

# The SABR Games Project Newsletter

## November 2018

### *From the chair*



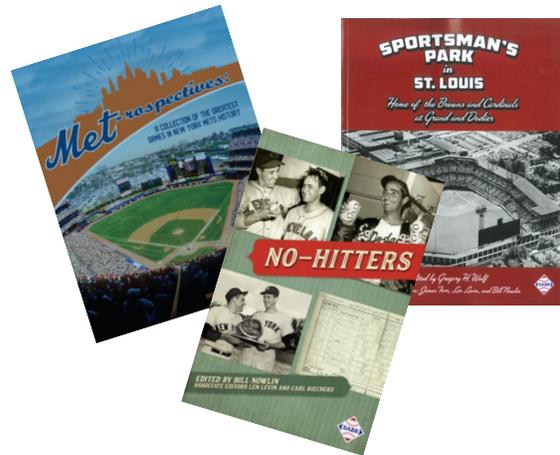
Greetings to all! I have been the chair of the [Games Project](#) committee for about eight months now, and the project continues to be a source of pride and inspiration. We have many fantastic volunteers who manage, edit, fact-check and

post games. The process, outlined on our project's webpage, is attracting new authors. I hope this trend continues! I ask you to join me in thanking all of the volunteers who help in getting game articles from author to online posting.

Here are the latest numbers: At the end of the fourth year of the project (2014 to 2017), 762 Games Project articles were online. So far this year (as of November 9, 2018), we have posted 485 more articles, bringing the grand total to **1247!** Great!

The project captures articles from two sources. An article is requested by an author and written about a particular game. Maybe the author attended that game or wants to write about a specific accomplishment (a team winning the World Series, or a pitcher pitching a perfect game, etc.). The other source is from SABR's prolific book projects. Recent publications on the Colorado Rockies, Cincinnati's Crosley Field, Met-rosppectives, etc., have included scores of game articles. Jacob Pomrenke and SABR interns have been recently posting articles from books published in 2017, highlighting the Astrodome, No-Hitters, and Sportsman's Park, to name a few. I am very pleased to say that all of these articles are

also hyperlinked, meaning that every player mentioned in each article has a hyperlink to his [BioProject](#) webpage.



Some new changes on the web have also occurred. In addition to searching for articles by decade, we can also search by book title, category or milestone. The major categories are 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Minor Leagues, Negro Leagues, All Star, Exhibition and Postseason. In addition, there are 11 milestone groupings, from players who earned their 300<sup>th</sup> win to no-hitters to notable debuts, to those who hit for the cycle. If you think we should add a milestone sub-category, please let us know!

Finally, I encourage all committee members to pick a game and write about it. Look at Len Levin's tips, follow the advice of experienced authors. Check out Bill Nowlin's note below for new book opportunities. Volunteer to be a fact-checker. Go on Facebook and read about the games that are posted. Tell others! Be ready when Spring Training begins!

Mike Huber  
Chair, Games Project Committee

## ***Requesting a Games Project assignment***



When requesting a Games Project essay assignment from our assignments editor, [Steven Weiner](#), please include the following information: date of game, visiting team,

home team, and any brief phrase representing the news worthiness of the game. The latter does not need to be the essay's title. You are encouraged but not required to include the Baseball-Reference and Retrosheet hyperlinks for that game in your request. Those hyperlinks are required for the essay itself.

Steven has been communicating with members who have unfulfilled essay assignments dating from 2017 and earlier. All authors are encouraged to complete their assignments in a timely fashion. Opportunities for prospective authors to write game essays of their choice are boundless. Nonetheless, we always strive to avoid the potential conflict of multiple requests for the same game.

## ***Fact-Checking***



Bruce leads a team of spirited

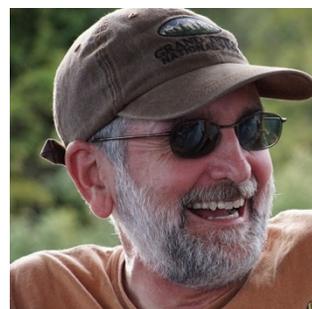
Earlier this year, Bruce Slutsky assumed the role of coordinating fact-checking of Games Project articles once they have been received from Len Levin, project editor.

volunteers: Kevin Larkin, Brandon Lewis, Tom Brown, Jack Zerby, Sheldon Miller and Mike Huber. Bruce reports that only a few corrections are normally needed before an article is ready for posting.

## ***The Baseball Index***

The [Baseball Index](#) is an ongoing project of a [SABR Committee](#), now chaired by Andy McCue. The Baseball Index was formed to locate, identify, evaluate, classify and describe the literature of the national pastime. Currently, it includes over 250,000 records of books, articles, book sections, and other materials and is continually updated. At the recent Pittsburgh meeting, Bruce Slutsky, our fact-checking manager, offered to index SABR Games Project articles, so they may be added to the database. The database is searchable by keyword and includes the teams involved and subject terms from a controlled thesaurus assigned by the indexer. At the end of September, 600 games have been indexed. The goal is to complete the 1178 games already posted by the end of 2018. At that time, the database will be updated monthly with the new submissions.

