

## **THE SQUIBBER**

### **January 2021 newsletter**

The Squibber is the SABR Bob Davids Chapter's quarterly newsletter. It is emailed to chapter members roughly every three months. If you're a Bob Davids Chapter member and are not getting the Squibber, please check that your email address and chapter affiliations listed on the SABR site are correct. Please send submissions for future editions to Squibber editor Walt Cherniak at [wcherniakjr@aol.com](mailto:wcherniakjr@aol.com).

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**TRIVIA QUESTION:** Among men who managed the Senators (both versions) or Nationals for at least three seasons, who has the highest career winning percentage? *(See answer below)*

**ANNUAL CHAPTER MEETING:** Slow Down and Zoom in on Jan. 23, By Mark Pattison  
For all Bob Davids Chapter members -- and others within SABR -- who have looked forward for the past decade to going to the Holiday Inn in Rosslyn for the chapter's annual meeting, forget it; the hotel was imploded in December!

Even if it were still standing, the pandemic would prevent us from meeting in person. But we've got a corker of a Zoom meeting set for Saturday, Jan. 23, starting at 9:30 a.m.

While we cannot tell you the exact lineup order, we CAN tell you we'll have the major leagues' oldest living player, former original Washington Senator Eddie Robinson, in a conversation with his biographer, C. Paul Rogers III, in the cleanup spot.

But that's not all. We'll also have Washington Nationals play-by-play announcer Bob Carpenter giving his take on the team (having your scorebook at your side is optional).

Another featured guest is Fred Valentine, a member of the expansion Senators who also toiled 10 seasons in the minors, including teams in three states below the Mason-Dixon Line during a time of great racial antagonism.

Brad Snyder, a professor at Georgetown University who wrote the well-received book, "Beyond the Shadow of the Senators : The Untold Story of the Homestead Grays and the Integration of Baseball," is also in the lineup.

Finally, we're also expecting Washington Post columnist Jerry Brewer, one of the few people who has been able to see pro sports in the past year, sharing his ideas on how fans can "meet the moment" once it's safe for them to return to the ballpark.

And all of this in just three hours! That's right, we expect to be able to wind this all up by 12:30 p.m. What's more, it's all free. This meeting will be all substance, all the time. Sans an in-person gathering, there won't be a catered lunch, or a raffle, or the camaraderie we've taken for granted at previous chapter meetings. But did we mention that it's free?

There will be some small bits of business to take care of, including the election of some members of the board. We'll squeeze that in sometime during the meeting.

In the meantime, watch for an email from the chapter shortly with the Zoom link to join in!

### **TALKIN' BASEBALL: Upcoming Speakers Announced, By Dave Paulson**

Here is the speaker schedule for the upcoming meetings of the "Talkin' Baseball" group:

- Feb. 6 -- Thomas Wolf: "The Called Shot: The Chicago Cubs and the Unforgettable Major League Baseball Season of 1932"
- March 6 -- Greg Pryor: "The Year the Yankees Made Me Shave"
- April 3 -- Brian Wright: "The New York Mets All-Time All-Stars"
- May 1 -- Jarol Manheim: "This Never Happened"
- June 5 -- Bill Nowlin: "Working a Perfect Game"
- July 5 -- Tim Wendel: "Escape from Castro's Cuba"

The Talkin' Baseball group normally meets on the first Saturday of each month at 9 a.m. Meetings are normally held at Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia, Md.

But due to restrictions caused by COVID-19, meetings are being conducted by Zoom. Check your email each month for meeting login information,

Whether virtually or in person, join us, and bring a friend!

### **WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A 'CLUBBIE': SABR Member Book Tells the Story**

SABR member Greg Larson was a starry-eyed fan when he hurtled headfirst into professional baseball. As the new clubhouse attendant for the Aberdeen IronBirds, a Minor League affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles, Larson assumed he'd entered a familiar world. He thought wrong.

In his new book, "Clubbie: A Minor League Baseball Memoir," which will be published in April by University of Nebraska Press, Larson details the life of a minor league clubhouse attendant. He quickly discovered the bizarre rituals of life in the minors: fights between players, teammates

quitting in the middle of the games, doomed relationships, and a negligent parent organization. All the while, Larson, fresh out of college, harbored a secret wish. Despite the team's struggles and his own lack of baseball talent, he yearned to join the exclusive fraternity of professional ballplayers. Instead, Larson fell deeper into his madcap venture as the scheming clubbie. He moved into the clubhouse equipment closet, his headquarters to swing deals involving memorabilia, booze, and loads of cash. By his second season, Larson had transformed into a deceptive, dip-spitting veteran, now fully part of a system that exploited players he considered friends.

