

THE SQUIBBER
April 2020

The Squibber is the Bob Davids Chapter's quarterly newsletter. It is emailed to chapter members roughly every three months. If you're a Bob Davids Chapter member and are not getting the *Squibber*, please check that your email address and chapter affiliations listed on the SABR site are correct. Please send submissions for future editions to Squibber editor Walt Cherniak at wcherniakjr@aol.com.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- TALKIN' BASEBALL: Upcoming Speakers Announced, By Dave Paulson
- ANNUAL MEETING RECAP: Chapter Packs a Bunch into Program, By Mark Pattison
- BUCKY HARRIS MAKES HIS SENATORS DEBUT: A Wild Day in New York, By Gary Sarnoff
- RECALLING CLYDE KLUTTZ: Impacted Several Teams, By Andrew Sharp
- COMMENTS ABOUT PLAYERS ON BASEBALL CARDS: Humorous or Cruel?, By Francis Kinlaw
- MYTHS OF BASEBALL: True or False? By Charles Pavitt
- A POETIC INTERLUDE: Baseball Classics -- The Pine Tar Game, By Laura H. Peebles

TRIVIA QUESTION: The 1945 Washington Senators famously used four knuckleball pitchers in their rotation. What non-knuckleball starter won both the first and last games of the season for Washington that year? (**See answer below**)

TALKIN' BASEBALL: Upcoming Speakers Announced, By Dave Paulson

Here is the speaker schedule for the upcoming meetings of the "Talkin' Baseball" group.

The Talkin' Baseball group normally meets on the first Saturday of each month at 9 a.m. Meetings are normally held at Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia, Md.

Depending on the restrictions caused by COVID-19, the location may change, or meetings may be conducted by Zoom:

- May 4 -- Mitchell Nathanson": *"Jim Bouton: " Life of a Baseball Original"*
- June 6 -- D.B. Firstman: *"Hall of Name: Baseball's Most Magnificent Monikers From The Only Nolan to Van Lingo Mungo and More"*
- July 11 -- Maxwell Kates: *"Time for Expansion Baseball"*
- Sept. 5 -- Jim Meisner: *"Faith, Hope, and Baseball"*

Come and bring a friend!

ANNUAL MEETING RECAP: Chapter Packs a Bunch into Program, By Mark Pattison

Six score and five members ago, our SABR members brought to the Rosslyn neighborhood of Arlington a terrific chapter meeting Feb. 1 loaded with great speakers and great baseball gems.

Mark Pankin led off with an expanded version of his SABR 49-winning oral presentation on batting out of turn. Pankin's deep dive included the squabble in a 1945 Detroit Tigers-Philadelphia A's game in which the home plate umpire got the rule wrong, leading to both managers protesting the game. The A's won the game and withdrew their protest. But the American League also rejected the Tigers' protest. Not that it mattered; the Tigers won the AL pennant and the World Series, so it didn't cost them too much. Interesting, though, that a Sporting News poll of so-called experts found that half of them also got the rule wrong!

Brian Engelhardt, our resident expert on baseball in Reading, Pa., gave a presentation on C/spy Moe Berg's time with the Reading Keys -- when he was a shortstop and part of a Jewish double-play combo. Space -- or maybe it's personal preference -- keeps me from quoting the florid language used by sportswriters of that day and quoted by Engelhardt to his great ironic delight.

Washington Post baseball scribe Jesse Dougherty waxed eloquent on the Washington Nationals' World Series run, answering all sorts of questions from the Nats fans in attendance. Some of those answers will undoubtedly appear in his new book, *"Buzz Saw: The Improbable Story of How the Washington Nationals Won the World Series,"* published March 24; one meeting attendee said during the Q-and-A that she had just pre-ordered the book.

Paul Scimonelli, with an undying curiosity on the original Washington Senators, gave a presentation on Joe Cambria, the "superscout" who brought all sorts of Cuban ballplayers to the attention of Clark Griffith to keep his team fairly competitive -- and fairly cheap on payroll. Scimonelli's expanding his presentation into book form, although

ordering information on "*Joe Cambria: Saint or Sinner*," which also dwells on his life as a minor-league team owner, entrepreneur and all-around hustler, was not available at press time.