## ***The Voice of experience***



Tom Brown has been writing for the Games Project for a few years and currently manages our Facebook account.

Here are a few suggestions for any member who wants to write a game story but has not written one yet. First, I would look for several games that interest you. They might

be games of some significance such as a player's first no-hitter or a milestone home run. It might be an important game in the history of your favorite franchise. Once you have selected a few games, see if they have been previously written by looking in the SABR Games Project index. Contact Steven Weiner and if the game has not been previously, you'll be off and writing!



SABR Games Project  
Community  
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208 like this

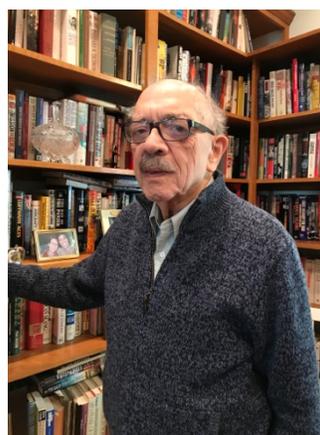
After you have been assigned a game, read about the game from several perspectives. You might start by looking through the Baseball Index play-by-play. It might also be helpful to research newspaper stories about the game. As you do your research, start thinking about how you want to turn it into a story. Each game that is written is meant to do just that: tell a story about that game; it is not just a play-by-play of the game. If the game focuses on a player's achievement, you might want to do some research to put the achievement in context in the story. If the game focuses on a team's history, you might want to explain the significance of the game as part of the story.

When writing up the game, don't feel like you have to include every play into the story. It is more important to tell a story that will be interesting to the reader and put the game into some perspective relative to the players and teams who were involved.

Finally, the [SABR Style Guide](#) should become your friend. Len Levin has provided excellent recommendations to review when you write your story but the style guide is invaluable to ensure that your story meets SABR requirements. I also recommend that

you read over your story aloud several times to make sure that it sounds as you want. Finally, don't be worried about the editors changing some of the story. That is their job. But when you see their edits, look them over; it will help you to improve your next story.

## *Notes from our editor*



Len Levin edits for the Games Project and many SABR books. Over the years, he has put together some advice for writing according to the SABR style guide. Here are his tips:

### **Writing “Games” articles and biographies – some tips**

#### **Avoid clichés, hackneyed**

**words.** Jones *came around* to score; he scored *all the way* from first; the reliever struck out 45 *across* 40 innings; *big fly*, *dinger*, and *went yard* for a home run. *The bump* for the mound. *Tied at 3*. *On the season*. *Change of scenery*.

**Explain, explain, explain.** What is a *hip pointer*? What is a *subluxation*? It's a service to the reader to explain obscure words like these. I'm sure you can think of others.

**Quotes.** Their source must be cited in an endnote. Exception: If all but a few quotes in a game story or biography are from a single source (especially an author interview), one covering endnote with the first quote will suffice. *Except where noted*,

*all quotes by Joe Doakes in this article are from a telephone interview conducted on ....*

**Adjectives.** He posted a *stellar* 3.45 earned-run average. He batted a *lusty* .271. A more accurate way to characterize these numbers might be to compare them against what others did that season.

**Spell out** states and months. *He was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on February 1, 1934.*

**In bios, don't refer constantly to the subject by his first name.** That's a sign of a fan, not a writer. It's OK to use the first name a few times, but not always. (Note exception below.)

**When the subject is a child or a youth** it's OK to refer to him by his first name, though probably not in a "game" context.

Examples: *When he was 8 years old everyone said Stanley was a sure major leaguer*; but: *As a high-school freshman Musial led the baseball team to a state championship* is OK.

**A player may be worth writing about, but don't canonize him.** If you can't find a good off-the-field thing to say about a player, that may mean there is none to be found. Don't strain to say something nice about him.

**If a player has a nickname,** you can mention it early, but in your narrative avoid using it to refer to the player until it has been bestowed on him. If you don't know when that is, save it until your narrative reaches the point where the player is a professional.

**Style on nicknames:** Put it quotes when you use it with a full name, but no quotes when you use it alone or with just a last name.

**Resist the urge** to use too many statistics. Use them if they're significant. It's worth writing that your man hit .395 or smacked

40 home runs in a minor-league season, but avoid using every little number in his career. And don't use things like *He finished tenth in the league in doubles* unless they're germane.

**Avoid this construction:** *He hit 15 home runs and batted in 90.* 90 what? Writers who use this construction are evidently trying to avoid repeating the word "runs." It doesn't work.

