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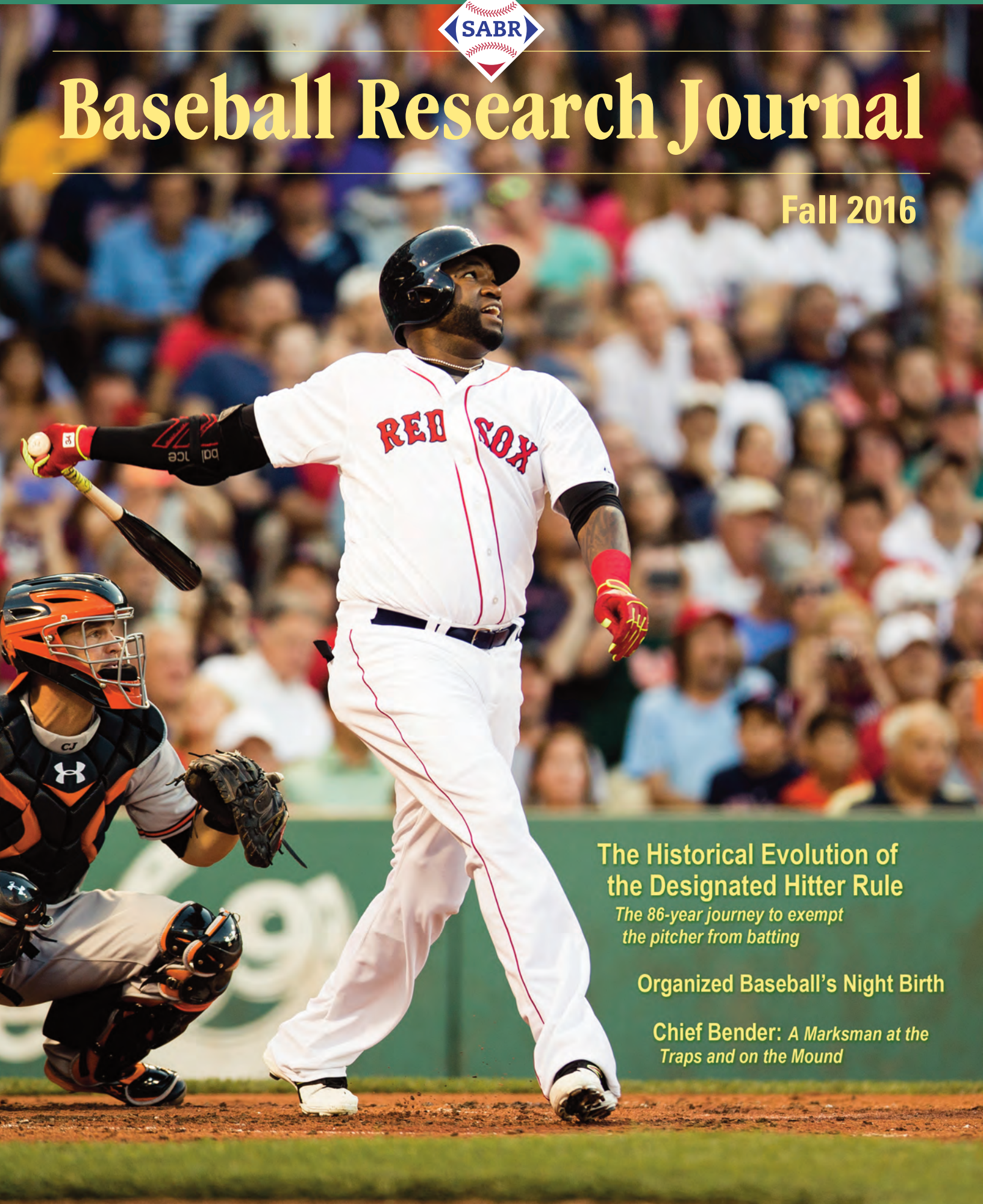

The Historical Evolution of the Designated Hitter Rule

The 86-year journey to exempt the pitcher from batting

Organized Baseball's Night Birth

Chief Bender: *A Marksman at the Traps and on the Mound*

Baseball Research Journal

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Contents

Note from the Editor — Cecilia M. Tan — 4

ANALYZING THE MAJOR LEAGUES

The Historical Evolution of the Designated Hitter Rule — John Cronin — 5

The Stallings Platoon
The 1913 Prequel — Bryan Soderholm-Difatte — 15

The .700 Club
Blessedly Good Baseball — Douglas Jordan — 26

Baseball Player Won-Lost Records
The Ultimate Baseball Statistic — Tom Thress — 34

ORGANIZED BASEBALL AND BASEBALL ORGANIZATIONS

Organized Baseball's Night Birth — Mark Metcalf — 47

The International Girls Baseball League — William E. McMahon, Helen E. Nordquist, Merrie A. Fidler — 50

***The Great American Pastime* (1956)**
Hollywood, Little League, and the Post-World War II Consensus — Ron Briley — 57

OFF THE FIELD

The Show Girl and the Shortstop
The Strange Saga of Violet Popovich and Her Shooting of Cub Billy Jurges — Jack Bales — 66

A Question of Character
George Davis and the Flora Campbell Affair — Bill Lamb — 78

Chief Bender
A Marksman at the Traps and on the Mound — Robert D. Warrington — 84

FEATS AND FIGURES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Young and the Restless
George Wright 1865–68 — Robert Tholkes — 95

Catcher Duke Farrell's Record Performance
Game Notes from May 11, 1897 — Brian Marshall — 102

Discrepancy in an All-Time MLB Record
Billy Hamilton's 1894 Runs Scored — Herm Krabbenhoft, Keith Carlson, David Newman, Richard "Dixie" Tourangeau — 108

Contributors — 115

Note from the Editor

I truly enjoyed SABR's annual convention this year in Miami. I suppose that goes without saying: baseball is one of my favorite things, and baseball research is one of my favorite things about baseball. But something about the mix of topics and experiences jelled into a delicious melange of molecular gastronomy. The Marlins were fantastic hosts. Barry Bonds, Don Mattingly, Andre Dawson, and Tony Perez all spoke to us in a special at-the-ballpark session, and Jeff Conine, Juan Pierre, and Jack McKeon regaled us in a session at the hotel. But the real stars of the convention for me are the researchers who present their passions. Where else would I learn the role Coca-Cola played in strengthening the fledgling MLB players union (Mark Armour), or the history of defensive metrics (Chris Dial), or hear definitive proof that closers don't have the impact on win totals that teams seem to think they do (David Smith)? Where else could I learn about the 1905 Waseda University Japanese good will tour of the West Coast (Rob Fitts) one minute and the Marginal Revenue Product of what pitchers are actually worth (Shane Piesek, who calculates that the average impact of strikeout to walk ratio on team revenue is $37,114.50) the next.

Well, actually, there's one other place that such diverse baseball-related knowledge is marshalled and it's here in the pages of the *Baseball Research Journal*. I feel like the kid who gets to open her Christmas presents early because I get to read all the articles before anyone else. The process starts with a query. Sometimes the researcher will email to ask if I think their topic is too "small" or "obscure" for the *BRJ*. The answer is usually "absolutely not." The so-called "obscure" topics are often the most fascinating, and the most painstakingly researched. I call them rabbit holes, and the researcher who dives down them pulls us, Alice-like, right into Wonderland with them. In this issue we get a deep dive on the life of Violet Popovich, the show girl who famously shot Billy Jurges of the Chicago Cubs, the offseason trap shooting career of Chief Bender, and a light shined on a baseball league that has nearly been forgotten by history, the International Girls Baseball League.

Sometimes a researcher goes down a rabbit hole and after their article is published, they keep going: Bryan Soderholm-Difatte published a paper previously demonstrating that George Stallings employed platooning with the 1914 "Miracle" Braves. He's back this time with a look at 1913, and while he was working on the paper, play by play information for 1912 and 1911 became available. The result is the meaty, delicious conclusion that pinpoints 1913 as the beginning of platooning as we know it. Another researcher who has been going down a rabbit hole is Tom Thress in his pursuit of the ultimate baseball statistic, Player Won-Lost records. He presents here a follow-up to his previous paper on the topic.

And that's just a fraction of what's in this issue. Hopefully every SABR member will find plenty of articles to interest them. If you don't, perhaps it's time to consider writing an article on the topic that is your favorite rabbit hole? If the subject intersects baseball in any way and is meticulously researched, send me a query. Each article submitted goes through our peer review process, with some articles going through multiple revisions before they are ready for prime time. If you're ready to put your work up for evaluation in front of other SABR members, send your queries to PubDir@sabr.org. No rabbit hole is too obscure.

– Cecilia Tan
October 2016

The Historical Evolution of the Designated Hitter Rule

John Cronin

Before Ron Blomberg stepped into the batter's box on April 6, 1973, as the major leagues' first Designated Hitter (DH), he sought the advice of one of his Yankees coaches, Elston Howard, on how he should take on this new baseball position. Howard advised him,"Go hit and then sit down."[1] Blomberg drew a walk. That first DH trip to the plate was the realization of a revolutionary baseball concept.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE FIRST DH PROPOSAL

The DH may have been a revolutionary concept, but it was by no means a new one. The idea of a player hitting for the pitcher every time his turn comes up had its roots in the late nineteenth century. The seeds were sown in 1887 when rule changes permitting substitutes in the game were explored.

> Two players, whose name shall be printed on the score card as extra players, may be substituted at any completed inning by either club, but the retiring player shall not thereafter participate in the game. In addition thereto a substitute may be allowed at any time for a player disabled in the game then being played, by reason of injury or illness, of the nature or extent of which the umpire shall be sole judge.[2]

One week later, *Sporting Life* reported:

> A strong fight will be made, it is believed, at the coming annual meeting of the American Association against the proposed new rule allowing two extra players' names to be printed on the score card, and giving a club power to substitute one of the extra players for another during a game. …Concerning the rule a Boston writer says: "What is the use of the new rule? The old time- honored fashion of playing the game was that of having nine players on either side, with the privilege of substituting a fresh player for a wounded one."[3]

It is hard to fathom this in today's baseball world of 25-man rosters, platoons, righty-lefty switches, pitch counts, et cetera. However, nineteenth century norms can't be viewed by today's standard, but must be put in the context of over 125 years ago when baseball was still in its infancy. It would appear that the Lords of Baseball were hesitant to tinker with what they felt was the very foundation of the game: nine versus nine. This resistance to change became the way of the game of baseball.

That didn't stop the baseball executives from proposing changes. Four years later, the following appeared in *Sporting Life*:

> **Messrs. Temple and Spalding; Agree That the Pitcher Should be Exempt From Batting.** Temple favored the substitution of another man to take the pitcher's place at the bat when it came his turn to go there. Mr. Spalding advocated a change in the present system and suggested that the pitcher be eliminated entirely from the batting order and that only the other eight men of the opposing clubs be allowed to go to bat. …
>
> Every patron of the game is conversant with the utter worthlessness of the average pitcher when he goes up to try and [sic] hit the ball.[4]

A month later, it was still a matter of discussion:

> The propositions to exempt the pitchers from batting, to permit managers to coach from the lines, to carry unfinished games from one day to another, etc., will receive no positive endorsement or recommendation to the League from Messrs. Reach and Wright.[5]

However, it was defeated by the smallest of margins as reported:

> We came very near making it a rule to exempt the pitcher from batting in a game, under a

> resolution which permitted such exemption, when the captain of the team notified the umpire of such desire prior to the beginning of a game. The vote stood 7 against to 5 for. I looked for it to be the reverse, but Day and Von der Ahe, whom I depended on, voted otherwise.[6]

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY DH EFFORTS

The fact that the early pioneers of the game considered the DH raises an important question—why the interest in letting another player hit for the pitcher? The answer to this question can be seen by examining the evolution of the pitcher during the nineteenth century. Beginning in 1863, there were frequent changes to the pitching motion and distance as well as the pitcher's location. These changes included the following:

Pitching Motion

The rule in 1845 stated that the pitcher threw underhand and had to keep his wrist stiff. Subsequent changes were made to the rules in 1872, 1879, 1884, 1885, and 1887. The last change in 1887 stated that the pitcher must start his delivery with one foot on the back line of the pitching box.

Pitching Distance

The pitching distance in 1863 was set at 45 feet from the front line of the pitcher's box to the rear of home plate. Subsequent changes in the distance were made in 1881, 1887, and 1890 (Players' League only). The last change enacted in 1893 set the pitching distance to its current 60 feet 6 inches.

Pitcher's Location

Perhaps, the finesse of baseball's detail can be seen by studying the changes in the pitcher's location during the nineteenth century. The pitcher's location was marked prior to 1893 by a rectangle. The size of the rectangle was set in 1863 with subsequent changes in the size in 1867, 1879, 1886 and 1887. In 1893, the rectangle was replaced by a slab. The slab was changed in 1895 to its present day size of 6 inches wide by 24 inches long.[7]

The pitcher morphed from the player merely serving up the ball to put it in play into the most important defensive player on the field. So, as baseball evolved in the nineteenth century, the pitching position developed into a full-time occupation requiring full concentration, to the detriment of those players' offensive skills. Thus the pitcher became the player who concentrated on only one aspect of the game: throwing a baseball to a hitter with the intention of getting an out.[8]

Do the baseball statistics back up the above supposition? As Figure 1 shows, pitchers had a batting average of .235 in the 1870s. During the 1880s, their average slipped .027 to .208, as pitching became a more vital and important aspect of the game. For the same two decades, non-pitchers' averages, as shown in Figure 2, decreased from .273 in the 1870s to .257. This represented a decrease of .016. Looking at Figure 3 which compares pitchers and non-pitchers hitting, it is noted that the difference in the two groups increased from .038 to .049. When one considers the number of at-bats involved (see Figures 1 and 2), the decline is significant enough that it may have caused the baseball executives to consider taking the bat out of the pitchers' hands.

Even though the rule change was defeated and pitchers continued to bat, the idea of the designated hitter didn't go away. By examining the data presented in the Figures, one can easily see why the baseball executives wanted to exempt pitchers from hitting. While both pitchers' and non-pitchers' batting averages went up in the 1890s, the difference in their two averages increased to .064.

In the middle of the 1900s, designated hitter talk again was raised. Non-pitchers batted .269 while pitchers' averages fell to .190 in the years 1900 to 1905. The difference in their averages further widened to .079. The suggestion of a designated hitter was made by Connie Mack, who would become one of the icons of baseball and a Hall of Famer. The following was published in *Sporting Life* more than a century ago (but the argument is still the same in the twenty-first century!):

> **WHY THE PITCHER OUGHT TO BAT**
>
> The suggestion, often made, that the pitcher be denied a chance to bat, and a substitute player sent up to hit every time, has been brought to life again, and will come up for consideration when the American and National League Committee on rules get together.
>
> This time Connie Mack is credited with having made the suggestion. …
>
> Against the change there are many strong points to be made. It is wrong theoretically. It is a

Figure 1. Pitchers Hitting, 1871–1972

Years	At Bats	Hits	Home Runs	Batting Average
1871–79	17,492	4,141	12	.235
1880–89	68,294	14,218	258	.208
1890–99	70,567	15,414	338	.218
1900–09	74,718	13,538	184	.181
1910–19	80,227	14,413	195	.180
1920–29	75,598	15,391	351	.204
1930–39	75,300	14,524	352	.193
1940–49	71,869	12,724	265	.177
1950–59	67,227	11,362	458	.169
1960–69	80,025	11,441	499	.143
1970–72	28,544	4,196	178	.147

Data Source: Baseball–Reference.com

Figure 2. Non-Pitchers Hitting, 1871–1972

Years	At Bats	Hits	Home Runs	Batting Average
1871–79	143,322	39,142	344	.273
1880–89	551,379	141,504	3,515	.257
1890–99	592,904	167,252	4,424	.282
1900–09	679,294	177,510	2,914	.261
1910–19	797,088	209,867	4,337	.263
1920–29	772,348	226,525	9,543	.293
1930–39	786,135	225,526	12,886	.287
1940–49	776,143	207,696	12,693	.268
1950–59	776,260	207,412	20,402	.267
1960–69	1,000,307	257,206	25,670	.257
1970–72	358,968	92,340	8,648	.257

Data Source: Baseball–Reference.com

Figure 3. Comparison of Pitchers and Non-Pitchers Batting Averages, 1871–1972

Years	Pitchers' Batting Average	Change per Years	Non-Pitchers' Batting Average	Change per Years	Difference Between Pitchers and Non-Pitchers Batting Averages
1871–79	.235	–	.273	–	.038
1880–89	.208	(.027)	.257	(0.016)	.049
1890–99	.218	.010	.282	0.025	.064
1900–09	.181	(.037)	.261	(0.021)	.080
1910–19	.180	(.001)	.263	0.002	.083
1920–29	.204	.024	.293	0.030	.089
1930–39	.193	(.011)	.287	(0.006)	.094
1940–49	.177	(.016)	.268	(0.019)	.091
1950–59	.169	(.008)	.267	(0.001)	.098
1960–69	.143	(.026)	.257	(0.010)	.114
1970–72	.147	.004	.257	0.000	.110

> cardinal principle of base ball that every member of the team should both field and bat. Instead of taking the pitcher away from the plate, the better remedy would be to teach him how to hit the ball.
>
> A club that has good hitting pitchers like Plank or Orth has a right to profit by their skill. Many of the best hitters in the game have started as pitchers.[9]

This *Sporting Life* article is interesting and deserves a discussion of several points. First and foremost, the article again showed that baseball was steeped in tradition. The writer invoked baseball's orthodoxy when he termed the substitution idea "wrong theoretically" and against a "cardinal principle of baseball." The article mentioned two "good hitting" pitchers, future Hall of Famer Eddie Plank and Al Orth. Plank had a major league career 1901–17 and had a batting average of .206 (331 hits in 1,607 at-bats). Plank's average of .206 compared favorably to overall pitchers who averaged .180 as a group 1900–19. Orth was a better hitter than Plank: a .273 batting average (464 hits in 1,698 at-bats) 1895–1909. For the time period 1890–1909, pitchers batted .199, far below Orth's .273! The final point the writer makes is that pitchers should be taught how to hit the ball. We have the hindsight of looking back over the last hundred-plus years and we know that didn't really happen. As Exhibit 1 clearly shows, pitchers' batting averages continued to decline and major league baseball finally adopted the Designated Hitter rule in the American League for the 1973 season.

During the first decade of the 1900s, the proponents of the pitcher taking his turn at bat even used exaggeration to try to win their argument. *Sporting Life* published the following article in June 1908:

> While there is no official record of the longest hit made in a professional game of base ball, Jack Cronin, the Providence pitcher, claims the distinction of accomplishing this feat, and his contention is backed up by Manager Stallings, of the Indians, who saw him do the trick. Cronin made his mighty swat in the city of Minneapolis in 1900, when he was a member of the Detroit (American League) team, which was at the time managed by Stallings. According to Stallings, the sphere traveled a distance between 700 and 800 feet before it fell to the ground and Cronin had time to walk around the bases two or three times before the ball was recovered.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

David Ortiz retired at the end of the 2016 season with 10,091 career plate appearances in the major leagues, 8,861 as a designated hitter, putting him atop the leaderboard for DH appearances over Harold Baines (6,618).

> Cronin made the homer off Red Ehret, who was pitching for Minneapolis.[10]

A review of Cronin's (not related to the author to the best of his knowledge) record at Baseball-Reference.com disclosed that he hit three homers during the season. It should be noted that the American League was considered a minor league during the 1900 season. This story had to be a gross exaggeration when one realizes that this was during the Deadball Era. Home runs were a rare occurrence and a good number of the home runs were inside-the-park ones. The article may well have been a gambit to forestall any talk of the pitcher no longer hitting. Pitchers who can hit 800-foot home runs should hit, right?

Also, during this time, pitchers themselves didn't want to give up hitting. The following quotes pitcher Addie Joss:

> "If the rule makers ever put through a rule to substitute a pinch hitter for the pitcher when it is the twirler's time to bat," says Addie Joss, who pitches for the Cleveland Naps…"there is going to be a mighty howl of objection raised by the slabmen. If there is one thing that a pitcher would rather do than make the opposing batsmen look foolish, it is to step to the plate, especially in a pinch, and deliver the much-needed hit. There is no question that the substitution of a good hitter in the pitcher's place would strengthen the offensive play of the club, but at the same time the rule would mean that the twirler be considered absolutely nothing but a pitching machine. … There is hardly anything the fans would rather see than a pitcher

> winning his own game with a safe drive. This is true, there are mighty few real good hitters among the twirlers, but at the same time the rest of us want to get all the chances there are to wallop the ball, and here's hoping they never pass the rule."[11]

Joss, a Hall of Fame pitcher, had a major league career that spanned from 1902 to 1910. He won 160 games to 97 losses for a .623 winning average and an excellent ERA of 1.89. However, he was a far better pitcher than batter. His batting average was only .144 (118 hits in 817 at-bats). He wasn't even a "good hitting pitcher." Pitchers in the decade of 1900–09 had an average of .181 as per Figure 1. That was .037 better than Joss's average. In the article, Joss is quoted that "the rest of us want to get all the chances there are to wallop the ball." He got his chances to "wallop the ball" but only hit one home run in his major league career. Probably not the best candidate to argue that pitchers should hit!

Babe Ruth's byline appears on an article in the February 1918 issue of *Baseball Magazine* entitled "Why a Pitcher Should Hit—My Ideal of an All-Around Ball Player." When Ruth (or his ghostwriter, as most of Ruth's writings were ghostwritten) wrote this article, he was a member of the Boston Red Sox and a full-time pitcher. "The pitcher who can't get in there in the pinch and win his own game with a healthy wallop, isn't more than half earning his salary in my way of thinking."[12] Ruth was not a proponent of specialization in baseball. In the same article, he wrote, "It seems to me that too many pitchers have the notion that they can't hit. Most of them don't hit, and I believe it's because they think they can't".[13] Figure 1 substantiates Ruth's claim as pitchers only batted .180 in the decade 1910–19. The claim is further validated by looking at both Figures 2 and 3 that show that non-pitchers batted .083 higher in the same period. Ruth also offered this theory as to why pitchers were poor hitters: "There is no discounting the fact that a pitcher is handicapped by not taking his regular turn against the opposing twirlers. A man needs that steady training day in and day out to put a finish on his work."[14] However, at this time, clubs were realizing that a pitcher's true value to his team was his pitching ability and not his hitting ability. Therefore, teams wanted pitchers to focus their time on becoming better pitchers rather than better hitters. Since they were not sharpening their hitting skills, their averages were continuing to decline and made Ruth's statements right on target.

The outlaw Federal League was aware of the limited offensive capacity of pitchers in the lineup during this period. The league executives discussed the use of a "Designated Hitter" for the 1914 season during its winter meetings.[15] However, nothing happened as a result of those discussions.

The 1920s ushered in the "live ball" era and batting averages for non-pitchers as well as pitchers increased as shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3. Non-pitchers' batting averages increased from .263 to .293 from the 1910s to the 1920s. Pitchers' averages increased a little less from .180 to .204 in the same time period. However, the difference in pitchers' and non-pitchers' average widened from .083 to .089, a trend that would continue. Also, the 1920s ushered in the era of the home-run hitter as Babe Ruth made his everlasting impact on how the National Pastime was played!

Figures 4 and 5 (page 10) present pitchers' and non-pitchers' home run stats over the decades. There are some interesting changes when you compare the 1910s (Deadball Era) to the 1920s. Non-pitchers hit 5,206 or 120.04% more home runs in the 1920s than the 1910s while pitchers slugged 156 or 44.44% more home runs in the same time period. Since the pitchers' numbers are smaller than the non-pitchers, this skewed the pitchers' percentage. Therefore, in order to fairly compare the home runs hit by pitchers and non-pitchers, it is necessary to calculate Home Run per Plate Appearance for both. As Figures 4 and 5 disclose, non-pitchers' Home Run per Plate Appearance increased from 1 home run per 202 plate appearances in the 1910s to 1 home run per 89 plate appearances during the 1920s. This represents an increase of more than double the Home Runs per Plate Appearance (2.27 times as many). But if one examines pitchers' home runs per plate appearances in the same two decades, there was an increase from 1 home run per 436 plate appearances for 1910s to 1 home run per 227 plate appearances during the 1920s, or merely 1.94 times as many. The non-pitchers increased their home run frequency by 17% more than the pitchers did.

During the Roaring Twenties, Babe Ruth and his home run hitting made him a bigger-than-life hero to the American public. Americans were captivated by the home run and wanted more offense in the National Pastime. This might explain why John Heydler, President of the National League, jumped on the DH bandwagon. He discussed what at the time was termed "the ten-man rule" at the annual major league meeting held in Chicago on December 13, 1928. Heydler did not mince words: "We have pitchers in our league—I don't know how many in the American—that when they

Figure 4. Pitchers Plate Appearances per Home Run, 1871–1972

Years	At Bats	Sacrifice Flies	Walks	Intentional Walks	Hit By Pitch	Total Plate Appearances	Home Runs	Plate Appearances per Home Run
1871–79	17,492	–	286	–	–	17,778	12	1,481.500
1880–89	68,294	–	3,532	–	204	72,030	260	277.038
1890–99	70,567	–	4,957	–	481	76,005	338	224.867
1900–09	74,718	–	3,677	–	448	78,843	184	428.495
1910–19	80,227	–	4,553	–	332	85,112	195	436.472
1920–29	75,598	–	3,753	–	268	79,619	351	226.835
1930–39	75,300	–	3,838	–	158	79,296	352	225.273
1940–49	71,869	–	3,826	–	127	75,822	265	286.121
1950–59	67,227	205	3,848	7	194	71,481	457	156.414
1960–69	80,025	302	3,828	4	295	84,454	499	169.246
1970–72	28,544	102	1,352	1	89	30,088	178	169.034

Data Source: Baseball–Reference.com

Hit by Pitch

1) The American Association in 1884 was the first to adopt the rule that if a batter is hit by a pitched ball that he can't avoid, then he is awarded his base by the umpire.
2) The National League did not record hit by pitch from 1897 to 1908.
3) The American League did not record hit by pitch from 1903 to 1908.

Sacrifice Flies

1) Sacrifice flies were not recorded from 1871 to 1907.
2) Sacrifice flies from 1908 to 1930 and in 1939 were counted but not differentiated from sacrifice hits.
3) Sacrifice flies from 1940 to 1953 were not counted.

Figure 5. Non-Pitchers Plate Appearances per Home Run 1871–1972

Years	At Bats	Sacrifice Flies	Walks	Intentional Walks	Hit By Pitch	Total Plate Appearances	Home Runs	Plate Appearances per Home Run
1871–79	143,322	–	2,743	–	–	146,065	344	424.608
1880–89	551,379	–	141,504	–	3,236	696,119	3,515	198.042
1890–99	592,904	–	57,732	–	7,433	658,069	4,424	148.750
1900–09	679,294	–	52,037	–	6,938	738,269	2,914	253.352
1910–19	797,088	–	73,634	–	6,939	877,661	4,337	202.366
1920–29	772,348	–	70,650	–	4,920	847,918	9,543	88.852
1930–39	786,135	–	76,048	–	3,509	865,692	12,886	67.181
1940–49	776,143	–	83,985	–	3,269	863,397	12,693	68.022
1950–59	776,260	3,879	84,361	3,624	4,594	872,718	20,402	42.776
1960–69	1,000,307	7,418	96,218	10,395	6,696	1,121,034	25,670	43.671
1970–72	358,968	2,758	36,638	4,237	2,308	404,909	8,648	46.821

Data Source: Baseball–Reference.com

Hit by Pitch

1) The American Association in 1884 was the first to adopt the rule that if a batter is hit by a pitched ball that he can't avoid, then he is awarded his base by the umpire.
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come to the plate they are absolutely a dead loss; gum up the play; gum up the action."[16] He went on to substantiate his claim when he said: "In looking over the averages, I have taken our League, and I am pretty sure it is true of the other League, out of the lowest 51, 47 were pitchers. The year before 57 out of 62 were pitchers."[17]

Sam Breadon, majority owner of the St. Louis Cardinals, agreed with Heydler in principle but did not like the idea of the extra hitter because it would create more specialists. He stated "We have a specialist now, he is the pitcher."[18] Instead, he proposed: "I do think if we could give the manager the choice of whether he would have his pitcher hit each time at bat, or he can pass that time and let it go to the next man, that would eliminate that dead end of the ball game."[19]

After the matter was discussed, Commissioner Landis asked for a motion. Clark Griffith, owner of the Washington Nationals of the American League, made the following motion: "I move it be tabled."[20]

HARTFORD DAILY TIMES

A 1929 editorial cartoon ridiculing Heydler's "tenth man" idea, showing the dejected pitcher heading back to the bench, muttering "coises" (curses), and the hitter saying the only job "easier than this is Christmas tree decorators."

It may have been a tabled motion, but it did receive publicity during that winter's "Hot Stove League." The cartoon opposite is from the *Hartford Daily Times*.[21]

Griffith aside, there was some support at the time for Heydler's idea. Though the idea was tabled, several National League managers indicated that they would try the "ten-man rule" on their own during spring training games. Heydler advised the teams not to do so. He stated that if pitchers were to bat during the regular season, it would be important for them to bat during the spring to get ready.[22]

Future Hall of Fame pitcher Walter Johnson had voiced his approval for the rule change in the year prior to Heydler's "discussion" at the joint meeting of the major leagues.[23] Johnson wasn't really a bad hitting pitcher. He slugged 24 home runs with a .235 batting average in his 21-year major league career.[24]

Even though his motion was not taken up by the owners, Heydler remained a staunch advocate of the DH concept. He indicated that he was waiting for the right time to present it to the major league rules committee again.[25] However, it appears Mr. Heydler never found that right time, because he never again "pitched" the idea.

The subject of the DH lay dormant during the 1930s. The concept was again reported by *The Sporting News* in its "Caught on the Fly" column in the January 2, 1941, issue:

> A long discussed experiment—elimination of the pitcher as a batter—will be given its first test next spring in state tournaments to be conducted by the National Semi-Pro Baseball Congress. … The proposal provides for use of a pinch-hitter each time for the pitcher, without removing the hurler from the game. Advocates contend the change would speed up play and by assuring pitchers of a rest after each inning, the hurling would be strengthened and at the same time the weak end of the batting order would be bolstered.[26]

This sounds familiar even today, doesn't it?

THE DH BECOMES AN AMERICAN LEAGUE REALITY

Nothing came of the 1941 experiment and the concept again went into hibernation until the 1960s when pitching had become the King of Baseball. American League batters only had a .230 batting average in 1968 and Carl Yastrzemski led the league with a .301 average. The good hitters were not "stacked up" in the National League as they hit only marginally better than their AL counterparts. In fact, there were only six batters who batted .300 or better in both major leagues. The powers that be in major league baseball realized that fans liked to see good hitting more than good pitching. In an effort to revitalize the sport, the International League, a Class AAA minor league, started using the DH in its games in 1969. Before long, four other minor leagues were

trying it also, but at the conclusion of the experiment, the American and National leagues could not agree on its implementation. The American League voted in favor of the rule change while the National voted against it. A compromise was agreed upon: the American League would use the Designated Hitter for three seasons beginning in 1973. After that trial period, both leagues would either employ the DH in their games or return to the pitcher being a hitter.

After the three-year experimental period, the American League didn't want to abandon the DH. The reason was simple according to John Thorn, official Historian of Major League Baseball: increased offense meant higher attendance in the American League.[27] Regardless, the National League still didn't want to adopt the DH rule.

LIVING WITH THE AL AND NL SPLIT

This arrangement didn't present a problem during the season since there was no interleague play prior to 1997, except for the All-Star Game and the World Series. During the Fall Classic, everything—and I do mean, everything—around the game is magnified to the utmost degree. The DH Rule is no exception. MLB has made three attempts to reconcile the difference between the two leagues for World Series play. The first attempt was to deny "the revolution" and the DH was not utilized at all during the World Series from 1973 through 1975. Conservative-minded baseball management probably figured that this would be a three-year experiment and then just go away. Baseball purists didn't want to tinker with the Fall Classic for the sake of an experiment in only one league.

But once the American League decided to keep the DH, it was necessary for baseball to recognize that fact. A compromise was hatched that would do so but also acknowledge the National League's way of doing things: the creation of what could be termed The Even-Odd Era from 1976 through 1985. In this era, the DH was employed in the World Series during the even-numbered years and the pitchers hit for themselves in the odd-numbered years. Many felt that this gave an advantage to the American League teams in the even-numbered years and the National League teams in the odd-numbered years.

The next compromise was what could be called The "When In Rome, Do As The Romans Do" Era. It began in 1986 and is still in place to the present day. When a World Series game is played in the American League stadium, the DH is allowed, and when a game is played in the National League stadium, the DH Rule is not followed.

When interleague play started in the 1997 season, the major leagues adopted this same methodology to keep consistency in the game with regard to the DH issue. Any other decision would have probably caused more debate and friction between the two leagues.

Even though the DH was used in World Series games beginning in 1976, the DH was not utilized in the All-Star game until 1989. The only reason that can be surmised is that the pitcher was usually pinch hit for anyway in the All-Star Game. More players could get in the game pinch hitting for the pitcher than utilizing a fixed DH. Pitchers from both leagues who batted in All-Star games from 1973 through 1988 went 0-for-16 with 11 strikeouts.

The DH was first utilized in the 1989 All-Star game under the same "When in Rome" rule that MLB used in World Series play. The first DH in an All-Star game was a National Leaguer, Pedro Guerrero, and the first American League DH was Harold Baines. These two players were exact opposites as far as hitting was concerned! While Guerrero was the first actual DH in an All-Star Game, it was also his first appearance as a DH in any major league game. To further add to the DH lore, he came to bat again in that game which was his last appearance as a DH in the major leagues. Baines, on the other hand, was a DH frequently during his career. In fact, he had 6,618 plate appearances as a DH, second only to David Ortiz.

The "When in Rome" rule was in effect for the 1989 through 2009 All-Star Games. During that period, pitchers hit a dismal .111 (1 for 9). The DHs did better, hitting .266 (21 for 79). However, the hits were not evenly distributed between the two leagues. The American League hit for higher average at .297 (11 for 37), while the National League DHs batted .238 (10 for 42).

Beginning with the 2010 All-Star Game, the DH is used in every All-Star Game, regardless of whether the game is played in an American or National League park. During this current era, DHs haven't really been yielding hot bats. Through the 2016 All-Star Game, the National League has hit for higher average than the American League. National League DHs have batted .222 (6 for 27) while American League DHs have managed only a paltry .125 (3 for 24).

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE DH?

The provision in the DH Rule that states that a team does not have to have a DH raises an interesting point. At the end of the three-year experimental period, 1973 through 1975, it was possible that the DH was going to be adopted for all Organized Baseball. If that were so, the key was whether the wording of the rule would

remain the same. If it did, the National League could have "their cake and eat it too!' The wording of the rule left the use of the DH up to the club and/or manager.[28] Since the National League was totally against the use of the DH, the wording of the rule made life easy for the teams in the league—they could just choose not to use the DH. It was that plain and that simple. So, what was decided? The classification of the designated hitter rule was changed from "experimental" to "optional." This meant that any league can adopt the DH by a majority vote of its members. When it was "experimental," it required a 75% majority to adopt it.[29]

The last vote by the National League to adopt the DH was conducted during baseball's summer meeting of 1980. It was 5 votes against, 4 in favor and 3 abstentions. The abstentions counted as no votes, so the National League didn't adopt the DH. It is interesting to note that an owner's fishing trip may have affected the vote.[30]

There is one thing that has definitely intensified over the forty-plus years since Ron Blomberg stepped into the batter's box on that April day in 1973. The debate whether the DH should be a part of the game has gotten stronger. In the past year, there has been a change in the thinking of the National League with regard to the adoption of DH. This is based upon two factors. The first is a decline in offense which seems to be a recurring factor. Remember that the DH was introduced in the American League in 1973 to counter the decline in offense during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Secondly, there have been costly injuries to high profile and highly paid pitchers, like Adam Wainwright, while batting.

The DH debate really heated up during 2016 as a result of three things that have occurred, involving the Commissioner, the fans, and players.

First, Commissioner Rob Manfred indicated at the January 2016 quarterly owners meeting that the DH could be adopted by the National League as early as the 2017 season. A week later he backtracked and stated that NL pitchers will likely continue to take their turn at bat for the foreseeable future.[31]

Second, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown created a new exhibit this past year, Whole New Ballgame, using interactive touchscreens to address several issues dealing with today's game. One of the issues is the DH. The Hall of Fame is using Twitter to create a dialog for it. The Hall tells people to "Use #IThinkTheDH, #yesDH or #noDH to tell us why the DH is good or bad for the major leagues."[32] A review of the tweets shows that fans seem to be evenly divided on this issue. For every fan that says the National League should adopt the DH for uniformity between the leagues, another fan will argue that the American League should abolish the DH and go back to the National League way of things. To cloud the issue even further, another fan will favor keeping the current setup.

Lastly, San Francisco Giants pitcher Madison Bumgarner lobbied to enter the Home Run Derby at the All-Star Game festivities in San Diego. Bumgarner is among the best-hitting pitchers in the major leagues at the current time. At this time of this writing, he leads all active pitchers with 14 career home runs. This total places him 21st on the list of career home runs by a pitcher (since 1913). Bumgarner is already a World Series hero and has become one of the premier pitchers in baseball today. So, why his fascination with hitting and entering the Home Run Derby? Perhaps Glenn Stout offered a good explanation in his book *The Selling of the Babe* when he wrote:

> Hitting a baseball square and then watching it go over a fence is almost transcendent. Once experienced, it is never forgotten. Pitching, for all the power and authority one can feel while blowing a fastball past a hitter, doesn't offer the same return. Its joys are primarily cumulative. Of all sports, the feeling that comes from hitting a home run is singular, and in baseball, particularly hitting, which includes so much inherent failure, so much that is dependent on the ball finding space between fielders, only the smacking of a long home run, which renders everyone else on the field irrelevant, seems to justify all the previous disappointments.[33]

Back and forth the DH debate will be ongoing. As John Thorn stated, "The subject will keep percolating, which is the way some folks like it."[34] So this aspect of the game, which has created two distinct styles of baseball, the American League and the National League, will be with the National Pastime for the foreseeable future. ■

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The Stallings Platoon

The 1913 Prequel

Bryan Soderholm-Difatte

The Fall 2014 issue of *The Baseball Research Journal* included the article, "The 1914 Stallings Platoon: Assessing Execution, Impact, and Strategic Philosophy," in which I noted that, while "1914 is considered the baseline year for platooning" because of the compelling narrative of Boston's "Miracle" Braves, it seemed quite likely that Braves' manager George Stallings also platooned in his outfield the previous year—1913, his first year in charge. At the time the article was written, 1914 was the earliest year for which the starting lineups and box scores for every game of the season, compiled by Retrosheet researchers, were available on the websites Retrosheet and Baseball-Reference.com. The judgment that Stallings probably also had an outfield platoon in 1913 was based on an analysis of gross Retrosheet data on position games played by Braves players relative to the number of games started against them by left-handed pitchers.[1]

Now, however, thanks to the painstaking work of Retrosheet researchers, comprehensive data on the starting lineups for every game in the 1911 (NL only), 1912, and 1913 seasons are now available.[2] This newly available information allows a definitive assessment that not only did Stallings in fact begin platooning in 1913, several other managers did so as well. Moreover, the 1911 and 1912 data indicate that 1913—and not any year earlier[3]—was the first time that platooning lefty and righty batters for a significant portion of the season depending on the handedness of the opposing starting pitcher was done on a systematic basis in the major leagues, although only by a few clubs.[4]

POSITION-PLAYER SUBSTITUTIONS FORESHADOW PLATOONING

As noted in my previous article, players and managers already understood that left-handed batters had an advantage against right-handed pitchers and vice versa. John McGraw was the first manager to work that concept into a game strategy by his willingness to pinch hit even for his starting position players for the lefty-righty (or righty-lefty) advantage at critical moments of the game. Other managers followed his lead, although he employed the tactic far more often. From 1903—McGraw's first full season managing the Giants—the number of position-player substitutions in the major leagues began to increase every year, mostly pinch-hitters or, sometimes, pinch-runners who then required a defensive replacement (see Table "Position Player Substitutions, 1903–12"). By 1912, the number of in-game position-player substitutions over the course of a major league season tripled from an average of 23 per team in 1903 to 69 per team.[5] Catchers were swapped out far more often than other position players because many were weak hitters, slow on the bases, or as a result of the taxing physical demands and injury risks they faced. Every year from 1908 to 1912, McGraw's position-player substitutions were more than double the major league average.

Notwithstanding the value of "playing the percentages" by substituting for the alternate-side-of-the-plate advantage at a pivotal moment, the validity of platooning as a concept for determining starting lineups still remained to be seen. Theoretically, it made sense, but whether it was a practical option over the course

Position-Player Substitutions, 1903–12*

	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912
McGraw	44	48	55	52	56	88	96	112	136	163
NL average	25	29	27	29	32	40.5	45	54.5	71.5	75
AL average	21	23	26	36	41	46	49	50.5	57.5	63
MLB average	23	26	26	32.5	36.5	43	47	52.5	64.5	69

*Calculated from Retrosheet data as follows: 1) Total games played minus total games pitched equals total games by position players. 2) Total games started minus pitching starts equals total games started by eight position players. 3) Position-player substitutions equal the difference between total games by position players and total games started by eight position players. 4) NL and AL averages are total position-player substitutions for the league divided by eight teams, and the major league average is total position-player substitutions divided by 16 teams.

of a long season was an open question. Managers had always assumed the importance of position-player stability in the starting lineup—seven infielders and outfielders who could be relied upon day in and day out, and a pair of catchers because of the position's rigors and risks—and McGraw was no different. All self-respecting position players wanted to play every day, and the regulars expected to be in the lineup every day regardless of who was pitching for the other team. When there were changes in the starting lineup, they were rarely day-to-day with different players being tested out, and certainly not with respect to the day's opposing starting pitchers; the replacement position player almost always was in the lineup for an extended period of at least weeks until the established regular was back in action after an injury, he himself was injured, or he proved not up to the job, paving the way for another player to be tried at the position.

However, as suggested in my article two years ago, platooning in starting lineups was ultimately inevitable, probably sooner than later. "An argument can be made," I wrote then, "that platooning two players (or sometimes more, as Stallings did in 1914) at the same position to take advantage of a right-handed/left-handed split became institutionalized by the collective wisdom of managers observing and learning from each other and becoming more strategic in their thinking." The fact that six managers platooned in 1913—the year before the "Miracle" Braves—suggests that judgment was probably correct. Rather than platooning being the brainchild of Stallings alone, it seems instead to have been a strategy whose time had come, then if not sooner. It was a logical outgrowth of the trend toward managers increasingly being willing to replace a starting position player at a critical juncture in the game, mostly to gain a batter-pitcher advantage by pinch hitting for him.

WHO STALLINGS PLATOONED IN 1913

The Boston Braves were a terrible team when George Stallings took over in 1913. They had suffered through four consecutive years not only finishing dead last in the National League, but losing 100 or more games each season. Second baseman Bill Sweeney, third baseman Art Devlin—who had mostly played out of position at first base and shortstop in 1912 for the Braves so that Ed McDonald could play third—and right fielder John Titus were the only holdovers of the regulars from the previous year in Stallings's plans for the 1913 season.[6] It is not apparent Stallings planned to platoon at any position when the season started.

Stallings had settled on left-handed-batting rookie Joe Connolly to be his everyday left fielder, but it soon became clear that Connolly was struggling, particularly against southpaws. Starting in all but two of the Braves' first 21 games and batting third in the lineup, Connolly's batting average was down to .184, and his on-base average was just .253. The Braves had faced a left-handed starting pitcher in six of their first 21 games, and Connolly was in Stallings's starting lineup in all of them. He had collected just 3 hits in his 24 at bats in those games, however, for a wholly inadequate .125 batting average. Connolly's average against righties was not much better at .212. With the Cardinals sending lefty Slim Sallee to the mound against his team on May 12, and probably well aware that Connolly was hitless in 16 at bats the last four times the Braves had faced a left-handed starter, Stallings decided to start right-handed-batting Wilson Collins in left field instead. Beginning a pattern that would be clearly evident in the box scores that year, as well as in the Braves' 1914 "miracle" season, Stallings brought in Connolly to finish the game in left field after Sallee was replaced by a right-handed reliever.

From then through July 22, Connolly started just three of the 17 games a southpaw took the mound against the Braves, and all 49 games when a right-hander did. He batted .344 in those 52 games—raising his batting average to .298—and hit the first five home runs of his career. When facing a lefty starter, Stallings replaced Connolly in the starting lineup with the right-handed-batting Bris Lord, a veteran in the last year of a playing career spent mostly as a reserve outfielder for the Philadelphia Athletics. Lord batted just .245 (12-for-49) in his 12 starts as the right-handed half of the left field platoon, and .198 overall in 36 games—including seven starts in right field, five of which were against right-handed starting pitchers.

A season-ending injury to John Titus on July 17, however, forced Stallings to use both Connolly and Lord every day for the next six weeks. Connolly started in five of the seven games a left-handed pitcher took the mound for the other team with 3 hits in 17 at bats (.176) in the time between Titus's injury and August 21.[7] By then the Braves had acquired another left-handed-batting outfielder of promise, Tommy Griffith, which allowed Stallings to platoon in both left and right, starting the lefty-swinging Connolly and Griffith against right-handers and the righties Lord and Les Mann against southpaws the rest of the season. Mann had been the Braves' center fielder but was displaced by the left-handed-batting Guy Zinn when he joined the Braves about the same time as Griffith.[8] In the 42

games the Braves played after August 20, Connolly did not start any in which a southpaw took the mound against his team.

All told, Connolly played 126 games in his rookie year, starting in 115 of the 140 games the Braves played before he was forced to sit out the remainder of the season because of an injury. The Braves faced off against a southpaw pitcher in 36 of those games before he got hurt, in which Connolly was in the starting lineup 14 times. He batted just .180 with 9 hits in 50 at bats in those 14 starts, which included all of the hits he collected off any right-handed relievers who might have been brought into those games.[9] In the 101 games he started against right-handed pitchers, Connolly hit for a much better .303 average. Again indicative of the pattern clearly established the next season, Stallings often removed him from the game in favor of a right-handed-hitting outfielder if a left-handed reliever was brought in; Connolly was in at the end of only 100 of the 115 games he started.

For the middle part of the 1913 season, Stallings also platooned at third base. The right-handed-batting Art Devlin, returning to his familiar position, began the year as Stallings's everyday third baseman, playing in all except four of the first 50 games, but as of June 15 he was batting just .230. His batting splits must have been revealing to Stallings—a neat .300 in the 13 games the Braves faced a southpaw starter, but only .205 when a right-hander took the mound against Boston—even if he didn't know or have access to the specific statistical data. Stallings found such a low batting average difficult to stomach even for someone batting in the bottom third of the order, and since he happened to have sitting on his bench a left-handed-hitting infielder who could play third base named Tex McDonald, the Braves' manager decided to see how each would fare in a platoon role.[10]

A part-time shortstop for Cincinnati as a rookie the previous year, McDonald had spent most of his first month in Boston on the bench after arriving in an early May trade, used almost exclusively as a pinch hitter. Given the opportunity to start eight games in the beginning of June, substituting for either Devlin at third or Bill Sweeney at second when they were nursing various aches and pains, McDonald batted .323. That was sufficiently impressive to Stallings that for the next month—June 16 to July 16—he started McDonald at third in the Braves' 22 games against righties and Devlin in the 9 games that a southpaw started for the other team. McDonald batted a robust .405 in those games, while Devlin batted .310 in his starts. McDonald appeared in three games replacing Devlin when a lefty reliever came in, without a hit; Devlin had just one hit in 11 at bats as a position substitute for McDonald when a left-handed reliever got the call.

Notwithstanding that both McDonald and Devlin were hitting well in their platoon roles, beginning on July 17, Stallings turned to right-handed-batting Fred Smith, a rookie, to play third the rest of the way, regardless of who the starting pitcher was.[11] Smith was batting just .200 in 24 games when Stallings put him into the starting lineup to stay on July 17. He went on an 11-game hitting-streak, including three 3-hit games, to end the month batting .302. Smith ended the year batting .228, including .230 in games a right-hander took the mound and .222 in the games when he had the presumed platoon advantage against a southpaw starting pitcher. After Smith became the regular third baseman, Devlin made just four more starts for the Braves—two against right-handers—before being released on August 25. McDonald started just three times at third base after July 15, once against a lefty, and did not play again after going 2-for-4 as the starting third baseman on August 28.[12] For full breakdown of the 1913 Braves platoons by starting pitcher handedness, see the tables on page 18.

THE FIVE OTHER TEAMS THAT ALSO PLATOONED

George Stallings was not the first manager to try platooning in the 1913 season. In Brooklyn, manager Bill Dahlen opened the season with right-handed-batting rookie Benny Meyer in right field, but getting just two hits in his first 19 at bats, Meyer lost his job after five games. For the next seven weeks, Dahlen opted for the left-handed-batting Herbie Moran in games started by right-handers and the right-handed-batting John Hummel against southpaws. Moran was a regular in the Brooklyn outfield in 1912, his first true season in the big leagues after having played a smattering of games from 1908 to 1910, and Hummel had been with Brooklyn since 1905, playing as a day-to-day regular in both the outfield and infield from 1908 to 1911. The Moran-Hummel platoon ended in early June when Dahlen decided to go with Moran as his regular right fielder the rest of the year. In the 21 games he started against righties while being platooned, Moran's batting average was .235, while Hummel batted .290 in his 14 starts when a southpaw took the mound against the Superbas (as the Dodgers were then called). For the season, during which he also started 23 games in the infield regardless of who was pitching, Hummel was a far better hitter when he had the platoon advantage, batting .327 against lefties and only

1913 BOSTON BRAVES PLATOONS

NOTE: For all tables on 1913 platoons, the at bats* and batting average* splits are for the entirety of games started by right-handed or left-handed pitchers and do not account separately for at bats against relief pitchers, if any, whether right-handed or left-handed. At bats* and batting average* splits vs. left-handed starting pitchers and vs. right-handed starting pitchers also include games into which the player was a pinch hitter or position substitute after the opposing team brought in a reliever who threw from the opposite side of the day's starting pitcher.

1913 Boston Braves Outfield Platoons: May 12 – July 23 and August 19 – October 3

		When Platooned			1913 Season Totals		
For Specified Dates of Outfield Platoons	**Opposing Starter**	**GS**	**AB***	**BA***	**GS**	**%AB***	**BA***
Joe Connolly, LHB (LF)	v RHSP	66	241	.328	101	.84	.303
[May 12 – July 23, and	v LHSP	3	9	.333	14	.16	.164
August 28-September 21]	Total	69	250	.328	115	1.00	.281
Bris Lord, RHB (OF)	v LHSP	26	130	.200	30	.49	.261
[May 12 – July 17, and	v RHSP	7	30	.300	20	.51	.242
August 19 – October 3]	Total	33	160	.219	50	1.00	.251
Tommy Griffith, LHB (RF)	v RHSP	33	121	.231	33	.95	.231
[August 19 – October 3]	v LHSP	0	6	.667	0	.05	.667
	Total	33	127	.252	33	1.00	.252
Les Mann, RHB, (OF)	v LHSP	11	46	.196	36	.33	.259
[August 28 – October 3]	v RHSP	11	43	.209	74	.67	.250
	Total	11	89	.202	110	1.00	.253

1913 Boston Braves Third-Base Platoon: June 16 – July 16

		When Platooned			1913 Season Totals		
For Specified Dates of 3B Platoons	**Opposing Starter**	**GS**	**AB***	**BA***	**GS**	**%AB***	**BA***
Tex McDonald, LHB	v RHSP	22	74	.405	32	.90	.364
[June 16 – July 16]	v LHSP	0	4	.000	2	.10	.267
	Total	22	78	.385	34	1.00	.355
Art Devlin, RHB	v LHSP	9	29	.310	23	.35	.301
[June 16 – July 16]	v RHSP	0	11	.091	36	.65	.190
	Total	9	40	.250	59	1.00	.228

.160 against righties with almost exactly the same number of at bats.

Miller Huggins, in his first year as manager of the St. Louis Cardinals and their second baseman besides, also began platooning in late April, about two weeks before Stallings decided on his left-field platoon. Twelve games into the season, Cardinals right fielder Steve Evans—a regular in their lineup since 1909—was hurt on a fielding play, and Huggins decided to alternate veteran left-handed-batting Jimmy Sheckard in right field with rookie Ted Cather, a right-handed batter, depending on whether a righty or a lefty took the mound for the other team.[13] Huggins's decision to platoon might have been influenced by his being a switch-hitter, so he personally would have known the benefits of batting from the other side of the plate from the pitcher's throwing arm. The Cardinals' outfield platoon ended once Evans was back in action, perhaps because neither Sheckard nor Cather hit particularly well in their starts; three of Cather's 12 hits came in games he entered to replace Sheckard when the opposing team switched from the right-handed starting pitcher to a lefty reliever.[14] The left-handed-batting Evans for the season predictably had more trouble in the 17 games he started against southpaws (.217 batting average), compared to what he hit (.261 batting average) in his 45 starts against righties.

