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# EMIL ROTHE CHICAGO CHAPTER

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**BILL PEARCH, SECRETARY - PETER YEE, TREASURER - JOHN RACANELLI, MEMBERSHIP**



*Above:* A new roadside marker along Woodside Avenue in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania honors Hall of Famer Hack Wilson. (Photo: Bill Pearch)

## ELLWOOD CITY CELEBRATES HACK WILSON WITH HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION

BY: BILL PEARCH

When the Ellwood City (Pennsylvania) Area Historical Society recently rolled out the red carpet to honor one of its favorite sons, Hack Wilson, the date also marked the 89th anniversary of the legendary slugger's final Major League at-bat at Pittsburgh's Forbes Field. The historical marker dedication on Friday, August 25, 2023, was also an intersection of several baseball passions for one Chicago attorney.

John Racanelli is a Chicago Cubs fan and Hack Wilson enthusiast who enjoys researching and chronicling the Hall of Famer's life. "His life story is the perfect embodiment of F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous quote, 'Show me a hero and I'll write you a tragedy.'"

"When it was announced in late 2022 that a historical marker was going to be placed in Ellwood City honoring Hack Wilson, I immediately planned to attend the dedication ceremony," said John Racanelli, "not only as a fan of Wilson's, but to document the event as co-chair of the Society for American Baseball Research's Landmarks Committee. Wilson always remembered Ellwood City fondly."

"Intending all along to simply attend the ceremony, the Historical Society ultimately asked whether I would be interested in giving the keynote address at the dedication ceremony," Racanelli said. "I jumped at the chance!"

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**BY JASON A. SCHWARTZ**

Four cards, one player. Can you guess who?



## EVEN BAD BASEBALL CAN BE GOOD!



BY: FRANCIS KINLAW

Until statistical analysis became the accepted method of evaluating athletic performance, sportswriters and fans seldom hesitated to express personal views regarding the strengths and weaknesses of major-league players. In September of 1957, *Sport* magazine published comments from the files of an unidentified National League club that compared every team's likely starters at the beginning of the 1957 season to their peers. The qualities of each club's pitching staff and utility players were also ranked from best to worst, but by team rather than individually. (In July of 1960, *Sport* would publish a survey of American League managers that revealed insights about the positive characteristics and deficiencies of that circuit's players. The results of that survey, with emphasis upon men on the roster of the White Sox, were discussed in an article that appeared in the July-September edition of this newsletter.)

Fans in the Chicago area were naturally most interested in how those wearing Cubs uniforms were perceived by at least one of the opposing National League organizations—unless the player ratings had happened to be obtained from the Cubs' front office (the odds of which, based upon the number of competing clubs, were one in eight).

To place the ratings in context, the Cubs had finished in seventh place in 1953 and 1954 before rising to sixth in 1955 and falling into the cellar in 1956. They and the lowly Pittsburgh Pirates would share seventh place—as well as last place—upon completion of the 1957 season.

*Above: Jack Littrell enjoyed a brief major league career. He played 50 games for the Philadelphia/Kansas City Athletics before ending his career with the Chicago Cubs. (Photo: Getty Images)*

The comparative rankings and the comments that appeared in the rating club's summaries follow:

**First base** – Dale Long was ranked last among the league's first sackers. "You don't become a good hitter at the age of 30, as it appeared Long had last year when he went on his celebrated home-run spree. Even in the minor leagues he seldom hit consistently. He has always been a streak hitter. If you bear down on him the first time up and get him out, it seems to ruin him for the rest of the day and you will probably have an easy time with him after that. He has never been a good defensive first baseman, either." (While with the Pirates, Long had homered in eight consecutive games between May 19th and May 28th of 1956).

**Second base** – Bobby Morgan ranked at the bottom of the rankings among second basemen. "The Cubs' situation at

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 –

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# IT HAPPENED HERE ... UNFORTUNATELY!



BY: JASON SCHWARTZ

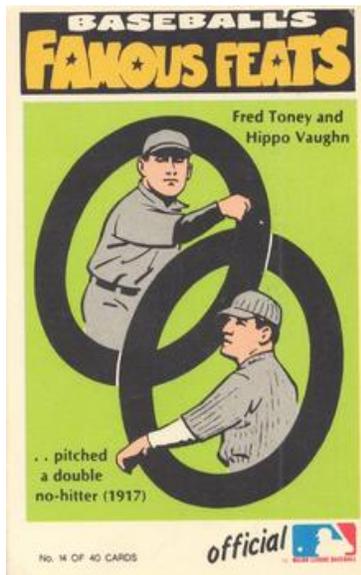
Writing for the [SABR Baseball Cards](#) blog, Emil Rothe chapter membership lead and McFarland Award winner John Racanelli recently [profiled](#) a baseball card set highlighting the top ten moments in Wrigley Field history. In this series, I've flipped the script to offer a baseball card set "lowlighting" the bottom ten moments in the history of our local ballparks. This is the third installment in the series.

## Weeghman Park: May 2, 1917

The Cubs were off to a reasonably strong start in 1917, finishing April just a game out of first place and beginning May with a 9-0 whitewashing of St. Louis. "What a perfect day for a no-hitter!" may not have been what any of the 3,500 or so on hand were thinking as they passed through the Weeghman turnstiles on May 2, but if they had, what a fine example of careful what you wish for! Sure enough, through nine-innings the visitors had managed nary a hit off Chicago ace Hippo Vaughn, who had also fanned 10 for good measure. Hippo was shoving, as they most certainly did not say back then.

Of course, were that the full story, the game would hardly merit a list of Chicago lowlights. We must therefore turn our attention to the Cubs bats, which to this point had equaled those of the Red Legs, that is to say did absolutely nothing! Though it would not qualify today as such, it was at the time baseball's first and

*Above: James Leslie "Hippo" Vaughn pitched nine seasons for the Chicago Cubs (1913-1921). He won a career-high 23 games during the 1917 season. (Photo: Chicago Tribune)*



**BASEBALL'S FAMOUS FEATS**

**TONEY AND VAUGHN**

Jim Vaughn of the Cubs and Fred Toney of the Reds were the aces of their clubs in 1917. Vaughn was on his way to a 23-13 season while Toney was heading for 24-16. Both were big men — "Hippo" Vaughn went 6'4" and was 215; Toney was 6'1" and almost 200. On a May day they hooked up in an historic pitching battle — the only game in which neither team got a hit in the first nine innings! In the tenth, Toney again set down the Cubs without a safety. But Vaughn wasn't so lucky — a hit and an error cost him the game, 1 to 0. But throughout a century of baseball, the duel went down as the only double no-hitter in the game's annals.