Like most minor leaguers, the gravitational pull of baseball was still too strong for Larson—even if chasing his private dream might cost him his girlfriend, his future, and, ultimately, his love of the game. That is, until an unlikely shot at a championship gives Larson and the IronBirds one final swing at redemption.

Clubbie is a hilarious behind-the-scenes tale of two seasons in the mysterious world of Minor League Baseball. With cinematic detail and a colorful cast of characters, Larson spins an unforgettable true story for baseball fans and nonfans alike. To pre-order the book, go to <https://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/nebraska/9781496224293/>

### **MYTHS OF BASEBALL: TRUE OR FALSE? By Charles Pavitt**

This is the ninth in a series of Squibber contributions intended to report the truth (as far as present data suggests) of the tidbits of “conventional wisdom” that TV analysts and comparable pundits make without any true knowledge about their validity. In this case, all are from Russell Carleton's consistently interesting posts on the Baseball Prospectus website.

Myth No. 25 – When batters hit a lot of foul balls during two-strike counts, they are having a “good at-bat.”

Certainly tiring out pitchers through them having to throw more pitches is helpful for subsequent hitters; whether it helps the current batter seems to be count-dependent. Achieving lots of fouls seems to matter when the batter is behind in the count but not when even or ahead.

Using 2000-2007 Retrosheet data, Russell looked at the resulting on-base average from the four two-strike counts for different numbers of subsequent fouls during the rest of the plate appearance (not distinguishing between fouls if a ball was called between fouls in the PA, although Russell claimed that the findings were about the same with that distinction made):

Count	0 fouls	1 foul	2 fouls	3+ fouls
0-2	.209	.264	.231	.253
1-2	.235	.266	.279	.282
2-2	.307	.313	.314	.312
3-2	.468	.467	.451	.482

Myth No. 26 – Pitchers having to bat or run the bases leads to much poorer performance in the next inning.

Eric Seidman and Russell took on this issue. For having to bat, 2008-2009 PITCHf/x data for pitchers facing at least 30 PA revealed a drop-off in fastball usage, with curveballs, sliders, and changeups all taking up the slack.

In other words, pitch variety increased. In addition, fastball velocity and movement (both horizontal and vertical) and changeup vertical movement decreased. Also, having to run the bases had an

analogous impact on fastball usage, velocity and movement, along with changeup and curveball movement.

Unfortunately, this second comparison appears to be against both pitchers who batted and did not get on base and pitchers who did not bat; it would be more informative to have been limited to the first of these groupings.

Turning to outcomes and based on PA for seasons for batters with and pitchers facing at least 250 PA (which seasons are not mentioned, but the data surely is from Retrosheet), and controlling for pitcher and batter strength and handedness and pitch count, Eric and Russell only uncovered a .004 decrease in strikeouts per PA, with most of those K's lost becoming outs-in-play, and a slight increase in hits going for extra bases rather than singles

Bottom Line: There is evidence of batting and baserunning effects for pitchers as the myth suggests, particularly in terms of pitch movement, but they seem to have minimal impacts on outcomes.

Myth No. 27 – You should separate starting pitchers with similar styles from one another in your pitching rotation.

Based on 2003 to 2012 Retrosheet data including all batters with and all starting pitchers facing 250 PAs in a season, Russell uncovered no evidence that batters facing consecutive-night starters who were similar in regard to handedness and tendencies for power versus finesse and groundball versus flyball performed any better than when facing dissimilar pitchers, even when these three factors were combined (e.g., two straight days facing lefty finesse groundballers).

So there is no evidence from this study supporting the myth that you need to keep similar starters separated; but always keep in mind that absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence.

### **NOT ONCE, BUT TWICE: Why Did the Nats Trade Mickey Vernon? By Francis Kinlaw**

As the Washington Senators struggled through one forgettable season after another in the 1950s, few of the team's players performed in a manner qualifying them for stardom at the major-league level. Through the disappointing decade, however, Mickey Vernon distinguished himself as a skilled first baseman and a dangerous hitter.

Vernon was selected to five All-Star teams (in 1946, 1948, 1953, 1954, and 1955) while playing for Washington, and he led the American League in doubles in 1946, 1953, and 1954. He posted the highest batting average in the league in both 1946 (.353) and 1953 (.337). He also registered 115 RBI's during the latter season (one of nine years in which he knocked 80 or more Washington runs across home plate) and in post-season voting by members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America ranked third behind Al Rosen and Yogi Berra in voting for the American League's Most Valuable Player Award.

