



# EMIL ROTHE CHICAGO CHAPTER

SPRING 2024 • VOLUME 15 • EDITION 1

**RICH HANSEN, CHAIR - RICHARD SMILEY, VICE CHAIR**  
**BILL PEARCH, SECRETARY - PETER YEE, TREASURER - JOHN RACANELLI, MEMBERSHIP**



*Above: We celebrated SABR Day 2024 with the Ken Keltner chapter on Saturday, February 3 at Kenosha's Brat Stop. Our speakers were (left to right) Scott Simkus, Susan Shemanske and Scott Lindholm.*

WATCH PART 1 WATCH PART 2

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## THE ERA OF TRANSPARENCY IN BASEBALL



BY: TIM GZUBA

*"Cause the good ole days weren't always good / And tomorrow ain't as bad as it seems"*  
- *Keeping the Faith*, Billy Joel (1983)

I was recently involved in a discussion on a Facebook baseball group page. For what seemed like the one-millionth time, the original poster was lamenting on how [Scott Rolen](#) could be a Hall of Famer. He saw him play and Rolen just wasn't a dominant third baseman, like George Brett.

I think most people who are involved in SABR will concede that Rolen's election was based heavily on analytics, maybe even more so than the eye test, of which I am a fan. Baseball is a game played by people and watched by people. Our enjoyment and memories of the game should be rooted in what we see, first and foremost. However, I am also a fan of analytics. Most analytics are good tools for GMs to build rosters, first and foremost, but some analytics have happily bled over into comparing greats from different generations. For the purpose of this article, I will use wins above replacement (WAR) as my go-to analytic stat.

But this article isn't about proving Scott Rolen is a Hall of Famer, because he is one. What got me thinking as I read the differing posts on Facebook concerning Rolen was optics. Literally, seeing the player. I had seen Rolen play a ton live because nationally televised baseball has been a staple in my life since the late 1980s. When that began, my late-adolescent self thought it was nirvana. As I aged, it seemed I could watch a ballgame, other than the White Sox or Cubs, whenever I wanted. Since Rolen played on some pretty good Phillies and Cardinals teams, I saw him quite a bit.

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 -



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**BY JASON A. SCHWARTZ**

Four cards, one player. Can you guess who?





# WRIGLEY FIELD WINTERLAND

BY: BILL PEARCH

“People ask me what I do in winter when there’s no baseball,” said Rogers Hornsby, the former two-time National League MVP. “I’ll tell you what I do. I stare out the window and wait for spring.”

Hornsby, a former player (1929) and player-manager (1930-1932) for the Chicago Cubs, never imagined that the old ballpark at Clark and Addison could look like this come the holidays. Wrigley Field has hosted its share of non-baseball activities throughout its 110-year history, and during the Rajah’s era, it transformed into the home of the Chicago Bears following baseball season.

For me, I suffer from baseball withdrawal once the final pieces of World Series confetti are swept away. The holidays provide a much-needed distraction as Chicago’s ivy-covered brick walls change from green to brown, but what if local baseball fans could enjoy a hint of the national pastime during our seasonal festivities? They can, and it’s called Winterland at Wrigley Field.

Officially branded as Wintrust Winterland at Gallagher Way, Wrigley Field and its immediate surroundings served as a haven for holiday revelers from mid-November until early-January. For



*Top: Wrigley Field’s iconic manually operated scoreboard greets attendees with a hint of special holiday décor.*

*Above: During the baseball season the Cubs fly the W flag, but during the holidays, they spell out Winterland. (Photos: Bill Pearch)*

years, the Friendly Confines hosted the free Christkindlmarket Wrigleyville along Clark Street. But for the last two years, with the purchase of a ticket, fans of all ages can enter Wrigley Field and enjoy an assortment of rides, games and special activities on the field.

Fans may enter the ballpark and roam around the field with a standard entry ticket. All attractions require one ticket per person, so guests can purchase single tickets, and packs of 10 or 20 tickets. The special Peppermint Pack includes one admission and 10 attraction tickets.

