

## Chapter Newsletter

### June 2020

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## LES COOK: LIFELINE OF THE PCL PADRES (1936-68)

by James D. Smith III

Last year, the SABR San Diego firm of Larwin, Bauer, Boyle, Myers, and Zuckerman blessed us with a classic volume: *San Diego's First Padres and "The Kid."* One of my humble contributions was a 1921 Zeenut baseball card picturing Les Cook with the PCL Sacramento Solons. Three years later, his contract purchased by Salt Lake City's Bill Lane, he joined an organization that would relocate to Hollywood (1927-35), then spend its remaining PCL life in San Diego (1936-68). That little card expressed an interest in "Cookie," which began with my 1960 discovery of baseball—and Westgate Park moments when, as trainer, he ambled out to patch up injured players. This brief article is a tribute to one who knew and personified the PCL Padres: their three-decade story's lifeline.

One player who witnessed the 1936 Stars to Padres move was veteran infielder **Eddie Leishman**, who 25 years later served as the PCL Padres General Manager and Cook's boss:

*"I've never seen a person more devoted to baseball than Les. He was more than a trainer to the players, managers and club officials. He was an inspiration to all of us in baseball. While his job was to tend the sore arms and bruises of the players, he was also a friend and confidant to the rookie and veteran alike. He has been referred to as 'Mr. San Diego Padre.' Les was just that."*



Les Cook with Sacramento (PCL)  
on 1922 Zeenut Card  
(Jim Smith collection)

Lester served (with Vince DiMaggio, et al.) on the ballplayer quartet that sang at infielder George Myatt's home plate wedding in 1936. The shortstop's best man was second baseman **Bobby Doerr**, an original Padre and Hall of Fame member. In my January 2006 interview he recalled Cook's mentorship:

*"I broke in with Hollywood in June of 1934, just a young kid, and roomed with Les for awhile. He did the hotel paying, and I respected him while he held it all together. He had the cash, and carried a pistol, which he hid under his pillow. He was still a pretty good catcher, and we got along well despite the age difference. In '36, with San Diego, he had a picture in the training room of the Rogue River (Oregon) area and said, 'Why not come up with Blanche [married 1924; died 1978] and me and spend the winter?' As a youngster, fishing and hunting intrigued me, so I went. He'd been going there since 1918 or '19. Once on site, he said there was a redheaded schoolteacher I might be interested in. I was kinda scared, but that's how I met my wife, Monica. We were married in 1938, and made our home there. Les was an old pro. A spade was a spade. He was rugged and steady. And he was a good trainer – we never had a sore-armed pitcher. I seem to recall that Blanche had lost a son in an accident, and had a hard time of it."*

A teenager on those 1936 Padres was "The Kid"—San Diego native and Hall of Famer **Ted Williams**. He honored Cook's positive influence:

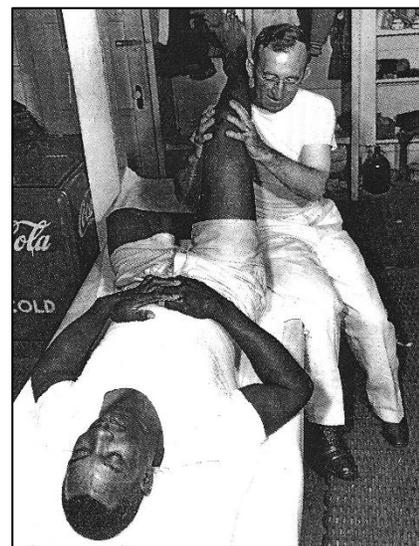
*"Cookie was a pro. I thought so from the minute I joined the Padres. Les made a strong impression on me because I knew he came from the old school of baseball... he had played for a good Hollywood team which was crammed with outstanding players. I was young then... but I could see what a fine job he did with the older men, especially the pitchers. They were always going to him for rubdowns to make the old soup bones feel good."*

After their 1937 championship year, Williams was off to Minneapolis, then to Boston, but the friendship continued.

Looking back, as *San Diego's First Padres* chronicles, Cook (born 1895 in Pennsylvania) began his pro career in 1913 as a catcher with Stockton in the California League. While playing in some 1,100 games—mostly PCL, with earlier stops in places like San Antonio and St. Paul, batting .212 lifetime—his role transitioned from player to trainer and sometime road secretary. "The Little Corporal" loved the West Coast, and after off-seasons in the outdoors, looked forward to the rigors of spring training, sharing his knowledge and love of baseball wherever he went. With the Padres, he enjoyed brief appearances in the lineup each season from 1936 to 1939, a total of ten games. His final contest was on August 23, 1939, when, with the Pads regular catchers hurt, the wiry 44-year-old went behind the plate, got a hit, scored a run, and threw out a baserunner. While never a star, to those in the game he became a living legend.