**Eschew the "would" construction:** As in: *He would go on to win 26 games that season.* It's hackneyed. Make it: *He went on to win 26 games that season.*

**Off of.** *He hit a three-run home run off of Joe Doakes* is not good usage. Make it *He hit a three-run home run off Joe Doakes* (or against Joe Doakes).

**Don't begin a sentence with a year,** as in: *1968 was Smith's best season.* It's also awkward to make it *Nineteen sixty-eight was Smith's best season.* Recast the sentence. Sometimes it's easy: *Smith's best season was 1968.* Sometimes it's a little tougher.

**Use fractions, not decimals,** for games ahead/behind. A team is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  games behind, not 5.5 or *five and one-half*. (This assumes your computer can create fractions.)

**The punctuation is a 20-year-old shortstop,** not a *20-year old shortstop*.

**World Series and other postseason games** are spelled out: *Game Two*, not *Game 2*.

**Flew out.** Verboten. The past tense of the verb *fly out* is *flied out*.

**Most acronyms** don't take periods (*NL, AL, ALCS*). *O.B.* for Organized Baseball is an exception.

**MLB.** It's not a synonym for the major leagues. *MLB* is a corporate term, meaning the structure of the enterprise called the major leagues.

**Spell out** *percent* (45 percent, not 45%) in text. (% is OK in tables).

**Cleats/spikes.** Football players wear *cleats*. Baseball players use *spikes*.

**Names as adjectives.** After a while, they tend to get deadly. *A Benintendi single* should be *a single by Benintendi*.

**Appeared.** As in, "He *appeared* in 12 games after being called up." Also deadly. Go easy on it. If a pitcher, "He pitched in 12 games after being called up." If a fielder, "He played in 12 games after being called up."

**Sacrifice fly.**

1. It's OK not to use the word "sacrifice" every time you describe one of these plays. If you write "Smith scored on a fly to right by Jones," the reader will understand that it's a sacrifice fly.

2. The scoring rule under which the batter is not charged with an at-bat when his fly ball scores a baserunner was instituted in 1908. It was eliminated in 1931, was restored in 1939 and was eliminated again in 1940. It was restored again in 1954. Note: From 1926 to 1931 a batter was credited with a sacrifice fly if his fly ball advanced any runner, not just one who scored.

**Fortunately/unfortunately.** *Doakes hit the ball a long way, but unfortunately it was caught by the center fielder.* Unfortunate for Doakes, maybe, but not for the other team. In general, avoid these words.

**In Rangers history.** *It was the first unassisted triple play in Rangers history.* Another cliché to avoid. Make it

something like *It was the Rangers' first unassisted triple play.*

**Reporters (as in Doakes told reporters after the game).** Usually more accurate to call them *sportswriters*. Sometimes just as accurate and shorter to write *Doakes said*.

**Club, team.** Writing of a franchise as an organization (general manager, front office, etc.), use *club*. Writing about the aggregation of players and their achievements, use *team*.

**Other words, phrases to avoid.**

**Promptly.** Doakes singled and *promptly* stole second.

**Following.** *Following* a two-out home run. It's a clunky word. Don't banish it altogether but use *after* more often.

**Prior to.** Use *before*.

**Ultimately.**

**Consummated a trade.**

**Back up (v). Not backup.**

## ***SABR book opportunities***



One of the ways the Games Project has grown has been through a number of books which feature games. The recent *Met-rospectives* book, for instance, had 57 games. Some

books that are largely BioProject books now often feature Games Project accounts. The *Major League Baseball A Mile High* book on the Colorado Rockies

had 26 bios, but it also featured 19 game accounts.

SABR's book publishing program will continue to try to encourage authors to write up biographies and games, helping provide opportunities for new researchers and writers and to contribute to both the BioProject and Games Project.

There are two new books coming up that I would like to mention. One of them is about 75% complete, but still needs authors. The other is being announced here for the first time.

The first is the "Blowouts" book which will feature 120 games, the four biggest wins measured by runs differential for each of the 30 teams. We have 92 of the games assigned, but that means there are still 28 available to readers of this newsletter. It's really a great way to get into researching and writing, and then seeing your work get published – a great resume builder, but also just another way to see your work more widely distributed. If you might be interested, email me and I will send you the list of remaining games.

The other project is a very special one, and it involves a number of minor-league games as well as major-league ones. For now, the working title is *SABR Convention Games*. I'm sure we'll come up with a better one. SABR is going to have its 50<sup>th</sup> annual convention in the year 2020 and this book is aimed for publication that year. Each year, there is usually one (and sometimes two) games "officially" on the convention schedule. The idea is to write up a game account of each of those games. This will admittedly have less interest outside of SABR circles, but it's something we wanted to do to celebrate SABR. We will, in the

process, add another 50 or so games to the Games Project.

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