



THE CATCHER'S MITT

SABR DETROIT

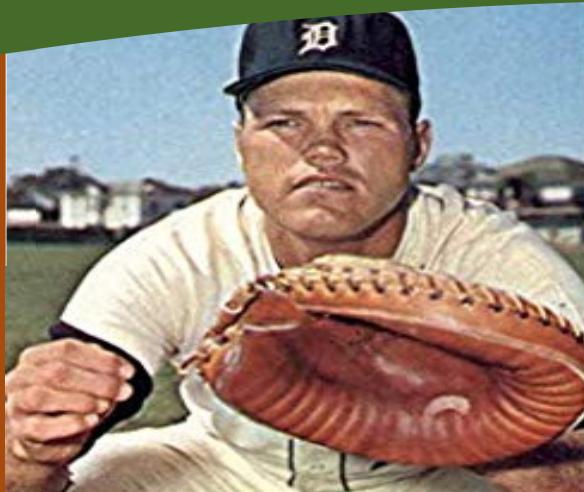
ISSUE 01 DECEMBER 2018

Trivia Time

1968 Tigers Edition

1. Which 1968 Tiger ended his career with the most career home runs?
2. How many night games were played during the 1968 World Series?
3. Which Tigers player was nicknamed Coyote?
4. How many Tiger players stole 10 or more bases in 1968?
5. Who led the 1968 Tigers with 90 RBI?
6. Which 1968 Tiger played in the 1959 World Series with teammates Nellie Fox and Luis Aparicio?
7. What teams finished second in the American and National League standings in 1968?

Continued on page 2.



On the Bases...

- Letter From the Editor **P.1**
October 20 Meeting Recap **P.2**
Freehan's Case for the HOF, D'Adonna **P.3**
Freehan Belongs in the HOF, Hoyos **P.5**
Lucas County/Ned Skeldon Stadium **P.7**
Book Reviews: A Six-Pack for '68 **P.9**
Trivia Answers **P.14**
Myths of 1968 **P.15**
Survey **P.18**
Dedication **P.19**

Letter From the Editor

Welcome to the inaugural edition of The Catcher's Mitt! So what is this, you may ask. Well, The Catcher's Mitt (TCM) is a bi-annual newsletter for baseball fans in the Michigan area. As such, TCM's content will lean heavily on the Detroit Tigers' history and their players.

We will also delve into Detroit's rich history in the Negro Leagues and other baseball related items from the area. Think minor leagues, Michigan native players, and stadiums past and present.

This first edition focuses on the 1968 World Champion Tigers. It has been 50 years since they captivated the area with their come from behind World Series victory over the St. Louis Cardinals. The players from the team have long since retired but the memories of those who saw them play remains strong.

This first edition is fortunate to have contributions from Detroit SABR Chapter Chair Gary Gillette as well as articles from Detroit SABR members Peter Hoyos and Dan D'Adonna. Toledo Mud Hens historian John Husman adds an informative

piece on Ned Skeldon Stadium.

Is longtime Tigers catcher Bill Freehan worthy of the Hall of Fame? The writers never gave him much consideration as he received only two votes when he became eligible in 1982. The various incarnations of the Veteran's Committee haven't supported Freehan either.

Both Hoyos and D'Adonna make their case for Freehan's inclusion. You can judge for yourself.

Looking for further reading on the 1968 Tigers? Hoyos will point you in the right direction with reviews on six books that cover the team.

We will also have regular features such as Trivia and Where are they Now.

Future editions will have different topics and will seek contributions from amateur and professional scribes alike.

I hope you enjoy this inaugal issue as we look to provide interesting and thought provoking reading material for the offseason.

Brandon Robetoy 1

The Catcher's Mitt is a publication of the Detroit Chapter of SABR.

Publisher and Executive Editor, Gary Gillette

Editor, Brandon Robetoy

Trivia Continued...

8. Which Tigers infielder was a 1963 World Series hero? Hint: Detroit traded Phil Regan to acquire him.

9. Which left-handed Tigers pitcher who led the league in ERA (and also WHIP, FIP, ERA+) in 1962, was traded to the Dodgers for a minor leaguer on April 3, 1968, just prior to the regular season?

10. Which future Tigers broadcaster spent most of the 1968 season on the Detroit bench?

11. Which two hurlers tied for the team lead with seven saves?

12: How many regular season games did Mickey Stanley play at shortstop in 1968?

Answers on page 14



Mickey Lolich and Tom Gage's Discussion and Book Signing Highlight the October 20th Detroit SABR Meeting

By Brandon Robetoy

The SABR Detroit chapter's most recent meeting was October 20th at the Detroit Public Library. The meeting opened with some challenging 1968 Tigers themed trivia. Created by Peter Hoyos, select portions of the trivia can be found here in the newsletter. The full list can be found at the SABR Detroit website.

Next we heard from Mickey Lolich and Tom Gage who spoke about their book "Joy in Tigertown: A Determined Team, a Resilient City, and our Magical Run to the 1968 World Series". Lolich shared many anecdotes from his lengthy career in professional baseball, expanding on stories from the book and other memories from his career. Lolich went into depth on the various pitches he threw and their evolution throughout his career. Lolich and Gage then answered questions from those in attendance and signed copies of their book. Check out Hoyos' book review on page nine as well as his dive into five other books on the '68 squad.

Later there was a panel discussion about the '68 season, the team's mid 70's regression, and the enduring legacy of Detroit's 1968 world champions. Steve Weingarden moderated a panel consisting of Joe Lapointe, Dan D'Adonna, and Gary Gillette. Lapointe, a longtime journalist (Detroit Free Press, New York Times), offered a unique perspective as he had been a junior usher at Tiger Stadium during the 1968 season while in high school.

The next SABR Detroit meeting will be February 2nd in Detroit. Keep a lookout on the SABR Detroit website, facebook page or twitter account for specifics.



Both Lolich and Gage photos courtesy of Joel Dinda

Freehan's Case for Cooperstown Inclusion

Eleven All-Star Games, 200 Home Runs, 44.8 WAR Highlight a Fifteen Year Career

By Dan D'Adonna

At the October SABR Detroit Chapter meeting, following a great presentation by Mickey Lolich and Tom Gage on their new book, there was a pretty lively discussion about the rise and fall of the 1968 Tigers.

An interesting conversation that came out of that panel discussion was the importance of Bill Freehan to the team during that era, as well as his Hall of Fame credentials. Freehan's name comes up a lot more in Hall of Fame discussions now that the old Veterans Committee has been replaced by committees specified to eras—which is important.

During the Golden Era (using the term based on the name of the Hall of Fame committee that deals with the time frame when Freehan played), Freehan was one of the most pivotal players and the most distinguished catcher.

Freehan was an 11-time AL All-Star during his 15-year career. Detroit fans have known this fact for a long time and it has been a main point in pushing for Freehan's enshrinement. To be fair, All-Star Game selections do not mean as much to the Hall of Fame voters—nor should they—because of the subjectivity and popularity that goes into picking players for the Midsummer Classic.

