

Beating the Bushes



*A publication of the Society for American Baseball Research
Minor League Committee*

Fall 2021

October 30, 2021

Traveling Down Winding Rhoades: Player Identification in the Baseball-Reference Minor League Database

By Terry Bohn

Baseball-Reference.com is an invaluable resource for researchers. In addition to the advanced analytics, the site contains not only statistics for every man who ever played Major League Baseball, but records and biographical information for thousands and thousands of minor league players dating back to the 1800s. However, in looking through player lists and team rosters on the Minor League Stats and History page, many players from the Nineteenth century and early 1900s, are known only by their last name, or possibly their last name and first initial, or a nickname such as "Lefty".

As a member of SABR's Biographical Research, Minor Leagues, and Nineteenth Century Committees, one of the most rewarding (and frustrating) aspects of baseball research is uncovering the identity of players previously known only by their last name. The process that I use is to search on-line newspapers of the city in which the player played (and cities with teams in the same league) using the player's last name as a search term. When verification of the player's name is found, source citations are documented and submitted to Baseball-Reference.

For example, a man with the last name "McKee" is on the roster of both Winona and Red Wing of the 1910 Minnesota-Wisconsin League. A search on his name in the *Winona Daily News* of May 2, 1910 revealed the following item, "Manager Bill Killian has released pitcher Harry McKee to Red Wing". With his first name now documented, I then search the Baseball-Reference database for a player with that complete name. A man by the name of Harry McKee, with a separate entry than the previously unknown McKee, played for Aurora, Illinois in 1912. As

the two Harry McKees were obviously the same player, I requested that their records be reconciled in the database.

Finding Pecky and Dusty

Other times player identification is not as straight forward. A player with the last name "Rhoades" pitched for Fargo-Moorhead and St. Boniface, Manitoba in the Northern League in 1915. Several factors complicated his identification. In addition to "Rhoades", contemporary newspaper accounts and box scores also spelled his name "Rhodes" and "Rhoads", and there were two other players, Dusty Rhodes and Henry H. (or Harry) Rhoades, playing in the same league around the same time. In addition, many players with similar surnames picked up the nickname "Dusty" during their playing careers. Was the unknown Rhoades one of these men, or someone completely different?

First I decided to track Henry Harrison Rhoades. Born November 2, 1888 in Minneapolis, he started out with amateur teams in his hometown as early as 1909 and may have played with an independent team in Milbank, South Dakota in 1910. For reasons unknown, he soon picked up the nickname "Pecky" and based on his middle name, was also sometimes also called Harry. He does not appear on any 1911 team rosters in Baseball-Reference, but began his professional career as a third baseman with Wausau of the Wisconsin-Illinois League in April 1911. Shortly thereafter he joined a semi-pro team in Jamestown, North Dakota (where he married Rose Blair of Minneapolis) and in August of that year, he hooked on with Superior, Wisconsin of the Northern League where he played the rest of the 1911 season. Rhoades played with the same two clubs, Superior and Wausau, in 1912.

Henry started the 1913 season with Superior but in May was sold to Duluth. One early season highlight was a 2-1, 12-inning win over Virginia, Minnesota in which he outdueled the Ore Diggers star pitcher, future Hall of Famer Rube Waddell. To top it off he shutout Virginia 5-0 in the second game of the doubleheader. After the season the *Duluth News Tribune* referred to him as "...the Min-

neapolis boy who played ball with Superior last year.” Henry Rhoades’ Baseball-Reference page lists his birthplace at Minneapolis, so, so far, we can be confident we are tracking the same man.

This is where things got muddled. Pecky Rhoades’ last name was usually spelled correctly in box scores and game accounts but sometimes it was also misspelled as either “Rhodes” or “Rhoads”. Early in the 1913 season a second player named Rhoades (different from Henry/Pecky) appeared in Duluth box scores as a third baseman, and to differentiate the two, he was usually referred to as “Dusty.” In fact, in one June game the two switched positions as the box score listed “Rhoads, 3b & p” and Rhoades, p & 3b” To further confuse things, in late June it was announced “Dusty Rhoads will be relieved of his third base duties and will be added to the pitching staff”.

Before completing the identification of Dusty, it was necessary to reconcile another group of players. There are three separate entries in Baseball-Reference for pitchers named Elton Rhoades, Elton Rhodes, and Elton E. Rhoads. The latter two men both played for the Macomb Potters of the Illinois-Missouri League, Rhodes in 1909 and Rhoads in 1910. The third, Rhoades, played in the Eastern Illinois League in 1908. All three had the same first, a variation of the same last name, played the same position (pitcher), played in the same part of the country (Illinois) and two played with the same team (Macomb) in consecutive seasons, making a strong case that all three were the same man.

In addition to playing for Macomb, Elton Rhoads also pitched for Lincoln, Illinois in 1910 and a report of a game that season referred to him as Dusty Rhodes. In addition, a Macomb roster prior to the 1911 season listed third baseman Dusty Rhoades of Macomb. A brief note about the 1913 Duluth, Minnesota team mentioned that “Pitcher Dusty Rhoades has been wintering in Macomb, Ill.”, and that he would meet up with the Duluth team during spring training in Madison, Wisconsin. Despite the continued misspelling of the last name, the mystery was cleared up in another brief report from early in 1913 stating that Elton Rhoads, or “Dusty as he is better known among baseball fans” was now in Madison and that he had signed to play for the Duluth team.

It seemed highly unlikely that it was a coincidence that both Dusty Rhodes and Elton Rhoads were both from Macomb, Illinois, so we can conclude that the three Eltons were the same player, and that he also was the same man as the second Rhoades that joined the Duluth squad in 1913. A Dusty Rhodes appears in Baseball-Reference as a pitcher and third baseman with Virginia (Minnesota) in 1913 and the Fort William/St. Boniface Northern league

franchise in 1914. However, before he could take the mound Dusty was traded to Virginia where he finished the 1913 season playing mostly third base, but also pitching on occasion.

In May 1914 the Fargo club announced that they had acquired a right-handed pitcher named Dusty Rhodes and that he had played with both Duluth and Virginia the previous season, obviously the same man. In late May he was released by Fargo and joined the Winnipeg Maroons, who later released him to Ft. William, again, except for the previously unknown stints in Fargo and Winnipeg, matching up with the Dusty Rhodes in Baseball-Reference, providing evidence that the Rhoades from 1915 with an unknown first name was the same man as Dusty Rhodes. So we can conclude that the following five players in the Baseball-Reference Minor League database were all the same man.

Elton Rhoades, Pitcher, 1908, Charleston, Pana/Linton, Ill/Eastern Illinois, (be126dd4)

Elton Rhodes, Pitcher, 1909 Galesburg, Macomb, Monmouth, Ill/Illinois-Missouri, (e6066f63)

Elton Rhoads, Pitcher, 1910-12, Illinois-Missouri, (4fb78442)

Dusty Rhodes, Pitcher/3B, 1913-14, Virginia, MN, Ft. William/Northern, (19995a750)

Rhoades, Pitcher, 1915 St. Boniface, MB, Fargo, ND/Northern, (48271ddb)

What is known of this player is that Elton Eugene Rhoads was born August 2, 1885 in Paris, Illinois. One report stated that he pitched for Depauw University in Greencastle, Indiana before beginning his professional career with Charleston in his home state in 1908. After pitching for various teams in Illinois through the 1912 season, he played in the Northern League from 1913 to 1915. According census records, after leaving baseball he settled in his home state of Illinois where he worked for the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad. His obituary stated he married Beatrice (Bee) Koch in St. Paul in 1914 (the couple later had two children) which is consistent with where he was playing ball at the time. His obituary also noted that he had been a professional baseball player, which also helped to confirm the identity of Elton/Dusty Rhoads.