Although he was not feared as a consistent long-ball threat (he pounded 172 homers in 20 major-league seasons while playing home games in a ballpark generally considered to be unfavorable to power hitters), his 20 home runs during the 1954 campaign established a new record for left-handed hitters wearing a Senators uniform.

Because the excellence that Vernon exhibited on baseball diamonds stands in such contrast to the futility of the teams for which he played, the fact that he was traded twice by the Washington club within a seven-year span is intriguing. Contemporary fans have reason to wonder: What line of reasoning could have been employed to justify the two transactions involving Vernon to the Griffith Stadium faithful?

First, let us consider the trade of Vernon to the Cleveland Indians on Dec. 14, 1948. On the heels of a very impressive 1946 season, the first sacker's batting average had dropped to .265 in 1947 and then to .242 in 1948. Undoubtedly due to these declines over a two-year period, Vernon was sent to Cleveland along with pitcher Early Wynn for first baseman Eddie Robinson and a pair of pitchers (Joe Haynes and Ed Klieman).

The Indians were hopeful that the former Washington star could fill a void at first base, but by early June of 1950 he had been displaced by Luke Easter. Consequently, Vernon again found himself on a trading block, and on June 14, 1950, he was headed back to the Senators in return for pitcher Dick Weik.

Vernon maintained his former status as one of the Senators' best players---if not the best---during his second stint in Washington. However, after five and half seasons, he was again sent packing, this time to Boston. Vernon went to the Red Sox on Nov. 8, 1955 in the company of pitchers Bob Porterfield and Johnny Schmitz, while the Senators obtained three hurlers (Dick Brodowski, Tex Clevenger, and Al Curtis) and two outfielders (Karl Olson and Neil Chrisley).

The Red Sox planned at the time of the trade for Vernon to platoon at first base in 1956 with a combination of right-handed hitters Dick Gernert and Norm Zauchin, but as the '56 season progressed, Gernert surpassed Zauchin as Vernon's "platooning partner." Vernon spent two years in Boston before closing out his fine career with brief appearances in uniforms of the Indians, Milwaukee Braves and Pittsburgh Pirates.

A review of circumstances relating to the two trades involving the first sacker thus reveals that the first transaction, with the Indians in 1948, evolved from a perception by the Senators that Vernon had begun a professional decline and a belief by Cleveland's decision makers that he would satisfy a need of their pennant-contending club.

The second deal, with Boston, was consummated as the Red Sox sought to improve their chances of launching a successful challenge in 1956 to their rivals from New York City. In both cases, Vernon was considered to be a potential asset capable of delivering a pennant to a hopeful franchise. Although neither the Indians nor the Red Sox achieved success in their respective pursuits, it is certainly understandable why they were attracted to Washington's star.

## **WANT TO BECOME AN OFFICIAL SCORER? Ripken League Has Opportunities, By Bill Hickman**

For those SABR members who know how to keep score of a ballgame, there is an opportunity to take a step to the next level and become an official scorer. Teams in the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League need additional official scorers to provide some off-nights to the personnel they already have on board.

Teams in the league are located throughout the metropolitan area (D.C., Maryland, and Virginia). They play in June and July. You will get trained on making scoring decisions and on inputting the game data into PointStreak software so that League statistics are updated. If you are interested, please contact Alex Thompson, an official of the Ripken League, at [abt630@gmail.com](mailto:abt630@gmail.com) .

The Ripken League teams are Alexandria (VA) Aces, Bethesda (MD) Big Train, DC Grays, Gaithersburg (MD) Giants, FCA Braves in Vienna, VA, and Silver Spring - Takoma (MD) Thunderbolts. Please let Alex know which team(s) would be your preferred location.

For those interested in volunteer opportunities other than scoring, the Bethesda Big Train is initiating a

"Bullpen Club" for adult volunteers this coming season. Members of the Bullpen Club will either staff a table where they will meet and greet fans, offering information about the team and ballpark, or serve as ushers in the stands. If you are interested in the Big Train Bullpen Club membership, please contact the team's general manager, Chris Rogers, at [crogs@bigtrain.org](mailto:crogs@bigtrain.org).