There are stories galore. One involves **Frank Kerr**, an iron man catcher, and World War II veteran, who later became a PCL umpire. In Bill Swank's fine book, *Echoes from Lane Field*, Kerr recalls the moment:

*"There was once this play at home. I blocked the plate and his spikes came right up my shin guard and cut me... Les came out, looked at my knee, and said, 'Oh my God!' The kid who spiked me felt real bad... Well, their manager called Les a quack, but he (Les) said I'd be playing in seven days. Les cleaned me out, put three clamps on it, put some black stuff on it and cleaned it every day. It was pretty bad. You could see the kneecap and it was three inches long, but Les was right. I was playing again in a week."*



May 28, 1949, Padres' Trainer Les Cook with Luke Easter  
(Jim Smith collection)

By the late 1940s, Cookie's skills and caring embraced former Negro Leagues stars. In 1949, **Luke Easter**, a PCL powerhouse on his way to Cleveland, suffered several ailments, most seriously in his knees. He had the right one drained weekly and with care continued in the lineup. Cook devised a new brace for the left one, which enabled him to play through midseason, when he underwent surgery. The previous season, native San Diegan **John Ritchey** had broken the "color barrier" in the Pacific Coast League by signing a contract with Padres owner Bill Starr. As he faced with dignity challenges both on and off the field, Johnny's simple statement, "Les Cook was always good to me," remains especially significant. Cook had earlier coached him at San Diego State, filling in for the regular faculty member during wartime, and the relationship of respect and affection was a blessing to each.

Over the years, as the PCL Padres had working agreements successively with the Indians, White Sox, Reds, and Phillies, generations of major-league players sought out the grizzled trainer for help in spring training—and he did not disappoint. Longtime *San Diego Union* sportswriter **Johnny McDonald** commented on Cook's special talents:

*"We can recall many visits by such major leaguers as Frank Robinson, Jim O'Toole, Vada Pinson and Jim Maloney at Cincinnati's minor league complex a few years ago. They preferred his educated fingers on their sore muscles."*

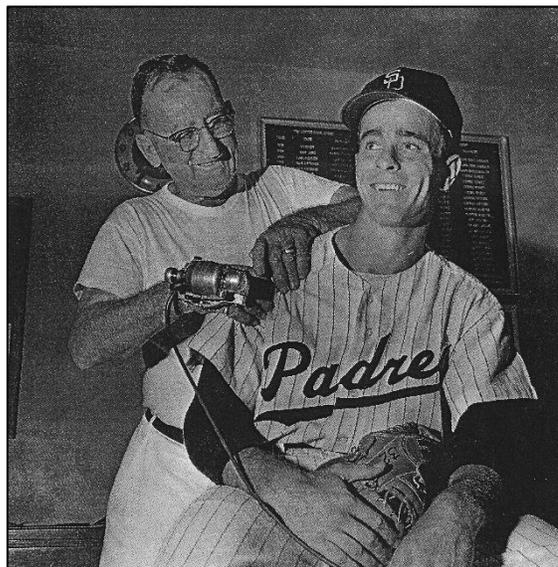
**Al Hogan** began by selling hot dogs at Lane Field in 1947, and eventually became concessions and advertising manager for both minor- and major-league Padres teams through 1974. His was a unique, behind-the-scenes perspective.

*"You'll never know how much Les Cook did to run that club. He'd been with it since Salt Lake City so he knew how things were done under Bill Lane. He was just one helluva guy. He was also the road secretary. He'd get so pie-eyed [anecdotes suggest Early Times masked by Mennen] - but let anybody touch that little bag with the money and he'd get sober right now. He was one of the finest men I ever met... He used to let kids into the ballpark and would say, 'There's lots of room.'"*

One kid he let into wooden Lane Field, later a National League outfielder and manager of the PCL Padres in their final 1967 season at homey Westgate Park and sole 1968 season at San Diego Stadium (aka Jack Murphy, then Qualcomm), was **Bob Skinner**. In my November 2006 interview he looked back fondly:

*"We'd knock and Les would come to the door. He'd say 'Wait a minute,' and when the coast was clear he'd let us into the bleachers. He had a big heart, that guy... When I was a PCL manager the last two seasons, he was past 70 and still trainer and traveling secretary. He had his office and training table in the clubhouse down the right field line. He was well ahead of his time in his knowledge of muscles and massage anatomy. He was sought out. Les was a real gentleman. He took care of us all. Even at his age, there was still energy. How many hours did he put in that we never saw? He loved Eddie Leishman, the GM. Hey, he loved us all."*

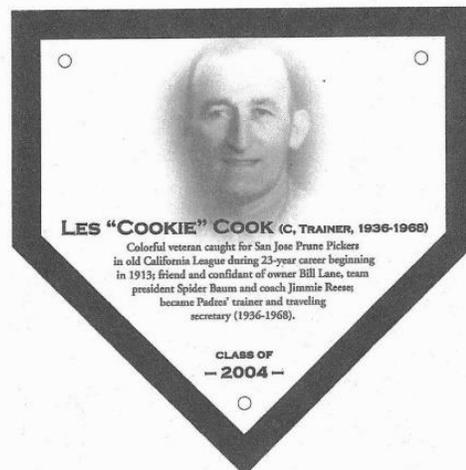
The *San Diego Union* and *Evening Tribune* (from which several reflections above are taken) faithfully detailed Les Cook's July 1, 1968, passing from a heart attack, while prepping for a (PCL!) road trip to Indianapolis and Denver.