But 11 All-Star Games is astonishing. Looking even closer, it is even more amazing.

Freehan played 15 years, but only played four games his first season in 1961 and played 71 games in his final season in 1976. Disregard those two seasons, and the Tigers' catcher made the All-Star team 11 of his 13 full seasons. Furthermore, he only had 345 plate appearances in 1963, so that was a little more than half a season.

Factoring this in, Freehan really made 11 All-Star teams in a 13-and-a-half-year period, making the 11 look even better. Clearly, he was the dominant catcher of his time.

Not counting banned players or Steroids Era players, most people considered the dominant player of their time at their position have made the Hall of Fame. There have been exceptions: Gil Hodges was the dominant first baseman of the 1950s and has come very close to making the Hall of Fame several occasions, but he is still on the outside looking in. Davey Concepcion was considered the dominant shortstop of the 1970s and is not in, remaining on the ballot for the full 15-year term, but not coming anywhere as near as Hodges. Some people now say Bert Campaneris was a better shortstop than Concepcion, especially based on new metrics, but he also is not in the Hall of Fame.

The third and final player widely considered the best of his time at his position is Freehan.

In addition to the All-Star appearances, he won five Gold-

Glove awards and finished second in the 1968 MVP voting behind teammate Denny McLain and was third the year before when the Tigers lost the pennant on the last day of the '67 season.

Freehan had a relatively short career, but not that short for a catcher. He hit 200 home runs and had an OPS+ of 112 in an era extremely light on offense as pitchers dominated the 1960s. So Freehan's 1,591 hits, .262 batting average, 758 RBIs and .752 OPS don't look particularly good, but it looks much better when one considers the era and the position he played.

Thanks to new metrics, Freehan is back in the conversation again. His WAR is 44.8, which is not sensational by any means; for a catcher, however, that places him 15th all-time. He is also ranked as the 14th-best catcher by way of Jay Jaffe and JAWS.

The only catchers ahead of Freehan who are not in the Hall of Fame are the just-retired Joe Mauer; Ted Simmons, who missed by one vote on the 2017 Modern Era ballot; Thurman Munson, who has been a finalist; and Gene Tenace, who is just slightly ranked ahead of Freehan.

One can make an easy Hall of Fame argument for Mauer and Simmons, and a strong one for Munson.

Tenace is a WAR-based candidate

...continued on page 4

Freehan's Case for Cooperstown Inclusion

...continued from page 3

who made one All-Star team (at first base). The Athletics' 1972 World Series MVP made 40 percent of his starts at first base and played a handful of games at other positions aside from catcher, which is why Freehan ranks ahead for most.

It would not water the Hall of Fame down to have Simmons, Munson, and Freehan added. They rank just below the average Hall of Fame members at the position in regards to metrics, but clearly in a group that belongs.

Hall voters have struggled with catchers over the years aside from the immediate, easy choices like Johnny Bench, Ivan Rodriguez, Carlton Fisk and Mike Piazza. Gary Carter ranks second in WAR among catchers and has strong traditional stats, yet it took him six ballots to make it.

Simmons retired as the all-time hits leader for catchers and had the second-most RBIs ever by a catcher. Only Rodriguez has since passed Simmons in hits, yet the Cardinals' star received just 3.7 percent of the vote on his initial ballot: one-and-done.

Freehan's fate was even worse. His only year on the ballot was in 1982, and he received just 0.5 percent of the vote—two measly votes. For reference, Hank Aaron and Frank Robinson were elected on the first ballot that year.

That year's ballot also included (in order of votes) Juan Marichal, Harmon Killebrew, Hoyt Wilhelm, Don Drysdale, Luis Aparicio, Jim Bunning, Red Schoendienst, Nellie Fox, Richie Ashburn, Billy Williams, Orlando Cepeda, and Bill Mazeroski. All would eventually be elected.

Yet Freehan also finished behind non-Hall of Famers Maury Wills, Roger Maris, Tony Oliva (though he has come close), Harvey Kuenn, Lew Burdette, Frank Howard, Don Larsen, Munson, Roy Face, Vada Pinson, Tommy Davis, Dave McNally, Rico Petrocelli and Lindy McDaniel.

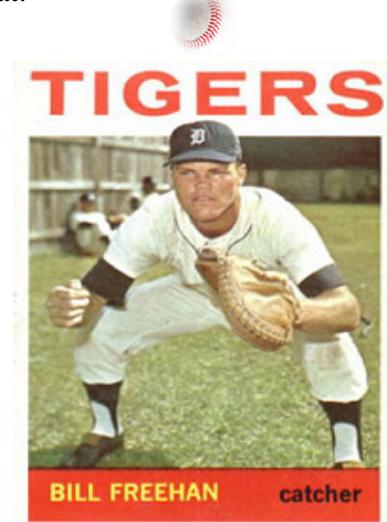
It is clear that the various Cooperstown electorates have never known what to do with catchers. Bench, Rodriguez, Fisk, Piazza, Yogi Berra, Bill Dickey, Mickey Cochrane, Gabby Hartnett, Roy Campanella, and Buck Ewing were easy choices. Carter should have been a little easier. Several catchers were elected early in Hall of Fame history, though a lot of them were enshrined in the last 20 years.

There was a period from 1956–86 where only Berra and Campanella were elected, along with Josh Gibson from the Negro Leagues. Then Ernie Lombardi made it via the Veterans Committee, followed three years later by the writers electing Bench, which brings up another point.

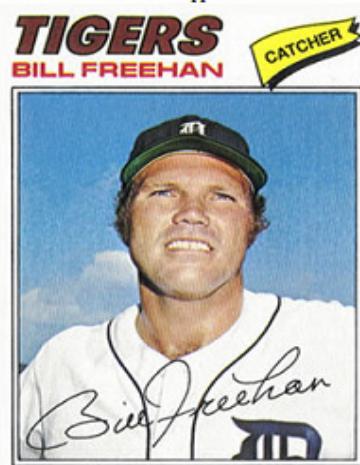
Freehan's candidacy, like that of Simmons, Munson, etc., suffers from Bench envy.

Bench was so good that everyone else looked inferior. It is true that Bench was much better than the rest, but that does not make the others less qualified for the Hall of Fame. There are 18 catchers in the Hall of Fame and Freehan's inclusion would not dilute anything. He is solidly in a group that belongs.

With 11 All-Star teams in 13 years, five Gold Gloves, 200 home runs in an era lacking offense, and with modern metrics to back up his place as the top catcher of his time, Freehan's case continues to look better: it is just up to the voters to see that.



Freehan's first solo Topps card and his last



Freehan Belongs in Cooperstown

The Tigers Have Been Historically Underrepresented at the Hall of Fame

By Peter Hoyos

The purpose of the National Baseball Hall of Fame is to promote the legends and lore of Major League Baseball. Baseball honors its greatest players with induction into the Hall and contemplate not only their statistical achievements, but also their character and their contributions to the world's greatest game.