### **FOUR CONSECUTIVE HOMERS? Nats Have Done it Twice, By Andrew Sharp**

After it happened for the first time ever in 1961 and then again in 1963 and 1964, no team would hit four consecutive home runs for another 42 years. Then in 2006, the Dodgers began what has become part of an overall homer barrage that has included back-to-back-to-back-to-back clouts six times.

Until Aug. 16, 2020, the Nationals had been the only team to hit four home runs in a row twice -- in 2017 and in 2019. That day in a game against the Cardinals, the White Sox joined them as two-timers, having done it the first time in 2008. Rookie Roel Ramirez of the Cards, in his MLB debut, was victim of the four-straight 2020 homers. He became the sixth pitcher to give up four in a row. Two of those six did it against the Nats.

None of the four Nationals who hit the first four-straight homers were among the second group of four players. The 2017 four-in-a-row were hit at home on July 27 against the Milwaukee Brewers. The four in 2019 came on June 9 in San Diego against the Padres.

The first four-in-a-row were hit by Brian Goodwin, Wilmer Difo, Bryce Harper and Ryan Zimmerman. Later in that same inning -- the third -- Anthony Rendon homered. All five came off Brewers right-hander Michael Blazek. He had already yielded a homer to Harper in the first. The Nats scored seven runs in the third and six more in the fourth. Zimmerman joined Harper with two round-trippers. Max Scherzer went six in a 15-2 rout. In 2019, the beleaguered Blazek pitched briefly for the Nats. He's still the only pitcher to have given up five homers in an inning.

Howie Kendrick, Trea Turner, Adam Eaton and Rendon hit the four-in-a-row in 2019 against the Padres in San Diego. The homers came in the eighth inning of what had been a 1-1 tie. All four were hit off former National Craig Stammen, who gave up the four dingers in a seven-pitch stretch. The Nats won, 5-2. Stephen Strasburg allowed a run over seven innings for the win. Kendrick's homer came pinch-hitting for Strasburg.

On June 8, 1961, the Milwaukee Braves were the first team in history to hit four consecutive home runs. Two Hall of Famers, Hank Aaron and Eddie Mathews, and two other noted sluggers, Joe Adcock and Frank Thomas, were the four who went deep against two Reds pitchers in Cincinnati. Despite the seventh-inning power display, the Reds already had scored 10 runs and held on to win, 10-8. Mathews hit another homer earlier in the game, as did losing pitcher Warren Spahn.

On July 31, 1963, long-time Senators' pitcher Pedro Ramos was among the four Indians who hit consecutive homers off Paul Foytack of the Angels in Cleveland. On May 2, 1964, two former Senators -- Harmon Killebrew and Bob Allison -- joined Twins teammates Tony Oliva and Jimmie Hall in hitting four balls over the fence.

### **IN SEARCH OF OLD BALLFIELDS: Researching Montgomery's Black Communities**

SABR member Bruce Adams is researching the baseball town teams of Montgomery County's Black communities with a focus on the period 1920 to 1960. On Saturday, Jan. 30, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. (sadly conflicting with the virtual SABR Day event), Bruce will be making a presentation of his research to

date at Montgomery History's "Montgomery County History Conference 2021"  
(<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-montgomery-county-history-conference-tickets-130455557083>).

Along with the church and schools, baseball was the center of civic life for many of Montgomery County's small towns for much of the first half of the 20th century. Nearly every Black community had a town team with the community's name on the front of the jersey – Clarksburg, Emory Grove, Germantown, Poolesville, Rockville, Scotland, Stewartown, Sandy Spring. On Saturdays and Sundays after church, hundreds would turn out to support their teams. On Memorial Day, a thousand fans would descend on Emory Grove for a picnic and ballgames at the county's finest ballpark, Johnson Park.

The purpose of Bruce's talk is to explore the stories of these town teams and their meaning to their communities during the decades when Negro League baseball was thriving across the country from the 1920s through the early 1960s. Bruce hopes to develop this work as a documentary film and journal publication with the further hope that historic markers can tell this story to future generations. In some cases, it may be possible to restore the ballfields for current use.

If you have knowledge of Black town teams from this period, please contact Bruce Adams by email at [bruce@greaterwash.org](mailto:bruce@greaterwash.org). Any sources, memorabilia, photos, or news clips especially from Montgomery County, Md., will be greatly appreciated.

### **OPENING DAY IN WASHINGTON: Unfortunately, Without Fans, By Steven C. Weiner**

When the Washington Nationals last met the New York Yankees, it was March 12, 2020, at FITTEAM Ballpark of the Palm Beaches, the Nationals' spring-training home since 2017. Just one day earlier, the World Health Organization assessed that the COVID-19 crisis warranted declaration of a global pandemic. The author was completing a weeklong trip to watch baseball in Florida — West Palm Beach and Jupiter.