This year’s attractions included classic amusement park rides and on-field games. The carnival rides included a Tilt-A-Whirl,

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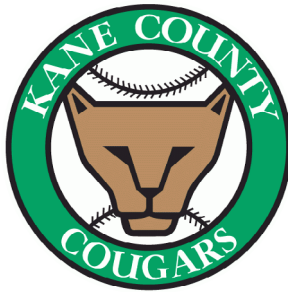


# BURLINGTON'S BATTERSBY BELTS FOUR BOMBS

BY: DAVID MALAMUT

Eric Battersby, a former Chicago White Sox minor leaguer, once clubbed four homers in a Class A Midwest League playoff game as a visiting player in Geneva, Illinois. Battersby, a 23-year-old member of the 1999 Burlington Bees, played first base and the outfield that season. Burlington finished second in the West Division with a 71-68 record, six games behind the Quad City River Bandits.

Burlington advanced to the second round of the Midwest League's 1999 playoffs after defeating the Clinton LumberKings, two games to one. Up next, the Central Division champion Kane County Cougars (78-59).



The best-of-three series opened in Burlington, Iowa's Community Field with a 12-0 Cougars win. Kane County was supported by Wes Anderson, Brad Fazio and Matt Pidgeon pitching a combined three-hitter. The Cougars plated 10 runs during the opening inning and never looked back. Brett Roneberg and Jeff Bailey set the pace with a two-run double and two-run triple respectively. Burlington's Battersby would go 0-for-3 with a strikeout.

The action shifted to Phillip Elfstrom Stadium in Geneva, Illinois, on September 11. Thanks to a 4-run seventh inning, the Bees evened the series with a 6-4 victory. Mario Valenzuela's three-run blast made the difference. Mark Buehrle, the future White Sox ace, made the start for the Bees, and pitched into the eighth inning. He allowed six hits, three runs, one walk and four strikeouts. Buehrle wouldn't get into trouble until the eighth inning when he surrendered a leadoff walk, a single and double before being pulled.

With the series tied at one game apiece, the Bees tapped righthander Matt Ginter with pitching honors for the deciding game. Burlington's lineup featured several prospects including the aforementioned Battersby and Valenzuela, but also Ryan Hankins, Chad Durham (Ray Durham's younger brother) and Brandon Hyde. Hyde, a catcher, never reached the majors as player, but manage the Florida Marlins (2011) and Baltimore Orioles (2019-2024). Danny Sandoval, who play 31 games with the Philadelphia Phillies (2005-2006) entered the game as a ninth-inning fielding replacement.

Kane County countered with righthander Claudio Vargas. He was backed with some prospects including Roneberg and Bailey, as well as, Chris Aguila, Matt Treanor and Derek Wathan.

Battersby started the scoring when he leadoff the second inning. He connected against Vargas and knocked his first home run

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 –

# RANDOM TANDEM



## “SAD” SAM JONES (1914-1935) & SAM “TOOTHPICK” JONES (1947-1964)

By Michael Marsh

“Sad” Sam Jones pitched for several teams including the Chicago White Sox, Cleveland Indians and St. Louis Browns/Baltimore Orioles. Pitched a no-hitter, threw a good curveball, hit decently for a pitcher, led the American League in win-loss percentage (1918), led the American League in losses (1925), pitched for two World Series champions (1918, 1923), was one of only two major league players named “Sam Jones,” and tutored kids about the game, including a young Sam “Toothpick” Jones.

Jones pitched for several teams including the Chicago Cubs, Cleveland Indians and St. Louis Browns/Baltimore Orioles. Pitched a no-hitter, threw a good curveball, hit decently for a pitcher, led the National League in losses (1955), led the National League in wins (1959), was selected for two All-Star games (1955, 1959), and is one of only two Major League players named “Sam Jones”.