Back to Henry/Pecky Rhoades. He stayed in the Northern League with Superior in 1914 and then signed with the Flint, Michigan Vehicles of the Southern Michigan League in April 1915. He pitched for that team until he was sold to Milwaukee of the American Association in June. After the season Milwaukee traded him to Philadelphia of the National League and he went to spring training with the Phillies in 1916. However, citing the need for more seasoning, the Phillies turned him over to the Richmond (Virginia) Climbers of the International League. He spent most of the season with that club until being turned back to Philadelph-

ia in August.

A player named “Rhodes” appears on the roster of the Indianapolis Indians of the American Association in 1916. This was Henry/Pecky Rhoades. The minor league structure and affiliations with major league teams present today did not exist then, but major league teams worked out informal working agreement with minor league teams. In 1916 Philadelphia had such an agreement with Indianapolis. Apparently still the property of the Phillies, arrangements were made for him to stop off in Indianapolis to pitch in an exhibition game against the St. Louis Browns that September.

He was expected back with the Indians in 1917 but when United States entered World War I Rhoads joined the military. Box scores show him umpiring games in the northern Minnesota towns of Chisholm and Virginia in 1918 and 1919 and for games in the Twin Ports Mesaba League, meaning he may have served with the Duluth shipyards during the war. At the time of the 1920 U. S. Census he was living in Hibbing, Minnesota and employed as a policeman.

Pecky Rhoades’ career in baseball, according to Baseball-Reference, appears to have ended after pitching for Indianapolis in 1916 but in July of 1920 a pitcher by the name of H. H. Rhodes resurfaces with the Aberdeen Boosters of the Class D South Dakota League. Could this have been Henry, aka Pecky, Rhoades, and if not, who was H. H. Rhodes? Aberdeen newspapers called him “Dusty” in their game reports but offered no other clue as to his real first name. However, an end of season summary noted that Rhodes would “...go to Minneapolis to begin where he left off as an auto mechanic.” Although the evidence is circumstantial, the fact that he was a pitcher, had the same initials, (no other player in the database with a similar last name has a first and middle name beginning with an “H”) as Henry Rhoades, and that he, like Pecky, hailed from Minneapolis, suggest that H. H. Rhodes was Henry, i. e. Pecky Rhoades. Therefore we can make a reasonable assumption that all three of the following players were the same man.

Harry (Henry H.) Rhoades, Pitcher, 1912-16, (0fcd9b93)

Rhodes, 1916 Indianapolis/AA (8e6f15a6)

H.H. Rhodes, pitcher, 1920 Aberdeen/South Dakota, (1b8e9cd5)

Off-Rhode Exploring

Several other players with similar names needed to be explored to see if they had any connection to Dusty (Elton) Rhoads or Pecky (Henry) Rhoades. Two men, Bob Rhoads and Charlie Rhodes, both pitched in the major

leagues during the first decade of the 20th century. Bob pitched in the National League for the Chicago Orphans in 1902 and the St. Louis Cardinals in 1903, and then the Cleveland Naps in the American League from 1904-1909. Charlie pitched for the Cardinals and Cincinnati Reds between 1906 and 1909. Because it was common at the time for players to kick around the minors after their major league careers ended, it was necessary to determine if either may have been Pecky, Dusty, or another unidentified Rhoades, Rhoads, or Rhodes.

Other than his eight-year major league career Bob Rhoads is not known to have played in Organized Baseball other than in 1901 with Memphis of the Southern Association. After his major league career ended Charlie Rhodes, a native of Kansas, pitched for Omaha from 1910 to 1912 and then in the Texas League in 1913 and 1914. An item from the *Caney (Kansas) Chronicle* in 1917 noted that a man named Rhodes was pitching for the local team and added, “...who was once with the St. Louis Nationals.” As Charlie was a native of Caney, this was no doubt him. However, neither major leaguer appears to have any connection to other unidentified players.

In July 1906 a man identified only as Rhoades, and nicknamed “Dusty”, was sent train transportation in La Salle, Illinois to come and play shortstop for the Green Bay club of the Wisconsin State League. One report stated he had played for amateur teams in Ottawa and Marseilles, small towns in La Salle County. His former team was apparently not disappointed at losing him, one report stating, “There are many things about baseball in Dusty’s vocabulary, but he is not the cleanest player on earth”, and “...was too often not in condition to play.” He lasted a little over a month in Green Bay, batting .159, and that club apparently was also pleased to part ways with Dusty. When he and two teammates were released in August it was said, “The feature about the releases which is most gratifying to the club officials and will please the fans, is that the ‘dissenting element’ has gone from the team.”

Despite, or maybe because of, his troubles in the Midwest, Dusty went east to play in 1907. In May of that year *The Times* of Streator, Illinois (the La Salle county seat) reported, “Dusty Rhodes, who played third for Ottawa several seasons, is with McKeesport, in the Pennsylvania State League this year.” Later that summer, the same newspaper provided an update saying, “We all remember Dusty Rhoades. He is now playing... in the Pennsylvania League”

Another separate “Rhoades” is shown on the roster of the Lynchburg Shoemakers of the Class C Virginia League in 1907. Baseball-Reference has a John Rhoades with McKeesport and a brief item that summer noted, “Third

Baseman John Roades of McKeesport, late of the P.O.M. League, has joined the Lynchburg team, and will be given a trial by manager Grim." This confirms that the Green Bay player, and the players in McKeesport and Lynchburg player were all the same man, John Rhoades, and can be linked together.

Rhoades, 1906, Green Bay/Wisconsin State, (6e3160b2)

John Rhoades, 1907 McKeesport, PA/Pennsylvania-Ohio-Maryland, (ce49b95f)

Rhoades, 1907 Lynchburg, VA/Virginia (3af69bba)

"Rhode" played for the Nebraska City Foresters of the Class D MINK (Missouri-Iowa-Nebraska-Kansas) League in 1912. He appeared as a pitcher in line scores in league newspapers as Rhode, but also as Rhodes, Rhoades, and Roads, but no first name was given. However, on June 21 the *Brown County World* of Hiawatha, Kansas reported that Rhode had been with Sioux City, Iowa earlier in the year. In April that city's newspaper noted that pitcher Vinton Rhode had been farmed out (by Sioux City) to Nebraska City. This man was neither Pecky or Dusty, but his identity was confirmed and linked to Vinton Rhode who was with Regina, Saskatchewan of the Western Canada League two years later, apparently his only other appearance in Organized Baseball.

Rhode, 1912, Nebraska City, NE/MINK, (c4f789ab)

Vinton Rhode, Pitcher, 1914 Regina, SK/Western Canada, (4ed28fed)

A man named Rhode pitched briefly for the Columbus,

Ohio club of the Interstate League in 1913. One of the local newspapers provided a first name stating, "...players signed to try out for places on the teams are...Bert Rhode of Nebraska." The reference to Nebraska provided another clue, but the Rhode who played in Nebraska City the previous season was already identified as Vinton, so apparently these were different men. There is no entry for a Bert or Albert Rhoades, Rhoads, Rhodes, or Rhode in Baseball-Reference, and no evidence could be found that he was connected in any way to the other players, but at least a first name is now known.