An injury to New York Giants third baseman Buck Herzog in late May paved the way for John McGraw,

the master of in-game moves for tactical advantage, to try platooning. Herzog had started every one of the Giants' first 35 games and was batting .258 when he got hurt and was limited to primarily a pinch-hitting role the next 27 games, starting just twice. McGraw made Tillie Shafer his third baseman during Herzog's extended absence from the lineup from May 29 to June 26, knowing it would be a seamless transition; Shafer had started 18 of the Giants' first 22 games as a substitute for Larry Doyle at second and Art Fletcher at shortstop when either was hurt, and 11 of the next 13 in center field because Fred Snodgrass was hurt and struggling. Shafer was batting .252 filling in for those guys, and responded to yet another change of position by batting .342 in the 27 games he started in place of Herzog.

By the time Herzog was finally ready to return full-time to the Giants' starting lineup, McGraw had decided to platoon the two men at third. From then until the end of July, when Shafer was once again needed to fill in for Doyle at second base, McGraw platooned the two men at third base. The switch-hitting Shafer, batting from the left side, started the next 27 games in which a right-hander took the mound for the other team, batting .320 in those starts. The right-handed Herzog started just 8 games from June 26 to July 30, all but one against a southpaw, batting .281 in those starts. Except for whenever Shafer was needed to substitute for Doyle at second base or for one of the outfielders, which gave Herzog starting time against right-handers, McGraw continued his third base platoon for the rest of the year. Ironically, Herzog's .341 batting average in his 19 starts against right-handed pitchers after returning from his injury was much better than the .257 he batted in his 18 starts against southpaws. McGraw did not platoon Shafer and Herzog in the 1913 World Series, perhaps only because he used the versatile Shafer in center field to replace Snodgrass, who was hobbled by a leg injury.[15]

Chicago Cubs manager Johnny Evers, who like Huggins was a first-year player-manager, also used a platoon in 1913, but the position where he alternated a left-handed batter with a righty depending on the day's opposing starting pitcher was his own—second base. Evers did not do so routinely, however, and did not begin excusing himself—a left-handed batter—from the starting lineup in games started by left-handers with frequency until late July. Johnny Evers was then playing in his twelfth major league season. Officially listed as weighing only 125 pounds at 5-foot-9 (which was an average height for American-born males in those days), the scrawny Evers was undoubtedly worn down and beaten up by years of playing a middle infield position, including takeout slides by baserunners. Personally finding left-handers particularly hard to hit this year—he batted just .190 in games against them, compared to .314 when a right-hander took the mound—if Evers was going to give himself a day off during the season, especially as the summer dragged on and the Cubs dropped out of contention, it was going to be against southpaw starters. Evers used right-handed-batting infielder Art Phelan in his stead when he did not start. Phelan, who also filled in at third base when Heinie Zimmerman was unable to play, batted much better against southpaws (.272), as might have been expected, than righties (.219).

Evers's platooning of himself, however, was more episodic than consistent. It was not until the end of July, when the Cubs were 16 games behind and just two games above .500, that he began doing so on a more regular basis. Up till then he had started in 84 of his team's first 91 games, including 27 of the 32 times a lefty started against the Cubs in which he batted just .192, compared to .296 in the games he started against right-handers.[16] In the remaining 25 games the Cubs faced a southpaw in 1913, Phelan started 13 games at second base and Evers started himself 12 times.[17] For the year, Johnny Evers started himself in all but three of the 98 games where a right-hander took the mound against the Cubs and in 39 of the 57 games when the opposing starting pitcher was a southpaw.

Over in the American League, Philadelphia Athletics manager Connie Mack started platooning the left-handed-batting Eddie Murphy and the right-handed-hitting Jimmy Walsh in right field on June 11. There was no obvious reason for Mack to do so. Murphy had started in all but one of his team's first 47 games and was batting .275 at the time, and in the 10 games where the Athletics had faced a southpaw, his .273 batting average was nearly as good as what he hit against righties.[18] He had endured a two-week, 11-game stretch in mid-May when he batted only .190, but Mack kept him in the lineup and Murphy had recovered to bat .333 in the next 15 games when suddenly his manager decided on a right-field platoon. Walsh, who had started 13 of the 23 games he had so far played as a temporary replacement for center fielder Amos Strunk in early May, was batting just .211. For six weeks from June 25 to August 1, Murphy started each of the 28 games where a right-hander took the mound against the Athletics and made the most of his platoon advantage by batting .366—including 1-for-1 in a game he entered after a right-hander was brought in to relieve the lefty starting pitcher—and none

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Johnny Evers (left) on the Braves in 1914 with his manager, George Stallings (right). As player-manager of the Cubs in 1913, Evers took himself out of the lineup against left-handers, but George Stallings (right) used handedness substitutions in the Braves' lineup regularly for strategic advantage starting in 1913.

against lefties, while Walsh and veteran right-handed-hitting outfielder Danny Murphy, not only nearing the end of a career that began in 1900, but trying to make a comeback from a devastating knee injury the previous year, each started eight games in right field against southpaws. Although both Walsh and Danny Murphy hit much better against pitchers who threw from the opposite side they hit, Eddie Murphy was back to being Mack's full-time right-fielder for the rest of the season after August 2, irrespective of the starting pitcher. Ironically, after being put back in the lineup on an everyday basis, Murphy batted poorly in his 19 starts against lefties (.192), but quite well (.325) in his 31 starts against right-handers.

That the Philadelphia Athletics were the only American League team to try platooning during the 1913 season is consistent with the fact that since 1911 the AL also lagged far behind the National League when it came to in-game position-player substitutions. While the average number of position-player substitutions because of pinch hitting and the subsequent need for a defensive replacement, or making a defensive change when the other team brought in a new pitcher in anticipation of future at bats, increased from 54.5 per team in the National League in 1910 to an average of 73 per team the next two years, there was only a modest increase in the American League from an average of 50.5 per team to 60 in 1911 and 1912. In 1913, the National League's team average of 107 position-player substitutions exceeded the AL average of 73 by nearly 50 percent. Following in McGraw's wake of using his bench strategically during games, National League managers seem to have been more comfortable with taking the next step of seeking a batter-pitcher advantage from the very beginning of the game. It is

1913 BROOKLYN SUPERBAS RIGHT FIELD PLATOON: APRIL 21 – JUNE 5

		When Platooned			1913 Season Totals		
For Specified Dates of RF Platoon	**Opposing Starter**	**GS**	**AB***	**BA***	**GS**	**%AB***	**BA***
Herbie Moran, LHB	v RHSP	21	81	.235	91	.72	.272
[April 21 – June 5]	v LHSP	2	5	.200	37	.28	.252
	Total	23	86	.233	128	1.00	.266
John Hummel, RHB	v LHSP	14	62	.290	23	.49	.327
[April 21 – June 5,	v RHSP	3	13	.231	22	.51	.160
includes 2 starts at 1B	Total	17	75	.280	45	1.00	.242
and 2 at 2B]							

1913 ST. LOUIS CARDINALS RIGHT FIELD PLATOON: APRIL 27 – JUNE 12

		When Platooned			1913 Season Totals		
For Specified Dates of RF Platoon	**Opposing Starter**	**GS**	**AB***	**BA***	**GS**	**%AB***	**BA***
Jimmy Sheckard, LHB	v RHSP	25	89	.236	57	.78	.193
[April 27 – June 12]	v LHSP	1	3	.333	13	.22	.200
	Total	26	92	.239	70	1.00	.194
Ted Cather, RHB	v LHSP	13	35	.229	35	.62	.193
[April 27 – June 12]	v RHSP	0	13	.308	14	.38	.246
	Total	13	48	.250	49	1.00	.213

1913 NEW YORK GIANTS THIRD BASE PLATOON: JUNE 26 – OCTOBER 4

		When Platooned			1913 Season Totals		
For Specified Dates of 3B Platoon	**Opposing Starter**	**GS**	**AB***	**BA***	**GS**	**%AB***	**BA***
Tillie Shafer, as LHB (at 3B)	v RHSP	53	191	.293	112	.84	.289
[June 26 – October 4]	v LHSP	1 (RHB)	3	.333	21	.16	.277
	Total	54	194	.293	133	(RHB)1.00	.287
Buck Herzog, RHB	v LHSP	18	70	.257	29	.39	.241
[June 26 – October 4]	v RHSP	19	91	.341	45	.61	.315
	Total	37	161	.304	74	1.00	.286

NOTE: 1913 season totals for Tillie Shafer include all of the games he was in the starting lineup. The versatile Tillie Shafer started a total of 80 games at third base, 24 at second base as an injury-replacement for Larry Doyle (himself, a left-handed batter), 15 games at shortstop as an injury-replacement for Art Fletcher, and 14 games in the outfield, mostly as an injury-replacement for Fred Snodgrass. The switch-hitting Shafer presumably batted right-handed in his starts against lefties.

NOTE: 18 of the 19 games Buck Herzog started at third base against right-handed starting pitchers after returning full-time from his injury on June 26 were when McGraw started Shafer at second base or in the outfield.

1913 CHICAGO CUBS SECOND BASE PLATOON: JULY 27 – OCTOBER 5

		When Platooned			1913 Season Totals		
For Specified Dates of 2B Platoon	**Opposing Starter**	**GS**	**AB***	**BA***	**GS**	**%AB***	**BA***
Johnny Evers, LHB	v RHSP	38	135	.341	95	.76	.314
[July 27 – October 5]	v LHSP	12	32	.188	39	.24	.190
	Total	50	167	.311	134	1.00	.285
Art Phelan, RHB	v LHSP	16	71	.282	28	.56	.272
[July 27 – October 5,	v RHSP	5	33	.211	23	.44	.219
including 7 starts at 3B]	Total	21	109	.257	51	1.00	.249

1913 PHILADELPHIA ATHLETICS RIGHT FIELD PLATOON: JUNE 11 – AUGUST 1

		When Platooned			1913 Season Totals		
For Specified Dates of RF Platoon	**Opposing Starter**	**GS**	**AB***	**BA***	**GS**	**%AB***	**BA***
Eddie Murphy, LHB	v RHSP	33	132	.341	100	.76	.311
[June 11 – August 1]	v LHSP	2	11	.364	31	.24	.242
	Total	35	143	.343	131	1.00	.295
Jimmy Walsh, RHB	v LHSP	16	66	.273	41	.53	.280
[June 11 – August 1]	v RHSP	10	49	.265	34	.47	.227
	Total	26	115	.270	75	1.00	.255
Danny Murphy, LHB	v LHSP	7	23	.478	9	.63	.351
[June 11 – August 1]	v RHSP	0	7	.286	0	.37	.273
	Total	7	30	.433	9	1.00	.322

NOTE: Only 8 of Jimmy Walsh's 26 starts from June 11 to August 1 were in right field, all against left-handed starting pitchers. His 16 other starts were elsewhere in the outfield.

perhaps not surprising that Connie Mack was the only American League manager to platoon in 1913—and he did so for only a month and a half—since he had in recent years been making appreciably more position-player substitutions than the league average; in 1913, Mack made 81 position-player substitutions.

MATTERS OF CIRCUMSTANCE

None of the six clubs that platooned in 1913—Stallings's Braves included—began the season doing so. These managers could not be certain of the strategy's efficacy over the course of a full season and in every case except for Connie Mack's decision to platoon Eddie Murphy, circumstances forced them to experiment.

- **Brooklyn**: Manager Bill Dahlen concluding early on that rookie right fielder Benny Meyer was not ready for prime time.

- **St. Louis**: an early-season injury to right fielder Steve Evans.

- **Boston**: an early-season slump that Joe Connolly couldn't seem to shake, plus in June manager Stallings deciding that veteran third baseman Art Devlin was no longer a prime time player.

- **New York**: starting third baseman Buck Herzog getting hurt about one-fifth of the way into the season.

- **Chicago**: manager Johnny Evers deciding that one-and-the-same second baseman Johnny Evers was having so much trouble against left-handed pitching that it would be best if he play much less often when his team faced a southpaw.

With few exceptions, the players who were platooned in 1913 were either over-the-hill veterans like Jimmy Sheckard, Art Devlin, John Hummel, and Danny Murphy, or players with limited major league experience who went on to have relatively short or undistinguished journeyman careers.

- The Cardinals released 34-year-old Sheckard in mid-summer and, although he was picked up by Cincinnati, he retired after the season ended. Thirty-three-year-old Devlin was also released during the summer and likewise officially retired after the 1913 season. Hummel was 30 years old in 1913 and played just 126 games the next two years before disappearing into the minor leagues. And Danny Murphy, 36 years old, was cut by Connie Mack after the season and resurfaced in the Federal League for 52 games in 1914 and 5 in 1915 to end his big-league days.

- As for the young players or those lacking big-league experience, Tillie Shafer left the game after 1913 to go into the family business; the major league careers of Tex McDonald, Ted Cather, Herbie Moran, and Art Phelan came to an end in 1915; Joe Connolly's big-league career lasted until 1916; Jimmy Walsh's lasted until 1917. Eddie Murphy was a full-time regular in 1914 and 1915 before reverting to a primarily off-the-bench role for the remainder of a career that was basically over by 1920. Tommy Griffith stayed in the major leagues until 1925, mostly in a platoon role playing at barely above the level of performance that would be expected of a replacement-level player.

Two players who were platooned—some of the time—would ordinarily have been day-to-day regulars. Evers, probably feeling that as a player-manager he had enough to worry about without trying to hit left-handed pitching, gave himself 18 days off when a southpaw took the mound. Whatever Evers's difficulties against left-handers may have been in 1913—and there is no doubt he had trouble since he batted below .200 in games started by southpaws while batting over .300 in games when a righty took the mound—the next year when he was with the Braves, he was not platooned by Stallings. In 1914, Evers batted a respectable .244 in 47 starts against left-handers—the Braves faced a southpaw starting pitcher in 56 games—compared to .297 against right-handers, and he won the NL Chalmers Award as most valuable player for his role in Boston's "miracle" season.

The Giants' Buck Herzog, who got hurt while Shafer got hot and was platooned thereafter except when Shafer was asked to play another position, had a contentious relationship with manager McGraw.[19] There was no other year in his career after Herzog became established as a regular in 1910 that he was platooned. For the years that batting splits are available on Baseball-Reference.com—1913 till the end of his career in 1920—Herzog, a right-handed batter, actually hit for a higher batting average (.259) in games started by right-handed pitchers than he did (.246) when a southpaw took the mound. About three-quarters of the games he started were against right-handed pitchers.

ASSESSING STALLINGS'S ROLE

If 1913 was a year in which managers "experimented" with the concept of platooning, then it is instructive to note that George Stallings and Connie Mack were the only two managers whose platoon decisions seemed to be more a concerted strategy to play the percentages for advantage, rather than compensating at a position of weakness caused by injury or poor performance. Evers platooned for the percentages as well, but his was a unique case because he was the manager, and even after he became more committed to the concept he started himself nearly as often against southpaws as he did the right-handed Phelan. Either way, Evers-the-player almost certainly would not have been platooned by any other manager—he certainly wasn't by Stallings in 1914—and might have objected vociferously had any manager other than himself tried to platoon him.

McGraw's third-base platoon involving Shafer and Herzog seemed more experimental than necessarily strategic because both were capable of being everyday players against any pitcher, and indeed both often played different positions in the same game with Herzog at third and Shafer wherever else McGraw might have needed him. McGraw probably went with it because, since Shafer was playing so well, he had little to lose by trying out a third-base platoon.[20] Perhaps noteworthy is that McGraw made fewer position-player substitutions in 1913 (130) than the year before (163 in 1912) for the first time since 1906, suggesting both the advantage of Shafer, at whatever position he started, being a switch-hitter, and that platooning in his starting lineup sometimes made it unnecessary to pinch-hit or make a position substitution he might otherwise have at a critical moment later in the game.

Most revealing about Stallings, and indicative of his taking a more thoughtful and forward-looking approach than any of the other managers who used a lefty/righty split at any one position that year, was his decision to platoon Joe Connolly. Although he was already 29 because he had gotten a late start in the established minor leagues, the left-handed-batting Connolly was highly regarded when he came to Boston as a rookie in 1913.[21] He was expected to be an everyday player. When Connolly got off to a rough start, however, and seemed particularly flummoxed by left-handers, rather than benching him in favor of someone else, Stallings chose instead to limit his supposed-to-be-good-hitting outfielder to starts against right-handed pitchers. Connolly in fact was a regular in Stallings's lineup for the remainder of the 1913 season, and for the next three years as well—but only in games a right-hander took the mound against Boston, with very few exceptions. Once

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Left-handed Joe Connolly was benched by Stallings against left-handers, making only 19 of 322 career starts against them, and only 5 after 1913.

Stallings decided to platoon him, Connolly never got a chance in his four brief years with the Braves to prove he could hit left-handers.

Joe Connolly played his entire four-year major league career for the Boston Braves under George Stallings. Only 19 of his 322 career starts were against left-handers, just five after 1913. Stallings, however, inserted him into 48 other games that a southpaw started against Boston, almost always to get his dangerous bat into the game when a right-hander was brought in as a relief pitcher. Perhaps validating Stallings's apparent judgment that Connolly would not be successful against left-handed pitching, Connolly batted just .209 in the 67 career games he played that the Braves faced a southpaw starting pitcher, compared to .298 in games where the opposing team started a right-hander.

If 1913 was a proof of concept year for platooning, the payoff of such a strategy seemed to generate mostly a collective shrug. There does not appear to have been any meaningful attention brought to that particular lineup strategy, even if baseball writers were aware it was happening. But that is not necessarily surprising. It was, after all, just baseball. Moreover, most of the players involved in the 1913 experiments were over the hill or just getting started. A player who was being platooned was unlikely to be an impact player; if he was an impact player, he would have been an everyday starter. Among those platooned who

were closest to being impactful players, the veteran Evers and the rookie Connolly were both left-handed batters who would be in the starting lineup most days anyway because most pitchers were right-handed. Shafer's ability to play multiple positions had him starting somewhere most of the season, masking the fact that for much of that time he was actually part of a platoon. Herzog had endured an injury and started often enough when he was in fact being platooned because Shafer was in the lineup at some other position that it went largely unnoticed, if noticed at all, that he was frequently not in the lineup against right-handed starting pitchers. Proof of concept was almost certainly also undermined by players' resentment about being platooned. Herzog was known to be unhappy about his playing time, and it seems likely that so too was Eddie Murphy, perhaps causing Connie Mack to end his right-field platoon at the beginning of August.[22]

While Stallings was far from alone in trying out platooning as a starting lineup strategy in 1913, he was perhaps the most perceptive and committed as to its effectiveness. Of the six teams that platooned in 1913, only the Braves, Cardinals, and Giants did so in 1914, and neither Cardinals manager Huggins nor McGraw began the season with a platoon at any position.[23] Stallings by contrast was clearly sold on the value of platooning at positions of weakness. He did so in 1914 from the beginning of the season at both corner outfield positions, and eventually platooned his entire outfield. Had it not been for the stunning success of the Braves surging from last place on the Fourth of July to overtaking John McGraw's favored New York Giants in early September, winning the National League pennant decisively, and following up with the first four-game sweep of a World Series against Connie Mack's heavily-favored Philadelphia Athletics, "the concept would probably have remained relatively obscure until some team did win using a platoon system." That was a key judgment in my article on "The 1914 Stallings Platoon." It still seems a fair one. ■

Notes

1. Retrosheet's "regular season game logs" for 1913 at that time included the starting pitcher and opposing starter for each game, but did not include box scores because the research effort had yet to be completed. The Retrosheet page for each team, however, did include the total number of games played by each player and at every position. While the lack of box scores for Braves games in 1913 made it impossible to analyze Stallings' starting lineups specifically, the distribution of games by Braves outfielders in left, center, and right, combined with knowing which side of the plate each batted from and who the opposing starting pitchers were—including the number of games started by both righties and lefties—provided a basis for trying to determine whether Stallings platooned that year. My analysis at that time was based on correlating the number of specific games played by Braves' left-handed-hitting outfielders with the number of times left-handed pitchers started against them (and, of course, the other way around). It should be emphasized that in the absence of box scores, such indirect correlations would necessarily be imprecise, but they could nonetheless provide insight into whether or not Stallings was platooning in 1913.
2. Note that Baseball-Reference has not yet aggregated the starting line-ups for 1911 and 1912 for any team on its site. Since the data for 1911 and 1912 is not yet aggregated into easily-accessible game-by-game "starting line-up" data, I relied on Retrosheet's calculus of players' position games started + their complete games, and by cross-checking with box scores, I was able to determine that in every case where it looked like there might be a platoon, there was not. Players who did not hold down their position for the entire year were always in the starting line-up for big chunks of time.
3. As Tom Nawrocki points out in "Captain Anson's Platoon," *The National Pastime*, Issue #15 (Cleveland: Society for American Baseball Research, 1995), the small size of rosters would have been a hindrance to platooning in the nineteenth century. He suggests that Anson's splitting of playing time based on handedness may have been his way of solving the "problem" of overabundance of starting talent on his roster and that the practice did not extend beyond the 1886 season. Even after rosters grew in the first decade of the twentieth century, other than swapping in catchers, who could not catch every game, managers fielded their best players every day, while those on the bench were reserves in case of injury, not strategic advantage. The premium was still on fielding the best players, and for reasons of both pride and paydays—especially the money—no player in a starting role wanted any part of being systematically kept out of the line-up because of who was pitching for the other team. And all managers, including McGraw, preferred the certainties of a set daily line-up.
4. That comes with the caveat that in some prior years, teams that had both a left-handed-batting and right-handed-batting catcher would sometimes platoon them in the starting lineup, as the Giants' John McGraw did with Jack Warner, a lefty batter, and Frank Bowerman, a righty, for much of 1903 and 1904. To the extent any teams thought of platooning in the first half of the Deadball Era, it was with regard to catchers because the rigors of the position at a time when equipment offered much less protection from being battered and beaten by foul balls necessitated they needed many more days off than other position regulars, and platooning offered an opportunity for doing so. All other position regulars at the time were expected to be everyday players, removed from the starting lineup only if they were hurt, slumping, played themselves out of the job, or needed a very occasional day off.
5. Position-player substitutions are derived from the difference between total position games for a team during the season and the total number of games times the eight fielding positions (pitcher not included). This figure does not include pinch-hitters for position players who did not subsequently take the field in place of the player they batted for, either because another player went in as the defensive substitute (who counts as the position-player substitution) or because pinch-hitting for the position player occurred in the bottom of the final inning of play and hence did not require a defensive replacement. These data are available at Retrosheet.org.
6. Devlin had been the third baseman for McGraw's Giants from 1904 until his sale to Boston just before the start of the 1912 season. He played 69 games at first base, 26 games at shortstop, and 26 games at third for Boston that year, while McDonald played 118 games at third.
7. Lord, meanwhile, flourished as Titus's replacement in right field between July 19 and August 16, batting .303 in 21 starts, including 16 against right-handers, until Stallings decided to once again use him in a platoon role for the rest of the season.
8. The left-handed-batting Zinn batted .286 in the 7 games he played started by a southpaw, including one when he entered the game after a right-handed reliever came in, and .300 against right-handed starters.

Zinn finished the season with a .297 batting average in 36 games but took himself out of the running for a starting position on the 1914 Braves when he opted for the Federal League instead. After the Federal League folded in 1915, Guy Zinn did not play another game in the major leagues, although he did play six more years in the minors.

9. Connolly also appeared in 9 games that he was not in the starting lineup when a southpaw took the mound for the other team. In each case, he came in after a right-handed pitcher had entered the game. He had just 2 hits in 17 at bats in those games, which accounts for his .164 average in Braves' games started by a left-hander that appears in the table on the "1913 Boston Braves' Outfield Platoons" for Connolly's 1913 season totals, even though he hit .182 in the games against southpaws that he was in the starting lineup.
10. Just to be clear, Tex McDonald and Ed McDonald, who played third base the previous year, are not the same person.
11. Smith started the last 9 games of the year at shortstop after Rabbit Maranville was injured with Charlie Deal taking over at third the rest of the way.
12. Leveraging his .359 batting average with the Braves for a better deal in the upstart Federal League in 1914, Tex McDonald played for the Feds in 1914 and 1915 and never again played in the major leagues after that. Fred Smith also defected to the Federal League, played two years there, had to settle for a minor-league gig in 1916, appeared in 56 games for the Cardinals in 1917, and disappeared thereafter from the annals of major league baseball.
13. Sheckard had been an elite hitter for Brooklyn at the turn of the century and had led the league in walks the two previous seasons, 1911 and 1912, playing for the Cubs. He was now 34 years old, however; Cather was 10 years younger.
14. The Cardinals were also able to platoon behind the plate because Ivey Wingo, in his third year and clearly up to being a regular, was a left-handed batter, allowing Huggins to give him days off when a southpaw started against St. Louis in favor of right-handed-hitting Larry McLean and, later, Palmer Hildebrand. Huggins did not necessarily platoon his catchers as matter of routine, however; 20 percent of Wingo's starts were against lefties, and 35 percent of McLean's against righties.
15. Shafer started four of the five games in the 1913 World Series against the Philadelphia Athletics in center field in place of the injured Snodgrass, except for Game Four when he started at third base. In that game, however, Snodgrass was forced to leave the game in the third inning, causing McGraw to move Shafer from third into center and bring in Herzog to play third base. Shafer went 3-for-19 in the Series, and Herzog—the Giants' batting star in the 1912 World Series—had just one hit in 19 at bats against Philadelphia's pitching.
16. Evers started himself at second base in all but two of the first 59 games his team played when a right-hander took the mound against them.
17. There were also three games that a southpaw started against the Cubs where Phelan was in the starting lineup at third base in place of Zimmerman, with Evers at second. It seems likely in context that if Zimmerman had been able to play, Evers would probably have started Phelan at second base instead of himself.
18. Murphy had come up in late August the previous year and played right field in 33 of the Athletics' final 35 games, batting .317 to earn himself the starting job in 1913, at least until Mack decided to try him in a platoon role.
19. Richard Adler, *Mack, McGraw and the 1913 Baseball Season* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), 200. Adler notes there was significant tension between McGraw and Herzog that year. Joseph Durso, *The Days of Mr. McGraw* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 59. Durso writes that McGraw "detested" Herzog.
20. Tillie Shafer's 2.9 wins above replacement in 138 games was the fourth-highest among Giants' position players in 1913. Herzog's player value was 2 wins above replacement, but he played just 96 games.
21. Connolly impressed major league scouts by batting .316 for Montreal in the International League the previous season. Contemporary baseball writer Samuel M. Johnston in his profile on the Braves' outfielder, "Good Natured Joe Connolly, The Man Who Always Smiles," in the February 1915 issue of *Baseball Magazine*, page 27, made a point of noting that Connolly "never had any trouble hitting the southpaws in the minors."
22. Adler, 200.
23. Huggins started the 1914 season with left-handed-batting Walton Cruise as the Cardinals' everyday left fielder before reverting to a platoon arrangement in early May. With Herzog traded to Cincinnati and Shafer having left the game, McGraw was forced to find a new third baseman entirely. Rookie Milt Stock was his man. A right-handed batter, Stock started virtually every game at third through August before an injury all but ended his season. From mid-June till the end of the season, McGraw platooned rookie left-handed-batting Dave Roobertson with left-handed-batting veterans Fred Snodgrass and Red Murray in the outfield, usually right field, until the end of the season.

The .700 Club

Blessedly Good Baseball

Douglas Jordan

The inspiration for this article was the play of the St. Louis Cardinals at the start of the 2015 season. Well into May, the Cards' winning percentage was over .700. They were 24–10 (.706) after their game of May 14, which meant they had played over 20 percent of the season with a winning percentage above .700. I wondered: How many teams have played .700 ball for the whole season?

That's a tall order—win seven of every ten games for an entire baseball season—so I assumed it would be a small number. Preliminary investigation confirmed my assumption. The following season, when the Cubs were playing over .700 ball into June, I took it as a sign I should look into the question seriously. But what is the best way to discuss these teams? Since some of the teams are among the most revered and written about in baseball history, I decided that rather than looking at the players on these teams, I would closely examine their statistical accomplishments in order to see if there were commonalities among them.[1]

The math is simple: 70 percent of 162 is 113.4, which means a team has to win 114 games to be over .700 on the season. For a 154-game season the same calculation results in 108 wins. Those are very impressive win totals, so it is not surprising that only nine teams after 1902 have managed to win that many games. The year 1903 is arbitrarily selected as a cutoff. (Apologies to the 1902 Pirates who played .741 ball but are not included in this analysis). All of the data presented in this article are from Baseball-Reference.com.

.700 TEAMS AND SELECTED SEASON DATA

Nine teams since 1903 have accomplished the impressive feat of winning over 70 percent of their games in a season. Table 1 lists them in reverse chronological order, along with some data associated with those seasons. Given the difficulty of winning that frequently, it's not hard to find people who will say these are among the best teams of all time. About the 1906 and 1907 Cubs, Bryan Soderholm-Difatte writes, "…[F]rom 1906 to 1910 the Chicago Cubs had the best team in National League history."[2] Many people argue that the 1927 Yankees are the greatest team of all time, such as Harvey Frommer: "Yet eighty years after their spectacular season and thrilling World Series victory, the 1927 New York Yankees are still widely recognized as the greatest team in Major League Baseball history."[3] And although they didn't win the World Series, the 1954 Indians are often argued to have had an all-time great pitching staff. For example, Gary Webster says, "The Indians rode the right arms of Bob Lemon, Early Wynn and Mike Garcia, still one of the best starting pitching staffs ever assembled, and boasted of the American League batting champion in second baseman Bob Avila."[4] Similar commentary can be found about all of the teams listed in Table 1.

The data presented in Table 1 lead to a few general observations about these great teams. Seven of the nine teams played in the 52 seasons from 1903 to 1954, and three of those seven occurred between 1906 and 1909. Only two teams have played at least .700 ball in the 61 full seasons played starting in 1955, and there were 43 consecutive seasons after the Indians' campaign in 1954 without any .700 MLB team. This suggests the overall competitive balance in baseball has improved over time, while the relatively capricious nature of playoff baseball is demonstrated by the fact that only five of these nine outstanding teams won the World Series. The Yankees appear on the list three times (1927, 1939, and 1998). The Cubs are the only other team with more than one .700 season and are also the only team to accomplish it in consecutive seasons (1906 and 1907). The 1906 Cubs also have the highest winning percentage at .763, and are tied with the 2001 Mariners for the most wins in a season with 116. The Cubs won more than three out of every four decisions in 1906.

The 1927 Yankees scored the most runs (976), although the 1939 Yankees outscored them on a per-game basis. And there is an interesting coincidence about the 1927 Yankees. The team had a season-winning percentage of .714, and Babe Ruth hit 714 career home runs. The two Cubs teams allowed the fewest runs per game. This is a reflection of the Deadball Era in which they played.

Table 1: Teams With .700 Season Winning Percentage and Selected Season Data

	W%	Record	RS RS/G	RA RA/G	Pythag. Record	DIF	LWS	LLS	MGA .50	H Rcd	A Rcd	1st Half	2nd Half	1 Run Gms
2001 Seattle Mariners	.716	116–46	927 5.72	627 3.87	109–53	190	15	4	71	57–24 .704	59–22 .728	63–24 .724	53–22 .707	26–12 .684
1998 NY Yankees	.704	114–48	965 5.96	656 4.05	108–54	152	10	4	66	62–19 .765	52–29 .642	61–20 .753	53–28 .654	21–10 .677
1954 Cleveland Indians	.721	111–43	746 4.78	504 3.23	104–50	134	11	4	69	59–18 766	52–25 .675	56–27 .675	55–16 .775	32–13 .711
1939 NY Yankees	.702	106–45	967 6.36	556 3.66	111–40	161	12	6	62	52–25 .675	54–20 .730	53–22 .707	53–23 .697	22–15 .595
1931 Philadelphia Athletics	.704	107–45	858 5.61	626 4.09	97–55	140	17	4	63	60–15 .800	47–30 .610	54–22 .711	53–23 .697	19–14 .576
1927 NY Yankees	.714	110–44	976 6.30	605 3.90	109–45	173	9	4	66	57–19 .750	53–25 .679	56–24 .700	54–20 .730	24–19 .558
1909 Pittsburgh Pirates	.724	110–42	701 4.55	448 2.91	105–47	156	16	4	70	56–21 .727	54–21 .720	55–21 .724	55–21 .724	33–13 .717
1907 Chicago Cubs	.704	107–45	571 3.68	390 2.52	102–50	161	7	4	64	54–19 .740	53–26 .671	57–20 .740	50–25 .667	37–16 .698
1906 Chicago Cubs	.763	116–36	704 4.54	381 2.46	115–37	155	14	3	80	56–21 .727	60–15 .800	56–24 .700	60–12 .833	27–13 .675

Bold: Team won the World Series
Italics: Team lost the World Series
W% = Season winning percentage; Record = Record for the season; RS = Runs scored; RS/G = Runs scored per game; RA = Runs allowed; RA/G = Runs allowed per game; Pythag Record = Pythagorean record; DIF = Days in first place; LWS = Longest winning streak; LLS = Longest losing streak; MGA .50 = Most games above .500; H Rcd = Home record; A Rcd = Away record; 1st Half = 1st half record; 2nd Half = 2nd half record; 1 Run Gms = Record in 1 run games

Pythagorean win expectation records are a function of runs scored and runs allowed.[5] The only team on the list with more Pythagorean wins than actual wins is the 1939 Yankees. This suggests that they should have had more (rather than fewer, as the rest of the teams) actual wins, given their run production and prevention. The longest winning streak that any of these teams had was 17 games (the 1931 Athletics), while the longest losing streak was six games (the 1939 Yankees). The 1906 Cubs finished the season an astounding 80 games above the .500 mark.

Table 1 also presents the records for home, away, first half, second half, and one-run games for these teams, along with the winning percentages for those subsets of the season. Six of the nine teams had better home records, including the 1931 Athletics, who won 80 percent of their home games that season. Three of the teams played better on the road, including the 1906 Cubs, who won an amazing 80 percent of their away games. Those same Cubs also went 60–12 over the second half of the season, winning an incredible 84 percent of their games over that time period. Performance in close games does not appear to have a big impact on the overall winning percentage for these teams as only two of them played over .700 ball in one-run games and three of them played under .600 ball in one-run games.

TEAM BATTING AND TEAM PITCHING DATA

The data in Table 1 are interesting, but we can gain still more insight into the accomplishments of these teams by looking at team batting and team pitching

data and how these teams ranked in their league those seasons. A team is going to need to be strong in both hitting and pitching in order to win 70 percent of its games. However, it's not obvious if one or the other is more important. The data in Table 2 can help us answer that question.

Comparing the season totals in Table 2 for these teams is problematic because of changes in the game over the century or so between teams on the list. For example, the 1998 Yankees hit ten times as many home runs (207) as the 1906 Cubs (20) but Yankees also struck out (1025) over twice as many times as the 1907 Cubs (449). On the pitching side, the three lowest ERA numbers are the two Cubs teams and the 1909 Pirates, who all played in the Deadball Era. That's apples and oranges compared to the 2001 Mariners and the 1998 Yankees. Given these kinds of issues, the teams will be compared using rank in the league in order to try to draw conclusions across eras. That said, two of the offensive numbers in Table 2 stand out. The 1927 Yankees batted .307 as a team and had a team on base percentage of .384. The team got on base just under 40 percent of the time.

Which of the batting categories shown are least important? The rankings suggest home runs and strikeouts. Three of the teams in Table 2 are ranked fourth or worse in the league in home runs, so you don't have to be a home run hitting team to win a lot. Avoiding strikeouts doesn't seem to matter either, as only one team on the list (the 1907 Cubs) had the fewest strikeouts in the league while the 1927 Yanks had the most strikeouts that year.

What are the most important categories? Readers who are familiar with sabermetrics will not be surprised that runs scored is very important. Every team on the list with the exception of the 1931 Athletics (who were third) is ranked first or second in runs scored. In terms of both batting average and on base percentage, six of the teams are ranked first or second in both categories while three of the teams are third or fourth.

Which of the pitching categories are least important? Strikeouts. Only one of the teams (the 1906 Cubs) led the league in strikeouts. It's clear the pitching staff does not need to generate big strikeout totals for the team to win a lot of games. Not giving up home runs isn't that important either, as only three teams led the league in that category. In terms of bases on balls, five of the teams finished first or second in fewest walks allowed, three teams finished third, while the ninth team (the 1906 Cubs) was fifth. These figures suggest that not walking too many batters is important. You don't have to lead the league in fewest walks to win a lot, but you cannot be leading the league in walks allowed if you want to win a lot of games.

Which pitching categories are most important? The statistics for these teams clearly show that ERA and WHIP are crucial. Every one of the teams on the list with the sole exception of the 1909 Pirates (who were second in both categories to the Cubs) led their league in both ERA and WHIP. Those Pirates are a special case because the majority of the pitching staff for the 1909 Cubs was the same as the great staff of the 1906 and 1907 Cubs ballclubs. The 1909 Cubs did win 104 games (for a .680 winning percentage) but offensively the Pirates generated about one half run per game more than the Cubs. This allowed them to win six more games than that still excellent 1909 Cubs team.

Now we are in a position to answer the question: Is excellent hitting or excellent pitching more important to teams that win 70 percent of their games? The

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The 1906 Cubs won 80 percent of their away decisions.

Table 2: Teams With .700 Season Winning Percentage and Selected Batting and Pitching Data
Numbers in parenthesis are the rank in the league for that season

	Batting Data								Pitching Data							
	#B	Bat Age	RS	HRH	BB	SO	BA	OBA	#P	Pit Age	ERA	RA	HRA	BB	SO	WHIP
2001 Seattle Mariners	35	31.3	927 (1)	169 (8)	614 (2)	989 (3)	0.288 (1)	0.360 (1)	15	30.8	3.54 (1)	627 (1)	160 (5)	465 (3)	1051 (5)	1.20 (1)
1998 NY Yankees	38	30.4	965 (1)	207 (4)	653 (1)	1025 (5)	0.288 (2)	0.364 (1)	19	30.2	3.82 (1)	656 (1)	156 (1)	466 (2)	1080 (4)	1.251 (1)
1954 Cleveland Indians	35	30.2	746 (2)	156 (1)	637 (3)	668 (6)	0.262 (4)	0.341 (4)	13	30.5	2.78 (1)	504 (1)	89 (4)	486 (1)	678 (3)	1.202 (1)
1939 NY Yankees	27	27.7	967 (1)	166 (1)	701 (1)	543 (5)	0.287 (2)	0.374 (1)	12	30.5	3.31 (1)	556 (1)	85 (4)	567 (3)	565 (3)	1.316 (1)
1931 Philadelphia Athletics	27	28.8	858 (3)	118 (2)	528 (3)	543 (5)	0.287 (3)	0.355 (3)	11	30.2	3.47 (1)	626 (1)	73 (4)	457 (2)	574 (3)	1.318 (1)
1927 NY Yankees	25	27.7	976 (1)	158 (1)	642 (1)	610 (8)	0.307 (1)	0.384 (1)	10	31	3.2 (1)	605 (1)	42 (2)	409 (1)	431 (3)	1.304 (1)
1909 Pittsburgh Pirates	29	28.4	701 (1)	25 (2)	479 (3)	511 (3)	0.260 (1)	0.327 (2)	13	28.2	2.07 (2)	448 (2)	12 (3)	320 (1)	490 (5)	1.066 (2)
1907 Chicago Cubs	24	28	571 (3)	13 (7)	435 (3)	449 (1)	0.250 (3)	0.318 (3)	8	28.2	1.73 (1)	390 (1)	11 (1)	402 (3)	586 (3)	1.060 (1)
1906 Chicago Cubs	23	27	704 (1)	20 (2)	448 (2)	516 (2)	0.262 (1)	0.328 (2)	9	27.1	1.75 (1)	381 (1)	12 (1)	446 (5)	702 (1)	1.055 (1)
Out of sample teams for comparison																
2015 St. Louis Cardinals (100 Wins)	46	28.4	647 (11)	137 (11)	506 (4)	1267 (6)	0.253 (6)	0.321 (5)	23	28.2	2.94 (1)	525 (1)	123 (2)	477 (7)	1329 (7)	1.254 (7)
2014 Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim (98 Wins)	54	29.3	773 (1)	155 (4)	492 (8)	1266 (10)	0.259 (3)	0.322 (4)	31	28.4	3.58 (7)	630 (6)	126 (1)	504 (13)	1342 (4)	1.221 (4)
2013 **Boston Red Sox** (97 Wins)	48	29.6	853 (1)	178 (5)	581 (2)	1308 (12)	0.277 (2)	0.349 (1)	26	30.2	3.79 (6)	656 (6)	156 (5)	524 (12)	1294 (6)	1.300 (6)

Bold: Team won the World Series
Italics: Team lost the World Series
Bat = Number of players used in games; Bat Age = Batters' average age; RS = Runs Scored; HRH = Home runs hit; SO = Strikeouts; BA = Batting average; OBP = On base percentage; # Pit = Number of pitchers used in games; Pit Age = Pitchers' average age; ERA = Earned run average; RA = Runs allowed; HRA = Home runs allowed; BB = Bases on balls (walks); SO = Strikeouts; WHIP = (Walks + Hits) per inning pitched

data in Table 2 strongly suggest that the answer is pitching, in particular having a low ERA and WHIP. A team almost has to be leading the league in those two categories if it is going to have a chance to play .700 ball. The same statement cannot be made for any offensive category. The team cannot be weak offensively but it doesn't have to lead the league in runs scored, batting average, or on base percentage.

Table 2 shows the team batting and pitching statistics and their ranking against the rest of the league. But we can also look at these statistics compared to the league average for the category that year. This will give us an idea of just how much better a team has to be than the league average in order to win a high percentage of their games. The data are presented in Table 3.

The numbers in Table 3 were calculated as follows, using the runs scored by the 2001 Mariners as an example. The Mariners scored 927 runs in 2001, while the league average for runs scored was 787. The ratio of 927/787 is 1.18. The 1.18 figure in Table 3 shows that the Mariners scored 18 percent more runs than average. For the pitching data where the ratio is below 1.0, you must subtract the ratio from 1.0 to see how much better the team was than average. For example, the Mariners ERA in 2001 was .79 compared to the league, so 1.0 minus .79 yields .21, or the Mariners were 21 percent better than average in terms of ERA. So what do the data in Table 3 tell us?

First, the most astounding number in Table 3 is the 2.87 home run figure for the 1927 Yankees. That means the Yanks hit almost three times as many home runs as the average club that year. Amazing. Of course, they also struck out 44 percent more times than the league average to accomplish the home run feat. Almost as impressive is the 0.67 ERA figure for the 1906 Cubs. That club's ERA was 33 percent lower than the league average. Combine that accomplishment with the club scoring 28 percent more runs than average and it is no wonder the team won 116 games out of 152. The other datum that stands out is the average age for these teams' pitching staffs. With the sole exception of the 1906 Cubs, who were slightly younger than average, every other club had a pitching staff that was older than average. Experience matters when it comes to pitching more so than hitting, where four of the nine clubs were younger or equal to average age.

In terms of individual statistics, Table 3 says that on average, teams use about ten percent fewer batters and pitchers than the league average, so stability in the lineup correlates with success. In runs scored, the 1927 Yankees tied the 1906 Cubs with 28 percent more runs scored than average, and the average for the nine teams is 19 percent better. These teams drew 13 percent more walks on average, while the 1927 Yankees were again the leader with 27 percent more bases on balls. All of the teams were slightly better than average in terms of batting average and on base percentage. Teams that hit worse than average are not going to win 70 percent of their games. On the pitching side, all of these teams have an ERA between 18 percent and 33 percent better, with an overall average of 24 percent better. They allow an average of 23 percent fewer runs and issue 12 percent fewer walks. The WHIPs for these teams are all between 11 percent and 14 percent better than average.

COMPARISON WITH OUT-OF-SAMPLE TEAMS

The numbers shown in the top portion of Tables 2 and 3 shed some light on the accomplishments of these nine teams. However, we can gain a better appreciation of the excellence of this group by comparing them to other teams with good records that didn't reach the .700 winning percentage standard. The teams with the best records in 2013–15 were arbitrarily chosen for comparison. In 2015 the Cardinals had the best record in baseball with 100 wins (.617 winning percentage). The Los Angeles Angels had the best record with 98 wins (.605) in 2014, and the Red Sox and Cardinals both led with 97 wins (.599) in 2013. The Red Sox numbers are used in the tables since the Cardinals numbers are used in 2015 and the two Cardinals teams were similar in pitching and hitting abilities.

The last three lines in Table 2 show the offensive and pitching numbers of these three teams (and their league rankings) for easy comparison with the nine .700 teams. The 2015 Cardinals had very strong pitching and led the league in ERA and fewest runs allowed. But their offense was mediocre, being in the bottom half of the league in runs scored and home runs, and in the middle of the pack in batting average and on base percentage. The team won 100 games with excellent pitching and roughly average hitting. The 2014 Angels and 2013 Red Sox took the opposite approach. Both teams led their leagues in runs scored and ranked high in both batting average and on base percentage. But the pitching on both teams was mediocre. They both were in the middle of the pack in ERA and fewest runs allowed.

We can gain a little more insight into the performance of these three teams compared to the nine teams that played .700 ball by comparing their results to that of the league average. These results are shown in the last three lines of Table 3. The Table 3 numbers show that the Cardinals' pitching in 2015 was not just good,

Table 3: Teams With .700 Season Winning Percentage and Selected Batting and Pitching Data
All figures relative to the league average that year

	Batting Data								Pitching Data							
	#B	Bat Age	RS	HRH	BB	SO	BA	OBA	#P	Pit Age	ERA	RA	HRA	BB	SO	WHIP
2001 Seattle Mariners	0.83	1.08	1.18	0.94	1.19	0.96	1.08	1.08	0.75	1.08	0.79	0.80	0.90	0.90	1.02	0.86
1998 NY Yankees	0.90	1.04	1.19	1.16	1.18	0.99	1.06	1.07	0.95	1.03	0.82	0.81	0.88	0.85	1.05	0.87
1954 Cleveland Indians	1.03	1.06	1.15	1.51	1.10	1.04	1.02	1.03	0.93	1.07	0.75	0.78	0.86	0.84	1.06	0.87
1939 NY Yankees	0.82	1.00	1.21	1.66	1.20	1.01	1.03	1.06	0.80	1.07	0.72	0.69	0.85	0.97	1.05	0.87
1931 Philadelphia Athletics	0.87	1.02	1.08	1.64	1.01	1.08	1.03	1.03	0.92	1.07	0.79	0.79	1.01	0.88	1.13	0.89
1927 NY Yankees	0.78	0.96	1.28	2.87	1.27	1.44	1.07	1.09	0.77	1.09	0.77	0.79	0.76	0.81	1.01	0.89
1909 Pittsburgh Pirates	0.94	1.04	1.24	1.32	1.07	0.92	1.07	1.05	1.00	1.05	0.80	0.79	0.63	0.71	0.88	0.88
1907 Chicago Cubs	0.92	0.99	1.09	0.72	1.06	0.85	1.03	1.03	0.80	1.01	0.70	0.74	0.61	0.94	1.11	0.88
1906 Chicago Cubs	0.88	0.95	1.28	1.25	1.06	0.91	1.07	1.06	0.90	0.98	0.67	0.70	0.75	1.04	1.24	0.87
Average	0.89	1.02	1.19	1.45	1.13	1.02	1.05	1.06	0.87	1.05	0.76	0.77	0.81	0.88	1.06	0.88
Out of sample teams for comparison																
2015 St. Louis Cardinals (100 Wins)	0.96	1.01	0.97	0.90	1.08	0.99	1.00	1.02	0.88	0.99	0.75	0.77	0.78	1.01	1.05	0.97
2014 Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim (98 Wins)	1.17	1.02	1.14	1.08	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	1.24	1.00	0.94	0.94	0.88	1.08	1.08	0.95
2013 **Boston Red Sox** (97 Wins)	1.07	1.03	1.22	1.07	1.16	1.07	1.08	1.09	1.13	1.05	0.95	0.94	0.93	1.06	1.05	0.99

Bold: Team won the World Series
Italics: Team lost the World Series
Bat = Number of players used in games; Bat Age = Batters' average age; RS = Runs Scored; HRH = Home runs hit; SO = Strikeouts; BA = Batting average; OBP = On base percentage; # Pit = Number of pitchers used in games; Pit Age = Pitchers' average age; ERA = Earned run average; RA = Runs allowed; HRA = Home runs allowed; BB = Bases on balls (walks); SO = Strikeouts; WHIP = (Walks + Hits) per inning pitched

it was historically good. Their ERA and runs allowed numbers are as good as those of the nine great teams. Similarly, the Angels and Red Sox runs scored numbers compare favorably to the nine great teams. But as their rankings in Table 2 suggest, their pitching was only slightly better than average.

So what can we conclude from these comparisons in Tables 2 and 3? This (admittedly small) sample suggests that teams can win a lot of baseball games (roughly sixty percent) by having either a very strong offense or very good pitching even if the weaker half of the team is merely average. This is actually not very surprising as it is quite common for teams to be stronger in one facet of the game than the other. But the interesting fact that these tables also show is that to improve the winning percentage from .600 (about 100 wins) to .700 (about 114 wins) requires a team to be one of the best in the league (and substantially above average) in both pitching and offense. It's so rare for a team to have both of these strengths at the same time that only nine teams after 1902 have managed to be strong enough in both areas to get to the .700 winning percentage threshold.

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The 1909 Pirates had the offensive edge on the 1909 Cubs scoring 4.55 runs per game versus the Cubs' 4.08 runs per game. Honus Wagner led his team in most hitting categories, including total bases (242), batting average (.339), on-base average (.420) and OPS+ (177).

THE GREATEST TEAMS DISCUSSION

The topic of the greatest teams of all time is a perennial discussion among baseball fans. Rob Neyer and Eddie Epstein's offering, *Baseball Dynasties*, discusses each of their 15 candidates in great detail and then ranks them with an extended discussion of the reasons for the rankings.[6] But it is interesting to note that only four of their 15 teams (1906 Cubs, 1927 Yankees, 1939 Yankees, and 1998 Yankees) are on the list of teams that played .700 ball for an entire season. Why aren't all of the .700 teams at least in the discussion? Neyer and Epstein admit to a bias against teams that only perform well for a single season. They write,

> What do we look for in a great team?…It's also important that a team be something more than a one-year wonder. Those teams, even if they have great numbers all the way around, are more likely to have been the beneficiary of some out-of-context seasons by some of their players and thus are not fundamentally as excellent as their one-season record might suggest.[7]

Neyer and Epstein are not the only ones who slight single-season achievements. Another is Phil Birnbaum. In his 2005 SABR convention in Toronto presentation, Birnbaum argued that the 2001 Mariners and the 1998 Yankees were the two luckiest teams since 1960.[8] He discounted position players and pitchers who had career years and compared the team's actual record to its Pythagorean record.

But this kind of reasoning doesn't really make sense. The teams won the games. Does it matter if some of the players on a team had a career year in order for that to happen? Players do have career years. In fact, it's often argued that at least a few players on a team must have a career year if a team is to win the World Series. Those teams are not called lucky, so why should it matter if a .700 ball club had some career year players? It's likely that this bias has its source in Hall of Fame standards. A single great year (or even a few) is not enough for a player to be considered Hall of Fame caliber. Longevity is an important consideration for the Hall of Fame.

But why should that standard be applied to overall team performance? Playing .700 ball for a full season is not the same thing as having a ten-game winning streak. Many teams have gotten hot and won ten in a row, but that in itself is clearly not enough to consider them a great team. If the discussion is great baseball dynasties, a single year's performance certainly does not qualify, but if the discussion is simply great teams, why does that performance have to last more than one season? I don't think it does, and therefore believe that these teams are all among the greatest teams ever. (Which team among the nine is best is very subjective. That exercise is left to the reader.)

PARTING THOUGHTS

Humans draw lines. Lines between states, between countries, between fair and foul balls, and between balls and strikes. But the distance from one side of the line to the other can be very small. In this paper the line is a .700 winning percentage for a full season. The teams that finished above that line since 1903 are discussed here, but three teams that came within one win of that standard should be recognized. Those teams are the 1929 Philadelphia Athletics, the 1932 New York Yankees, and the 1995 Cleveland Indians. One more win in the same number of games and these three teams would have made the list.

A little elaboration on the 1995 Indians is in order. That Indians team won 100 games, so the wins total does not look impressive by the standards discussed here. But what is often forgotten is that the 1995 season was strike-shortened, so the 1995 Indians played 144 games instead of 162. It's very likely their win total would have been the best since the 1954 Indians (who won 111) had they played an additional 18 games, and it's possible they would have finished above .700 for the season. The accomplishments of this Indians team are under-appreciated today because of the deceptively low win total, and their loss to the Braves in the World Series. ■

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Notes

1. Thanks to Cecilia Tan, SABR Publications Director, for her suggestions in this regard.
2. Bryan Soderholm-Difatte, "The 1906-10 Chicago Cubs: The Best Team in National League History," *Baseball Research Journal*, 40 (Spring 2011)
3. Harvey Frommer, *Five O'Clock Lightning; Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and the Greatest Baseball Team History, The 1927 New York Yankees* (John Wiley and Sons, 2008).
4. Gary Webster, *.721: A History of the 1954 Cleveland Indians* (McFarland & Company, Inc., 2013).
5. Baseball-Reference.com uses 1.83 rather than 2 for the exponent in Bill James's original "pythagorean" win expectation formula. For more information see http://www.sports-reference.com/blog/baseball-reference-faqs/)
6. Rob Neyer and Eddie Epstein, *Baseball Dynasties: The Greatest Teams of All Time* (W.W. Norton & Company, N.Y., 2000).
7. Neyer and Epstein, 12.
8. Phil Birnbaum, "Were the 1994 Expos Just Lucky?" Presentation at the 2005 SABR convention in Toronto. The PowerPoint slides are available at: http://www.philbirnbaum.com/ and click on "Were the 1994 Expos Just Lucky?"