May 18, 1962, Trainer Cook with Padres' Sammy Ellis (Note: see the article on page 9 regarding Ellis' No-Hitter)  
(Jim Smith collection)

As one elected to the San Diego Baseball Hall of Fame in 1966, his life was viewed with affection and respect.

With his Padres granted a National League expansion team for 1969, Les was anticipating a season in the major leagues. Yet in the eyes of his adopted city, and the baseball family, he had seemed a big-leaguer forever. As former PCL Padres teammate, roommate, and coach **Jimmie Reese** observed: "He had more friends in the game than anyone I ever knew."



## SIGN STEALING IN THE WORLD SERIES: WELCOME TO 1911

by Dan Boyle

First, a confession: I am addicted to Strat-O-Matic. I first purchased the game in 1963 and have had some kind of season going ever since. The game company has recreated many older seasons, with the oldest being 1911. This was my most recent project.

Most of what I knew about the first Athletic dynasty was the \$100,000 infield. We can probably all name them: Stuffy McInnis, Eddie Collins, Jack Barry, and Frank "Home Run" Baker. At the start of the season, McInnis was on the team, but for the first four to six weeks he only played at shortstop when Barry missed some time. Harry Davis was the first baseman.



Who is Harry Davis?<sup>1</sup>

When the American League started in 1901, his nondescript career appeared to be over, with the highlight being a good 1897 season in Pittsburgh. Connie Mack managed that Pirate club and he tracked down Davis (working either as a bank clerk or for the railroad, depending on which source you believe) and persuaded him to join the Athletics in May 1901.

*The Sporting News* referred to Davis in 1911 as "Connie's right-hand man for the last six seasons." Davis was the Babe Ruth (or if you're Bill Swank, the Gavy Cravath) of the first AL deadball decade, leading the league in home runs for four straight seasons and named captain of the team in 1905. He was 37 at the start of the 1911 season. While playing regularly in the early months, his job was also to tutor McInnis, thought to be too short (5' 9 1/2") to play first base. By June McInnis was ready and took over at first base. When Davis disappeared from the roster in late July, I assumed he had been released.

But he was reactivated in September after McInnis hurt his wrist and started every game in the World Series win over the Giants. Here the story gets more interesting.

The Giants were convinced that the Athletics were stealing their signs, but did not know how. Theories ranged from someone adjusting the awnings on the houses across the street beyond right field to

<sup>1</sup> To read the SABR biography of Harry Davis click on this link: <https://sabr.org/bioproj/person/harry-davis/>

the batboy stealing signs as he went out late to pick up bats. Giants' catcher Chief Meyers told Lawrence Ritter in *The Glory of Their Times* that after Game 2, he told Christy Mathewson and Rube Marquard to throw whatever they wanted. He would put down signs, but they should ignore them.

*"They're getting our signs from someplace," Meyers told McGraw. "That coach on third base, Harry Davis, is calling our pitches. When he yells, 'It's all right,' it's a fastball."*

Is there any contemporaneous evidence of sign-stealing? This would be categorized under "inside baseball," which was referred to but not generally reported on in that era. There is one tantalizing note in the November 2, 1911, issue of *The Sporting News*:

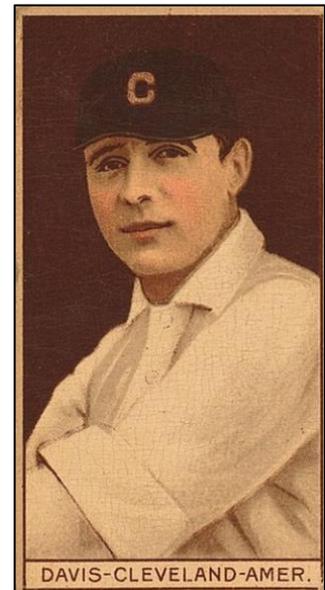
*There were frequent conferences between Meyers and Marquard in the third inning. There were obvious attempts to switch signals. It was all in vain, however, as [Rube] Oldring hooked a fast one over the fence with [Jack] Lapp and [Jack] Coombs and there wasn't a sound from the New York rooters.*

This is obviously not conclusive, but the details support Meyers' story. With Lapp and Coombs on base, Davis would have been coaching at third base. Rube Oldring's three-run home run was off "a fast one." Game 5 was Marquard's first start since after Game 2, when Meyers told both Giant star pitchers to ignore his signs, and it would be logical to expect some confusion early in the game.