Rhode, 1913 Columbus, OH/Interstate (6a35465c) ID as Bert/Albert Rhode

Two other "Rhoades" taken proved to be dead ends, at least so far. One is listed as playing with Elizabeth City, North Carolina, in 1911 but no information could be found about his identity. Another pitched with Kearney in the Nebraska State League in 1914. When he arrived to join the team in July he was, of course, called "Dusty" and said to have come from Mason City, Iowa. He only lasted about two weeks after posting a 0-2 record, and nothing more could be found about who this Rhoades was. As for these two fellows, and countless other mystery men, the search continues.

Rhoades, 1911, Elizabeth City, NC/Tidewater (bd3eb659)

Rhoades, Pitcher, 1914, Kearney, NE/Nebraska State (ac3cd031)

BASEBALL TONIGHT
EVANGELINE LEAGUE
ALEXANDRIA ACES
VS.
BATON ROUGE
RED STICKS
Week Day Games 8 p. m.
Sunday Games 3 p. m.



The (Alexandria) Town Talk, May 7, 1946

Expos and the minors

By Joe Marren

Why did baseball mostly play a minor role in a major North American metro? There are several answers:

First, ownership. The owners fumbled away any good will, stumbled with player deals due to charges of collusion, contraction and “fire sales” of the rosters, and bumbled through stadium issues.

Second: San Juan. Toward the end, when MLB owned the team, San Juan got a try-out as a potential new home. It didn't go well.

Ownership

Starting at the top, the owners didn't help things and it didn't matter whether the owner was Charles Bronfman (1968-91), Claude Brochu (1991-99), Jeffrey Loria (1999-2002), or even MLB itself (2002-04).

Bronfman, a Montreal native and McGill University graduate, had many interests outside of baseball. That didn't necessarily distract him from the on-field product, but all those fingers in all those pies at times made for a sticky financial mess. Besides the Expos he also helped run the family business of Seagram's distillery and its other ventures with his brother, Edgar, and later Edgar's son, Edgar Jr.. Seagram's eventually expanded into areas such as broadcasting and theme parks before it all went sour in the early 1980s. Because Seagram's business ventures were failing its interests had to be sold off.

Brochu was born in Quebec City and had been the team's president since 1986. But he was also the guy who held a fire sale of players when the fiscal floor dropped out from under the team.

Loria was the absentee owner who spent most of his time in New York City. He had a certain amount of *savoir faire* when it came to art, but made errors as an owner.

And MLB itself? It fiddled with the team while the franchise fizzled out.

Some problems were specific to one particular owner, some were more universal. The front office makes the deals, but it's the owner and the biz peeps who dole out the dough and say how much money can or can't be spent. So trades, releases and signings can be traced in a direct line to the bottom line. All statistics come from <http://www.baseball-reference.com>:

- In 1984 perhaps the biggest surprise and biggest disappointment was the trade of popular catcher Gary Carter to the New York Mets on Dec. 10. Bronfman

had told the *Ottawa Citizen* newspaper that Carter's 1981 contract (seven years for a total of \$12.6 million) was a mistake that he couldn't afford. So Carter was traded for shortstop Hubie Brooks (\$550,000), who played 156 games for the Expos in 1985 and batted .269; catcher Mike Fitzgerald (108 games in '85, .282), who was paid \$147,000 in 1986; outfielder Herm Winningham (125 games, .237), who was paid \$87,500 in '86; and right-handed pitcher Floyd Youmans (4-3 in '85 with a 2.45 ERA), who earned \$70,000 in '86. By contrast Carter played in 149 games in '85 and had a .281 batting average. In the course of his Hall of Fame career (inducted in 2003) he won a World Series with the Mets in 1986 as the team beat the Boston Red Sox 4 games to 3.

- On May 25, 1989, Montreal traded top pitching prospect Randy Johnson (\$70,000), a southpaw, to Seattle for another lefty, Mark Langston (12-9 with a 2.39 ERA in '89). The Expos ended the season 81-81 (fourth place) and Langston signed with the California Angels on Dec. 1, 1989.

- And after the 1990 season the Expos traded away another future Hall-of-Famer (inducted in 2017) when they dealt Tim Lincecum (\$2 million) to the Chicago White Sox. Lincecum had 2,605 hits, 170 home runs and batted .294 in his career.

The Expos sent Lincecum and right-handed pitcher Jeff Carter to the Chisox (Carter was pitching for the Jacksonville Expos of the Double-A Southern League). In return, they got outfielder Ivan Calderon (\$2.2 million), who batted .300 in 1991; and right-handed pitcher Barry Jones (\$875,000), who was 4-9 with a 3.35 ERA in 1991.

Brochu would write in 2003 that the team had the second-lowest payroll in 1994 (Pittsburgh had the lowest at \$13.5 million) and, if he had kept the roster as it was in '95, the team would have lost \$25 million, which is why he said the economics of a salary cap ensured existence.

Add it all up and it means trouble, trouble with a capital “T,” which rhymes with “P,” and that stands for players gone. Brochu and the minority owners were facing a bleak bottom line, so General Manager Kevin Maloney bid *adieu* to four star players between April 5-8, 1995:

- Walker, a Canadian born in British Columbia, was allowed to leave to play for the Colorado Rockies (1995-2004) and he finished with the St. Louis Cardinals (2004-05). Walker made \$4 million with the Expos in 1994; he made \$5 million with the Rockies the next season.

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- Right-handed pitcher Hill was traded to the St. Louis Cardinals. The Expos paid Hill \$2.6 million in 1994; the Cardinals paid him \$4.5 million in 1995.

- Another righty pitcher, John Wetteland, was traded to the New York Yankees. Wetteland took home \$2.2 million with the Expos in 1994; the Yankees paid him \$3.3 million in '95.

- Grissom (broke in with the Expos in 1989) was traded to the Atlanta Braves. Montreal paid him \$3.5 million in 1994; the Braves paid him \$4.9 million in '95.

Subsequent player moves included:

- Alou and right-handed pitcher Mel Rojas were gone by the end of the '96 season, each granted free agency on Dec 7, 1996. Alou was paid \$3 million in Montreal in 1996; the Florida Marlins paid him \$4.5 million in 1997.

- Then-GM Jim Beattie traded right-handed pitcher and Cy Young Award winner Pedro Martinez (inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2015) to the Boston Red Sox on Nov. 18, 1997, for right-handed pitcher Carl Pavano and a player to be named later (Tony Armas Jr.). The Expos paid Martinez \$3.6 million in 1997; the Bosox paid him \$7.5 million in '98.

After that the team usually finished fourth or fifth (i.e., last place) in the divisional standings from 1998 to 2004 except for 2002 when it went 83-79 for a second-place finish, yet 19 games behind the Atlanta Braves.

Another ownership change didn't help. Brochu sold his 24 percent share to American art dealer Jeffrey Loria on Dec. 9, 1999, for \$12 million, making the New York City resident the new managing general partner. Loria convinced additional partners from Montreal to come in with him as minority investors, including Charles Bronfman's son, Stephen, as well as Mark Routtenberg of Guess Jeans and Jean Coutu, who owned a chain of drugstores (Eventually Loria's share of the franchise would grow to 94 percent as the costs of running the team went higher and the other owners decided not to contribute.)