No. 14 of 40 CARDS by R. G. Laughlin ©1972 Fleet Corp. Phila., Pa. 19141

only double no-hitter! What a spectacle for the fans, at least through nine, but as they say, "All good things must come to an end."

Vaughn's half of the double no-no went kaput rather quickly, thanks to a one-out single by shortstop Larry Kopf in the top of the tenth. Three batters later, Kopf would score

on a single by none other than the great Jim Thorpe, ending any hopes of a Vaughn shutout. Finally, when the heart of the Cubs order went down in rapid succession in the bottom of the frame, all Vaughn was able to take away from his masterful twirling was a heartbreaking loss to Reds pitcher Toney. If that ain't a hard luck day at the ballpark, I don't know what is! After all, who pitches a no-hitter and loses?!



## BROWN-FOR-TAYLOR



BY: RICK ZUCKER

St. Louisans love to remember the Brock-for-Broglio trade of June 1964, where the Cardinals acquired young Lou Brock in exchange for veteran pitcher Ernie Broglio, whose best days were behind him. A future Hall-of-Famer, Brock became a catalyst who spurred the Cardinals to three NL pennants and two world championships over a five-year period. The fact that the archrival Cubs were on the wrong end of the deal made it even sweeter.

But long before Brock-for-Broglio, in fact 120 years ago in December, there was Brown-for-Taylor, also a Cardinal-Cub trade. But this time the shoe was on the other foot. On December 12, 1903, St. Louis sent young Mordecai Brown to the Cubs in exchange for veteran pitcher Jack Taylor. Brown would become a Hall-of-Famer and the Cubs' ace, leading them to four NL pennants and two world championships over a five-year period.

Mordecai Brown was born in 1876 in Indiana. Multiple childhood accidents left the right-hander with a deformed pitching hand. He had a stub of an index finger, a bent middle finger, and a paralyzed baby finger. But his arm was fine. The combination of a strong arm and deformed fingers resulted in fast pitches with bewildering movement.

Let's look at this trade chronologically:

**1902** – Brown pitched for Class-A Omaha of the Western League. He threw 352 innings, registering a 27-15 record with a 2.22 ERA. The Omaha media nicknamed him “Three-Finger” and he caught

the attention of Patsy Donovan, player-manager of the sixth place St. Louis Cardinals. Donovan signed Brown for 1903.

Taylor was one of the NL's top pitchers. He was 23-11 and led the league in ERA (1.29) and shutouts (8).

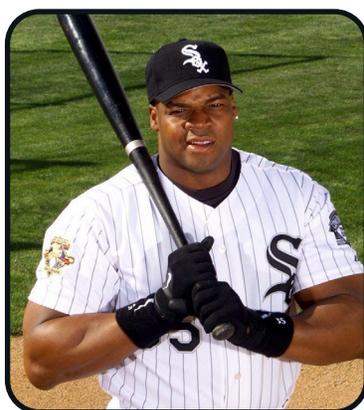
**1903** – Brown made his major-league debut on April 19, starting for the Cardinals against the up-and-coming Cubs. Brown baffled the Cubs over five innings in a rain-shortened game, shutting them out on one hit as St. Louis won, 3-0. The Cubs' Frank Chance, who was 0-2 with a strikeout, was mesmerized by the rookie. Brown finished the season with a reasonable 9-13 record for the last place Cardinals who were a disastrous 43-94. The Cards were last in the NL in runs scored, and 7th in fielding percentage and ERA. But Brown easily led Cardinal pitchers with a 2.60 ERA (126 ERA+), and led the entire team with 2.6 WAR.

Taylor followed his brilliant 1902 season with a 21-14 record and a 2.45 ERA for the third-place Cubs. But Chicago believed Taylor was crooked and wanted to unload him. Cubs' owner James Hart suspected Taylor was being paid by gamblers to throw games, including some to the White Sox in the Chicago City Series following the 1903 season. Taylor would later admit that he got \$100 from the Cubs for beating the White Sox, but \$500 for losing to them.

It was as simple as this: Hart wanted to get rid of Taylor; Frank Chance coveted Brown. So in December, when the Cubs offered the established star Taylor for the rising, but unproven Brown, the Cardinals jumped at it. To even up the trade, St. Louis threw in its main catcher, light-hitting Jack O'Neill, in exchange for minor-league catcher, Larry McLean.

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 –

# RANDOM TANDEM



## ERNIE BANKS & FRANK THOMAS

Hall of Famer Ernie Banks is the only Cubs player to win back-to-back MVP Awards. He began his MLB career at 20 years old, retired when he was 40 years old, hit four walk-off home runs in Chicago, and led the league in slugging average once—during an MVP campaign (1958).

Hall of Famer Frank Thomas is the only White Sox player to win back-to-back MVP Awards. He began his MLB career at 20 years old, retired when he was 40 years old, hit four walk-off home runs in Chicago, and led the league in slugging average once—during an MVP campaign (1994).

**Have a sweet Chicago Random Tandem?  
Send it to [johnbracanelli@gmail.com](mailto:johnbracanelli@gmail.com)!**

## 2023 NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

Chicago's Emil Rothe Chapter is a bimonthly publication. We want to highlight your contributions. If you would like to submit content for a future issue, contact Newsletter Editor Bill Pearch at [wcpearch@comcast.net](mailto:wcpearch@comcast.net).

**NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2023**

Published: December 4 / Content Deadline: November 20

second has not been good since Gene Baker, a good player, was traded to the Pirates. Morgan, who has a good batting eye and some power, is a dead ballplayer, with little of the speed and reflexes to play winning ball." [Author's note: You read that comment correctly. An employee of the anonymous opposing club did describe Morgan as nothing more than a "deceased" ballplayer!]

**Third base** – Ernie Banks ranked third at the hot corner behind Eddie Mathews of the Braves and Ken Boyer of the Cardinals. "One of the few real players the Cubs have, Banks can fill in either at third or short. Because he has little range at shortstop, third base is his best position. He has a quick, powerful swing which propels a ball out of the park as fast as anybody's in the league. His homer total has fallen off after his sophomore year (44 in 1955) because the pitchers are keeping the ball away from him and he seems to be standing back from the plate more than he used to. His arm is only fair." [Author's note: Banks played shortstop in 100 games in 1957 while appearing at third base in part or all of 58 games. According to Retrosheet, Bobby Adams was the primary third baseman for the Cubs in 1957.]

**Shortstop** – Jack Littrell was listed last for this position. "Littrell, while good defensively, has yet to prove himself at the plate. He does a better job at the position than either Banks or Morgan, but does not have their power. The same can be said for Casey Wise when he is playing there." [Author's note: As stated above, Ernie Banks was the primary shortstop for the Cubs in 1957.]