How did Davis know what was coming? Meyers said that the Giants never did figure out how he did it. Jumping across decades, a recent book by Ron Darling offers a clue. In chapter 8 of *108 Stitches*, Darling tells of his first major-league spring training start for the Texas Rangers: versus the Yankees, multiple innings, no runs scored. His manager, Don Zimmer, asked him to stick around for an inning after he came out of the game. Zim sat next to him, asked to see his glove, and told him, "Get yourself a closed glove, son. See this opening in the back? Every time you throw a curveball, you move your finger." Maybe it's as simple as: a baseball lifer like Zimmer or Davis sees things that no one else does.

Davis left the celebration early after Game 6 and took a train to Cleveland, where he was announced as the new manager of the Naps. Baseball smarts do not necessarily make a good manager, however. He was fired before the season was over.

Harry Davis coached third base for several seasons under Connie Mack and made a major contribution to the next Philadelphia dynasty. His obituary in the *New York Times* credits him with scouting for the Athletics, finding a young unorthodox hitter in the minors, and convincing Mack to acquire Al Simmons.



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#### List of References:

"Gossip of the Fifth Game," *The Sporting News*, November 2, 1911.

Lawrence Ritter, *The Glory of Their Times* (Macmillan, 1966), 172-173.

Ron Darling, *108 Stitches* (St. Martin's Press, 2019), 170-172.

[https://www.baseball-reference.com/bullpen/1911\\_World\\_Series](https://www.baseball-reference.com/bullpen/1911_World_Series)

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1947/08/13/87803764.html?pageNumber=22>



### BTW!

We are always looking for articles to publish in our Chapter's newsletter. Submit your articles to Geoff Young via email at [gyoung858@yahoo.com](mailto:gyoung858@yahoo.com) for inclusion in an upcoming edition.

## 1986 FAN APPRECIATION DAY: FLAN 9 POSITIONS

as told by Andy Strasberg

*The Padres were way out of contention by Labor Day 1986, which had happened in all but two seasons while I'd been employed with the Padres since 1975. Still, it was my job to "market" the team and reduce the number of "no-show" ticket holders, while at the same time generating incremental ticket sales.*

*That's when I thought about bringing back the feat of a player playing nine positions in one game. This was my opportunity to put a Padres player in the record books and make it happen for the first time in the senior circuit.*

*My selection of who could do it was a no-brainer. Right away, I knew it had to be Tim Flannery, our super-utility player extraordinaire. In late August, as Flan was taking batting practice, I floated the idea by him.*

*"Hey Tim, how about you playing all nine positions on Fan Appreciation Day, Sunday, September 28?"*

*Tim's response: "Whatever you need."*

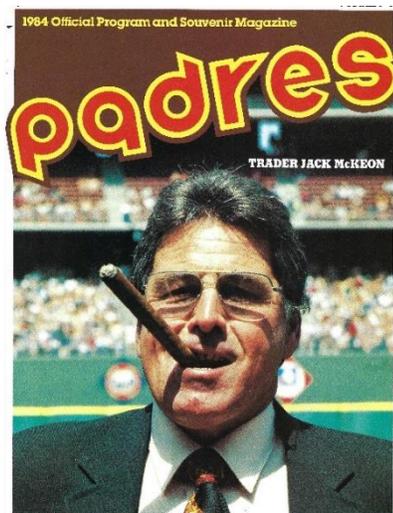
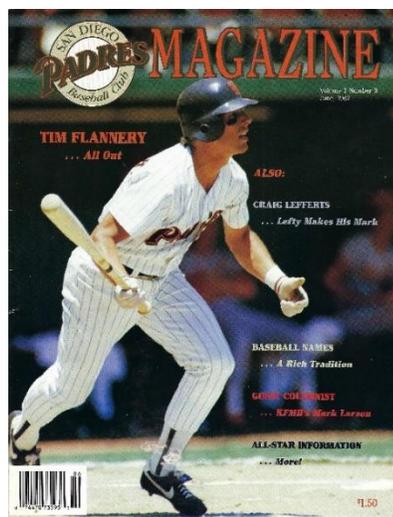
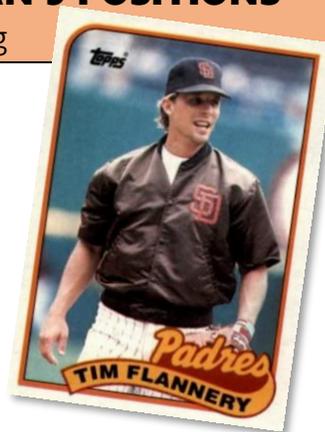
*Great. We could promote it as "Flan Appreciation Day on Fan Appreciation Day" and sell a boatload of game tickets. I could hardly contain myself.*

*The only other puzzle piece I needed was our GM's approval, so I pitched Jack McKeon.*

*His response: "NO."*

*End of story.*

Factual Notes: Attendance for the September 28, 1986, game was 12,617. The final score was Reds 6, Padres 3.