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



**CLICK HERE TO PLAY**

**CAN YOU NAME THE MLB ALL-STARS WHO WERE OVER THE AGE OF 40?**



*Above: The CTA Red Line may take fans to and from Wrigley Field, but the Infield Express will spin you around the bases. Now that's a round-tripper. (Photo: Bill Pearch)*

## WINTERLAND (CONT.)

swings, an umbrella ride, Flying Dragons, spinning teacups and a carousel. Participants could attempt to win special prizes playing games like ring tosses, hockey puck shots, basketball tosses and more.

Want to round the bases like legendary slugger Ernie Banks? There's no need to hammer a fastball onto Waveland Avenue, simply hop aboard The Infield Express. This miniature locomotive will take riders around the bases twice ... complete with bells and whistles.

You didn't need to flash the leather to make diving catches in right field like Andre Dawson did. Make the climb up the steps and take a ride down the multi-colored Fun Slide. On a personal note, the larger tube slide last year was an absolute blast. Spoken like a true Cubs fan—maybe next year.

If you're an ice enthusiast, center and right-center field provided two unique options. You could glide around center field gracefully, like Dexter Fowler, and enjoy the Gallagher Ice Rink. Guests were welcome to bring their own skates? If not skates, were available for rental. But the Ice Bumper Cars in shallow center field provided a far more interactive activity.

Anyone who needed a break from the elements could enjoy three indoor escapes. The Lodge, located in left field, featured a full bar complete with food and drinks. Located on the center field warning track, the Maker's Mark Chalets offered indoor and outdoor seating for up to 20 guests, a fireplace and fantastic views of the attractions. Something new this year certainly made the Bleacher Bums jealous. The U.S. Virgin Islands Igloo Experience provided unprecedented views from the left field bleachers. The igloos hosted up to six guests and included tropical-themed desserts and drinks.

But this year, my favorite moment was riding The Edge. Have you wondered what a baseball feels like sailing toward the right field bleachers? I do now. This carnival rides rocks it riders side to side before hurling them around multiple times.

Bill Veeck once said, "There are only two seasons—winter and baseball." The Chicago Cubs have discovered a magic way to combine the two during the holidays. They even included a holiday gift shop to pick up some seasonal swag.

## TOP 10: MOST CAREER HOME RUNS FOR A CHICAGO TEAM WITHOUT A SINGLE STOLEN BASE



RANK	PLAYER	HR	SB	YEAR	TEAM
1	ELOY JIMÉNEZ	89	0	2019-2023	WHITE SOX
2	MATT DAVIDSON	46	0	2016-2018	WHITE SOX
3	JOHN ROMANO	38	0	1958-1966	WHITE SOX
4	GUS ZERNIAL	34	0	1949-1951	WHITE SOX
5	RICHIE ZISK	30	0	1977	WHITE SOX
6	TODD HUNDLEY	28	0	2001-2002	CUBS
7	CAL NEEMAN	25	0	1957-1960	CUBS
8	CONOR GILLASPIE	23	0	2013-2015	WHITE SOX
9	HARRY CHITI	20	0	1950-1956	CUBS
10	JIM EDMONDS	19	0	2008	CUBS
	BO JACKSON	19	0	1991-1993	WHITE SOX

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).

## TELL YOUR BASEBALL STORY

We all have great baseball stories. Go ahead and share some with your fellow SABR Chicago Chapter members. Contact Bill Pearch, newsletter editor, via email at [wcpearch@comcast.net](mailto:wcpearch@comcast.net) to schedule a brief interview.