"Hall of Fame voting is based upon the player's record, ability, integrity, sportsmanship, character, and contributions to the team(s) on which he played." [1]

There are three Tigers players who were overlooked initially by the Baseball Writers' Association of America (BBWAA) and, later, by the various Veterans Committees: three players with excellent career statistics and fine character. Each was vitally important to the Detroit Baseball Club, and all were outstanding contributors to the lore and legends of organized baseball.

Those three overlooked Tigers are Bill Freehan, Mickey Lolich, and Lou Whitaker. Here is the case for Bill Freehan. [*Editor's note: A discussion of Lolich's and Whitaker's cases for the Hall of Fame will be featured in future editions of The Catcher's Mitt.*]

Quiet leadership, strength of character, and commitment to excellence are the qualities that

best describe Bill Freehan, one of baseball's greatest catchers. Along with Al Kaline, it was Freehan who provided the Tigers with leadership and stability for 15 years. Both played their entire careers for in Detroit.

Recalling the Tigers of the 1960s, Hall of Fame third baseman George Kell wrote, "Bill Freehan was the leader of the team. Kaline was the best player, but Freehan sort of took charge of the leadership. . . . Bill just gave everyone the feeling that everything was under control when he was on the field. That's critical to a winning team." [2]

Of Detroit's top 24 players ranked by career WAR, Bill Freehan is the only catcher. His career WAR of 44.8 places him 18th on the list. Freehan caught 1,581 games for the Tigers, more than any catcher. Rudy York is ranked twenty-fourth all-time, but York was predominately a first baseman and caught only 239 games. Lance Parrish did not make the top 24. His WAR in 10 seasons with the Tigers was 30.1.

Ivan Rodriguez and Mickey Cochrane are two Hall of Fame catchers who played in Detroit. Rodríguez, who spent the bulk of his career with the Texas Rangers, posted a 68.7 WAR, but he played only five seasons in Detroit (14.5 WAR for those years). Mickey Cochrane, whose greatest years were with the Philadelphia A's, has a career WAR of 52.1.

However, "Black Mike" played only played only four seasons for the Tigers (with an 11.4 WAR).

Jay Jaffe's JAWS metric ranks Freehan as the 14th-best catcher in baseball history with 39.2 points.

[3] Of the top 15 catchers on Jaffe's list, six (including Freehan) are not in the Hall: Joe Mauer (9th), Ted Simmons (10th), Thurman Munson (12th), Gene Tenace (13th), and Buster Posey (15th). [4] Mauer and Posey are obviously not eligible yet, but I believe that all six of these catchers belong in Cooperstown.

In the 1970s Freehan, Simmons, Munson, and Tenace were overshadowed by Johnny Bench (1st on Jaffe's list), Gary Carter (2nd), and Carlton Fisk (4th). Before Bench arrived in 1968, the best National League catchers in the 1960s were Smokey Burgess (30th), Del Crandall (37th), Tom Haller (38th), and Tim McCarver (45th). The sensational abilities of Bench, Carter, and Fisk do not diminish the exemplary qualifications of Freehan, Simmons, Munson, and Tenace for the Hall. [5]

In the second tier of 15 catchers as ranked by JAWS, the Hall of Famers are Buck Ewing (16th), Ernie Lombardi (18th), Roger Bresnahan (22nd), and Roy Campanella (27th). Between Bresnahan and Campanella are two non-Hall of Fame catchers of significance: Yadier Molina (26th),

...continued on page 6

Freehan's Case for Cooperstown Inclusion

...continued from page 5

who will probably be inducted into the Hall of Fame after he retires, and Lance Parrish (25th), who will not.

Defense was Freehan's strength, and he won five Gold Glove awards from 1965–1969. His career defensive WAR is 12, good for fifth among Tigers, behind only slick-fielding infielders Alan Trammell, Lou Whitaker, Brandon Inge and Billy Rogell. For 11 seasons in the American League, Freehan was a top-five catcher in fielding percentage. He was among the top five catchers in the American League for nine seasons in Range Factor per nine innings and a top-five catcher in Range Factor per game for 12 incredible seasons.

Freehan also provided power at the plate, ranking 10th among Tigers hitters with 200 career home runs and 21st among all catchers. Freehan posted three 20-home run seasons, is 8th among Tigers in sacrifice flies with 48, and his power and RBI numbers were good for his light-hitting era.

Like teammate Mickey Lolich, Bill Freehan is forever remembered as one of the '68 Tigers. He started more games (155) than any other Detroit player that season, catching MLB's last 30-game winner. Although he did not hit well in the World Series, he caught seven complete games. Freehan was involved in the critical defensive play in Game 5 of the Series when

he caught Willie Horton's throw from left field, blocked home plate, and tagged out Lou Brock.

In 1972 Freehan suffered a broken thumb on a play at the plate against Carl Yastrzemski and the Red Sox on September 21, but still came back to play less than three weeks later in the final three games of the ALCS. In that exciting series against the Oakland A's, Freehan caught Joe Coleman's 14-strikeout gem in Game 3, caught Detroit's 10-inning win in Game 4, and caught the Tigers' heartbreakin loss in Game 5. In the final game, Freehan was involved in yet another exciting play at the plate when Reggie Jackson was injured sliding home with Oakland's first run in the second inning.

Bill Freehan was the dominant American League catcher in the 1960s and early 1970s. [6] An 11-time All-Star, he was selected for 10-consecutive Midsummer Classics from 1964–1973, and he was the AL starting catcher seven times.

From 1966 through 1969, Freehan was a serious MVP candidate. In 1967 he finished third behind Carl Yastrzemski and Harmon Killebrew in MVP votes. In 1968 he finished second to Denny McLain. He also received serious consideration in 1964, finishing seventh, with honorable recognition in 1969 and 1972.

Freehan was a quintessential Tiger. The Veterans Committee should reconsider his case.

It is undeniable that Freehan was a premier ballplayers in his time and an outstanding ambassador of baseball. He exemplified the virtues of ability, integrity, sportsmanship, and character. He affected pennant races, postseason play, and contributed mightily to the legends and lore of the game. Whether one is a "Small Hall" or "Large Hall" advocate, he is an exceptional candidate for induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Primary Resources

- The Cooperstown Casebook, by Jay Jaffe. St. Martin's Press (2017).
- What Happened to the Hall of Fame? by Bill James. First Fireside edition, Simon & Shuster (1995).
- SABR Bio Project biography of Bill Freehan, by Trey Strecker.
- www.baseball-reference.com.

Notes

[1] Taken from the HOF guidelines for voting and cited in *The Cooperstown Casebook*, by Jay Jaffe, St. Martin's Press (2017), p 22.

[2] *Hello Everybody I'm George Kell*, by George Kell, Sports Publishing (1998), *The Year of the Tiger*, p134.

[3] *The Cooperstown Casebook*, by Jay Jaffe, St. Martin's Press (2017), p126-127.

[4] Buster Posey will pass Bill Freehan after the 2019 season, and Joe Mauer retired after the 2018 season. The Hall-of-Fame catchers in the top 15 are Johnny Bench (#1), Gary Carter (#2), Ivan Rodriguez (#3), Carlton Fisk (#4), Mike Piazza (#5), Yogi Berra (#6), Bill Dickey (#8), Mickey Cochrane (9), and Gabby Hartnett (#11). See <https://www.baseball-reference.com>, Catcher JAWS Leaders.