## THE PENNANT-WINNING 1929 SAN DIEGO ACES

by Tom Larwin

The San Diego Aces played in the Class D California State League that had one ill-fated season in 1929. The league was not formally established until late March, set its Opening Day for two weeks later on April 10, and had its last game played on June 16, in the middle of what was scheduled to be a 21-week season.

This new California State League had four teams: Bakersfield Bees, Orange County Countians, San Bernardino Padres, and San Diego Aces.<sup>2</sup> Despite its shaky start San Diego's new team in this league garnered substantial community support. The 1929 Aces would be the city's first professional baseball team since the 1913 San Diego Bears, a team in the Southern California League.

San Diego was the new league's largest city and benefited from relatively good fan support. Of the league's four teams it was the most successful at the gate. The team finished the shortened season with the league's best record and was officially awarded the pennant as league champions. The 1929 San Diego Aces turned out to be San Diego's first professional sports championship team.

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A

THE EVENING TRIBUNE

San Diego, Cal., Tuesday, June 18

### *State League Suspends; San Diego Aces Awarded Pennant*

The existence of the San Diego Aces and its being a championship team are well-kept secrets in San Diego. Not much can be found in local sports history articles or books about the team.

Nonetheless, research into the team some 90 years later has discovered several players from the Aces who had varied and interesting connections with history. In alphabetical order the following are introductions to six notable players from the team.

**Sam Agnew** was the team's player-manager and also a vice president of the club. He was 42 years old in 1929 and in the last years of a playing career that started in 1910. Agnew's career consisted of 1,100 games over 11 seasons in the Pacific Coast League (PCL) and 563 games at the major-league level. He played in 22 of the Aces' 60 games and batted .283.

The interesting connection for Agnew was being the Boston Red Sox catcher for a baseball Hall of Famer in the 1918 World Series by the name of Babe Ruth. The Red Sox won the Series against the Cubs, four games to two. Ruth won two games. Agnew caught for Ruth in a Game 1 shutout win and was also Ruth's catcher for the first eight innings in the Game 4 win.

**Dave Colley** was the team's best pitcher — and perhaps its best hitter. He started nine games for the Aces and had a won-lost record of 6-2. On June 2, in the first game of a Sunday doubleheader, he pitched his best game of the season, a two-hit masterpiece. He helped the win by going 3- for-3 and raised his batting average to a team-leading.463.

The historical connection for Colley was a tragic one. On June 7, five days after he pitched so well, the 31-year-old Colley died unexpectedly. The apparent cause was traced back to a hand injury several weeks earlier and then a fall at the ballpark on June 2. Nothing too unusual; however, Colley was not feeling well on



Sam Agnew with Hollywood (PCL) on 1926 Zeenut Card

**COLLEY SUCGUMBS  
IN HOSPITAL HERE;  
ILL FEW HOURS**

San Diego's 'Ace in Hole'  
Pitcher and Hitter Passes  
Away; Autopsy Made.

(June 8, 1929,  
San Diego Union)

<sup>2</sup> The Orange County team, based in Santa Ana, had trouble from the start and by the end of May was relocated twice, to Pomona and eventually, to Coronado.

June 3 and was confined to bed. On June 4 he had surgery on his hand. Late on June 6 he returned to the hospital and died early the morning of June 7. There was speculation that untreated diabetes may have been the cause of his death.

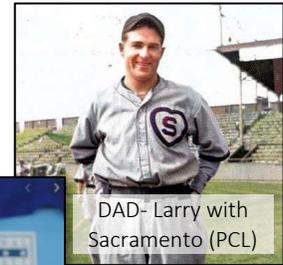
**Dan Crowley** was the Aces' first baseman for every one of its games. He led the team in home runs with five. Crowley grew up in Los Angeles and had some minor-league experience prior to 1929 with teams in the Utah-Idaho League. After the Aces he played in several minor leagues; 1933 was his last season when he played for the PCL Hollywood Stars.



Crowley with Hollywood (PCL) in 1933  
(February 2, 1984, *Los Angeles Times*)

There were several interesting aspects to Crowley's connection with history, all about baseball. One example took place when he was with the Stars in 1933. He had what was described in an article from 1984 as "the greatest one-week career of any ballplayer in L.A. baseball history."<sup>3</sup> He hit five crucial homers as the Stars won six straight games while contending with the Los Angeles Angels for first place in September. Crowley also gained local prominence as a mentor to numerous major-league players during the 1930s-1950s. For 60 years he led the renowned "Crowley All-Stars" in Los Angeles.

**Larry Gillick** was the Aces' workhorse pitcher, getting into one-third of the team's games and starting 15. He ended the season with a 7-9 record. Gillick would go on to have a modest minor-league career, primarily with Sacramento of the Pacific Coast League during 1929-1933.



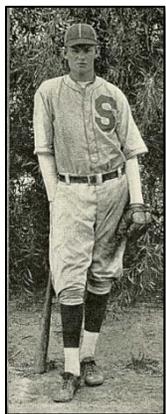
DAD- Larry with Sacramento (PCL)

(Alan O'Connor Collection)

Gillick's connection with history is with the National Baseball Hall of Fame and by virtue of his son, Pat, who was elected by the Veterans Committee in 2010 and inducted as a team executive. Larry also had a connection with the 1936 PCL Padres. He was with the team throughout spring training before being cut just before the season started.