Baseball Player Won-Lost Records

The Ultimate Baseball Statistic

Tom Thress

In the Fall 2012 *Baseball Research Journal*, I authored an article entitled "Beyond Player Win Average: Compiling Player Won-Lost Records" in which I introduced my attempt to measure player value, Player Won-Lost records.

I calculate Player wins and losses two ways. I begin by calculating **pWins**, which are tied directly to team wins, by construction—the players on a team earn two **pWins** and one **pLoss** for every team win and one **pWin** and two **pLosses** for every team loss. Having constructed these, I then also construct **eWins**, which are neutralized for context. Statistics derived from **eWins**—such as eWins over Positional Average (**eWOPA**) and eWins over Replacement Level (**eWORL**)—are conceptually comparable to other sabermetric "uber-statistics," including the various constructions of Wins above Replacement (**WAR**).

In this article I will explain why I believe that Player won-lost records are the best measure of player value—in essence, why Baseball Player won-lost records are the ultimate baseball statistic. The heart of this explanation is a comparison of my results to Wins above Replacement (WAR) as measured by Baseball-Reference.com and Fangraphs.

The relationship between team wins and pWins is perfect: [**Actual Wins minus Actual Losses] equals [pWins minus pLosses**] for any given team by construction. As such, there is not much "analysis" to be done there. But what about *context-neutral* wins (eWins)?

The object of analysis throughout this report will be net wins—Wins minus Losses—and/or wins above average (WOPA, in my vernacular; WAA, in the vernacular of WAR). I focus on wins relative to average for three reasons:

- First, wins above or below average are a "real" thing that can be empirically measured, whereas "replacement level" is more of a theoretical concept (although, once "replacement level" is set—at, say, .294 as is the case for Baseball-Reference and Fangraphs—it essentially becomes as empirically valid a measuring stick as .500).
- Second, for both Player won-lost records as well as for WAR, values are built up initially relative to average; comparisons to replacement level simply derive from a final step that shifts the comparison point from .500 to something else.
- Third, net wins, WOPA, and WAA are all centered on zero by construction. This simplifies the mathematics of the statistical analyses that I undertake here by eliminating the need for constant terms in any of my equations.

PLAYER WON-LOST RECORDS: eWINS VERSUS TEAM WINS

Having laid that out, we begin, then, with a basic equation that looks at the relationship between Net Wins (actual team wins minus actual team losses) and Net eWins (total eWins for the players on a team minus total eLosses for the players on a team):

Net Wins = a*(Net eWins)

This equation was fit using Ordinary Least Squares with the following results.

Table 1.

Seasons	a	Standard Error	R^2
2003–15	2.008	0.049	0.815

I chose the time period investigated here, 2003 through 2015, because my source data (from Retrosheet) are generally consistent since that time at identifying the hit type (e.g., ground ball, fly ball, line drive) for all balls in play. I also investigated some longer time periods to see how consistent the results were over the longer time period. Generally speaking, the results presented here were fairly stable across earlier seasons as well.

The estimated coefficient, **a**, has a value of approximately two. This is, perhaps, twice what one might expect—that the coefficient in the above equation should be approximately equal to one. The reason why net eWins translate into net Team Wins at more than a one-to-one ratio is because the difference in

Player winning percentage between the winning and losing team within a game tends to be fairly narrow. Specifically the pWinning percentage of players on a winning team will be 66.7 by construction (2 pWins vs. 1 pLoss). (My rationale for assigning players pLosses in team wins was explained in my earlier *BRJ* article). But the eWinning percentage of players on a winning team has tended to be closer to 57.6 (1.9 "wins" vs. 1.4 "losses" per game before normalization). In other words, 0.076 net eWins (0.576–0.500) translate into 0.167 net pWins (0.667–0.500), a ratio of about 2.2, which is not terribly different from the numbers in the above table.

The **Standard Error** of the coefficient, a, measures the uncertainty of the coefficient estimate. Given certain assumptions, we would expect the true coefficient to fall within one standard error of the point estimate approximately two-thirds of the time and we would expect the true coefficient to fall within two standard errors of the point estimate approximately 95% of the time.

The value, $\mathbf{R^2}$, measures the percentage of total variation in the "dependent" variable (Net Wins) that is explained by the equation—i.e., that is explained by the "explanatory" variable(s) in the equation—Net eWins, in this case. Overall, somewhat more than 80% of the variation in team wins can be explained by differences in eWins. The remaining differences can presumably be attributed to differences in the context in which player performance took place.

TEAMMATE INTERACTION

For several components of Player won-lost records, responsibility is shared between players—either between batters and baserunners or between pitchers and fielders. The values of eWins are calculated controlling for the ability of one's teammates. For shared components, however, the team-level winning percentage is affected not only by the context-neutral winning percentages for the two sets of players sharing the components (e.g., pitchers and fielders), but also by the interaction of these two variables. This latter term is referred to by me as a "Teammate Adjustment." If both pitchers and fielders on a team are above average at something, the team, as a whole, will be better than either its pitchers or its fielders.

To account for this interaction, then, the next equation which I investigated added teammate adjustments to the previous equation as follows.

$$\text{Net Wins} = a_0*(\text{Net eWins}) + a_1*(\text{Teammate Adj.})$$

This equation was fit using Ordinary Least Squares with the following results.

Table 2.

Seasons	a_0	Std Error	a_1	Std Error	R^2
2003–15	1.956	0.048	4.170	0.850	0.826

The coefficient on Teammate Adjustments is approximately twice as large as the coefficient on net eWins. This is because of a difference in the nature of the two variables. Net eWins are equal to wins minus losses. So, for a record of, say, 90–72, net wins would be +18. Teammate adjustments are reported relative to .500, where 90 wins (out of 162) is only 9 games over .500 (81 out of 162 games). If the coefficient on Teammate Adjustments was constrained to be exactly equal to twice the coefficient on net eWins in the equation above, the coefficient on net eWins would be 1.961 (standard error of 0.046) and the R^2 of the equation would be 0.825.

IMPACT OF BATTING vs. BASERUNNING vs. PITCHING vs. FIELDING ON TEAM WINS

Having set up a basic equation to relate eWins to Team Wins, this equation can be extended to evaluate whether the four basic factors are weighted appropriately within Player won-lost records. That is, the basic equation laid out above:

$$\text{Net Wins} = a_0*(\text{Net eWins}) + a_1*(\text{Teammate Adj.})$$

can be replaced with the following equation:

$$\text{Net Wins} = a_b*(\text{Net Batting eWins}) + a_r*(\text{Net Baserunning eWins}) + a_p*(\text{Net Pitching eWins}) + a_f*(\text{Net Fielding eWins}) + a_1*(\text{Teammate Adj.})$$

One might think, then, that if batting, baserunning, pitching, and fielding are weighted correctly, then the coefficients on these factors (a_b, a_r, a_p, and a_f) should be equal to each other (and should all be equal to the coefficient on net eWins from the earlier equation(s), a_0).

I re-arranged some terms in the basic equation outlined above to make the interpretation and analysis of the results somewhat more intuitive. Specifically, I fit the following equation (using Ordinary Least Squares):

$$\text{Net Wins} = a_0*[(\text{Net Batting eWins}) + (1 + a_{r0})*(\text{Net Baserunning eWins}) + (1 + a_{f0})*(\text{Net Fielding eWins}) + a_2*(\text{Teammate Adj.})] + a_0*(1 + a_{p0})*(\text{Net Pitching eWins})$$

This equation is mathematically identical to the previous equation, but some terms have been re-arranged and coefficients have been re-presented to facilitate analysis.

- In this equation, a_0 is the same as in the equation relating (Net Wins) to (Net eWins) and we would expect this coefficient to be similar in magnitude across both equations.
- The coefficient on Teammate Adjustments in the earlier equation, a_1, is equal to $a_0 * a_2$ in this equation. As explained above, the coefficient here, a_2, has an expected value of 2.
- The coefficients, a_{r0} and a_{f0}, measure the difference in the weight on these two factors (a_r and a_f) relative to the weight on the factor, batting (a_b). The expected coefficients on a_{r0} and a_{f0} are both zero.
- I have separated pitching from the other three factors for reasons that will become more obvious later in this article.

The final results of this equation are presented in the next table.

Table 3.

	2003–15
a_0	2.064
(Std. Error)	0.078
a_2	1.828
(Std. Error)	0.555
a_{r0}	-0.275
(Std. Error)	0.264
a_{f0}	0.031
(Std. Error)	0.176
a_{p0}	0.220
(Std. Error)	0.062
R^2	0.839

A few comments.

1) The general coefficient, a_0, is similar to earlier estimates, around 2.0.
2) Batting, baserunning, and fielding seem to generally be weighted correctly. The one possible exception is baserunning, with the coefficient on a_{r0} being about one standard error below zero (which implies that baserunning is, perhaps, somewhat over-weighted in Player won-lost records), although a difference of one standard error is generally not viewed as statistically significant.
3) The coefficient on teammate adjustments, a_2, is not significantly different from two.
4) Including the four factors separately improved the R^2 value of the equation somewhat, from 82.6% to 83.9%.
5) The coefficient on pitching, a_{p0}, is significantly (3.5 standard errors) greater than zero. Over the most recent sample period, the coefficient on pitching here, 0.22, suggests that pitching is under-weighted in Player won-lost records by approximately 22%.

Obviously, comment 5) warrants further discussion and analysis.

One of the key findings of my work is that player wins are not additive. In fact, they are something closer to multiplicative. This is mostly because of the result noted above that the players on a winning baseball team have an average context-neutral (eWin) winning percentage of 57.6 which translates into a pWin winning percentage of 66.7. As mentioned above, this is the reason why a0 has a value of two in the equations presented so far. This multiplicative effect affects the expected impact of players who are somewhat above (or below) average. The impact of a player being slightly above average will translate into a greater impact on team wins. This effect is not taken account of in the net factor wins analyzed above. And it is this effect that explains the significant positive coefficient on a_{p0}.

The multiplicative effect of player performance on team wins is incorporated into my calculation of eWins through an expected team win adjustment. This increases the expected player winning percentage based on the expected impact of the player's performance on the team's winning percentage. Expected team win adjustments are stronger for pitchers than for non-pitchers, because pitchers concentrate their performance into fewer games, so that the per-game impact of pitchers tends to be greater than the per-game impact of individual non-pitchers.

From 2003 through 2015, pitching (including pitcher fielding) accounted for 34.0% of unadjusted player decisions. But pitchers accounted for 44.3% of pWins over replacement level (excluding pitcher offense). In other words, the impact of pitchers on team wins is 30.4% greater than the impact implied by simple, unadjusted pitching decisions (44.3% / 34.0% - 1). Hence, the expected coefficient on a_{p0} is not zero, but is, instead, 0.304, which is not significantly different from the value of a_{p0} shown above.

In other words, my analysis here strongly suggests (to me) that the relative value of batting, baserunning,

fielding, and pitching implied by Player won-lost records accurately reflect the relative value of these four factors on actual team wins.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The next table repeats the results above for my final equation and contrasts the estimated coefficients with the expected coefficients, as they were derived above (except for a_0, for which the "expected" value is really an empirical question—i.e., the "right" coefficient is whatever comes out of the equation). That is, the second equation takes everything except a_0 as given and only estimates a coefficient for a_0.

Table 4.

	Statistical Estimates	Expected Values
a_0	2.064	1.978
(Std. Error)	0.078	0.044
a_2	1.828	2.000
(Std. Error)	0.555	–
a_{r0}	-0.275	0.000
(Std. Error)	0.264	–
a_{f0}	0.031	0.000
(Std. Error)	0.176	–
a_{p0}	0.220	0.304
(Std. Error)	0.062	–
R^2	0.839	0.838

None of the results in the first column are significantly different from the expected results in the right-hand column.

Taking all of this a step further, then, team wins over .500 can be related to eWins over positional average by the following equation:

Team Wins over .500 = a_0*(eWOPA + (Teammate Adjustments))

If eWOPA (and, by extension, eWORL) is calculated correctly, we would expect the coefficient in this equation, a_0, to match the coefficient of the same name in the previous equation, and we would expect the R^2 here to match the R^2 from that equation as well. The results are as follows.

Table 5.

Seasons	a_0	Std Error	R^2
2003–15	1.915	0.045	0.821

The value of a_0 perhaps changed a bit more than expected and the value of R^2 is somewhat lower, but, overall, the results are reasonably similar.

WINS ABOVE REPLACEMENT (WAR) vs. ACTUAL TEAM WINS

Having looked at how the factors underlying Player won-lost records—batting, baserunning, pitching, and fielding—relate to team wins and whether, based on this analysis, these factors were correctly weighted in the calculation of Player won-lost records—specifically, wins over positional average (eWOPA, pWOPA) and replacement level (eWORL, pWORL), I next undertook a similar analysis for WAR (Wins above Replacement) as calculated and presented by Baseball-Reference.com (bWAR) as well as by Fangraphs (fWAR).

For both bWAR and fWAR, the basic calculation framework is the same. For non-pitchers (as well as for the offensive contributions of pitchers), a player's contributions are expressed in terms of runs above average (runs below average being expressed as negative numbers) for the three non-pitching factors: batting, baserunning, and fielding. A fourth factor is then added into the mix, a positional adjustment, also expressed in runs above average (RAA). The positional adjustments are positive for "fielding-first" positions (C, SS, 2B) and negative for "offense-first" positions (1B, LF, RF; CF and 3B tend to have positional adjustments near zero). These four factors are added up to produce an aggregate RAA for the player. A final value, called Rrep by Baseball-Reference, based on playing time, is added to convert from runs above average (RAA) to runs above replacement level (RAR). RAA and RAR are then converted from runs to wins, based on the run-scoring environment in which the player played. In theory, one could apply the run-to-win converter to the individual components to create, in effect, separate values of WAA for batting, baserunning, and fielding (WAA_b, WAA_r, WAA_f).

Pitcher WAR is somewhat more complicated but is similar in concept: a pitcher's runs allowed are compared against average and converted into wins above average (WAA_p) and replacement (WAR_p). Baseball-Reference begins with RA9—runs allowed per nine innings—and adjusts for the team's fielding RAA; Fangraphs uses FIP—expected runs allowed per nine innings, based on strikeouts, walks, and home runs allowed. Both Baseball-Reference and Fangraphs adjust relief pitcher WAR to account for leverage. Baseball-Reference also calculates a unique run-to-win converter for each pitcher to reflect the impact of the pitcher on the run-scoring environment (I am not entirely sure what Fangraphs does in this regard).

Team WAR (or WAA) is then simply equal to the sum of the WAR (WAA) of the individual players on the team. In theory, I would expect the positional adjustments to balance out—every team has exactly one of

every position in every inning of every game—so that, at the team level, I would expect a team's total WAA to equal the sum of WAA_b, WAA_r, WAA_f, and WAA_p.

To test, then, whether batting, baserunning, fielding, and pitching are weighted appropriately within WAR, I fit the following equation:

$$\text{Team Wins over .500} = a_b*WAA_b + a_r*WAA_r + a_f*WAA_f + a_p*WAA_p$$

For analysis purposes, I re-arranged the terms in the above equation, as I did in my analysis of Player won-lost records earlier in this article.

$$\text{Team Wins over .500} = (1 + a_0)*[WAA_b + (1 + a_{r0})*WAA_r + (1 + a_{f0})*WAA_f] + (1 + a_0)*(1 + a_{p0})*WAA_p$$

The next two sections present and discuss my results for both bWAR and fWAR.

BASEBALL-REFERENCE: bWAR

Baseball-Reference has two pages on its website for every season which summarize position player and pitcher WAR for every team within the season.

For position players, Baseball-Reference provides data on Rbat (RAA for batting), Rbaser, Rdp (runs above average for batters at avoiding grounding into double plays—for this analysis, I combined Rdp and Rbat), Rfield, and Rpos (positional adjustments), along with total RAA (the sum of all of the aforementioned columns) and WAA, Rrep (replacement runs), RAR (RAA + Rrep), and WAR.

As I said above, in theory, I would have expected Rpos to be approximately zero at the team level. In fact, however, for the 2015 season, total Rpos across all 30 teams summed to +742 runs (+25 runs per team on average). Offsetting this, the combined total for Rbat was -700 runs. This is typical of the seasons which I examined (back to 1969). I am reasonably sure that the reason for this is that the average number of runs against which Rbat is measured excludes pitcher batting. But the sum of Rbat (and Rpos) for teams includes pitcher batting. For the 2015 NL, total Rpos was +847 vs. Rbat of -630; for the AL, total Rpos was -105 vs. Rbat of -70.

My intended analysis required that total WAA be limited to batting, baserunning, pitching and fielding, and that total WAA be equal to zero at the seasonal level, by construction. To do this, I distributed Rpos to Rbat such that the sum of Rbat across the league was exactly equal to zero—i.e., in 2015, since Rbat summed to -700, I adjusted that number up by +700; I did so proportional to the +742 Rpos—i.e., I added 94.3% (700/742) of Rpos to Rbat for every team. For Rrun, Rdp, and Rfield, I adjusted the numbers proportionally across all teams such that the sum for the season was equal to zero—e.g., in 2015, Rfield totaled +37; I therefore subtracted 1.2 runs (37/30) from each team's Rfield value; in 2015, Rrun and Rdp both summed to zero across the league, so that no adjustments were necessary to these numbers.

On Baseball-Reference's pitcher WAR page, they provided data for WAA, WAAadj, and WAR. The last of these was, of course, total pitcher WAR. The first two of these summed to zero at the league level in every season. I, therefore, set pitcher WAA equal to the sum of WAA and WAAadj. Based on Baseball-Reference's explanation of its WAR for pitchers, WAAadj is an adjustment made to account for reliever leverage. As I understand it, then, at the league/team level, WAAadj ends up essentially being rounding error to re-center WAA to zero.

Having set all of that up, I fit the above equation using Baseball-Reference data from 2003–2015. The equation being solved is repeated here for reference.

$$\text{Team Wins over .500} = (1 + a_0)*[WAA_b + (1 + a_{r0})*WAA_r + (1 + a_{f0})*WAA_f] + (1 + a_0)*(1 + a_{p0})*WAA_p$$

The results in the first column of the table were estimated using Ordinary Least Squares. The results in the last column are what we would expect if the four factors—batting, baserunning, fielding, and pitching—were appropriately weighted in the calculation of bWAR.

Table 6.

	2003–15	
	Statistical Estimates	**Expected Values**
a_0	0.080	0
(Std. Error)	0.043	–
a_{r0}	0.085	0
(Std. Error)	0.328	–
a_{f0}	-0.118	0
(Std. Error)	0.074	–
a_{p0}	0.013	0
(Std. Error)	0.035	–
R^2	0.817	0.815

None of the coefficients are significantly different from their expected value (zero) at a 95% significance level. The value for a_0 is nearly so, however ($p = .064$, meaning a_0 differs from zero at about a 93.6% significance level (1 - p)). The value for a_{f0} ($p = .114$) is also at least suggestive if, perhaps not quite "significant."

A positive value of a_0 suggests that the impact of position player WAA (i.e., batting, baserunning, and fielding) on team WAA is greater than one-to-one. In this case, a coefficient of 0.080 suggests that team wins over .500 are, on average, 8% greater than implied by team-level position-player WAA. So, for example a team with players with a combined (position-player) WAA of +12 (and 0 pitching WAA) would be expected to finish 13 games over .500 (this is the difference between a 93- and 94-win team in a 162-game schedule).

A negative value of a_{f0} suggests that the impact of player fielding on team wins is less than the impact of batting or baserunning. In this case, a coefficient of -0.118 suggests that fielding WAA are, on average, 12% less valuable than batting or baserunning WAA in translating into team wins.

The top fielding team in MLB in 2015, according to Baseball-Reference, was the Arizona Diamondbacks at +68 Rfield. I translated that into a WAAf of 6.5. Reducing that by the 12% implied by the estimated value of af would lower that to approximately 5.7 WAA—a reduction of just under one team win (0.8). Overall, Baseball-Reference calculated a total of 6.4 WAA for the 2015 D-Backs. Reducing that by 0.8 would lower it to 5.6 WAA. The 2015 D-Backs actually finished 79–83, 2 wins below .500.

The worst fielding team in MLB in 2015, according to Baseball-Reference, was the Seattle Mariners at -68 Rfield. I translated that into a WAAf of -6.7. Reducing that by the 12% implied by the estimated value of af would lower that (in absolute value) to -5.9—a reduction of 0.8 wins. Overall, Baseball-Reference calculated a total of -7.7 WAA for the 2015 Mariners. Adjusting that by 0.8 would raise it to -6.9 WAA. The 2015 Mariners actually finished 76-86, 5 wins below .500.

CORRELATION BETWEEN PITCHING AND FIELDING

Baseball-Reference's treatment of pitching vis-a-vis fielding makes it difficult to evaluate the accuracy of bWAR as compared to fWAR or eWOPA. This is not a criticism of Baseball-Reference's treatment of pitching and fielding, merely a statement of fact. From the perspective of a team, Baseball-Reference begins with actual runs allowed, calculates an independent estimate of fielding runs above or below average, and attributes the difference between the two (i.e., total runs allowed minus (net) runs allowed by the team's fielders) to the team's pitchers. Baseball-Reference does not calculate WAR directly at the team level—WAR is constructed at the player level—and there are differences in the conversion from runs to wins for position players (where I understand the adjustment to be constant, or at least nearly-constant, across all players within a league) and pitchers (where the adjustment is calculated uniquely for each pitcher to reflect the impact of the pitcher on his own run-scoring environment). Because of these differences, it is not literally true that fielding WAA and pitching WAA can be traded off exactly one-for-one. But, it is the case, that, essentially, team-level pitching WAA and team-level fielding WAA will very nearly add up to a team-level defensive WAA based on actual runs allowed at the team level.

In other words, any "errors" in Baseball-Reference's calculation of fielding WAA will produce nearly-exactly offsetting errors in Baseball-Reference's calculation of pitching WAA—and vice versa. The mathematical term for this issue is Multicollinearity and this issue may affect the interpretation of the results in the above table (especially a_{f0} and a_{p0}). Specifically, (from the Wikipedia article on Multicollinearity), "One of the features of multicollinearity is that the standard errors of the affected coefficients tend to be large. In that case, the test of the hypothesis that the coefficient is equal to zero may lead to a failure to reject a false null hypothesis of no effect of the explanator, a type II error." In layman's terms, the standard errors associated with a_{f0} and a_{p0} are artificially large, because of the way in which Baseball-Reference calculates bWAR.

Because of the way in which Baseball-Reference calculates fielding and pitching WAA, total WAA (or WAR), as calculated with Baseball-Reference will have virtually no "errors" on the defensive side, relative to actual runs allowed. Actual runs allowed may not track perfectly with team wins because of differences in timing (e.g., "clutch performance," "pitching to the score"), but these differences should generally be beyond the scope of fWAA and eWOPA, as well (but not pWins and pWOPA, which explicitly measure such factors, of course). This should make bWAR a more accurate measure of actual team performance than either eWOPA or fWAR, neither of which tie their defensive measures directly to actual runs allowed at the team level.

This makes it very difficult to evaluate Baseball-Reference's treatment of fielding and pitching at the player level by looking at the team-level accuracy of bWAR (or bWAA). Difficult, but not entirely impossible.

One thing worth looking at is the team-level correlation between pitching (WAA) and fielding (WAA). If there were systematic errors in Baseball-Reference's calculation of fielding WAA, this would lead to perfectly offsetting errors in Baseball-Reference's pitching WAA, which would lead to these two measures being

negatively correlated. Hence, a negative correlation between fielding WAA and pitching WAA, at the team level, could be indicative of problems in the split between fielding and pitching.

Player won-lost records also calculate fielding and pitching measures controlling for each other. As with Baseball-Reference, a negative correlation between these two measures could indicate problems with this split.

One challenge, however, in evaluating correlations between pitching and fielding is to figure out what correlation we should expect. At one level, we might expect a correlation of zero: pitching and fielding are performed by entirely different players (outside of pitcher fielding, but (a) pitchers tend to have relatively few fielding opportunities compared to other positions, and (b) pitcher fielding is necessarily subsumed within "pitching" by Baseball-Reference, because of its decision to tie to actual runs allowed). On the other hand, good teams tend to be good at everything and bad teams—especially very bad teams—tend to be bad at everything. So, it might be reasonable to expect pitching and fielding to be positively correlated at the team level.

Fortunately for our analysis, one of the three systems being analyzed here—Fangraphs—estimates pitching and fielding independently, based on entirely independent statistics. Specifically, pitchers are evaluated based entirely on strikeouts, walks, and home runs (via FIP), while fielders are evaluated based entirely on balls in play (via UZR). The correlation between pitching WAA and fielding WAA, as measured by Fangraphs, should reflect the "true" correlation between these factors at the team level.

The next table calculates the correlation between pitching and fielding WAA for the three systems from 1969 through 2015.

Table 7.

Fangraphs	Baseball-Reference	Player W-L Records
6.67%	-13.07%	6.98%

As measured by Fangraphs, the correlation between pitching and fielding is fairly small, but is slightly (and somewhat significantly) positive—as one might expect for the reasons suggested above. As measured by Baseball-Reference, however, the correlation between pitching and fielding is negative—not hugely, but significantly, so. This suggests to me that Baseball-Reference may be systematically misallocating credit for runs allowed between pitchers and fielders.

And what of Player won-lost records? The correlation between fielding and pitching as measured by Player won-lost records, 6.98%, is virtually identical to the correlation as measured by Fangraphs, 6.67%. I am very encouraged by this.

bWAR vs. ACTUAL WINS ABOVE REPLACEMENT

Both Baseball-Reference and Fangraphs use a replacement level of .294. As a final analysis, I compared bWAR to team WAR, where the latter was set equal to actual team wins minus the number of wins a .294 team would have won over that team's total games (47.6 per 162). For this experiment, I fit the following equation:

$$\text{Team Wins over .294} = a_0 + (1 + a_{pos})*WAR_{pos} + (1 + a_p)*WAR_p$$

As with the previous table, the results in the first column of the table were estimated using Ordinary Least Squares. The results in the last column are what would be expected.

Table 8.

	2003–15	
	Statistical Estimates	Expected Values
a_0	2.152	0
(Std. Error)	0.847	–
a_{pos}	-0.092	0
(Std. Error)	0.033	–
a_p	-0.039	0
(Std. Error)	0.036	–
R^2	0.798	0.793

The coefficients, a_0 and a_{pos} are both significant at a 95% confidence level (in fact, both are significant at more than a 98% confidence level).

The value of a_0, 2.15, indicates that a team that amassed an actual .294 winning percentage would be expected to earn 2 WAR rather than the 0 WAR implied by a replacement level of .294.

The only sub-replacement team over the time period analyzed here was the 2003 Detroit Tigers, who went 43–119 for a .265 winning percentage, which works out to -4.3 wins over .294. Baseball-Reference shows them with +4.3 WAR.

The next two worst teams over this time period were the 2004 Arizona Diamondbacks and the 2013 Houston Astros, who both finished 51–111 (.315), 3.4 wins over .294. According to Baseball-Reference, the players on the 2004 Diamondbacks accumulated 5.7 WAR and the players on the 2013 Astros had 8.4 WAR.

The value of a_{pos}, -0.092, indicates that position-player WAR translate into about 9% fewer team

WAR—i.e., 11 player WAR translate into only 10 team WAR. This is broadly consistent—in the sign of the coefficient if nothing else—with the earlier result suggesting that fielding WAA may be overstated by 12% or so.

The value of R^2 indicates that just under 80% of the variance in team wins (over .294) can be explained by player WAR as presented at Baseball-Reference.com.

FANGRAPHS: fWAR

Fangraphs has two pages on its website for every season which summarize position player and pitcher WAR for every team within the season.

For position players, Fangraphs provides data on Batting, Base Running, and Fielding, as well as Positional values, expressed as runs above average. Fangraphs also has a column titled "League" which appears to reflect differences between the American League and National League in a particular season (e.g., in 2015, AL teams are credited with around 22 runs; NL teams are credited with around 11 runs here). Finally, Fangraphs has a column "Replacement," which converts the previous columns (including League) from runs above average (RAA) to runs above replacement (RAR). Fangraphs then shows RAR (which is the sum of the preceding aforementioned columns) and WAR.

For a season as a whole, the sum of Fangraphs' values for Batting, Baserunning, Fielding, Positional, and League add up to zero (or something exceptionally close to zero, most likely due to minor rounding issues). As was the case with Baseball-Reference, however, total Batting runs above average tend to be negative while Positional and League adjustments tend to be positive, on average, across all teams. To create WAA measures for Batting, Baserunning, and Fielding, all of which were centered at zero, therefore, I distributed Positional and League adjustments by team across Batting, Baserunning, and Fielding, such that the total number of Batting, Baserunning, and Fielding Runs (relative to average) were all exactly equal to zero for every season. I then converted these runs above average (RAA) measures into wins above average (WAA) measures using the ratio of WAR to RAR reported by Fangraphs.

Fangraphs' pitcher WAR page provided team values for RA9-WAR (WAR based on actual runs allowed) and WAR (their preferred measure, based on FIP—i.e., based only on strikeouts, walks, and home runs allowed). Fangraphs did not provide any measures of either runs or wins relative to average (RAA or WAA). I converted Fangraphs' WAR estimates (using WAR, not RA9-WAR) to WAA by simply subtracting the same number of WAR from each team such that the sum equaled zero. So, for example, in 2015, total pitcher WAR, as reported by Fangraphs was 429.8. Dividing 429.8 by the 30 MLB teams, the "replacement" portion of WAR worked out to 14.3 "wins" per team. Subtracting each team's WAR by 14.3 produced a set of WAA measures which summed to zero across the 30 major league teams in 2015.

Having set all of that up, I fit the same equation as used earlier for eWins and bWAR, using Fangraphs data from 2003–15. The equation being solved is repeated here for reference.

$$\text{Team Wins over .500} = (1 + a_0)*[WAA_b + (1 + a_{r0})*WAA_r + (1 + a_{f0})*WAA_f] + (1 + a_0)*(1 + a_{p0})*WAA_p$$

The results in the first column of the table were estimated using Ordinary Least Squares. The results in the last column are what we would expect if the four factors—batting, baserunning, fielding, and pitching—were appropriately weighted in the calculation of fWAR.

Table 9.

	2003–15	
	Statistical Estimates	**Expected Values**
a_0	-0.043	0
(Std. Error)	0.043	–
a_{r0}	-0.122	0
(Std. Error)	0.263	–
a_{f0}	-0.200	0
(Std. Error)	0.085	–
a_{p0}	0.190	0
(Std. Error)	0.051	–
R^2	0.802	0.790

The coefficients on fielding, a_{f0}, and pitching, a_{p0}, are both significantly different from their expected value (zero) at more than a 95% significance level.

A negative value of a_{f0} suggests that the impact of player fielding on team wins is less than the impact of batting or baserunning. In this case, a coefficient of -0.200 suggests that fielding WAA are, on average, 20% less valuable than batting or baserunning WAA in translating into team wins.

The top fielding team in MLB in 2003, according to Fangraphs, was the Seattle Mariners at +78.1 Fielding Runs (above average). I translated that into a WAA_f of 7.7. Reducing that by the 20% implied by the estimated value of a_{f0} would lower that to approximately 6.1 WAA—a reduction of 1.6 wins. Overall, Fangraphs calculated a total of 47.2 WAR for the 2003 Mariners. Reducing that by 1.6 would lower it to 45.6

WAR. The 2003 Mariners actually finished 93–69, which is 45.4 wins above the .294 replacement level used by Fangraphs (and Baseball-Reference).

The worst fielding team in MLB in 2003, according to Fangraphs, was the Toronto Blue Jays at -73.5 Fielding Runs. I translated that into a WAA_f of -7.2. Reducing that by the 20% implied by the estimated value of a_{f0} would lower that (in absolute value) to -5.8—a reduction of 1.4 wins. Overall, Fangraphs calculated a total of 33.6 WAR for the 2003 Blue Jays. Increasing that by 1.4 would raise it to 35.0 WAR. The 2003 Blue Jays actually finished 86–76, 38.4 wins above the .294 replacement level used by Fangraphs.

A positive value of a_{p0} suggests that the impact of pitching WAR on team wins is greater than the impact of position-player WAR on team wins. In this case, a coefficient of 0.190 suggests that pitching WAA are, on average, 19% more valuable than position-player WAA in translating into team wins.

The top pitching team in MLB in 2003, according to Fangraphs, was the New York Yankees with 28.6 WAR. I translated that into a WAAp of 14.3. Increasing that by the 19% implied by the estimated value of a_{p0} would raise that to approximately 17.0 WAA and 31.3 WAR. Overall, Fangraphs calculated a total of 55.1 WAR for the 2003 Yankees. Increasing that by the additional 2.7 pitcher WAR derived above would raise it to 57.8 WAR. The 2003 Yankees actually finished 101–61, which is 53.6 wins above the .294 replacement level used by Fangraphs.

The worst pitching team in MLB in 2003, according to Fangraphs, was the Detroit Tigers with 2.9 WAR. I translated that into a WAA_p of -11.4. Increasing that (in absolute value) by the 19% implied by the estimated value of a_{p0} would raise that (in absolute value) to -13.6 WAA and 0.7 WAR. Overall, Fangraphs calculated a total of 1.7 WAR for the 2003 Tigers. Decreasing that by the additional negative pitcher WAA derived above (2.2) would lower it to -0.5 WAR. The 2003 Tigers actually finished 43–119, which is 4.6 wins below the .294 replacement level used by Fangraphs (i.e, an actual WAR of -4.6).

fWAR vs. ACTUAL WINS ABOVE REPLACEMENT

Both Baseball-Reference and Fangraphs use a replacement level of .294. As a final analysis, I compared $_f$WAR to team WAR, where the latter was set equal to actual team wins minus the number of wins a .294 team would have won over that team's total games (47.6 per 162). For this experiment, I fit the following equation:

$$\text{Team Wins over .294} = a_0 + (1 + a_{pos})*WAR_{pos} + (1 + a_p)*WAR_p$$

As with the previous table, the results in the first column of the table were estimated using Ordinary Least Squares. The results in the last column are what would be expected.

Table 10.

	2003–15	
	Statistical Estimates	**Expected Values**
a_0	-0.605	0
(Std. Error)	0.906	–
a_{pos}	-0.116	0
(Std. Error)	0.035	–
a_p	0.199	0
(Std. Error)	0.052	–
R^2	0.799	0.788

The coefficients, a_{pos} and a_p are both significant at a 99% confidence level.

The value of a_{pos}, -0.116, indicates that position-player WAR translate into about 12% fewer team WAR—i.e., 9 position-player WAR translate into only 8 team WAR. This is broadly consistent with the earlier result suggesting that fielding WAA is overstated by 20%. The value of a_p in this equation, 0.199, is virtually identical to the value of a_{p0} in the previous equation. Both coefficients suggest that pitcher WAR translates into 20% more team WAR—i.e., 5 pitcher WAR translate into 6 team WAR.

The value of R^2 indicates that just under 80% of the variance in team wins (over .294) can be explained by player WAR as presented at Fangraphs.com.

COMPARISON: eWOPA vs. bWAR VS. fWAR

Measuring the Accuracy of bWAA, fWAA, and eWOPA

At the team level, one would expect bWAA, fWAA, and eWOPA to correlate at least reasonably strongly with actual team wins over .500. The correlation will not be perfect (as it is for pWOPA and pWORL, by construction), of course. On offense, none of bWAA, fWAA, nor eWOPA tie to actual runs scored. And even if they did, differences in the distribution of runs scored lead to a less-than perfect correlation between runs scored (and runs allowed) and team wins. On the other hand, there is no particular reason to expect any of bWAA, fWAA, or eWOPA to do a notably better job of incorporating these differences, since none of the three are designed to capture such differences.

There are some expected differences across the three systems:

- As noted above, bWAA for pitching and fielding are constructed to tie to actual runs allowed at the

team level, by construction. This might lead one to expect bWAA to correlate somewhat more strongly to actual team wins than either fWAA or eWOPA.

- Both bWAA and fWAA for relief pitchers incorporate the leverage in which relief pitchers pitched. To the extent that better relief pitchers pitch in more important situations, this should lead to a better correlation with team wins for bWAA and fWAA than for eWOPA, which does not adjust for actual pitcher leverage.
- While eWOPA are calculated based on "context-neutral" win probabilities, there are some plays—stolen bases, bunts, and intentional walks—which I do not "neutralize" for context. To the extent that these plays are incorporated within eWOPA based on their actual context, this may lead eWOPA to correlate somewhat better with actual wins than bWAA or fWAA.

But, overall, the best (only?) way to evaluate how "accurate" bWAA, fWAA, and eWOPA are, relative to one another, is to evaluate how close they come to actual wins over .500 at the team level.

Table 11 repeats results presented earlier in this article that relate actual team wins to my eWOPA (eWins over positional average) and to WAR (Wins above Replacement), as calculated by Baseball-Reference (bWAR) and Fangraphs (fWAR). (I evaluated WAR rather than WAA because the WAA values investigated here were at least partially constructed by me, as explained earlier in the article.)

For eWOPA, I fit the following equation:

$$\text{Team Wins over .500} = a_0*(\text{eWOPA} + (\text{Teammate Adj.}))$$

For bWAR and fWAR, I fit the following equation:

$$\text{Team Wins over .294} = c + (1 + a_{pos})*WAR_{pos} + (1 + a_p)*WAR_p$$

The equations were all fit over team data from 2003 through 2015.

Table 11.

	eWOPA	bWAR	fWAR
a_0	1.915	–	–
(Std. Error)	0.045	–	–
C	–	2.152	-0.605
(Std. Error)	–	0.847	0.906
a_{pos}	–	-0.092	-0.116
(Std. Error)	–	0.033	0.035
a_p	–	-0.039	0.199
(Std. Error)	–	0.036	0.052
R^2	0.821	0.798	0.799

In comparing the results, I would point out that the equation for eWOPA presumes that the various factors are weighted optimally (as, indeed, I showed that they are earlier in this article). For bWAR and fWAR, however, the equation corrects for any mis-weighting between position players and pitchers. As such, to the extent the results here may be biased toward one or the other, they would be biased toward the WARs.

In spite of this possible bias, the highest R^2 (which measures the percentage of variance in actual team wins explained by the various equations) is for eWOPA.

There are several alternative ways to measure how "close" these measures come to actual team wins beyond the above table. Table 12 presents two such measures over two alternate time periods.

Table 12.

	bWAA	fWAA	Raw	eWOPA incl. Teammate Adj.
Correlation				
1969–2015	89.7%	88.4%	89.9%	90.6%
2003–2015	89.3%	88.8%	90.3%	90.8%
Standard Errors				
1969–2015	4.931	5.213	4.926	4.792
2003–2015	5.066	5.118	4.839	4.726

The first two rows present the simple correlation between team wins over .500 and the measures being evaluated here (bWAA, fWAA, eWOPA). Correlation is a measure that ranges from -1 to 1. Numbers greater than zero indicate that teams with higher values of bWAA (for example) tend to also have more actual wins over .500 (and vice versa). A correlation of 1 (or 100%) would mean that actual wins and the measure of interest move perfectly in synch, so that 5% more bWAA would translate into exactly 5% more wins over .500.

Statisticians often refer to correlation by the letter, r. The relationship between the "r" here and the R^2 in several of my earlier tables is not coincidental. In fact, for a univariate equation (i.e., y is a simple function of one variable, x), R^2 is the square of the correlation coefficient, r. Not surprisingly, then, the correlation results here tell the same basic story as the R^2 results told earlier: the relationships between team wins over .500 and bWAA, fWAA, and eWOPA are fairly similar, with eWOPA correlating somewhat better than bWAA and fWAA.

The last two rows calculate standard errors for bWAA, fWAA, and eWOPA. These are calculated as follows. For every team-season, the difference between team wins over .500 and the number of wins over .500 predicted by the relevant measure is calculated. For

bWAA and fWAA, the "number of wins over .500 predicted" is simply equal to bWAA and fWAA, respectively. As discussed earlier, the relationship between net eWins and net team wins (and, by extension, between eWOPA and team wins over .500) is not one-to-one, but is closer to two to one. Hence, for this set of calculations, "the number of wins over .500 predicted by" eWOPA is equal to 2 times eWOPA. These differences are squared and then summed. Squaring the errors has two effects. First, a square of any number is positive, so squaring the numbers has the effect of valuing 2 the same as -2, so that positive and negative errors do not simply cancel out. Second, squaring these numbers (as opposed to simply taking the absolute value) weights larger errors more strongly than smaller errors. For example, squaring errors of 1 and 4 would produce a sum of squared errors of 17 ($1^2 + 4^2$) while squaring errors of 2 and 3 (which have the same simple sum: 5) would produce a sum of squared errors of only 13 ($2^2 + 3^2$): being off by 4 half of the time is worse than always being off by 2 or 3. The sum of squared errors is then divided by the total number of observations (1,288 team-seasons from 1969–2015) and the square root is taken. The results, then, are, essentially, average absolute errors (weighted against large errors)—so lower numbers are better.

The conclusion from the standard errors is pretty much the same as the conclusion from the correlations: eWOPA is best. Over the most recent time period (2003–15), the standard error associated with eWOPA (including teammate adjustments) is approximately 7% better than bWAA and 8% better than fWAA.

Comparing bWAA and fWAA, the results seem to clearly favor Baseball-Reference. This is as we would expect, I think, given that defensive bWAA are constructed based on actual runs scored. Given that, the fact that eWOPA is even more accurate than bWAA strikes me as truly impressive (although I'm obviously not the most objective observer of these results, of course).

COMPARISON OF FACTORS: BATTING, BASERUNNING, FIELDING, PITCHING

Proper Factor Weighting: Batting vs. Baserunning vs. Pitching vs. Fielding

Earlier in this article, I spent a great deal of time looking at the individual factors of player value—Batting, Baserunning, Fielding, and Pitching—and assessing whether these factors were properly weighted within eWOPA, bWAA, and fWAA. Those results are repeated below.

To review, I fit the following equation for eWins, bWAA, and fWAA by factor.

$$\text{Net Wins} = a_0*[(\text{Net Batting eWins}) + (1 + a_{r0})*(\text{Net Baserunning eWins}) + (1 + a_{f0})*(\text{Net Fielding eWins}) + a_2*(\text{Teammate Adj.})] + a_0*(1 + a_{p0})*(\text{Net Pitching eWins})$$

Table 13 presents statistical results (estimated using Ordinary Least Squares) as well as expected coefficients. All three equations were estimated over data from 2003–15.

To review some key points from my earlier analysis. First, with respect to Player won-lost records:

- None of the coefficients in the equation for Player won-lost records are significantly different from their expected values.
- The impact of pitching on Player won-lost records is stronger (by 20–30 percent) than expected based on raw Player won-lost records. But this is accounted for in player eWins through adjustments for expected context and "team win adjustment".
- The relationship between net eWins and net Team wins is approximately 2-to-1.

Table 13.

	Player Won-Lost Records		Wins above Replacement (WAR)		
	Statistical Estimates	Expected Values	Baseball-Ref	Fangraphs	ExpectedValues
a_0	2.064	1.978	1.080	0.957	1.000
(Std. Error)	0.078	0.044	0.043	0.043	–
a_2	1.828	2.000	–	–	–
(Std. Error)	0.555	–	–	–	–
a_{r0}	-0.275	0.000	0.085	-0.122	0.000
(Std. Error)	0.264	–	0.328	0.263	–
a_{f0}	0.031	0.000	-0.118	-0.200	0.000
(Std. Error)	0.176	–	0.074	0.085	–
a_{p0}	0.220	0.304	-0.062	0.243	0.000
(Std. Error)	0.062	–	0.050	0.086	–
R^2	0.839	0.838	0.817	0.802	0.793 / 0.788

- The relationship between eWins and team wins is strengthened by taking explicit account of teammate adjustments, to reflect the interactive relationship between pitchers and fielders (and, to a lesser extent, between batters and baserunners).
- Overall, approximately **84%** of the variance in team wins is captured within eWins.

As for the two WAR measures:

- Fielding is significantly over-weighted and pitching is significantly under-weighted within Fangraphs' fWAR framework.
- Because of the structure of its calculations—which tie to actual runs allowed at the team level—it is difficult to evaluate the appropriateness of Baseball-Reference's weighting of fielding and pitching. The evidence that exists, however, suggests that fielding is over-weighted by Baseball-Reference.
- Despite certain factors that should give the two WAR measures certain structural advantages vis-a-vis context-neutral eWins—relief pitcher leverage, Baseball-Reference's use of actual runs allowed—both WAR measures explain less of the actual variance in team wins than eWins, even when optimizing the weighting of batting, baserunning, pitching, and fielding.
- As presented by Baseball-Reference and Fangraphs, **less than 80%** of the variance in team wins is captured within either bWAR or fWAR.

WHY ARE PLAYER WON-LOST RECORDS SUPERIOR?

The math seems very compelling to me. Player won-lost records are a better measure of actual team value—and, hence, by extension, are a better measure of player value—than WAR. Of course, I'm not the most objective observer here, but hopefully I have made a sufficiently compelling case that you agree with me.

Moving beyond the math, why are Player won-lost records superior to WAR?

The answer, I believe, is because I start from actual wins. I actually begin by calculating pWins, which tie to team wins by construction. I then pull out the context from pWins to create eWins. But starting from actual wins ensures that eWins still tie directly to team wins because eWins are still derived from actual team wins—albeit indirectly.

For example, starting from actual wins, I discovered that home runs are more valuable, relative to other hits, than conventional sabermetric wisdom believed.

Starting from actual wins, my other big discovery is that the translation from player value to team value is not linear, but is, instead, largely multiplicative. Being a little bit better than average will translate into a lot of wins. By starting from actual team wins, I was able to incorporate this finding even into my "context-neutral" wins through what I call an "expected team win adjustment." This recognizes that a player who is somewhat above (or below) average will have a non-linear, multiplicative, impact on his team's wins above (or below) average. The extent to which this is true will depend on how concentrated a player's performance is within his team's games. Because pitchers concentrate their performance more heavily than position players, this leads to pitchers having stronger expected (and actual) team win adjustments. This leads me to (correctly) weight pitcher performance more heavily than may be suggested by a simple linear analysis.

Probably the most significant difference between my eWOPA and eWORL measures versus bWAR and fWAR is in the impact of fielding on team wins. As I showed and discussed above, both WAR measures overstate the impact of fielding on team wins, by perhaps as much as 25%. In contrast, the evidence strongly suggests that my weighting of fielding is entirely appropriate. As with batting and pitching, I believe that I have gotten this weighting right because I determined the appropriate split between pitching and fielding through an objective analysis that began from a framework tied to actual team wins.

Ultimately, if you want to understand what leads to wins in Major League Baseball, you have to look at actual wins in Major League Baseball. Player won-lost records begin by looking at actual team wins, unlike WAR, which begins by looking at theoretical run values. And that is why Player won-lost records produce the best estimate of player value, either in or out of context. ■

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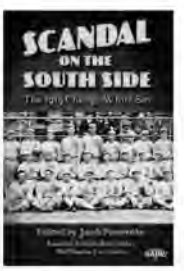

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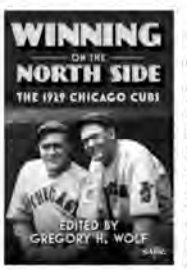

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Organized Baseball's Night Birth

Mark Metcalf

The first night game in the history of Organized Baseball took place in Independence, Kansas, on April 28, 1930. The Independence Producers, a Class C team in the Western Association, had installed permanent lights on their field, Producers Park. They played a total of fifty-five night baseball games at home in 1930.[1]

One part of understanding the significance of the event in Independence is understanding the definition Organized Baseball—the term used to describe Major League Baseball and the associated minor leagues. The leagues are governed by rules and agreements such as the National Association Rules, Major-Minor League Rules, and the Major-Minor League Agreement. Besides the rules and agreements, the leagues, teams, and players are governed by the Commissioner of Baseball. The commissioner has authority to discipline all those under his management.[2]

Before the first night baseball game in Independence, the *Independence Daily Reporter* wrote, "Independence is thus leading the world in the plan which experts say will ultimately result in adoption by practically every minor league baseball team in the world." The newspaper added that the night game would be a historic first for Organized Baseball since the game would be on their field under their lights. They believed it would be a notable event that would mark the beginning of a new "epoch" for baseball.[3]

Independence was not the first city to host a night baseball game. Night baseball games took place much earlier, one being on September 2, 1880, in Hull, Massachusetts. Two department store teams—Jordan Marsh and Company and R.H. White and Company—played a nine inning game that ended in a tie, 16–16. Professional baseball showed no interest in the game, and the Organized Baseball leadership would wait fifty years before giving night baseball a try.[4]

Various experimental night baseball games and exhibitions did take place after the game in Hull. One such exhibition game took place in Wilmington, Delaware, on July 4, 1896. The teams, Wilmington and Paterson, were Organized Baseball teams in the Atlantic League. The game only lasted six innings, but one of its players was notable: Honus Wagner.[5] During the sixth inning, Wilmington pitcher Doc Amole threw an explosive instead of a ball. What followed caused the novel experiment with lights to be cut short. When Wagner connected with his bat, the firework exploded, which put a sudden halt to the game. There were no injuries reported, but many upset fans requested refunds.[6]

Thirteen years later two Central League teams, Grand Rapids and Zanesville, took to the field at night. The seven-inning game took place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on July 7, 1909. Grand Rapids won the game, 11–10, but they did not have the honor of playing the first night game in Organized Baseball, because league rules banned night games. Therefore the game did not count as a league game.[7]

Newton Crane's 1891 book that explained the game of baseball included the authorized playing rules for all organizations operating under the National Agreement. One rule required games to start at least two hours prior to sunset. That rule is understandable since another rule stated that games would have nine innings, while another granted umpires authority to call games due to darkness. The 1913 official rules for a regulation game include the same game start time and innings requirements as those published in 1891.[8]

On June 4, 1927, another night game exhibition took place in West Lynn, Massachusetts. The two New England League teams were Lynn and Salem, and Lynn won the seven-inning game by a score of 7–2. The General Electric Company had placed lights on the company's baseball field for the two visiting teams; the lights were removed after the game. The game got the attention of E. Lee Keyser, the Des Moines (Iowa) Demons owner.[9]

Several Organized Baseball executives also witnessed the West Lynn night game. Managers from the Washington Nationals and Boston Red Sox attended, and were impressed with the future prospects of night baseball. The success of the West Lynn game had some league owners and managers considering the benefits of nighttime play. It was the final experiment

with lights before the "real thing," a night league game, would take place.[10]

The Des Moines Demons were part of the Western League. When the annual National Association convention took place in 1929, Keyser announced plans for night baseball games in 1930. But before the Demons could take the field under the lights, the first league night baseball game actually took place in Independence, Kansas, on April 28, 1930. The teams were the Independence Producers and the Muskogee Chiefs. The Chiefs won the game 13–3, but Independence won the honor of hosting the first league game under lights.[11]

Before the league night game in Independence, the Producers had played an exhibition night game on April 17, defeating the House of David, a professional team that was not an Organized Baseball club. The light projectors used in the game had been purchased from the supplier was the Giant Manufacturing Company located in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Six steel pipe towers were constructed, and when mounted on the field stood sixty feet tall. Lighting technology had significantly improved since the 1927 game in Massachusetts, which allowed Independence to start a new era in baseball.[12]

A community effort was needed to make baseball history in Independence. The contract to purchase the lights was signed by several city leaders: B.H. Woodman for the Independence Board of Education, L.E. Losey for the Independence High School Athletic Association, Marvin Truby for the Independence Baseball Association, C.B. Smith for the Giant Manufacturing Company, and Independence's mayor, Charles Kerr.[13]

Truby owned the Producers in 1930 and pushed to bring night baseball to Independence. A business man who loved baseball, Truby will now be remembered as the "father of nighttime baseball." In 2014 Truby was posthumously inducted into the Kansas Baseball Hall of Fame.[14]

Baseball Magazine, in 1931, gave credit to Independence for hosting baseball's first league night game, but that was just the beginning. What took place during the 1930 season showed the significance of the event. Night baseball "spread like wildfire" across the minor leagues and game attendance exploded. (The major leagues did acknowledge what was taking place in the minor leagues at the time, but they had little interest in following suit, yet.[15]) Independence pitcher Ron Vance threw the first pitch in an official night game. By the end of 1930, 38 minor league teams would be playing night baseball on their home fields. And that was just the beginning of things to come.[16]

By the end of the 1934 season, sixty-five minor league teams had installed permanent lights on their fields. In 1935 *The Sporting News* reported that Independence had been the first to use permanent lights, and that the Des Moines claim of being first was false. Leagues were investing in permanent lights during the Great Depression.[17]

The Encyclopedia of Minor League Baseball credits night baseball with saving the minor leagues. However, the minor leagues were not the only ones interested in night games. The Kansas City Monarchs were not an Organized Baseball team, but they also made the move to artificial lighting. On April 28, 1930, the Monarchs played their first night baseball game, an exhibition game using a portable lighting system. The game was played in Enid, Oklahoma, against Phillips University. Powering the Monarchs' lighting was what they advertised as the largest generator of its kind, which could be transported by truck along with the telescoping light towers.[18]

Des Moines, Iowa, was the second city to have a league night baseball game played, and it was under permanent lights. The Independence lights were adequate for professional baseball, but the system Keyser

COURTESY OF JOEL MCKENZIE

Night baseball game at Independence's Producers Park in 1930.

used in Des Moines was superior. The game took place on May 2, 1930, between the Des Moines Demons and the Wichita Aviators. Unlike the game in Independence, the game in Des Moines was partially broadcast live on NBC radio. That broadcast put Des Moines in the national spotlight, while the achievement in Independence went mostly unnoticed by the mainstream media.[19]

Independence considered their 1930 lighting system to be "elaborate," effective for night baseball games and believed to be sufficient for all sports. Even so, Truby announced in March 1931 that he was having additional lighting units installed before the start of the season.[20]

It did not take long for night baseball to migrate beyond the borders of the United States. In 1931, at Athletic Park, the Firemen defeated the Arrows in a baseball game under the lights in Vancouver, Canada. The fans were awed by the lights, and the game announcer predicted that other cities would soon follow Vancouver's example. Waseda University Stadium in Japan installed lights for baseball games in 1933. The six towers constructed there were one hundred feet high.[21]

Larry MacPhail, the general manager of the Cincinnati Reds in 1934, attended the National League convention in December of that year. He requested approval—and received it—to play night games in 1935. Cincinnati, Ohio, would become the first city to hold a major league game at night on May 24 at Crosley Field. The Reds beat the Philadelphia Phillies, 2–1, before a crowd of 20,422.[22]

In summary, Independence, Kansas, achieved two firsts in baseball history. The city was the first to install and use permanent lights on an Organized Baseball field, first using them in an exhibition on April 17, 1930. Independence was also the first to play an Organized Baseball game under artificial lighting, on April 28, 1930. These events defined the start of a new era in professional baseball. After fifty years of experimenting, Organized Baseball finally had night games. ■

Notes

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The International Girls Baseball League

William E. McMahon, Helen E. Nordquist, Merrie A. Fidler

Probably almost everyone has heard of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) thanks to the movie *A League of Their Own*. Of course, the film did not deal with other professional leagues or an international girls' baseball league. The idea for an international league was first proposed by Arthur Meyerhoff, a Philip K. Wrigley advertising agent and AAGPBL Commissioner from 1945 through 1950. Meyerhoff was also integrally involved in helping to establish and advertise the AAGPBL from its inception in 1943. In 1948 he envisioned an International Girls Baseball League to play games in Florida in December, Venezuela in January, Puerto Rico in February, and Cuba in March.[1]

Meyerhoff's plan stemmed from his experiments with league spring training in Cuba in 1947 and post-season exhibition tours in Cuba, Central America, Venezuela, and Puerto Rico in 1948 and 1949.[2] Although Meyerhoff's groundwork suggested that a winter league of girls' international baseball could be viable, its success was undermined by potentially dishonest Latin American promoters and financially constrained team directors who lacked his vision.[3]

A second incarnation of an International Girls Baseball League did come to fruition, though, and with the help of co-author and former AAGPBL player, Helen "Nordie" Nordquist, we have been able to construct an account of this hitherto obscure subject.