**Left field** – The combination of Bob Speake and Frank Ernaga fell in line with an obvious trend as they joined several of their teammates by being judged deficient at their position. "Speake, Ernaga or whoever else is in there for the Cubs must rank last. In left field, as at most other positions, the Cubs must look for additional help." [Author's note: Lee Walls played left field more often than any other Cubs player in 1957.]

**Center field** – Jim Bolger was one of the few Cub players to receive compliments from the unidentified organization, although his ranking among eight center fielders was seventh (ahead of Bobby Gene Smith of the Cardinals). "Bolger is a good-looking fly chaser who runs well and has a strong arm. Hitting is his problem at the moment." [Author's note: Bob Speake started more games in center field than Bolger during the 1957 season.]

**Right field** – Walt Moryn, like Bolger, received measured praise despite ranking sixth among right fielders. "Moryn is a pretty good outfielder with average running speed. His power can break up a ball game, but he will never be a consistent hitter."

**Catcher** – Blunt comments regarding Cal Neeman clearly explain why he was considered (at least by this one club) to be the league's worst backstop. "Neeman is not really ready as a big-league catcher. He is not a good receiver, he throws awkwardly and has plenty of trouble hitting the curve ball."

**Pitching staff** – The Cubs' hurlers ranked seventh in comparison to those of other clubs. "Chicago's staff is rated above the Reds' because of its potential. It has some fine young pitchers, including Moe Drabowsky, Don Kaiser and Dick Drott, but each still has a lot to learn. Bob Rush has a great fast ball which is

... season with the Chicago Cubs with 56 home runs, which stood for 68 years, and 191 RBIs. He finished his career with the Philadelphia Phillies in 1934 with a lifetime .307 batting average, 244 home runs, and 1,063 RBIs. Inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1979.

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION 2023



## HACK WILSON HISTORICAL MARKER (CONT.)

Inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1979, Wilson is far from a household name. When the idea was pitched to memorialize him with a blue-and-gold Pennsylvania Historical Marker, Everett Bleakney, chair of the Hack Wilson Marker Committee, knew the local star's credentials would knock the application out of the park.

Lewis Robert "Hack" Wilson, born in Ellwood City on April 26, 1900, was one of the dominant sluggers of the 1920s and 1930s. He donned the uniforms of four National League franchises during his brief 12-year career—New York Giants, Chicago Cubs, Brooklyn Dodgers and Philadelphia Phillies—and clubbed 244 home runs. Wilson, for a fleeting moment, was considered the "Babe Ruth" of the Senior Circuit.

His 1930 season as a member of the Cubs was pure magic. He belted 56 home runs which stood as a team and National League record until 1998. He also knocked in 191 runs which stands as the Major League Baseball single-season record.

"There is so much more to Hack Wilson than those two statistics," said Ed Hartig, Chicago Cubs team historian. "He terrorized National League pitchers for five seasons. Add to that those great Cubs teams and teammates ... the Great Depression ... Prohibition ... Al Capone-era Chicago ... and Hack was right in the middle of all of it! Hopefully this ceremony will prompt others to take a few minutes to learn more."

Bob Morabito, Ellwood City Area Historical Society's president, served as emcee during the dedication ceremony held at Lincoln High School Sports Complex in Ewing Park. He welcomed a host of local elected and appointed officials, representatives from the Heinz History Center and Lawrence County Historical Society, and representatives from the Pittsburgh Pirates and

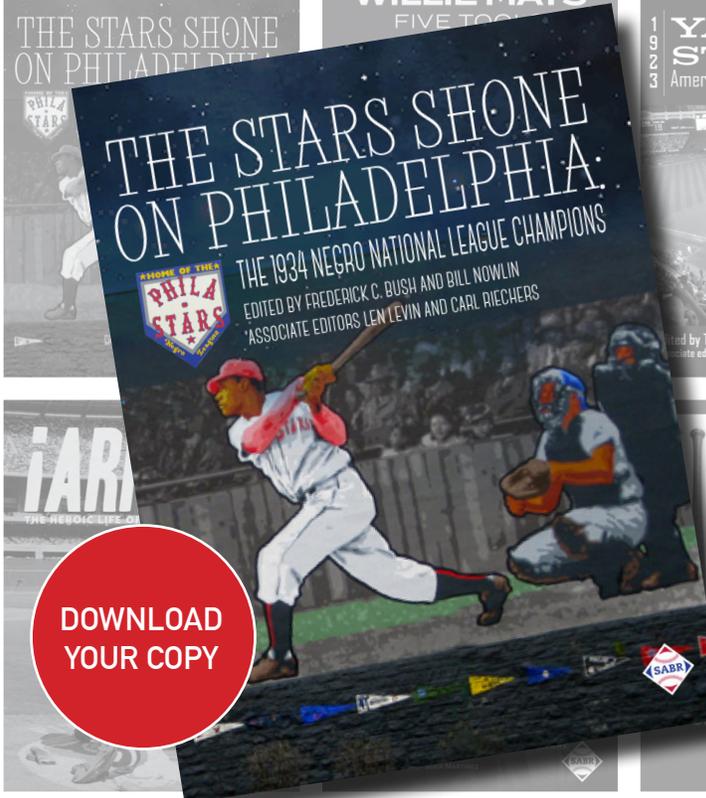


**Top:** Jason Schwartz, Bill Pearch and John Racanelli catch a sneak peek of the Hack Wilson historical marker prior to Ellwood City's dedication festivities. (Photo: John Racanelli)

**Inset:** Keynote speaker John Racanelli highlighted Wilson's life and career during the historical marker dedication ceremony. (Photo: Jason Schwartz)

Chicago Cubs. Lincoln High School's Blue Band also performed rousing renditions of the national anthem and "Take Me Out to the Ballgame."