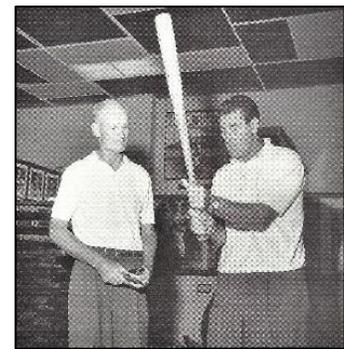
SON- Pat at his HoF Induction



Luscomb with San Diego HS in 1925

**Rod Luscomb** was a 21-year-old San Diego boy who joined the team in late April, primarily as an outfielder. He went on to have a decent season, with a .295 batting average, plus he was the starting pitcher in three games. The 1929 season with the Aces was his only season in professional ball.

His connection has to do with another San Diegan, Ted Williams. Luscomb was 11 years older than Williams and was director at the city's North Park playground where Williams learned to hit. Luscomb, who was called "my first real hero" by Williams, would serve as his batting practice pitcher, confidant, mentor, and lifelong friend.<sup>4</sup>



July 21, 1961, Luscomb with Ted Williams

<sup>3</sup> Scott Ostler, "An All-Star and His Collection of Stars," *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 1984, pp.19-20.

<sup>4</sup> There are numerous references to Luscomb's influence on Williams in these books: (a) Ben Bradlee, Jr., *The Kid: The Immortal Life of Ted Williams*, Little, Brown and Company, 2013; (b) Leigh Montville, *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*, Doubleday, 2014; (c) Bill Nowlin (ed), et al, *The Kid: Ted Williams in San Diego*, Rounder Books, 2005.

**Lee Ramage** was another San Diego boy, only 18 years old and an infielder on the Aces. He played in only six games, which turned out to be the extent of his pro baseball career.

However, Ramage did end up with a professional sports career: He became a heavyweight boxer. From 1929 through 1939 he posted a record of 49-14 with 23 knockouts. Ramage had two bouts with future heavyweight champion Joe Louis. Their first fight was in December 1934 and their second in February 1935. It was early in Louis' career; he came into the first fight with an 11-0 record. Louis won both fights with TKOs. The 1935 fight was in Wrigley Field... the Los Angeles version.



Ticket stub from Fight vs Joe Louis  
February 21, 1935



## A LOOK BACK: THE LAST PADRES' NO-HITTER

### SAMMY ELLIS on AUGUST 14, 1962

You have to go back to our PCL Padres to talk about a Padres no-hitter. The last one was almost 58 years ago. The game took place on Tuesday, August 14, 1962, at Westgate Park, where Fashion Valley Mall now rests. Sammy Ellis was the pitcher and with the 4-0 win he was on his way to a 12-6 record for the season. The Padres won the PCL pennant that year with a record of 93-61, 12 games ahead of two second-place teams.

After a brief stint with the Cincinnati Reds in 1962, Ellis spent the following season with the PCL Padres, going 12-10 in 1963. He returned to the Reds in 1964 and went on to spend six seasons with them and two other teams. His career MLB record was 63-58. His best season came in 1965, when he was selected to the National League All-Star team and finished with a 22-10 record. The next day's articles from the *San Diego Union* are contained below and on pages 10-11.

**SPORTS The San Diego Union SPORTS**  
ESTABLISHED 1868 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 15, 1962 Page 3-3

## 9,124 See Padres' Ellis Hurl No-Hit 4-0 Victory

Tacoma	ab	r	h	bi	San Diego	ab	r	h	bi
Garrido, ss	4	0	0	0	Ruiz, ss	4	1	2	0
Thornberry, rf	3	0	0	0	Klaus, 2b	3	0	1	0
Phillips, 2b	3	0	0	0	Harper, lf	2	2	0	0
Gerner, 1b	3	0	0	0	Walters, rf	4	0	1	1
Perry, cf	3	0	0	0	Sevan, 1b	4	0	1	0
Hain, 3b	3	0	0	0	Samford, 3b	3	0	0	1
Cardenal, lf	2	0	0	0	Pisoni, cf	3	1	1	1
Wilson, c	2	0	0	0	Gonder, c	3	0	0	0
LeMay, p	1	0	0	0	Ellis, p	3	0	0	0
Goetz, p	0	0	0	0					
b-Weekly	1	0	0	0					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>

b—Grounded out for LeMay in 8th.  
 b—Struckout for Perry in 9th.  
 Tacoma..... 000 000 000—0  
 San Diego..... 001 110 01x—4  
 E—LeMay. PO—A—Tacoma 5, San Diego 5.  
 DP—Cardenal-Phillips. Klaus-Ruiz-Sevan.  
 Garrido-Phillips-Gerner. 2B—Walters.  
 HR—Pisoni. SB—Cardenal. Harper. SF—  
 Samford. Walking—Thornberry, Phillips.  
 Gerner, Harper 2, Wilson, LeMay, Car-  
 denal. Striking Out—Cardenal, Wilson,  
 LeMay, Thornberry, Ellis, Gonder,  
 Samford 2, Perry, Garrido, Weekly.