## LET'S GET SOCIAL!

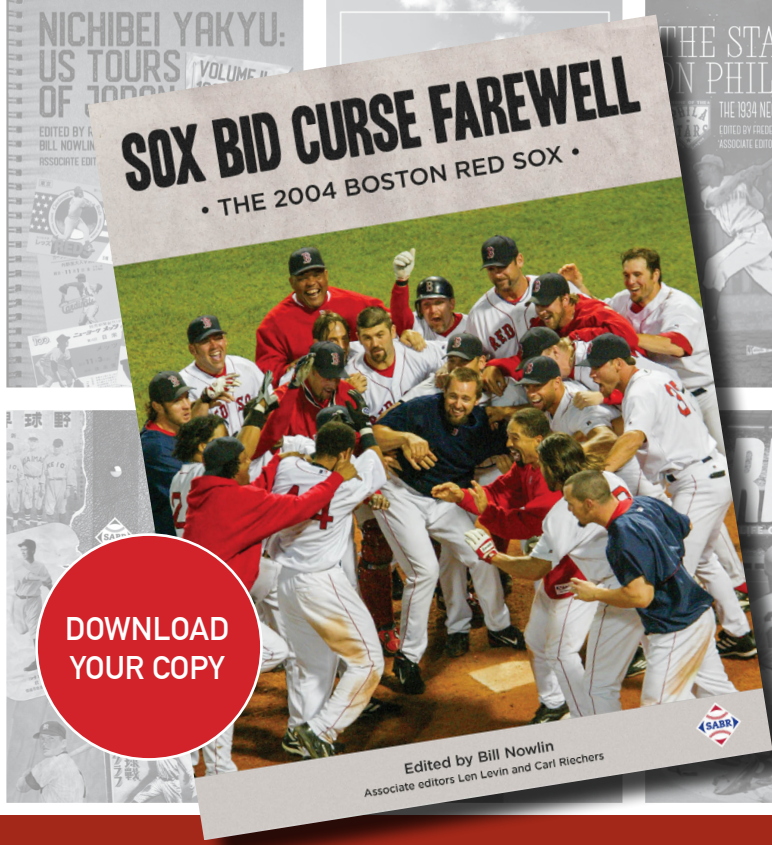


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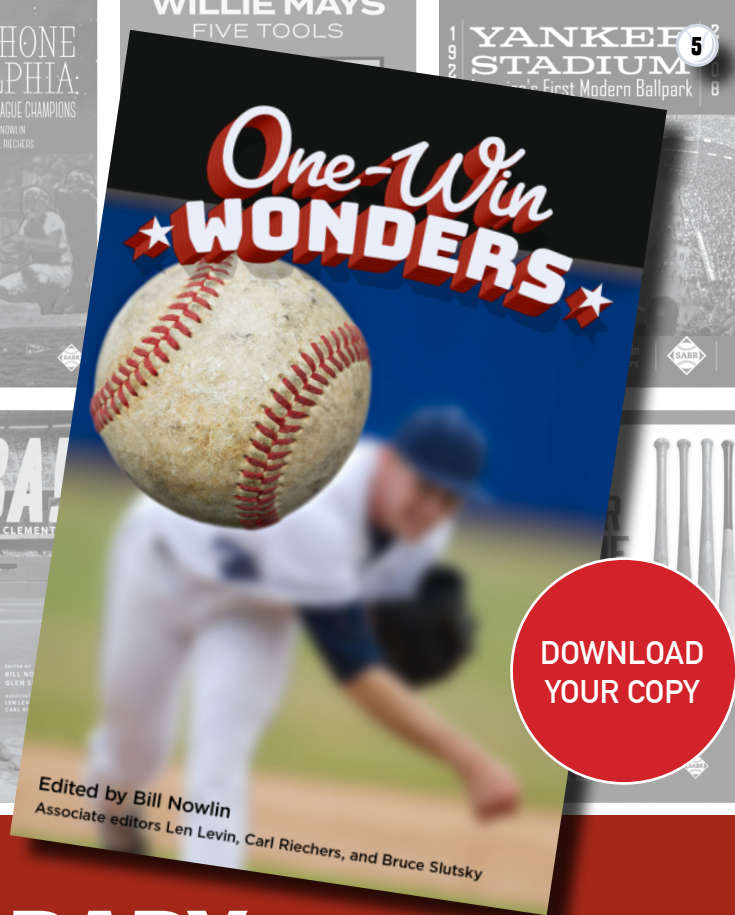
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## SOX BID CURSE FAREWELL: THE 2004 BOSTON RED SOX