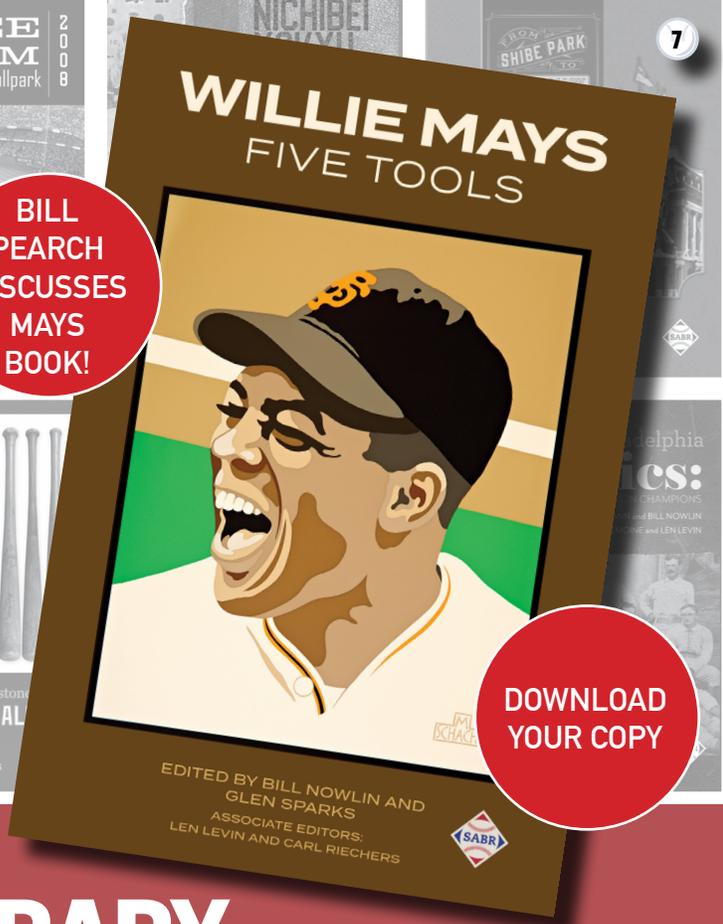
Racanelli, a 2023 McFarland-SABR Baseball Research Award winner, was the event's featured speaker. He delivered a comprehensive look at Wilson's career on and off of the field. He punctuated the slugger's timeless baseball achievements and humorous moments, but did not steer away from the personal demons he faced—struggles with alcoholism, estrangement from his wife and son, and physical and verbal altercations. Wilson was 48 years old when he passed away on November 23, 1948, after a fall in his Baltimore apartment.



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## THE STARS SHONE ON PHILADELPHIA: THE 1934 NEGRO NATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

In 1934, Ed Bolden's Philadelphia Stars joined the new Negro National League II (NNL2), which had been founded one year earlier. After fending off their intrastate-rivals, the Pittsburgh Crawfords, the Stars claimed the NNL2's second-half championship and faced the first-half champions for the title. They defeated the Chicago American Giants to claim the NNL2 crown.

Over two dozen SABR members researched the Stars' history for this book, which includes biographies of as many of the team's players as possible, even those who participated in only a single game. The 1934 Stars featured future Hall of Famers Raleigh "Biz" Mackey and Jud Wilson; stalwarts like Phil Cockrell, Webster McDonald, and Chaney White; shooting star Stewart "Slim" Jones; and temporary fill-ins like Frederick Coleman and Clifford "Whip" Irons.

**Contributors:** Rebecca T. Alpert, Richard Bogovich, Frederick C. Bush, Alan Cohen, Joseph Gerard, Darren Gibson, Margaret M. Gripshover, Michael Hauptert, Leslie Heaphy, Paul Hofmann, Jay Hurd, Bill Johnson, Thomas Kern, Bob LeMoine, Len Levin, Bill Nowlin, Will Osgood, James Overmyer, Richard J. Puerzer, Chris Rainey, Carl Riechers, Courtney Michelle Smith, Jeb Stewart, Mike Whiteman, and Dave Wilkie.

## WILLIE MAYS: FIVE TOOLS

Willie Mays thrilled baseball fans for more than two decades. He could do it all—in the outfield, at bat, and on the bases. *Five Tools* tells the story of arguably the greatest baseball player in the game's history, through more than 20 insightful essays and recaps of over 30 of the most significant games in his career. Some essays explore Mays' time in the Negro Leagues and minor leagues, while others examine the the relationship of Mays to his managers, the press, and his mentoring of Bobby and Barry Bonds.

The National League Rookie of the Year in 1951 with the New York Giants, Mays made his big-league debut just four years after Jackie Robinson broke baseball's shameful color line. He brought with him a dynamic blend of power and speed. Just a few years into his amazing career, he left with his teammates for San Francisco.

Mays batted .301 lifetime and belted 660 home runs. He hit more than 50 homers in two seasons and led the National League in stolen bases four times. Mays also won 12 Gold Gloves for his fielding excellence in center field. The "Say Hey Kid" earned a spot on a record 24 All-Star teams. Incredibly, he won just two MVP awards.

A collaborative effort of 51 SABR members, this book celebrates a player who was known by some as "Wondrous Willie."

**Contributors:** Jake Bell, Luis A. Blandón Jr., Kurt Blumenau, Richard Bogovich, Thomas J. Brown Jr., John J. Burbridge Jr., Frederick C. Bush, Alan Cohen, Richard Cuicchi, Dan Fields, James Forr, Brian M. Frank, John Fredland, Robert F. Garratt, Craig Garretson, Gordon J. Gattie, Steven M. Glassman, Duke Goldman, Chip Greene, Lou Hernández, Paul Hofmann, Jason Horowitz, Mike Huber, Douglas Jordan, David Kaiser, Brent Kallestad, Dave Lande, Kevin Larkin, Bob LeMoine, Len Levin, Chad Moody, Rob Neyer, Bill Nowlin, Tim Odzer, Tim Otto, Richard J. Puerzer, Stephen V. Rice, Carl Riechers, Howard Rosenberg, John T. Saccoman, Mark Simon, Glen Sparks, Creg Stephenson, Mark S. Sternman, Jeb Stewart, Stew Thornley, Tom Thress, Theo Tobel, Bob Webster, Daniel Winkler, and Gregory H. Wolf.

**LET'S TALK SABR BOOKS!**  
Calling all baseball writers, bloggers and podcasters. I'd love to discuss the latest books in SABR's Digital Library with you. Contact Bill Pearch via email at [wcpearch@comcast.net](mailto:wcpearch@comcast.net).

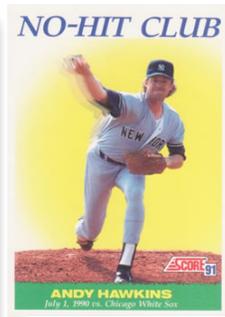
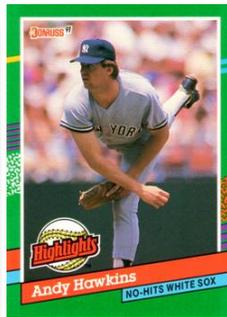


*Above: On Saturday, October 21, 2023, SABR Chicago member Bill Pearch joined SABR's St. Louis and Central Illinois chapter members at St. Louis' Field House Museum to experience the exhibit "Rounding the Bases: The History of St. Louis Browns Baseball."*