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
LeMay (L, 6-3)	7	3	3	1	3	3
Goetz	1	0	0	0	1	1
Ellis (W, 10-5)	9	0	0	0	6	7

Balk—LeMay. U—Anthony, Ashford & Valentine. T—2:02. A—9,124.



A happy Sammy Ellis and San Diego Padres' teammates examine the final game ball which Ellis tossed no-hit 4-0 victory over Tacoma last night. Left to right are Bob Risenhoover, Jesse Gonder, Ellis, trainer Les Cook, and Tommy Harper. A crowd of 9,124 saw Ellis score his 10<sup>th</sup> victory in series opener with Giants.

## Whiffs Seven In Triumph Over Tacoma

By **JOHNNY McDONALD**

Wow! The flame-thrower was really hot last night.

Blazing-fast Sammy Ellis, a 21-year old Birmingham, Ala., righthander, thrilled a huge, overflow crowd of 9,124 at Westgate Park by throwing a no-hit, no-run game to give the San Diego Padres a 4-0 victory over third-place Tacoma.

This was the league-leading Padres' sixth straight triumph and ran the Giants' string of runless innings to 30.

With the possible exception of rightfielder Kenny Walters' long, running catch of Bill Hain's fly ball in the second inning, there wasn't a single ball that came close to being a base hit.

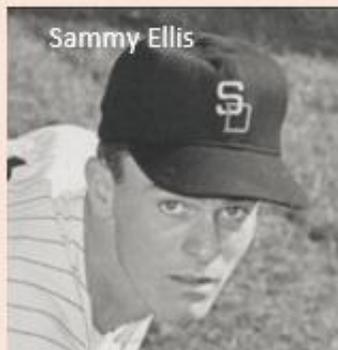
### AWARE OF NO-HITTER

Young Sammy received errorless support but he was troubled by walks in the first, fourth, fifth and seventh frames. He walked six and fanned seven. This increased his season strikeout total to 142.

As the players and fans mobbed the Padre hurler, Sammy said: "I don't believe it myself. It's the first no-hit game I have ever pitched."

Ellis, who didn't play high school baseball until his senior year because "I was too wild," said he knew he was working on a no-hitter all the way.

Shaking his head, Ellis added: "I didn't know I'd come that close."



Sammy Ellis

### FASTER AT FINISH

Padre catcher Jesse Gender, who said in the dressing room that this was the first no-hitter he has caught, was just as happy as his hurling teammate. "He's never gone more than five innings of hitless ball this year," Jesse said.

"I believe he threw faster in his last three games, especially against Salt Lake last week," the catcher added. "He threw about 26 curves tonight and was throwing harder in the last inning than the start."

Ellis returned and yelled to his teammates: "Boys, you made this no-hitter possible."

This was the first no-hitter by a Padre hurler since last summer when veteran Al Worthington now with Indianapolis, turned the trick.

### SHAKEY START

"About the seventh, I could tell the whole squad's awareness and I knew we were all pulling for him together," said manager Don Heffner. "Even before tonight, I felt his feet were solidly on the ground."

"The game against Salt Lake was just as gutty a job (he won that one, 2-1). He's grown up in the last two weeks and as far as I'm concerned he's a real major

leaguer and should be for a long, long time to come."

Sammy started out wobbly. After forcing Gil Garrido to ground out, he walked Faye Throneberry and Dick Phillips in the first frame. Then Dick Gernert flied to Walters and Bob Perry popped up to second baseman Bobby Klaus.

Hain's hard smash to right field started the second. Centerfielder Jim Pisoni and Walters ran for the ball and the latter gathered it in after a long sprint to his right.

He walked Gernert again in the fourth and passed two straight batters in the fifth with one down. But a double play, started by Klaus, ended the inning.

The last Giant base-runner was Jose Cardenal in the seventh. Cardenal walked and stole second with two down but Ellis got Neil Wilson to pop up to Chico Ruiz at short.

For Ellis, who signed a pro contract with the Cincinnati Reds out of Mississippi State last summer, this was his eighth complete game of 21 starts. He had started this season with the Reds but was sent down May 10.

Jim Pisoni's 14th home run in the third inning was actually enough for the Padre twirler but San Diego added single tallies in the fourth, fifth and eighth frames.

In all, the Padres got eight hits off the offerings of starter Dick LeMay (now 6-3) and reliever John Goetz.

It was a great show for a crowd that spilled out into the grassed banks beyond the outfield fences. Ellis picked a great night for his masterpiece.