Loria's initial player moves were at first appreciated by the fans. On Dec. 22, 1999, he OK'd a trade with the New York Yankees for right-handed pitcher Hideki Irabu and signed him to a \$4.1 million contract. Irabu was coming off an 11-7 season with the Yankees, but in two seasons with the Expos he would only be 2-7. (His MLB career would end in 2002 with the Texas Rangers after posting a 3-8 season.)

In return for Irabu the Expos sent right-handed pitcher Jake Westbrook to the Yankees and two players to be named later. Westbrook was with Montreal's Class AA Harrisburg Senators in the Eastern League in '99. He would have a 13-year MLB career (2000-2013) with the Yankees, Cleveland Indians and St. Louis Cardinals, finishing 105-103 and a 4.32 ERA.

Things got worse as time went on. Although Loria was paying more in player salaries, the rebuild wasn't going fast enough (in 2000 the Expos won 67 games, in '01 the team won 68 games). An impatient Loria relied on signing pitchers such as Irabu and lefty Graeme Lloyd (for \$3 million). Lloyd signed with the Expos on Dec. 20, 1999. He had arthroscopic surgery and sat out the 2000 season, but he came back in '01 and had a 9-5 record (4.35 ERA). But then Lloyd was part of a multi-player trade to the Florida Marlins on July 11, 2002.

A three-team trade on March 16, 2000, also didn't work the way it was supposed to. The Texas Rangers sent first baseman Lee Stevens to the Expos, who in turn sent first baseman Brad Fulmer (.279 career batting average) to the Toronto Blue Jays. And the Blue Jays sent David Segui and cash to the Rangers. Stevens signed for \$3.5 million, but only batted .265 for the Expos that year. On June 27, 2002, he and left-handed pitcher Cliff Lee (career stats are 143-91 with a 3.52 ERA), second baseman Brandon Phillips (.275 career), and centerfielder Grady Sizemore (.265 career) were traded to the Cleveland Indians for two right-handed pitchers: Bartolo Colon and Tim Drew. Colon only played the one season ('02) in Montreal, going 10-4 with a 3.31 ERA (247-188 lifetime with a 4.12 ERA). Drew was 1-0 with a 2.81 ERA in '02 and 0-2 with a 12.46 ERA in 2003. Colon was traded to the Chicago White Sox on Jan. 15, 2003.

Montreal also reacquired first baseman and left fielder Cliff Floyd in a trade with the Florida Marlins on July 11, 2002. Floyd had played with the Expos from 1993-96 and was traded to the Marlins on March 26, 1997. He and second baseman Wilton Guerrero (Vladimir's brother) and right-handed pitcher Claudio Vargas went to the Expos in 2002. Floyd would play 15 games for the Expos batting .208 with seven runs, 11 hits and three home runs.

All the stars and better players were leaving in 2003. On Oct. 27, Vladimir Guerrero was granted free agency. On Dec. 16 the Expos traded right-handed pitcher Javier Vazquez to the New York Yankees. Vazquez had been with Montreal since 1998 and had posted a 64-68 record with a 4.16 ERA. He also had a \$6 million contract. In return the Yankees sent left-handed pitcher Randy Choate (whom the Expos would trade to the Arizona Diamondbacks on March 27, 2004), first baseman Nick

Johnson (who got paid \$1.2 million in '04 and appeared in 73 games with a .251 batting average), and outfielder/first baseman Juan Rivera (\$312,000 contract, 134 games and batted .307).

Puerto Rico

The schedule announced in November 2002 had the Expos playing against the New York Mets (April 11-14), the Atlanta Braves (April 15-17) and Cincinnati Reds (April 19-20; a doubleheader was played on April 19). After that initial "home" stand, games were to include the World Series champion Anaheim Angels (June 3-5) and the Texas Rangers (June 6-8). The San Juan schedule would conclude against the Florida Marlins (Sept. 5-7) and Chicago Cubs (Sept. 9-11). Here's a bit of reality about that: In 2003 the Expos played more than 100 road games and traveled 40,951 miles.

In April the Expos played 10 games in San Juan, winning six of them. Those were the good times for the team because it was in first place in its division until May 1. A total of 131,021 fans attended the games, for an average of 13,102. The most fans in Hiram Bithorn Stadium that season were on Saturday night, April 12, when 18,264 folks saw the 'Spos beat the Mets, 5-4.

During the June home games the Expos played six games in Puerto Rico, winning four of them before 85,142 fans, or an average of 14,190. There were three games with announced attendance at or above 18,000, all wins against the Texas Rangers on the weekend of June 6-8. On Friday night (June 6) there were 18,005 fans in attendance; on Saturday night (June 7) there were 18,000 fans; and on Sunday afternoon (June 8), 18,001 fans.

And in September the Expos also played six games in Bithorn, winning three. Attendance was 84,919, or an average of 14,153. The game with the most fans was on a Wednesday night, Sept. 10, an 8-4 win against the Chicago Cubs, when 18,002 people went to the stadium.

In total, there were 22 games in San Juan in 2003, with the Expos going 13-9 before 301,082 fans (an average of 13,685 per game). The Expos total attendance that season was 1,025,639, which means the Expos average attendance in Montreal was 12,280.

Things didn't get any better in 2004. The powers that be scheduled 21 games in Bithorn Stadium before the July 13 All-Star break: April 9-11 against the New York Mets, April 13-15 against the Florida Marlins, May 18-20 versus the Milwaukee Brewers, May 21-22 versus the San Francisco Giants, July 2-4 against the Toronto Blue Jays, July 5-7 versus the Atlanta Braves, and July 8-11 against the Pittsburgh Pirates. Most of the games would be on week-

nights, with five day games: on Sunday, April 11 (Mets); Thursday, April 15 (Marlins); Thursday, May 20 (Brewers); Sunday, July 4 (Blue Jays); and Sunday, July 11 (Pirates).

The Expos would go 7-14 in Puerto Rico, drawing 217,005 fans (an average of 10,333). Montreal won one (1-0 against the Mets on April 10) and lost five in April. Attendance was 73,613 (average 12,268). In May the team went 1-4, the lone win coming against the Brewers (3-2) on May 18. Attendance slipped in May to 56,646 (average 11,329). And the Expos split the July stand, going 5-5 with attendance at 86,746 (average 8,674).

In April, five of the six games drew double figures. The lone exception was the final game there that month, a 3-0 loss to the Marlins on April 15 that 8,494 fans went to see. Attendance dropped off in May when the Expos started to lose more than win. However, the largest crowd of that season in San Juan (16,836) was on hand Saturday night, May 22, when the Giants beat the Expos 7-2. At the time, San Francisco (19-24) was in third place in the NL West, 5 games behind the Los Angeles Dodgers. Montreal (14-29) was in fifth (last) place in the NL East, 10½ games behind the Marlins.

By contrast, the lowest-attended game (7,436) was an 11-0 loss to the Pittsburgh Pirates on a Friday night, July 9. The Pirates (39-45) were stuck in last place in the NL Central, 13½ games behind the St. Louis Cardinals. Montreal (29-56) was also in last place in its division, 17 games in back of the St. Louis Cardinals.

So if it was an audition for San Juan, it didn't go so well, especially since promoter Antonio Munoz guaranteed MLB \$10 million. In light of that, Selig announced on Sept. 29, just a few hours before their final home game in Montreal (a 9-1 loss to the Marlins before 31,395 of the faithful), that the Expos would move to Washington, D.C., for the 2005 season and temporarily play in RFK Stadium until a new ballpark was built. The only serious opposition came from Baltimore Orioles owner Peter Angelos, who didn't want competition just 35 miles from Camden Yards. His was the sole no vote (28-1) on Dec. 3 to formally approve the move of the franchise to Washington, D.C. (The franchise shift was the first in the National League since the Braves left Milwaukee for Atlanta in 1965.)