In 2004, the Boston Red Sox won the World Series in historic fashion. This book, published on the 20th anniversary of the 2004 championship, celebrates that team by collecting biographies all of the players on the roster alongside essays about that unprecedented postseason run and its ripples throughout New England. These biographies include everyone on the team, from the stars like David Ortiz, Kevin Youkilis, and Johnny Damon to a couple of guys who would later manage their own teams in the big leagues in Dave Roberts and Gabe Kapler, to the manager, Terry Francona, and his coaches.

Seeing the team win the World Series for the first time in 86 years resonated throughout New England and "Red Sox Nation" beyond, tapping into the strong sentiments that people have rooting for the underdog. When Dan Shaughnessy wrote the book *The Curse of The Bambino*, the title resonated with every Red Sox fan. But the "curse" was reversed when the Red Sox avenged that and every other loss to the Yankees by becoming the first team to ever win a seven-game series after being down three games to none.

Chicago Cubs and White Sox fans have had even longer waits, but only the Red Sox had so many excruciating last-minute losses along the way. We hope readers will enjoy the story of Kathryn Gemme, who finally saw her Red Sox win it all again, when she was 109 years old. Also in the book we include the memories of a few dozen fans and details of the first-of-its-kind "trophy tour" to all 351 towns in Massachusetts.

This book began as a project of the Boston Chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research, but grew to embrace the contributions of 68 different SABR members, including both Yankees and Cardinals fans. SABR's Digital Library has now passed 100 volumes, all created, researched, and written by SABR members.

## ONE-WIN WONDERS

In *One-Win Wonders*, we meet 78 players whose time in the major leagues included only a single pitching win. *One-Win Wonders* is a companion book to the 2021 SABR book *One-Hit Wonders*, which included biographies of players who had gotten only a single hit.

The 78 players whose biographies are presented here are among the 915 players who completed their major-league career with just one win. An astonishing 229 of those never lost a game, ending with a career record of 1-0. Some simply had very brief stays in the majors, like Bill Ging "With the Wonderful Wing" who joined the Boston Beaneaters at the tail end of 1899 and secured a 2-1 complete game victory over the New York Giants, but found himself without a team when the National League contracted from 12 teams to eight in 1900.

Then there's Nick Adenhart, whose career was tragically cut short by a drunk driver hours after securing his win for the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim. Others, like catcher Brent Mayne, were position players who wound up on the mound and left with a victory. Mayne's win came in an epic extra-innings contest between the Colorado Rockies and Atlanta Braves.

We wanted to encourage new research by featuring players in this book who did not yet have a SABR biography. Thus, the surprising Jack Nabors (with a career record of 1-25) is not included, but his biography by Stephen V. Rice can be found on the SABR website.

The late Tom Ruane of Retrosheet graciously provided all the data regarding the full spectrum of the *One-Win Wonders*. Each of the current 30 major-league franchises is represented by at least one such wonder, as are a number of other teams, some dating back to the nineteenth century. *One-Win Wonders* represents the collaborative work of nearly 60 researchers, authors, and editors from the Society for American Baseball Research.



## 6 BATTERSBY (CONT.)

into deep left field. The Cougars plated three additional runs in the third inning to take the lead. With one out, Willy Hill and Derek Wathan hit back-to-back singles. Roneberg followed with a double to right and drove Hill and Wathan home. One out later, Bailey singled to left field to score Roneberg.

Burlington hung a four-spot on the board in the fifth inning and knocked Vargas out of the game. Ender Gonzalez leadoff with a single, then Durham doubled to move Gonzalez to third. Hankins singled to drive them both home and ended Vargas' night. The Cougars brought in Nate Robertson, another future big leaguer, out of the bullpen. Two outs later, Battersby hit a two run-homer to cap off the inning and gave the Bees a 5-3 lead.

