New York Highlanders. His player/manager that season was this infamous character of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. (For an extra point, tell us Hoff's age when he passed; within two years.)
4. While there are no centenarians in the baseball Hall of Fame, there is one in the Pro Football of Fame and he also spent some time as a big league ballplayer. He was NFL MVP with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1941 and was elected to Canton in 1972. He played for Philadelphia Athletics in 1937 and 1938, where he didn't hit well, but it allowed him to eventually earn the distinction of being the last living person to have played against our own Rogers Hornsby. He passed away

- at the age of 101 in 2013. Hint: While not a pitcher, his nickname would suggest he was one.
5. This question is here just so I can name drop Howdy Groskloss. Howdy played sparingly with the Pittsburgh Pirates from 1932 to 1934. In 2006, he passed away at the age of 100 years and 96 days in this town, the winter home of the Dodgers until two years after his death.
  6. The last year a centenarian was active in the major leagues was:
    1. 1977
    2. 1967
    3. 1957
    4. 1947
  7. Pitcher Milt Gaston passed away in 1996 at the age of 100 years and 90 days. He pitched for five big league teams and his first roommate with the 1924 Yankees was Lou Gehrig. His career lasted 11 years in which he led the league in losses twice. He holds the dubious record for most games under .500 in a career. What was his career record?
    1. 97-164
    2. 102-211
    3. 88-125
    4. 46-159
  8. Billy Werber was a third baseman in the 1930s and early '40s who passed away in 2009 at the age of 100 years and 216 days. He led his league in stolen bases three times and starred in the 1940 World Series. Which *two* (2) of the following are *not* about Mr. Werber?
    1. First player to ever come to bat in a televised baseball game
    2. Only player to be hit by five pitches in a game
    3. The last living teammate of Babe Ruth
    4. Once arrested by Philadelphia police for stealing signs
    5. Only player to hit four consecutive doubles in both leagues
  9. In what year did the first player reach 100 years old?
    1. 1953
    2. 1963
    3. 1973
    4. 1983

## Part 2. Oldest Living Ballplayers

For the purposes of this quiz, we're considering the start of big league play to be the National Association in 1871. Therefore, the very first so-called "oldest living ballplayer" was an active player, which makes perfect sense when you think about it. His name was Bill Lennon and his reign as such lasted exactly one day: May 4, 1871.

10. Lennon lost the title to this 36-year-old fellow who had already made a national name for himself when he assembled and played with the famous 1869-70 Cincinnati Red Stockings. He would also manage for 25 years, winning four National Association titles and two more in the National League. He is "credited with introducing innovations such as backing up infield plays from the outfield and shifting defensive alignments based on hitters' tendencies." He was so famous that when he died, baseball dedicated a day to him. What is his name?
11. Sixty-four years later, his kid brother—also a Hall of Famer—also became the oldest living ballplayer. They were teammates on that famous Cincinnati team as well as the Boston National Association championship teams of 1872 to 1875. He shares a name with a Texas Rangers center fielder of the 1980s.
12. This man held the title of oldest living ballplayer for an astounding 29 years and took the title away from the man who signed him in 1871—the answer to the first question in this section. He played a grand total of one game for Boston in 1871 at the age of 39, going 0-for-4. He is, therefore, the earliest-ever born major leaguer. You don't need to give his first name, just know that his last name is synonymous with a brand of sandal footwear favored by hippies (although it's spelled slightly differently).
13. This all-time great former player, who had had his 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday on May 6, 2023, is the oldest living Hall of Famer.
14. Like his 19<sup>th</sup> century contemporary Albert Spalding, this player went on to have his own sporting goods company (his name was on American League baseballs as late as 1976) and to publish a very popular annual baseball guide. As an executive, he helped found the Philadelphia Phillies in 1883. His reign as oldest living player lasted from 1912 until his passing in 1928.

15. At 91 years and 185 days, this man is the oldest living manager of a World Champion team. He was voted into the Hall of Fame by the Veterans' Committee in 2010 on the strength of a career .532 managerial record, three division titles in the American League, three National League pennants and one World Series win. You've probably never heard him referred to by his birth name, which is Dorrel.
16. This slugging Red Sox second baseman was the oldest living player for most of 2017. A longtime teammate of Ted Williams, he was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1986. He hit 223 career homers and was an All Star nine times. Unlike Williams, he tore it up in their lone World Series (1946), slashing .409/.458 /.591.
17. At 97 years and 229 days, this diminutive southpaw is the oldest living former MVP and the fourth-oldest living player. He won the award by going 24-7 for the 1952 Philadelphia Athletics and shares a first name with the answer to the previous question.
18. Born deaf, this man was the oldest living player from 10/31/1956 to 12/15/1961. He amassed over 2,000 career hits in four leagues (American Assoc., Player's League and the NL, and AL), mostly in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. He was often a topic of conversation when Curtis Pride was playing in the 1990s. Last name only is an acceptable answer.

### **Bonus Question**

For a whopping five points, name any one of the three current oldest living ballplayers.

### **ANSWERS**

#### **Part 1. The Centenarians**

1. Eddie Robinson, died at 100 years and 293 days
2. 111 years, 15 days; died in 2006
3. Hal Chase; 107 years, 132 days
4. Ace Parker

5. Vero Beach, Florida
6. 4. 1957; Eddie Robinson on the Indians, Tigers and Orioles
7. 1. 97-164 with the Yankees, Browns, Red Sox, Senators, and White Sox
8. 2 and 4; He batted leadoff for the Reds in the first televised game at Ebbets Field on August 26, 1939; played with Ruth on the Yankees from 1930 to 1933.
9. 3. 1973; Ralph Miller, who played with Brooklyn (1897) and Baltimore (1898)

## Part 2. Oldest Living Ballplayers

10. Harry Wright
11. George Wright
12. Nate Berkenstock
13. Willie Mays
14. Al Reach
15. Whitey Herzog
16. Bobby Doerr
17. Bobby Shantz
18. Billy Hoy

## Bonus Question

Art Schallock; 99 years, 18 days

Bill Grearson; 98 years, 252 days

Larry Miggins; 97 years 266 days



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