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Irv Hach: The Forgotten “PTBNL” for Honus Wagner

By Chris Betch

In the July 24, 1897, edition of *The Sporting News*, page 5 included a small blurb that stated, “The Pittsburgh club [expected] to land Hannes Wagner, of the Paterson team, before many days, having offered a big sum for his release, but Louisville got him”. The Louisville National League team had looked at Honus Wagner on the recommendation of Ed Barrow, the owner of the Paterson, NJ, minor league club in the Atlantic league, and the Colonels indeed slipped right in front of Pittsburgh and made a deal for the prospect. Most resources today show that Wagner was released to Louisville with Paterson receiving as much as \$2,500 in compensation in the deal. Pittsburgh later got their man, when Wagner was part of an infamous trade to the Pirates, and he of course went on to become one of the greatest players of all time. Irv Hach left Louisville and isn’t even mentioned as a historical footnote for being part of one of the more lopsided deals of the time.

Irvin William Hach was born June 5, 1873, in Louisville, KY, the son of German immigrants that had settled in the city. Hach started off playing ball in the back lots of Louisville and had come to be known to his friends and teammates as “Major”, the reason has seemingly been lost to history. Hach would never have been considered for a spot on a major league roster had it not been on account of necessity. The Colonels hobbled into the month of July 1897, many of their starters ailing after a road trip that spanned the entire month of June. The team returned home and was scheduled to play Cincinnati in a home series starting on July 1, but several regulars would have to sit out with injuries. Regular third baseman Billy Clingman was thought to be ready to come back after nursing a broken hand at home in Cincinnati but notified the team that he would not make it back to Louisville in time for that day’s game. Manager Fred Clarke was forced to scour the local ball fields to find a fill in for the lineup. Irv Hach didn’t garner much attention on the local scenes by any means but had played well for a few years for a top local amateur team, the Louisville Gays, and had been recommended to Clarke. More importantly Hach was an infielder and was available, and he was recruited to join the Colonels for the day. He reached first base once on an error and played “aggressive snappy ball” at third base against the Reds, and following the game he was offered a contract to become a full-fledged member of the team.

From the outset following his first appearance, Hach’s last name was misspelled in game accounts as Hock. “Hock will do” was the opinion of the local crowd, as reported by the Louisville paper, the *Courier-Journal*. He was moved to second base and handled the position capably, and initially he held his own with the bat. Louisville fans were impressed at first with the local amateur that had stepped off the street and into the majors overnight, but after two weeks the honeymoon ended. Hach had 11 hits in 51 at bats, and his defense wasn’t enough to make up for his .216 batting average. On July 16, Louisville’s season record sat at 26-39, tying them with Washington for tenth place in the twelve-team league. According to the *Courier-Journal*, Clarke was disgusted with the club’s performance, and offered that a “general shake up of the team would take place in a few days”. True to his words, that same day it was reported that Hans Wagner had signed with the Colonels.

Wagner made his major-league debut on July 19, playing center field. He reached base by a single and by base on balls, stole two bases, and had a sacrifice. Major Hach was absent from the Louisville lineup that day; he was on his way to New Jersey. The July 22nd edition of the *Courier-Journal* had a transaction statement included in the sports section that announced that Major Hach had been farmed out to Paterson, “in part payment for Wagner”. For all intents and purposes Hach had been traded to Paterson to even out the cash deal for Wagner. The Major was in the Paterson lineup that week (still being listed as Hock), but he didn’t fare well in his time there. After only eight games Hach was released, indicating that he may not have been much more than a throw-in as part of the trade. Adding insult to injury, he just narrowly missed a chance of playing in a game with famed boxer Jim Corbett, who was signing himself up to play for teams in the Atlantic League as a fun diversion around that time.

His whirlwind ride from Kentucky amateur player to major leaguer to New Jersey minor leaguer started and ended completely within the month of July. He did not seem to play anywhere else in the professional ranks for the rest of the season. Baseball-Reference.com indicates that Hach also played with Atlanta of the Southeastern League in 1897, but that was likely an E. Hock that played short-stop for the team before the league folded in May. Irv Hach did reemerge the next season with Oswego in the New York State League, and then spent the 1899 season in Ottumwa, IA, in the Western Association. After that “the Major” returned to the amateur leagues around Kentucky.

Nearly thirty-seven years later, in April 1934, Honus Wagner visited Louisville as a coach with the Pittsburgh Pirates when they came to town to face the Colonels in an

exhibition game. While there he was introduced to Irv Hach, the man for whom he had been traded. The meeting was covered in the *Courier-Journal*, where Hach's name was still misspelled as Hock. Wagner spent the rest of his days in baseball, but Hach had left the game long before their meeting and was working as a landscaper in Louisville. Two years later, on August 13, 1936, Hach caught a ride home on a street sweeper truck, when he lost his balance and fell off the truck. He hit his head on the pavement, fracturing his skull, and died from the injuries a short time later. His obituary in the *Courier-Journal* the next day read "'Major' Hach, Traded for Wagner, Dies". Almost as if a tribute to the Major, Hach's name was finally spelled correctly.

Ryan's Iron Man Feat Punctuated with a No-Hitter

By Brian M. Frank

Throwing complete games in both games of a doubleheader is something that would never happen in today's game with the emphasis on pitch counts and limiting pitcher's innings. However, probably to the surprise of many modern-day fans, what was once known as an Iron Man used to actually occur. Pud Galvin, the Hall of Fame pitcher from Buffalo's National League days, accomplished the Iron Man while pitching for the Bisons during the 1880s. The Iron Man even occurred during the twentieth century. For example, between 1900 and 1927 a pitcher threw complete games in both games of a major-league doubleheader on no fewer than 38 occasions. In fact, as recently as 1950, Brooklyn Dodgers legend Don Newcombe started both games of a doubleheader against the New York Giants – however, he was pulled for a pinch-hitter in the eighth inning of the second game, so he didn't record a complete game in both games.

On August 8, 1919, Bisons pitcher Rosy Ryan, a 21-year-old Holy Cross grad, joined the Iron Man club. Although the second game of Ryan's Iron Man doubleheader was a scheduled seven-inning game, his feat was even more amazing than most, because Ryan fired a no-hitter in the nightcap.

Ryan's incredible performance took place when the Bisons played the Reading Marines (also referred to as the Minors and Coal Barons) in a doubleheader in Reading, Pennsylvania. Buffalo was having a good season, sitting in third place in the International League with a 58-46 record. Reading, on the other hand, was in the midst of a horrendous summer. The Marines sat dead last in the

league standings with a dismal 32-67 record. The day before Ryan took the mound, the Bisons added to Reading's woes by sweeping them in a doubleheader.

Ryan's historic day didn't look all that amazing at the outset. He walked Joseph Burns with two outs in the first inning of the first game – but he was erased when catcher Benny Bengough gunned him out trying to steal second. In the second inning, Ryan again walked a batter – this time it was John Hummel with one out. Hummel stole second and scored on Frank Brower's double to give Reading a 1-0 lead. The Marines increased their lead in the third inning when Jesse Altenberg drove a Ryan pitch into the right-field stands for a solo home run.