[5] *The Cooperstown Casebook*, by Jay Jaffe, St. Martin's Press (2017), Catchers, p107-127.

[6] Motor City Bengals, *Detroit Tigers: Bill Freehan should be in the Hall of Fame*, by Andy Patton, August 2018, motorcitybengals.com.

Lucas County Stadium / Ned Skeldon Stadium

Longtime Home to Toledo's Mud Hens Could be Demolished in 2019

By John R. Husman, Toledo Mud Hens Team Historian

After an absence of nine seasons, a community effort led by Lucas County Commissioner Ned Skeldon brought minor-league baseball back to northwest Ohio in 1965, when the Richmond, Virginia, franchise in the International League was procured just before the season commenced.

A deal was then signed with the New York Yankees to provide players to make the Toledo area the home of their top farm club. In a very short time, northwest Ohio had a franchise and a team, but no place to play. The solution was the Fort Miami Fairgrounds, a horse racing track at the Lucas County Recreation Center on Key Street in Maumee, which was hastily converted for baseball and pressed into service. The resulting facility was thought to be temporary, but it served as the home of the IL's Toledo Mud Hens for 37 seasons.

The Yankees' reign lasted only two seasons. They were followed by the Detroit Tigers in 1967, the Philadelphia Phillies in 1974, the Cleveland Indians in 1976, and the Minnesota Twins in 1978, and the Detroit Tigers, again, in 1987. The Tigers–Mud Hens relationship continued through the end of the ballpark's use for professional baseball after the 2001 season, remaining intact today at Fifth Third Field in downtown Toledo.

Lucas County Stadium featured a fine playing field and provided an intimate relationship between the game and its spectators. The racetrack grandstand provided the seating along the third base side of the field; new, uncovered seating was constructed on the first base side.

The rest of the infrastructure of the new ballpark was another matter, however. Locker rooms, training facilities, and team offices were woefully inadequate. The dugouts had no conveniences, and players had to make their way through waiting fans as they went to and from the locker room. The fans also suffered as often-crowded rest rooms and concessions were remote from the field.

In spite of the Mud Hens winning the International League's Governors' Cup playoffs in 1967 and the International League championship the following year, fans did not flock to Lucas County Stadium in large numbers: attendance for the first 13 years of the park's existence averaged less than 100,000.

Three events before the 1978 season led to more stability for the franchise and to increased attendance. First and foremost, Gene Cook became the Hens' general manager, holding the position through 2001. Second, the Twins located their Triple-A team in Maumee for an eight-year run. Finally, Cal Ermer was appointed to manage the Mud Hens, staying at the helm for seven summers. The combination of strong front office leadership and a competitive team with a popular manager led to modest winning records and increased attendance. More than 200,000 fans passed through the turnstiles for the first time in 1980.

Major renovations to Lucas County Stadium were made before the 1984 season, improving conditions for spectators and the press, though not for the players. The \$1.5 million project included improvements to the stadium's structure, seats, restrooms, the Mud Hens Nest (souvenir shop), handicapped seating, and ground level entrances. The most dramatic changes were the addition of a roof over the right field grandstand, a new press box, and new space for the Mud Hens' Diamond Club.

In 1988, the facility was renamed in honor of Ned Skeldon, who was largely responsible for the return of baseball to the Toledo area. The park became affectionately known as "The Ned." Attendance continued an upward trend, reaching a high of 325,532 in 1997. The park's single-game record was set on July 14, 1966, when 13,695 spectators somehow squeezed into the venue (capacity listed as 10,025) for a pony-giveaway promotion.

...continued on page 8

Lucas County Stadium / Ned Skeldon Stadium

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Several notable individual performances along the way included Billy McMillon's .345 batting average in 2000 and Phil Hiatt's 42 home runs and 119 RBIs in 1996. Jose Lima pitched the only Mud Hens no hitter there on August 17, 1994. Bobby Murcer hit four consecutive home runs in a doubleheader on June 26, 1966, and Bubba Trammell slammed four round-trippers in a game on August 9, 1997. Good pitching abounded on the 1968 pennant-winning team, single-season records at Lucas County/Ned Skeldon were established by Jim Rooker with 206 strikeouts and by Mike Marshall and Dick Drago with 15 wins each.

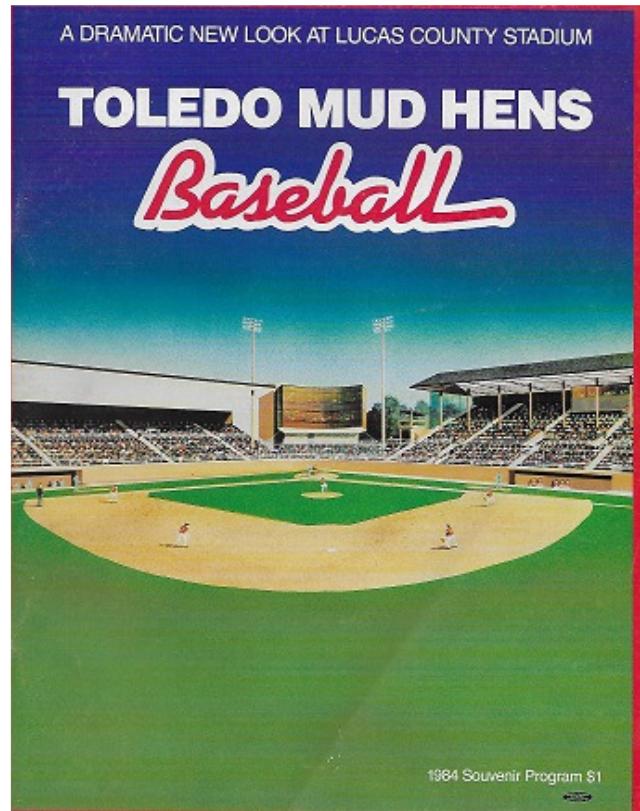
The final game at Ned Skeldon Stadium was played on September 3, 2001, with GM Gene Cook throwing out the first pitch. Cook passed away that winter and, thus, did not get the chance to do the same at the new ball park in downtown Toledo the following spring. It would have been fitting if he had, as Cook had a big role in the Mud Hens' return to the City of Toledo.

Since the Mud Hens' exit, Ned Skeldon has been used for amateur baseball and other events, but Maumee Mayor Richard Carr announced in 2018 that "the city has ordered the stadium be demolished"¹ because of structural and safety concerns.

Discussions about the future of the Lucas County Recreation Center, which includes the stadium site, are continuing between Carr and Lucas County Commissioner Pete Gerken, who plan to include current users of the facilities in their ongoing talks. The pair agreed that "it's best to hand over the property to the city of Maumee, which would then seek developers to overhaul a good portion of the 85-acre space."