## IT HAPPENED HERE ... (CONT.)

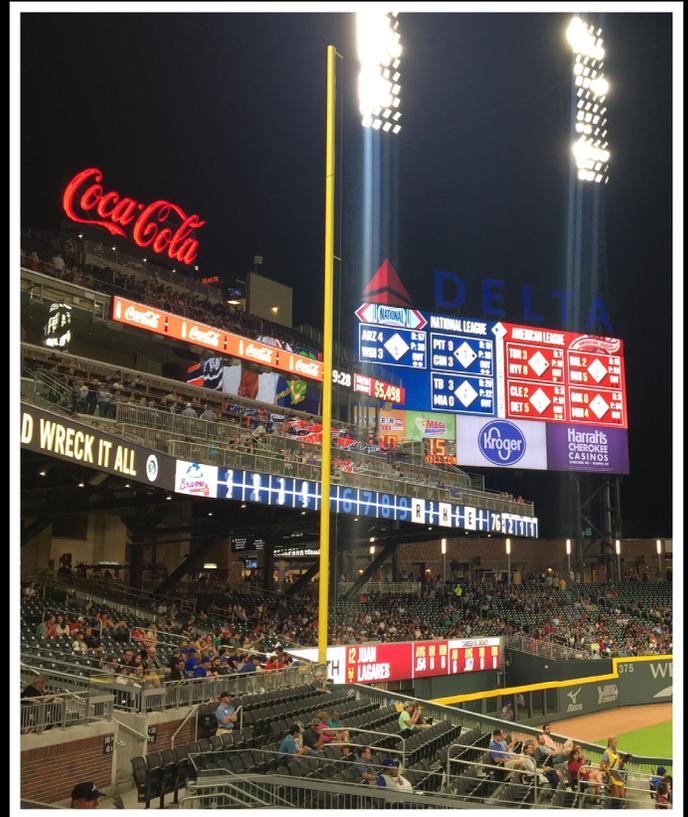
### Comiskey Park: July 1, 1990

Fast forward more than seven decades to a summer Sunday at Comiskey where our high-flying White Sox (45-26) played host to the league-worst Bronx Bombers (28-44). On the bright side, fans of our Sox were treated to a win, a 4-0 shutout in fact that propelled setup man Barry Jones to an eye-popping 10-1 record. But Southside Hit Men our boys were not! Exactly how many hits did they tally against Yankee righthander Andy Hawkins? Let's just say it starts with a Z and wasn't a zillion!



As with the Vaughn feat, the Hawkins game is no longer recognized by Major League Baseball as a no-hitter. Still, for the fans who came out that day hoping to see Ivan Calderon, Ron Kittle, and company do some serious bashing, they know what they saw, Commissioner Manfred be damned!

# SCOREBOARD PUZZLER



The World Series is underway! Let's test your scoreboard identification skills. From the clues in this photo, can you successfully guess the exact date of the game? You may need to zoom in. Some of the clues might be deceiving. Good luck.

Our July-September 2023 issue had two correct guesses. The photo provided featured Milwaukee's Miller Park on July 7, 2018. The Atlanta Braves beat the Brewers, 5-1. Congratulations to:

Ed Hartig / Richard Smiley

Do you have a scoreboard photo that will have your fellow chapter members scratching their heads? Send it to Bill Pearch at [wpearch@comcast.net](mailto:wpearch@comcast.net). Note that photos are not limited to Chicago ballparks.

## GET PUBLISHED!

Let SABR's Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter help publish your baseball research. We are looking for new articles to share in the Chapter's newsletter and our social media outlets. Submit your articles to Bill Pearch, newsletter editor, via email at [wpearch@comcast.net](mailto:wpearch@comcast.net) for inclusion in an upcoming edition.





# HISTORY HUNTERS

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## SITE OF BRAVES FIELD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETING!

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18**

**ELMHURST PUBLIC LIBRARY  
125 S. PROSPECT AVE. / ELMHURST, IL 60126  
1:00 - 3:00 P.M.**

#### SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

**ADAM DAROWSKI - IMMACULATE GRID (VIRTUAL)  
JACOB POMRENKE - BLACK SOX TRANSCRIPT  
BILL PEARCH - DWIGHT, ILLINOIS BASEBALL**



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*Above: Boston University acquired James Gaffney's overgrown "perfect ballpark" and, in the process of converting it for the university's own athletic purposes, demolished the majority of the plant, although much of the old right field pavilion remains and the Spanish Colonial ticket and administrative office building now serves as the headquarters for the Boston University police force.*

*The Boston Braves and Braves Field live on in the memories of a hardy group of preservationists known as the Boston Braves Historical Association. Baseball, the game, and how the nation and its cities relate to that game, have changed several times over since March 1953, but somehow the love of the game, the love of one's team whether that team is good or bad, and our memories, live on. (Source: SABR.org)*

*Located at 961 Gaffney Street, Boston, MA 2215  
(42.352411, -71.119086) / [SABR Baseball Map Site ID: 699]*

If you are interested in joining SABR's Landmarks Committee and assisting with the project, contact John Racanelli.

Do you go out of your way to visit old ballparks, historical markers, statues or gravesites? We would love to hear about it! Send us your experiences and photos to [johnbracanelli@gmail.com](mailto:johnbracanelli@gmail.com)!

# 10 EVEN BAD BASEBALL (CONT.)

hard to hit at night, but as the Cubs play no night ball at home it doesn't do him much good. He just pumps in the fast ball; he has no slow stuff. In relief, Jim Brosnan is not too fast and has only a mediocre curve."

**The bench** – The employees of the rating organization spent very little time addressing the quality of reserves on the Cubs' roster, offering only this short but not sweet comment: "Once again the Cubs trail all the rest. There's not much else to say."

Cumulatively, the opinions of the unidentified organization are abysmal: Only Ernie Banks of the anticipated "everyday" players achieved an acceptable rating. One of his teammates ranked sixth and one ranked seventh, but the other five were rated as the worst National League player at their positions. The ranking assigned to the Cubs' pitching staff and the blunt comment regarding Chicago's utility players merely added to the criticism of the Cub's roster.

If the ratings of the North-Side players had been converted into numbers with the best player at each position receiving a "1" and the worst an "8," the average score for the eight Cubs regulars would have been 7.00 and the average attained by a combination of the pitching staff and reserves would have been 7.50. If the ratings of the eight position players had been combined with those of the pitching staff and frequently used reserves, the cumulative score would have been 7.10. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the Cubbies were tied for last place at the end of the 1957 season!

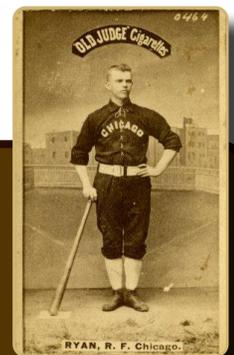
It is often said that every fielding position is not be of equal importance, and that some roles should be assigned a greater weight than others. If differing weights are assigned to certain positions, the positions receiving "extra credit" are usually those in the middle of the diamond (catcher, second base, shortstop, and center field). The average rating for Cubs players at these four fielding positions would have been a puny 7.75, although replacing Littrell with Banks at the shortstop position would have increased this number to a limited degree.