Reading starter Frank Brower got off to a better start than Ryan and "looked like a million dollars" through the first four innings. He didn't allow a hit until future Baseball Hall of Famer Bucky Harris singled with two outs in the fourth. However, the Herd broke through in the fifth. Chick Keating led off the inning with a double, advanced to third on a groundout, and scored on a wild pitch. Later in the inning, Donald Donelson tied the game with an RBI single.

Player-manager George "Hooks" Wiltse put the Herd in the lead with an RBI single in the sixth inning, before the Bisons used a "heavy barrage of hits" to take control of the game in the eighth. Catcher Benny Bengough started the rally by walking with one out. Chick Keating struck out swinging, but Reading catcher Mike Konnick couldn't hold on to strike three and Keating reached first safely. Wiltse then stroked his second RBI single of the game. Run-scoring singles by Bill McCarren, Donelson, and Ed Barney helped increase Buffalo's lead. Lee Strait capped Buffalo's big inning with an RBI double that brought home the sixth run of the frame and gave the Bisons a commanding 9-2 lead.

Ryan gave up a run in the eighth inning on a groundout to second. He allowed another run in the ninth on Sam Fishburn's two-out RBI double, before he was able to get Cook to fly out to centerfield to end the game. Ryan ended up giving up four runs on seven hits and three walks, while striking out three, in his nine-inning outing.

According to the *Buffalo Express*, Bisons player-manager Hooks Wiltse told Ryan before the first game that if he won, he'd send him back out for the second. It's likely Wiltse was a bit short on pitching since the two teams were playing four games in two days. After Ryan won the first game, "Wiltse proved as good as his word and returned him to the hill."

In the nightcap, Ryan faced off against Reading hurler Dave Keefe, who "was unable to hold the enemy from the

very start of hostilities.” Donelson drew a walk to leadoff the game for the Herd. After Barney flied out, Harris reached on an error by the second baseman. Strait then drilled the ball into the right-field stands for a three-run home run to give Buffalo the early lead.

After losing the first three games of the series, the Reading faithful were not pleased with the team’s slow start in the game and began yelling at manager Pop Kelchner to take Keefe out. He didn’t heed their warnings. However, even if Kelchner had taken the fans’ advice, it was already too late with the performance Ryan was about to put on.

Ryan walked Jesse Altenburg to start game for Reading, but then induced three groundouts to end the inning. Altenburg reached base again in the third on a “hot one” grounded to third baseman Bill McCarren, “who failed to recover the ball fast enough to catch the runner after it had bounded off his glove.” That would be it for Reading, as Ryan set down 13 batters in a row to end the game. His astonishing performance was not lost on the Reading crowd. The *Reading Times* reported “the youngster received a good hand from the local fans throughout the game.”

Buffalo tacked on three more runs in the fourth inning, highlighted by Barney’s RBI double and Harris’s two-run home run. Donelson added a solo home run to right in the sixth to put the Herd in front 7-0.

In the seventh and final inning, Ryan got all three Reading batters to ground out to first base to secure both his Iron Man feat and his seven-inning no-hitter. “Dust off a place in the hall of fame for pitcher W.D. Ryan,” the *Buffalo Express* raved. “He has a double claim to distinction as a result of his performance against the Reading club here today. Not only did he pull the iron man stunt successfully by turning back the Marines in both ends of a doubleheader, but he held them hitless and runless in the second game.” The *Buffalo Evening News* described the second game a bit more colorfully, writing: “Ryan not only held the locals helpless but hitless and runless as well.”

Numerous newspapers commented on the solid defense played behind Ryan in both games, particularly during

the no-hitter. The *Buffalo Courier* noted that Altenburg was the only batter to reach on a walk and an error, but “[w]ith magnificent support back of him, Ryan bowled the other Reading batters over as fast as they stepped to the plate.” The *Reading Times* said, “The Bisons fielded

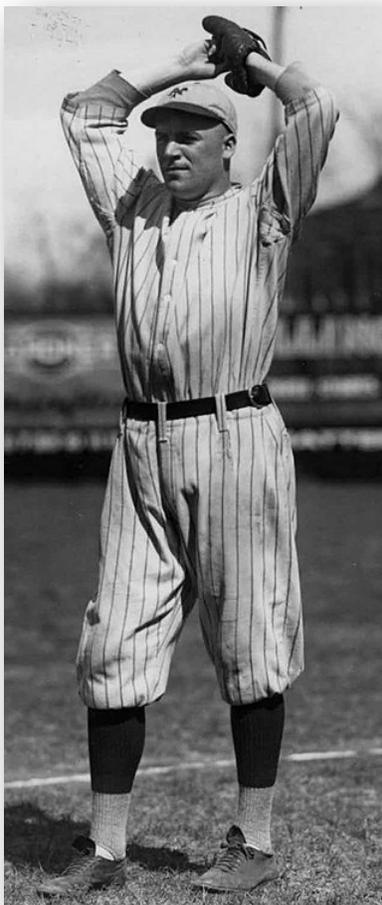
like fiends in the last few innings and cut down a few which looked as if they might have been labeled.” The *Buffalo Express* reported: “The Bisons put up a dazzling display in the field in both games and Ryan owes much to the championship style displayed by his teammates particularly the combination around second, Keating and Harris.”

Buffalo newspapers took to calling their team’s star pitcher “Iron Man” Ryan for the rest of the summer. The 21-year-old hurler joined the New York Giants in September, before Buffalo’s season had concluded, and pitched in four games for John McGraw’s squad, including three starts. Despite not finishing the season with the Herd, Ryan went 15-8 for Buffalo, which tied him with Rip Jordan (15-10) and Tommy Thomas (15-13) for the team lead in wins.

Ryan went on to enjoy a major-league career that spanned 10 seasons, mostly for the Giants, but also with the Boston Braves, New York Yankees, and Brooklyn Dodgers. He led the National League with a 3.01 ERA and went 17-12 for the 1922 World Series Champion Giants. The next season, he went 16-5 and led the N.L. in games pitched (45), helping lead the Giants to another N.L. Pennant. He pitched in three consecutive World Series for the Giants from 1922 to 1924 and has the distinction of earning the win in two consecutive World Series Game 1s – in 1922 and 1923.

Ryan had a long, distinguished career that all began with his first professional season in Buffalo. He had many highlights in his major-league career, but never again achieved what he did with the Herd on an overcast day in 1919 in Reading, Pennsylvania – accomplishing the Iron Man feat and punctuating it with a no-hitter.

This article originally appeared on The Herd Chronicles, a website dedicated to preserving the history of the Buffalo Bisons and professional baseball in Buffalo.



Can You Believe? Record 54 Independent Players in Majors in 2021

By Bob Wirz

The 2021 season is going down in history with regard to the involvement of players who have played in at least one Independent league during their career and have later earned major league time.

In both 2016 and 2017 an all-time high 45 Indy players appeared with one of the 30 major league teams. The total was obliterated--destroyed or wiped out also would work--in this past season. In records compiled exclusively by IndyBaseballChatter.com, a whopping 54 players made it to the majors.

Some of them will be in the post-season starting next week.

The count jumped somewhat this year because a strange sequence of events during COVID-19-infested 2020 when some one-time-only Independent leagues sprung to life. Otherwise, the depth of talent in Independent circuits today and the current MLB mindset of constantly shuffling of roster spots between the majors and handy Triple-A teams both contributed to the growth.