The over-capacity crowd of 8,043, largest ever to see the Nationals play in West Palm Beach, was standing for a stirring rendition of the national anthem by D.C. Washington with his customary up-tempo rhythm. His was a familiar voice for sports fans in the nation's capital. A photo in the Palm Beach Post documents that spring-training setting, but close your eyes and you are listening to him at Nationals Park.

Even before home-plate umpire Angel Hernandez called for the first pitch (1:06 p.m. EDT), word was reaching fans that Major League Baseball was about to suspend all baseball activities due to the pandemic. The Yankees won 6-3, the details of which are of little consequence under the circumstances. It was noticeable to fans that the umpires were checking their watches during the later stages of the game. Indeed, the game finished five minutes before MLB implemented the suspension at 4 p.m. EDT. It was going to take a while to figure out the consequences and repercussions of that action. But MLB wasn't alone. The next morning's Palm Beach Post sports section headlined analogous actions taken by the NCAA for March Madness and the PGA Tour for The Players Championship.

As we fast-forward 133 days to Opening Day in July, we mustn't forget the death, suffering, and hardship brought each day by the pandemic. We must also remember the heroism, sacrifice, and charity exhibited by many in response. Dave Sheinin, Washington Post sportswriter, described what everyone associated with major-league baseball was about to confront in a 60-game season: "It is as much a science experiment as a championship pursuit."

Opening Day stood in stark contrast to that springlike March day in Florida. Nationals Park was virtually empty when the World Series flag was raised. Only a smattering of fans was ready to watch a

ballgame from their rooftop seats beyond the center-field entrance to the park. D.C. Washington again sang the national anthem at Nationals Park, as he often did. He was as forceful as ever, but this time his performance was pre-recorded on the big scoreboard in a ballpark without fans. Recorded crowd noise suitable for any event that might occur on the field was ready for use. Weird, strange, unprecedented, or any number of synonyms could easily describe the day.

Now it was time for some baseball — Max Scherzer versus Gerrit Cole. Nothing stirs the excitement of baseball fans prior to a game more than the anticipation of two elite pitchers facing each other. When Scherzer and Cole last met as mound opponents, the circumstances were completely different. It was Game One of the 2019 World Series, the Nationals versus the Astros. Now Scherzer wore a World Series ring and Cole wore a different uniform, having raised his pay grade as well. In December the New York Yankees signed Cole to the richest contract ever given to a pitcher, \$324 million over nine years.

Coincidentally, it was also home-plate umpire Angel Hernandez who called for baseball's first pitch of the regular season, just as he had done for the Nationals and Yankees on that March day in Florida. Scherzer retired the first batter, Aaron Hicks, on a grounder to second, but Aaron Judge became the season's first baserunner with a single to left. With two outs, Giancarlo Stanton hit a fastball 459 feet into the empty seats beyond the left-center-field wall. It was the longest home run allowed by Scherzer since MLB's Statcast first recorded those distances in 2015. Watching a Stanton home run sail out of the ballpark was a familiar experience for Nationals fans, even virtually. As a Marlins outfielder (2010-2017), Stanton hit 20 home runs at Nationals Park.

Adam Eaton hit a solo home run in the Nationals' first inning to cut the Yankees lead in half, 2-1. It would be the one and only hit all night off Cole!

When Scherzer struck out the side in the second inning, he was well on his way to a double-digit strikeout game for the 94th time in his career. But Scherzer continued to be challenged by Judge and Stanton. In the third inning, Judge lined a one-out double to left field, scoring Tyler Wade, who had walked to open the inning. In the fifth inning, walks to Gio Urshela and Gleyber Torres again got Scherzer in trouble. Stanton singled to right, scoring Urshela for a 4-1 Yankees lead and keeping the bases loaded. But Scherzer got Brett Gardner on a swinging strikeout, number 11 for the game, to end the threat.

Scherzer was in trouble again in the sixth inning with one out, when Luke Voit walked and Urshela singled. This time Scherzer was saved by thunder, lightning, and the deluge that followed. It was a short game (1:43) and a long rain delay (1:58) before the weather and the Yankees won out and the umpires called the game. Cole's victory gave him 17 consecutive wins as the pitcher of record dating back to May 22, 2019, seven shy of tying Carl Hubbell's all-time record achieved during the 1936-1937 seasons. Cole won three more games before the Braves beat him in late August, ending his streak at 20.