Transfer of the property is not imminent because of the many details that need to be ironed out. Any new agreement would require approval from both Lucas County commissioners and Maumee City Council. A transfer deal may or may not happen, and the "Ned" may or may not be included in future development of the property—it is too early to tell.

As of the end of 2018, the City of Maumee's demolition order was still pending.



Artist's rendering depicts Lucas County Stadium with improvements made before the 1984 season.

Notes:

¹ *The Blade* (Toledo, Ohio), September 27, 2018.

¹ Ibid.

Did You Know?

Hall of Fame pitcher Jim Bunning managed the Mud Hens in 1974-75 before embarking on his long political career.

Hall of Famer Casey Stengel managed the Mud Hens from 1926-31. By then in his late 30's he sometimes penciled his name in the lineup and hit .322 in 292 at bats.

Book Reviews: A Six-Pack for '68

By Peter Hoyos

On October 2, 1968, I sat down with my parents and grandfather to watch my very first baseball game on television. Outnumbered three-to-one by Cardinals fans, I rooted for the Tigers during Game 1 of the World Series. Eight days later the Detroit Tigers were the world champions. At age four I started at the very top with the Tigers.

Over the past five decades, Tigers fans have witnessed some great teams, several division titles, three more AL pennants, and another great team crushing the opposition on its way to a world championship in 1984. But the '68 champions retain a remarkable grip on the hearts and minds of Tigers fans: their come-from-behind victories captured our imaginations, and they remain our favorite baseball heroes.

The ballplayers and the fans that watched them play are now fifty years older. Time passes, memories fade, and new generations of Detroit fans have never experienced the joy of seeing their Tigers win a World Series.

To fill that deficit, here is a list of good books that help explain the character of that special 1968 team and their triumphant march to Game 7 of the Fall Classic.

Joy in Tigertown, by Mickey Lolich with Tom Gage. Triumph Books (2018).

World Series MVP Mickey Lolich finally has written a book about his career in baseball with help from veteran former *Detroit News* beat writer and Spink Award winner Tom Gage. Lolich, now 78, decided to write the book because he wanted his grandchildren to know what he had accomplished in baseball. Lolich said that he didn't want his book to be exclusively about the World Series.

Joy in Tigertown begins with two chapters covering Lolich's recollections of the 1967 Detroit riots and the '67 season. The third chapter describes the '68 pennant drive, beginning with a four-game losing streak against New York in August and culminating with Don Wert's pennant-clinching hit. The next 14 chapters alternate between each game of the World Series and recollections of the first 27 years of Lolich's life. Chapters 18 and 19 recall the final half of his big-league career, and chapter 20 is about his former doughnut shop.

Alternating chapters creates a steady conversational pace for the story. The reader can easily imagine sitting down to chat over coffee and a doughnut with Lolich. That accomplishment is the result of the first collaboration between Lolich and Gage.

A recipient of the J. G. Taylor Spink Award in 2015, Tom Gage began his career in Detroit as a beat reporter with the *Detroit News* in the late 1970s, covering the brief Les Moss era, Rusty Staub's hold-out, and the arrival of George "Sparky" Anderson. His 38 years of experience covering the Tigers was invaluable in assisting Lolich with this book. Initially, Gage reviewed audio tape of Lolich's interview with Bill Dow for *Baseball Digest*. Gage and Lolich also watched YouTube videos of Games 2, 5, and 7 of the 1968 World Series together. Gage noted that Lolich had never watched these games before.

The book's title was selected from the novelty song *Go Get 'Em Tigers*, written by Artie Fields and commissioned by the National Bank of Detroit. Although the melody isn't bad, the lyrics stick in one's head like those from "Meet the Mets", the "Carl Yastrzemski Song", or "I Wish I Were an Oscar Mayer Weiner".

Lolich, who ended his major-league career with 217 wins, 2,832 strikeouts, and a .110 batting average, gives credit to three baseball men who helped him become a great pitcher: Johnny Pesky, Gerry Staley, and Johnny Sain.

...continued on page 10

...continued from page 9

Pesky offered key advice which caused Lolich to sign with the Tigers rather than the Yankees. Staley, a former journeyman pitcher and coach with the Portland Beavers in 1962, worked personally with Lolich and taught him how to throw the sinker ball with control. Above all, Lolich reveals that he was truly a disciple of Johnny Sain. It was Sain's philosophies and positive attitude that gave him the confidence to succeed in the major leagues.

Lolich also wrote briefly about most of his teammates in a chapter titled "Who We Were." Here, the object is to convey the character of the team, not to provide copious personal details. Ballplayers of this generation are not very fond of tattletales, like Jim Brosnan or Jim Bouton, and Lolich allows his teammates to tell their own stories.

Perhaps surprising to some readers, the book does not contain much criticism of Denny McLain. Indeed, Lolich praises McLain's accomplishments, especially in 1968 and 1969, when McLain won a total of 65 games, an MVP, and back-to-back AL Cy Young Awards. Understandably, Lolich and his teammates would prefer to be remembered for their achievements, including a world championship, not for disagreements or arguments—or in McLain's case, scandals and suspensions. Lolich expressed his opinion that enough has been said, and it's time to mend fences.

The book also features Lolich's recollections about his strained relationship with Jim Campbell and his business venture with Mike Ilitch and Little Caesar's Pizza. His wife, Joyce, adds her own perspective regarding the World Series. Lolich reveals his competitive spirit with tales of his World Series victories, his pitching duels with California Angels' ace Nolan Ryan, his harassing Boog Powell, and his battling archnemesis Cesar Tovar, who raked against Lolich.

Joy in Tigertown is especially effective when Lolich shares his knowledge about pitching. In a section called "My New Pitch," the left-hander describes how he learned to throw his cut fastball, a pitch that Sain had shown him a few years earlier. The cutter revitalized his career in 1971. Attendees at our October Detroit SABR Chapter meeting had the opportunity to see Lolich demonstrate the unusual grip he used for his cutter.

Lolich hinted that he might pen another book, as there are more stories to be told. It would be great if the next book contained more recollections about his pitching duels with the aces of his era like Dave McNally, Vida Blue, Luis Tiant, Jim Kaat, and Wilbur Wood. YouTube, DVD, and CD audio collections make it possible to analyze and recreate the excitement of those games, and it would be fascinating to read Lolich's pitch-by-pitch analysis of some big games against the Cardinals, the dreaded Orioles, and the Swinging A's. Keep writing Mickey.

Editor's Note: In appreciation for his appearance at our SABR-Detroit meeting, Pete Hoyos presented Lolich with a DVD of his seven-hit shutout over McNally and the O's on July 1, 1972.

***Pitch By Pitch: My View of One Unforgettable Game*, by Bob Gibson and Lonnie Wheeler.
Flatiron Books (2015).**

Wait a minute! Bob Gibson, the Evil One? The St. Louis Cardinal? What's a book written by Bob Gibson doing on this list? Over the years, Gibson has written so many books that the ill-tempered right-hander is now known as the ill-tempered *write-hander*. In this one, aptly titled *Pitch By Pitch*, Bob Gibson takes the reader pitch-by-pitch through the Detroit Tigers' lineup in Game 1 of the 1968 World Series.