Regardless of the reasons, for 54 players from non-affiliated leagues to play in the major leagues in one summer shows just how far the Indy circuits have come from their early days in the 1990s when the leagues were often put down or made fun of by those in baseball's top tier

operations.

Thirteen of the 54 made their major league debut this season, with pitchers Tommy Nance of the Chicago Cubs and Kaleb Ort of the Boston Red Sox perhaps the most prized duo since their first professional games were in Independent leagues. Both emerged from the Frontier League. Nance played at Windy City, not far from Wrigley Field, and gave up only two hits and no runs in his first 12 big league appearances covering 11.1 innings. It has not been as easy of late and Nance has a 1-0 record and a 7.07 earned run average heading into the final week. Ort, also starting near Chicago at Joliet, got only a brief look for the contending Red Sox.

Thirty-five onetime Indy players were on major league rosters as of September 28 although 10 of them were on the injured list. This includes veteran first baseman-outfielder Jose Martinez who has been on the New York Mets' IL the entire season, which kept him from increasing the season's active count to 55.

Bob Wirz, onetime chief spokesman for Baseball Commissioners Bowie Kuhn and Peter Ueberroth, has been writing about Independent Baseball since 2003. This post is from his blog, www.IndyBaseballChatter.com. He has published a book (The Passion of Baseball) about his life. It is available at www.Amazon.com or autographed at www.WirzandAssociates.com.

Independent League Players Flourished in the Majors in 2021

By Robert Schulz

Part one

An overview of the Independent Leagues. The current version of Independent League baseball started with the 1993 season and has operated continuously through 2021. The exception being 2020 when the Independent Leagues played a shortened schedule and most Leagues played in one location known as a "bubble". While not an ideal situation, it did provide an opportunity for players to play and continue their development.

Since 1993, Teams and Leagues have come and gone. The reasons being mostly financial in nature. The Frontier League has operated continuously since 1993 with the

exception of 2020; the year of the pandemic. With the contraction of the Minor Leagues and fewer teams in 2021, it has been the Independent Leagues that have picked up the slack. In fact, some Independent leagues are now classified as "Partner Leagues" and have a working agreement with MLB. This arrangement is in sharp contrast to the early days of Independent baseball when MLB did not consider them to be a viable source of baseball talent.

The Independent Leagues have served to be an alternative playing opportunity for undrafted Amateur players and released Minor League players as well as former Major Leaguers.

Hall of Famers Ricky Henderson, Jack Morris and Tim Lincecum have spent time playing in the Independent Leagues.

2021 saw a record 58 players with playing time in the Independent Leagues, make an appearance in the Major Leagues. The old record was 45 players achieved in both

2016 and 2017.

Twenty five Major League teams had at least one former Independent player play for them. Tampa Bay had the most with seven players. Only the Athletics, Astros, Reds, Royals and Yankees were not represented.

Independent Leagues represented:

Atlantic League, American Association, Frontier League, Can-Am League,

United Shore League, Pacific Association, Pecos League, North American League and United League.

There two were “bubble” Leagues represented in 2020, the Constellation Energy League and the City of Champions League.

Part two

The total number of Independent League graduates to the Major Leagues from 1993 to 2021 now stands at 290. 176 of these players were MLB rookies and 114 players returned to the Majors after playing in the Independent Leagues. 52 of the rookies started their professional career in the Independent League baseball. This included Vinny Nittolli and Kaleb Ort debuting in 2021.

The 2021 season:

14 rookies, 12 former Major Leaguers returning to the Majors and 32 players continuing their MLB career.

Pitchers made up 51 of the 58 players; 4 were outfielders, 2 were catchers and 1 infielder.

Rookies – Fourteen (14) players

Name	Pos.	MLB team	Indy Team	League	Year(s)
Alberto Baldonado	P	Washington	High Point	Atlantic	2021
Anthony Bender	P	Miami	Sioux City	American Association	2019
Akeem Bostick	P	NY Mets	Kansas City	American Association	2019
Jake Cousins	P	Milwaukee	Schaumburg	Frontier	2019
			Chicago	American Association	2020
Mickey Jannis	P	Baltimore	Lake Erie	Frontier	2012-14
			Bridgeport	Atlantic	2013
			Sou. Maryland	Atlantic	2014
			Long Island	Atlantic	2015
Dusten Knight	P	Baltimore	Sou. Maryland	Atlantic	2019
Jake Latz	P	Texas	Sugar Land	Constellation Energy	2020
Tommy Nance	P	Chicago Cubs	Windy City	Frontier	2015
Vinny Nittolli	P	Seattle	St. Paul	American Association	2017-18
Kaleb Ort	P	Boston	Joliet	Frontier	2016-17
Connor Overton	P	Toronto/Pitts.	Sioux City	American Association	2016
			Lancaster	Atlantic	2019
Brandyn Sittinger	P	Arizona	Evansville	Frontier	2019
Dillon Thomas	OF	Seattle	Texas	American Association	2018
Konner Wade	P	Baltimore	Sugar Land	Atlantic	2018-19

Players returning to MLB twelve (12)

Tanner Anderson	P	Pittsburgh	Sioux Falls	American Association	2020
Andrew Bellatti	P	Miami	Sugar Land	Atlantic	2019

Name	Pos.	MLB team	Indy Team	League	Year(s)
Dietrich Enns	P	Tampa Bay	Tully	City of Champions	2020
Drew Hutchison	P	Detroit	Milwaukee	American Association	2020
Scott Kazmir	P	San Francisco	Eastern Reyes	Constellation Energy	2020
Ian Krol	P	Detroit	Nerds	City of Champions	2020
Tyler Ladendorf	OF	Chicago Cubs	High Point	Atlantic	2019
			Chicago	American Association	2020
Andres Machado	P	Washington	Eastern Reyes	Constellation Energy	2020
Jake Petricka	P	L.A. Angels	High Point	Atlantic	2021
Sean Nolin	P	Washington	Long Island	Atlantic	2019
David Robertson	P	Tampa Bay	High Point	Atlantic	2021
Zac Rosscup	P	Colorado	Sugar Land	Constellation Energy	2020

32 Independent League players from previous years continuing their MLB career in 2021

Pitchers (27)

Name	MLB Team	Last Indy Team	League	Year
Fernando Abad	Baltimore	Sugar Land	American Association	2018
Andrew Albers	Minnesota	Lancaster	Atlantic	2016
Nick Anderson	Tampa Bay	Greys	Frontier	2015
John Brebbia	San Francisco	Laredo	American Association	2015
Jose Cisnero	Detroit	New Jersey	Atlantic	2016
Chase DeJong	Pittsburgh	Sugar Land	Constellation Energy	2020
Ross Detwiler	Miami/San Diego	York	Atlantic	2019
Randy Dobnak	Minnesota	Utica	United Shore	2017
Luis A. Garcia	St. Louis	Nashua/Newark	Can-Am	2012
Junior Guerra	L.A. Angels	Wichita	American Association	2013
Rich Hill	Tampa Bay/Mets	Long Island	Atlantic	2015
James Hoyt	L.A. Angels	Wichita	American Association	2012
		Edinberg	North American	2012
DJ Johnson	Cleveland/T-Bay	Traverse City	Frontier	2014
Mike Kickham	L.A. Dodgers	Kansas City	American Association	2016
Brandon Kintzler	Philadelphia	St. Paul	American Association	2009
Chris Martin	Atlanta	Grand Prairie	American Association	2010
Tyler Matzek	Atlanta	Texas	American Association	2019
Chris Mazza	Tampa Bay	San Rafael	Pacific Association	2018
		Sou. Maryland	Atlantic	2018