The Bees answered in the seventh frame against Robertson. Terrell Merriman walked with two outs. Battersby stepped to the plate and drilled another two-run bomb off of Robertson to extend Burlington's lead to 7-3. Robertson's would be done for the night following the end of the inning.

Hankins added to the Bees' lead in the eighth inning with a two-out solo homer. Kane County showed signs of life in the bottom of the inning by answering with three runs. Roneberg and Jose Santos starting the frame with consecutive walks. Then Ginter left the game and handed pitching duties to Brandon Whatley. One strikeout later, Treanor would take a pitch out to left field for a three-run homer. The Cougars were not done threatening to score in the inning. Dave Callahan wound up at second following a double and Matt Padgett walked with two outs. Whatley was able to get Hill to ground one back to him to squash the threat.

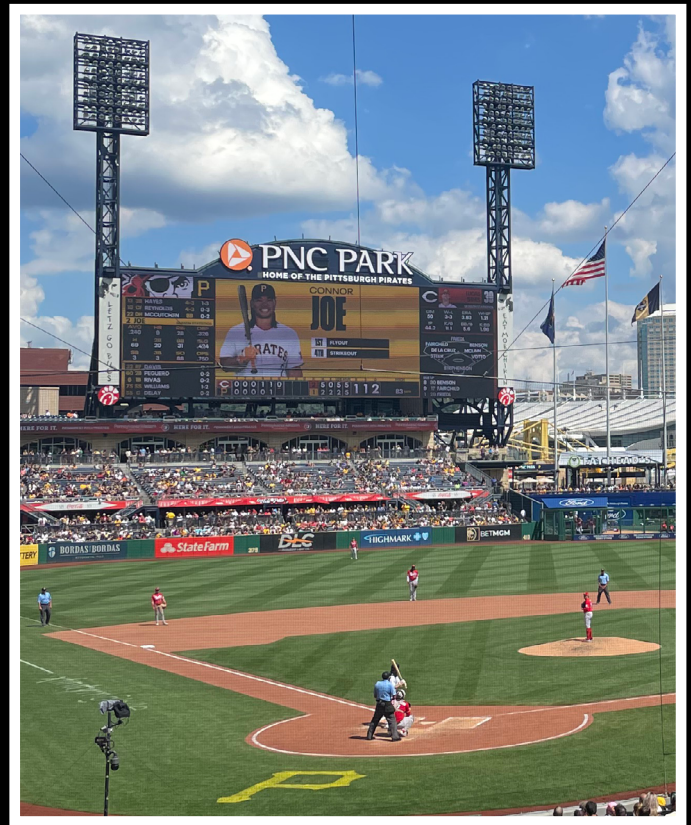
Burlington clung to an 8-6 lead with the game headed into the ninth inning. The Cougars called in pitcher Brad Farizo to relieve Robertson. With one out, Battersby came up again. This time he would hit a solo homer, his fourth long ball of the day. The Bees weren't finished as Valenzuela singled and Jason Fennell reached on an error. The Cougars brought in their closer Scott Clackum and induced an inning-ending double play.

Burlington secured a 9-6 win that eliminated the Cougars and sent the Bees to the championship round against the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers. Burlington proceeded to win the Midwest League's 1999 championship, three-games-to-two.

The Chicago White Sox would play one more season with prospects going to the Burlington Bees before having their low-A affiliate play in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, of the South Atlantic League.

Eric Battersby was selected with a 27th-round pick out of St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, in 1998. Following his Midwest League season, when he hit .290 in 132 games with 18 homers and 93 runs batted in, he moved to Class AA Birmingham. He would spend the next two years there, then he would go between Birmingham and Class AAA Charlotte in 2002. He returned to Birmingham in 2003 before being released after 56 games. Battersby would spend the next year and a half playing for the independent Coastal Bend Aviators (Corpus Christi, Texas), before he ended his playing career at age 28. He would end up moving to Corpus Christi and being elected into the St. Mary's University Hall of Fame in 2014. His son, Tyler played baseball for St. Mary's.