The second set of administrators to establish a women's winter professional baseball league in Florida came from the Chicago-based National Girls Baseball League (NGBL), a parallel league to the All-American. They organized and operated the "International Girls Baseball League" (IGBL) in Florida during the winter of 1952–53.

The amateur/semipro teams of the Chicago area were a key source of talent for the AAGBPL, as the area attracted the nation's best softball players and touring teams from other cities during the 1930s and 1940s.[4] Philip Wrigley created the All-American Girls Softball League (AAGSBL) in 1943 to keep baseball alive with female players, while many male big leaguers were serving in World War II. The AAGSBL title only lasted half a season because league administrators wanted to differentiate that, except for underhand pitching, ball size, and field dimensions, the league utilized baseball rather than softball rules. Subsequent league title changes included All-American Girls Base Ball League (1943, 1946–50), All-American Girls Professional Ball League (1944–45), and American Girls Baseball League (1951–54). The players' adoption of "All American Girls Professional Baseball League" when they incorporated as a players' association in 1987 is how the league is known today and how it is referred to in this article. That league did not play in Chicago except during 1948. Its teams were primarily located in smaller cities around Chicago.[5] It was natural that Wrigley's scouts would recruit the best talent in Chicago, who were playing softball in the Metropolitan League. Thus, in order to retain and compete for player talent, some of the administrators of the Metropolitan League decided to convert their amateur softball teams into the professional "National Girls Baseball League" in 1944. As a result, women's professional ball then had its own "American" and "National" Leagues. The NGBL began with five teams in 1944, which was increased to six teams in 1945, and that number remained stable for several years.[6] For most of its history the All-American League consisted of at least six teams, with a high of ten teams in 1948 and a low of four teams in 1943.

The founders of the NGBL included Charlie Bidwill, owner of the Chicago Cardinals football team, Emery Parichy, owner of a suburban home improvement business, and prominent politician Ed Kolski. The NGBL continued as a fast pitch softball league while the AAGPBL, except for pitching, ball size, and field dimensions, always played by baseball rules. Throughout the league's history, its field dimensions, ball size, and pitching style were constantly changed to approximate those of the men's game because league administrators believed baseball was a better spectator sport than softball.[7]

From 1944–54 players jumped back and forth between the All-American and National Leagues. Players

switched leagues for things like a better salary, playing closer to home and a job—some AAGPBLers didn't like or got tired of the extended travel—or being more comfortable with one game (usually softball) than the other. Some players in the AAGPBL, especially pitchers and infielders, couldn't adapt to overhand pitching or throwing the longer field distances that league administration continually adopted, but they were still outstanding softball players. Connie Wisniewski, for instance, first became an AAGPBL outfielder when the increased pitching distance and overhand delivery reduced her pitching effectiveness. In 1950 she switched to the NGBL, where her underhand softball pitching prowess was in demand, but returned to the AAGPBL in 1951 because she enjoyed the social atmosphere there more.[8]

After two years of conflict over players, administrators in the two leagues reached a nonraiding agreement in 1946, and competition between them lessened, which brings us to the winter of 1952–53.[9]

As noted previously, Meyerhoff had envisioned establishing an International Girls Baseball League in 1948, and Frank Darling of the NGBL wanted to start a winter league in Florida in 1950. These ideas did not come to fruition, but in the fall/winter of 1952, some NGBL administrators, headed by Darling, organized and operated a winter girls' baseball league in Florida. Frank Darling, owner of the NGBL's Chicago Music Maids, was the president and driving force for the IGBL, and league secretary Harry D. Wilson also hailed from the NGBL. Darling must have collaborated with AAGPBL administrators on recruiting some of their players because a December 21, 1952, *Rockford* (Illinois) *Morning Star* article announced that six Peaches were playing in the IGBL.[10] Another aspect bespeaking collaboration between the NGBL and AAGPBL was that the IGBL adopted the AAGPBL's skirt-style uniform rather than the NGBL's baseball pants or shorts-style uniforms. No information was available to suggest whether IGBL administrators consulted with those from the AAGPBL regarding the league's title or whether they eventually intended to include competition with Cuban, Venezuelan, or Puerto Rican women's teams. However, the league's title suggests this may have been a possibility.

NGBL and AAGPBL players were "recruited" to the IGBL with letters from Darling in October

International Girls Baseball League, Inc.

HOLLYWOOD, FLA. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS MIAMI BEACH, FLA. FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.

M. F. DARLING, PRESIDENT
HARRY D. WILSON, SECRETARY

October 29th, 1952

BUSINESS OFFICE
5247 West Madison Street
Phone Estebrook 8-3838
CHICAGO 44, ILL.

Helen Nordquist
124 Tremont Street
Malden 48, Massachusetts

Dear Helen:

Since the time is growing very close to the opening date of the new Winter League, I am enclosing herewith a contract in the amount of $90.00 per week. If you are interested in becoming a member of this new League, please sign and return one copy of this contract to me immediately. I will also need to know your bust, waist and hip measurements and your height and weight.

Our plans are to play six nights per week with Mondays off. A few exhibition games may be played on Monday in Havana, Cuba and Key West, Florida but for these games the League will assume the expense of hotel accommodations, etc. We have made arrangements, for any girls who wish to take advantage of it, to stay at an excellent downtown Miami hotel at the reasonable rate of $10.00 per week. If you wish accommodations made for you at this hotel, please let me know by return mail. The League will furnish all uniforms.

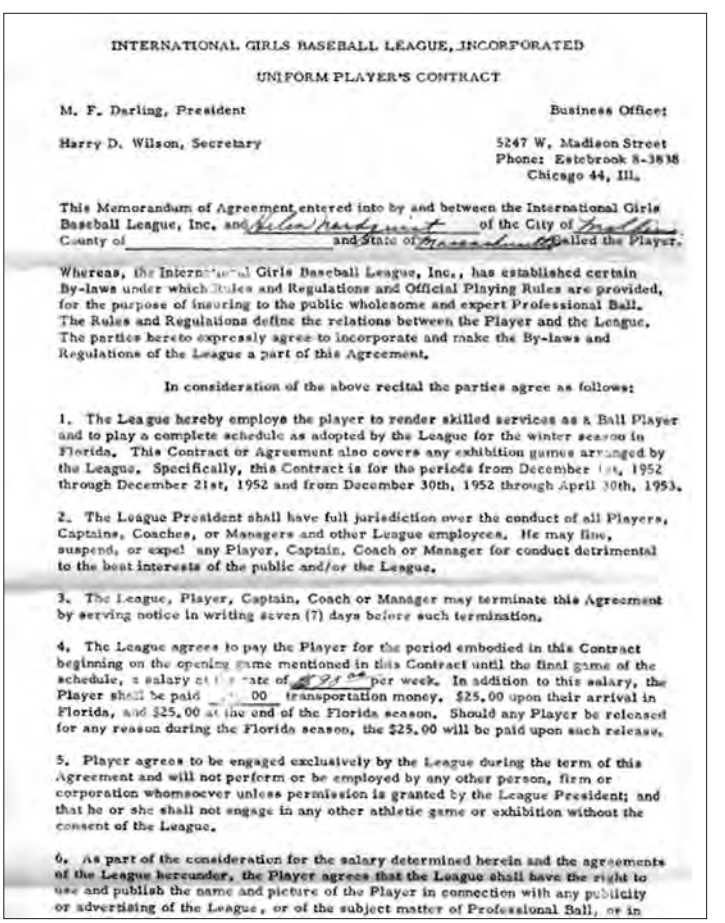
You might be interested in knowing that a large number of All-America girls have signed up with our League. To name just a few, Dorothy Schroeder, Betty Foss and her sister, Wilma Briggs and a number of others.

Since the training week begins November 24th, it is absolutely necessary for me to receive your reply immediately. I will look forward to hearing from you and until then, I remain

Very truly yours,

M. F. Darling,
President

MFD:rs



INTERNATIONAL GIRLS BASEBALL LEAGUE, INCORPORATED

UNIFORM PLAYER'S CONTRACT

M. F. Darling, President
Harry D. Wilson, Secretary

Business Office:
5247 W. Madison Street
Phone: Estebrook 8-3838
Chicago 44, Ill.

This Memorandum of Agreement entered into by and between the International Girls Baseball League, Inc. and Helen Nordquist of the City of Malden County of _____ and State of Massachusetts called the Player.

Whereas, the International Girls Baseball League, Inc., has established certain By-laws under which Rules and Regulations and Official Playing Rules are provided, for the purpose of insuring to the public wholesome and expert Professional Ball. The Rules and Regulations define the relations between the Player and the League. The parties hereto expressly agree to incorporate and make the By-laws and Regulations of the League a part of this Agreement.

In consideration of the above recital the parties agree as follows:

1. The League hereby employs the player to render skilled services as a Ball Player and to play a complete schedule as adopted by the League for the winter season in Florida. This Contract or Agreement also covers any exhibition games arranged by the League. Specifically, this Contract is for the periods from December 1st, 1952 through December 21st, 1952 and from December 30th, 1952 through April 30th, 1953.

2. The League President shall have full jurisdiction over the conduct of all Players, Captains, Coaches, or Managers and other League employees. He may fine, suspend, or expel any Player, Captain, Coach or Manager for conduct detrimental to the best interests of the public and/or the League.

3. The League, Player, Captain, Coach or Manager may terminate this Agreement by serving notice in writing seven (7) days before such termination.

4. The League agrees to pay the Player for the period embodied in this Contract beginning on the opening game mentioned in this Contract until the final game of the schedule, a salary at the rate of $90.00 per week. In addition to this salary, the Player shall be paid $ 00 transportation money, $25.00 upon their arrival in Florida, and $25.00 at the end of the Florida season. Should any Player be released for any reason during the Florida season, the $25.00 will be paid upon such release.

5. Player agrees to be engaged exclusively by the League during the term of this Agreement and will not perform or be employed by any other person, firm or corporation whomsoever unless permission is granted by the League President; and that he or she shall not engage in any other athletic game or exhibition without the consent of the League.

6. As part of the consideration for the salary determined herein and the agreements of the League hereunder, the Player agrees that the League shall have the right to use and publish the name and picture of the Player in connection with any publicity or advertising of the League, or of the subject matter of Professional Ball, or in

Examples of Darling's letter to prospective IGBL players.

MIAMI BEACH BELLES

Player	Pos	1952 Team
Donna Banning	SS	Queens 1953
Erma Bergmann	P	Last played for Battle Creek Belles in 1951
Jaynne Bittner	UT	Fort Wayne Daisies
Wilma Briggs	LF	Fort Wayne Daisies
Genevieve Burns	C	Checashers
Marilyn Burns	P	Checashers
Inez Gray	P	NGBL
Ruby Heafner	C	Last played for Battle Creek Belles in 1951
Jacqueline Kelley	3B	Rockford Peaches
Marie Mansfield	2B	Rockford Peaches and Battle Creek Belles
Ruth Mason	OF	Bloomer Girls/Belles (Played for Grand Rapids in 1953)
Dolores Moore	1B	Belles (Played for Grand Rapids in 1953–54)
Helen Nordquist	OF	Rockford Peaches
Joanne Winter	P	Music Maids (Played for Racine Belles 1943–50)

MIAMI MAIDS

Player	Pos	1952 Team
Joan Berger	SS	Rockford Peaches
Alice Brunke	3B	Music Maids
Betty Foss	CF	Fort Wayne Daisies
Julie Gutz	C	Music Maids/Belles (Played AA 1948–50)
Josephine Kabick	P	Music Maids (Played in AA 1944–48)
Ann Kmezich	P/OF	Queens
Ann Pallo	C	Music Maids
Mary Pembo	1B	Music Maids/Bloomer Girls
Edythe Perlick	LF	Music Maids (Played in AA 1943–50)
Joyce Ricketts	RF	Music Maids (Played in AA 1953–54)
Stephanie Vaughn	P	Music Maids
Jean Weaver	2B	Fort Wayne Daisies

FORT LAUDERDALE ROCKETTES

Player	Pos	1952 Team
Joanne Beckmann	SS	Belles
June Borowy	3B	Bloomer Girls
Yolanda Davino	P	Bluebirds
Lottie Jackson	P	Music Maids 1951
Donna Johns	2B	Bluebirds
Doris Sams	CF	Kalamazoo Lassies
Lonnie Stark	P	Bluebirds
Caroline Stoecker	LF	Checashers
Georgia Terkowski	UT	Rockford Peaches
Virginia Ventura	UT	Rockford Peaches
Dorothy Whalen	C	Checashers (Played for South Bend Blue Sox and Springfield Sallies in 1948)
Mary Wisham	1B	Last Played for Peoria Redwings in 1950

HOLLYWOOD QUEENS

Player	Pos	1952 Team
Irene Applegren	P	Rockford Peaches
Margaret Berger	P	Checashers (Played for South Bend Blue Sox in 1943–44)
Virginia Busick	P	Queens
Louise Fischi	3B	Queens
Dorothy Hane	CF	Queens
Alice Kolski	3B	Queens
Jane McCawley	OF	Queens
Mary Reynolds	SS	Last played for Peoria Redwings in 1950
Ruth Richard	C	Rockford Peaches
Mary Rudd	UT	Bloomer Girls
Freda Savona	2B	Queens
Ellouise Stech	C	Queens

1952.[11] If a player responded affirmatively to the letter, she received a contract.

Enough players from the NGBL and AAGPBL responded affirmatively to Darling's winter ball proposal to constitute four teams. Those listed on the following page who played for teams preceded by city names were from the AAGPBL, and the other players listed came from Chicago's NGBL teams.

The NGBL was well represented in the IGBL with outstanding players such as Beckmann, Borowy, Brunke, G. Burns, Johns, Kabick, Ricketts, and Stoecher. They were all on the NGBL's 1952 All-Star team. In addition, the Queens, the team the All-Stars played, were represented by Busick, Hane, Kmezich, Kolski, F. Savona, and Stech, who were equally outstanding. Kabick and Ricketts had also previously starred in the AAGPBL. Savona was the "Babe Ruth" of the NGBL; she shattered the existing home run record and batted over .400 in 1951.[12]

Top players from the AAGPBL were former All-Stars

Joan Berger, Briggs, Foss, Kelley, Moore, Perlick, Richard, Sams, Winter, and Wisham. Multi-year AAGPBL All Stars included Perlick (1943, 1947, 1948), Richard (1949–54), Ricketts (1953–54), Sams (1947, 1949–52) and Winter (1946, 1948). Among these, Sams was one of only two AAGPBLers who earned the league's Player of the Year Award twice (1947, 1949).[13]

The plans for the International Girls Baseball League were very ambitious, and as it turned out, overly so. There was to be a 240-game schedule, meaning 120 games per team, to be played between December 2, 1952, and April 28, 1953. After that, of course, the women would return to their regular league teams for their scheduled seasons. As noted, Frank Darling, owner of the NGBL Music Maids, was the IGBL president. Umpires were from the men's Florida International League. Games were played almost daily from December 2 through December 21. However, a Sunday, December 21, 1952, *Rockford* (Illinois) *Morning Star* sports page editorial predicted that the IGBL was doomed unless a "lusty TV contract" and/or additional "advertising lifesavers" turned things around. The article noted that attendance was affected by cold weather and amounted to only 667 fans at the season opener. Some succeeding games only drew 200–500, and players were asked to take a pay cut due to the league's financial woes.[14] There was a two-week hiatus for the Christmas holidays, and play resumed on January 6, but weather prevented all but a couple of games for the next few days. Then on January 11, 1953, it was announced that the rest of the season was cancelled.

On Monday, January 12, 1953, the *Omaha* (Nebraska) *World Herald* reported that the IGBL, which operated for more than a month, had folded the day before. The league blamed "cold weather and other attractions for its failure," and it was noted that "spotty crowds attended the first three weeks and the league closed down for the Christmas holidays" with only two games per team being played between January 1–7, 1953.[15]

The *Miami Herald* sports page articles for the IGBL from December 3, 1952, through January 9, 1953, were short and sweet.[16] They reported outstanding individual play, scores, winners and losers, line scores, and the next night's game schedule, but not much else to entice fans to attend games. There were no averages (or even standings) published. All that was available, mainly from the *Miami Herald*, are line scores with some commentary. Thus the following statistics are unofficial, but the standings are approximated as follows:

Team	W	L
Fort Lauderdale Rockettes	9	4
Hollywood Queens	9	4
Miami Maids	6	8
Miami Beach Belles	4	12

COURTESY OF HELEN NORDQUIST

Miami Beach Belles, L to R: *Wilma Briggs, Ruby Heafner, Inez Gray, Marie Mansfield, Joanne Winter, Jaynne Bittner, Erma Bergman, Jacquelyn Kelley, Ruth Mason, Helen Nordquist, Dolores Moore, Donna Banning, Marilyn Burns, Genevieve Burns.*

COURTESY OF HELEN NORDQUIST

Hollywood (FL) Queens, L to R: *Irene Applegren, Louise Fischi, ?, Ruth Richard, Dorothy Hane, Freda Savona, Ginny Busick, Margaret Berger, ?, ?, Alice Kolski, ?, Mary Rudd.*

More game stats for analyzing league action would have been desirable, however the success of the Queens was no surprise. Their core was from the Chicago Queens, the dominant team in the NGBL. The other teams looked fairly evenly matched on paper. For hitting, only home runs were mentioned in the articles. Three players had at least two—the NGBL's Alice Kolski (one grand slam), and Freda Savona (two in one game), and the AAGPBL's Betty Foss. For pitching, the best performance was Ginny Busick's 6–1 record. Lottie Jackson was 4–2, while Sunny Berger and Ann Kmezich went 3–2.[17] The pitching style was underhand, so the pitchers were primarily from the NGBL, although some played in the AAGPBL 1943–47, when the league utilized underhand pitching. One notable disappointment was Joanne Winter, a star in both leagues, who started out 0–5.

The only promotions to stimulate attendance were Ladies' Nights, an exhibition game or two with local men's teams, and a clash between a team of IGBL All-Stars and the Fort Lauderdale Rockettes.[18] Only two articles included photographs. One was a game action shot of Marie Mansfield attempting to tag Alice Brunke at third base on December 3, 1952, and the other was a December 9 still of Margaret (Sunny) Berger about to deliver an underhand pitch. Some feature articles on individual players and more game action shots might have helped stimulate attendance. In addition, efforts to promote attendance among local business or factory workers might also have bolstered sagging fan turnout. Coverage by other local newspapers in IGBL cities was not available for this article, but it seems reasonable to believe that the *Miami Herald*'s coverage was representative of the rest.

Of the International Girls Baseball League's premature folding, NGBL star Freda Savona said, "I just can't understand it, …The sport has been so successful around Chicago. Why, for two seasons our league outdrew the White Sox in attendance."[19] Of 28 games scheduled between December 30 and January 4, the teams played about half, but this wasn't only due to the weather. Ad hoc adjustments to the original schedule wiped out five games between these dates. One has to wonder at the market research and lack of publicity by management because Miami was a much smaller market than Chicago. In addition to the usual sports activities (basketball, high school games, etc.), there were football bowl games, and Hialeah and jai-alai featured the allure of gambling. If the league had survived into February/March, it would have also had to compete against major league baseball's spring training. In addition, there was a good men's minor league operating in the area. Since the IGBL was an experiment, a 60 to 80 game schedule would have been more sensible.

COURTESY OF YOLANDA DAVINO

Ft. Lauderdale Rockettes, L to R: *June Borowy, Georgia Terkowski, Caroline Stoecker, Dorothy Whalen, Virginia Ventura, Mary Wisham, Lottie Jackson, Joanne Beckman, Donna Johns, Yolanda Davino, Lonnie Stark.*

COURTESY OF HELEN NORDQUIST

Miami Maids, L to R: *Joan Knebl, Julie Gutz, Joyce Ricketts, Josephine Kabick, Ann Pallo, Jean Weaver, Ann Kmezich, Betty Foss, Mary Pembo, Edythe Perlick, Alice Brunke, Stephanie Vaughn.*

As the January 12, 1953, *Miami Herald* article noted, the IGBL consisted of the cream of both women's Midwestern circuits.[20] Unfortunately, the demise of the IGBL was an early indicator that women's professional softball and baseball were on the way out. The AAGPBL lasted through the 1954 season, dropping from six teams in 1953 to five in 1954. The NGBL dropped two teams in 1953 and another in 1954 after which it also came to an end.[21,22] Subsequently, there was no women's professional baseball to speak of. Amateur women's softball underwent a revival as a college sport with the passage of Title IX and enjoyed a stint as an Olympic sport from 1996 through 2008. There was an attempt to establish an International Women's Professional Softball Association (1976–79), but it wasn't until 1997 that the current women's National Professional Fastpitch (NPL) league was first established as Women's Professional Fastpitch (WPF).[23]

As former IGBL participant Helen "Nordie" Nordquist affirms, the life of the International Girls Baseball League was brief, but despite bad weather and less than the best publicity and promotion, it afforded AAGPBL and NGBL players the opportunity to enjoy joining together to play a game they loved during the winter of 1952–53. ■

Notes

1. Fidler, Merrie A., *The Origins and History of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland Publishers, 2006), 113. (Taken from "Memorandum of All American Cooperative Organization Plans for Latin America," April18, 1948, Meyerhoff Files, Drawer 74, S.A. Tour Folder. This folder was reviewed by Fidler in 1974. Also, see Fidler, 111–21, for a full discussion of the AAGPBL's post season Latin American Tours.)
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, 112, 121, 123. A letter to Max Carey from Mary Rountree noted that Manuel Parra told a couple of players that one of the reasons the October tour failed was because of a falsification on his part. He added $8,000 to the transportation bill to be assured of a larger return. At the end of the 1949 Latin American Tour, the players were $4,724.96 short on their salaries and demanded to be paid or they would quit and join the professional National Girls Baseball League in Chicago. Meyerhoff agreed to pay half and pressured team directors to pay the other half. The directors weren't happy about that because they were already in debt and money was tight.
4. Ibid, 200.
5. An exception was 1948, when a team, the Colleens, was placed in Chicago. That effort failed.
6. For various reasons, e.g., time and Chicago demographics, the National Girls Baseball League was largely forgotten and hence did not attract much media attention. The primary sources are the Chicago newspapers 1943–55 and the league magazines. The *Tribune* is of course the best known paper, but at times the coverage in the *Herald-American* and *(Sun)-Times* was as good as or better than the *Tribune*'s. The *Daily News* also covered the league. The papers carried line scores and occasional stories about players, but all in all, the coverage was probably less than that of, e.g., bowling. The magazines were put out by Publishers Press from 1949 to 1953, and for some of the other years there is insufficient information about rosters, standings, and averages.
7. Fidler, 36–37.
8. Fidler, 212. This information was provided from an interview with former AAGPBL player Marilyn Jenkins, who was a close friend of Connie Wisniewski.
9. This was near to the end for both leagues, leading to a quest for ways to stimulate interest, such as a winter league pitting their players against each other.
10. Oliver L. Cremer, "The Sports Coop: Six Peaches in Doomed Florida League," *Rockford* (Illinois) *Morning Star*, December 21, 1952, 49. There were still some turf wars. After the non-tampering contract expired on February 15, 1951, Darling signed Sophie Kurys, Edythe Perlick, and Joanne Winter of Battle Creek for the Music Maids. In retaliation, Grand Rapids signed Connie Wisniewski of the Music Maids. (See *Chicago Tribune* April 6, 1951, B2; April 12, 1951, D2). On the other hand, Publishers' Press, which published the *Official National Girls Baseball League Magazine*, put out an issue in August 1950, which covered both leagues, essentially equating them.
11. The player depicted on the letter is Stephanie "Tosh" Vaughn.
12. It was thought that Freda Savona wasn't recruited by the All-American because she wasn't "pretty."
13. The other two-time AAGPBL Player of the Year was P/3B Jean Faut (1951 and 1953).
14. Cremer, *Rockford* (Illinois) *Morning Star*, December 21, 1952, 49.
15. "Female Diamond League Collapses," *Omaha* (Nebraska) *World Herald*, January 12, 1953,10.
16. See IGBL articles in the *Miami Herald* Sports Pages for December 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13,14,15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22, 1952, and January 4, 7, 8, and 9, 1953.
17. After several years with the New Orleans Jax, the top amateur team, Jackson signed with the Music Maids, for whom she pitched and played outfield.
18. "Maids nudge Belles, 2 to 1," *Miami* (Florida) *Herald*, December 11, 1952, C12; "Girl Baseball 'Frozen Out'," *Miami Herald*, December 13, 1952, A21; "Lauderdale Girls Swamp Miami, 5–1," *Miami Herald*, December 21, D8; "Lauderdale Girls Lose 2," *Miami Herald*, December 22, D4; and "Girl Baseball Play Resumes Tuesday Night," *Miami Herald*, January 4, 1953, D6.
19. "Girl Baseballers Strike Out," *Miami Herald*, January 12, 1953, D3.
20. *Miami Herald*, January 12, 1953, D3.
21. Frank Darling sold the Music Maids before the end of the 1953 season.
22. That left a three-team league. For the playoffs, another team was cobbled together from players available in the Chicago area.
23. Even softball was left to amateur leagues. Women's softball underwent a revival as a college sport after the passage of Title IX and in 1976 Billie Jean King (professional tennis player), Janie Blaylock (professional golfer) and softball star Joan Joyce launched the ten-team International Women's Professional Softball Association (IWPSA). The IWPSA ran for four years. More recently a pro fastpitch league was launched in 1997 as Women's Pro Fastpitch (WPF) which is now operating with six teams under the name National Pro Fastpitch (NPF), an official partner of Major League Baseball. See "NPF History" at http://www.profastpitch.com/about/history/, accessed September 30, 2016.

The Great American Pastime (1956)

Hollywood, Little League, and the Post-World War II Consensus

Ron Briley

Following the Second World War, the baseball genre film enjoyed considerable popularity with Hollywood filmmakers hoping to recapture the commercial success of *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942). As that film re-told Lou Gehrig's life story, many of the postwar films were biographical pictures, including *The Babe Ruth Story* (1948), *The Stratton Story* (1949), *The Jackie Robinson Story* (1950), *The Winning Team* (1952), *The Pride of St. Louis* (1952), and *Fear Strikes Out* (1957). The postwar baseball genre also included lighter fare with fantasy films such as *It Happens Every Spring* (1949), *Angels in the Outfield* (1951), *Rhubarb* (1951), and *Damn Yankees* (1958). The role of baseball within the postwar military-industrial complex was examined in *Strategic Air Command* (1955), featuring actor James Stewart of the United States Air Force Reserve and suggesting that a baseball star—or anyone for that matter—should sacrifice his career for the nation. Most of these films had relatively low budgets and earned some profits, but one of the least successful of the baseball films at the box office was *The Great American Pastime* (1956), which was made for $762,000 but earned only $430,000 in rentals.[1] Nonetheless, this film—which examines the institution of Little League Baseball through the lens of a romantic comedy—is iconic for what it reveals about American society during the 1950s.

British journalist Godfrey Hodgson employed the term "liberal consensus" to describe postwar America, a perspective embraced by many scholars of the era.[2] The consensus society included broad agreement upon such issues as the nuclear family, "traditional" gender roles (husband serving as breadwinner, wife performing domestic chores), a Judeo-Christian religious foundation, and the belief that an ever-expanding capitalist economic system would eventually bring the American dream within the grasp of every citizen. The major threat to the American consensus was the ideology of communism; thus, adherence to the principles of anti-communism was a pillar of the consensus society. Of course, the consensus concept glossed over fundamental inequities in itself and within American society, and during the 1960s, many women and minority groups refused to accept the second-class citizenship the consensus conferred. The consensus broke down, exposing the problems of race, gender, and class plaguing post-World War II America.

Despite the gap between myth and reality during the 1950s, the baseball genre films of the era, as exemplified by *The Great American Pastime*, emphasized the corporate values of consensus and cooperation rather than the more destructive threat of untamed individualism or unregulated capitalism which had culminated in the crisis of the Great Depression. The post-World War II era celebrated the organization man and the outer-directed individual who was driven by a desire to earn the respect of friends and associates.[3] These values were not limited to the workplace; the rise of suburbia encouraged a conformist culture in which gender roles were rigidly constructed. Little League is an institution that grew and developed within the environs of suburbia, reflecting the notion that youth baseball was an activity that needed to better fit the modern American family.

Concerns about juvenile delinquency were assuaged by baseball as panacea: Little League would move young boys from the unregulated vacant lot into organized leagues where suburban fathers with greater leisure time would instruct their sons in the values of fair play and sportsmanship. Contrast this suburban idyll with the cinematic depiction of inner city juvenile delinquents found in *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), who used baseballs as weapons and lacked father figures.[4] During the Cold War era, Little League also sought to instill values of patriotism and citizenship. Little League policies officially opposed Jim Crow, though the majority of participants were white. Meanwhile the organization promoted traditional gender roles by forbidding female participation. This emphasis on consensus values, however, did not prevent Little League from experiencing a bitter civil war that plagued the organization in the mid-1950s. As John M. Miller notes in a piece for Turner Classic Movies, *The Great American Pastime* was made with the full cooperation of Little

League who sought a comedy that was "gentle and safe" after litigation had almost destroyed the enterprise.[5] *The Great American Pastime*, thus, celebrates consensus values while acknowledging the threat of female sexuality which must be tamed. (These consensus values would be challenged in the 1960s by three elements exemplified in *The Bad News Bears* [1976]: multiculturalism, the women's movement, and the individualism of the counterculture.)

Little League was established in 1939 by Carl Stotz, a clerk for the Pure Oil Company in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The father of a two-year old daughter, Stotz was a devoted baseball fan who enjoyed playing ball with his young nephews, Jimmy and Harold Gehron, who were six and eight years of age respectively. Stotz relates that the idea of Little League came to him after receiving a nasty scratch while playing catch in a crowded yard. While rubbing his injured ankle, Stotz proclaimed, "I'm gonna have a baseball team for boys, complete with uniforms and equipment. They'll play on real fields like the big guys, with cheering crowds at every game."[6] Stotz shared the inspiration with his nephews who were excited about the idea, and Little League was born. The inaugural 1939 season for Little League included only three teams located in Williamsport.

Although the growth of Little League was slow during the Second World War, the organization expanded rapidly in the more affluent postwar environment and overwhelmed other fledgling youth baseball leagues. By 1948, Little League grew beyond the boundary of Pennsylvania with ninety-four leagues and a national tournament at the end of the season that would eventually become known as the Little League World Series. The rising organization also gained a corporate sponsor in US Rubber, providing a needed source of income, but corporate sponsorship eventually challenged Stotz's personal control of the enterprise. In their history of Little League, Lance and Robin Van Auken argue that the growth of Little League allowed fathers and sons separated by the war an opportunity to become reacquainted. As for mothers and daughters, the Van Aukens conclude, "Mothers, also, were needed at Little League fields; they painted fences, corralled boys, worked in concession stands, and formed ladies' auxiliaries. Daughters, if dutiful, helped their mothers in the stands, but often girls stood near the dugouts with autograph books, admiring the little baseball stars."[7]

While perpetuating sexism and a passive role for young women, Little League's record in regard to racial segregation was somewhat more progressive. In 1955, white South Carolina teams refused to play the all-black Cannon Street YMCA Little League team of Charleston. In response, Little League officials declared the Cannon Street team regional champions. However, since they had won by forfeit, they were not allowed to participate in the Little League World Series. (The Cannon Street team was invited to attend the festivities in Williamsport, though, and were greeted by crowds chanting "Let them play.") Angered by Little League's refusal to support segregation, hundreds of Southern white teams left Little League Baseball in protest and joined a segregated youth baseball organization, Little Boys Baseball, Inc., which became Dixie Youth Baseball.[8]

As National Director and later Commissioner for Little League, Carl Stotz traveled throughout the nation promoting the organization. As he grew increasingly concerned about the commercialization of Little League, he began to quarrel with the governing board and its chair, Peter J. McGovern, a US Rubber executive from Detroit who moved to Williamsport to exercise greater control over the organization. Stotz clashed with the board over Sunday ballgames to make up for rain-outs in postseason play as well as international participation in the Little League World Series. According to Stotz's friend Kenneth D. Loss, the Little League Commissioner "wanted the August tournament to remain national, not to become international. World Series, to him, meant the National and American Leagues' best teams at the end of the season playing for the championship for that year. There were no big-league teams from outside the United States participating in that world series."[9] Nevertheless, Stotz was overruled by the board, and a team from Panama was invited to the Little League World Series in 1951.

In June 1955, Stotz returned from a promotional tour to find that in his absence Little League officials were granting charters—a privilege usually reserved for the commissioner. Believing that his organization was becoming commercialized and hierarchical, Stotz demanded that Little League return to the 1950 bylaws which conferred most power to the commissioner and held more board positions for volunteers rather than business representatives. When the board refused to honor Stotz's demands, the commissioner sought to form a new association called "Organized Little League." Board chair McGovern responded by suing Stotz for breach of contract. An injunction was issued to prevent Stotz from forming a rival organization, and after considerable bitterness and litigation the Little League civil war ended when an out-of-court agreement was reached in February 1956. Stotz was

acknowledged as the founder of Little League, but he agreed to resign as commissioner and dissolve his rival association. In exchange, the board was to make good faith efforts to recruit volunteers and field representatives.[10] Seeking to explain Stotz's motivation, Kenneth Loss concluded that his friend "had conceived the idea and plan for Little League and had recruited sponsors, managers, a woman's auxiliary, and other volunteers to bring it into being. He had lovingly nurtured it during World War II. He had set its high tone and inspired thousands of adults to see and act on his vision. He had almost single-handedly sought out and persuaded US Rubber to get into the act as an altruistic, not controlling sponsor."[11] The individualistic entrepreneur essentially was replaced by more corporate values reflective of the consensus society. While the dispute cost Stotz money and left the founder embittered, the organization he established in 1939 was able to withstand the Little League civil war with some 2,500 leagues organized and new applications arriving in Williamsport every day.

Another reason Little League was able to survive internal divisions and persevere as a postwar American institution was the degree to which the organization embraced the values of patriotism during the Cold War. Historian Richard O. Davies argues, "In an age when fears about disloyalty and communism gripped a society, and when it became increasingly evident that in order to succeed adults had to make their peace with big government and corporate organizations, the values that middle-class parents wanted to instill in their children were those of patriotism, discipline, acceptance of authority, and primacy of the group or organization to which one owed allegiance." Thus, consensus values were the cornerstone of the Little League Pledge in which boys solemnly promised: "I trust in God. I love my country and will respect its laws. I will play fair and strive to win but win or lose I will always do my best."[12] There was no room in Little League for anyone espousing atheistic communist ideas.

From 1950 to 1952, retired Army Colonel W. H. "Cappy" Wells produced the newsletter *Little League Hits* that was sent to every Little League president. The publication included Cold War patriotic advice along with coverage of Little League news. Wells also reflected corporate values as he was initially hired in 1949 by US Rubber to handle media relations for the Little League World Series. In the March 1951 edition of *Little League Hits*, Wells proclaimed that the baseball youth organization was promoting Americanism. The editor, however, was concerned that managers, who wanted to form their own teams, rather than follow the

Advertising billed the film as a comedy that would "keep us all in stitches."

Little League policy of drafting players, might be promoting cliques rather than the melting pot of true Americanism. Wells relates the story of one town where residential areas were segregated according to social class—although this statement would seem to cover most American urban residential patterns. This segregation by class was leading to vandalism and gang violence, but Little League was able to save the day. Wells writes, "Those youngsters were not developing into the type of citizens we need and many of them were well on the road to juvenile delinquency. Then Little League was introduced. The Auction System was adopted. Youngsters from all walks of life found themselves on the same ball team. Every boyish gang and clique disappeared. The juvenile delinquency rate fell." The idea of employing Little League as a means to negate Marxist class divisions also drew the support of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. The anti-communist FBI chief praised Little League for promoting positive competition; concluding, "A clean, healthy body begets a clean, healthy mind, and the two are absolute essentials to good Americanism."[13]

In 1953, *Little League Hits* became *The Little Leaguer* and was published in Williamsport rather than New York City, but a Cold War orientation remained an essential component of the League's promotional activities. The Little Leaguer warned Americans in 1961 not to be concerned about the recession of 1960–61, asserting it was simply "one of the lowest booms we've had in some time," while living conditions were far worse under communism. The Little League publication editorialized, "Things are so bad on the home front in Russia and in the critical food shortages in Red China there is possibility that the brush fire wires and push button riots have to be suspended while we feed them again. Sputniks to Venus do not help empty stomachs." Dwight Eisenhower's Attorney General, Herbert Brownell Jr., voiced support for the anticommunist principles of Little League, insisting, "The young Americans who compose the Little League will prove a poor target for the peddlers of godless ideology." Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick, who served on the board of Little League, echoed these sentiments, observing that communism and fascism were the products of nations that did not have the tradition of youth baseball, and "as long as American boys went to bed each night with baseball gloves under their pillows, American democracy was safe."[14]

Extolled as an institution promoting American ideas of teamwork, belief in God, traditional values, patriotism, and anticommunism, Little League, nonetheless, was not without its critics. Sociologist Gary Alan Fine argued that Little League provided an avenue for the socialization of boys into men, but critics complained about the exclusivity of an organization that officially excluded girls until 1974 and failed to provide a place for boys who lacked the athletic abilities to be selected in the local Little League player draft.[15] Another major issue with Little League was the presence of adults putting pressure on children to win games, while often heaping verbal and sometimes physical abuse upon team managers as well as umpires. In a 1963 piece for *Atlantic Monthly*, major league pitcher and author Jim Brosnan bemoaned the emphasis upon winning in Little League and described the organization as dominated by adults and "not a world the kids made." Brosnan was especially critical of the Little League draft system which destroyed the self-esteem of many young boys, arguing, "Putting a price on a boy's ability is obviously adult business." The pitcher also expressed little respect for the volunteer coaches of Little League, insisting, "The people who run Little League are usually on the lower part of the sociological curve, guys who can't quite make it in their business, marriage or social life. So they can take it out on the kids." In the final analysis, Brosnan maintained Little League was not about building character, but rather winning was everything, writing, "Preadolescents are immature and can't be expected to live up to the physical and emotional guidelines of older children—parents included. Winning games should not be given the importance that exists in the Little League age group."[16]

Connecticut housewife Lorraine Hopkins supported Brosnan, observing that Little League was focused upon preparing boys for the corporate world. Speaking of Little Leaguers, Hopkins argued, "He's sold his independence for security at the age of ten. Exhorted by crowds, fed by publicity, clothed in impersonal uniforms, he has foregone the joys of the cheerfully unorganized individual boy whose every summer day should be a little bit different from the one before." With trophies, all-star teams, and championships, children no longer had the opportunity of organizing their own play. Hopkins concluded, "Little League is a long and dreary dress rehearsal of children acting out roles which grownups have not only assigned, but, worse still, have written."[17] The concerns expressed by Brosnan and Hopkins in the pages of *Atlantic Monthly* were supported by medical reports raising questions about the impact of Little League on the psychological development of young children.[18]

Little League countered this criticism and negative publicity around Stotz's ouster by cooperating with Hollywood in the production of *The Great American Pastime*—a picture that would extoll the virtues of Little League and traditional American values. *The Great American Pastime* was written by Nathaniel Benchley, the son of famed author and humorist Robert Benchley, and directed by Herman Hoffman, who moved on to a distinguished directing career in television.[19] The film enjoyed the usually strong production values associated with the MGM studio and attracted a strong cast. The male lead of Bruce Hallerton was assigned to veteran stage and screen star Tom Ewell. The female leads were Ann Miller, a star performer in MGM musicals who was closing out her career at the studio, and Anne Francis, who was beginning a career that would include the leading role in the sexy television series Honey West (1965–66). In his study of baseball cinema, Hal Erickson found the casting of the film to be rather implausible as he could not imagine two such beautiful women as Miller and Francis fighting over the "ploddingly unromantic" Tom Ewell.[20] Yet, Billy Wilder's pairing of Marilyn Monroe with Ewell in *The Seven Year Itch* (1955) was quite successful at

the box office, and MGM hoped to once again tap the comic potential of Ewell in a romantic lead. *The Great American Pastime*, however, lacked the cutting-edge performance of Monroe that gave *The Seven Year Itch* a sexual quality.

The Great American Pastime begins with Bruce Hallerton, an attorney in the small New York town of Willow Falls, having a drink and narrating how managing a Little League team got him into trouble with his family and community. The film then turns to a flashback beginning with a Hallerton family picnic. His wife Betty (Anne Francis) is taking a nap, and his son Dennis (Rudy Lee) is bored, tossing stones into the lake. Bruce seems to have little time for the family as he has brought along his briefcase and is doing paperwork during the picnic. The family returns home, and Bruce begins to watch his beloved New York Yankees on television. Dennis is not particularly interested in the ballgame, and when his father is called to the phone for legal advice, the boy takes the opportunity to change channels and commences watching a Western program. After his phone call, Bruce resumes watching the game. Betty is talking to her husband about planning a summer vacation to Mexico, but Bruce is focused on the baseball game and pays little attention to his wife's conversation. This opening sequence presents Bruce as the consummate organization man who seems far more interested in work than family. Little League, however, will be introduced as an opportunity for family bonding through the great American pastime.[21]

The next day at work, Bruce is approached by colleagues who want him to manage a local Little League team. Bruce initially resists the idea, but his associates persist, and he surrenders to their arguments that managing the team will be good for business contacts, give him some time with his son, and the Mexican vacation could be postponed until after the baseball season. That evening Bruce comes home to find his wife starching the curtains on the stove, a representation of her domesticity. After fortifying his nerve with a drink, Bruce announces that the family vacation will be postponed until August as he will be managing the Panthers for the local Little League. Betty, who does not care for baseball, is unhappy, but Bruce convinces her that managing will provide some bonding time with Dennis, who does not seem particularly excited about playing baseball.

The film then shifts to the first day of practice, and an exhausted and out of shape Bruce is assisted by coach Buck Rivers (Dean Jones, who would later become a Disney star). Bruce then meets with players and emphasizes that winning is not everything and talks about the importance of fair play. When Bruce visits with the parents, however, it is quite clear that their emphasis is on putting together a winning team. Doris Patterson (Ann Miller), an attractive team mother, speaks to Bruce about how important it would be for her son Herbie's (Raymond Winston) self-esteem to be the team's pitcher as his father is deceased. Meanwhile, Bruce learns that Dennis is actually a good baseball player and has been drafted by the Tigers and their manager Ed Ryder (Judson Pratt) who is intent on fielding the most competitive team possible. With the opportunity for more father/son bonding time gone, Betty is even more dissatisfied with Bruce.

Note that the Panthers are an integrated team with a black third baseman who does not have a speaking part in the film. While *The Great American Pastime* addresses the issue of overly aggressive parents directly, the picture makes only this silent remark regarding racial integration.

As the film progresses, more members of the community place pressure on Bruce. A judge tells the attorney that his nephew is on the Panthers. Doris gives Bruce a ride in her convertible and continues to lobby for her son. A local banker and his wife invite Bruce and Betty for dinner so the banker can advocate for his son's role of team pitcher in exchange for sending legal business to Bruce's firm. However, the boy is not much of a pitcher and shatters Bruce's car window with an errant throw. The banker's wife, meanwhile, warns Betty about the predatory Doris Patterson, who is not only a widow but a former actress. Doris symbolizes female sexuality uncontrolled by a husband, therefore potentially a threat to the suburban family. Making Doris a widow rather than divorcee undermines the sexually aggressive female image somewhat, but was more appropriate for a family film.

For their first game, the Panthers face the Tigers, and Ed Ryder's competitive team dominates, winning 27–0. Although the patriotic theme of Little League is not concentrated upon in *The Great American Pastime*, the Pledge of Allegiance before the game is included. After the game, values of unity seem forgotten as the parents are angry with Bruce, and even Betty wonders if he should be using Herbie Patterson as the team's pitcher. Fearing the encroachment of Doris Patterson, Betty decides to defend her marriage by assuming the duties of team scorekeeper and secretary. (In one scene, Doris invites the couple to dinner. Bruce fawns over her cooking and bonds with her over acting, while a bored Betty falls asleep.) The Panthers improve and win some games, but they are still dominated by

the Tigers, while Bruce becomes increasingly concerned that Dennis is focused on winning at the expense of fair play. This fear is borne out in the next contest between the Panthers and Tigers. Dennis wins the game for the Tigers when he collides with the Panthers catcher and dislodges the ball. A fight ensues, and Bruce is critical of Dennis and censures his players for brawling. Several parents consider Bruce too soft and decide to pull their boys from the team, and a dejected Bruce is left with only a handful of players.

Later than evening Bruce receives a phone call from Doris, asking him to come console a distraught Herbie. As Bruce prepares to leave, Betty makes her anger with Bruce apparent. Betty assumes that she is about to lose her husband to Doris, but while he drives to the Patterson home, Bruce vows that he will inform Doris that he loves his wife and is not interested in a relationship with the attractive widow. After spending a few minutes calming down Herbie, Bruce has a drink with Doris. He announces that he is in love with Betty and cannot become involved with another woman. Doris is shocked and explains that she is not even sexually attracted to him. She asserts she is simply a mother trying to help her son find self-esteem and confidence within the structure of Little League. Thus, motherhood trumps sexuality and traditional gender roles are upheld. Nevertheless, the earlier flirtations seem to suggest a bit more attraction than the film's conclusion seems willing to concede.

Following his uncomfortable confrontation with Doris, Bruce heads to a local bar where he becomes intoxicated, sharing drinks with Mr. O'Keefe (Bob Jellison), the father of "Man Mountain" O'Keefe (Todd Ferrell) who is the smallest and least athletic player on the Panthers. (Note that in this family film from the 1950s, the drinking of alcohol is frequently displayed, and the assumption is that the two inebriated men were guilty of driving under the influence.) When Bruce does not return home, Betty expects he is with Doris and proceeds to bolt the front door to the Hallerton home. Bruce and O'Keefe break the door open, and the mild-mannered O'Keefe informs Bruce that Ed Ryder's Tigers only get rough with the Panthers because they are weak. Bruce vows that his team will henceforth play tough but stay within the rules. The film then turns to the final game of the season between the Tigers and Panthers, failing to consider how Bruce explained his night on the town to his wife.

The tough but fair Bruce seems to have regained the trust of his athletes who are playing with considerable enthusiasm, and Herbie Patterson is pitching well. The positive competitive values of Little League seem reinforced when parents watching the game discuss the fact that the league is not going to have Ed Ryder return as a manager due to the fact that he failed to embody the Little League principles of fair play. The game is tied going into the bottom of the last inning, when Bruce plucks "Man Mountain" O'Keefe from the bench to serve as a pinch runner. "Man Mountain" almost loses his pants in a run-down after he is picked off base, but he is able to score the winning run. There is no elaborate strategy, and "Man Mountain" should have been tagged out, but the film seems to suggest that in the final analysis the American values of fair play win out. After an enthusiastic celebration, Bruce is left alone picking up equipment as Betty leaves the field with Dennis.

The film then returns to Bruce's narration with which the picture began. Bruce is alone and drinking, wondering what his summer of Little League really meant to him and his family. Suddenly the quiet is destroyed as Betty, Dennis, the Panthers, and the team parents surprise Bruce with a party in his honor. Doris Patterson is also there but clearly in the role of a supportive mother whose sexuality has being contained within the American consensus of Little League. Dennis is also proud of his father who taught him important lessons about winning and losing. The film concludes on a comic note with Bruce being asked if he would be willing to serve as a scout master with another institution that inoculated American boys with the values of God, patriotism, free enterprise, and heterosexuality: the Boy Scouts.

The innocuous film *The Great American Pastime* embraced consensus values and sought to restore Little League's positive image after the resignation of the organization's founder Carl Stotz, but failed to find much of an audience. Most reviewers ignored *The Great American Pastime*, but the critics who did bother to notice the film were mostly negative in their opinions. *Variety* complained, "The character Ewell is called upon to play is unfortunately the stereotype of an American father that television, in particular, has advanced. He's a silly, bumbling nincompoop totally unaware of the realities that surround him. Ewell is frequently funny in a farcical way, but his character never emerges as a real person." *The Hollywood Reporter* was a little more supportive of the film and Ewell's performance; asserting, "Tom Ewell is the closest thing we have today to the late Robert Benchley, with the same ability to render a flat tone with humorous effect."[22] The bottom line is that the character of Bruce Hallerton reflects the type of loving but often befuddled father one found in television comedies such

as *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* (1952–66). With television increasingly undermining the profitability of Hollywood films, it was incumbent upon the motion picture industry to offer viewers special effects or adult themes unavailable on the tube in their suburban homes. Unfortunately, *The Great American Pastime* represented the type of fare regularly programmed on television during the 1950s.

Scholars of baseball cinema also tend to be dismissive of *The Great American Pastime*. In *Great Baseball Films*, Rob Edelman describes the MGM feature as a strictly formulaic film in which Bruce Hallerton is a "stereotypically inept suburban husband-father. But his essential decency prevails, and he becomes the hero as he leads his boys to the league title."[23] Hal Erickson devotes a bit more attention to *The Great American Pastime* in his *Baseball Filmography*, but his conclusions are similar. Erickson notes that the picture was the first feature film to focus upon Little League, and he is generally supportive of how the organization was depicted on the screen, noting, "There is the expected comedy inherent in the concept of flabby, middle-aged adults living their dreams of glory through their children, but the satiric thrust is gentle to the point of being antiseptic. The young ballplayers perform vigorously in the film's sporadic game sequences, exhibiting more pep and enthusiasm than is found in 90 percent of the films about baseball."[24] Neverthelss, Erickson argues that the filmmakers lost their way in the subplot of Doris Patterson threatening the Hallerton marriage which comes to dominate the film. In this observation, however, Erickson tends to miss the extent to which Little League baseball and the institution of marriage reflected traditional values under assault from the forces of change, including the women's movement, that would eventually rip asunder the postwar consensus during the 1960s and 1970s.

The film's embrace of traditional values is unapologetic, leading some proponents of *The Great American Pastime* to lament the contemporary cynicism of American film and society while nostalgically looking to the 1950s as a golden age. In a review for the Internet Movie Data Base, for example, one user comments on enjoying the film which is "just full of old fashion fun with Tom Ewell and the rest of the cast," while another user concludes, "Overall, it is a well paced, enjoyable film with a simple plot and gentle humor spread evenly through its running time. Viewing may prove a refreshing relief from the comedies being produced in the present day."[25] Although not as profitable as some of the baseball genre films from the 1950s, *The Great American Pastime* well reflects the values of the post-World War II consensus. The extent to which Little League was part of the establishment that would come increasingly under siege in the 1960s and '70s is exemplified by the popular *The Bad News Bears* (1976)—a film reflective of countercultural values seeking to expose the hypocrisy of American institutions of conformity such as Little League.