<u>Name</u>	<u>MLB Team</u>	<u>Last Indy Team</u>	<u>League</u>	<u>Year</u>
James Paxton	Seattle	Grand Prairie	American Association	2010
Trevor Richards	Milwaukee/Tor.	Gateway	Frontier	2016
Tanner Roark	Toronto	Southern Illinois	Frontier	2008
Chaz Roe	Tampa Bay	Laredo	American Association	2012
Max Scherzer	Wash./L.A. Dodgers	Ft. Worth	American Association	2007
Robert Stock	Chi. Cubs/NY Mets	New Jersey	Atlantic	2016
Caleb Thielbar	Minnesota	St. Paul	American Association	2017
Justin Topa	Milwaukee	Rockland	Can-Am	2018
Eric Yardley	Milwaukee	Taos/Trinidad	Pecos	2013

Catchers (2)

<u>Name</u>	<u>MLB Team</u>	<u>Last Indy Team</u>	<u>League</u>	<u>Year</u>
Yermin Mercedes	Chicago White Sox	San Angelo	United	2014
		Douglas/White Sands	Pecos	2014
Rene Rivera	Cleveland/Wash.	Camden	Atlantic	2010

Outfielders (2)

<u>Name</u>	<u>MLB Team</u>	<u>Last Indy Team</u>	<u>League</u>	<u>Year</u>
John Nogowski	St. Louis/Wash.	Sioux City	American Association	2017
David Peralta	Arizona	Amarillo	American Association	2013

Infielder (1)

<u>Name</u>	<u>MLB Team</u>	<u>Last Indy Team</u>	<u>League</u>	<u>Year</u>
Ildemaro Vargas	Chi. Cubs/Pitts./Ariz.	Bridgeport	Atlantic	2015

Honorable mention to Outfielder Jose Martinez. He was with Rockford in the Frontier League in 2014 and played in the Majors from 2016-2020. He was on the Mets Injured list from the start of the 2021 season until sent out on a rehab assignment in August and never did play with Mets.

Not to be outdone, there were no less than 33 MLB Coaches who had spent time in the Independent Leagues. All were players except for Andy Haines. Haines coached and managed in the Frontier League from 2005-2007. He was a Coach for the Cubs in 2018 and Milwaukee 2019-2021.

Predicting the number of Independent League graduates in 2022 may show quite different results.

Bethesda Big Train has a Dominating Season in the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League

By Bill Hickman

The Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League consists of six teams (there will be seven in 2022) in the area surrounding and including Washington, DC. After being shut down in 2020 because of the Covid pandemic, the League returned successfully in 2021 to conduct a full season of play.

The Bethesda Big Train, one of the teams in the League, was named after the great Washington Senators pitcher, Walter "The Big Train" Johnson. The Big Train team won the 2021 League championship with a 27-8 record in regular season play and a 4-0 sweep in the playoffs. This marked the fifth time in a row that the Big Train team captured the championship.

The stars of the 2021 Big Train team included Matt Thomas (William & Mary), who was named the League Offensive Player of the Year, and who batted .350 with 7 home runs and 32 RBI; Rocco Peppi (Long Beach State), who hit .357 with 7 home runs and 25 RBI; Darius Foster (San Francisco), who hit .327 and stole 25 bases, helping him to score 37 runs; Kemp Alderman (Mississippi), who hit .319 and showed himself to be a clutch hitter, driving in 47 runs in 25 games; Grayson Hitt (Alabama), who started five games and posted an ERA of 1.63 in 22 innings pitched; and reliever Ryan Metz (Virginia Tech), who pitched to an ERA of 1.25 in 10 appearances and 14.1 innings pitched.

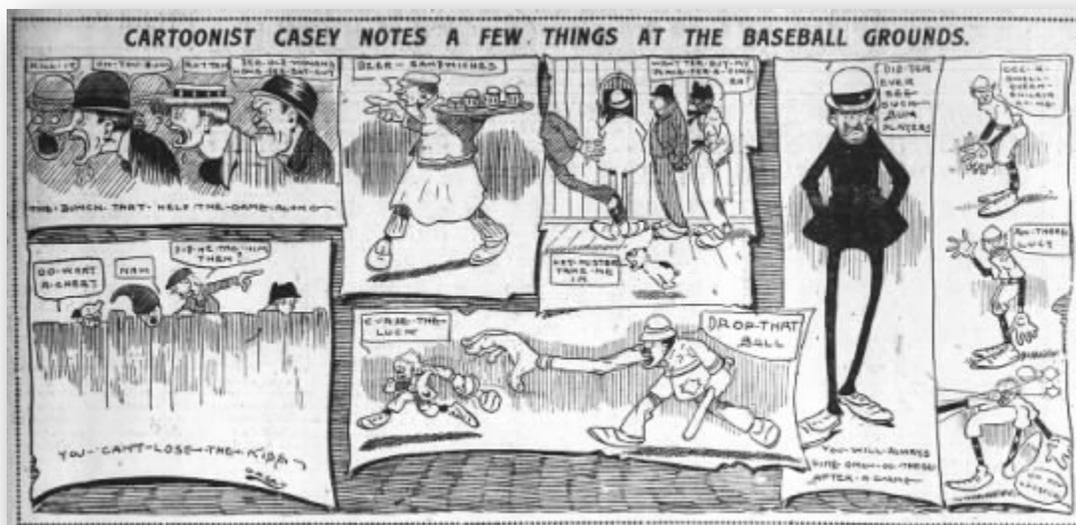
Manager Sal Colangelo, who has been at the helm of Big

Train since 2005, picked up his 500th win as a collegiate summer league manager during the 2021 season. Only a handful of current summer league skippers have been able to achieve that total.

The Big Train experience, along with the coaching the players receive at their individual colleges, has proved to be an excellent training ground for further advancement in baseball. 43 percent of Big Train players have gone into pro baseball (affiliated minor leagues, independent leagues, or foreign baseball) after leaving school. As of this writing, 17 have made it into the major leagues. These include current big leaguers Hunter Renfroe, Brandon Lowe, Ty France, Logan Gilbert, and Joe Mantipty.

A special event for Big Train in 2021 was an exhibition game against the Israeli Olympic Baseball team. On July 18, Team Israel came from behind in the final inning to beat the Bethesda Big Train 8-7 before a standing room only crowd of 835 at Shirley Povich Field in Rockville, Maryland. Team Israel had several former major leaguers on it, including Ian Kinsler, Ty Kelly, Danny Valencia, and Ryan Lavarney. The next night, a Ripken League All-Star team made up of players from the Big Train, the Alexandria Aces, and the Silver Spring-Takoma Park Thunderbolts played Team Israel at Ripken Stadium in Aberdeen, Maryland. This time, the All-Star team defeated Team Israel 9-3. Big Train players drove in six of the nine runs for the winning side.

A constancy for the Big Train home games at Povich Field in 2021 was giving recognition to those who had helped so greatly throughout the Covid pandemic. This was done through a feature called the Frontline Community Heroes program. The Big Train organization provided meals and game tickets to 20 organizations representing such heroes. At each game, the fans were introduced to groups of those heroes who attended the games.



Oakland Tribune Apr 7, 1907