This Opening Day game was like no other, providing baseball fans with a first glimpse of what was in store for the 2020 season. Baseball is bound by tradition, but there were plenty of new rules to contemplate such as the use of designated hitters for all games. When entering a game, a relief pitcher had to face a minimum of three batters or complete an inning. What about extra-inning games? Each team would start any half-inning with a runner on second base. Official scorers were now virtual scorers doing their work remotely.

New health and safety protocols, guided by a 113-page MLB manual, became part of the norm. Everyone not currently playing in the game were required to wear masks in the dugout and players could wear masks while on the field. Pitchers carried their own rosin bag out to the mound and brought it back to the dugout each half-inning. In order to maintain proper social distances in the dugout, many

players sat in the empty stands. Later that night, at the season opener at Dodger Stadium, those players sitting in the stands were joined by cardboard cutouts of baseball fans.

Within one week, COVID-19 outbreaks among players and staff caused entire series to be postponed and rescheduled, and protocols were being tightened. Hometown teams were playing in road grays in their own ballparks, a product of necessary rescheduling by MLB. Call it weird, strange, unprecedented, or any synonym you like. Washington Post columnist Thomas Boswell called it “capricious weirdness.” This was baseball in 2020, every time the umpire yelled, “Play ball!”

Author’s note: It seems only fitting to finish a story about Opening Day 2020 with some baseball trivia. A hint: Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, threw out the game’s ceremonial first pitch to Sean Doolittle at Nationals Park. Topps NOW baseball cards highlight noteworthy individual games and player accomplishments and are sold for a 24-hour period. Which Topps NOW card released through Opening Day 2020 holds the record for sales? The answer is the Dr. Fauci card (51,512) purchased by the author and featured in this essay. The previous record was held by the Vladimir Guerrero Jr. card (19,396) which celebrated his first major-league hit.

### **JOE JUDGE AND THE 1919 SERIES: Preview for a Fix, By Gary Sarnoff**

On Aug. 29, 1919, Senators manager Clark Griffith was talking baseball in the lobby of the Ansonia Hotel in New York City before leaving for Boston. The topic of conversation was the upcoming World Series, and although there was a month left in the season, Griffith wasn’t bashful about predicting a White Sox American League pennant and World Series victory. “The White Sox have every essential of a championship team,” Griffith said. “They have a whirlwind attack, a wonderful defense, and every move they make is directed by keen baseball brains. The Chicago team is a real blown-in-the-glass club. They lead the league in hitting, runs, extra base hits and everything else.”

One month later, a few days before the White Sox and Reds met in Game 1 of the World Series, Senators first baseman Joe Judge was down by the rail at a New York racetrack with his good friend and Dodgers’ pitcher Rube Marquard when a man approached the two ballplayers with a hot tip. “If you’d like to make some money,” the man said, “bet everything you’ve got on Cincinnati to win the first two games.” Marquard stared at the man in disbelief before speaking. “You’re nuts,” Marquard told him, “the White Sox are the best team in the country.”

“Who was that guy?” Judge asked Marquard after the two ballplayers walked away.

“It’s Arnold Rothstein, a gambler,” replied Marquard.

“You realize what he was telling us?” asked Judge. “He was telling us the World Series is fixed.”

“You’re crazy, Joe,” replied Marquard. “There’s no way to fix a ball game.”

When Judge returned to Washington, he told Griffith what he had heard and informed him that he thought the World Series was fixed. Griffith sounded like Marquard when he replied. “You’re crazy, Joe, there’s no way to fix a ball game,” the Senators manager told him.

A few days later, after the World Series had begun, Judge stopped by Washington’s American League park and was surprised to see Griffith. “I thought you were at the World Series?” Judge asked.

“I was,” replied Griffith. “The whole White Sox club is throwing the series.” Griffith said he saw a White Sox infielder cut off a throw to the plate when the baserunner would have been out by 10 feet and saw enough mysterious plays to convince him. “The story didn’t break until the following fall,” Joe Judge said in 1959, “but during the 1920 season, some of the White Sox spread stories that an oil well

had come for them. All I ever said when they tried to tell me about striking oil was ‘you’re not kidding me.’”

**TRIVIA ANSWER:** Walter Johnson had a 350-264 record and a .570 winning percentage while managing the Senators from 1929-32. Dusty Baker has a .593 winning percentage with the Nationals, but has only managed two seasons.