Nationals organist Matt Van Hoose, who let on that he almost became the Cleveland Indians' organist while an undergrad at Oberlin College, entertained us with stories about how "Baby Shark" became the biggest fad in D.C. since impeachment. He also talked about the fraternity of "super nice" organists at major-league parks around the country, although he noted that the Pittsburgh Pirates replaced their organist with recordings of said organist from previous years.

Charlie Pavitt, a regular Squibber contributor and a sabermetrics analyst, showed how ethnicity guides teams' decisions on where to use players in the field. Pavitt allowed that, even with 70-plus seasons of data, there is more to be gleaned from this field of study, including whether on-field and off-field decision-makers are playing into stereotypes based on past players of the same ethnicity.

Umpire Chris Segal regaled the crowd with all sorts of stories of umpiring decisions, including the first question asked of him -- the Trea Turner interference call in World Series Game 6 -- and the high school umpiring decision that led him to get into umpiring in the first place. For those who weren't there, the home-plate ump deliberately made a bad call in the last inning because he had somewhere to go to and didn't want to risk going into extra innings, leading to a months-long controversy that consumed the adults but never reached the prep players in uniform. Segal talked about what can lead to an ejection, noting there are three languages in baseball: "English, Spanish and cussing."

Jerry Crasnick, whom most people know from his 15 years at ESPN, now works for the Players' Association, and took the train from Philadelphia that morning to join us. Crasnick said he always wanted to be a fly on the wall to hear what was being said during the MLBPA visits to each team during spring training -- and, of course, now that he works for the union, he knows, but he cannot say! Crasnick added that former player Tony Clark, the union's executive director, is 6-foot-7 but doesn't need that height to command the attention of players when he addresses them in Florida and Arizona.

Winding up our meeting was Greg Larson, author of "*Clubbie*" (due out next year from University of Nebraska Press). Larson said he made more money as a clubhouse attendant for the Aberdeen Ironbirds in 2012 and '13 than did the short-season A-ball players he tended to; not only that, they each had to pay him \$7 a day in clubhouse fees. Larson talked about MLB's threatened contraction of the minor leagues. While there may be rightful high dudgeon over it, he said, the terrible pay the players get and the terrible conditions they endure at some ballparks may make it inevitable. One former Ironbird who made it to high-A Frederick -- on MLB's hit list -- took note of the lousy

postgame food served the players along with other deficiencies and said, "Maybe this place should just disappear."

The meeting's baseball book and memorabilia raffle raked in \$607 to the chapter's treasury. And everybody could take home at least one thing if they really wanted to! The leftover books were boxed up and delivered to a free bookstore in Baltimore across the street from the Peabody Heights Brewery (site of the Baltimore chapter's annual meetings). The leftover clothing, including a lot of Caribbean World Series garb from last year, was delivered to the Georgia Avenue Thrift Store for sale pricing.

The chapter has a new lineup on the board. Peter Cottrell, who had been chapter vice president, was elected to a two-year term as president after Dave Raglin decided to step away from the post. Vernona Elms was chosen vice president to succeed Cottrell for the unexpired balance of his VP term. Mark Pattison was elected to a two-year term as secretary after having filled the unexpired term of Don Seaman a year ago, and Raglin and Jim Dunphy were elected to two-year terms as board members. They join chapter treasurer Dave Paulson and board member Barry Sparks on the chapter board. Our thanks to Dave for his five-plus years as chapter president, and thanks also to Ed Veit for his four years of service on the board.

We also bid adieu to the Holiday Inn Key Bridge in Arlington, as it is scheduled for demolition later this year. Raglin led a discussion to learn what are essentials, and desirable options, for a successor venue. Raglin, who works for the Census Bureau, said he will send an online survey to allow all members to give their input. This much is fairly certain: The 2021 chapter meeting is likely to be on Saturday, Jan. 30 -- the presumed "SABR Day" -- so that celebrants and hangers-on from the presidential inauguration can leave plenty of time to leave town!