...continued on page 11

...continued from page 10

Filled with inside information from a Hall of Famer, Gibson describes each pitch and each hitter in 11 chapters. One chapter is devoted to the pregame, with a final chapter covering the postgame and the rest of the series. In between there are nine chapters describing each inning of Game 1, beginning with the visitors from Detroit batting first.

This is the third book that Gibson and Wheeler have written together. Gibson's attention to detail conveys the intensity of his competitive nature. As each player steps up to the plate, Gibson provides the reader with information about the players and the pitching, making the reader feel like he is watching the game.

Pitch By Pitch is a fun read and sets up the 1968 Series nicely. Written 47 years after that classic October contest, Gibson refreshed his recollection with the aid of a DVD recording of the game and by consulting many articles from the SABR Biography Project. As a ballplayer, Bob Gibson didn't offer many compliments about opposing players, but his book is filled with generous praise for our Tigers. It's an excellent introduction to the history of the epic '68 World Series—momentous enough that Bob Costas later interviewed Gibson, Tim McCarver, Willie Horton, and Al Kaline as they watched Game 1 for a special MLB broadcast.

***An October To Remember 1968: The Tigers-Cardinals World Series as Told by the Men Who Played in It*, by Brendan Donley. Sports Publishing (2018).**

Brendan J. Donley, age 26, is a sportswriter and the creator and editor of The Big Inning, a website devoted to baseball. After watching the Chicago Cubs win the 2016 World Series, and inspired by Lawrence Ritter's oral history classic *The Glory of their Times*, he decided to write a book about another seven-game World Series. Donley had two reasons for selecting the 1968 World Series. First, he was born on the 24th anniversary of the Tigers' victory in Game 5; second, his grandfather was from Detroit.

The book follows the 1968 World Series in chronological order, with a chapter devoted to each of the seven games. Donley scored an impressive number of player interviews, including 11 Tigers and eight Cardinals who were there. Both Mickey Lolich and Bob Gibson declined to participate in Donley's project, probably because they have written their own books (see reviews above) about this World Series.

Each game is described by the men who played in it, supplemented with line scores and quotes from TV broadcasters Curt Gowdy, George Kell, and Harry Caray. Also contributing were Detroit bullpen coach Hal Naragon, Bill Freehan's wife Pat, former NBC broadcaster Tony Kubek (who also worked the Series), umpire Bill Haller, and national anthem singer Jose Feliciano.

Donley's skillful editing of the material carries the story, effectively creating suspense reminiscent of the game. For example, in Game 2 Curt Gowdy calls Norm Cash's home run, followed by the line score through the top of the sixth inning (3-0, Detroit), comments about Cash from Denny McLain, Tom Matchick, Jim Price, and Naragon, and finally back to the account of the game. In Game 5 Gowdy's description of Lou Brock being called out at home plate is transcribed and followed by eyewitness accounts from second baseman Julian Javier, Willie Horton, Don Wert, Mickey Stanley, and Pat Freehan.

An October to Remember is an excellent companion piece to *Joy in Tigertown*. Brendan Donley offered special thanks to a number of people, including SABR Detroit's own Dan D'Addona.

...continued on page 12

...continued from page 11

The Tigers of '68: Baseball's Last Real Champions, by George Cantor. Taylor Publishing (1997). Veteran newspaper reporter, columnist, and author George Cantor reminisced about the 1968 season with numerous player interviews in this book, published 29 years after the events.

Cantor, who died in 2010, was a young reporter for the *Detroit Free Press* in 1968. He regarded the '68 championship as a welcome distraction from Detroit's social problems—but not a saving remedy for the city. Over 29 years Cantor worked for the *Free Press*, the *Detroit News*, and the *Detroit Jewish News*. He was a professor at Oakland University and wrote numerous sports books and travel guides, including *Wire to Wire: Inside the 1984 Championship Season* (2004) and *Out of Nowhere: The Detroit Tigers' Magical 2006 Season* (2006). Both were published by Triumph Books.

The Tigers of '68 breaks down the season and World Series in 33 chapters. The book is written in chronological order, typically with one biography per chapter. It starts with the 1967 riots and the '67 pennant race, continuing through the celebration after Game 7 of the 1968 World Series.

It should be noted that Cantor and the late Joe Falls were involved in a running feud with Denny McLain that began after Game 5 of the World Series and lasted until the right-hander was traded to the Washington Senators in October 1970. The dispute centered upon whether McLain had originally said that he would be unavailable to pitch Game 6 of the World Series. However, in his book Cantor is not perceptively unfair to McLain.

The book's title "*Baseball's Last Real Champions*" refers primarily to the end of the traditional baseball pennant races, when only one team from each league qualified for post-season play in the World Series. In 1969 the American and National Leagues created East and West Divisions, with League Championship Series determining the pennant winners. The book's title also refers to the rise of the Major League Baseball Players Association, drug abuse, and era of high-paid free agents.

Cantor's style is smooth and engrossing, and he approached the subject with great reverence. His player interviews hit the mark, and he effectively linked the baseball season with the social history of the times. This is easily the best-written book about the legendary 1968 team.

Sock It To 'Em Tigers: The Incredible Story of the 1968 Detroit Tigers, edited by Mark Pattison and David Raglin. Maple Street Press (2008).

Sock It to 'Em Tigers contains the essential facts about every player on the 1968 Tigers team. The book, published in conjunction with SABR for the 40th anniversary celebration, is structured in four parts: the players, the management, the broadcasters, and the season. Following the format established by the SABR Biography Project for SABR's "team books," it contains biographies of 18 position players and 15 pitchers (everyone who appeared for the Tigers that season), plus articles about the general manager, manager, coaches, and broadcasters.

Pattison and Raglin deserve praise for assembling the definitive reference book about the '68 Tigers. *Detroit News* sports columnist Lynn Henning wrote the foreword. Henning, who was 16-years-old at the time, described 1968 as the "greatest year of my sports-loving life." Each player biography includes a photograph of that player's baseball card as well as his 1968 and career stats. Detroit's own Gary Gillette contributed biographies of Roy Face and Jim Price.

...continued on page 13

...continued from page 12

The final portion of the book, entitled “Sock It to ‘Em Tigers,” is a collection of eight essays about the Detroit club in the 1960s and early 1970s. Two personal favorites in this section are “The Rise and Fall of the Tigers,” by Dan Levitt and Mark Armour, and “The Switch,” by Rich Shook, which analyzes the decision to move Mickey Stanley to shortstop.

Unfortunately, this hard-to-find book was not updated for the 50th anniversary. A second edition with updated biographies and a World Series recap would be spectacular.

***Behind the Mask: An Inside Baseball Diary*, by Bill Freehan with editors Steve Gelman and Dick Schaap. The World Publishing (1970).**

If you have read *Ball Four* by Jim Bouton, you will recognize the structure employed in Bill Freehan’s *Behind the Mask*—a daily diary recording the games and events that transpired during the 1969 Tigers’ baseball season. Published in 1970, *Behind the Mask* was overshadowed by Bouton’s controversial bestseller, which hit the bookstores a few weeks later.