There was certainly no institutional support from Little League for director Michael Ritchie's 1976 film. In *The Bad News Bears*, Walter Matthau plays Morris Buttermaker, a former minor league pitcher who now cleans swimming pools for a living and spends most of his spare time consuming beer. He is recruited to coach the Bears, an incompetent group of young boys who are better at swearing than playing baseball.[26] They are sponsored by Chico's Bail Bonds and their nemesis is the aggressive and bullying Yankees coached by Roy Turner (Vic Morrow). To make his team more competitive, Buttermaker recruits Amanda Whurlitzer (Tatum O'Neal), the daughter of his former girlfriend, to pitch for the Bears. She, in turn, employs her feminine wiles to entice juvenile delinquent and outstanding athlete Kelly Leak (Jackie Earle Haley) onto the team. Behind Amanda and Kelly, the Bears begin to win and meet the Yankees for the league championship. During the course of the championship game, Buttermaker realizes that he, too, has become consumed with winning. He comes to his senses and allows all of his players to participate. The result is that the Bears lose the game, but the team has gained a sense of camaraderie and self-respect. Buttermaker then gives all his players a bottle of beer which they drink and spray on the Yankees, all the while laughing hysterically and poking fun at those who take Little League baseball too seriously.

Hal Erickson asserts that Michael Ritchie was selected to direct the film because in a series of pictures, *Downhill Racer* (1969), *The Candidate* (1972), and *Smile* (1975), he demonstrated "the dark side of pursuing the American dream."[27] *The Bad News Bears* resonated with the more antiestablishment values of the era and grossed over $25 million domestically; making it the fourth biggest moneymaker for the summer of 1976. This commercial success led to several sequels which lacked the punch of the original. Baseball film historian Rob Edelman praised the film as "immensely likable and intelligent" in its critique of the adults who often run Little League programs. Edelman concludes, "The film offers a reminder that the purpose of Little League is to have fun. All the kids should be allowed to participate, not just the most athletically gifted. Little League, after all, is for the kids, not their parents or coaches."[28]

An insightful essay on *The Bad News Bears* is provided by historian David Zang in his book *Sports Wars: Athletes in the Age of Aquarius*. Terming *The Bad News Bears* as "one of the most subversive sports movies ever made," Zang argues that the depiction of Little League provided by Ritchie and his screenwriter Bill Lancaster was a product of a changing zeitgeist in America brought about by the Vietnam War, Civil Rights Movement, and a youth counterculture questioning the consensus and traditional values. Before *The Bad News Bears*, baseball films such as *The Great American Pastime* and the postwar biographical pictures presented "the fate of athletes and teams as an extension of unimpeachable national character." Moving beyond the depiction of an America dominated by white males, Zang argues that Ritchie's film presents a more inclusive nation and team. The bottom line for Zang is that *The Bad News Bears* illustrates that "stripped down to its basest humanity, devoid of its protective façade, sports might not be such a noble pursuit after all, much less an institution that ought to stand for national temperament or capacity." Placing *The Bad News Bears* firmly within the historical context of the Vietnam War, Zang concludes, "In some ways, the championship game in *Bears* and its high stakes replicated the Vietnam War, muddling the sense of rights and wrongs, … the value of victory, and the means of obtaining it."[29]

While *The Bad News Bears* enjoyed commercial success in 1976, the parallel popularity of *Rocky* that same year indicates the association of sport with national character was not passé. In fact, sports films of the 1980s and 1990s, such as *Hoosiers* (1986), *Field of Dreams* (1989), and *Rudy* (1993), restored to primacy the connection between sport and character. The Hollywood establishment watched the storming of the barricades during the 1960s and 1970s and responded with a reaffirmation of the relationship between sport and national character—albeit casting a wider net in defining those participating in the national narrative.

A similar characterization may be employed to describe other establishment institutions such as Little League who weathered the crisis in values of the 1960s and 1970s and maintained influence within the resurgent conservative society symbolized by the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. In the twenty-first century, Little League faces challenges from other sports such as youth soccer, but the primacy of Little League within American culture remains significant as is evident with the lucrative contract the organization has with ESPN and ABC television to broadcast the Little League World Series. According to Norby Williamson, ESPN executive vice president of programming and acquisitions, "For us, it is perfect timing to have a two-week tournament pre-football. It delivers good ratings for us."

Of course, these multi-million dollar business arrangements continue to raise questions about the commercialization of Little League as well as the perennial issue of adults organizing children's games. In addition, Little League teams from the United States have not fared well against international competition such as clubs from Taiwan, leading to allegations of cheating on eligibility requirements. Major League Baseball is concerned about the lack of participation by black youth in Little League and youth baseball in general. Thus, there was considerable celebration in 2014 when the Jackie Robinson West club from Chicago became the first all African-American Little League team to win the US championship, but the title was later voided due to violations of Little League recruiting and boundary rules. A less controversial sense of inclusion was provided by the pitching of African American Mo'ne Davis, who became the first girl in Little League World Series history to pitch a shutout and was the first Little Leaguer featured on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* (August 25, 2014). Mo'ne, however, remains the exception rather than the norm as Little League is still essentially a male enclave. Little League continues to face many challenges, but it still resonates within American culture.[30]

In 1956, Little League cooperated with Hollywood to showcase consensus values and counteract negative public relations. While by no means a great work of Hollywood cinema, *The Great American Pastime* represented the post-World War II consensus values of patriotism, fair play, and cooperation which Little League sought to extol. Decades later, *The Bad News Bears* provided a countercultural, and many would say more realistic, appraisal of the values espoused by *The Great American Pastime*. Little League, like other establishment institutions, has responded to demands for change by becoming more inclusive while maintaining core principles. But while Little League enjoys a central role in the perpetuation of the cultural ideals equating youth sports with American values, and exhibits considerable financial clout today with its multi-million dollar television contract, the essential questions about elitism, money, and adults dominating what should be a child's game persist. ■

Notes

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3. William H. Whyte Jr., *The Organization Man* (New York: Doubleday, 1955); and David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denny, *The Lonely Crowd* (New York: Doubleday, 1955).
4. For a discussion of *Blackboard Jungle* see Peter Biskind, *Seeing Is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 197-217.
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6. Carl Stotz as told to Kenneth D. Loss, *A Promise Kept: The Story of the Founding of Little League Baseball* (Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania: Zebrowski Historical Services Publishing Company, 1992), 3.
7. Lance and Robin Van Auken, *Play Ball!: The Story of Little League Baseball* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 51.
8. Chris Lamb, "Let Them Play!: The Cannon Street All-Stars and the 1955 Little League World Series," *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture*, 22 (Fall 2013): 1–10. Dixie League Baseball continues to operate in eleven Southern states, but policies of racial segregation have been dropped.
9. Stotz and Loss, *A Promise Kept*, 175.
10. For an overview of the Little League civil war in 1955 see Van Auken, *Play Ball!*, 67–85.
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13. Quoted in Van Auken, *Play Ball!*, 64.
14. *Ibid*. Ford Frick quoted in "Game to Ride Out All Threats, Frick Tells Rotary Club," *The Sporting News*, December 12, 1951, 4.
15. Gary Alan Fine, *With the Boys: Little League Baseball and Preadolescent Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). In 1950, Kathryn Johnston played Little Little baseball in Corning, New York; posing as a boy. Little League responded to her presence by adopting a rule that banned female participation. A law suit was brought in 1974 by the families of Frances Pescaore and Jenny Fulle that opened Little League to girls. For baseball, Little League, and girls see Jennifer Ring, *Stolen Bases: Why American Girls Don't Play Baseball* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009).
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23. Rob Edelman, *Great Baseball Films: From Right Off the Bat to A League of Their Own* (New York: Citadel Press, 1994), 171.
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The Show Girl and the Shortstop

The Strange Saga of Violet Popovich and Her Shooting of Cub Billy Jurges

Jack Bales

> So, turn the key with me and enter Room 509 of the [Hotel Carlos], the most famous place in Chicago that you barely knew existed.
>
> —(Kankakee, Illinois) *Daily Journal* and (Ottawa, Illinois) *Daily Times*, April 10, 2010[1]

The 1932 Chicago Cubs baseball season is probably best remembered for Babe Ruth's gesture during the third game of the Cubs-Yankees World Series. Ruth may or may not have "called his shot," but with her own shots earlier that summer, a young Chicago woman named Violet Popovich unknowingly set in motion the events that would indirectly lead to one of the most famous moments in baseball history.

Profiles of Cubs shortstop William Frederick "Billy" Jurges usually mention his wounding by jilted lover Popovich, while little is said about her background and career. Interviews, newspaper articles, and county and court archives have provided numerous heretofore unpublished biographical details. These facts also provoke questions about how Violet Popovich's formative years may have contributed to her decision to burst into Jurges's hotel room on July 6, 1932, and pull a gun from her purse.

THE SHOOTING AND AFTERMATH

Attractive and outgoing, Violet Popovich fell for Chicago Cubs shortstop Billy Jurges soon after she met him at a party in 1931. "Such a personality!" the 21-year-old brunette exclaimed a year later. "Such a man! … I love Bill Jurges for himself—and not for his place in the public eye or his popularity."

As for Jurges, age 24, his popularity and place in the public eye seemed assured during the Cubs' 1932 season. The Brooklyn native had signed with the Cubs in 1929 and played minor-league ball until 1931, when manager Rogers Hornsby promoted him to the big leagues. Jurges competed in 88 games and finished his rookie year with a .201 batting average. After a healthy start in his second season in the majors, he was "playing brilliantly," as reported in *The New York Times*, "and batting about .260." *The Sporting News* considered his fielding "a defensive masterpiece, impelling no less an authority on infielding than his manager, Hornsby, to declare that Bill is the best shortstop in the game."[2]

In Depression-era 1932, cuts in both team rosters and players' salaries were the order of the day, so improving his game was likely uppermost in Jurges's mind, not Violet Popovich. The former stage actress went to New York in May 1932 to pursue her acting career, but she succeeded in finding work only as a model for "confession" magazines. She wanted to pursue Billy as well, and when the Cubs traveled east on a road trip, she cheered him from the stands at Ebbets Field as Chicago took on Brooklyn. (She wrote her brother Michael that she even helped calm him down after he exchanged punches with Dodgers infielder Neal "Mickey" Finn on June 10.) She telephoned Jurges several times at his Brooklyn home, but as his father recalled a few weeks after the calls, "Bill talked to her but didn't seem at all anxious about her. He never was a so-called ladies' man. Since he was a little boy his only love has been baseball."[3]

Jurges and Popovich quarreled sometime in mid-June, and she apparently stayed in New York while the Cubs continued their road trip. The team came home following a 4–1 loss to the St. Louis Cardinals on June 27. Popovich returned to Chicago on July 3 and took a room at the Hotel Carlos, her usual living quarters when she was in the city. Since the small residential hotel at 3834 Sheffield Avenue was just a couple of blocks north of Wrigley Field, during the summer months Jurges and some of his teammates also stayed there.

Ballplayers were at the Hotel Carlos on July 6, the day the pennant-chasing Cubs were set to open a three-game series against the Philadelphia Phillies. Popovich went to room 509 late that morning to talk to Jurges. While she, according to the *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, "was reproaching him for neglecting her," she opened her purse and drew out a .25 caliber pistol. As the two struggled for the gun three shots were fired.

One bullet entered Jurges's right side, deflected off a rib, and came out his right shoulder. A second grazed the little finger of his left hand. A third hit Popovich's left hand and went up her arm about six inches.[4]

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that "the girl fled to her room while Jurges stumbled into the hall calling for help." The Cubs team physician, Dr. John Davis, happened to be at the Hotel Carlos that morning and he treated both of them, who were taken to the Illinois Masonic Hospital. Jurges's injuries were not as bad as they looked (his rib prevented the bullet from striking his liver, saving his life), and Davis said that he would be able to get back on the baseball field in two or three weeks. Popovich's wound was superficial, and she was soon transported to the Bridewell Hospital, next to the Cook County Jail, in custody on a charge of assault with intent to kill.

When questioned by police, she told them that she was employed as a cashier in a store on the North Side of Chicago. In a search of her hotel room, officers found several empty liquor bottles and a letter addressed to her brother Michael, an employee of the Chicago Division Street YMCA. "To me life without Billy isn't worth living," she had written, "but why should I leave this earth alone? I'm going to take Billy with me."

She quickly changed her story, insisting that she really had wanted just to shoot herself "to make Bill sorry" for breaking up with her. On July 7 she was interviewed from her cot in the Bridewell Hospital, where she told a *Chicago Daily Tribune* reporter that "I had been drinking before I wrote that note, and when I went to Billy's room I only meant to kill myself. He knows that. I got a note from him today, after I wrote him one. He said he'd do anything he could to help me."[5]

Billy did, too. He refused to press charges or sign a complaint, although Violet still faced arraignment in felony court on July 8. Her attorney explained to Judge John A. Sbarbaro that Popovich was under police guard in her hospital room and could not appear in court. Judge Sbarbaro responded that bond would be set at $7,500 and that he would continue the case until July 15. He added: "I understand that Bill Jurges has declined to prosecute the defendant. I want it understood that if he retains this attitude I shall issue a subpoena for his appearance as a witness."

Jurges, recovering in his own hospital room, shook his head when he heard what Sbarbaro had decided. "Gee, I don't see why the judge wants to be that way," he said. "I certainly don't want to prosecute Violet. I have no doubt that she shot me accidentally, she only wanted to kill herself and I tried to stop her. If I'm made to appear in court, that's all I can say about the affair."

BILL HAGEMAN

On July 15, 1932, 21-year-old Violet Popovich appeared in Chicago's felony court with her two attorneys, Herbert G. Immenhausen (left) and James M. Burke (right). Note Popovich's bandaged left arm.

Jurges may not have wanted to comment, but newspaper reporters had no such reticence concerning the "famous Carlos Hotel gunplay," as the *Chicago Evening American* put it. Photographers barged into Popovich's hospital room to take pictures of her recuperating in bed (she covered her face with her uninjured right arm as flashbulbs popped before her). Stories were plastered in newspapers around the country, often with glaring, tabloid-style headlines, such as "Crazed by Love Woman Tries to Kill Self" and "Jurges, Star Cub Shortstop, Wounded by Jilted Woman."[6]

Reporters interviewed her at length while she was in the hospital. A *Chicago Evening American* journalist described how "the raven-tressed beauty tossed in her bed as she tore the curtain of secrecy from her troubled romance with Bill Jurges." Popovich related that "I was unhappily married at 18—one of those puppy love affairs with a schoolboy. I never lived with him and we were divorced six months later." In late 1929 or early 1930 she took dancing lessons at the Ned Wayburn studio in Chicago, which led her to the chorus of Earl Carroll Vanities. This series of stage musicals, directed by theatrical producer Earl Carroll between 1923 and 1940, featured dance revues, burlesque performances, comedy routines, and risqué sketches. In early 1931, probably after her Vanities

engagement, Violet met Cubs outfielder Hazen Shirley "Kiki" Cuyler. She told the reporter that "he was very attentive," but when she found out he was married, "I had nothing more to do with him."

Then Billy Jurges entered her life. At the hospital Violet said that their relationship had been "perfect for many months," but then "gossips began to cast aspersions on my character. It nearly killed me—for I could see that Bill's ardor was waning." She did not name any of the "gossips," though she had singled out Kiki Cuyler in the letter found in her hotel room as one of the "few people" who "forgot that there might be anything fine and beautiful in our love for each other and dragged it in the mud." Cuyler denied both going out with her and interfering with her romance, though he admitted that Jurges had asked him for advice concerning Popovich and that he had told the shortstop he was "too young to think of love."[7]

Cuyler's denial notwithstanding, Jurges recalled many years later that his teammate was "a big ladies' man" and that Popovich had indeed dated Cuyler as well as other ballplayers. "I took the rap for it," Jurges said, "but she had gone to Cuyler's room first. …She had the key to his room but he wasn't there. She wrote a note and put it on the mirror: 'I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!'"[8]

Various other conflicting accounts muddy the details surrounding that day. For example, the *Chicago Herald and Examiner* wrote that shortly before noon on the sixth, Popovich "went to Jurges' door on the fifth floor, pounding until he let her in." On the other hand, Jurges said during a 1988 interview that she had called him from the hotel lobby at about 7:00AM, and he told her to "c'mon up."

Did the original journalist get it wrong or did Jurges have difficulty (as one might imagine) recalling events of more than half a century ago? Researchers will probably never know exactly what occurred, but some particulars are well documented. Popovich was strong enough on July 9 to be transferred from the Bridewell Hospital to the adjoining Cook County Jail; later that day she was released on bail after a family friend, Lucius Barnett, posted her $7,500 bond. Jurges continued to convalesce at the Illinois Masonic Hospital. Dr. Davis allowed him to go to the ballpark on July 10, where he watched his teammates defeat the Boston Braves, 4–0.[9]

Jurges was also present in Judge Sbarbaro's felony court on July 15, where the ballplayer was subpoenaed to appear as a witness against his former girlfriend. The *Chicago Evening American* noted that "baseball fans, girl romanticists and mere thrill-seekers" were on hand, as well as cameramen, from whom Jurges "screened his face with a handkerchief." The *Chicago Daily Tribune* observed that once "a curious crowd had filled the courtroom," Popovich, "a former chorus girl, made her entrance, wearing a white crêpe dress, trimmed in red, white hat and purse, and red shoes." With her were her two attorneys, Herbert G. Immenhausen and James M. Burke.

Jurges had left the hospital and worked out with his teammates just two days earlier, and he was anxious to put his messy, public love life behind him so he could get on with baseball. As it turned out, Judge Sbarbaro was the ideal person to make the entire matter quietly disappear. Sbarbaro was not only a Cubs fan who did not want the team embarrassed but was also the consummate political "fixer." (Incredibly, at the same time he served the public as a judge and attorney, he also ran a mortuary favored by Chicago's mobsters and hid bootleg liquor in his garage.) Jurges stepped forward and told the judge that he did not want to press charges and that he expected no more trouble from his erstwhile girlfriend.

"Then the case is dismissed for want of prosecution," Sbarbaro ruled, "and I hope no more Cubs get shot." After the hearing, Popovich said that she would not try to contact Jurges. "I owe it to my self-respect to consider the entire matter a thing of the past," she said. "If I happen to see Bill again it will be just impersonal."[10]

Popovich may have considered the whole affair "a thing of the past," but it continued to make headlines for both her and Jurges. Newspapers reported just a few days after the two of them appeared in court that the ballplayer was back in the hospital to have a bullet removed from his right side. According to an Associated Press story, it was not determined if he had originally been shot three times instead of twice or if the bullet that had struck his hand "lodged between the ribs and was overlooked." The surgery proved to be just a minor setback for him, as he took the field in Pittsburgh for a July 22 game against the Pirates. In his absence, the usual third baseman, Woody English, had been playing shortstop, so Jurges took third. The Cubs lost, 3–1, but as the *Tribune* wrote, "Jurges bowed himself back into his profession by socking a single to center."[11]

As for Popovich—no "shrinking" Violet—she wasted no time in capitalizing on her newfound notoriety. Jurges and the Cubs returned to Chicago after their brief road trip to discover through thousands of handbills distributed around Wrigley Field that Popovich was "seek[ing] solace in burlesque." Although Jurges

MARK PRESCOTT

A teenaged Violet Popovich poses on a city street.

had refused to sign a complaint against her, she jumped at the chance to sign a contract—to headline at Chicago's State-Congress Theatre as "The Girl Who Shot for Love." Singing and dancing under her stage name, Violet Valli, she and her "Bare Cub Girls" made their debut on July 23 in the "Bare Cub Follies," billed in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* as "A Screamingly Funny Burlesque Production." Despite all the publicity, however, the show ran for only a few weeks. Her nephew, Mark Prescott, conjectured during a recent interview that her lack of success may have stemmed from her lack of talent. "She liked to sing," Prescott said. "That is, she tried to sing."[12]

But Popovich had more important matters to worry about than her floundering stage career. On August 12 she once again appeared before Judge Sbarbaro; this time she sought his assistance in obtaining an arrest warrant for real estate broker Lucius Barnett, her former bail bondsman. She told Sbarbaro that while she was in the hospital, she had entrusted Barnett with twenty-five letters "of an affectionate nature" from Billy Jurges (they also purportedly included notes from Kiki Cuyler). She had asked Barnett to give the correspondence to her attorney, Herbert G. Immenhausen, as she was contemplating suing both ballplayers. She later changed her mind about the lawsuit, but Barnett had refused to return the letters, telling her that he wanted to publish them in booklet form as *The Love Letters of a Shortstop* and sell copies in ball parks around the country. He had promised her $5,000 up front and $20,000 later, but Popovich refused. "I wouldn't let him do that," she said. "I think too much of Bill."

Sbarbaro suggested that her attorney seek an injunction against Barnett. The judge told reporters that "I'm a Cub fan myself" and "publication of letters that would hurt Jurges or the Cubs must be prevented." Police officers discovered that Barnett had no intention of publishing the letters but instead wanted to blackmail Jurges and Cuyler by threatening each with a lawsuit. Barnett ("an alleged confidence man," according to the *Chicago Daily Tribune*) was arrested at his home and charged with larceny and extortion. After he scuffled with officers and kicked one in the stomach, the charges of assault, disorderly conduct, and resisting a policeman were added to his list of offenses.[13]

On August 23, Judge Sbarbaro fined Barnett $100 on each of the three police charges. Sbarbaro dismissed the two remaining ones of larceny and extortion on September 8 when a sick Popovich failed to appear in court. By that time Barnett had returned all of Popovich's letters to her, and Chicago's newspapers quickly turned their attention to other matters. As Roberts Ehrgott summarized in his Cubs history, *Mr. Wrigley's Ball Club*, "After two months of criminalities and sensationalism, the episode had ended with a whimper."[14]

What had not ceased, however, was Violet's ability to attract press coverage. She once again pursued her show business career, and in 1937 she was on stage as a "torch singer" in the Kitty Davis Cocktail Lounge in Chicago. On March 11 her friend Frederick B. Williams, a local businessman who worked in the office of his father's hardware factory, drove to the lounge to pick her up. He became angry at having to wait for her to finish her act and change her clothes, and they started arguing. The fight escalated in his car after she demanded that he take her home, and he began speeding along the streets of Chicago, ignoring red lights and stop signs. "I insisted he let me out," she told a policeman later that day, "and he said, 'O.K., I'll let you out.' He opened the door and pushed me out."

Popovich suffered minor scrapes and bruises, and the police advised her to file charges against Williams, with whom she said she had been "going" for four years. Hot tempers apparently cooled, for on October 13 the two applied for a marriage license. Their ardor, however, evidently cooled as well, for they never married.

Although Chicago's newspapers covered Popovich's automobile altercation, the reporters did not mention

her past relationship with Billy Jurges. They would have had no reason to make the connection anyway. After Violet's divorce she sometimes used her mother's original surname (which Margaret went back to after her own divorce), and the articles focused on one Violet Heindl being pushed from the car, not Violet Popovich.[15]

Neither name appeared much in the papers after March 1937. Sportswriters would write occasional pieces on Jurges's career mentioning the shooting, and "today in history" columns sometimes noted it. When a female fan shot Philadelphia Phillies ballplayer (and ex-Cub) Eddie Waitkus in his Chicago hotel room in 1949, Popovich and Jurges emerged as a footnote in some of the news stories.

Footnotes usually lead to additional information, but this was not the case with Violet Popovich. Who were her parents? What was her childhood like? Few people outside her family seemed to know much about her, but new research can now answer these and other pressing questions.[16]

THE TROUBLED PAST OF VIOLET POPOVICH

Mirko Popovic was 25 years old when he stepped off a ship in New York City. Born in Krusevica, Austria, and an electrician by trade, Popovic had sailed from Hamburg, Germany, aboard the SS *Kaiserin Auguste Victoria*. The Hamburg-American liner had become lost for hours in the heavy fog around New York Harbor, but it finally managed to dock at the Port of New York on January 19, 1907.

Popovic soon settled in Chicago, and in 1910 he married Margaret Heindl, age 19, also from Austria. The couple had their first child, Viola, on March 21, 1911. Four other children would join their big sister: Drogiro (a girl born in 1912 but surviving only a few weeks), Michael (1913), Milos (1915), and Marco (1917).[17]

After a few years in the United States, Mirko Popovic Americanized his name to Michael "Mike" Popovich. Viola became Violet. Marco would soon answer to Mark, and both he and his brother Michael would change their last names to Prescott. Milos would change his name to Melvin Parker and then to Melvin Parker Popovich.[18]

The Popovich marriage was not a happy one. According to court documents, Margaret lived "in constant fear" of her husband, and he began beating her soon after Violet's birth. "At that time my baby was only ten days old," Margaret testified at a March 1920 divorce hearing. "After the baby was born he hit me in the face and over the body, and he gave me black and blue eyes." Eight-year-old Violet took the stand during the hearing, but she was merely asked a few perfunctory questions, such as whether she attended Sunday school and if she knew the importance of telling the truth (she answered no and yes).[19]

Court papers also reveal that after the divorce, Michael Popovich, who worked as a night electrician in Chicago's Insurance Exchange Building, provided little financial support for his family. Margaret was employed as a seamstress in a dressmaking establishment, but she was "unable to support the said children which she was given custody of, in a sanitary and wholesome manner." The youngsters consequently lived at the Uhlich Children's Home in Chicago, a private institution that cared for children without parents or whose parents could not provide for them. The Popovich boys were residents until 1932; in fact, in 1928 Michael told the superintendent that Uhlich's was the only real home he had ever known.

Violet, however, hated foster care and wanted to live with her mother. She got her wish in 1922 after she deliberately set fire to one of the residence's bathrooms. Violet's mother evidently could not care for (or perhaps control) her daughter, for the girl wound up back in Uhlich's. Violet still preferred her mother over a matron, and in 1926, shortly before her fifteenth birthday, she told Uhlich's administrators that she would soon turn eighteen and asked for permission to leave. Her request was granted (apparently without verification of her true age), though four months later she may have regretted her decision. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that the local police were called when the 15-year-old ran away from home after being "whipped for going to a movie with a boy and staying out late."[20]

With such a childhood, there is little wonder that, as Violet told a reporter after she wounded Billy Jurges, "I was unhappily married at 18" and "divorced six months

MARK PRESCOTT

A young Violet Popovich, clad in overalls, spending time in the country with her equine companion.

later." Her subsequent pursuit of a theatrical career with Earl Carroll Vanities probably stemmed from her close friendship with an actress who was quite at home on the stage. Years later, this woman would be her confidante (and confederate) in the Hotel Carlos. The *Chicago Evening American* did not identify the person in its coverage of the shooting, but simply noted that as Violet "began pounding for admittance" to Jurges's room, a "mysterious girl friend" with her "turned and fled."

The *Chicago Herald and Examiner* was similarly vague when it wrote that the police were looking for Violet's "mysterious blond companion." The newspaper reported that Violet had received a telegram on July 6 that intimated Jurges had been out with other women. A resident of the hotel had overheard Violet exclaim to her friend, "If he denies this I'll forgive him. Otherwise I'll give him the works." Notwithstanding all the frenzied media coverage about the shooting, newspapers could find very few details about the blond woman, though the *Herald and Examiner* observed that Violet's mother knew her as "Betty."[21]

Margaret certainly could have revealed more than just a first name, as the "mysterious blond companion" was none other than Violet's stepsister, Betty Subject (original name Sopcak). Michael Popovich had married Anna Sopcak in 1922, when her daughter Betty was 26 and Violet 11. By then Betty had earned favorable reviews as an accomplished theater and film actress, particularly on the stage in the 1914 musical comedy *September Morn*. After she filed for divorce from her second husband in 1923 (she would be married four times), Betty learned that fame could be both fleeting and fickle. When she could not pay her rent in early 1924, one newspaper unsympathetically proclaimed, "September Morn Out of Luck." Violet paid little attention to such headlines, however, for she looked up to her stepsister as a true "big sister." When Violet went to New York in May 1932 to seek work in the theater, Betty accompanied her.[22]

THE 1932 CUBS

The Cubs were leading the National League in early June, but after their loss to Pittsburgh on July 22—the day Billy Jurges rejoined his teammates—they found themselves 3½ games behind the hard-charging Pirates. Whispered comments within the Cubs organization centered not on the ballplayers' skills but on the obvious animosity between club president William Veeck and manager Rogers Hornsby. Veeck believed that the team was easily good enough to win the National League pennant, and he was growing weary of Hornsby's constant carping about the men and their perceived shortcomings. The ballplayers themselves had little use for their brusque and no-nonsense manager, who publicly (and frequently) pointed out their mistakes and berated them for not measuring up to his standards. After the Brooklyn Dodgers defeated the Cubs and their ace pitcher, Lon Warneke, on August 2, Veeck fired Hornsby and appointed as manager the popular first baseman, Charlie "Jolly Cholly" Grimm.

Just three days later, Veeck purchased Mark Koenig from the Pacific Coast League's Mission Reds to help out in the infield. Koenig had joined the Yankees in 1925, and two years later he batted .285 for the famed "Murderers' Row" team. In 1930, however, his batting average was only .230 in 21 games and on May 30 he was traded to the Detroit Tigers. Unfortunately for the former Yankee, the Tigers would soon be delighted with Billy Rogell's performance as shortstop, and by 1932, Koenig found himself in the Pacific Coast League. He batted .335 in 89 games for the Mission Reds.

One could make a case that the Cubs hired Koenig as a roster replacement for Hornsby, who had occasionally inserted himself into the lineup. But sportswriters observed that Veeck had been concerned about Jurges's recovery following the shooting and that the Cubs president mentioned he wanted another shortstop as a backup. Scout Jack Doyle recommended Koenig, who justified Doyle's faith in him on August 14. As Arch Ward wrote in his *Chicago Daily Tribune* column, Koenig "hit the first ball thrown to him in the National League for a single, and he has been busting 'em ever since."[23]

The Cubs were also "busting 'em," thanks to new manager Charlie Grimm. "Jolly Cholly" was living up to his nickname, and the team flourished under his buoyant personality and easygoing, even-tempered leadership style. Both Jurges and Koenig played shortstop, though Koenig was making the headlines—and the heads turn. On August 20 in a game against the Philadelphia Phillies he became "Chicago's baseball hero of heroes," as sportswriter Edward Burns phrased it in the *Tribune*. With two men on base and two out in the ninth inning and the Cubs down 5–3, Koenig drove Ray Benge's first pitch "high into the right field stands for the wildest of the wild finishes that are becoming habitual with the Cubs."

That wild day marked the first victory in a 14-game winning streak that gave the Cubs a solid grip on first place. They never let up and clinched the National League pennant on September 20, finishing the season with a record of 90–64, four games in front of Pittsburgh. Koenig proved to be a potent factor in Chicago's

drive to the flag, for in his 33 games he batted .353. "The ball started bouncing for us the first day Mark put on a Cub uniform," Charlie Grimm recalled years later. "He did everything right and turned out to be a leader in the field."[24]

Some of Koenig's teammates, however, focused on the length of his tenure rather than his accomplishments during it. The Cubs met to vote on the division of the World Series playoff bonus, as a player's full share required unanimous approval. Billy Jurges and second baseman Billy Herman insisted that Koenig deserved only a half-share, not a full one. "We figured he wasn't entitled to it," Jurges remembered. "He did win the pennant for us, but he didn't play that many ball games."

The New York Yankees, Koenig's former team and Chicago's World Series opponents, figured differently. When the newspapers announced the breakdown of the postseason players' pool, the Yankees (and Babe Ruth in particular) berated the Cubs as cheapskates and penny-pinchers. "Sure, I'm on 'em," Ruth scornfully admitted in a *Chicago Daily Tribune* article. "I hope we beat 'em four straight. They gave Koenig…a sour deal in [his] player cut. They're chiselers and I tell 'em so."

Sportswriter Shirley Povich succinctly appraised the championship showdown when he wrote that "the Cubs' stinginess fired the Yankees to new heights." The Cubs lost the first two games in New York, 12–6 and 5–2, and on October 1 the World Series shifted to Chicago. Both teams had been shouting insults at each other since the Series started, and as Billy Herman recalled, "Once all that yelling starts back and forth it's hard to stop it, and of course, the longer it goes on, the nastier it gets. What were jokes in the first game became personal insults by the third game."[25]

The score was tied in the fifth inning of the third game, 4–4, when Babe Ruth stepped to the plate and faced pitcher Charlie Root. With the count two balls and two strikes, Ruth gestured with his right hand. Did the left-handed slugger look at the Cubs dugout (or Root) and hold up two fingers to indicate that that was only two strikes and he had one left? Did he point to center field as if to signal or "call" a home run? Countless barrels of ink have been spilled in published debates and discussions over his intention, but what happened next is unarguable: Ruth smashed Root's next pitch over the center-field fence. Lou Gehrig followed Ruth to the plate and also hit a home run, leaving the Chicago team thoroughly demoralized. "The Yankees just had too much power for us," third baseman Woody English sighed years later. "It was discouraging."

MARK PRESCOTT

Violet Popovich married when she was 18 years old. She was about that age when she sat in a doorway and had her picture taken.

It was even more discouraging for the Cubs when they lost the game by the score of 7–5, later losing the Fall Classic in four straight games (as Ruth had hoped they would). Mark Koenig, who batted 1-for-4 in the Series (.250), was not surprised at the outcome. "I never fit in with the Cubs players," he said. "They only voted me a half-share of the World Series. … I knew damned well we couldn't beat [the Yankees]." Koenig played one more year for the Cubs before he was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies in November 1933.

Jurges performed well at the plate in the 1932 postseason, batting 4-for-11 (.364). The *Tribune* reported in December that "Bullet Bill Jurges, though he had many things to distract him," led the National League shortstops with his .964 fielding percentage in 108 games (shortstop Dick Bartell of the Phillies played in 154 games and finished the year with a .963 percentage).[26]

Even though "Bullet Bill" remarked after he was shot that he had no intention of getting married and that "I guess I'll remain a bachelor all my life," he soon changed his mind. In the morning of June 28, 1933, he married Mary Huyette in Reading, Pennsylvania. Later on that day he celebrated his wedding with six hits in a Cubs-Phillies doubleheader (Chicago won the two games, 9–5 and 8–3).

Jurges was traded to the New York Giants in December 1938. He returned to Chicago as a utility player in 1946, where he wound up his last two seasons in the major leagues. Jurges then coached, served as an infield instructor, managed in the minor leagues, and in 1956 helped coach for the Washington Nationals (popularly known as the Senators). He was hired as manager of the Boston Red Sox in July 1959, replacing Mike "Pinky" Higgins. Although Jurges finished the

1959 season with a 44–36 record (.550), by mid-June of 1960 the slumping Red Sox were in last place, and he was fired and Higgins brought back. Jurges told an interviewer while reflecting on his brief time in Boston that "it is very important for managers to get a ball club with players on the way up. On that club, most of them were on the way down."

Jurges continued to work in baseball as both a scout and an instructor, eventually retiring in Largo, Florida. He was diagnosed with cancer in 1991, and he died on March 3, 1997, at the age of 88. He and his wife had one daughter, Suzanne Jurges Price. When Price was asked a few years ago if she knew that Violet Popovich had shot her father in 1932, she said she was familiar with the incident but that when she was growing up "it was never mentioned in our house."[27]

MARK PRESCOTT

Violet (about age 40), stands behind her mother, Margaret Heindl.

THE LATER YEARS OF VIOLET POPOVICH

In the early 1930s Margaret Heindl moved to Los Angeles, California, and by 1940 her daughter had joined her. Violet still had show business aspirations, although the 1940 census notes that none of her income the previous year had been earned through professional singing. In 1947 Violet married Charley Retzlaff, a former heavyweight prize fighter from North Dakota who had fought out of Duluth, Minnesota. (How and where she met him is unknown.) Retzlaff's first professional fight had been in 1929, and he lived up to his nickname, "The Duluth Dynamiter," until January 17, 1936, when a young Joe Louis knocked him out in less than two minutes. Retzlaff retired in 1940 and returned to his family farm in the small North Dakota community of Leonard. After his marriage he expected his wife to enjoy rural life as much as he did, but according to her nephew, Mark Prescott, Violet stayed only about a week at the farm before she moved back to Los Angeles.

She and her husband did not get divorced, however, and Prescott mentioned during an interview that the two stayed in touch and remained on friendly terms. Prescott added that his aunt was certainly not at a loss for male companions, as she was a five-foot, nine-inch "stunning beauty" with an olive complexion and gray eyes. She went out with quite a few baseball players, including future Cubs manager Leo Durocher and future White Sox manager Al Lopez. Prescott particularly remembered going to a 1959 White Sox game with his aunt when he was nine years old. Lopez came into the stands to chat with them, bringing a baseball which he autographed for the boy.[28]

Violet lived in the Studio City neighborhood of Los Angeles and worked in the color department of a film studio. She was not well off financially, and following her retirement she had a couple live with her to help with expenses. When she could not afford to pay the property taxes on her house, she agreed to sell it to the man and woman on the condition that they allow her to stay there. Violet had failed to consult a lawyer to protect her legal rights, and after the couple took possession of the house they changed the locks, effectively evicting her. She spent her final years in a nursing home, where she would often talk about her past as a show girl. She died at age 88 on February 25, 2000, and was buried in Los Angeles's Forest Lawn Memorial Park–Hollywood Hills. She had outlived her parents; her father had died in Chicago in 1945 and her mother twelve years later in Los Angeles.

One question in particular can now be answered: Had Violet intended to kill Billy Jurges when she entered his room at the Hotel Carlos? The letter that she had left in her own hotel room clearly indicates that murder had been on her mind, but after her arrest she declared that she had only meant to use the gun on herself. Mark Prescott said that years later she confided to his mother that she had, indeed, gone to room 509 with the express purpose of shooting the ballplayer. As she told her sister-in-law, "I was very angry and I wanted to kill him."[29]

Violet's turbulent upbringing and abusive father do not excuse her behavior, but they may explain what she longed for from Jurges: intimacy and commitment. Chicago Cubs historian Ed Hartig believes that "she was desperate for attention and affection—certainly

not getting that from her family life, especially from her father and a failed marriage. I think she felt that she finally would find it with Billy Jurges—though if it hadn't been Jurges, she likely would have latched onto almost any ballplayer."

When Violet recklessly pulled the trigger in the Hotel Carlos, her bullets not only struck Jurges but had a domino effect on the Cubs, Mark Koenig, the 1932 pennant race, the division of the World Series money, and Babe Ruth's arguable "called shot." As Hartig contends in an article for *Vine Line*, the Chicago Cubs magazine, "The shooting of Jurges opened the door for Koenig to become a Cub and baseball legend."

The shooting made Violet something of a legend as well. It is possible that years later she and Ruth Ann Steinhagen (who had wounded Eddie Waitkus) inspired Bernard Malamud to include a paragraph in his 1952 novel, *The Natural*, in which a woman shoots ballplayer Roy Hobbs. *The Natural* and that scene continue to live on today, thanks to the fan-favorite 1984 motion picture starring Robert Redford as Hobbs. And Violet Popovich will remain a part of baseball, too, inextricably linked to the 1932 season and one of the most unfortunate and unusual episodes in the sport's history.[30] ■

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Notes

1. Dave Wischnowsky, "Cubs Lore? It's Only 'Natural' in Room 509," The Wisch List, accessed June 4, 2016, http://wischlist.com/2010/04/cubs-lore-its-only-natural-in-room-509/. This article refers to the hotel as the "Sheffield House Hotel," which the Hotel Carlos was renamed in the mid-twentieth century.
2. Popovich meeting Jurges at a party is in Virginia Gardner, "Jurges' Girl Friend Blames Shooting on 'Too Much Gin,'" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 8, 1932, 3. "Such a personality!" quotation, meeting Jurges in 1931, and Popovich's personal characteristics are in "Cub Star Not to Prosecute Divorcee," *Chicago Evening American*, July 7, 1932. Jurges's game statistics are in http://www.retrosheet.org/. "Playing brilliantly" quotation is from "Bill Jurges Wounded by Girl He Rejected," *The New York Times*, July 7, 1932, 18. "A defensive masterpiece" quotation is from "William Frederic[k] Jurges," *The Sporting News*, May 26, 1932, 1. Jurges's career is in Paul Geisler Jr., "Billy Jurges," SABR Baseball Biography Project, Society for American Baseball Research, accessed May 20, 2016, http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/aada6293. See also "Bill Jurges, Nobody in the Minors, Big League Success," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 4, 1931, 27.
3. Salary and roster cuts are in Associated Press, "Salary Lists of Major Leagues to Be Cut $1,000,000 This Year," *The New York Times*, January 13, 1932, 28; Charles C. Alexander, *Breaking the Slump: Baseball in the Depression Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 36–60. Popovich resuming her career and watching Jurges play is in "Note Reveals Girl Planned to Kill Jurges," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, July 7, 1932 (two different but identically titled articles from two editions of the newspaper, one from the *Last Metropolitan* edition, pages 1 and 3, and the other from an unknown edition, pages 1 and 5). The phrase "confession story magazines" is in Gardner, "Jurges' Girl Friend Blames Shooting." Photographs of Violet as a model are in the *Chicago Evening American*, July 7, 1932. The Jurges and Finn fight is in Roscoe McGowen, "12,000 See Robins Topple Cubs, 4 to 3," *The New York Times*, June 11, 1932, 11. "Bill talked to her" quotation is from Margery Rex, "Jurges' Father Says Bill Did Not Love Girl," *Chicago Evening American*, July 7, 1932. Conversations are also in "Bill Jurges Wounded by Girl He Rejected."
4. Jurges and Popovich quarreling and the Hotel Carlos are in "Letter Solves the Shooting of Bill Jurges," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 7, 1932, 1; "Crazed by Love Woman Tries to Kill Self," *Chicago Evening American*, July 6, 1932 (notes that Popovich occupied room 111 in the Hotel Carlos). Game logs are in http://www.retrosheet.org/. Cubs and Popovich returning to Chicago is in "Cub Star Not to Prosecute Divorcee." Popovich living in the hotel and the "was reproaching him" quotation are in "Note Reveals Girl Planned to Kill Jurges," 1, 5 (notes the address of Popovich's mother, Mrs. Margaret Heindl, as 743 Belden Avenue in Chicago). Gun shots are in "Bill Jurges Wounded by Girl He Rejected."
5. "The girl fled to her room" and "to me life without Billy" quotations, John Davis, and liquor bottles are in "Letter Solves the Shooting of Bill Jurges." Popovich in custody at Bridewell Hospital is in "Charge Violet with Attempt to Kill Jurges," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, July 8, 1932, 7. Popovich's job as cashier is in "Jurges, Cubs' Shortstop, Is Shot by Girl," *Brooklyn* (New York) *Daily Eagle*, July 6, 1932, 1. One newspaper said she was "a cashier in a Chicago cigar stand." See "Local Ball Star Victim of Attack in Chicago Hotel," (Forest Parkway, New York) *Leader-Observer*, July 7, 1932, 1. "To make Bill sorry" and "I had been drinking" quotations are from Gardner, "Jurges' Girl Friend Blames Shooting."
6. Jurges refusing to press charges and Popovich facing arraignment are in "Charge Violet with Attempt to Kill Jurges." Sbarbaro, Jurges, and "Famous Carlos Hotel gunplay" quotations are in "Jurges Must Accuse Girl, Says Court," *Chicago Evening American*, July 8, 1932. An ACME Newspictures wirephoto from the author's collection, dated July 6, 1932, has this caption: "Miss Popovich is shown above a few hours after the shooting, hiding from photographers." Articles are "Crazed by Love Woman Tries to Kill Self," *Chicago Evening American*, July 6, 1932; "Jurges, Star Cub Shortstop, Wounded by Jilted Woman," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 7, 1932, 1.
7. *Chicago Evening American* interview, quotations, and biographical details are from "Cub Star Not to Prosecute Divorcee." Similar details are in "Charge Violet with Attempt to Kill Jurges." For opening of Ned Wayburn's dancing studio see "Ned Wayburn, Noted Follies Producer, Opens Dancing Studio in Chicago," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 10, 1929, sec. E, 7. In Gardner, "Jurges' Girl Friend Blames Shooting," the author states that Popovich joined the chorus of Vanities in 1928, which is contrary to details in the *Chicago Evening American* interview that imply 1929 or 1930. Information on Earl Carroll Vanities is in Thomas Hischak, *The Oxford Companion to the American Musical: Theatre, Film, and Television* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 219. Violet's stint with Vanities was in Chicago, as per "Note Reveals Girl Planned to Kill Jurges," *Last Metropolitan* edition, 3. "Few people" and "forgot that there" quotations are from "Letter Solves the Shooting of Bill Jurges."

Cuyler's denial of dating Popovich is in "Crazed by Love Woman Tries to Kill Self." The "too young to think" quotation is from "Jurges Refuses to Act Against Girl Assailant," *Chicago Evening Post*, July 7, 1932, 4.

8. "A big ladies' man" quotation and Popovich dating ballplayers are in Jerome Holtzman and George Vass, *Baseball, Chicago Style: A Tale of Two Teams, One City*, new exp. ed. (Los Angeles: Bonus Books, 2005), 54. On the evening of July 5, Violet "was heard exclaiming loudly in her room: 'I'm going to get Bill, and maybe "Kiki," too,'" as per "Note Reveals Girl Planned to Kill Jurges," *Last Metropolitan* edition, 3. Bill Veeck wrote in his memoir that a "very jealous" Popovich came to the Hotel Carlos looking for her married lover and found him in Jurges's room. Jurges stepped between them and was accidentally shot in the hand. "Billy, being single, kept the intended victim's name out of it, leaving everybody to believe that he had got shot on his own merits." See Bill Veeck, with Ed Lynn, *The Hustler's Handbook* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), 164. See also Roberts Ehrgott, *Mr. Wrigley's Ball Club: Chicago and the Cubs During the Jazz Age* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 286–88; Charles DeMotte, "Baseball Heroes and Femme Fatales," in *The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture*, 2002, ed. William M. Simons (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2003), 315–18.
9. "Went to Jurges' door" quotation is from "Note Reveals Girl Planned to Kill Jurges," 5. "C'mon up" quotation is from Holtzman and Vass, *Baseball, Chicago Style*, 53. Popovich leaving the hospital for the jail and posting bond is in "Girl Who Shot Jurges Is Freed on $5,000 [*sic*] Bond," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 10, 1932, 3; "Girl Who Shot Jurges Freed in Bail," *The New York Times*, July 10, 1932, 8. Jurges watching the ball game is in "Bill Jurges Out of Hospital; Sees Cubs Beat Braves," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 11, 1932, 19. Game logs are in http://www.retrosheet.org/.
10. "Baseball Fans, girl romanticists" quotation is from "Jurges' Plea Frees Girl in Shooting," *Chicago Evening American*, July 15, 1932. "A curious crowd" and Sbarbaro's and Popovich's quotations are from "Girl Who Shot Cubs' Player Goes Free," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 16, 1932, 3. Jurges working out is in "Billy Jurges Back in Uniform," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, July 14, 1932, 11. Sbarbaro as a Cubs fan wanting to protect the team is in "Girl Who Shot Cub Ball Player Asks Arrest of Agent," *Chicago Evening Post*, August 12, 1932, 1. Sbarbaro's political life is in "Three Bombed; One a Judge," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 18, 1928, 1; Laurence Bergreen, *Capone: The Man and the Era* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 136, 145, 277–78; Jonathan Eig, *Get Capone: The Secret Plot That Captured America's Most Wanted Gangster* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 48.
11. "Lodged between the ribs" quotation is from "Another Bullet Found in Jurges," *Brooklyn* (New York) *Daily Eagle*, July 19, 1932, 8. Both John Davis, the Cubs' physician, and Jurges said it was a third bullet. See "Jurges Shelved Longer; Remove Third Bullet," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 19, 1932, 17; Holtzman and Vass, *Baseball, Chicago Style*, 53–54. "Jurges bowed himself" quotation is from Edward Burns, "Cubs Lose, 3–1; Trail Pirates by 3½ Games," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 23, 1932, 9. Jurges is referred to as "the celebrated revolver target" in "Jurges on 3d Base As Cubs, Pirates Start Big Series," *Chicago Evening Post*, July 22, 1932, 9. Hornsby discusses the changes in the Cubs lineup in "Cub Star Wounded by Scorned Woman," *Washington Post*, July 7, 1932, 3. Game logs are in http://www.retrosheet.org/.
12. Handbills and "solace" quotation are in Edward Burns, "Five Wild Weeks Give the Cubs a Succession of Varied Thrills," *The Sporting News*, August 18, 1932, 1. Popovich making her debut and "The Girl Who Shot" quotation are in "State-Congress Has Violet Valli As Star," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, July 24, 1932, sec. 3, 10. Popovich adopting her stage name is in "Letter Solves the Shooting of Bill Jurges." "Bare Cub Girls" quotation is from "Amusements," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, July 23, 1932, 11. "Bare Cub Follies" and "A Screamingly Funny" quotations are from "Amusements," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 26, 1932, 11. Articles that refer to Popovich's show in the past tense include "Girl Who Shot Cub Ball Player Asks Arrest of Agent;" "Girl Who Shot Jurges Battles for His Letters," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, August 13, 1932, 13. Popovich singing and dancing during her show and Mark Prescott quotation are from Mark Prescott (son of Popovich's brother Mark), telephone interview, November 16, 2015. In a December 26, 2014, email, Popovich's nephew Peter Prescott wrote that "it is my understanding that Violet's six-month show…was cut short after the curiosity wore off and due to her lack of talent." The origin of Popovich's stage name, Valli, is unknown. Perhaps she was inspired by popular entertainer Rudy Vallee. Another possibility is Ernie Valle, a well-known musical director and orchestra leader of the time. See Steven Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music: A Book of Orchestrators and Orchestrations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 487.
13. Popovich seeking a warrant, the "of an affectionate nature" quotation, and publication of the letters for cash are in "Girl Who Shot Jurges Battles for His Letters." Kiki Cuyler letters are in "Valli 'Love' Letters Would Wreck Cubs, Accused Insists," (Chicago) *Daily Illustrated Times*," August 16, 1932, 3. Popovich's lawsuit (the reasons for it were not given), "I wouldn't let him do that" quotation, blackmail plot, and "an alleged confidence man" quotation are in "Police Hold Chief of Jurges Blackmail Plot," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 14, 1932, sec. 2, 2. "I'm a Cub fan myself" quotation is from "Girl Who Shot Cub Ball Player Asks Arrest of Agent." Barnett's arrest and charges are in "Arrest Jurges Letter Holder on Girl's Plea," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, August 14, 1932, sec. 1, 3; "Girl Regains Jurges Notes; Continue Case," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 19, 1932, 23.
14. Sbarbaro fining Barnett is in "Jurges Letter Suspect Fined on 3 Charges," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 24, 1932, 18; "Valli Letter Holder Fined; Faces Hearing," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, August 24, 1932, 3. Dismissal of charges and return of the letters are in "Dismiss Extortion Charges in Jurges Shooting Case," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 9, 1932, 3. The illness of Popovich is in "Jurges Letter Holder Freed," *Chicago Evening American*, September 8, 1932. "After two months" quotation is from Ehrgott, *Mr. Wrigley's Ball Club*, 347.
15. Articles on Popovich's altercation include "Blues Singer Sees Red: Charges Pal with 'Eviction,'" (Chicago) *Daily Times*, March 11, 1937 (includes "torch singer" and "going" quotations); "She Finds Reason to Sing Blues," *Chicago Evening American*, March 11, 1937 (includes "I insisted he let me out" quotation); "Pushed from Auto," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 12, 1937, 18. Williams's occupation of "general office work" in his father's "hardware factory" is in the *1930 U. S. Census* (Population Schedule), Chicago, Illinois, Enumeration District (ED) 16-184, sheet no. 39-B, Frederick B. Williams in household of Frank B. Williams, line 52, digital image, accessed November 2, 2015, http://www.ancestry.com/. Marriage application between Fred B. Williams and Violet Popovich is cited in *Cook County, Illinois Marriage Index, 1930–1960*, file number 1553834, accessed October 20, 2015, http://www.ancestry.com/. Digital image of the "affidavit for marriage license" obtained from the Cook County Clerk's Office, Genealogy Online, accessed October 21, 2015, http://www.cookcountygenealogy.com/. Popovich using her mother's name is in Gardner, "Jurges' Girl Friend Blames Shooting." "Margaret Heindl" is in the two versions of "Note Reveals Girl Planned to Kill Jurges" (see note 3).
16. Articles that mention Popovich and Jurges include Mike Drago, "Jurges a 'Natural' On—Perhaps Off—the Field," *Reading* (Pennsylvania) *Eagle*, August 23, 2009; Tom Weir, "20th Century: This Day in Sports," *USA Today*, July 6, 1999, sec. C, 3; "Waitkus Shooting Recalls 1932 Jurges Incident," *Washington Post*, June 16, 1949, 20.
17. Legal documents not cited as obtained online are from the Circuit Court of Cook County Archives, Chicago, Illinois. Mirko Popovic was born on April 1, 1881. His ancestry and emigration are in United States Department of Labor, Immigration Service, Certificate of Arrival—for Naturalization Purposes, "Lirko [*sic*] Popovic," stamped June 30, 1922 (the January 19, 1907, "date of arrival" is verified in *Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850–1934*, accessed June 10, 2016, http://www.ancestry.com/); United States of America, Declaration of Intention, "Mirko Popovic," no. 79198, December 6, 1917 (notes that Margaret was born in Austria);

U.S. Naturalization Record Indexes, 1791–1992 (indexed in *World Archives Project*), "Mirko Popovic," accessed May 2, 2016, http://www.ancestry.com/; United States of America, Petition for Naturalization, "Mirko Popovic," no. 56042, September 5, 1924 (includes names and birthdates of Violet [has incorrect day of March 24], Michael, Milos, and Marco). Fog is in "Lost in New York Harbor," *Washington Post*, January 19, 1907, 3. Marriage is in State of Illinois, Marriage License, Mirko S. Popovich and Margaret Heindl, no. 535453, applied for on May 27, 1910 (married on June 5, 1910). Margaret Heindl's birthday of May 10, 1891, is in *California, Death Index, 1940–1997*, "Margaret A. Heindl," accessed November 11, 2015, http://www.ancestry.com/. Violet's birthday and names of parents are in *U. S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936–2007*, "Violet Popovich," accessed November 20, 2015, http://www.ancestry.com/. Drogiro Popovich's birth and death are in *Illinois, Cook County Deaths, 1878–1939, 1955–1994*, "Drogiro Popovich," accessed November 1, 2015, https://familysearch.org/.