BUCKY HARRIS MAKES HIS SENATORS DEBUT: A Wild Day in New York, By Gary Sarnoff

In our last Squibber edition we read about minor league infielder Bucky Harris going 6-for-6 while playing with a finger injury and while being scouted by Senators manager Clark Griffith.

The Washington manager was impressed with the prospect's performance and amazed that the second baseman did it with an injury. "He thinks you're a game rooster to go out and play with a finger as big as a balloon," the Buffalo manager told Harris. "He thinks you are fast enough and have the right spirit."

A deal was made, with the Senators paying \$4,500 for Harris. Before joining the Senators in New York, Harris took a few days to pack and give his injured digit time to heal. He managed to reduce the swollen finger to its normal size by using his own lemon poultice treatment.

A few days later, Harris arrived in New York and went directly to the hotel to greet his new team. He waited alone in the hotel lobby until someone finally arrived. "Glad to see you, Bucky," said Washington first baseman Joe Judge, who knew Harris from when they were teammates with the Baltimore Drydocks the previous fall.

The two men rode the elevated train to the Polo Grounds, and when they arrived in the Senators' clubhouse, Judge introduced the rookie to Walter Johnson, Sam Rice and the other Washington players. During batting practice, as Harris waited for his turn to bat, Griffith said hello. "Hope you brought that bat with all the hits from Buffalo," the Washington manager said with a smile. Then Griffith informed Harris that he would be in the starting lineup.

In the top of the second, with runners on second and third of a scoreless game, Harris came to the plate for his first major league at bat. Pitching for the Yankees was Carl Mays, the Yankees' submarine-style hurler. Harris socked a Mays pitch into center field for a base hit that scored both runners for a 2-0 Washington lead. "Nice work," Walter Johnson, the Senators' starting pitcher, told Harris after the inning.

The Senators added two more in the next inning, but the Yankees fought back to tie the game, 4-4. With the game still tied in the bottom of the 14th, and with runners on first and second, Yankees outfielder Duffy Lewis lifted a high fly ball to shallow right field.

Harris moved back; right fielder Sam Rice and center fielder Clyde Milan moved in. It was a play Harris should have made, but the play resulted in Harris, Rice and Milan looking at one another as the ball fell to the ground for a game-winning hit. Harris felt badly for not making the play, and for Johnson, who took a tough loss. And to Harris's amazement, Johnson wasn't sore, didn't yell or shake his head. The great pitcher calmly folded his mitt and headed to the dugout.

"Yell that it's your ball, and wave everyone else away," Griffith told Harris about the play he should've made. "You should have stuck that one in your pocket."

"Yes sir," Harris replied.

"You busted a few, anyhow," Griffith said. "Maybe we'll make a big-league infielder out of you yet. Keep hustling. That's all I ask."

"You bet," said Harris.

RECALLING CLYDE KLUTTZ: Impacted Several Teams, By Andrew Sharp

Clyde Kluttz was a backup catcher in the majors for nine seasons, the last two of them with the Washington Senators in 1951 and '52, the last Washington team to finish above .500.

After seven years in the National League, Kluttz was sent to the minors by the Pirates after the 1948 season. A good year with the AAA Baltimore team in 1950 earned him a return to the majors with the St. Louis Browns in 1951. When the Browns released Kluttz in early June, Clark Griffith picked him up. He appeared in 53 games with the Senators and overall produced career-highs in batting at .313 and OBP, .389.

Washington manager Bucky Harris considered Kluttz like an additional coach. "He's making my job easier.... He's all business, and I wish I had discovered him 10 years ago," the veteran skipper said of Kluttz in March 1952.

Indeed, pitcher Bob Porterfield, who won 22 games, threw nine shutouts and was AL Pitcher of the Year as a Senator in 1953, credited Kluttz "for working with him to perfect his change-up," Warren Corbett wrote in Porterfield's SABR bio essay.