By today’s standards, *Behind the Mask* certainly seems tame when compared to subsequent sports books of the 1970s and beyond. Freehan’s book does not deal with sex and drugs, although there is a funny story about Tom Timmermann’s blind date in Seattle. In contrast to Bouton, the catcher-turned-author offers mainstream opinions about the game, with respect for his teammates, coaches, manager, GM, and Commissioner Bowie Kuhn.

The reader experiences the highs and lows of big-league baseball through the descriptions of the perennial All-Star catcher who, along with his teammates, struggled to keep pace with the surging Baltimore Orioles. Along the way the reader gains keen insights about the team’s unique chemistry and the seeds of its destruction.

Unlike Bouton, Freehan was at the pinnacle of his career in 1969. He was not fighting for his job. The Tigers’ players shared genuine respect, if not affection, for each other: a band of brothers with no cliques. The tension that developed during the season was aggravated by the pressure to repeat as champions. Communication problems between manager Mayo Smith and pitching coach Johnny Sain culminated in Sain’s August 10 dismissal. Freehan wrote, “*If John [Sain] said the same things to Mayo he said to us, there shouldn’t have been any problem.*” The recurring theme is that the Detroit players wanted a disciplinarian to enforce the team’s rules equally among the ballplayers, including rule-breaker-in-chief Denny McLain.

Although *Behind the Mask* has been out of print for years, it is often used as source material for books, essays, and articles about the Tigers, including the five other books reviewed in this article. When Freehan’s teammates talk about their club, they often refer to the same stories covered in this book, but they decline to discuss the impact that his book had on the team’s morale during the disastrous 1970 season.

If *Behind the Mask* was controversial, it was because it was published during the unravelling of McLain’s career. In his 2006 SABR article “*Ball Four*,” Mark Armour explained the situation that occurred in March 1970. “McLain was being investigated by baseball for conspiring to operate a sports book, for which he was suspended for half the season. Freehan was embarrassed by the contents of the book, apologized to his team, and more or less refused to talk about it ever again.”

...continued on page 14

...continued from page 13

Behind the Mask has been out of print for decades. After reading and rereading this book many times, the same questions crop up: Did Freehan's teammates know he was writing the book in 1969? What impact did the book have on the team's morale and its ultimate decline? These are the questions that the Boys from Denver, Syracuse, and Toledo (Detroit's Triple-A farm clubs from 1960–73) don't like to be asked, but they are also significant.

“A Loaf of Bread, a Flask of Wine, and a Tiger’s Tale”

Now you have a reading list to close out the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Detroit Tigers. The list of books above is by no means complete. For instance, I have not found a copy of Jerry Green's *Year of the Tiger: The Diary of Detroit's World Champions*, and I only recently obtained two autobiographical books by Denny McLain, *Nobody's Perfect* and *I Told You I Wasn't Perfect*. These books and others will undoubtedly be revisited whenever the discussion turns to the '68 Tigers.

Remember: Only six more years until we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1974 rebuild.

Trivia Answers:

1. Eddie Mathews, acquired in August of the 1967 season in a trade with the Astros, had more career home runs (512) than any of his 1968 Tiger teammates.
2. All the games in the '68 World Series were day games. Since 1988 all World Series games have been played at night.
3. Don Wert was known as Coyote. Per John Milner's SABR Bio of Wert, during the 1964 spring training “Manager Dressen reportedly requested Wert to become more vocal at third base and Don responded with high-pitched chatter that sounded like the yip-yip-yipping of a coyote”.
4. Zero. The team stole only 26 bases in total, with Dick McAuliffe leading the team with eight.
5. Jim Northrup led the team with 90 ribbies, while Willie Horton and Bill Freehan added 85 and 84 respectively.
6. Norm Cash played first base with Fox (2b) and Aparicio (SS) on the 1959 Chicago White Sox.
7. Baltimore and San Francisco finished second to Detroit and St. Louis in 1968.
8. Dick Tracewski – In Game 1 he singled off Whitey Ford and scored on a home run by John Roseboro. In Game 4 he made a fine defensive play.
9. Hank Aguirre was traded for minor league infielder Frederick Moulder.
10. Jim Price, Detroit's reserve catcher, who appeared in 64 games and only got 132 at-bats.
11. Pat Dobson and Daryl Patterson each notched a team best seven saves.
12. Mickey Stanley appeared in nine games, starting eight, at shortstop during the 1968 regular season.



Myths Of 1968

By Gary Gillette

As evidenced by the many celebrations, commemorations, and discussions about the fabled '68 season, the events of 50 years ago have not yet faded from the memories of baseball fans and writers.

Moreover, many bloggers and pundits who are too young to remember that year have weighed in on how the landscape of the National Pastime was forever altered by the controversial changes made in the aftermath of the 1968 season.

Some important changes directly resulted from '68, like the reduction in the height of the mound. Other changes were effectively unrelated to '68, like the expansion to 24 teams and the advent of divisional play.

Far too often, however, the facts of the 1968 season and its consequences have been misunderstood, resulting in a loose collection of myths, mostly related to the year's dominant pitchers and seemingly impotent hitters.

Some of these myths are easy to bust, others more complicated to unpack. Here's a list of some common misapprehensions about the Cardinals, the Tigers, and the '68 Fall Classic.

Myth No. 1

The NL champion and defending world champion Cardinals were a much better team than the AL champs, and were justifiably heavily favored to win the World Series.

St. Louis featured a formidable lineup and rotation, each anchored by two future Hall of Famers: Orlando Cepeda and Lou Brock in their lineup, and Bob Gibson and Steve Carlton in their rotation.

Depending on which source you consult, the Redbirds were favored by the oddsmakers by about 17–10 over the Bengals before Game 1. A writers' poll conducted by the Detroit Free Press was somewhat more reasonable, favoring the NL pennant winners by a 3–2 margin games to St. Louis's 97.

Both are long odds for a World Series match-up, especially considering Detroit won 103 games to St. Louis's 97.

Why were the Cardinals so highly rated? One factor could have been the October 8, 1968, Sports Illustrated cover that would have been in subscribers' mailboxes and for sale on the newsstands before the World Series opener. The narrative was that the Cardinals were the most expensive and, also, the best. They were the defending World Champions. Gibson was Gibson. Brock was seen as a huge big-game player. The Tigers, in the press, were just crazy McLain and a bunch of hard-grinding guys.

SI published two McLain covers in 1968, one in July and one when he won his 31st. The Tigers didn't get another cover, even when they won the World Series. The Cardinals rated two SI covers: one of Flood in August and one in October. Ironically, the October SI piece seems to have been the impetus for St. Louis owner August "Gussie" Busch to try to break up the team the following two years.

The Cardinals offense had sexy batting averages and beaucoup steals. The Tigers had walks and power, which didn't get paid attention to nearly as much. But the bashin' Bengals boasted a far superior offense, leading the AL by 57 runs and scoring 108 more runs than the runnin' Redbirds. While St. Louis' run production dropped 112 runs from 1967, the Tigers scored only 12 fewer runs than in '67 in a far tougher hitting environment than a year earlier.