18. Signatures of the Popovich children showing names of Mike Popovich, Violet Popovich, Mark Popovich, and Melvin Parker are in Probate Court of Cook County, In the Matter of the Estate of Mike Popovich, Deceased: Vouchers, document 445, page 443, no. 45 P 7555, stamped July 16, 1947, Circuit Court of Cook County Archives, Chicago, Illinois. Mark Popovich/Mark Prescott is in State of California, Certificate of Registry of Marriage, Mark Popovich "also known as Mark Prescott" and Helen Josephine Thotos, no. 30122, applied for on September 20, 1947 (married on October 1, 1947), Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, California, *California, County Marriages, 1850–1952*, digital image, accessed November 11, 2015, https://familysearch.org/. Melvin Parker changing his name to Melvin Parker Popovich is in "Order to Show Cause," *Van Nuys* (CA) *News and Green Sheet*, May 19, 1972. Michael Popovich changed his last name to Prescott and had a son, Michael Prescott, as per emails from Mark Prescott (son of Violet's brother Mark), November 13, 2012; June 16, 2016.
19. Legal documents are from the Circuit Court of Cook County Archives, Chicago, Illinois. "In constant fear" quotation is from Margaret Popovich vs. Michael Popovich, Bill for Divorce, no. B-56160, September 3, 1919. "At that time" quotation and Violet's testimony are from Margaret Popovich vs. Michael Popovich, Certificate of Evidence, no. B-56160, March 26, 1920. Divorce is in Margaret Popovich vs. Michael Popovich, Decree for Divorce, no. B-56160, March 30, 1920.
20. Legal documents are from the Circuit Court of Cook County Archives, Chicago, Illinois. Michael's occupation and "unable to support" quotation are from Margaret Popovich vs. Michael Popovich, Petition for Rule to Show Cause, no. B-56160, July 26, 1920. Margaret's occupation is in the 1920 census, which lists the names of the Popovich family members as Mike, Margaret, Viola, Mike, Milos, and Mark. See 1920 U.S. Census (Population Schedule), Chicago, Illinois, Enumeration District (ED) 1256, sheet no. 7-B, lines 53–58, digital image, accessed October 20, 2015, http://www.ancestry.com/. Four Popovich children placed in the Uhlich Children's Home in 1920 and just the three boys living there in 1922 and 1923 are in Margaret Popovich vs. Mike Popovich, Petition, no. B-56160, June 27, 1922; Margaret Popovich vs. Mike Popovich, Notice-Petition and Affidavit to Petition, no. B-56160, February 8, 1923. Michael calling Uhlich's his home is in Henry W. King, Report of Superintendent to Board of Trustees, April 12, 1928, Uhlich Children's Home Records, series 1, box 1, folder 2, Chicago History Museum (see also King's report of May 10, 1928, and June 14, 1928). Michael left Uhlich's on January 30, 1932, and Malosh [*sic*] and Mark left on June 18, 1932. See Roll Call Ledger: Boys' Division, 1931–1932, Uhlich Children's Home Records, series 1, box 3, folder 4, Chicago History Museum. Violet setting the fire is from Mark Prescott, telephone interview, November 13, 2012. Violet leaving Uhlich's in March 1926 is in Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees, March 11, 1926, Uhlich Children's Home Records, series 1, box 1, folder 1, Chicago History Museum. "Whipped for going" quotation is from "Whipped for Staying Out Late, Girl Runs Away," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 21, 1926, 3.
21. "I was unhappily married" quotation is from "Cub Star Not to Prosecute Divorcee." "Began pounding" quotation is from "Crazed by Love Woman Tries to Kill Self." "Mysterious blond companion" quotation, telegram, "if he denies this" quotation, and reference to Violet's mother are from the two versions of "Note Reveals Girl Planned to Kill Jurges" (see note 3).
22. Details about Anna Sopcak, her marriage to Michael Popovich, and Anna's daughter Betty are in the extensive testimonies in Anna Popovich vs. Michael Popovich, no. B-175582, decree entered January 14, 1930, Circuit Court of Cook County Archives, Chicago, Illinois. See especially testimony by Anna Popovich (pages 2–69), testimony by Michael Popovich (pages 75–159), and testimony by Betty Carlan, aka Betty Subject (pages 907–25). The 1930 census notes that Anna and her daughter Evelyn went by the name of Subject (a phonetic spelling of Sopcak) and that Betty Carlan was married to Eugene S. Carlan (this was her fourth marriage). See 1930 U. S. Census (Population Schedule), Chicago, Illinois, Enumeration District (ED) 16-1655, sheet no. 23-B, Anna Subject and family, lines 65–69, digital image, accessed November 5, 2015, http://www.ancestry.com/. Betty was born in 1896 and died in 1970. See *California Death Index, 1940–1997*, "Betty E. Carlan," accessed November 8, 2015, https://familysearch.org/. Articles about Betty Subject include "Here's a 'Pleasant Subject' in Movies," (Chicago) *Day Book*, April 19, 1915, [15]; "Cruelty Alleged by Wife in Suit," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 29, 1923; "September Morn Out of Luck in Winter of San Francisco," *Modesto* (California) *Evening News*, January 5, 1924. Violet and Betty going to New York is in "Crazed by Love Woman Tries to Kill Self"; "Cub Star Not to Prosecute Divorcee"; "Note Reveals Girl Planned to Kill Jurges," *Last Metropolitan* edition, 3.
23. Game logs and player statistics are in http://www.baseball-reference.com/ (includes Pacific Coast League statistics) and http://www.retrosheet.org/. Hornsby and Grimm are in Edward Burns, "Hornsby Removed by Cubs," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 3, 1932, 1, 19; "Why Hornsby Leaves the Cubs," *Literary Digest* 114, no. 8 (August 20, 1932): 30; Peter Golenbock, *Wrigleyville: A Magical History Tour of the Chicago Cubs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 225–31. Hiring of Mark Koenig is in "Koenig Purchased by Cubs; To Join Team Thursday," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 6, 1932, 13. Koenig biographical information is in Daniel Shirley, "Mark Koenig," SABR Baseball Biography Project, Society for American Baseball Research, accessed May 24, 2016, http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/560d9b03. Koenig traded to Detroit Tigers is in "Hoyt and Koenig Go to Tigers in Trade," *The New York Times*, May 31, 1930, 14. Veeck wanting Koenig is in Arch Ward, "Talking It Over," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 31, 1932, 17 (includes "hit the first ball" quotation); Joe Vila, "Setting the Pace," (New York) *Sun*, August 8, 1932, 23; Claire Burcky, "Castoff Koenig to See Pal, Tony, in World Series," (Gloversville, New York) *Morning Herald*, September 8, 1932, 5. Koenig's single on August 14 is in Edward Burns, "Cubs Lose 2–0, 2–1 Battles to Cardinals," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 15, 1932, 19.
24. Game logs, team standings, and player statistics are in http://www.retrosheet.org/. "Chicago's baseball hero" quotation is from Edward Burns, "Homer with 2 On, 2 Out in 9th! Cubs Win, 6–5," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 21, 1932, sec. 2, 1, 2. The Cubs clinching the pennant is in Edward Burns, "38,000 Cheer As Cubs' Victory Clinches Flag," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 21, 1932, 1, 21. "The ball started bouncing" quotation is from Charlie Grimm, with Ed Prell, *Jolly Cholly's Story: Baseball, I Love You!* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1968), 88.
25. World Series shares are in Edward Burns, "Cubs Split Series Money; Ignore Hornsby," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 22, 1932, 23; Irving Vaughan, "Home Field Buoys Cubs for Third Game," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 1, 1932, 19 (mentions that Ruth "kept yelling at Koenig, 'So they're going to give you a half share, are they, Mark? Well, you had better collect that five bucks right now.'"); "World Series Gate Receipts," *Baseball Almanac*, accessed June 9, 2016, http://www.baseball-almanac.com/ws/wsshares.shtml. "We figured he wasn't" quotation and "once all that yelling" quotation are from Golenbock, *Wrigleyville*, 233, 235. "Sure, I'm on 'em" quotation is from "Babe Airs His Views of Cubs and 'Chiseling,'" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 30, 1932, 21. "The Cubs' stinginess" quotation is from "Scribbled by Scribes," *The Sporting News*, October 13, 1938, 4. Game logs are in http://www.retrosheet.org/.

26. Controversy over third game is in Golenbock, *Wrigleyville*, 234–39 (Woody English quotation is on p. 234); Robert W. Creamer, *Babe: The Legend Comes to Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 357–68; Ehrgott, *Mr. Wrigley's Ball Club*, 369–71, 451–55; Ed Sherman, *Babe Ruth's Called Shot: The Myth and Mystery of Baseball's Greatest Home Run* (Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press, 2014). Game logs and player statistics are in http://www.retrosheet.org/; http://www.baseball-almanac.com/. "I never fit in" quotation is in Shirley, "Mark Koenig." See also Edward Burns, "Cubs Get Chuck Klein for Cash, 3 Players," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 22, 1933, 21. "Bullet Bill Jurges" quotation is in "Bill Jurges Leads N. L. Shortstops," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 28, 1932, 17 (statistics are in "National League Fielding, 1932," 18).
27. "I guess I'll remain" quotation is from "Jurges Must Accuse Girl, Says Court," *Chicago Evening American*, July 8, 1932. Mary Huyette and games on wedding day are in Edward Burns, "Cubs Idle; Buy Wedding Gifts for Jurges," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 28, 1933, 25; "Cubs Conquer Phils Twice, 9–5 and 8–3," *The New York Times*, June 29, 1933, 24. Game logs, team standings, and player statistics are in http://www.retrosheet.org/. Jurges trade is in Irving Vaughan, "Cubs Get Leiber, Mancuso and Bartell," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 7, 1938, 25, 27. Biographical information on Jurges is in Geisler, "Billy Jurges" (see note 2); Kenan Heise, "William F. Jurges, Cubs Shortstop in 1930s, '40s," *Chicago Tribune*, March 7, 1997; Rich Westcott, "Bill Jurges—Good Field, Good Hit Shortstop," in *Diamond Greats: Profiles and Interviews with 65 of Baseball's History Makers* (Westport, Connecticut: Meckler Books, 1988), 100–105 (includes "it is very important" quotation on p. 104); Tony Salin, "Chicago's Blazing Shortstop: Billy Jurges," in *Baseball's Forgotten Heroes: One Fan's Search for the Game's Most Interesting Overlooked Players* (Lincolnwood, Illinois: Masters Press, 1999), 159–68; Eddie Gold and Art Ahrens, "Billy Jurges," in *The Golden Era Cubs, 1876–1940* (Chicago: Bonus Books, 1985), 144–47; Rick Phalen, "Billy Jurges," in *Our Chicago Cubs: Inside the History and the Mystery of Baseball's Favorite Franchise* (South Bend, Indiana: Diamond Communications, 1992), 1–4; Stan Grosshandler, "Billy Jurges Recalls How It Was in Majors in 1930s," *Baseball Digest* 51, no. 10 (October 1992), 68–70. "It was never mentioned" quotation is from Suzanne Jurges Price, telephone interview, September 21, 2011.
28. 1940 U. S. Census (Population Schedule), Los Angeles, California, Enumeration District (ED) 60–109, sheet no. 9-A, Margaret Heindl and Violet Heindl Popovich, lines 23–24, digital image, accessed October 20, 2015, http://www.ancestry.com/. The 1930 census shows Margaret and Violet living in Chicago. 1930 U. S. Census (Population Schedule), Chicago, Illinois, Enumeration District (ED) 16-1604, sheet no. 12-A, Margaret Heindl and Violet Heindl, lines 47–48, digital image, accessed October 4, 2015, http://www.ancestry.com/. Marriage verified in State of Minnesota, Marriage Record, Charles Retzlaff and Violet Popovich, April 17, 1947, certificate number 0040-323, Clay County, Minnesota, Minnesota Official Marriage System, accessed October 15, 2015, http://claycountymn.gov/1147/Marriage-Records. Information on Charles "Charley" Retzlaff is in "Charley Retzlaff," Minnesota Boxing Hall of Fame—Old Timers, accessed June 8, 2016, http://www.mnbhof.org/Minnesota_Boxing_Hall_of_Fame/Charley_Retzlaff.html; James P. Dawson, "Crowd of 17,000 Sees Louis Stop Retzlaff and Gain His 27th Straight Victory," *The New York Times*, January 18, 1936, 10. "Stunning beauty" quotation is from Mark Prescott, telephone interview, November 13, 2012. Personal features are also in Gardner, "Jurges' Girl Friend Blames Shooting;" "Jurges Must Accuse Girl, Says Court."
29. Biographical material and "I was very angry" quotation are from Mark Prescott, telephone interview, November 13, 2012. Nursing home and show girl past are in Peter Prescott, email, December 26, 2014. Violet's date of death is in *U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935–2014*, "Violet Popovich," accessed October 20, 2015, http://www.ancestry.com/. Grave at Forest Lawn is in Forest Lawn—Hollywood Hills, accessed June 1, 2016, http://forestlawn.com/hollywood-hills/; Violet's father's death on October 10, 1945, is in Coroner's Certificate of Death, "Mirko Popovich," District no. 3104, no. 28573, stamped October 12, 1945, Circuit Court of Cook County Archives, Chicago, Illinois. Violet's mother's death on October 15, 1957, is in *California, Death Index, 1940–1997* (see note 17).
30. "She was desperate" quotation is from Ed Hartig, email, January 6, 2016. "The shooting of Jurges" quotation is from Ed Hartig, "The Original 'Wonder Boys,'" Chicago Cubs *Vine Line* 18, no. 2 (February 2003): 31 (mentions Waitkus, Jurges, and *The Natural*). See also Rob Edelman, "Eddie Waitkus and *The Natural*: What Is Assumption? What Is Fact?," *The National Pastime* (2013): 86–91.

A Question of Character

George Davis and the Flora Campbell Affair

Bill Lamb

Of the more than 300 individuals enshrined in Cooperstown, perhaps the most enigmatic is George Davis. Despite an outstanding 20-season playing career—and twice being manager of the renowned New York Giants—Davis was rarely the subject of close press scrutiny. To this day, significant aspects of his life away from the diamond remain unknown. But what is known about Davis—both good and bad—has prompted nineteenth century baseball scholar David Nemec to describe Davis as "a man of enormous character contradictions."[1]

An incident that Nemec places in the Davis minus column might be called the Flora Campbell affair. On July 16, 1893, former amateur ballplayer Harrison Campbell publicly accused Davis of running off with his wife, Flora, and infant son. The accusation was a one-day local news story that Davis dismissed out-of-hand, while the national press and baseball fandom paid little heed to it. Eight years later, Campbell named Davis as co-respondent in a divorce action against Flora, citing the alleged 1893 runaway as grounds for his suit. This time, the matter drew considerable press and public attention. A furious Davis, by now ostensibly married to another woman, vigorously denied the accusation, threatening to wring Campbell's neck if given the chance. In court, however, the proceedings were uncontested, resulting in Campbell gaining his divorce decree.

In an effort to determine whether the allegations made against Davis ring true or not, this article will examine the Flora Campbell affair, analyzing the rather fragmentary direct evidence, the circumstances surrounding both the 1893 incident and the 1901 divorce suit, and relevant aspects of the Davis persona. Integrated into this discussion will be an account of Davis's complicated domestic situation during the 1890s. In the end, the object of this exercise will be to shed some new light on "the enormous character contradictions" of George Davis, one of turn-of-the-century baseball's finest players.

THE FLORA CAMPBELL AFFAIR, PART I

In 1893, 22-year-old George Davis was the everyday third baseman for the New York Giants, having come to Gotham from Cleveland in a preseason trade for fading Giants icon Buck Ewing. Once in New York, the switch-hitting Davis was an immediate success. By July he was in the midst of the breakout season that would set him on the path to Cooperstown.

On Saturday, July 15, the Giants were in Cleveland, playing the final game of a three-game set against the Spiders, Davis's old team. George was in the lineup that day and went 1-for-5 in a 7–3 Giants win. Later that date or the following morning, the club boarded the train for the return trip to New York. The Flora Campbell affair began with a brief news article buried in the back pages of the Sunday, July 16, edition of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* captioned: "Harry Campbell of Erie Street Has Reason to Believe That His Wife Has Fled with a Ball Player." The article stated that Campbell "reported to police last evening that his wife—a dashing brunette—had fled with George Davis, formerly of the Cleveland baseball club, now with the New York club. Seven years ago, Campbell was a pitcher for the Plattsville, New York club. He married Miss Florence Murray, forsook the diamond, and came to Cleveland to work as a stage carpenter. Davis at the time was a boy in Plattsville and a mascot of the club."[2]

According to Campbell, "Davis knew my wife in Plattsville and they were good friends. During the visit of the [New York] club to this city, he called on her several times. At six o'clock (last) evening, I came home for my supper. My wife was very affectionate. She threw her arms around my neck, kissing me fondly and asking me what time I would be home. I replied about 11:30. I returned home at that hour and found my house stripped, my wife and baby gone, and many articles of value missing."[3] The *Plain Dealer* concluded the article with the discouraging observation that "the police seemed indifferent and failed to offer any assistance to the deserted man."[4]

Unhappily for Harry Campbell, indifference to his plight was not confined to Cleveland's finest. No one

else was much concerned, either. As far as has been discovered, no other Cleveland newspaper re-published the *Plain Dealer* report, the growing prominence of former Spiders star George Davis notwithstanding. Nor was the story picked up by newspapers in New York or elsewhere. The only place the story was carried was in the July 22 issue of *The Sporting News*, by which time the incident had already been largely forgotten. Meanwhile, George Davis assumed his third base station for a Monday, July 17, game against Boston at the Polo Grounds and went 1-for-4 at the plate in a 4–1 New York win.

On July 19, the *Plain Dealer* updated its Campbell-Davis story, informing readers that Giants player-manager John Montgomery Ward had telegraphed the following: "No truth whatever in story that George Davis has eloped," adding, curiously, that "he isn't that kind of third baseman."[5] Davis himself had also been heard from, wiring the *Plain Dealer*: "Saw account in your paper. Please deny it absolutely. No truth in it."[6] By this time, the *Plain Dealer* may have begun to have misgivings about the Campbell allegations. Its July 19 story revealed that efforts to corroborate events had been stymied by the disappearance of the purported victim. "Campbell cannot now be found. A search for him yesterday proved futile."[7] With that, the newspaper abandoned the matter. It would not be heard of again for another eight years.

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George Davis, one of the turn of the century's finest ballplayers, remains an enigma with regards to his personal life and character.

BEFORE AND AFTER THE EVENT

The evidence is sketchy but US Census reports suggest that Harrison Campbell was born in Illinois in April 1865. His wife, Florence, was five years younger and Canadian, born in Quebec Province in June 1870. Around 1880, she and her parents emigrated to Massachusetts. In 1886, Harrison Campbell, age 21, and Florence "Flora" Murray, age 16, were married. That same year, Flora gave birth to the couple's first child, a son named Earl. A second boy, Harry (J. Harrison), arrived the following year. Both the Campbell children were born in Iowa, but the loss of the 1890 US Census stymies determination of whether there was also an "infant son" in the family at the time of the alleged elopement. All that can be said is Earl and Harry were the only Campbell children listed in later census reports. Another unknown is the post-Iowa whereabouts of the Campbells, until Harrison and Flora surfaced in Cleveland in 1893.

A similar shroud engulfs the early life of George Davis. Little is known except that he was born in September 1870 in Cohoes, New York, a mill town on the Hudson River wedged between Albany and Troy, and that George was the fifth of the seven Davis children surviving infancy.[8] He began his known baseball career in 1886 playing for an amateur team in Troy sponsored by a local tavern owner/politico named John Durkin.[9] Engagements with the Cohoes YMCA nine and other area clubs followed. In 1889, Davis was promoted to a fast Albany semipro club managed by former major leaguer Tom York. The following year, he was among the many elevated to major league ranks by the advent of the Players League, becoming the regular center fielder for the National League Cleveland Spiders.[10] An offensive-defensive standout from the very beginning, Davis was an exceptionally promising and mature talent despite his being only 19 years old. Two more seasons in a Cleveland uniform then established Davis as a potential star.

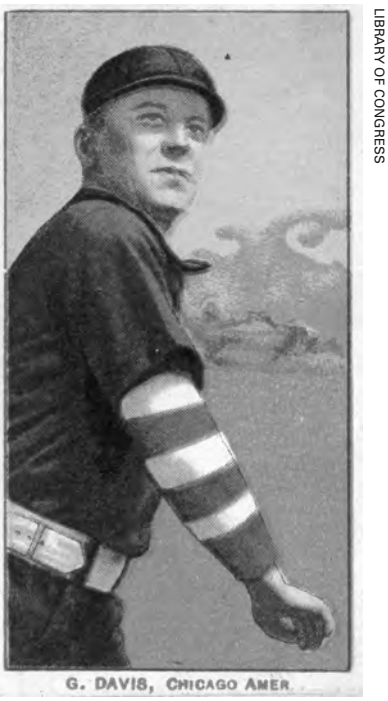
Among Davis's admirers was the newly-installed player-manager of the New York Giants, John Montgomery Ward. Shortly after assuming the helm, Ward dispatched aging Giants stalwart Buck Ewing (a longtime Ward rival) to Cleveland in exchange for George Davis. Having moved to third base in 1892, Davis became a fulltime infielder once in New York. With him and Ward anchoring the Giants inner defense, the club rose in NL standings, its crowning achievement being a postseason Temple Cup triumph over Baltimore in 1894. Following Ward's retirement immediately thereafter, Davis, now 24, assumed the post of New York player-manager in 1895, albeit only briefly (33 games) and without much success. Remaining with the Giants after having been relieved of club command, Davis developed into baseball's best two-way shortstop, batting .332 and fielding brilliantly during a nine-season run in New York.

Although Davis's playing skills were widely respected, both the New York sports press and Giants fans viewed him coolly. To a certain extent, this was attributable to Davis's amenability to doing the bidding

of Giants club owner Andrew Freedman, probably the most hated figure in turn-of-the-century baseball.[11] Midway through the 1900 season, Davis had been reinstalled by Freedman as Giants manager amidst public recriminations by deposed predecessor Buck Ewing that cast Davis in an unflattering light. But Davis's persona also did him no favors. On the field, he was a clean, scientific player in a raucous baseball age who, apart from his superb play, did little to draw attention to himself.[12] Consequently, reportage on Davis was usually confined to his game performance, occasionally supplemented with commentary about his up-and-down relationship with the club boss.

Off the field, Davis was colorless—a private, reserved man whom sportswriters rarely published anecdotes about or sought out for rainy-day column filler. Given that he played at the center of the baseball universe (New York, and later Chicago), perhaps the most remarkable thing about George Davis was the scarcity of press notice and fan attention accorded him during his lengthy career. Even truly heroic conduct—Davis pulled a floundering swimmer from dangerous Atlantic Ocean surf on an off-day during the 1894 season, and led the impromptu rescue that saved several women and children from a Manhattan tenement blaze in 1900—failed to generate much publicity about Davis (who did not seek it, anyway).

During the years that Davis was playing great baseball for a succession of bad New York Giants ball clubs, the Campbells remained cloaked in the anonymity of private life. In the late 1890s, however, Harrison Campbell reemerged in Akron, Ohio. There, he became active in the local Disciples of Christ congregation, eventually affecting the title of the Reverend Campbell. But by the time of the 1900 US Census, he was not listed as an Akron clergyman. Rather, Campbell was identified as a 35-year-old farmer residing in Munson, Oho, about 30 miles east of Cleveland. Interestingly, the other members of the Campbell household were recorded as his teenage son, Earl, his married sister, Cora Olmstead, his widowed mother, Susan Lafferty—and his wife, Florence Campbell, age 30.



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Davis as depicted in his days with the Chicago Americans (White Sox) on an early twentieth century baseball card.

THE FLORA CAMPBELL AFFAIR, PART II

On the morning of March 14, 1901, the page one/top-of-the-fold headline of the *New York Morning Telegram* blared: "Manager George Davis Was Co-Respondent: Captain of the New York Team, Although Married, Ran Away with Wife of Harrison Campbell of Cleveland, Who Is Granted Decree." The accompanying article related that Davis "received word from Cleveland yesterday that he has been named as co-respondent in a divorce suit that came up in the Court of Common Pleas Tuesday morning. The plaintiff is Harrison Campbell, who declared that his wife Flora had run away with the Giants leader."[13] Without mentioning that the alleged runaway had taken place eight years earlier, the *Morning Telegraph* continued: "Davis is married, and his wife was a constant attendant at the games played at the Polo Grounds last season."[14] The wife referred to here was Jane Holden, a native Philadelphian with whom Davis was cohabiting in upper Manhattan. "While playing with the Cleveland club," the article concluded, "[Davis] became acquainted with Mrs. Campbell who admired the popular player. The friendship resulted in elopement of which yesterday's divorce was the culmination."[15]

Unlike 1893, this time Campbell's allegations garnered newsprint, with various national newspapers as well as the baseball weeklies devoting space to them.[16] Davis angrily denied the charges, responding in some detail. "The story from Cleveland, which alleged that I eloped with Harrison Campbell's wife, is an outright lie from beginning to end. It is only an old story rehashed. If I had that man Campbell here I'd wring his neck. He first told this story seven years ago. It went through the newspapers and was completely thrashed out. It was a fake, and I proved this fellow not only false, but an ingrate."[17]

Warming to his subject, Davis went on: "Why, I practically kept this Campbell out of the poorhouse, practically, for two years, and I never saw his wife more than half a dozen times, and then only when he

sent her to me for money. His wife was a Worcester woman. [Campbell] played ball on the team at Plattsburgh, New York, once.[18] She lived there at the time he married her and they moved to Cleveland. I was playing ball on the Cleveland team. This was in 1893. He got money from me on the score of his baseball connection."[19] Regarding Flora Campbell, Davis had merely played financial benefactor in her time of need. "One day [Flora] came to me. She said [Campbell] had abused her, and she asked me for money to get home to her folks at Worcester. I let her have the money, and Campbell started this little story then."[20] Finally, Davis revealed what apparently most galled him about the Campbell allegations—their likely effect on Jane. Said George: "I did not even know my wife at the time, and she has never heard this old story on which Campbell seeks to get a divorce seven years after I married."[21]

By the time that Davis mounted his defense, the court of public opinion was the only forum available to him, as the *Campbell v. Campbell* divorce case had already been decided. Indeed, Davis apparently had not even been placed on notice of its existence until after judgment had been rendered.[22] By all appearances from the limited reportage of the actual proceedings, the suit was uncontested by Flora, who probably did not even make a court appearance, much less challenge the assertions in her husband's petition. If that was so, the proceedings before Judge Thomas Dissette would have been perfunctory and the divorce decree sought by Harrison Campbell granted almost as a matter of course.

The entry of that decree came not a moment too soon for Harry Campbell, otherwise engaged in the private courtship of Helen Usher, the teenage daughter of a Munson councilman. No sooner had the ink dried on Judge Dissette's divorce decree than Campbell was applying for a license to marry Helen. In fact, Harry and Helen planned to be wed the very same afternoon that the divorce was granted.[23] But such plans were thwarted by disapproving local officials. As somewhat gleefully reported by the *Cleveland Leader*, "Rev. Harry Campbell, formerly a Disciple minister of Akron, but who for the past year has been engaged in agricultural pursuits in Chardon, met with a bitter disappointment in his matrimonial intentions last evening."[24,25] Unsuccessful in obtaining a marriage license, the couple then attempted to elope only to be confronted at the door of the Usher home by the father of the would-be bride "who promptly put a stop to the proceedings."[26] At last published report, Helen was still at home while "the Reverend Mr. Campbell … [set off to] answer the call from a church in New York."[27]

THE AFTERMATH

As it turned out, Harry Campbell remained in the area, and by 1903 he was in his grave at Chardon Municipal Cemetery, dead at age 38.[28] By that time, George Davis had joined the player exodus to the new American League, jumped the seemingly ironclad two-year contract that he had signed with the Chicago White Sox, returned to the New York Giants pursuant to even more lucrative contract terms, and become a major obstacle to cessation of interleague hostilities until ordered back into White Sox livery by a federal court. His domestic situation was similarly complicated.

During his bachelor days, Davis became enmeshed in another salacious scandal involving members of the opposite sex. In June 1897, the *New York Journal* revealed that Davis was threatened with breach of promise suits by two Manhattan boarding house residents, each of whom was under the impression that she was engaged to marry him. Other newspapers then picked up the story.[29] And lest baseball fans nationwide miss news of the affair, New York Giants beat writer William F.H. Koelsch featured it in his weekly *Sporting Life* column, complete with embarrassing details of Davis's correspondence with "Peaches" (young Helen Kerrison) and "Kittens" (a comely widow named Hurd).[30] For the next several days, Baltimore Orioles fans serenaded Davis with cries of "Peaches" and "Kittens" whenever he came to the plate, but with little effect. Davis played with his customary proficiency and the Giants won.[31] When asked to explain the situation, Davis calmly deflected press inquiries about his personal life, and the "Peaches" and "Kittens" scandal disappeared from newsprint within days—as the Flora Campbell affair would four years later.

Within a year of the fleeting "Peaches" and "Kittens" embarrassment, Davis had settled down with 25-year-old Jane Holden of Philadelphia. The two shared a Manhattan apartment, and informed 1900 US Census takers that they had married in 1898. Except they hadn't. Indeed, they couldn't have married—for Jane already had a husband. Rather, George Davis and Jane Holden were married on December 5, 1904, somewhere in Delaware (presumably after death, annulment, or divorce had removed the impediment to Jane's remarriage).32 For the next 25-plus years, the couple led a quiet, almost anonymous, existence, first in New York and then St. Louis, until George's mind began to fail in the early 1930s. Then, the Davises moved to Philadelphia to live with Jane's older sister. Committed to Philadelphia State Hospital in 1934, George Davis remained a resident there until he died in October 1940, age 70. The immediate cause of death

was paresis, the slow-moving endgame for untreated syphilis cases.[33]

A QUESTION OF CHARACTER

To integrate the Flora Campbell affair into an assessment of George Davis's character, it is first necessary to determine what actually happened during this three-person drama. The task here is complicated by the fact that the accounts of two of the parties (Harrison Campbell and George Davis) are largely unworthy of belief, while the third (Flora Campbell) was never heard from.[34] The problems with the Harrison Campbell account are not confined to dubious or false details like George Davis being a boyhood mascot for a team in Plattsville, a seemingly non-existent "infant son" in his elopement scenario, or Campbell's apparent disappearance shortly after he had made his public charge against Davis and Flora. Campbell's allegations do not square with the known whereabouts of George Davis during the crucial July 15–17, 1893, time frame—July 15: Davis played in a game in Cleveland; July 16: train ride back to New York; July 17: Davis played in game at the Polo Grounds—and the complete absence of any change in Davis's normal routine during that period. But perhaps most telling is the 1900 US Census which puts Campbell and wife Flora under the same roof in Munson, Ohio, years after her supposed runaway.

Davis's story is little better. The assertion that he repeatedly gave money to Harrison Campbell and "kept him out of the poorhouse, practically" merely because Campbell had once played for a baseball club in Plattsburgh, New York, is a weak one. The same goes for Davis financing an abused Flora's return to her parents in Worcester. What does ring true is that both Harrison and Flora Campbell got money out of a young George Davis, else Davis would not have admitted same. The question, of course, is why did Davis give money to the Campbells?

At the April 2016 Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19th Century Base Ball Conference in Cooperstown, the issue was raised before a gathering of some 55 turn-of-the-century baseball enthusiasts, most of whom were fully familiar with George Davis's sterling major league career. But few had ever heard of the Flora Campbell affair. After the facts of the matter had been presented, the attendees were asked to cast a vote on the following question: In July 1893, did George Davis and Flora Campbell leave Cleveland together for an adulterous or immoral purpose? The sharply-divided outcome—42 percent yes, 58 percent no—demonstrated that reasonable minds can disagree about events involving Davis and Flora.

In the discussion that followed, there was little division regarding one underlying component of the relationship. The assumption that Davis and Flora were having sex was treated as a given. Attendees were also near universal in their disdain of Harrison Campbell, deemed a cad, at best. Indeed, several attendees voiced the suspicion that Campbell was pimping out Flora, and not just to George Davis. Davis himself also came in for his share of censure, with the Flora Campbell affair categorized by some as nothing more than another instance of suspected—if unsubstantiated and non-specific—"deviant" sexual behavior on the part of Davis. In keeping with the spirit of the discussion, this writer then offered this thesis on the matter—unencumbered by any concrete proof but one fairly suggested by the circumstances: the affair could have been a successful-for-a-time but clumsily-concluded badger game.[35] Davis, then young, single, financially comfortable, and likely horny could have been susceptible to such a scheme by the Campbells. Regrettably, the badger game construct does not explain why the scheme imploded in July 1893. Nor does it explain why Harrison Campbell resurrected the elopement story when seeking to divorce the wife that he evidently continued living with for years after the event. All that can be said is that, with the tale left unchallenged in court by either Flora Campbell or George Davis, it provided a cognizable basis for the divorce decree so urgently sought by Campbell in March 1901.

More important, what insight—if any—does the Flora Campbell affair afford us into the elusive character of George Davis? That Davis was sexually active during his twenties is hardly remarkable, although he did exhibit something of a knack for involving himself in publicly embarrassing liaisons. What is noteworthy is the short shelf-life of such incidents. Like his misadventure with "Peaches" and "Kittens," the Flora Campbell affair had no appreciable effect on Davis's standing with his club or the sporting public. The matter was little more than a one-day news story, and quickly forgotten. Perhaps what the affair and other indiscretions reveal most about Davis is his almost preternatural immunity to attracting public interest. Even a sex scandal or two could not keep the press or fans focused on him. For twenty big league seasons, George Davis was a greatness-taken-for-granted ballplayer whose personal life the baseball world rarely paid attention to. And that was apparently fine with Davis.

By all accounts, Davis was an intelligent, well-spoken, discreetly ambitious man who spent most of a long baseball career playing superbly in the media

capitals of New York and Chicago. For Davis to have avoided press and public attention as constantly as he did bespeaks a temperament and personality of exceptionally bland proportions. Even sexcapades failed to spice up Davis in the press and public mind. In the end, the conclusion most likely to be drawn from such circumstance is this: George Davis was a private, colorless character who led an eventful, Cooperstown-bound life in spite of himself. ■

Author's Note

Bill Lamb is a retired state/county prosecutor. The life of George Davis has been a research interest of his for more than 30 years. This article is adapted from a presentation made during the Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19th Century Base Ball Conference at Cooperstown in April 2016.

Notes

1. Nemec, David, *Major League Baseball Profiles, 1871–1900: Volume 2* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 22.
2. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 16, 1893.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. "Denies the Story," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 19, 1893.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Almost everything known about the non-baseball events of George Davis's life has been uncovered by Walt Lipka, the former Cohoes town historian. A detailed chronology of Davis family events compiled by Lipka is contained in the George Davis file at the Hall of Fame library in Cooperstown, but even this document sheds little light on George's youth.
9. No evidence placing Davis with a baseball team in Plattsville, New York, a vanished railroad whistle stop in Schoharie County not that far from Cooperstown, has been found by the writer. Plattsville and Cohoes were approximately 50 miles apart.
10. During its one year of existence (1890), the Players League swelled the ranks of major league players by roughly one-third.
11. Years later, it was reported that fellow players had privately nicknamed Davis "Andy" for his maintaining a relationship with the disdained Andrew Freedman. See the *Des Moines Register and Leader*, April 24, 1910.
12. In 20 major league seasons, Davis was ejected from a mere nine games as a player. The umpires tossed him four other times as a manager.
13. *New York Morning Telegraph*, March 14, 1901.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. See e.g., the *Albany Times-Union*, *Cincinnati Post*, and *Cleveland Leader*, March 13, 1901, and *Sporting Life* and *The Sporting News*, March 23, 1901.
17. *The Sporting News*, March 23, 1901.
18. Plattsburgh is located near the upstate New York border with Canada, and is approximately 200 miles north of Plattsville.
19. *The Sporting News*, March 23, 1901.
20. Ibid. See also, *Sporting Life*, March 23, 1901.
21. *The Sporting News*, March 23, 1901. The final comment attributed to Davis may have been garbled in the translation to newsprint, as George and Jane did not begin to hold themselves out as married until 1898. Given that, it would make more factual sense if the phrase read "several [not seven] years after I married" in the *Sporting News* article.
22. Although divorce case procedure varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the co-respondent in an adultery-based divorce suit usually has no legal right to intervene in the proceedings. The right to appear and argue in court is reserved to the parties (husband and wife) affected by the suit's outcome.
23. As reported in the *Cleveland Leader*, March 15, 1901, and the *Denver Post*, March 17, 1901.
24. Chardon was a farming town in eastern Ohio that shared a post office address with nearby Munson.
25. "The Wedding Did Not Take Place," *Cleveland Leader*, March 15, 1901.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. At the time of his demise, Campbell was going by the title of the Reverend H. Lester Campbell. His mother, Susan Lafferty, lived to be almost 100 and was buried next to her son when she died in 1938. Their grave markers in Chardon Municipal Cemetery are viewable on the Find-A-Grave website.
29. See e.g., the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 22, 1897, *Washington* (DC) *Evening Star*, June 25, 1897, and *Cincinnati Post*, June 28, 1897.
30. See "Davis a Deceiver? The New York Shortstop Engages in Dual Courtship," *Sporting Life*, June 26, 1897.
31. As per the Philadelphia Inquirer and *St. Albans* (Vermont) *Messenger*, June 22, 1897.
32. Personal information noted in Delaware marriage records viewable on-line makes the identity of the couple unmistakable. For more, see Bill Lamb, "Mr. and Mrs. George Davis: Living in Sin and Beyond," *The Inside Game*, Vol. XIII, No. 3 (September 2013), 13–16.
33. There is, inarguably, something ignominious about dying from a venereal disease. But before sulfa drugs and penicillin became available, syphilis was a difficult-to-cure malady and men both high (Lord Randolph Churchill, Winston's father) and low (Al Capone) were brought down by it. Given its often-long gestation period, Davis's contraction of syphilis may have dated to as far back as his late-playing days. It is doubtful, however, that he got it from wife Jane who showed no signs of the disease prior to her death from a heart attack in 1948.
34. Although not conclusive regarding identity, US Census reports indicate that a likely Flora Campbell survived both her ex-husband and George Davis. In 1940, this 70-year-old Flora was living as a "widow" in a Cleveland rooming house. After that, she drops from view, her ultimate fate unknown to the writer.
35. In its classic form, a badger game is a scheme in which a woman places a man in a compromising position. The mark is thereafter extorted for money when her male accomplice, pretending to be an outraged husband, enters and threatens violence, scandal, or embarrassment.

Chief Bender

A Marksman at the Traps and on the Mound

Robert D. Warrington

In early twentieth century America, baseball and trapshooting went hand-in-hand for major league ballplayers. Many star players, and those not so prominent, were "scarcely able to wait until the diamond season is ended so they may rush to the gun rack, select their favorite firearms, and strive for records at the traps."[1] For some ballplayers, trapshooting was far more than a recreational activity intended to pass the time enjoyably until spring training. They participated in shooting tournaments that were as intensely competitive as they were financially rewarding. Matches between players became extensions of their rivalries on the diamond, and the trapshooting industry used baseball stars to lure people to take up the sport of shooting. Charles Albert "Chief" Bender excelled in baseball and trapshooting, and both sports played important roles in his life. While his career in baseball has been extensively analyzed, Bender's success as a trapshooter among major league ballplayers of his era is less well known. His involvement in this sport and its relationship with his baseball profession are examined in this article.[2]

THE SPORT OF TRAPSHOOTING

Trapshooting has been part of America's sports scene since the late nineteenth century. In it, people shoot at targets—typically with a 12-gauge shotgun—launched into the air by a machine in a direction away from the shooter. The targets are saucer-shaped pieces of baked clay, from which the name clay target is taken. The sport was designed originally to allow bird hunters to practice their skills by shooting at clay targets instead of live pigeons; hence, another oft-used name for the target is clay pigeon. The machine moves continuously to change the angle at which a target is sprung from the trap, providing more realism in simulating bird hunting. Competition among participants involves shooting from a fixed position at a pre-determined number of targets over one or more rounds. Whichever competitor "breaks" the greatest number of targets is the winner.[3]

Trapshooting achieved considerable popularity throughout America by the early twentieth century. In 1915, there were over 4,000 trapshooting clubs in the nation with more than a half million members.[4] Still, trapshooting struggled against an image of being a "rich man's game" intended for the well-to-do. Only the wealthy, it was widely believed, could pay for trapshooting club memberships, a high-quality shotgun, copious amounts of ammunition and targets, and the fees attendant to match competitions.[5]

BASEBALL AND TRAPSHOOTING: A SYNERGISTIC RELATIONSHIP?

Executives from the business side of trapshooting (e.g., arms and ammunition manufacturers, gun club owners, etc.) sought to entice more Americans to spend time and money at the traps by promoting the theme that the sport was a fitting pastime for the common man. Baseball became an integral part of this campaign. Every American—not just affluent ones—should embrace trapshooting, it was claimed, because of the similarities to the National Game, a supposition demonstrated by the many professional ballplayers who were trapshooters. It was a simple proposition: If you enjoyed baseball, you would enjoy trapshooting.

Articles on trapshooting in the early twentieth century often trumpeted the large number of major leaguers who favored shooting during the offseason. A number of eventual Hall of Famers were identified as avid trapshooters, including Christy Mathewson, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Chief Bender, Honus Wagner, Ty Cobb, Eddie Collins, Roger Bresnahan, and Frank Baker.[6] The author of one article asserted that "virtually every player of prominence" also was a trapshooting enthusiast, and he noted more broadly:

> A recent canvass of every player of note showed that forty-nine out of every fifty owned shotguns—some of the players being the owners of more than one gun while several had equipments of five guns, and one boasted of seven guns. Further, all claimed that shooting was their favorite sport.[7]

Several reasons were offered to explain the affinity ballplayers had for trapshooting. The most prominent

AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

A circa 1912 portrait of Chief Bender probably taken for advertising purposes when he was a sporting goods salesman/consultant at Wanamaker's Department Store in Philadelphia. The shotguns in the background have price tags dangling from strings attached to their trigger guards. The gold pendant hanging from a fob on Bender's waist was given to players by the Athletics' club for winning the 1911 World Series.

was that the sport kept abilities needed on the diamond sharp during the offseason.[8] One writer professed, "For shooting and baseball are two of America's "best bets" in the sports world. Both require a steady nerve, good eye, even temperament, concentration, and A-1 brand of sportsmanship. Indeed, they have many things in common."[9]

A sports columnist echoed this refrain in a 1915 article that noted once the baseball season had ended, players instinctively headed for the traps:

> Trapshooting has taken such a strong hold upon the players in the past two years that they have now resolved themselves into a series of exchanges of the bat, ball and glove for the gun and shell. They have found from experience that trapshooting is the only recreation for their Fall and Winter period of idleness that will not send them into next season's campaign overtrained.[10]

The particular advantage hours spent on a firing line at a trapshooting club had for pitchers was emphasized in one article: "The clay bird game is a sport that, more than any other, keeps eyes keen, steels the nerves and cultivates instant and accurate judgment of speed, distance, the effect of wind, etc.; things that are invaluable to a pitcher."[11]

The campaign to attract baseball fans to the traps went beyond highlighting that numerous major leaguers enjoyed the sport. Proponents of trapshooting wanted people participating in the sport, not simply watching it as they did baseball games. Trapshooting had not developed into a spectator sport, and industry officials realized the unlikelihood of convincing people to pay an admission fee to attend matches between trapshooters who, regardless of their skill, were not sports celebrities. While there was ample evidence people would pay to watch famous baseball players participate in shooting matches—as they did to see these same players at the ballpark—the real money was in persuading people to become trapshooters themselves.

Consequently, the allure of the sport was reinforced using the premise that while fans could not compete against ballplayers on the diamond, they could challenge and perhaps even best them in trapshooting competitions. Dangling this prospect served an unmistakable purpose. People were encouraged to see themselves as capable of competing as equals against well-known ballplayers in trapshooting matches. Achieving the talent to contend at this level would, of course, require a significant amount of time and money spent practicing at the traps. But the glory and bragging rights associated with winning such contests were portrayed as powerful inducements to try, including by one author who stressed, "The 'fan' is not able to compete with Matty in the pitcher's box, nor with Cobb at bat and on the bases, but that same fan will gather many crumbs of comfort for himself when he can entice these famous athletes to the traps and show them how to hit the flying targets."[12]

The campaign featured other links between baseball and trapshooting with the intent of portraying their shared attraction for ordinary people. Both sports were "truly American" in origin, and "the inherent liking of Americans for baseball and firearms cannot be denied." In addition, both allowed Americans—living in an increasingly industrialized and urbanized society—to nostalgically relive the country's pastoral and bucolic past. Baseball and trapshooting took place in the "Great Outdoors," permitting participants and even those just watching the competition to bask in sunshine, breathe fresh air, enjoy simple pleasures, and escape the stifling oppressiveness and regimentation of the office, the factory, and—for children—the classroom.[13]

While the many ballplayers shooting at the traps lent credence to the claim that it was a popular sport among major leaguers during the offseason, match competition specifically was cited as the clearest evidence ballplayers—especially stars—believed trapshooting benefited their skills on the diamond. And of all of those who excelled at the ballpark and at the traps, it was Chief Bender who—by combining his

baseball talents with his shooting skills—substantiated most convincingly the claim that because both sports are complementary, success in one contributed to success in the other.

CHIEF BENDER THE BALLPLAYER

A sizable body of literature exists on Chief Bender's career in professional baseball; therefore, his record as a major leaguer is only summarized here.[14] Bender pitched for manager Connie Mack and the Philadelphia Athletics 1903–14. He was a key member of the A's "First Dynasty," which won four American League pennants and three World Series championships, 1910–14.[15] Mack considered Bender his "greatest one-game pitcher," and was quoted as saying, "If everything depended on one game, I just used Albert, the greatest money-pitcher of all time."[16]

Bender signed with the Baltimore Terrapins of the Federal League for the 1915 season, and he ended his active major league career by pitching for the Philadelphia Phillies in 1916–17.[17] By the time he hung up his spikes, Bender had won 212 games, posted a .625 winning percentage, and pitched a no-hitter. He was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1953—the first Native American accorded that honor. Although informed of his selection, Bender did not live to see his induction into the Hall. The ceremony took place on August 9, 1954, almost three months after his death on May 22, 1954.[18]

CHIEF BENDER'S VIEWS ON TRAPSHOOTING

In an interview that appeared in the April 1915 issue of *Baseball Magazine*, Chief Bender explained his partiality for trapshooting:

> I have been shooting clay targets for about thirteen years and with every visit to a trapshooting club the hold of the sport on me grows…It would be pretty hard to give the biggest reason why trapshooting appeals. There are so many reasons and almost any combination of these reasons would hold a man in the game once he had experienced the fascination of shattering a clay saucer that was getting away from him at a rate that made a bird's flight look lazy…Perhaps you have already suspected it, but to make sure that there be no mistake about it, let me tell you in plain English: I am a gun bug.[19]

In a short article that appeared under his name that same year, Bender echoed the notions of trapshooting's popularity among ballplayers, and how it enabled them to keep their baseball skills sharp during the offseason:

> Like 95 percent of the baseball players and fans, I find my chief recreation away from the diamond in the gun…I believe the one sport is the complement of the other. It seems to me that all of the baseball fraternity realizes that the one sport or hobby that is necessary to them in the offseason of baseball is shooting…The practice at the traps not only provides a certain amount of physical exercise, but it also trains the eye and mind, develops self-control, and brings the player into close communication with the best type of sportsmen in the world.[20]

Bender's relationship with trapshooting, however, was more multifaceted than simply using it as part of his training regimen during the offseason. He was aware of the considerable financial rewards winning match competitions could yield, and that realization as much as any other influenced his affinity for the sport and beckoned him frequently to the traps.

TRAPSHOOTING AS A MONEY SPORT

Trapshooting was covered extensively in newspapers and sports periodicals during the first decades of the twentieth century when Chief Bender was active in the sport. *Sporting Life*, for example, included a section, "The World of Shooting," and a column, "Those Shooters We Know," which reported in each issue on the results of matches including those in which Bender competed.[21] It is from this coverage that we can gain an understanding of the extent of his participation in shooting contests, monetary prizes at stake, and the success Bender enjoyed on the firing line.

Trapshooting competition typically took place in one of four formats:

- An individual match in which shooters competed one-on-one. Both wagered identical sums that became the purse.[22] They fired at a specified number of clay saucers, and whoever broke the most targets was the winner. The amount wagered by a shooter in an individual competition was seldom less than $50.
- Tournament play, consisted of multiple shooters—usually between 10 and 20—each paying an entrance fee to participate in the competition. Total fees paid, which typically varied between five and twenty dollars for each entrant, became the purse. The winner again was determined by who broke the greatest number of clay birds,

although tournaments didn't always use the winner-take-all format. Instead, the purse was divided between the first- and second-place finishers.

- A variation of tournament play featuring the "miss-and-out" match. Participants would each shoot at 10 clay birds per round. The first time a shooter missed a target, he was eliminated from the contest. The competition continued until only one shooter was left standing.
- Team contests involving multiple shooters—typically three to five in number—competing together against an equal number of shooters on another team. Each team's collective total of clay pigeons struck determined the champion, and members of the victorious team divided the winnings equally.

Exact contest purses are in many cases not specified in reporting on trapshooting matches. There are instead references to "big money," "big purse," and "neat sum of money." Enough references to specific amounts exist, however, to gain a good understanding of the amounts at stake.

Purses varied significantly among competitions. For example, in a March 3, 1909, match, Bender and his opponent, S. White, each put up $100 to shoot at 50 targets. Bender broke all of them while White could manage to hit only 43.[23] In another match held "in a driving rain" on February 23, 1909, Bender and Nathan Benner engaged in a 50-target contest. Bender cracked 44 clay birds against Benner's 43 and took home $375.[24] Not all purses were so rich. In other individual contests in which Bender participated, the amount bet by each shooter was $50.[25]

AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

Chief Bender and other ballplayers in a circa 1915 photo taken at the Beideman Gun Club—Bender's home range—in Camden, New Jersey. From left: Chief Bender, Fred Plum—National Amateur Trapshooting Champion—Grover Cleveland Alexander (Phillies), and Joe Bush (Athletics).

Winnings in the tournament format were determined by the number of participants and the entrance fee.[26] For example, Bender participated in a 1909 competition in which 12 participants each paid ten dollars to shoot. Bender won "first money" by cracking 24 of 25 clay birds.[27] In a match the previous year in which 15 participants paid $5 each to shoot at 10 targets, Bender came out on top by downing all 10 birds.[28]

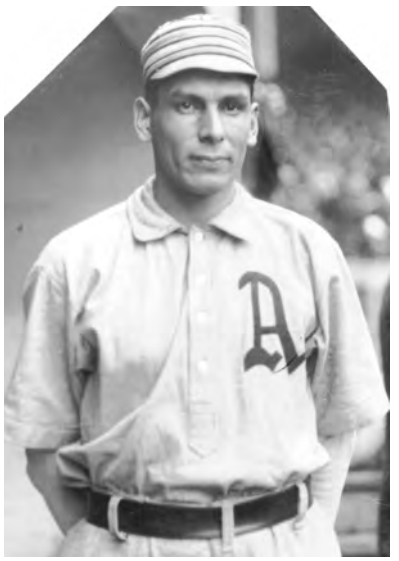
The totality of reporting on Bender's prowess as a trapshooter reveals he won, or at least finished "in the money," considerably more often than he did not. But Bender was not always victorious.[29] A match in 1915 paired him against Lt. George Marker of the Pennsylvania Railroad police for the handsome sum of $500. In an unusual twist, the contest was not held at a gun club, but at the Charleroi Baseball Park in Charleroi, Pennsylvania. Presumably, this was done to accommodate more spectators who were charged an admission fee to watch the event. Given the amount of money at stake, the number of clay bird targets was set at a modest 25 for each shooter. Marker prevailed by a score of 20 to 16.[30]

GAMBLING AT TRAPSHOOTING MATCHES

An assessment of trapshooting as a money sport and its relationship with baseball is incomplete without a discussion of gambling. Like other major sports, trapshooting drew gamblers to contests who were there primarily to place bets, not to marvel at the brilliance of outstanding shooters. Depending on the competition format, wagers could be placed in a number of ways: the individual or team that would be victorious; the number of targets a shooter or team would break; the difference in scores between shooters in individual matches or teams in tournament contests; the order in which shooters on a team would finish; and so forth.