While with Washington, Kluttz sang in a quartet with Porterfield, Tom Ferrick and Irv Noren.

Kluttz got off to a solid start in 1952 and was hitting .300 after the games of June 1. But he slumped the rest of the way, spending most of July on the disabled list after an appendectomy. He finished at .229. Washington released him in October.

By no means was Kluttz done with baseball. After a few seasons managing in the minors, he began a scouting career with Kansas City that eventually led to front-office jobs with the Yankees and Orioles. While with the Athletics, he signed a young pitcher who soon became known as "Catfish" Hunter. Later, with the Yankees, he persuaded Hunter to sign as a free agent with New York.

While with the A's, Kluttz also signed Ken Harrelson, who later played with Senators before helping the 1967 Red Sox to the pennant and later becoming the broadcast voice of the White Sox.

Kluttz developed heart trouble and died at age 61 in 1979 while helping develop Orioles teams that twice made it to the World Series.

During his playing career, Kluttz played for six teams. "Kluttz was shopped around," sports columnist Jim Murray wrote in 1975, "usually landing on teams that had whole dugouts of Clyde Kluttzes."

COMMENTS ABOUT PLAYERS ON BASEBALL CARDS: Humorous or Cruel?, By Francis Kinlaw

Many fans of baseball in the 1950s and 1960s are familiar with an entertaining book that was published in 1973, *The Great American Baseball Card Flipping, Trading, and Bubble Gum Book* by Brendan C. Boyd and Fred C. Harris.

The book contains colorful copies of baseball cards while providing humorous comments about players' poses, facial features, or performance. Although the authors did make it very clear in the opening pages that no malice was intended and that readers should not "take (the contents) too seriously," some of the comments may be considered---nearly 50 years after the book's publishing---to be excessively harsh and personal.

Furthermore, since all of the former players on the cards are now either very elderly or deceased, the instances of "ridicule in print" seem even more unfortunate.

This article focuses on the 14 players featured in the book's illustrations who were identified as members of the Washington Senators (or Nationals) on a baseball card produced by the Topps Chewing Gum Company. For reference purposes, the year of each card's distribution and the number of the individual player's card in that year's Topps set are provided below. And, for ease in reference, the cards are listed chronologically by year of distribution.

Without knowing exactly how the players themselves felt about words and descriptions appearing in the book's text, what is your opinion of the following comments?

Clyde Kluttz (1952, # 132):

"Despite all evidence to the contrary, there has never been, nor could there ever be, a major league ballplayer named Clyde Kluttz." (This man named "Clyde Kluttz" was a major league player for nine seasons.)

Eddie Yost (1952, # 123):

"Every ballplayer reveals the underlying strengths and weaknesses of his personality by the way he stands in the batter's box. It was Eddie Yost's belief that a fellow just can't be too careful. For this reason he absolutely refused to swing at any pitch outside the strike zone, or very many on the perimeter of the strike zone for that matter and always, but always, led the American League in bases on balls. This finicky peculiarity made him an almost perfect lead-off man, a more or less flaccid and vacuous baseball personality."

Camilo Pascual (1955, # 84):

“Hey Mac, you wanna buy a hot Buick?” (A reference to Pascual’s facial appearance)

Wayne Terwilliger (1955, #34):

“Everybody remembers Wayne Terwilliger, but nobody can remember exactly why. Wayne was the perfect utility man. He couldn’t hit his hat size, but he could field every position. He wouldn’t help you out very much, but he wouldn’t embarrass you either. He had a good disposition, was always sober, and liked to pitch batting practice---in other words, a manager’s dream. He also looked like a utility man---he had a utility man’s face, a utility man’s build, and a utility man’s outlook on his life. And certainly no one could argue the fact that he had a utility man’s name. He always looked like the sort of guy you might send for to unplug a drain in a large apartment house. Of course, what made it even better was that he played with some of the worst Washington Senator teams of the early 1950s, teams consisting of entire rosters of utility men.” (The Senators sold Terwilliger and catcher Joe Tipton to the New York Giants on January 14, 1955. He had played for the Senators in 1953 and 1954.)