Before concluding this review of the information in the unidentified club's files, one more exercise—albeit one which could be expected to yield a predictable result—can be conducted.

Selection of starting lineups for the 1957 All-Star Game in St. Louis was to be based upon fan voting but, when an organized campaign in and around Cincinnati succeeded in the election of seven of the Reds' eight regular position players to starting roles, Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick ordered the replacement of outfielders Gus Bell and Wally Post by Henry Aaron and Willie Mays. Therefore, while the validity of the National League's starting lineup in the "Midsummer Classic"

can be reasonably questioned due to biased voting by many loyal followers of the Reds, it is not surprising that Ernie Banks was the only Cubs player named to the National League's team. Having gained recognition as a shortstop, he was chosen by All-Star manager Walter Alston of the Dodgers to back up Roy McMillan of the Reds. Banks pinch hit for McMillan in the fifth inning and grounded into a double play. Remaining in the game following that plate appearance, he struck out in the seventh inning before driving in a run on a single to left field in the bottom of the ninth frame. After advancing to second base on Minnie Minoso's subsequent throw to third baseman Frank Malzone, Banks represented the potential tying run as the American Leaguers clung to a narrow 6-5 lead, but Gil Hodges lined out to Minoso to end the game.

These findings relating to the Cubs of 1957 certainly seem unremarkable and insignificant when compared to those of contending clubs such as the Braves, Cardinals, or the soon-to-be-extinct Brooklyn Dodgers. For loyal fans who spent afternoons in Wrigley Field in the 1950s, however, recalling the names and athletic tendencies of specific players may evoke bittersweet memories of the era. And those memories should remind us all that exposure to baseball—no matter how well or poorly it is played—can be a pleasurable experience! ♡



## TOP 10: MOST CAREER TRIPLES WITH A CHICAGO TEAM

RANK	PLAYER	TRIPLES	YEAR	TEAM
1	JIMMY RYAN	142	1885-1900	CUBS
2	CAP ANSON	124	1876-1897	CUBS
3	FRANK SCHULTE	117	1904-1916	CUBS
4	BILL DAHLEN	106	1891-1898	CUBS
5	SHANO COLLINS	104	1910-1920	WHITE SOX
6	NELLIE FOX	104	1950-1963	WHITE SOX
7	LUKE APPLING	102	1930-1950	WHITE SOX
8	EDDIE COLLINS	102	1915-1926	WHITE SOX
9	PHIL CAVARRETTA	99	1934-1953	CUBS
10	JOE TINKER	93	1902-1916	CUBS

HAVE YOU COMPILED A TOP TEN LIST THAT THE CHAPTER WOULD FAWN OVER? SEND IT TO JOHN RACANELLI VIA EMAIL AT [JOHNBRACANELLI@GMAIL.COM](mailto:JOHNBRACANELLI@GMAIL.COM).

SOME ARTWORK PROVIDED BY:



**CLICK HERE TO PLAY**  
CAN YOU NAME THE LAST FIVE  
MLB MVPS AT EACH POSITION?

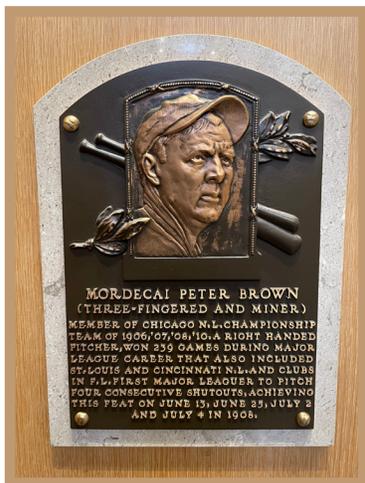
[SABRCHICAGO.COM](http://SABRCHICAGO.COM)

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# BROWN-FOR-TAYLOR (CONT.)

1904 – Taylor performed well for the Cardinals. He was 20–19 with a 2.22 ERA and a league-leading 39 complete games, as the Cardinals vaulted from eighth place to fifth under their new manager, ace pitcher and future Hall-of-Famer, Kid Nichols.



In his second big-league season Brown was 15–10 with a team-leading 1.86 ERA (142 ERA+). The Cubs finished second behind the Giants.

1905 – The Cardinals prosperity was short-lived. Nichols faded and was shipped to Philadelphia in July. Taylor's ERA ballooned to a subpar 3.44 and he finished 15–21, but led the team in games and innings pitched. The Cardinals slipped to sixth place, at 58–96. Suspicion of dishonest play continued to follow Taylor, but the league never officially established his guilt.

Brown continued his upward path. He won 18 games with a 2.17 ERA (137 ERA+). The Cubs had another stellar season, finishing third at 93–60.

1906 – The roof caved in for the Cardinals on the Brown-for-Taylor trade. Taylor started out well enough. He was 8–9 with a 2.15 ERA when the Cards traded him on July 1, back to Chicago of all places, for two young players and cash. Hart no longer owned the Cubs so they were open to reuniting with Taylor. The two young players were Fred Beebe, a promising righthanded pitcher, and Pete Noonan, a catcher/first baseman. Beebe topped the NL in strikeouts while going 9–9 with a 3.02 ERA for the Cardinals. He would prove a serviceable but mediocre hurler for the Cardinals through 1909. Noonan didn't amount to much.

After the trade Taylor was 12–3 for the Cubs with a superb 1.83 ERA. But Brown was better. Had there been a Cy Young award, Brown would have won it. He was 26–6, and led the league with a 1.04 ERA (253 ERA+), nine shutouts, and a .934 WHIP. The Cubs set a record with 116 wins, taking the pennant by 20 games, but lost to the White Sox in the World Series. Taylor did not appear.

1907 – 1910 (Four Seasons) – The Cardinals had little left from the Brown trade. Meanwhile, Brown was 101–38 with a 1.51 ERA (170 ERA+). He led the league in several categories. Perhaps his best year was 1909, when he led the league with 27 wins, 32 complete games, and 7 saves. Even Taylor won seven games for the Cubs in 1907 before fading into the minors. The Cubs won three pennants and two world championships over these four seasons.

The Cubs hammered the Cardinals in the Brown-for-Taylor trade. Six decades later Brock-for-Broglio was a dish the Cardinals best served cold. ☺

## Sources

Baseball-reference.com; SABR Bios on Brown and Taylor; Cindy Thomson & Scott Brown, *Three Finger, the Mordecai Brown Story* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 22–26.