Reporting on matches occasionally contains oblique references to gambling since it was illegal—but mostly tolerated—in many places contests were held. Admitting that gambling attracted some people to the traps was contrary to the campaign promoting the sport as a pastoral "truly American" pastime rooted in the "Great Outdoors."[31]

Matches that featured baseball stars unquestionably encouraged gambling by attracting larger crowds, but from a business standpoint, the presence of gamblers was an unintended consequence, not a goal. The trapshooting industry wanted people to become trapshooters, not bet on trapshooters, but there is no doubt that the opportunity to gamble on the outcomes of



AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

Bender, wearing his A's uniform in a circa 1910 photo, believed trapshooting helped keep his baseball skills sharp during the offseason.

trapshooting contests was a key motivation for many people to attend matches. It wasn't all about seeing a famous ballplayer in person.

The typical euphemism used to acknowledge gambling at trapshooting events was money "changing hands" among spectators. On rare occasions, however, actual amounts wagered on contests were mentioned in reporting, and that information indicates monies gambled could be huge. For example, in a 1908 two-person match that did not include Bender, "over $6,000 in side bets changed hands."[32] By comparison, the average American worker's annual salary that year was $700.[33]

Gambling was not limited to spectators. Shooters often bet on themselves to augment their winnings in matches. This included Chief Bender.

TRAPSHOOTING AS A SOURCE OF INCOME FOR BENDER: BALLPLAYER VERSUS TRAPSHOOTER

Comparing Chief Bender's income from baseball versus shooting is hindered by a lack of data on his earnings in both sports. Bender's salary as a ballplayer is unknown for most years and can only be estimated.[34] It is documented he received $5,000 and $4,000 while playing for the Philadelphia A's in 1911 and 1914, respectively, and reaped his biggest salary of $8,500 while a member of the Federal League's Baltimore Terrapins in 1915.[35] These were among his highest earnings, and in other years he received considerably less.[36]

In the same vein, Bender's trapshooting winnings are in most cases described vaguely with phrases like "a big purse" and "first money." While specific prize amounts are noted frequently enough in reporting to indicate trapshooting was a financially lucrative sport for those who were successful at it, information on most matches does not include actual purse amounts.

Even with these empirical limitations, some general comparisons can be made between Bender's incomes from baseball and trapshooting in individual years. For example, following a mediocre performance in 1908 (8–9 record in 17 games started) on an underperforming Athletics' team that finished in sixth place, an irate Connie Mack sent Bender a contract for 1909 that, according to Mack, "will call for a salary so small that he will no doubt scoff at it."[37,38] Although the exact amount is unknown, given other A's players' salaries for that year, Mack probably offered Bender around $1,800.[39]

The minimal contract tendered to him in 1909 illustrates the significant role trapshooting could play as a second source of income for Bender.[40] He knew all too well his pay as a baseball player could go down as easily—perhaps more easily—as it could go up. Mack predicted that when Bender saw the "salary clause in the contract which I will tender him, he will feel like giving up pitching."[41] Bender earned over $1,200 in winning or "sharing in the money" in a mere eight trapshooting competitions that year. This is a base figure because he won additional matches in which prize amounts are not specified in reporting.[42] It is highly likely Bender earned more—likely substantially more—in the traps than on the diamond in 1909.

PAID APPEARANCES

Potential earnings from trapshooting were not limited to competing in matches. It is almost certain—albeit unreported, since deals were privately negotiated—that Bender was often paid by gun clubs to appear in contests so large crowds would attend.[43] Many spectators were drawn to a match more by his celebrity status than the contest itself. For example, nearly 400 people showed up at the Belmont Gun Club in Narberth, Pennsylvania, to watch Bender shoot against other competitors in a "miss-and-out" tournament in 1909. The event was described as "the biggest shoot ever held by the gun club," and the large turnout was clearly attributable to Bender's presence.[44] That same year, Bender was the "chief attraction" and "continually cheered by a large crowd that had assembled to see the Indian shoot" in a match held in Morrisville, New Jersey.[45] Gun club owners eagerly hoped those who came to see Bender might be intrigued enough with the sport to take up trapshooting themselves.

BETTING ON HIMSELF

A 1909 article in the *Washington Post* stated that Bender bet on himself to win trapshooting matches.[46]

Given the prevalence of gambling surrounding the sport, it is not surprising he engaged in the practice. Wagers probably were made with other shooters and attendees. No data exist on how often he gambled on himself at contests or the financial gains he secured by doing so, but it is virtually certain he came out ahead, given his talent as an exceptional marksman and how frequently he was victorious in shooting contests.

AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

A circa 1917 photo of Chief Bender holding the tool of his trapshooting trade.

ENDORSEMENTS

Chief Bender's domination among ballplayers as a marksman afforded another opportunity for earnings—endorsing products. From the nineteenth century through today, baseball players—especially stars—have endorsed products for a fee. Bender was no different, and some of the merchandise he backed was associated with trapshooting. These included appearing in a Du Pont Gun Powder Company advertisement extolling the "irresistible fascination" of the traps, and another for the company promoting the superior performance of Du Pont's "Hand Trap," used to hurl clay pigeons into the air.[47] In addition, Bender touted the quality of U.M.C. Arrow shotgun shells, and publicized the Parker shotgun, which he "uses in all his contests."[48]

Bender also parlayed his celebrity status as a ballplayer and trapshooter into employment during the offseason as a salesman/consultant for sporting goods and other merchandise in Philadelphia-area department stores. Early in his career, he was employed in that capacity by Wanamaker's Department Store, and after his baseball career by Gimbels Department Store.[49]

While Bender wrote about the intrinsic joy of trapshooting and its beneficial effects on his baseball abilities, the multiple ways the sport augmented his income motivated his drive for excellence and participation in shooting competitions. It also was not lost on Bender that trapshooting could be a profitable source of income for him long after his days as a major league ballplayer had ended.

THE VAUDEVILLE PAUSE

Chief Bender was actively involved on the shooting circuit when not on the baseball diamond throughout his major league career save one year—1911. An article in *Sporting Life* reported:

> Chief Bender, the wonderful Indian pitcher of the World's Champions Athletics will not be able to indulge in any shooting this Fall and Winter, as he is booked clear through the offseason in vaudeville. Chief is one of the best live bird shots in the country and an extremely good target shot. He had planned to shoot some big matches this season, but the theatrical engagements prevent.[50]

The vaudeville sketch was called "Learning the Game," and it featured Bender along with fellow Athletics' pitchers Cy Morgan and Jack Coombs.[51] Cornball humor dominated the act, which took place in a garden supposedly outside Shibe Park. In Bender's big scene, he would be dressed in an A's uniform to play the role of a "bashful Chippewa" by the name of "Strong Heart." Upon leaving the ballpark, Strong Heart encounters a young lady who knows almost nothing about baseball. She strikes up a conversation: "I hear you pitched a great game against the Giants today." Bender's reply: "Oh, yes, but Larry Doyle hit me twice." Believing he had been physically assaulted, the horrified woman asks, "Why?"[52]

Another scene in which all three pitchers appeared had them showing the audience how they held a baseball to throw their signature pitches. Morgan demonstrated throwing "the spitter," Coombs followed with his celebrated curve, and Bender finished up by displaying how he performed his knuckle delivery. A stage hand did the catching.[53]

But in vaudeville, as elsewhere in is life, Bender suffered indignities rooted in the prejudice and discrimination that permeated American society in the early twentieth century.[54] When the act was playing in Atlantic City, Bender, Coombs and Morgan were in the lobby at Young's Hotel waiting to cross the boardwalk to perform at the Steel Pier. A "southerner" who was staying at the hotel saw Bender and demanded of manager Jimmy Walsh to know if he was a guest. Walsh acknowledged he was and inquired, "What's

the matter?" The man observed Bender was "a person of color" and declared, "I won't stop at a place like this!" Walsh replied, "Why that man's an Indian. He's Chief Bender of the World Champion Athletics. The best is none too good for him." Astonished, the man adjourned to the bar, but whether he stayed or departed for another hotel is not known.[55]

ENCOUNTER WITH ANNIE OAKLEY

While the Philadelphia Athletics were conducting spring training in New Orleans in 1908, several players—Chief Bender, Jack Coombs, Doc Powers, Eddie Plank, and Simon Nicholls—spent one morning at the shooting range where Bender and Coombs cracked over 90 percent of their targets. That afternoon during an exhibition game between the A's and the New Orleans Pelicans, famous sharpshooter Annie Oakley appeared and took in the game. Unfamiliar with baseball, she was tutored by Coombs on its finer points. One of the questions she asked was why Athletics' players on base didn't try to score when a foul ball was hit over the grandstand, believing they could do so while the ball was retrieved and brought back into the ballpark.[56]

Although Bender and Oakley met on this day—their only recorded meeting—they did not engage in a shooting contest. It would have been a memorable moment for the sports of trapshooting and baseball to have had them compete against each other.

BALLPLAYERS' TRAPSHOOTING TRIP

The highpoint of the baseball-trapshooting relationship during Bender's era came following the 1915 season when the Du Pont Gun Powder Company decided to sponsor a three-week tour by a squad of baseball stars to compete against the best shots at gun clubs in the East and Midwest. The purpose of the trip—and Du Pont's goal in sponsoring it—was to attract more people to become trapshooters:

> The participants in this tour will be a group of prominent major league baseball stars, men of wide repute in the field, but also skilled as trapshooters. They plan to travel from the Atlantic half way across the continent, shooting in the leading trapshooting centers against the prominent local clubs in the belief that the natural attraction that these stars of the diamond would exert, will bring the sport prominently to the notice of a great army of sportsmen who could easily be brought into the field of the clay target pastime … The trapshooting of such a squad will not only draw the regular shooters, but thousands of baseball fans, who know and admire these players and who may by this means be converts to the sport.[57]

The ballplayers selected initially for the tour were Chief Bender, Eddie Plank, Harry Davis, and Christy Mathewson. Plank, however, had a son born on October 18 and decided to remain with his family. James "Doc" Crandall replaced him.[58] The players' team was augmented by a "guest" local shooter at each stop.[59]

A match consisted of 1000 targets. Each five-person team shot at 500 clay birds—100 per man. Whichever team collectively broke the most targets won.[60] But in some of the contests, players on opposing teams were also paired individually to expand the levels of competition. For example, when the ballplayers shot against the West End Gun Club in Richmond, Virginia, Chief Bender was paired against E. H. Storr of the club. Bender "walked away with his scalp," breaking 96 targets to Storr's 95.[61]

The tour schedule was rigorous—matches in 18 cities in 20 days. Table 1 shows the November dates, gun clubs, locations and results for the players' team.[62]

Among the baseball players, Bender was called "the star of the group."[64] During the tour, each player shot at 1800 clay birds—100 targets per player at each of 18 stops. Bender claimed top spot by breaking 1658

Table 1.

November	Club/Location	Results
8	West End Gun Club, Richmond, VA	(Loss) 447–395
9	Oriole Gun Club, Baltimore, MD	(Loss) 462–391
10	Herron Hill Gun Club, Pittsburgh, PA	(Win) 409–408
11	Cincinnati Gun Club, Cincinnati, OH	(Loss) 405–376
13	Indianapolis Gun Club, Indianapolis, IN	(Loss) 465–428
14	St. Louis Trap Shooters' Club, St. Louis, MO	(Win) 434–410
15	Elliott's Shooting Club, Kansas City, MO	(Loss) 410–391
16	Omaha Gun Club, Omaha, NE	(Loss) 435–419
17	Des Moines Gun Club, Des Moines, IA	(Loss) 408–397
18	Twin City Gun Club, Minneapolis, MN	(Loss) 457–447
19	Badger Gun Club, Milwaukee, WI	(Loss) 440–404
20	Lincoln Park Gun Club, Chicago, IL	(Loss) 444–434
21	Chicago Gun Club, Chicago, IL	(Loss) 453–406
22	Edgewater Gun Club, Toledo, OH	Unknown[63]
23	Pastime Gun Club, Detroit, MI	(Loss) 427–422
24	Syracuse Gun Club, Syracuse, NY	Unknown
25 (*Thanksgiving*)	New York Athletics Club, New York, NY	(Loss) 443–405
27	Paleface Gun Club, Boston, MA	(Loss) 437–414

of them. Crandall downed 1287, while Mathewson followed closely behind at 1285.[65] Davis finished last with 1232.[66]

Although the players lost far more often than they won, the tour was an enormous success from the perspectives of sponsor Du Pont and the gun clubs that hosted the matches. Reports from throughout the trip highlighted the extraordinary number of people who came to witness the competition, many of whom had never before set foot on a trapshooting range. Examples include:

- The visiting squad of baseball players drew a great gathering of spectators to the West End Gun Club on November 8, the crowd being the largest that has ever attended a shooting event in this city. (Richmond match)[67]
- The interest manifested by the baseball shooters is very satisfactory. Large delegations from Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and the down-State shooters of Missouri were present. The baseball fans were also much in evidence, playing their favorites off the boards. (Kansas City match)[68]
- A gallery of more than 400, including many women and baseball fans, was on hand early… The presence of the ballplayers attracted a large number of marksmen from New Hampshire and Maine. (Boston match)[69]

A *Sporting Life* article written after the tour emphasized its success, and concluded the endeavor had achieved its intended purpose:

> One of the most successful trapshooting promotion trips undertaken in recent years came to a close on Saturday, November 27, in Boston, when the team of touring major league baseball players competed against the Paleface Gun Club combination…Along the entire route the shooters were greeted not only by trapshooters, but also by thousands of baseball fans who were interested in the players, but who had never seen a trapshooting event. Needless to say, many of these have now been inoculated with the trapshooting germ, which will make them lovers of the sport for life, and the Du Pont Powder Company, the sponsors of the trip, deserve unlimited credit for the benefit of the sport.[70]

How much the players were compensated for their involvement in the trip—in addition to expenses—is not revealed in reporting on the event. They themselves expressed delight at how well they were treated—for example, a large banquet was held in their honor at every stop—and there was speculation a second trip would be planned for 1916.[71]

TRAPSHOOTING IN BENDER'S LIFE

As his baseball career wound down, Bender continued to be active in trapshooting circles. During the winter of 1916–17, he engaged in several matches with other Philadelphia-based baseball players. In a contest staged at the Whitemarsh Country Club, Bender bested fellow pitcher Joe Bush in a 50-bird shoot, 50 to 46. In another match of 500 clay targets a side, Bender teamed with Phillies' catcher Billy Killefer against the team of Bush and Grover Cleveland Alexander. On this occasion, in reporting that gratuitously highlighted Bender's heritage, "Bush's team beat the Indian's team 420 to 403."[72]

Late in life, Bender evinced some regret that he had not focused more on developing a second career in business while he was performing in the major leagues.[73] In an interview with J.G. Taylor Spink months before he died, Bender observed:

> Practically all I did was hunt and fish, but in those days it was not impressed on our minds that we should prepare ourselves for the future. Today all the fellows are interested in learning or lining up some business for the time when they can no longer play.[74]

And in a departure from his perspective of 40 years earlier that trapshooting was the finest sport for ballplayers to pursue when not on the diamond, he advised, "One thing that always helped me though, and I think it would help every pitcher without taking too much time, is bowling. You'd be surprised how it keeps the legs in shape, and the arm and shoulder muscles loose."[75]

Bender's lamentation about not planning ahead more fastidiously for his financial future probably was prompted by the serious money issues he experienced later in life. When "Chief Bender Night" was held at Shibe Park in 1952, he was given a check for over $6,000 because Bender needed money more than expensive gifts like a car or vacation trip to some exotic location.[76]

While Bender's pecuniary problems adversely affected his later years, they in no way diminish his remarkable accomplishments on the mound and at the traps earlier in life.[77] He was the finest marksman among active major league players of his day, a fact acknowledged by The *American Shooter* magazine

when it named him "King of the Ballplayers at the Traps" in 1916.[78,79] The extraordinary recognition he received in being inducted into a Trapshooting Hall of Fame as well as the National Baseball Hall of Fame is further proof of the breadth and impressiveness of his achievements.[80]

Success in both sports enabled Chief Bender to transcend being a talented ballplayer and an expert shooter. Together, they made him a true sportsman, which Bender probably would have regarded as the greatest honor of all he could have been accorded. ■

Notes

1. "Ball Players Hit 'Em With a Gun," *The American Shooter*, January 1, 1916. The article notes ballplayers also enjoyed hunting as an offseason recreational activity.
2. Trapshooting and trapshooter can be spelled as one or two words. In this article, both are spelled as single words. In the early twentieth century, baseball and ballplayer were spelled as two words, as they were in several quotations used from that period in this article. For the sake of consistency, both are spelled as one word, including when they appear in those quotations.
3. Trapshooting has evolved dramatically since the days of Chief Bender. In addition to trapshooting, there are now different disciplines of clay target shooting, including skeet shooting and sporting clays, and even further variations within each of those categories. The targets themselves are made of other materials in addition to clay. To learn more about the history and evolution of trapshooting as a sport in the United States and around the world, see, "Trap Shooting," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trap_shooting. For more details about the rules and technical specifications of trapshooting, see, http://www.craigcolvin.com/photogrsaphy/index.php/what-is-trapshooting.
4. Pennsylvania led all states with almost 400 clubs. Men dominated the sport, not surprisingly, but women also were counted among the ranks of trapshooters. Wilmington, Delaware, had the largest women's club—the Nemours—and the largest men's club—the Du Pont—based on membership. Women preferred shooting at targets hurled into the air by hand rather than by a mechanical arm on a machine—the former requiring less skill of the two techniques. Samuel Wesley Long, "What is the National Sport," *Baseball Magazine*, June 1915.
5. The longstanding campaign to expunge the perception of trapshooting being largely confined to the affluent is acknowledged in "The Shooting Game," www.clearleaderinc.com/site/shooting-game.html. That trapshooting began and remains a sport reserved for the rich who can afford it is asserted in, www.trapshooting.com/threads/shooting.
6. *American Shooter*, January 1, 1916.
7. Long, *Baseball Magazine*, June 1915. Other than citing "a recent canvass," Long provides no information about how the survey was done, by whom, which ballplayers participated, and how the questions asked were phrased. Long acknowledged that not every ballplayer who owned a shotgun was a trapshooter, but using a somewhat torturous line of reasoning, argued that all owners "are interested in trapshooting from a very personal standpoint because of familiarity with the shotgun, the principal accessory of the sport." Even if most major league ballplayers possessed firearms at that point in time, the accuracy of the claim that "forty-nine out of every fifty players owned shotguns" is impossible to verify empirically.
8. The veracity of this claim is open to question. While some Hall of Fame ballplayers were avid trapshooters, others were not. Moreover, some ballplayers who also were ardent trapshooters do not reside in the National Baseball Hall of Fame, including Harry Davis, Otis Crandall, Jack Coombs, George Stallings, Nap Rucker and Jake Daubert. That offseason shooting was advantageous to performance on the diamond is an argument built through assertion, not empirical evidence and logical argumentation. While it is not unreasonable to believe trapshooting afforded some benefits to players who engaged it in during the offseason, and certainly was preferable to staring out the window and waiting for spring—to quote Rogers Hornsby—the same could be said of other sports like tennis and bowling. It will never be known if those who became Hall of Famers would have performed less capably on the diamond had they not been fervent shooters in the offseason. *American Shooter*, January 1, 1916.
9. Ibid.
10. Thomas D. Richter, "Baseball Players as Shooters," *Sporting Life*, November 6, 1915.
11. Samuel Wesley Long, ""Chief" Bender Goes Back to Organized Baseball," *Baseball Magazine*, April 1916.
12. *American Shooter*, January 1, 1916. Another article with a similar theme noted that comparatively few men play baseball at the major league level while thousands of spectators watch. As a sport, trapshooting is much more egalitarian because it permits a far greater number of people to compete in matches—including against major leaguers—instead of being relegated to the passive role of observer, as in baseball. Long, *Baseball Magazine*, June 1915.
13. Long, *Baseball Magazine*, June, 1915. While enchanting, these assertions are dubious and cannot be accepted at face value. Fans attending games at ballparks located in major cities breathed the same air as the rest of the people who lived there. Ballpark air wasn't less polluted. This fact is highlighted by the Reading Railroad tracks that ran across the street from the Phillies' National League Park. Billowing smoke and embers from passing locomotives would come down on patrons in the stands—hardly the fresh air of the "Great Outdoors." Rich Westcott, *Philadelphia's Old Ballparks* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 29. As far as baseball being "truly American" in origin, the Mills Commission report that baseball was a purely indigenous American sport invented by Abner Doubleday in Cooperstown, New York, in 1839 has long been discredited. Baseball is in part derived from the English games of rounders and cricket. G. Edward White, *Creating the National Pastime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 122–25.
14. Tom Swift, *Chief Bender's Burden: The Silent Struggle of a Baseball Star* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008). William C. Kashatus, *Money Pitcher: Chief Bender and the Tragedy of Indian Assimilation* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).
15. David M. Jordan, *The Athletics of Philadelphia: Connie Mack's White Elephants, 1901–1954* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 1999), 30, 42–62.
16. Associated Press Biographical Service, "Biographical Sketch of Charles Bender" (May 15, 1942), Bender file, National Baseball Hall of Fame Museum and Library, Cooperstown, New York. Mack always referred to Bender and addressed him personally using his middle name, "Albert."
17. Chief Bender pitched a single inning in a game in 1925 while working as a coach for the Chicago White Sox. The team was managed by his friend and former A's teammate Eddie Collins, and Bender's appearance on the mound was primarily a stunt. The Sox were playing the Boston Red Sox that day, the team Bender had beaten to gain his first major league victory in 1903. Tom Swift, "Chief Bender," Baseball Biography Project, http://bioproj.sabr.org.
18. After retiring as a major leaguer, Bender spent many years pitching, managing, and coaching in the minor leagues. His last job was as a pitching coach with the Philadelphia Athletics. http://www.thebaseballpage.com/player/bendech01/bio.
19. "What a Famous Pitcher Thinks of Trap Shooting," *Baseball Magazine*, April 1915.
20. Chief Bender, "Ball Players as Shooters" (March 6, 1915), Bender file, National Baseball Hall of Fame Museum and Library, Cooperstown, New York.
21. Bender's home trapshooting facility was the Beideman Gun Club in Camden, New Jersey. He trained there, put on shooting exhibitions and participated in matches sponsored by the club. "Baseball Players Thrive

as Trap Shots," *Sporting Life*, April 7, 1917. In a display of his shooting prowess at Beideman, Bender once went through 100 targets without a miss and broke 38 more in a row before a saucer finally got by him. A reporter who watched the demonstration called it "one of the most remarkable exhibitions of trapshooting ever seen in this section of the country." "Bender Breaks 138 Straight," *Sporting Life*, February 13, 1915.

22. Sometimes, gun clubs would put up the purse to attract sports celebrities to the range in hope of drawing a big crowd to watch them shoot. If spectators were charged an admission fee, the purse could be "sweetened" by adding to it a percentage of gate receipts. In either case, persuading people to attend a match so they might become trapshooters themselves was the ultimate goal of the club owners.
23. Thomas S. Dando, "Those We Know," *Sporting Life*, May 22, 1909. Two months earlier, White had challenged Bender to a contest for the same stakes, that time shooting at live pigeons instead of clay birds. Bender obliged and shooting "in his best form," according to a report describing the event, walked away with another $100 of White's money. Thomas S. Dando, "Those We Know," *Sporting Life*, March 13, 1909.
24. Thomas S. Dando, "Those We Know," *Sporting Life*, February 20, 1909. Dando reported the results of the contest in his column that appeared in the February 27, 1909, issue of *Sporting Life*. In this case, Bender also received a portion of the "gate receipts" for winning, but the amount is not specified.
25. In a 1909 match at the Rod and Gun Club in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, Bender cracked 19 of 20 birds "and walked off with $50 of the money." *Sporting Life*, February 13, 1909. Bender won the same sum defeating A.A. Felix in a live bird shoot at the Point Breeze Gun Club in Philadelphia in 1907. *Sporting Life*, January 4, 1908.
26. Occasionally, a gun club would offer a special prize to the winner of a match in addition to the purse. In a 1908 tournament competition held at the Penrose Gun Club in Philadelphia, Bender won a shotgun in addition to first-place money. "The Live Bird Shooters of Philadelphia Enjoy the Holiday," *Sporting Life*, January 2, 1909.
27. "Bender's Honors," *Sporting Life*, January 9, 1909. The article does not specify the amount Bender won, but based on the division of winnings in other tournaments held during the same period, he likely received two-thirds of the purse, with the second-place finisher taking home one-third.
28. "Bender a Winner," *Sporting Life*, December 19, 1908.
29. In early 1915, Bender engaged in a 100-bird match with Carroll W. Rasin, president of the Baltimore Federal League Baseball Club, with whom Bender had signed to play that season. Rasin won by the razor-thin margin of 89 to 88. One can only wonder if Bender let him win as a courtesy to his new boss. "The World of Shooting," *Sporting Life*, February 13, 1915.
30. "Those Shooters We Know," *Sporting Life*, October 16, 1915. The match was announced in an article in *Sporting Life*, October 2, 1915. Why both men, especially Bender, shot so poorly is not explained. It may have had something to do with the unusual setting for the contest—a baseball park—and/or the weather.
31. Gambling in trapshooting also raised the prospect of matches being fixed by those willing to bribe participants to bet on a "sure thing." The extent to which, if at all, fixed trapshooting contests were a problem in the sport is beyond the scope of this paper, but none of the research completed by this author uncovered any allegations or evidence that competitions were anything other than honest.
32. "Roughton Outshoots Benner," *Sporting Life*, February 29, 1908.
33. Meryl Baer, "The History of American Income," eHow, http://www.ehow.com/info_7769323_history-american-income.htm (accessed September 14, 2016). To make a further comparison, major league baseball's highest paid player in 1908, Cleveland's Nap Lajoie, earned $8,500. See Michael Haupert, "MLB's annual salary leaders, 1874–2012," at SABR.org, http://sabr.org/research/mlbs-annual-salary-leaders-1874-2012 (accessed September 14, 2016).
34. For the 16 years Bender pitched in the major leagues—including his one-game stint in 1925 with the White Sox—his salary is reported for five years (1903, 1911, 1914, 1915 and 1925), and is "undetermined" for the other 11 years. http://www.baseball-almanac.com/players/player.php?p=bendech0.
35. Ibid.
36. Kashatus, *Money Pitcher*, 111, 125–26.
37. Jordan, *Athletics of Philadelphia*, 40–41.
38. Thomas D. Richter, "Philly Jogged," *Sporting Life*, February 27, 1909. Bender grudgingly accepted Mack's parsimonious offer. Kashatus, *Money Pitcher*, 111.
39. If accurate, this would have been only $600 more than Bender received when he first signed with the Athletics in 1903. http://www.baseball-almanac.com/players/player.php?p=bendech0.
40. Mack probably had an ambivalent attitude toward Bender and trapshooting. He understood Bender's affinity for the sport, recognized his ascendant talent as a shooter, and appreciated how competing augmented his yearly income. Indeed, in 1908, Mack gave Bender a week's vacation during the season to attend the Pennsylvania State Championship Shoot in Bradford, Pennsylvania. At the same time, Mack would not permit any outside activity, regardless of its profitability, to interfere with a player's commitment to the Athletics and maintaining peak performance on the diamond. Mack's willingness to let Bender attend the state championship competition is described in, "Those We Know," *Sporting Life*, May 30, 1908.
41. Richter, *Sporting Life*, February 27, 1909.
42. *Sporting Life*, various issues in 1909.
43. A gun club's desire to downplay compensation for Bender, or any ballplayer, to compete in a match or shoot in an exhibition is certainly understandable. A club wanted to promote the belief the player was there because of his intrinsic devotion to the sport—a passion spectators also could experience by becoming involved in trapshooting. Acknowledging a player was paid to appear was inconsistent with that image.
44. Bender came in second place but still "shared in the money." "Chief Bender Fell Down on Ninth Bird at Belmont," *Sporting Life*, February 6, 1909.
45. "Kills 19 Straight, Pitcher Bender is Chief Attraction at Morrisville Shoot," *Sporting Life*, January 23, 1909.
46. A reference to the June 6, 1909, edition of the *Washington Post* edition noting Bender wagered on himself in trapshooting contests is contained in Swift, *Bender's Burden*, 303.
47. The Du Pont advertisement on the attraction of trapshooting as a sport appears in *Sporting Life*, April 10, 1915. The Du Pont advertisement publicizing the company's "Hand Trap" is found in *Sporting Life*, May 22, 1915.
48. The reference to using U.M.C. Arrow shotgun shells is contained in an article describing a trapshooting match Bender won. *Sporting Life*, May 22, 1909. That Bender used a Parker shotgun for shooting competitively is featured in an article describing his abilities as a marksman. "Those We Know," *Sporting Life*, February 25, 1908.
49. Bender's employment with Wanamaker's is mentioned in Kashatus, *Money Pitcher*, 140, and his job with Gimbels in Swift, *Bender's Burden*, 278.
50. Thomas D. Richter, "In Re Shooters," *Sporting Life*, November 11, 1911.
51. The selection of Athletics' players to appear in the show was no doubt influenced by the fact the club had won back-to-back World Series championships in 1910–11.
52. A reporter who described the act noted, "The dressing room made him (Bender) appear lighter (in skin tone) than he really is." "Stars Every Way," *Sporting Life*, November 18, 1911. The choice of the Giants in the sketch dialogue is odd since the A's did not play that club during the regular season. It probably was a reference to the just-completed 1911 World Series in which the Athletics defeated the Giants.
53. Ibid. The real star of the show among the ballplayers was Cy Morgan who had experience in vaudeville and, according to this article, "was a big hit with his song numbers."
54. In addition to describing his baseball career, the biographies of Bender by Kashatus and Swift cited earlier assess the injustices he experienced as a part-Chippewa American Indian occupying the high-profile position of

major league pitcher in a racially intolerant society. Bender is habitually identified as an "Indian" pitcher in *Sporting Life* reporting on his trapshooting exploits, although the race of other baseball players is never mentioned, presumably because they were all white. Bender made it clear he wanted to be presented to the public as a pitcher, not as an Indian. Newspapermen chose to ignore this request. Swift, *Bender's Burden*, 4.

55. According to the article in which this anecdote appears, the southerner did not actually call Bender a "person of color," but "used entirely different words" that *Sporting Life* chose not to repeat in print. It is not for this author to speculate what bigoted term was uttered. "This Was Different," *Sporting Life*, November 25, 1911.
56. Thomas A. Marshall, "Marksmen in Dixie Land Heartily Welcome Experts at Various Points—Shoot with Ball Players—Incidents of Tour," *Sporting Life*, March 28, 1908.
57. Thomas D. Richter, "Ball Players Follow Shooting Circuit," *Sporting Life*, October 16, 1915. Bender, Plank, and Crandall played in the Federal League during the 1915 season. Mathewson was with the New York Giants, while Davis was a coach with the Athletics, although he did appear in five games with the team that year. www.baseball-reference.com/players.
58. "Stars Added to Ball Players' Trap Shooting Trip," *Sporting Life*, October 23, 1915.
59. Why a local shooter was added to the players' team at each stop instead of using five players throughout the tour was not explained. It is possible that doing so heightened the level of competition since the local shooting team would not only be competing against famous ballplayers but also one of their own.
60. "Players Ready for Shooting Trip," *Sporting Life*, November 6, 1915.
61. "Ball Players' Shoot Tour a Success," *Sporting Life*, November 20, 1915. The metaphor of Bender taking Storr's scalp is a derogatory reference to Bender's Indian heritage. Another example of a disparaging reference to Bender's Indian heritage is an article that reported Bender was "on the warpath against clay pigeons." "Trap Gossip," *Baseball Magazine*, December, 1916.
62. All of the information on the tour is taken from the following issues of *Sporting Life*: October 16, 23, 30, 1915; November 6, 20, 27, 1915; and, December 4, 1915.
63. For reasons that are not clear, *Sporting Life* did not print the results of the matches held in Toledo on November 22 and Syracuse on November 24. The January 1, 1916, issue of *American Shooter* lists the scores of each player at every stop on the tour, including those in Toledo and Syracuse, indicating the matches were held.
64. Richter, *Sporting Life*, November 6, 1915. There were added bonuses for being the best shot. In Chicago at the Lincoln Park Gun Club, for example, Bender received a gold medal for marksmanship in striking 95 of the targets. *Sporting Life*, December 4, 1915.
65. Following the tour, Mathewson was quoted as saying, "Chief Bender is one of the best trap shots I ever saw." "Mathewson on Shooting," *Sporting Life*, December 18, 1915.
66. *American Shooter*, January 1, 1916. As noted in footnote 53, this article contains a table showing the number of clay pigeons broken by the four players individually in each of the 18 matches. Mathewson did not participate in the contest in St. Louis, Missouri. His total was calculated by averaging his score over the other 17 matches and adding that figure to his total number of birds hit.
67. *Sporting Life*, November 20, 1915.
68. *Sporting Life*, November 27, 1915.
69. *Sporting Life*, December 4, 1915. Note the emphasis in the reporting on the ballplayers' presence being more influential in attracting a large crowd than the match, itself.
70. Ibid.
71. *Sporting Life*, November 27, 1915.
72. *Sporting Life*, April 7, 1917.
73. The Bender file at the National Baseball Hall of Fame includes a 1915 newspaper advertisement for the Chief Bender Sporting Goods Company located at 1306 Arch Street in Philadelphia. According to the advertisement, "The Chief knows what's what in baseball and baseball toggery! Everything you get here you can bank on will be O.K. Suits, bats, balls, gloves, shoes, accessories! Best of quality throughout. Prices are right. Glad to give suggestions. Come in and talk it over." Bender file. National Baseball Hall of Fame Museum and Library, Cooperstown, New York. Bender's store is referenced in Kashatus, *Money Pitcher*, 140.
74. J.G. Taylor Spink, "Looping the Loop," *Sporting News*, December 30, 1953. There were occasional references to Bender going into business following his baseball career and his continued participation in trapshooting competitions. An early 1917 Sporting Life article noted, "However, there is a possibility Bender will retire from baseball and go into business this season in which event he will shoot in the Pennsylvania State Tournament next May and will be one of the favorites for the individual championship." Bender played for the Phillies that year, his final regular season as a major leaguer. "News Notes of Trapshooting," *Sporting Life*, January 6, 1917.
75. Spink, *The Sporting News*, December 30, 1953.
76. Swift, *Bender's Burden*, 278.
77. A noteworthy shooting episode that did not occur at the traps involved Bender downing a vulture in 1907 while the team conducted spring training in Texas. The bird had been hovering over the A's practice field when Bender brought him down with a rifle, explaining his action by sayng the club wasn't so moribund to attract such a creature. The local sheriff heard of the incident and traveled to the Athletics training camp to arrest Bender. It was illegal to shoot vultures, according to the sheriff. It took all of Connie Mack's diplomacy and persuasive charm to convince the sheriff to let Bender go, assuring him had the pitcher been aware of the prohibition he never would have shot the vulture. Spink, *Sporting News*, December 30, 1953.
78. Other baseball players attained remarkable success as trapshooters, a noteworthy example of which is Lester German, who pitched for the Baltimore Orioles, New York Giants and Washington Senators from 1890–97. Following his career in baseball, German, an expert trapshooter, toured with the Parker Gun Company and DuPont Company participating in exhibition matches. In 1915, for example, he set a world trapshooting record by breaking 499 out of 500 clay pigeons in a shoot in Atlantic City, New Jersey. While Bender was the better pitcher of the two—German tallied a dismal 34–63 record as a major league pitcher—unlike Bender, German did get to perform in shooting matches with Annie Oakley. www.trapshoot.org/People-Stories/baseball-and-trapshooting.html.
79. *American Shooter*, January 1, 1916.
80. In the Bibliographical Essay section of his book, *Chief Bender's Burden*, Tom Swift notes on page 297 an article dated November 25, 1917, and found in Temple University's Urban Archives states that Chief Bender and another individual had been recently inducted into the Trapshooting Hall of Fame. The National Trapshooting Hall of Fame website (www.traphof.org) does not list Bender as an inductee, but that Hall of Fame was not established until 1968. It is likely, therefore, that the Hall of Fame into which Bender was inducted was sponsored by a local or state trapshooting organization.

The Young and the Restless

George Wright 1865–68

Robert Tholkes

Baseball Hall of Famer George Wright's record for changing clubs as a young player (1865–68) was exceptional even for this pre-reserve-clause period: six baseball teams (one of them twice, and omitting his cricket clubs) in four cities in four seasons, all before he was of an age to cast his first vote. He moved again for 1869, famously, to the Cincinnati club.

In George's early years the family meal ticket was cricket. His father, English emigrant Sam Wright, was a cricket professional for the St. George Club of New York, as was older brother Harry Wright. Harry had also been a baseball player since 1858, when he joined the Knickerbocker Club.

George, born in Harlem on January 28, 1847, played with St. George's first eleven as a substitute as early as July of 1862. He was an all-rounder—batting and bowling—from the start. In August 1862 he was top scorer for the firsts in a match with East New York, while teammate and fellow baseballist James Creighton took most of the wickets as bowler.[1] George was in the eleven again in October, in a match where brother Harry acted as scorer and father Sam as umpire. (As professionals for St. George, they normally did not play interclub matches.) This was the match against the Willow Club of Brooklyn during which Creighton suffered the hernia he would fatally rupture playing baseball a few days later. The *New York Clipper*, in its issue of October 25, 1862, listed 15-year-old George among the professionals to receive the proceeds from a benefit match (the first type of match for which admission was charged), indicating that he assisted Sam and Harry in some way. The club continued to classify him as a member of the second, or reserve, eleven, presumably because of his age, for which it was criticized following one of his efforts as a substitute with the first eleven: "George Wright, also, considering he is rated a second eleven player by his club, is entitled to credit for his 9 (runs). A second eleven, all of his strength, would whip the first easily…"[2] Answering an inquiry in its issue of August 22, 1863, from a reader in the Boston area, the *Clipper* commented: "George Wright is a son of the veteran cricketer Sam Wright… George is now one of the best players here, and bids fair soon to be the best."

In September 1864, Wright played against two Philadelphia cricket clubs, the Philadelphia and Young America, and it was perhaps this exposure which earned him an offer in the spring of 1865 to become a full-fledged professional for the Philadelphia club. This may have involved instructing college boys of about his age—the Philadelphia was equated the following season to the Graduate Eleven of the University of Pennsylvania.[3] He was still listed as a member of the Gotham as late as March 1865, but in June starred for a combined Philadelphia eleven against a visiting New York team.[4] Besides any increase in compensation, the St. George Club's problems that spring may have influenced his decision to transfer: the club lost its Hoboken grounds at the beginning of April and were in danger of losing its players to other teams.[5] As cricket clubs did not forbid dual memberships (the National Association of Base Ball Players, or NABBP, did), he continued as a member of the St. George Club, playing with them as his schedule permitted. In 1865 he played with a New York club in the US vs. Canada grand match in Toronto.[6] His family background was strong, and there was a war on, but even so, at cricket Wright qualifies as a phenom.

Immersed from his earliest memories in a sport that already recognized professionals, George Wright was the most prime of candidates to join the growing ranks of compensated baseball players as soon as his talent justified it. Arranged employment and waived club dues had been considered acceptable evasions of the National Association of Base Ball Players rule forbidding compensation since its adoption in 1859. At a time when few boys completed high school or dreamed of attending a university, this type of "professional" status for players of his age—he didn't turn 21 until 1868—was not unheard of. At age 19 in 1860, for example, pitcher James Creighton of the Excelsior of Brooklyn was undoubtedly compensated.

To this point (1865) baseball played a distinct second fiddle to cricket for Wright. The 18-year-old's

senior baseball experience, following an earlier experience for the Gotham's junior club, consisted of ten interclub matches with his brother Harry's team, the Gotham of New York. The first had been in 1863, in which he played left field and was praised for "doing great execution among the high balls batted in that direction…"[7] The next nine matches followed in 1864, when his batting was only average for the club—2R3 hands lost and 2R2 runs per game.[8] They won three, lost six, and tied one. His fielding was ahead of his batting at this stage: he played all nine games at catcher, the most demanding position in those days of bare-hand, frequent-base-stealing baseball, when a pitcher might make 300 pitches per game. Previously, he took part in senior exhibitions pitting 18 cricketers against nine baseballists in baseball matches, some of them benefits staged by the St. George Cricket Club for his father and brother. At the first such, in September 1861, the 14-year-old, playing for the 18s at "second catcher" (close to the spectators), he had an unexpected opportunity to further his practical education: "Ladies' crinolines made an excellent third catcher for stray balls, and little Georgy Wright must have done some damage to the aforesaid garments of some of the fair dames, by running amuck with his head into them in search of the ball to save a run."[9]

Despite Wright's move to Philadelphia for 1865, baseball did not drop off his agenda. Joining the Olympic Club, he began playing catcher for them in July, appeared in five games, and was also recruited while in New York at the end of July to substitute for the Keystone Club of Philadelphia during its visit to Greater New York. In total he found time for six interclub baseball matches in 1865, averaging 2R2 hands lost and 2R2 outs per game. He also was recruited to umpire two games in Philadelphia. Finally, the *New York Herald* on August 9 reported that George had played a match for his old club, the Gotham, up the Hudson at Newburgh, New York, under the name Cohen, presumably as a substitute for Leonard Cohen, a Gotham regular, on August 1. This is not corroborated by another source.

In March 1866, Harry Wright accepted an offer to captain the Cincinnati Cricket Club. He packed up his family and left for Ohio forthwith, and was quickly replaced as cricket professional for the St. George club by George. George also returned to the Gotham Base Ball Club. He played in five games, averaging 1R4 hands lost and 4R1 runs per game, which led the team. By this time he was considered an elite baseballist. Henry Chadwick, listing the best players by position in the *Clipper* on July 21, named him as catcher.

Wright is listed in the 1866 Gotham box scores as "George"—an unexplained deviation. Pseudonyms in 1860s box scores are far from unknown, and are usually ascribed to players who were illegally "revolving" with other clubs or who didn't want their employers to know that they were playing hooky from the office. However, there is no indication that he continued to belong to the Olympic Club of Philadelphia after he rejoined the Gotham, and as he was compensated in some form, the second possibility does not seem to apply. Certainly no one was deceived. In the lone Gotham box score which is accompanied by a statistical summary, he is listed as "Wright" in the summary, and the Gotham's 1866 player statistics in the 1867 *Beadle's Dime Base Ball Player* also list him correctly.

The Gotham in 1866 played interclub matches only infrequently, and only one of their seven games was with first-tier opposition. That, and George's developing skills in baseball, may account for his decision in July to resign from the club and enroll as a member of the first-tier Union Club of Morrisania, a then-independent town in the modern South Bronx. Waiting out the required 30-day membership period (which eliminates the possibility that he played for the Gotham under a pseudonym because he anticipated transferring), he debuted with the Union in September, and played their final nine games as they contended for the club championship of 1866. There he played for the first time at shortstop, his future specialty. The Union apparently preferred to keep Dave Birdsall, who would also be George's teammate in the 1870s at Boston, at catcher. The change may also have been at George's insistence—he remarked in later years that he moved to the infield after taking a foul tip in the throat. The club won eight of the nine, and finished with an overall record of 25–3. The Atlantic of Brooklyn, the champions of 1865, finished 16–3, but avoided defeat in a best-of-three series against any of its rivals, and so retained its unofficial championship. It did not schedule the Union, which was its prerogative. Wright averaged 1R3 hands lost and 4R6 runs per game, second on his team.

The *New York Clipper* noted in its cricket report of September 1, 1866, that "baseball has supplanted cricket in the affections of the lovers of out door pastimes in this country…" With baseball and cricket moving in opposite directions, Wright's decision to leave the Gotham Club marked the reversal of their places in his plans: he staked his professional career for the foreseeable future on baseball. He never lost his affection for his first sport, however. He was a prominent amateur cricketer in the Boston area for many

years after his retirement from baseball, competing well into his fifties.

Wright's pocketbook likely dictated his next move. He resigned at some point from the Union Club. On November 12, before the Union had closed its season, he was in Philadelphia to play in a series of benefit games with some members of his 1865 club, the Olympic. The *Philadelphia Sunday Mercury* reported on November 18 that "we are glad to hear there is some prospect of [Wright] being again attached to clubs hereabouts." In April 1867, apparently having spent the winter considering his options, he enrolled in the National Base Ball Club of Washington, DC. Though the "champions of the South" by virtue of triumphs in 1866 over teams in the District and in Baltimore, the National Club was second-tier by Greater New York standards, like the Gotham, but had ambitions of moving up. It had begun bringing in experienced players from Greater New York in 1866, and was looking for more.

Club president Col. Frank Jones was an official in the Treasury Department, and a resettled Brooklynite who had been a member of the Excelsior Club of Brooklyn before the war. As the new hands such as Wright were hired, they were listed as clerks in Treasury Department offices. For the 1867 season, eight of the top eleven players on the National were so designated.[10] The National also offered a chance for George to visit brother Harry. It had announced in March that it would tour five "western" states in 1867, including two games in Cincinnati. Was Col. Jones expecting to replay the Excelsior's success of 1860, when its tour of western New York had propelled it to immediate championship contention? Certainly one object of the tour was to let the newly-constructed team (the Excelsior were in a similar position in 1860) jell into a nine with the talent and cohesion to succeed in championship competition in September and October.

Wright upheld his end of the bargain. He led the team offensively, averaging 2R6 hands lost and 6R8 runs per game. His runs per game was the highest among players for first-tier clubs, and the National posted the highest per-game scoring average.[11] The National posted a 25–5 record against NABBP-member clubs. A notorious sixth loss occurred on the western tour at the hands of the Forest City Club of Rockford, Illinois, in Chicago, and was generally attributed to the rigors of the tour schedule. The expected dividend of the tour in the form of first-tier contender status in the East, however, did not materialize, as the team afterward lost five of seven matches with Greater New York opponents. Postseason post-mortems pointed to a lack of discipline in the club, inconsistent fielding, the lack of a first-class pitcher, and the practice of moving players from position to position during a game. Wright's experience is illustrative: despite his sterling reputation as a catcher and first-tier experience at shortstop, available box scores and game accounts from various sources (the box scores of the time listed only the position in which the player began the game) show him appearing in 12 games at second base, nine as pitcher, seven at catcher, six at third base, four at shortstop, and two in center field.

The captain (or field manager), Georgetown University law student George Fox, apparently took the blame for the post-tour failures. He resigned as captain in September and was replaced by Wright, who was even younger and had no experience as a baseball captain, but may have been thought the player most capable of exercising leadership with an undisciplined crew. It didn't seem to take. A nadir of sorts was reached on October 21 when the team blew an eight-run lead in the ninth against the Union Club of Lansingburgh, New York. Covering the club's loss to the Excelsior of Brooklyn, by then a second-tier club, in his issue of the *Ball Player's Chronicle* on October 31, Henry Chadwick described the club's condition during its late-October road trip to Greater New York:

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

George Wright at the peak of his baseball career, with the Boston Red Stockings in the 1870s.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

George Wright's plaque in Cooperstown lacks the space to detail the most peripatetic period of his career.

"George Wright is nominally the captain, but as each player of the nine, and two or three in particular, seem to consider themselves as fully competent to act in the position, the result is a lack of discipline, totally destructive of good generalship, be the nominal captain ever so capable of directing the nine." As Wright was prone to the oft-criticized practice of moving players from position to position during the game (he played himself at four different spots in one of the losses), "ever so capable" probably doesn't describe his abilities as a captain at this point in his career.[12]

Though the club offered Wright the captaincy for 1868 with a seat on the committee that selected the first nine, he apparently had had enough of clerking in the Treasury Department, and re-signed with the Union of Morrisania. The Unions had ascended to the unofficial championship of 1867 by winning a two-out-of-three game series from the Atlantic of Brooklyn, and then finishing the season without themselves losing a two-of-three game series to another club. They also had had to beat back an appeal by the Atlantic to the NABBP, on the grounds that the Union had used an ineligible player. Nevertheless, the Union's record had declined from 25–3 in 1866 to 21–8 in 1867, and George was welcomed back, "at his own request."[13] This apparently occurred shortly after the end of the season in November; the *New York Sunday Mercury* was predicting his return to the Union by December 29.

At the beginning of March, Wright opened in New York, along with Harry, what the *Sunday Mercury* on March 1 called the "Wright Brothers Base Ball-Depot," selling gear for several outdoor sports. This was his first foray into the occupation that would become his life's work. George also returned to cricket, playing for Philadelphia in an interclub match in that city in May, for St. George on June 24 in Philadelphia, and in a series of matches against a visiting English eleven in September and October. His return improved the Union Club, which posted a record of 39–6. Unfortunately, two of the losses were to the Atlantic of Brooklyn, which deprived the club of its champion standing, which the Mutual Club of New York then won after defeating the Atlantic. Wright's record in 43 games of 2R5 hands lost and 4R23 runs per game, was good for fourth overall among players on NABBP teams.[14] An additional statistic, the number of times reaching base on hits, appears for the first time in some box scores: for 32 games, Wright accumulated 225, an average of over seven per game. Though the Union returned him primarily to shortstop (39 games), he inexplicably played second base in both of the losses to the Atlantic. He got another look at the "west" in August, as the Union went on a 20-game tour (including Cincinnati) that ranged as far as St. Louis. Answering an inquiry in the *New York Clipper* on September 26, Chadwick named Wright as the best "general player" in baseball.

The chronology of Wright's next move, joining Harry on the all-salaried Cincinnati Base Ball Club for 1869, cannot be completely determined from the primary sources available. To an inquiry from Cincinnati printed on September 12, 1868, about the possibility that George would join the Red Stockings, the *Clipper* responded, "Not that we know of." Since he played out the Union schedule, which ended on November 8, this presumably was not an accomplished fact. The NABBP then decided at its convention in December to recognize professional players and clubs. Cincinnati had decided, perhaps even before the NABBP's action had to field an all-salaried team in 1869, which may have influenced his choice.

Definite reports of his transfer are lacking until February, so it seems unlikely that Wright had signed a contract before that point. The NABBP convention also voted to increase the period in which transferring players could not play for their new club from thirty to sixty days, effectively reducing the offseason signing period and making in-season transfers less likely. With the beginning of open professionalism, clubs were sorting themselves into all-professional, semi-professional, and amateur status. As of early January, 15 clubs, including the Union of Morrisania, were considered professional.[15] The Union, however, after team meetings later that month, decided to abandon professional play and field an amateur nine. This decision likely was made after Wright (and other Union players) had decided to move on, rather than the other

way around. The *New York Sunday Mercury* item on February 7 announcing the club's decision listed the players transferring or retiring, Wright among them. Cincinnati, the Athletic Club of Philadelphia, and the Mutual were all reported to be interested in his services, and he was listed on an Atlantic of Brooklyn team that was headed for New Orleans in March.[16]

The speculation ended later in February: in its issue of February 28 the *Sunday Mercury* described Wright as on the "official list" of players who had signed with Cincinnati. The Red Stockings thus became the next club to try to achieve championship status by enrolling Wright, the acknowledged best general player in the game, following the unsuccessful attempts of the Nationals in 1867 and the Union in 1868.

George Wright's peregrinations in his youthful years in baseball seem to have their causes in the permissive environment for player movement at the time, in his family background, and the fact that he was in an early stage in his career. The *Sunday Mercury*'s editorial on January 17, 1869, about "revolvers" prompted by the end of the decade (1859-1868) when compensation of players was contrary to NABBP rules, reflects the contemporary attitude in the baseball community to player movement:

> REVOLVERS TO BE REPUDIATED. We are glad to learn that the principal clubs throughout the country this season intend repudiating the class of revolving professionals entirely, the majority of the organizations engaging the services of players, having become disgusted with the conduct of several players whom they had treated liberally in the hope of having them permanently in their clubs, but who finally either left them in the lurch at an important period of the season, or who forgot their indebtedness for favors received when tempted by the offer of better pecuniary receipts. We know of instances of players from Northern cities engaged by Western clubs, who after having been the recipient of pecuniary favors as well as cordial greetings and kindly welcome., have gone off to other clubs without so much as a by your leave. It is time such frauds as these were prevented. Now that professional ball-playing is a business, and that players can engage in it honestly and openly and above board, it becomes not only the honorable manly course to pursue, but also the best policy, to be strictly honest in all engagements with clubs…The revolving system would soon have its deathblow given it if clubs would refuse to allow a player to enter their nine who could not show a fair record—as regards honest dealing we mean—from the club he left. But as long as men are accepted, regardless of how they have acted with the clubs they have left, just so long may we expect to see revolvers flourish. Players may have good reason for leaving a club in the middle of a season; but when they do, the club taking them in should be thoroughly convinced of the fact. Now that the sixty-day law is in force, we shall expect to see less revolving; but the best way to put a stop to the odious system is for clubs to have an understanding among themselves not to employ players who cannot bring with them a clean record from their last place. For instance, suppose Joe Start, Geo. Flanly, Al Reach, Harry Wright, John Goldie, or half a dozen other well-known professional ball-players should desire to leave the clubs they belong to, there is not one of them who cannot point to his faithful services to the club he has been a member of as an honorable record sufficient to give him an engagement in any organization he may wish to join.