Dick Brodowski (1956, # 157):

“Dick Brodowski should never, under any circumstances, have been allowed out of the house without his mother.” (A reference to Brodowski’s youthful facial appearance)

Ernie Oravetz (1956, # 51):

“Ernie Oravetz carried petiteness to an illogical extreme. He was a 5’4”, 145-pound outfielder who was built like Cubby O’Brien (one of the original Mouseketeers on ‘The Mickey Mouse Club’)---only not as muscular. He played two years and 188 games in the Washington Senators lineup without ever hitting a home run. For those of you who might be wondering whatever became of little Ernie, he is still very much connected to our national pastime. He works all of the Dover (Delaware) Mud Hens’ home games in an administrative capacity: popping out of the little hole behind home plate to hand the umpire a fresh supply of baseballs.” (Rather than “popping out a little hole,” Oravetz was employed by the U.S. Postal Service after retiring from baseball.)

Carlos Paula (1956, # 4):

“There are two kinds of ballplayers who manage to stay in the major leagues for any length of time without ever winning a permanent starting position. One is the good field, no hit type of player. The other is the good hit, no field type of player such as Carlos Paula. Paula’s ability to hit the baseball (.314 lifetime minor league batting average) could never quite make up for his inability to catch it. He once mishandled three

consecutive fly balls in one inning, two of which fell for extra-base hits. Carlos had good speed, excellent range, and he usually got a pretty good jump on the ball, but he could never quite seem to get the hang of catching the damned thing, and in an outfielder this can be a disheartening weakness.”

Clint Courtney (1957, #51):

“Clint Courtney had not one, but two nicknames---‘Scrap Iron’ and the ‘Toy Bulldog’---both of which fit perfectly. He was a feisty, combative little catcher during the mid-1950s who tried to make up for his playing deficiencies with generous doses of what the hard-rock disciplinarians in the athletic realm refer to as ‘leadership qualities.’ In other words, he was noisy.”

Hal Griggs (1958, #455):

“Hal Griggs was to pitching as Wayne Causey was to hitting. That is to say---nothing. In four seasons with the Washington Senators from 1956 through 1959, Griggs had a record of 6-26 with an ERA of 5.50. He pitched 347 innings and gave up 392 hits. He walked 209 and struck out 172. He had one shutout. Enough said.”

Dick Hyde (1958, # 156):

“Dick Hyde was the last of the legitimate submarine pitchers. Sometimes, in fact, it looked as though he was throwing the ball from between his legs. He wasn’t all that good a pitcher, but then again who could have been good with the late 1950s Senators, teams which included on their rosters the likes of Vito Valentinetti, Tex Clevenger, Russ Kemmerer, and Norm Zauchin. And those were some of the stars. Of course throwing the submarine pitch requires an extremely unnatural motion, and before long Hyde had permanently injured his arm trying to scare the living hell out of American League right-handed batters. But he sure was fun to watch while he lasted.”

Herb Plews (1958, # 109):

“There was something almost heroic about the stupefying mediocrity of Herbie Plews’ play, the polished and studied indifference of his skills.”

Reno Bertoia (1959, # 84):

“Reno Bertoia was a major-league baseball player who was born in San Remo, Italy, lived in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and couldn’t hit. The back of Reno’s (1959) card... says that his average in 1958 was .162 and that, although he did not get to play in too many ball games, he gained valuable information about American League hurlers that would help him in the future...The information he gathered was that every pitcher in the

American League could get him out, and that perhaps he should try some other line of work.”

Lou Klimchock (1963, #542):

“Every so often there appears a figure on the American sporting scene of such stunning originality and overwhelming vitality that he seems almost singlehandedly to revolutionize an entire sport. Lou Klimchock fits into that category, for Klimchock by his daring use of the dropped fly and the missed signal, by his unflagging ability to bobble grounders and throw to the wrong base, by his unstinting efforts to strike out in the clutch and ground into double plays, seemed almost singlehandedly and against the greatest possible odds to revitalize baseball ineptitude during the 1950s. With his ten-year record of accomplishment---187 games played (an average of 18 per year), 355 at bats (an average of 35 per year), a .203 lifetime batting average, 41 RBIs and six homers, Lou put to rest forever the ridiculously persistent notion that there is no place in the game of baseball for the guy who can’t play well.” (Couldn’t the authors find at least one good thing to say about the guy?)