Ray Rippelmeyer (2-2) will pitch for the Padres tonight at 8 o'clock against either Danny Rivas (11-13) or Gerry Thomas (11-8) for the Giants.

# Jack Murphy

THE SAN DIEGO UNION'S  
SPORTS EDITOR

## That Was No Bomb Lighting Sky, It Was Sammy Ellis' Big Smile

The young pitcher was trying to play it cool as he walked off the mound. Sammy Ellis had just completed a no-hitter by striking out pinch hitter John Weekly on four screeching fast balls and the cheers of a crowd of 9,124 came roaring and crashing over him like a tidal wave.



Sammy Ellis

Ellis pretended not to notice. There wasn't a flicker of emotion on his face as he began walking toward the dugout. Then, from the corner of his eye, he saw catcher Jesse Gonder running toward him, grinning and shouting. Ellis abandoned the pose. By the time Gonder reached him, the no-hit pitcher turned on a smile that must have brought an early sunrise in his home town of Birmingham, Ala.

Sammy began jumping up and down like a kid on a pogo stick. Gonder caught him on the bounce and wrapped him in a bear hug. Then a mob of teammates came at him on the run, joyfully rumping his hair, pounding him on the back, and all but bodily lifting and carrying him to the clubhouse in a surge of excitement.

There was shouting and singing in the dressing quarters and Ellis struggled to maintain his composure. His fingers were trembling as he unbuttoned the shirt to his uniform.

"I struck out that last hitter on pure adrenalin," said the youngster who, after less than two years as a professional, already is worth \$100,000 to the Cincinnati Reds. "Gonder wouldn't let me throw anything but the fast ball in the ninth inning and that was all right with me. I felt strong and I didn't want to take a chance of the curve. When I try to get the curve down, sometimes it hangs."

## No Idle Gossip In Dugout

This was Ellis' 10th victory of the year and it came as a surpassing thrill to the largest crowd to watch a Pacific Coast League game in San Diego this summer. The hum began in the stands in the sixth inning, gradually increasing in volume as Ellis disposed of the Tacoma hitters almost effortlessly. In the ninth, tension crackled like electricity.

Up in the press box, Padre president Jim Mulvaney remarked offhandedly, "I've always wanted to see a no-hitter; this will be my first one." There was a chill and Mulvaney, a nice man, was regarded in hostile silence.

A big zero on the scoreboard said it all. In the dugout, nobody even mentioned the possibility of a no-hitter. But coach Whitey Weitelmann almost templed baseball's strongest superstition while Ellis was pitching to the leadoff hitter in the ninth.

"I just hope he gets by Phillips," said Weitelmann, referring to Tacoma second baseman Dick Phillips. Then the coach put a hand to his mouth as though to seal his lips. With the count 2-0, Phillips lofted a fly ball to center; Weitelmann relaxed.

Then Dick Gerner swung on a 1-1 count and popped to Chico Ruiz at shortstop. And four Ellis blazers got Weekly, the last man.

Much later in the night, when the ballpark had emptied and the tumult had subsided, Padre general manager Eddle Leishman was serving refreshments in his spacious carpeted office. His wife, Phyllis, was in another part of the building, serving as den mother to three lost boy scouts.

"What a year!" sighed Leishman. "I'm going to put a big circle around 1962 and go look at it every time I get the blues."

This was the high water mark of a lumpy and memorable season. The club had floundered in April and May and it was in fifth place, nine games off the pace, on May 15. Then came a surge on the pitching of Johnny Flavin, Joe Nuxhall and Ellis, and the Padres took the lead on June 29.

The lead had expanded to 11 games when the San Diego athletes — breaking out of a slump on the road that saw them win only four of 12 games—swept a five-game series from Salt Lake City. Ellis started it all with a sparkling four-hitter last Friday night that led to a 2-1 triumph. Then the other victories came in a rush; Salt Lake City, the nearest contender, was routed and the race was practically over.

## What Now For An Encore?

The tension had left its sign on skipper Don Heffner. Before Tuesday night's opener with Tacoma, Heffner fell asleep while chatting with Leishman in the general manager's office.

"Golly," he said, sheepishly, "this game is getting tough."

After crushing Salt Lake City, Heffner wondered what he'd do for an encore. A letdown seemed likely, perhaps inevitable. The manager decided to pitch Ellis again, even though his 21-year-old prize doesn't like to work on only three days' rest.

They opened the gates and Leishman and concession manager Al Hogan prepared for a crowd of 1,500. They had underestimated San Diego's interest in a lively, winning team. Long lines formed before the box offices, traffic backed up, and Hogan sent for reinforcements. When play began the stands at Westgate Park had overflowed and some of the mob (mostly boy scouts—1,500 came as guests of management) sprawled on the embankment beyond the fences.

Ellis gave them a show to remember. Pitching the first no-hitter in the Coast League this year, he gave his supporting cast only two difficult chances. He walked six, struck out seven.

"I was a little wild," said Sammy, "just wild enough to be effective."

That's what makes Sammy hum.