Above: The iconic image that inspired Racanelli's interest in researching the slugger's life and career. (Source: Newspapers.com - Chicago Tribune, August 31, 1930, p.13)

# HACK WILSON HISTORICAL MARKER (CONT.)

Following Racanelli's speech, Ellwood City baseball player Lucas Bleakney unveiled the roadside marker located on Woodside Avenue (State Route 65).

When asked what sparked his interest in Wilson, Racanelli did not hesitate. "That famous photo," he said, referring to the iconic image that graced the front page of the *Chicago Tribune's* sports section on August 31, 1930.

"In 2021, I traveled along the 'Hack Wilson Trail' from Wrigley Field to Cooperstown—with stops in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania and Martinsburg, West Virginia—to experience first-hand the formative places that took young Lew Wilson from uncertain beginnings to baseball's highest heights," Racanelli said. "SABR member Don Mancini conducted an immersive Ellwood City tour highlighting where Wilson lived, learned to play baseball, and where his mother was buried following her death when Wilson was just seven years old."

"It was quite an honor to play a part in the Hack Wilson marker dedication," Racanelli said. "Many thanks to the Ellwood City Area Historical Society for putting together such a fantastic ceremony and especially Bob Morabito, Everett Bleakney, and Don Mancini for their invitation and hospitality." Several SABR members including Bill Pearch, Jason Schwartz, and Andy Terrick also made the trip out to Ellwood City for the ceremony.

To learn more about Hack Wilson's life and career, you can read Racanelli's latest article, "Hack Wilson: A Pugilist," in SABR's *The National Pastime: Heart of the Midwest*. You can also search [SABR's Baseball Map](#), created and maintained by the SABR Landmarks Research Committee, to find baseball-related landmarks in your neighborhood. ☺

This article originally appeared in *Here's the Pitch: the IBWAA Newsletter* on September 20, 2023.

# PATENT PORTAL: JAMES E. BENNETT AND BASEBALL'S MOST RIDICULOUS EQUIPMENT



BY: JOHN RACANELLI

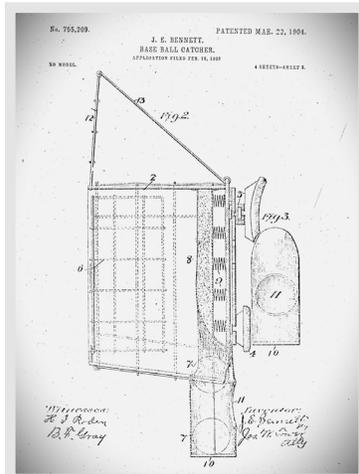
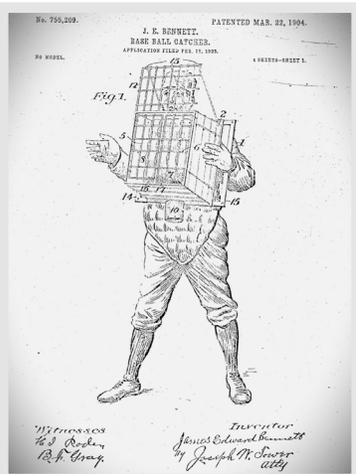
Generally speaking, a utility patent will be granted for an invention as long as it is “new, nonobvious and useful.” Whether a new device is “useful” is somewhat interesting in that the patent examiner is charged only with deciding whether an invention will function as expected and otherwise has a “useful purpose.” However, “useful purpose” does not always mean that the invention will be practical or marketable.

So how did James Bennett hope to revolutionize baseball?

It is not clear whether inventor James E. Bennett of Mokenca, Illinois is the same James Bennett who played for the Sharon Ironmongers in the 1895 Iron and Oil League, regardless, it seems clear that he did not consider whether his inventions would be functional when used in an actual baseball game. (Either that, or he just despised catching a ball with the existing baseball glove technology available at the turn of the 20th Century.

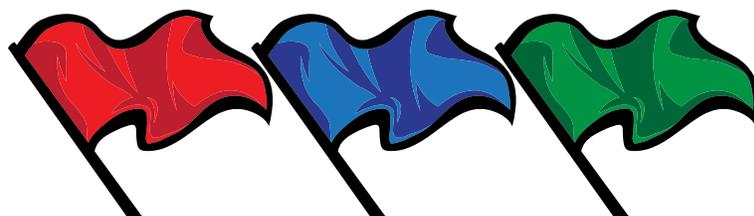
By the early 1900s, baseball gloves had undergone constant improvement. Starting with George Rawlings in 1885, (Pat. No. 325,968) protective gloves were becoming more acceptable to protect fielders’ hands. In 1891, Harry Decker added a thick pad to the front of the glove (Pat. No. 450,355) and Bob Reach added an inflatable chamber (Pat. No. 450,717). By 1895 Elroy Rogers had designed the classic “pillow-style” catcher’s mitt (Pat. No. 528,343) that would be used with little change until Randy Hundley single-handedly pioneered a new catching technique in the 1960s using a hinged catcher’s mitt.

Thumbing his nose at the baseball glove technology in use at the time, James Bennett thought way outside the box by eliminating the catcher’s mitt all together, instead attaching a cage to the catcher in place of the chest protector. Here is Bennett’s “Base Ball Catcher” invention in all of its ill-conceived glory:



Bennett apparently envisioned the catcher squatting behind home plate acting as a passive target for the pitcher’s offerings.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 —



## ZEMAN'S ZINGERS



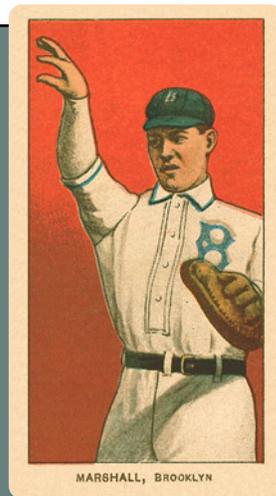
BY: DAVE ZEMAN

The 2023 World Series features the Texas Rangers and Arizona Diamondbacks. To recognize the moment, here’s a Texas- and Arizona-themed quiz. Ready to play ball? Here’s the pitch!

1. What two batters have had a double-digit home run season for both the Texas Rangers and Arizona Diamondbacks?
2. Name the pair of pitchers to enjoy a 10-win season for both teams.
3. Who was the only skipper to manage both clubs?
4. What former Cy Young Award winner holds the career wins record for Arizona-born hurlers?
5. Who was named to 10 All-Star teams, the most for any Texas-born pitcher?