Woodie Held (1965, #336):

“Woodie Held is the all-time strikeout-per-at-bats leader in the major leagues (as of 1973, when Boyd and Harris’s book was published) with a strikeout percentage of 23.5%.”

Upon an initial reading many years ago, the photos of cards brought forth a pleasant sense of nostalgia, and the satirical comments accompanying the illustrations seemed to be nothing more than harmless humor. But fresh perspectives gained by decades of life may raise doubts about the appropriateness of the text. Perhaps the enjoyable of act viewing these cards can and should be combined with individual judgments regarding the authors’ supplementary choice of words.

MYTHS OF BASEBALL: True or False, By Charles Pavitt

This is the seventh in a series of Squibber contributions intended to report the truth (as far as present data suggests) of the tidbits of “conventional wisdom” that TV analysts and comparable pundits make without any true knowledge about their validity.

But before I do that, in answer to a question I got at my presentation at the regional meeting; Managers tend to come from central positions; catcher and middle infield. Because a majority of Black Non-Hispanic players are outfielders, this tendency places them at a disadvantage unshared with Hispanics who often play central positions.

In order to control for this bias, Rimer (1995) compared what were then believed to be obvious hiring criteria between the seven Black Non-Hispanics and Hispanics and the eleven White Non-Hispanic former outfielders who were hired as managers between 1975 and 1994.

The former played an average of five more years and 670 more games, had 654 more hits, 176 more home runs, and 553 more runs batted in than the latter, but were half as likely (28% versus 55%) to have minor league managerial experience, and those who had been coaches had half the experience (2 versus 4 years).

In short, in the first two decades in which they were hired, minority outfielders had to be prominent players to get hired as managers. This was, however, not true for the Hispanic managers who had played central positions. In contrast, Singell (1991), when examining those who played between 1950 and 1965 and later became coaches, uncovered an overall increase in Black coaches between then and 1990, although not quite up to the proportion of Whites.

Black coaches (BA of .271, SA of .407) had again been better hitters than White coaches (.243 and .346). To me, this finding points out the outfielder bias, for which the author did not sufficiently control.

Unfortunately, Singell did not distinguish Hispanics in his work. I am unaware of any newer research, which we certainly could use. And I wonder if number of games played and batting performance were actual hiring criteria then (they certainly are not now).

Now back to the regularly scheduled program

Myth #19 – Position players' careers tend to peak between the ages of 28 and 32.

The research on this is ever-changing. According to research performed from the 1980s through the 2000s, the evidence was overwhelming that the plurality of position players were having their best season at age 27, with 26 not far behind.

If you were to choose a five-year stretch analogous to the 28-32 myth, it would probably be 25 to 29. But different skills appear to reach their peak at different ages, in a predictable fashion: those relevant to speed (stolen bases and triples) earlier, home runs and walks later.

One part of this myth, that catchers tend to peak later than other positions, is probably true; one study by Dallas Adams back in 1982 supported the overall 27-year-old claim but pushed both best year (28) and best stretch (26-30) one year later for backstops.

Finally, there is a lot of variability across players, with (according to Nate Silver pre-fivethirtyeight.com in 2006) those players with multiple skills (BA, HR, SB) aging better than those with one, and (according to multiple researchers) the best players tending to peak later, more like 29 or 30.

In contrast, more recent work done by Jeff Zimmerman (2013) showed a shockingly different result; peak years for offense had become earlier over time, and by 2006-2013 had become closer to 24 and 25, with that for age 21 only a couple of runs lower, and with a faster decrease afterward.

Jeff attributed the change to better training/ conditioning in the minors and, in particular, better player evaluation resulting in teams promoting major-league-ready players earlier. Evidence for the latter was players stuck in Triple A still peaking around 26-27 as earlier research had implied.