## SCOREBOARD PUZZLER



The 2024 MLB regular season 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. This one may be extra challenging.

Our November-December 2023 issue had one correct guess. Yes! There was a twist as the photo featured a preseason game at Montreal's Olympic Stadium. It was April 2, 2016 between the Boston Red Sox and Toronto Blue Jays. The Red Sox won, 7-4, in front of 53,000 fans. Congratulations to:

Ed Hartig

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.

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### UPCOMING EVENTS!

EVENT  
DETAILS!

#### BOOKING BASEBALL: WRITING ABOUT THE NATIONAL PASTIME

A SOCIETY OF MIDLAND AUTHORS EVENT

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024: 6-8 P.M.

TURTLE'S BAR & GRILL, 238 W. 33RD STREET, CHICAGO, IL

#### CHARLIE HUSTLE: A CONVERSATION WITH KEITH O'BRIEN AND J.A. ADANDE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024:  
6:30-7:30 P.M.

THE BOOK STALL,  
811 ELM STREET, WINNETKA, IL

REGISTER  
NOW!

Located at 110 E. Hickory Street in Streator, Illinois 61364  
(41.1221369, -88.8377336) / [SABR Baseball Map Site ID: 543]  
(Photo: Bill Peach)

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)!

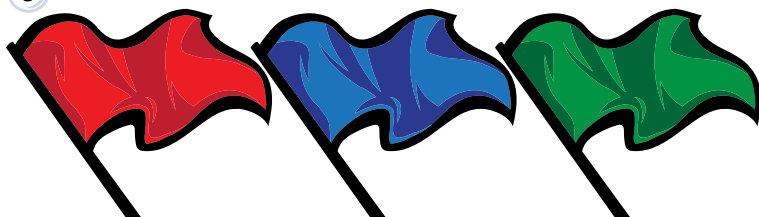
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## ZEMAN'S ZINGERS



BY: DAVE ZEMAN

Baseball is back, now ... let's rewind 100 years! Here's the pitch!

1. What was the only AL/NL team without any Hall of Famers on its roster during the 1924 season?
2. What Chicago White Sox rookie had two 5-hit games in 1924?
3. The 1924 New York Giants are the only team to have two different pitchers homer in the same World Series. Who were these slugging hurlers?
4. While Walter Johnson won the seventh and deciding game of the 1924 Fall Classic, what Washington pitcher notched two victories that series?
5. Name the clubs that squared off in the initial World Series between Negro League teams.

SUBMIT  
YOUR  
ANSWERS!

### NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2023: HOW DID YOU DO?

1. Name the only two Hall of Famers to play for a Washington D.C. based team since 1961. **Minnie Minoso and Ivan Rodriguez**
2. Who was the most recent National Leaguer with consecutive 200-hit seasons? **Juan Pierre, Florida Marlins (2003-2004)**
3. What former MVP is the oldest living member of a Chicago major league team? **Bobby Shantz of the 1964 Cubs**
4. What club has gone the longest without one of their pitchers winning at least 20 games in back-to-back seasons (see accompanying list)? **Pittsburgh Pirates (Rip Sewell, 1943-1944)**
5. Three players who debuted in the 1871 National Association ended their major league careers in the 1890s. Two are Hall of Famers who played together on an early National League pennant winner. Name this trio. **Cap Anson, Joe Battin and Deacon White**



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## PASTIME PASSAGES

"You can learn little from victory.  
You can learn everything from defeat."

— Christy Mathewson

Photo: Bill Pearch

Henry J. McCormick, "Playing the Game,"  
Wisconsin State Journal, November 7, 1954, 31

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

## 2024 NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

Chicago's Emil Rothe Chapter is a quarterly 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).