Both the AL and NL average teams scored 3.4 runs per game in '68. St. Louis scored 3.6, tied for fourth in the NL. Detroit scored 4.1, the most in the AL and second-highest in the majors behind the Reds, who scored 4.2.

What about the pitching? Gibson, with that 1.12 ERA, surely must have made the Cardinals a powerhouse on the mound, right? True, the Cardinals' tough defense allowed just 2.9 runs per game, best in the majors.

...continued on page 16

Myths Of 1968 continued

But guess which team's "D" was second? The Tigers, at 3.0, just a smidge more generous than the Cards.

Without Gibson on the mound, the Cardinals' starters were a bit better than average. The bullpen was not deep but, then again, didn't have to be. One could also say that the Tigers' starters weren't great in '68 with the exception of McLain who, of course, was still not as great as Gibson.

As we all know, though, the unheralded Mickey Lolich took care of that advantage.

Myth No. 2

That Bob Gibson's 1968 performance was the best all-time for a pitcher.

Gibson was a great pitcher and a deserving Hall of Famer, and he had one of the all-time greatest seasons by any standard. But the myth that it was the best-ever is based on his 1.12 ERA, which for years was shown by the old *Sporting News* Record Books as the lowest ever because they used a minimum of 300 innings pitched.

In terms of Adjusted ERA (ERA compared to a league average of 100), Gibson's famed 1.12 stands at 258—that is, an astounding 258% better than the NL average that season. However, from 1901–1968, Walter Johnson's 1.14 ERA for the 1913 Senators (259) and Dutch Leonard's 0.96 ERA for the 1914 Red Sox (279) were better performances by that measure.

By the way, before anyone mutters "Deadball Era" in retort, scoring in 1968 (3.42 runs/game) was substantially lower than in 1913 and 1914 and well below the average for the whole of the Deadball Era.

Addendum: Since 1968, Pedro Martinez in 2000 and Greg Maddux in 1994 and 1995 both turned in Adjusted ERAs higher than Gibson's.

Myth No. 3

That Denny McLain's 31-win season was great.

True, it was very good, but it was also nowhere near great.

Today, McLain's standout '68 is merely tied with 17 other hurlers for 293rd—yes, that's 2-9-3—all-time in single-season pitching WAR. Even if you throw out the 19th century and all seasons after 1968, it wasn't that impressive.

McLain benefited from a huge amount of run support—46% above league average. It's a helluva lot easier to win games when your team scores 5 runs per game for you than 3½ runs in your starts. That's not all: the Bengals' ace with the high-riding fastball and even higher-riding lifestyle wasn't even the best pitcher in the AL that year! Luis Tiant of Cleveland had a better season.

El Tiant led the AL with a 1.60 ERA, going 21–9 in 258.1 innings while receiving Run Support that was 4% below average. The Tigers led the league in scoring, while the Indians were eighth, scoring more than 20% fewer runs. Tiant also led AL hurlers with an ERA+ of 186 and a Fielding Independent Pitching (FIP) mark of 2.04.

Tiant fashioned a 41-inning scoreless streak in April and May, posting four consecutive shutouts and nine whitewashes on the year. McLain notched six shutouts in front of a better defense, while Tiant pitched against better competition since he didn't have to face the AL's best lineup: Detroit's.

Of course, Tiant's skein of goose eggs would be surpassed later that remarkable summer by Gibson's 47 scoreless frames and Don Drysdale's record-shattering 58 consecutive blanks.

Myth No. 4

McLain's 1968 season was light years better than any other Detroit pitcher.

When one considers postseason performance along with regular-season performance, Lolich's '68 was pretty impressive. Shockingly, it wasn't *that* much worse than McLain's.

Skeptical? What would you call a pitcher who went 20–9 in 35 starts and 247 innings, plus picked up a save along the way and posted an ERA of 2.95?

...continued on page 17

Myths Of 1968 continued

Pretty impressive, right? That was Lolich's combined stats line at the end of Game 7.

Mickey's winning percentage was .690, also damn good. His Run Support was only 9% above average, much lower than McLain's. Their FIP for the regular season was much closer than one would expect (2.53 for Denny, compared to only 2.99 for Mickey) on the basis of McLain's gaudy 31 wins, as well.

McLain deserved the Cy Young, without question, but the Tigers would have won the pennant with any good starting pitcher in his place. McLain also won the AL MVP Award that year, with his battery mate Bill Freehan finishing a very respectable second (161 points to McLain's 280 points). Detroit might not have won the championship without Freehan's productive bat, without his Gold Glove defense and his field generalship. Perhaps most importantly, Detroit might not have won without Freehan's determined leadership on a talented club where the manager was an alcoholic who had accidentally caught a Tiger by the tail and was mostly just along for the ride.

And we all know who won the big games and took home the World Series MVP Award.

Myth No. 5

That 1968 Detroit Tigers “healed” or brought together their race-riven city after the devastation of the ’67 riots (the white community’s viewpoint) or the ’67 rebellion (the black community’s perspective).

True, the summer of ’68 provided a welcome respite from the smoldering ruins and smoldering resentment on both sides of the racial divide in Detroit. Nonetheless, it did not have the magical power to transform Michigan’s deeply entrenched racism nor enlighten the racist minds of white politicians or opinion leaders.

This trope has been trotted out ad nauseam since the Tigers’ triumphant October a year after the civil disturbance, and it goes largely unchallenged even today.

A major reason that it is still generally accepted is that many of the ’68 Tigers themselves claim it’s true, including Willie Horton—a genuine hero to Detroit’s African-American community.

The facts don’t speak for themselves, but the facts are stark and sad. White flight from the City of Detroit had begun long before the catastrophic summer of ’67, and it would continue until the city was overwhelmingly (more than 80 percent) black.

Even a primer in the convoluted history of race relations in Southeast Michigan would require thousands of words, so let’s just leave it at this: the heroes of ’68 were ordinary men even as they were extraordinary ballplayers manufacturing a once-in-a-lifetime season. They could not and did not fundamentally change the future of Detroit’s dysfunctional and disturbing discrimination, nor its disastrous effects.

Stuart Shea also contributed significantly to this piece.

A special thanks to Nick Prestileo, All-Star designer and loyal Phillies fan, for the design of The Catcher's Mitt logo!



Survey!

What sources do you use to get news about the Detroit Tigers?

- A. Social Media-Twitter
- B. Social Media-Facebook
- C. Social Media-Other
- D. TV-ESPN
- E. TV- MLB network
- F. TV-Fox Sports Detroit
- G. TV-Local News
- H. Internet- mlb.com/tigers, the Tigers official website
- I. Internet- Other, please specify

Please send answers to brobetoy@gmail.com

Dedication

This inaugural issue of The Catcher's Mitt is dedicated to Lolich, Freehan, Kaline, Horton, and all the heroes from the 1968 World Championship team.