However, his latest (2020, based on 2012-2019) moves the peak even younger, at 22 (Bryce Harper's best year), although remaining near peak through age 26. If replicated by others, these findings imply a significant revision to past thinking about career peaks and trajectories.

Myth #20 – WHIP (walks plus hits per innings pitched) is a good measure of pitching effectiveness.

The relevant issue with indices measuring pitching effectiveness is the extent to which they are biased by factors unrelated to pitching as such, most notably the performance of each pitcher's team's fielders and the characteristics of the ballpark pitched in, mostly of course the home park.

Walks are one of the so-called Three True Outcomes because, along with strikeouts and home runs, they are free from fielding bias (home runs are not quite as "pure" due to ball park attributes). The number of hits allowed, in contrast, are partly a result of team fielding and, apparently, luck.

As such, in contrast with the Three True Outcomes, they differ substantially across seasons for the same pitcher, and as such are not a good measure of pitching effectiveness. The research evidence in support of this claim is extensive, starting with Vörös McCracken's original 1999 claim that pitchers have basically no impact on the outcome of batted balls in play.

That argument was too extreme, but the work of many researchers (Tom Tippett, Ben Baumer, Keith Woolner working with Dayn Perry, and John Charles Bradbury, to name

some of them) implies that a moderate interpretation (pitchers have some control, but not as much as previously thought) is valid.

There are some relevant pitching factors that are thought to have impact on pitchers' batting averages on balls in play; the best knuckleball pitchers, power pitchers, control pitchers, and "crafty lefties" seem to be more consistently successful than others, and groundball pitchers tend to give up more hits but fewer home runs than fly ball pitchers.

Bottom line – WHIP has value, but the Three True Outcomes are more valid indicators. For that reason, a given season's ERA is predicted more accurately by the previous season's Three True Outcome-based indices such Fielding Independent Pitching (FIP) than by the previous season's ERA.

Myth #21 – There is such a thing as a clutch pitcher.

There is very little evidence that clutch pitchers, as defined in a couple of different ways, exist. Pete Palmer has been involved in several relevant studies, and in each case, the number of pitchers whose won-loss records exceed what they "ought to have been" given their overall performance and their team's run support is actually fewer than would be expected by chance.

In their 2016 book, Tom Tango, Mitchel. Lichtman and Andrew Dolphin could not uncover performance differences for relievers in versus not in late-inning close-game appearances, and John Charles Bradbury (2011) was analogously unsuccessful for pitchers with runners in versus not in scoring position. Owen Watson (2016) is an exception, noting increased pitch speeds and spin rates for pitchers in high leverage situations.

A POETIC INTERLUDE: Baseball Classics -- The Pine Tar Game, By Laura H. Peebles

Since we don't have any new baseball games to look at, here's a rhyming summary of a classic:

Baseball Classics: The Pine Tar Game, July 24, 1983

No one much recalls the score

Of that long-off game.

But many fans recall that bat

That's in the Hall of Fame.

George Brett hit a homer
The Yanks did not like that.
Billy Martin popped right up:
“Umpire, check that bat!”

The pine tar on the bat compared:
And measured on home plate.
McClelland’s ruling: “Too much tar:
That home run I’ll negate.”

Brett came flying at the ump
He had to be restrained.
Of course it was to no avail:
The Yanks had won the game.

But not so fast! The Royals protest.
Lee McPhail: “Play on!”
The Yanks delay, lawsuits are filed.
(Eventually, Royals won).

Billy had a plan to say
“Brett missed first, he’s out!”
League officials planned ahead:
They knew the Yanks, no doubt.

Affidavits from the umps,
Providently on hand.

The game restarted, finished, won.

Foiling Billy's plan.

TRIVIA ANSWER: Marino Pleretti, a diminutive (5-7) right-hander born in Lucca, Italy, went 14-13 for the second-place Nats in that wartime season, winning his first game on Opening Day and his last game in the season finale.