## JULY-SEPTEMBER 2023: HOW DID YOU DO?

1. Noted bison supplier / 18th Dodger to be named NL Rookie of the Year **Buffalo Bill Cody Bellinger**
2. Cookie king / 19th-century flamethrower **Wally Amos Rusie**
3. Won 16 games as a rookie in 2012 / “Wrecking Ball” singer **Wade Miley Cyrus**
4. 6-time 200-hit batter / NFL player turned *Brooklyn 99* actor **Bill Terry Crews**
5. Most recent Cub with a complete game no-hitter / boxing referee and judge **Alec Mills Lane**



## PASTIME PASSAGES

“Baseball today is a profession the same as law or medicine and the man who does not seek to get to the top of the profession is not wanted in the major leagues.”

— William Riddle “Doc” Marshall,  
Oshkosh (Wisconsin) Daily Northwestern, June 8, 1912

Do you have a favorite baseball-related quote? Send it to John Racanelli via email at [johnbracanelli@gmail.com](mailto:johnbracanelli@gmail.com).

# THE POSTSEASON: A BAD MEASURING STICK?



BY: JASON SCHWARTZ

The postseason is not only about which team brings home the trophy. It is also a time for individual players to add to (or subtract from!) their legacies. Fair or unfair, the postseason--small sample size and all--is when some players emerge as big time, clutch, and "built for October" while other players find themselves labeled as overrated, overpaid chokers. In some cases the narrative can shift from GOAT to goat within the span of a single series. Witness the Phillies big three of Kyle Schwarber, Trea Turner, and Bryce Harper who slugged .690, .756, and .771 through the first five games of the 2023 NLCS but went a combined 1-for-20 in the "games that really mattered."

In this article, I'll look at the game's immortals through the fickle lens of postseason over and underachievement, using "batting average differential" (BAD) as my measuring stick. My sample here will be the 124 Hall of Famers registering at least 50 postseason plate appearances, i.e., about half the players in Cooperstown, though obviously skewed toward the division and wild card eras and rich in Yankees.

Here are the ten Hall of Famers with the highest postseason batting average differential. Each of these players could absolutely boast "I'm a BAD man in October!" and have the stats to back it up.

## HIGHEST POSTSEASON BAD (MIN 50 PA, HALL OF FAME)

Rk	Player	Postseason	Regular Season	BAD
1	Lou Brock	0.391	0.293	98
2	Monte Irvin	0.394	0.305	89
3	Carl Yastrzemski	0.369	0.285	84
4	Turkey Stearnes	0.417	0.348	69
5	Cal Ripken Jr.	0.336	0.276	60
6	Robin Yount	0.344	0.285	59
7	Henry Aaron	0.362	0.305	57
8	Home Run Baker	0.363	0.307	56
9	John Smoltz	0.214	0.159	55
10	Paul Molitor	0.359	0.306	53

On the other end of the stick, here are the ten Hall of Famers with the worst BAD. Some huge names, no doubt, but be honest. Would you really want a single one of these guys on your postseason roster?

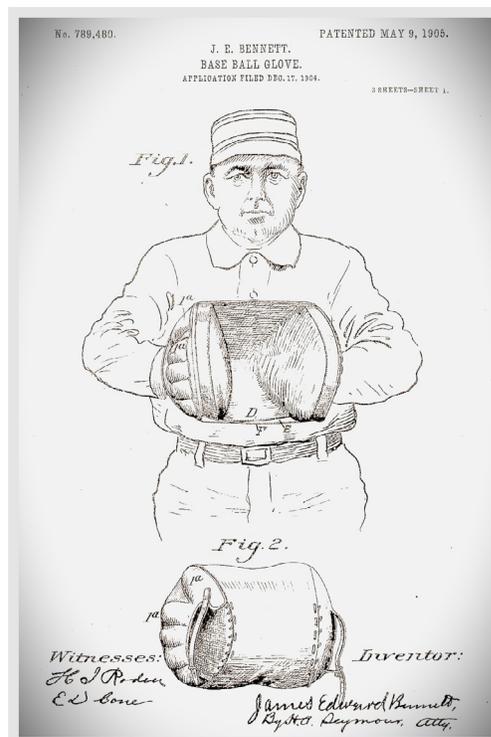
## LOWEST POSTSEASON BAD (MIN 50 PA, HALL OF FAME)

Rk	Player	Postseason	Regular Season	BAD
124	Travis Jackson	0.149	0.291	-142
123	Jud Wilson	0.235	0.350	-115
122	Rogers Hornsby	0.245	0.358	-113
121	Chick Hafey	0.205	0.317	-112
120	Josh Gibson	0.262	0.373	-111
119	Jim Bottomley	0.200	0.310	-110
118	Rod Carew	0.220	0.328	-108
117	Dave Bancroft	0.172	0.279	-107
116	Ty Cobb	0.262	0.366	-104
115	Ted Simmons	0.186	0.285	-99

# PATENT PORTAL (CONT.)

His contraption was designed to trap the pitched ball into the cage such that it would strike the padding and drop through a chute into the catcher's hand to be returned to the mound. It is readily apparent, however, that this device has significant shortcomings should the catcher have to attempt to throw out a would-be base stealer, be required to catch the ball for a play at the plate, attempt to block a wild pitch, or field a ball put in play in front of home plate.

But Bennett was not finished yet! In 1905, he patented a two-handed "Base Ball Glove" with an oversized pocket to trap the ball:

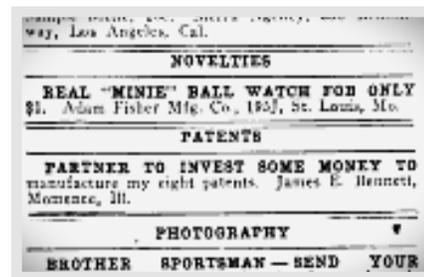


Bennett claimed that this poorly imagined glove was easy to use because the fingers on the player's throwing hand were specially designed to "permit the easy and quick removal of that hand to grasp and throw the ball." Just as with the "Base Ball Catcher," however, this design did not offer the player much of a catching radius.

So, what happened to James Bennett's inventions?

As of 1918, he was still looking for investors, according

to this advertisement he placed in the August and October issues of "Forest and Stream" magazine:



There is no evidence that either of James Bennett's inventions ever saw the light of day.

Perhaps reflecting the overall trend of batting averages being lower in the postseason, a full one-third of my sample had BADs of -50 or worse, among them Joe Morgan (-89), Jackie Robinson (-79), Stan Musial (-75), Joe DiMaggio (-54), Honus Wagner (-53), and Willie Mays (-53).

Different fans will view these data in different ways. Some will attribute the vagaries of the data to small sample size alone while others will read into the data real differences if not deficiencies in character, chemistry, or makeup. Either way, I believe it's just this sort of variance that makes October so exciting, a month when anything can happen and it quite often does!