SUMMER 2024

Published: June 3 / Content Deadline: May 6



# TRANSPARENCY (CONT.)

I couldn't say that when I was a kid or even an early teen. In the 1970s, my exposure to players who weren't White Sox or Cubs was limited to the local broadcasts or NBC's *Game of the Week* on Saturdays, and later in the late '70s, ABC's *Monday Night Baseball*. As any Gen Xer knows, our exposure to the greats of that era were limited. My favorite ballplayer as a kid was Johnny Bench, but I probably only saw him play maybe 100 games from the early '70s through his retirement in 1983. The number is that high only because I was a crazy baseball fan who watched most of the times he was on TV. Contrast that with Scott Rolen, who I saw play sometimes three or four times a week, depending how good his team was.

The more you see something or someone, the more you see the full scope of what you're looking at. From reading the publications at the time, I knew that Bench had a poor, injury-riddled 1976 season, even as the Big Red Machine cruised to another easy division title. Heck, I think I saw Bill Plummer (R.I.P.) play more against the Cubs than Bench that year. Do you know what I remember though? I remember Bench lighting it up in the playoffs and becoming the World Series MVP. Favorite player ... LOCKED! I remember Scott Rolen striking out nine times in a three-game televised stretch. It would be easy for me to look poorly at Scott Rolen, the ballplayer, even as I vaulted Johnny Bench into the stratosphere as the greatest catcher ever, and a favorite.

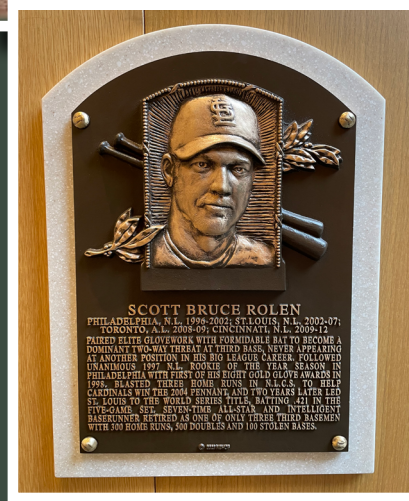
Here's the point, if you haven't already deduced. The more you see a player, the more you see their warts, and that affects the eye test. I'm sure Johnny Bench struck out nine times in a short stretch, just like Scott Rolen. I just never saw it. I saw George Brett more than most superstars because his Royals were in the AL Central, and played my beloved White Sox quite a bit. It seemed like he killed my Sox. That's what I remember. Brett's career was also coming to a close when the boom of nationally televised baseball just started. I really don't remember George Brett's warts. I do remember his hemorrhoids, though.

The bottom line is Scott Rolen has the 10th highest WAR of any third baseman in the history of this great sport. The nine in front of him are all in the Hall of Fame. Rolen belongs, even if I remember him striking out or being injured. I saw his warts, and I also saw him have some great playoff runs, and while I might not have initially considered Rolen an all-time great, an advanced metric points to his greatness. If your baseball gag reflex is set to "analytics suck," know that the highest career WAR in baseball history belongs to Babe Ruth. If Ruth would've been on TV all the time, all over the country, we would've seen his warts, too. Call today the age of baseball transparency. Transparency is called for all of the time in our society. We have it in baseball. Gen Xers and older: don't let the warts make you overlook a great player's place in the game.

It's time to stop telling people to get off your lawn and remember those words of Billy Joel. 🎧



**NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2023  
ANSWER: AL LOPEZ**



*Above: During his 17-year career, Scott Rolen won the 1997 NL Rookie of the Year award, was a 7-time all-star, an 8-time Gold Glover, and member of the 2006 St. Louis Cardinals World Series team. (Photo: Getty Images)*

*Left: Rolen's plaque in Cooperstown, New York. (Photo: Bill Peach)*



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MLB PREDICTIONS!**

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AWARD WINNERS!  
STORYLINES! MORE!  
WE'LL PUBLISH THEM  
THROUGHOUT THE SEASON!**