Earlier, contemplating player movement from the Atlantic Club before the 1866 season, the *Sunday Mercury* found a silver lining:

> The changes which occur in the organization of the first-nines of our leading clubs each season, though they sometimes lead to unfriendly feelings and give rise to reports of unfair dealing, are nevertheless more beneficial than injurious to the game, inasmuch as a monopoly of success, year after year, tends greatly to lessen the public interest in the principal contests which take place…The excitement incident to a close match between two rival clubs is greatly promoted by the changes which occur in the formation of club-nines each year.[17]

George Wright was not included in the *Sunday Mercury*'s list of paragons considered above any suspicion of dishonest dealing, but had the same sterling reputation. Henry Chadwick, denying in the *Ball Player's Chronicle* of May 21, 1868, an accusation of favoritism toward the Wrights, doubled down on their character:

> We have been free in our praise of these two players for sundry reasons, among which, apart from their skillful play, may be named the following:

> We never knew either to be guilty of a dishonorable action; we have never known of either hanging idly about taverns and gambling houses; we have never heard from the mouths of either of them any blasphemy or profanity, or seen either give way to ill-temper or "ugliness"…we are glad to be able to hold them up as examples to professional players.

By contrast, two examples of unacceptable behavior occurred in early 1869 involving Wright's intended team, the Red Stockings. The team in 1868 had employed an easterner, John Hatfield, a star catcher-outfielder. Hatfield over the winter took "pecuniary favors" from the Mutual Club of New York, but then attempted to rejoin the Red Stockings, and was listed as a Red Stocking in most preseason commentaries. He ended up with the Mutual: possibly the upright Harry sent him packing. Also so listed was a young Philadelphian, John Radcliff, an infielder-outfielder, who also ended up back east after similar reports.[18]

Abuses notwithstanding, never in professional baseball's subsequent history would the "free agent" market seem so favorable for players. Honorably done, a mobile player could offer his services freely to the numerous professional and semi-professional clubs nationwide, and have no fears for his reputation or his employability. It was only required that he play for one club at a time and be a club member for 30 days before playing, limitations adopted in 1857 after a notorious instance of revolving in 1856. Although the waiting period between appearances for his old and new clubs was increased to 60 days for 1869 to discourage mid-season player movement, the assumption was still that a player should have the right to change employers on the same basis as anyone else. In a "labor market" with little or no restriction on player movement and dominated by independent clubs which hired professionals in competition with each other, Wright was almost inevitably going to make career moves among different employers. When this utopian labor market ended after the 1879 season with the secret adoption of the reserve clause, he became one of its first victims. Not wishing to return to Providence after the 1879 season, he was unable to obtain his release and chose to prematurely interrupt his playing career.

A player of George Wright's unattached circumstances, reputation, and ability thus had in the period from 1865 to 1868 almost no limitations in his freedom of movement, and obviously Wright believed it was in his best interest to use it. That attitude ran in the family. The youthful George Wright operated against a backdrop of membership in a family of professional sportsmen who responded when opportunity knocked. Father Sam, though he settled down with the same New York cricket club for many years, had emigrated from England to better his career. Harry Wright preceded George in successfully combining cricket and baseball, and himself moved as a baseballist from the Knickerbocker Club to the more competitive Gotham Club amateurs to professional Cincinnati, even though by that point he had a family to uproot. Their relationships, and particularly Harry's role in George's career decisions, are however primarily a matter for conjecture. Perhaps it is significant that none of the primary sources even hint at a role for Harry in George's movements, other than, finally, as a team captain interested in his services.

Wright's moves are typical for an advancing young professional. He moved from junior to senior play, first in cricket and then in baseball, in association with his father and brother. He then decided as an 18-year-old that his best option was a promotion to cricket club professional, even if it meant splitting his time between New York and Philadelphia. Harry's move to Cincinnati created an opening for George in New York in 1866, and in the same year the progress of his baseball skills allowed him to move first from junior play to a second-tier gentleman's club playing a limited schedule and then to a first-tier championship contender, presumably with increases in compensation. In the absence of any other likely reason, his move to Washington in 1867 seems to have been financial. That club seeming in the grip of indiscipline and mismanagement, he returned to Greater New York City in 1868, with the financial resources in hand to invest in the Wright Brothers Base Ball Depot. As the present era of open professionalism dawned in 1869, however, the sun was setting on George's period of hopscotching. He was at the baseball pinnacle as a player, and at the top of its new wage scale. He also had had his first experience as a sports entrepreneur, which would make him one of the most prosperous and respected of the pioneer baseballist. That and his longevity (he lived until August 1937) ensured his election to the Hall of Fame. ■

Notes

1. *New York Tribune*, August 29, 1862, 8.
2. *New York Clipper*, September 12, 1863, 170.
3. *Philadelphia North American*, May 4, 1866, 1.
4. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 27, 1865, 2.
5. *Wilkes' Spirit of the Times*, April 8, 1865.
6. *New York Herald*, August 25, 1865, 5.
7. *New York Sunday Mercury*, September 13, 1863.
8. The only widely-kept statistics for individual player performance until the late 1860s was total number of outs made and total runs scored, divided by games played. "2R2" indicates two runs per game with a remainder of 2.
9. *New York Sunday Mercury*, September 22, 1861.
10. *Washington Evening Star*, August 5, 1867, 1.
11. *Beadle's Dime Base Ball Player*, 1868, 66, 97.
12. *New York Clipper*, November 2, 1867, 235.
13. *The Ball Player's Chronicle*, January 23, 1868.
14. *Beadle's Dime Base Ball Player*, 1869, 61.
15. *New York Sunday Mercury*, January 10, 1869.
16. *New York Sunday Mercury*, February 7, 1869.
17. *New York Sunday Mercury*, May 6, 1866.
18. *New York Sunday Mercury*, February 28, 1869.

Catcher Duke Farrell's Record Performance

Game Notes from May 11, 1897

Brian Marshall

Welcome to nineteenth-century baseball research, where it is not uncommon for the newspapers to have conflicting box score data, and for the box score data to be in conflict with the written article covering the game, or the scoring data included with the box score to be in conflict with the data in the box score itself. This makes researching nineteenth century baseball challenging, but also very rewarding once all the pieces are put together in an accurate manner.

The Baltimore Orioles and the Washington Senators played quite an interesting, record-setting game on Ladies Day, May 11, 1897, in Washington. The record books indicate that catcher Charles A. "Duke" Farrell established a record for throwing out the most base-stealers in a single game: eight. For example:

- *1898 Reach Guide* under Some Playing Features: *Catcher Farrell, of the Washingtons, threw out eight of the Baltimores at second base on May 11th.*[1]
- *1924 Little Red Book* under Catchers' Fielding Records, National League: *Most runners thrown out in attempts to steal base, game 8— C.A. Farrell, Wash. (vs Balto.)… May 11, 1897*[2]
- *1928 Little Red Book* under Catchers' Fielding Records: *Most runners thrown out in attempts to steal base, game—8 Charles A. Farrell, Washington NL, vs Baltimore, May 11, 1897*[3]
- *1963 One for the Book* under Catchers' Fielding Records: *Most Men Caught Stealing, Game, Nine Innings N. L.—8—Charles A. Farrell, Washington, May 11, 1897*[4]
- 1982 Edition of *The Book of Baseball Records* under Base Runners Caught Stealing: *Most Base Runners Caught Stealing, Game 8 Charles A. Farrell, NL: Wash. May 11, 1897*[5]

While the published box scores support that Farrell had eight assists in the May 11 game, what is not supported is how the assists were acquired. The record books state that all eight of Farrell's assists were the result of throwing out baserunners attempting to steal. The 1898 *Reach Guide* goes so far as to claim that all eight were thrown out at second base. But I was familiar with this game from previous research and upon seeing the record books I questioned, "Was it eight?" I reviewed my game file: Two newspapers stated that Farrell threw out only six baserunners, not eight. The discrepancy spurred me to dig deeper into the facts of the game.

I started with the game account in the *Baltimore American* (the primary source for the 1897 Baltimore Orioles box scores I generated for previous research). The *American* reported, "One of the features of the game was the daring base running of the Baltimores. It was daring, but unsuccessful, because of Charlie Farrell, who is supposed to have a lame throwing wing. Every attempt to get to second—and there were six attempts—resulted fatally to the Baltimore sprinters."[6]

The *Washington Post* account was similar: "The features of the games [sic] were the pitching of Brother Joe Corbett and the backstopping of Duke Farrell. Farrell built a record for himself that probably will stand as one of the remarkable events of the major League season. He is credited with eight assists, six of which were on throws that nailed the Orioles in their attempts at stealing bases. Stenzel, the Orioles' winged-foot champion, got gay on two occasions and was thrown out by Farrel [sic]. McGraw, Keeler, Kelly [sic] and O'Brien were also caught in the act of kleptomania by the Duke's emotional and shifty wing."[7]

However, the following list of the players that Farrell threw out makes three things clear:

a) Only six, not eight, baserunners were thrown out in an attempt to steal.

b) Not all of the six were thrown out at second base.

c) John McGraw was not one of them.

Runners Caught on May 11, 1897

1. Jake Stenzel, second base, first inning
2. Joe Kelley, second base, third inning
3. Jake Stenzel, second base, fourth inning
4. Heinie Reitz, second base, fourth inning
5. Willie Keeler, caught off base after safely reaching third, fifth inning
6. Tom O'Brien, second base, eighth inning

The *Baltimore Sun* chalked up some of the outs on the basepaths as follows:

> Four different times men on first base started to steal, expecting the batter to hit with the runner, and were caught, simply because the batters stood like wooden men and made no effort to hit the ball. This occurred three times in the third and fourth innings alone. In the third Kelley was caught because Doyle did not hit the ball, although it was called a strike. In the next inning Stenzel, who had singled, was caught because Reitz gave him no help, and Reitz was treated the same way by Clarke. Clarke was excusable, however, as the ball was over his head. O'Brien was caught in the eighth in the same way by Stenzel's not hitting.[8]

The Keeler play at third base, however, was reported by the *Washington Post* thus:

> Duke Farrell's arm came into play in the fifth. McGraw lined one too tall for O'Brien, the ball tipping Johnnie's mitt. Mugsy [McGraw] was forced on Keeler's roller to DeMontreville. Jennings hit to short left field, and Selbach made a strong bid for Hughey's liner, but it fell at Sel's feet, Keeler reaching third. Jennings started for second on a steal, and the Duke made a feint to throw to O'Brien, but shifted and caught Keeler off third.[9]

The *Baltimore Sun* described Keeler's resulting outburst: "Hurst called Keeler out on third base once, and so surprised and angry did that usually quiet player become that he ran at Hurst like a cyclone."[10] Technically the Keeler out at third was a pick off, not a caught stealing, thus only five of the six Farrell throw-outs were to catch a player in the act of trying to steal a base.

According to the game box score (see Figure 1) Duke Farrell had one put out, eight assists, and zero errors. Baltimore's Joe Kelley was caught in a rundown between third and home in the first inning. Kelley was tagged out by DeMontreville, but presumably Farrell assisted on the play which would account for the seventh assist. The second inning saw Joe Corbett sacrifice and presumably Farrell assisted on the out for the eighth assist. The second inning also featured a put out at home plate when Boileryard Clarke was called out. Presumably the put out was by Farrell.

Interestingly, the Baltimore Orioles' players did manage to steal some bases despite Farrell's efforts, the number of which varies depending on which newspaper you read. The *Washington Post* lists three stolen bases (by Keeler, Jennings, and Corbett). The Baltimore American listed only Corbett as having stolen a base while the *Baltimore Sun* credited the Orioles with five stolen bases: two by Keeler and one each for Jennings, Stenzel, and Corbett. Given that the game was played in Washington, it isn't surprising that The *Washington Post* provided the most thorough overall account of the game. Their total of three stolen bases was likely the most accurate:

1. Willie Keeler stole second base, second inning
2. Hughie Jennings stole second base, fifth inning
3. Joe Corbett stole second base, eighth inning

In addition to the eight Farrell assists, the game featured two other noteworthy incidents, both involving Jack Doyle, the Baltimore first baseman.

The first was reported by the *Washington Post*:

> Keeler, the infant phenom., went to Baltimore last night, plus an addition to his lip and minus one molar. His troubles came off in the second, when Ed. Cartwright shoved a fly into short right field that the omnipresent Queensberry gentleman, Jack Doyle, bucked up for. While Jack was rearing Keeler advanced on a canter, and ran into Jack's elbow, which landed on his wind. Jack's head collided with one of Keeler's molars, a dental mishap that deprived him of an ivory. But Keeler pocketed the molar and betook himself to his reservation, whereat the crowd warmed to him and gave him a glad-hand serenade.[11]

The *Baltimore American*'s version of the collision:

> Before his expulsion Jack came very near putting Willie Keeler out of the game for a long time to come. Doyle is an ambitious player, who takes every chance that offers to win a game. A short fly went up to right field, and Doyle and Keeler both went for it. The ball was in Keeler's

territory, but Jack, without warning, pursued the ball, and the result was a violent collision with Keeler. Keeler was momentarily stunned by the shock, and for a few minutes lay motionless upon the grass. It was at first thought that he was seriously injured, for both players were running at full speed when they came together.

The players gathered around him and he was deluged with water, and finally recovered and resumed his place in the field.[12]

The *Baltimore Sun* printed the following:

Keeler came near being badly hurt in the second inning by a collision with Doyle. Doyle ran out into right field after Cartwright's fly, which was Keeler's ball, and the collision knocked Keeler down and out for a few minutes. He recovered and continued to play.[13]

The second incident involved Doyle being ejected from the game. As the *Washington Post* colorfully reported:

Physician McJames, however, diagnosed a speech that Jack Doyle made at the home plate, and pronounced Jack's English as suffering from a compound fracture. Jack's sprained English was passed at Umpire Hurst because Tim called a strike on Jack, who had $25 worth of conversation with Tim, and was finally ordered to beat an exit from the grounds. O'Brien, the Orioles' substitute outfielder, replaced Jack at first.

After his exit Doyle returned and fanned baseball with a cluster of railbirds perched on the Freedmen's Hospital fence in deep left field.[14]

From the *Baltimore American*:

There was enough scrapping by the players and kicking against the umpire to please the most exacting lover of excitement. Jack Doyle figured in animated debate with Tim Hurst, and the result was that Jack was not only banished from the game, but he was ordered out of the grounds, with a heavy fine chalked up against him.

Tim Hurst could not have inflicted severer punishment upon Doyle than by putting him out of the game.[15]

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS: BENJAMIN K. EDWARDS COLLECTION

Farrell as depicted with the Chicago White Stockings on an Old Judge baseball card, circa 1888–90.

And the *Baltimore Sun*:

In the third inning Doyle was put out of the game and out of the grounds because of his objection to a strike being called on him. Up to that time Hurst had been doing fairly well, and the strike called on Doyle was certainly not a flagrant error, if an error at all, but from that time forward Hurst gave everything against the visitors.

He "roasted" Corbett on balls and strikes until the usually placid Clarke, after protesting mildly time and again, finally got so exasperated that he came near being expelled from the game.[16]

A further point of note involved the Baltimore players being hit by pitched balls, as the *Baltimore American* stated, "Several of the Baltimore players were hit by pitched balls but in every instance the blow was intentional. The crafty Orioles picked out Mercer's slow balls and placed their bodies near enough to the plate to come in contact with the horsehide and be rewarded by a free pass to first."[17] Although the Orioles did their best to be credited with many HBP, only two were actually awarded, McGraw and Jennings, both in the seventh inning which led to a bases-loaded situation but no runs. The *Washington Post* added, "Then Mercer jolted McGraw over the kidneys with an inshoot, Mugsy reaching third on Keeler's single to center. Jennings was hit by Mercer and was forced on Kelly's [sic] grounder to DeMontreville, O'Brien covering the base with neatness and dispatch."[18]

The newspaper box scores don't agree on the number of hits (H) or at bats (AB), either. The *Baltimore*

American lists eight hits for the Orioles, while the *Washington Post* lists 10 and the *Baltimore Sun* 12. The discrepancy undoubtedly has to do with which errors were deemed to have occurred. The individual ABs in the *Baltimore American* box score didn't make sense from a plate appearance point of view. John McGraw, who played third base and batted first for the Baltimore Orioles, was listed as having four AB, one base on balls (BB) and one hit by pitch (HBP): six plate appearances. Four batting order positions after McGraw was the combination of Jack Doyle and Tom O'Brien (O'Brien replaced Doyle in the third). Doyle had one AB, O'Brien had three, totaling four—but O'Brien also had a BB which meant a total of five plate appearances. No problem there except for the fact the preceding batting order position—Joe Kelley, who batted fourth—only had four plate appearances.

To further muddy the waters, the seventh and eighth batters—Heinie Reitz and Boileryard Clarke respectively—only had four plate appearances each, but Joe Corbett, batting ninth, had five: four AB plus one sacrifice hit. How can a later batting order position have more plate appearances than an earlier position? It's impossible.

The *Washington Post* box score (see Figure 1 on page 106), on the other hand, made much more sense: The BB, HBP, and the SH add up properly relative to the ABs. All 42 plate appearances—five for the first six positions in the batting order, four for the latter three—can be validated by summing the AB (34), BB (5), SH (1) and HBP (2).

Another conundrum was served up by the *Baltimore American*. They stated that Washington's DeMontreville and Selbach had sacrificed, DeMontreville in the first inning and Selbach in the sixth. None of the box scores listed either of them with a sacrifice hit, including the *Baltimore American* itself. This non-listing makes sense from a plate appearances point of view given that each player was credited with four AB, zero BB, and zero HBP. The *American* likely labeled the DeMontreville and Selbach efforts improperly.

Any time a researcher finds him or herself in a situation where research identifies an error in the historical record, the first reaction is that "I must have made a mistake" and/or "I must have missed something."[19] Review of what we know about the game on May 11, 1897, though, it's clear that the record books are wrong. Duke Farrell did in fact have eight assists in the game against the Baltimore Orioles—but only five of the assists, not eight, were catching runners stealing second base. Since the stated references do not categorically detail his involvement, the remaining three assists must be presumed to involve the pick-off at third, the rundown between third and home, and the put out of a batter who sacrificed. This researcher is aware of at least two other nineteenth century catchers who threw out five at second base in a single game: 1) Charlie Bennett on July 22, 1881 and 2) Tom Daly on July 5, 1887. I will leave the readers with this final note about Duke Farrell and his skill at throwing to second base: "Charley Farrell is working a very clever trick this season. In practice before the game the Duke makes a bad mess of getting the ball down to second, but after the game starts the fast base runner discovers that Farrell is throwing true to the mark."[20] ■

Notes

1. A.J. Reach. *Reach's Official Base Ball Guide for 1898.* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: A.J. Reach Co., 1898. Reprinted in 1990 by Horton Publishing Company.
2. John B. Foster, Editor (Compiled by Charles D. White). *Spalding's Official Base Ball Record*, part of the Spalding "Red Cover" Series of Athletic Handbooks, No. 59R. New York, NY: American Sports Publishing Company, 1924.
3. John B. Foster, Editor (Compiled by Charles D. White). *The Little Red Book: Spalding's Official Base Ball Record*, part of the Spalding's Athletic Library, No. 59B. New York, NY: American Sports Publishing Company, 1928.
4. Leonard Gettelson, Preparer. *One for the Book for 1963: Complete All-Time Major League Records.* St. Louis, MO: Charles C. Spink & Son (The Sporting News), 1963.
5. Seymour Siwoff, Editor. *The Book of Baseball Records.* New York, New York: Seymour Siwoff , 1982.
6. "A BATTLE OF PITCHERS: In Which Joe Corbett is Ahead of Mercer," *Baltimore American*, Wednesday, May 12, 1897, page unknown.
7. "MERCER THEIR CINCH: Has Never Pitched a Winning Game Against the Orioles," *Washington Post*, Wednesday, May 12, 1897, 8.
8. "HARD TIME WITH HURST!: Corbett Saves the Game," *Baltimore Sun*, Wednesday Morning, May 12, 1897, 6.
9. *Washington Post*, op. cit.
10. *Baltimore Sun*, op. cit.
11. *Washington Post*, op. cit.
12. *Baltimore American*, op. cit.
13. *Baltimore Sun*, op. cit.
14. *Washington Post*, op. cit.
15. *Baltimore American*, op. cit.
16. *Baltimore Sun*, op. cit.
17. *Baltimore American*, op. cit.
18. *Washington Post*, op. cit.
19. This is true not only in baseball research and records. I recall having those exact thoughts at the time I discovered that Jim Brown, the famous running back for the NFL Cleveland Browns, had actually gained over 1000 yards rushing—1016 to be exact—in the 1962 season rather than the 996 yards he was credited with. See Brian Marshall. "Rushing to Judgment: Recovering Jim Brown's Lost Yardage from 1962." *The Coffin Corner*, Volume 35, Number 3, May/June 2013, 9–12.
20. `"Baseball Notes," *Baltimore Sun*, Friday Morning, May 21, 1897, 6.

Figure 1. Box score for May 11, 1897 Game; from *The Washington Post*

Baltimore Orioles / Manager: Ned Hanlon
Batting, Fielding and Stolen Bases

Player	AB	R	H	BA	1B	2B	3B	HR	BB	SO	SH	SB	PO	A	E
John McGraw, 3b	3	0	1	0.333	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0
Willie Keeler, rf	5	1	2	0.400	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Hughie Jennings, ss	4	1	2	0.500	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	4	6	0
Joe Kelley, lf	5	0	1	0.200	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Jack Doyle, 1b	1	1	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0
Tom O'Brien, 1b	3	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	9	0	0
Jake Stenzel, cf	3	1	2	0.667	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
Heinie Reitz, 2b	3	2	1	0.333	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	3	1
Boileryard Clarke, c	4	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Joe Corbett, p	3	0	1	0.333	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	1
Totals	34	6	10	0.294	8	1	1	0	5	0	1	3	27	17	2

	Pitching									LOB	DP	BE
Player	IP	H	SO	BB	HBP	WP	B	W	L	7	1	4
Joe Corbett, p	9.0	7	2	1	0	0	0	1	0			
Totals	9.0	7	2	1	0	0	0	1	0			

Washington Senators / Manager: Gus Schmelz
Batting, Fielding and Stolen Bases

Player	AB	R	H	BA	1B	2B	3B	HR	BB	SO	SH	SB	PO	A	E
Tom Brown, cf	3	2	1	0.333	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kip Selbach, lf	4	1	2	0.500	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
G. DeMontreville, ss	4	0	1	0.250	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	5	3
Duke Farrell, c	4	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0
John O'Brien, 2b	4	0	1	0.250	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	2	1
Ed Cartwright, 1b	4	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	1
Charlie Abbey, rf	4	0	1	0.250	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Charlie Reilly, 3b	4	0	1	0.250	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	5	0
Win Mercer, p	3	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0
Totals	34	3	7	0.206	4	3	0	0	1	2	0	1	27	23	5

	Pitching									LOB	DP	BE
Player	IP	H	SO	BB	HBP	WP	B	W	L	4	0	1
Win Mercer, p	9.0	10	0	5	2	1	0	0	1			
Totals	9.0	10	0	5	2	1	0	0	1			

Umpire-in-Chief / Tim Hurst at HP

Runs by Inning	Inning									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Totals
Baltimore Orioles	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	6
Washington Senators	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3

Brian Marshall's article in the Spring 2016 issue of the *Baseball Research Journal* "Notes Related to Cy Young's First No Hitter" included a box score that due to a typesetting error had incorrect pitching and totals lines. The corrected box score is presented here.

CORRECTED BOX SCORE FOR CY YOUNG'S FIRST NO-HITTER

Cleveland Spiders / Manager: Patsy Tebeau
Batting, Fielding and Stolen Bases

Player	AB	R	H	BA	1B	2B	3B	HR	BB	SO	SH	SB	PO	A	E
Jesse Burkett, lf	4	0	1	0.250	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Cupid Childs, 2b	3	2	1	0.333	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	0
Bobby Wallace, 3b	4	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2
Jack O'Connor, 1b	4	1	2	0.500	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0
Ed McKean, ss	4	1	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	1
Ollie Pickering, cf	3	1	1	0.333	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0
Ira Belden, rf	3	1	2	0.667	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Chief Zimmer, c	2	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	2	0
Cy Young, p	3	0	1	0.333	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0
Totals	30	6	8	0.267	7	1	0	0	4	1	1	2	27	13	3

Pitching

Player	IP	H	SO	BB	HBP	WP	B	W	L
Cy Young, p	9.0	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	9.0	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	0

LOB	DP	BE
4	0	1

Cincinnati Reds / Manager: Buck Ewing
Batting, Fielding and Stolen Bases

Player	AB	R	H	BA	1B	2B	3B	HR	BB	SO	SH	SB	PO	A	E
Bug Holliday, rf	4	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Dummy Hoy, cf	4	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
Bid McPhee, 2b	3	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	6	0
Jake Beckley, 1b	3	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0
Tommy Corcoran, ss	3	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	0
Charlie Irwin, 3b	3	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	0
Eddie Burke, lf	3	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Pop Schriver, c	3	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Billy Rhines, p	1	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
a) Claude Ritchey	1	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	28	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	24	17	1

a) batted for Rhines in ninth

Pitching

Player	IP	H	SO	BB	HBP	WP	B	W	L
Billy Rhines, p	8.0	8	1	4	0	1	0	0	1
Totals	8.0	8	1	4	0	1	0	0	1

LOB	DP	BE
2	0	3

Umpire-in-Chief / Kick Kelly at HP

Runs by Inning	Inning									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Totals
Cleveland Spiders	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	x	6
Cincinnati Reds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Discrepancy in an All-Time MLB Record

Billy Hamilton's 1894 Runs Scored

Herm Krabbenhoft, Keith Carlson, David Newman, Richard "Dixie" Tourangeau

QUESTION: Who holds the all-time MLB record for most runs scored by an individual player during a single season?

ANSWER: Billy Hamilton of the 1894 Philadelphia Phillies.

There is no disagreement on who holds this record, but there is on the number of runs "Sliding Billy" scored in his record-setting campaign. According to MLB.com (the official website of Major League Baseball), Hamilton scored 192 runs in 1894, while Baseball-Reference.com has Hamilton with 198 and *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* (published by the Elias Sports Bureau—the official statistician of Major League Baseball) 196.[1]

The run is unquestionably the most important statistic in baseball. With no disrespect for the contributions of pitching and fielding, teams win or lose based solely on the number of runs the players on each team score. Knowing how many runs are scored is integral to the most basic record of the game: who won and who lost. It seems inconceivable that these sources would disagree on the number of runs scored by Hamilton in 1894. In an attempt to settle the matter, we have undertaken a comprehensive and in-depth research effort to authoritatively answer the question of how many runs Billy Hamilton scored in 1894.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The most rigorous modus operandi for resolving the runs-scored discrepancy is to ascertain the "complete details" for each of the 1179 runs scored by the Phillies in 1894. Ascertaining the "complete details" means obtaining each of the three critical components of each run:

1) The identity of the player who scored the run
2) The run-scoring event (for example: a 2-RBI triple, a wild pitch, a 1-RBI bases-loaded walk, a steal of home, a 1-RBI grounder where the batter is safe on a fielding error, a 0-RBI grounder where the batter is safe on a fielding error)
3) The identity of the player who completed his plate appearance during the run-scoring event (if any): the player who could be credited with an RBI

In order to obtain the complete details for each run scored, we examined the box scores and text descriptions for all 132 games played by Phillies in 1894, comparing the accounts of six daily newspapers published in Philadelphia and at least two daily newspapers from the opponents' cities.

RESULTS

The Appendix (at http://sabr.org/node/42657) provides supplemental material and the complete details, according to our research, for each of the 1179 runs scored by the Phillies on a game-by-game (GBG) basis for the 132 games they played in 1894. With reliable GBG runs-scored numbers for each player, we are able to achieve full-season totals for each, as shown in Table 1, Column A. For comparison, the table also presents the originally-reported official runs-scored numbers (B) and the runs-scored numbers currently shown on Baseball-Reference.com (C) and MLB.com (D).

DISCUSSION

Inspection of Table 1 reveals that our full-season runs-scored number (196) for Billy Hamilton agrees with the originally-reported official statistics, but several other players—Jack Clements, Lave Cross, Ed Delahanty, Sam Thompson, and Tuck Turner—show discrepancies. Comparison of our runs-scored numbers with Baseball-Reference.com reveals three more players with runs-scored discrepancies—Hamilton, Lou Johnson, and Jack Taylor. And comparison with MLB.com reveals differences for six more players—Bob Allen, Jack Boyle, Kid Carsey, Bill Hallman, Joe Sullivan, and Gus Weyhing.

Let's begin with the runs-scored numbers provided on MLB.com (Column D), focusing on Billy Hamilton. Box scores and game accounts show Hamilton played in all 132 games, but MLB.com records Hamilton playing in

Table 1. Full-Season Runs-Scored Numbers for Players on 1894 Phillies—Comparison of Our Runs-Scored Numbers with Other Sources

Player	A Runs (This Work)	B Runs (Official)	C Runs (Baseball-Reference.com)	D Runs (MLB.com)
Bob Allen	27	27	27	***26***
Jack Boyle	103	103	103	***98***
Dick Buckley	18	24[2]	18	18
Al Burris	0	?[3]	0	0
Jimmy Callahan	4	?[3]	4	4
Kid Carsey	31	31	31	***30***
Jack Clements	25	***26***	***26***	***26***
Lave Cross	127	***128***	***128***	***123***
Ed Delahanty	148	***149***	***149***	***147***
Tom Delahanty	0	?[3]	0	0
Jack Fanning	2	?[3]	2	2
Frank Figgemeier	0	?[3]	0	0
Mike Grady	45	45	45	45
George Haddock	2	?[3]	2	2
Bill Hallman	111	111	111	***107***
Billy Hamilton	196	196	***198***	***192***
George Harper	7	?[3]	7	7
Arthur Irwin	0	?[3]	0	0
Lou Johnson	5	?[3]	***4***	***4***
Alex Jones	1	?[3]	1	1
Al Lukens	0	?[3]	0	0
Tom Murray	0	?[3]	0	0
Charlie Reilly	21	21	21	21
Jack Scheible	0	?[3]	0	0
Joe Sullivan	65	72[4]	65	***63***
Jack Taylor	21	21	***20***	***20***
Sam Thompson	116	***115***	***114***	***108***
Tuck Turner	95	***94***	***94***	***91***
Gus Weyhing	9	9	9	***8***
Charles Yingling	0	?[3]	0	0

NOTES

1. The official runs-scored numbers (Column B) are those reported in *The Sporting News* (October 6, 1894, p 6, and October 20, 1894, p 6) and given in the 1895 editions of *Spalding's Base Ball Guide* (p 94) and Reach's Official Base Ball Guide (p 38); the Baseball-Reference.com runs-scored numbers (Column C) are those shown on May 15, 2016; the MLB.com runs-scored numbers (Column D) are those shown on May 15, 2016.
2. The 24 runs-scored number shown in the official records for Buckley includes his runs scored with both St. Louis and Philadelphia.
3. The originally-reported official runs-scored records did not include players with less than 9 runs scored.
4. The 72 runs-scored number shown in the official records for Sullivan includes his runs scored with both Washington and Philadelphia.

only 129 games. Here's the reason for the games-played discrepancy for Hamilton at MLB.com: the database of historical stats MLB.com uses only includes 129 games played by the Phillies. The provenance of this database at MLB.com is well-documented: beginning with a database obtained from Pete Palmer in 2001, who had generated it based on the 1969 edition of *The Baseball Encyclopedia* (Macmillan), which in turn was based on David S. Neft's records, aka "ICI sheets." Neft's game-by-game database showed the Phillies as a team playing only 129 games and Hamilton scoring 192 runs in them.[2]

In assembling his ICI database, Neft chose to exclude protested games, including three from the Phillies 1894 season—April 26 (Philadelphia 13, Brooklyn 3); August 27, first game (Philadelphia 9, Cincinnati 19); and September 6, first game (Philadelphia 14, Cincinnati 7). While the 1894 season was still in progress, the National League directors decided that these games were illegal.[3] Note that though these games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The 1892 Phillies. Billy Hamilton is at the far right.

were "no-decision" games with respect to each team's won-lost record (i.e., the equivalent of a draw), the statistics achieved by the players in these games were counted toward their official full-season records. The official 1894 games-played log, as shown in the 1895 edition of Spalding's Base Ball Guide, lists 132 games for Philadelphia—the 128 games for a 71–57 won-lost record, one tie on May 26, and three illegal "no-decision" games.[4]

The official records show Hamilton with 196 runs scored for the entire 1894 season (132 games)—which is consistent with our research which shows that Hamilton played in the three "ICI-omitted" games and scored a total of six runs—one run, one run, and four runs, respectively.

But wait, adding the six runs Hamilton scored in the three "ICI-omitted" games to the 192 runs shown on MLB.com results in a revised total of 198 runs scored—the number currently shown on Baseball-Reference.com. Baseball-Reference has implemented Pete Palmer's updated database of baseball statistics, which includes the omitted games. We must now address why Baseball-Reference shows two more runs scored for Billy Hamilton (198) than our research (196).

Comparison of the GBG runs-scored numbers pinpoints two games as the sources of the discrepancy. Let's scrutinize the run-scoring in each of these two games.

JUNE 15, 1894—PHILADELPHIA vs. CINCINNATI—PHILADELPHIA SCORED 21 RUNS

According to our research, Hamilton scored two runs in the Phillies-Reds game on June 15, 1894. However, the ICI sheets show Hamilton with three runs scored. Table 2 presents the runs-scored information provided in the box scores from the game accounts in various newspapers. Also shown are the runs-scored numbers according to our research and those given on the ICI sheets.

Inspection of Table 2 reveals that the box score runs-scored numbers are not harmonious for Hamilton, Taylor, and Grady. PEI, PINQ, and PNA box scores show Hamilton with 3 runs, while all others show Hamilton with 2 runs. Similarly, the PINQ and PNA box scores show Taylor with 1 run, while all of the other box scores show Taylor with 2 runs. And, the PEI box score shows Grady with 2 runs, while all of the other box scores show Grady with 3 runs. So, which box score is correct? To find out, we examined

Table 2. Runs-Scored Information Provided in Box Scores in Newspaper Accounts for June 15 Game.

Player	PEI	PINQ	PNA	PPRS	PPL	PREC	CINCOM	CINENQ	This Work	ICI
Hamilton	***3***	***3***	***3***	2	2	2	–	2	2	***3***
Turner	3	3	3	3	3	3	–	3	3	3
Grady	***2***	3	3	3	3	3	–	3	3	3
Delahanty	4	4	4	4	4	4	–	4	4	4
Boyle	2	2	2	2	2	2	–	2	2	2
Hallman	2	2	2	2	2	2	–	2	2	2
Reilly	0	0	0	0	0	0	–	0	0	0
Taylor	2	***1***	***1***	2	2	2	–	2	2	***1***
Callahan	0	0	0	0	0	0	–	0	0	0
Allen	2	2	2	2	2	2	–	2	2	2
Cross	1	1	1	1	1	1	–	1	1	1

NOTES

1. The players are listed in the order of their position in the batting lineup.

2. The box score runs-scored numbers are from the following newspapers—Philadelphia Evening Item (PEI), Inquirer (PINQ), North American (PNA), Press (PPRS), Public Ledger (PPL), and Record (PREC), and Cincinnati Commercial (CINCOM) and Enquirer (CINENQ). The CINCOM box score did not include runs-scored numbers for the individual players.

the text descriptions (provided in the Appendix) for each of Philadelphia's 21 runs, as presented in the various newspaper accounts. Here is a summary of the complete details from the text descriptions for each of the runs scored by the Phillies:

First Inning—Philadelphia scored 1 run

- Hamilton scored on a 1-RBI groundout by Grady.

Fifth Inning—Philadelphia scored 3 runs

- Turner scored on a 3-RBI double by Boyle.
- Grady scored on a 3-RBI double by Boyle.
- Delahanty scored on a 3-RBI double by Boyle.

Seventh Inning—Philadelphia scored 5 runs

- Turner scored on a 3-RBI homer by Delahanty.
- Grady scored on a 3-RBI homer by Delahanty.
- Delahanty scored on a 3-RBI homer by Delahanty.
- Boyle scored (from second base) on a 2-out 1-RBI single by Reilly.
- Hallman scored (from first base) on a 2-out single by Reilly coupled with a fielding error (fumbled pickup followed by a wild throw) by the center fielder Hoy.

Eighth Inning—Philadelphia scored 8 runs

- Allen scored on a 2-RBI triple by Turner.
- Hamilton scored on a 2-RBI triple by Turner.
- Turner scored on a 1-RBI double by Grady.
- Grady scored on a 1-RBI single by Delahanty.
- Delahanty scored on a 1-RBI double by Hallman.
- Hallman scored on a wild pitch.
- Taylor scored on a 2-RBI single by Turner.
- Allen scored on a 2-RBI single by Turner.

Ninth Inning—Philadelphia scored 4 runs

- ???
- ???
- ???
- ???

As can be seen, the complete details for the four ninth-inning runs are not summarized—because none of the text descriptions state specifically which players scored the runs. All that can be gleaned from the text descriptions is that at least six players got on base—Delahanty (triple), Boyle (single), Hallman (single), Taylor (single), Cross (single), and Hamilton (double). Fortunately, however, the identities of the four players who did score the four ninth-inning runs can be readily deduced from the runs-scored numbers presented in the box scores provided in the newspaper accounts, which are summarized in Table 2. Taking into account the complete details for the runs scored through the eighth inning (as summarized above), it is clear that through the eighth inning the 17 Philadelphia runs were scored by Hamilton (2), Turner (3), Grady (3), Delahanty (3), Boyle (1), Hallman (2), Reilly (0), Taylor (1), Allen (2), Cross (0), Callahan (0).

Knowing who scored the runs through the eighth inning from the text descriptions and knowing the total runs each player scored according to the box score allows us to deduce which players scored the four ninth-inning runs. However, because the box scores are not all in agreement, one has to do the math with each box score and then determine if the deduced run-scorers are in sync with the text descriptions.

Let's start with the PEI box score. Subtracting the runs-scored numbers through the first eight innings from the runs-scored numbers given in the box score results in the "four" deduced ninth-inning run-scorers being Grady (minus one run!), Delahanty, Boyle, Taylor, Cross, and Hamilton. Clearly, the PEI box score is absurd—five positive run-scorers and one negative run-scorer—ludicrous!

Therefore, the PEI box score is logistically not viable.

What about the PINQ and PNA box scores? Subtracting the runs-scored numbers through the first eight innings from the corresponding runs-scored numbers given in the box scores results in the four deduced ninth-inning run-scorers being Delahanty, Boyle, Cross, and Hamilton. Do these four deduced ninth-inning run-scorers mesh with the text descriptions given? Here's play-by-play:

- Delahanty led off with a triple—and subsequently scored.
- Boyle singled—and subsequently scored.
- Hallman singled—but did not score; therefore, he must have been retired on the basepath.
- Reilly batted—but did not score; therefore, he must have been retired.
- Taylor singled—but did not score; therefore, he must have been retired on the basepath.

So, at this point, we have Delahanty having scored the first ninth-inning run (perhaps on Boyle's single) and we have Boyle either having scored the second run of the ninth inning (perhaps on Taylor's single) or still on base waiting to score the second ninth-inning run. AND, we have three players retired (Hallman, Reilly, and Taylor)—i.e., the ninth inning is over…before Cross could single (and subsequently score) and before Hamilton could double (and subsequently score).

Therefore, the PINQ and PNA box scores are logistically untenable. AND, since the ICI sheets have the exact-same runs-scored information as the PINQ and PNA box scores, the ICI runs-scored numbers for Hamilton (3) and Taylor (1) are not tenable.

This brings us to the PPRS, PPL, PREC, and CINENQ box scores. Subtracting the runs-scored numbers through the first eight innings from the corresponding runs-scored numbers given in these box scores results in the four deduced ninth-inning run-scorers being Delahanty, Boyle, Taylor, and Cross. Do these four deduced ninth-inning run-scorers dovetail with the text descriptions? Here's the play-by-play:

- Delahanty led off with a triple—and subsequently scored (probably on Boyle's single).
- Boyle singled—and subsequently scored.
- Hallman singled—but, since he did not score, he must have been retired on the basepath.
- Reilly batted—but did not score; therefore, he must have been retired.
- Taylor singled—and subsequently scored (perhaps on Hamilton's double).
- Cross singled—and subsequently scored (probably on Hamilton's double).
- Hamilton doubled.

Yes! The four deduced ninth-inning run-scorers—Delahanty, Boyle, Taylor, and Cross—are indeed in perfect alignment with the text descriptions. However, while we know for certain who scored the four ninth-inning runs, we do not know for certain who batted in the ninth-inning runs scored by Delahanty, Boyle, Taylor, and Cross. As shown in the Appendix, various scenarios can be conjectured for assigning RBI credit. Here's a summary of some possible paths for the four ninth-inning runs:

- Delahanty scored on a 1-RBI single by Boyle…OR…
- Boyle scored on a 1-RBI out by Reilly…OR…on a 1-RBI single by Taylor…OR…on a 1-RBI single by Cross…OR…
- Taylor scored on a 1-RBI single by Cross…OR…on a 2-RBI double by Hamilton…OR…
- Cross scored on a 1-RBI double by Hamilton…OR… on a 2-RBI double by Hamilton…OR…

So, considering all of the available information—and having demonstrated that the runs-scored numbers given in the PPRS, PPL, PREC, and CINENQ box scores are accurate—Billy Hamilton actually scored two runs in the June 15 game (not three runs as shown on the ICI sheets). And, similarly, Jack Taylor actually scored two runs in the game (not one run as shown on the ICI sheets).

AUGUST 17, 1894—PHILADELPHIA vs. LOUISVILLE—PHILADELPHIA SCORED 29 RUNS

The other game for which our runs-scored number for Hamilton (two) differs from the ICI sheets runs-scored number for Hamilton (three) is the Phillies versus Colonels contest on August 17. To resolve the discrepancy, let's examine the text descriptions (provided in the Appendix) for each of the runs as presented in the various newspaper accounts. As summarized in the Appendix, we were able to ascertain complete details for only six of the runs—the first three runs in the first inning (Boyle, Delahanty, and Thompson scored on Thompson's 3-RBI homer), the one sixth-inning run (Delahanty scored on a 1-RBI single by Turner), and the two eighth-inning runs (Boyle and Cross scored on Cross's 2-RBI homer). Unfortunately, as detailed in the Appendix, the text descriptions did not provide sufficient information to ascertain the complete details of the other 23 runs. Thus, we were forced to rely entirely on the box score runs-scored information for the identities of the run-scorers and the number of runs each player scored. Table 3 lists the runs scored by each Phillies player according to each box score. Also shown are the runs-scored numbers given on the ICI sheets.

The most-glaring item in Table 3 is that the ICI sheets and the PINQ box score each show both Hamilton and Boyle with three runs scored, while all of the other box scores show Hamilton with two runs scored and Boyle with four runs scored. For all of the other players there is complete agreement for all of the corresponding runs-scored numbers. So, the critical issue is ascertaining which box score is correct for the runs scored by Hamilton and by Boyle. Since the text descriptions of the runs given in the newspaper accounts do not resolve the issue, one is left with just the box scores themselves. One could simply claim that because there are seven box scores showing Hamilton with two runs scored and only one box score showing Hamilton with three runs scored, the majority rules. However since it is widely known that even competing independent newspapers sometimes shared box scores, a plurality of box scores does not necessarily guarantee consensus. So, to help resolve this issue one needs to know how many box scores are unique. The Appendix provides pertinent information on the uniqueness of the box scores, from which it can be confidently advanced that there are five unique sets of box scores: [1] PINQ; [2] PEI and PREC; [3] PNA and PPL; [4] PPRS; and [5] LOUCJ and LOUCOM.

That four of these unique sets of box scores—[2]; [3]; [4]; and [5]—have identical corresponding runs-scored numbers for all of the players can be taken as

meaningful evidence in support of these runs-scored numbers being correct (and that, therefore, the PINQ box score runs-scored numbers for Hamilton and Boyle are spurious and incorrect). Additionally, since the ICI sheets have the same runs-scored information as the PINQ box score, it can be reasonably concluded that the ICI runs-scored numbers for Hamilton (three) and Boyle (three) are not accurate.

Another line of reasoning that is important in evaluating the accuracy of baseball's historical statistics is that baseball's originally-reported official numbers must be held as correct—unless they can be irrefutably proven to be wrong. As it has developed, the official GBG runs-scored records of the 1894 season are no longer extant. All that does remain are the official full-season runs-scored statistics that were released and reported to the public, such as in *The Sporting News* or the annual baseball guides. So, embracing that line of reasoning—i.e., deference to the official records—results in accepting that Hamilton scored two runs—since (as indicated below) that then results in Sliding Billy ending up with a total of 196 runs scored for the season—i.e., the same number as that officially reported in 1894 in *The Sporting News*.

Considering all of the available information, we conclude that Billy Hamilton scored two runs in the August 17 game (not three runs as shown on the ICI sheets). Analogously, Jack Boyle actually scored four runs in the game (not three runs as shown on the ICI sheets).

Combining our findings for the games on June 15 and August 17 gives Hamilton 196 runs (not 198 runs as shown on Baseball-Reference.com) during the 1894 season.

Having resolved the discrepancy of the runs-scored number achieved by Hamilton for the major league record for most runs scored by an individual player in a single season, let's now turn to the seven other players for whom our full-season runs-scored numbers (Table 1, Column A) are different from the runs-scored numbers presently shown on Baseball-Reference.com (C) and the official runs-scored numbers reported in *The Sporting News* in 1894 (B). Without going into all the laborious details here, let's simply state that we assembled evidence to support our runs-scored numbers; the pertinent supporting documentation is provided in the Appendix at http://sabr.org/node/42657.

FINAL REMARKS

In the present endeavor we strove for 100% accuracy for the runs scored by the players on the 1894 Phillies by ascertaining the complete details for each of those 1179 runs. Fortunately, we obtained evidence as to the identities of the players who scored each of the runs. We were not always able to determine the player who may have driven in the run or by what means. As it turned out, there were some other games for which we needed to deduce the identities of the run-scorers for some of the runs or to rely entirely on the box score for the identities of the run scorers and the number of runs that each player scored in the game. For each of these games the Appendix provides the text descriptions from numerous newspaper accounts. The bottom line with respect to the players who scored the runs is this: we have assembled persuasive evidence which allows us to report with high confidence the identities of each of the run-scorers and the number of runs they scored in each of the 132 games Philadelphia played in 1894.

From our comprehensive and in-depth investigation of the runs scored by the players on the 1894 Philadelphia Phillies, the most significant conclusion is that

Table 3. Runs-Scored Information Provided in Box Scores in Newspaper Accounts for August 17 Game

Player	PEI	PINQ	PNA	PPRS	PPL	PREC	LOUCJ	LOUCOM	This Work	ICI
Hamilton	2	***3***	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	***3***
Boyle	4	***3***	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	***3***
Cross	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Delahanty	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Thompson	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Hallman	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Turner	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buckley	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Grady	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sullivan	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Carsey	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

NOTES

1. The players are listed in the order of their position in the batting lineup.
2. The box score runs-scored numbers are from the following newspapers—Philadelphia Evening Item (PEI), Inquirer (PINQ), North American (PNA), Press (PPRS), Public Ledger (PPL), and Record (PREC), and Louisville Courier-Journal (LOUCJ) and Commercial (LOUCOM).

the 196 sculpted onto Sliding Billy's Hall of Fame plaque is correct.[5] We hope that MLB.com and Baseball-Reference.com will also eventually show Hamilton's 196 runs-scored number. ■

Author's Note

The final draft of this manuscript (including the Appendix) was provided to Cory Schwartz (MLB.com), John Thorn (Official Historian of Major League Baseball), Pete Palmer and Gary Gillette, Sean Forman (Baseball-Reference.com), and Craig Muder and Jim Gates (National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum) in order to facilitate the incorporation of Hamilton's 196 runs-scored number.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully thank Gary Stone for providing copies of game accounts from newspapers to which he had access. We also thank John Thorn and Pete Palmer for their inputs on the statistics utilized by MLB.com.

Notes

1. MLB.com and Baseball-Reference.com accessed on May 15, 2016. Seymour Siwoff, *The Elias Book of Baseball Records*, Elias Sports Bureau, New York (2016).
2. David S. Neft, an employee at Information Concepts Incorporated, an information systems company in New York, directed a research effort beginning in the mid-1960s to produce a complete and comprehensive baseball reference work, which culminated with the publication in 1969 of *The Baseball Encyclopedia* by Macmillan. The computerized game-by-game (GBG) records compiled by Information Concepts Incorporated (typically referred to as "ICI sheets") are available at the National Baseball Hall of Fame Library in Cooperstown, New York. Pete Palmer, in an email (January 9, 2015) to Herm Krabbenhoft, wrote that MLB.com obtained his database of baseball statistics "probably in 2001 or so" and that "MLB has not done much with the data besides adding in current years." John Thorn, currently the Official Historian of Major League Baseball, corroborates this story in an email (July 16, 2012) to Herm Krabbenhoft: "Herm I have no sway with the mlb.com data. It is Pete Palmer's old *Total Baseball* database, with some tinkering by unknown hands."
3. For example, see "Three Baseball Games Thrown Out," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (September 21, 1894) 11.
4. The 1894 Philadelphia games-played log on Retrosheet.org is identical.
5. Curiously, the biographical sketch for Billy Hamilton currently given on the Hall of Fame's website (baseballhall.org) states, "Remarkably, he scored 192 runs in 129 games in 1894," while the 2015 edition of the Hall of Fame Yearbook states on page 85, "…his record of 198 runs scored for the 1894 Phillies has stood for more than a century."

Contributors

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DOUGLAS JORDAN is a professor at Sonoma State University in Northern California where he teaches corporate finance and investments. He's been a SABR member since 2012. The article "The .700 Club: Blessedly Good Baseball" is his third contribution to the *BRJ*. He runs marathons when he's not watching or writing about baseball. Email him at douglas.jordan@sonoma.edu.

HERM KRABBENHOFT, a SABR member since 1981, respectfully dedicates this article to the memory of Rick Steckley, a boyhood friend whose favorite baseball player was Harvey Kuenn. Back in 1955, when Herm was first discovering baseball, besides playing catch and "flies and grounders" together, Rick introduced Herm to the fun of collecting baseball cards and explained the meanings of the stats on the backs, like "R" for runs and "RBI" for runs batted in. As it turned out, Herm's enduring interest in those numbers eventually led him to do his research on players like Ruth, Gehrig, Greenberg, and Sliding Billy. Thanks so much Rick!

BILL LAMB is a retired state/county prosecutor. The life of George Davis has been a research interest of his for more than 30 years. His article is adapted from a presentation made during the Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19th Century Base Ball conference in Cooperstown, April 2106.

BRIAN MARSHALL is an Electrical Engineering Technologist living in Barrie, Ontario, Canada, and a long time researcher in various fields including entomology, power electronic engineering, NFL, Canadian Football and MLB. Brian has written many articles, winning awards for two of them, and two books in his 60 years with two baseball books on the way—one on the 1927 New York Yankees and the other on the 1897 Baltimore Orioles. Brian has been a SABR member for three years and is a long time member of the PFRA. Growing up Brian played many sports including football, rugby, hockey, baseball along with participating in power lifting and arm wrestling events, and aspired to be a professional football player but when that didn't materialize he focused on Rugby Union and played off and on for 17 seasons in the "front row."

BILL McMAHON is professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Akron. Born in Chicago in 1937, he is a lifelong Cubs fan. He has been a SABR member for about 30 years, active in the Jack Graney Chapter, and he has contributed several articles to SABR publications. He chairs the Farm Club subcommittee of the Minor League Committee. Other SABR activities include Retrosheet and the Nineteenth Century Research Committee. Bill's interest in womens' baseball stems from watching the games of the Bluebirds of the National Girls Baseball League in Bidwill Stadium in the late 1940s. He is currently working on a book on that league.

MARK METCALF is a longtime baseball historian who has been doing extensive research on the baseball history of Independence, Kansas. His interest in the city's baseball history was kindled by the presence of the baseball grandstand there, which was built in 1918 and the state's oldest. Since Mickey Mantle started his professional career as an Independence Yankee, Mark plans to publish a story about Mantle in the future.

DAVID NEWMAN first joined SABR in 2002. He is a retired internal auditor with the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration. Dave remains a lifelong Yankees fan, a tradition passed down from his father. He has spent many hours in the Library of Congress Microform Reading Room, a short Metro ride from his Crofton, Maryland, home where he lives with his wife, Carol.

HELEN E. "NORDIE" NORDQUIST was born to Swedish immigrants in Boston, Massachusetts, March 23, 1932, and she lived in nearby Malden most of her life. As a result she's a life long Red Sox Fan. Nordie grew up playing baseball and tag football with the

neighborhood boys and was the first girl in her junior high school to earn a school letter for sports. In high school, she co-captained the softball team as a junior and senior. Nordie signed as an outfielder for the Kenosha Comets of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) in 1951 and played for the AAGPBL's Rockford Peaches (1952–53), and South Bend Blue Sox (1954). After the AAGPBL folded, Nordie played amateur softball in the New England states and took up bowling. She worked as a switchboard operator, an accountant, and retired as a toll collector on Interstate 95 for the State of New Hampshire.

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