

# 20 To 80\*



## SABR SCOUTS COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

**2006 No. 2**

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*Welcome to both new SABR members and new members of the Scouts Committee.*

## **Advance Scouting / Red Sox by Bill Nowlin**

This article first appeared in *Red Sox Magazine*.

When Jason Varitek sets up low and outside, when Alex Gonzalez moves a little more to his left, when Curt Schilling fires a fastball right down the middle to A-Rod for a called third strike, it's not pure guesswork and not just baseball instinct. There's always an element of guesswork and always an element of instinct, but increasingly major league ballplayers rely on detailed advance scouting work and tailor their movements to advance scouting reports and the accumulated and detailed video available to coaches, hitters, and pitchers. (continued page 2)

## **SABRscouts ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUP**

The SABRscouts eGroup is a restricted and unmoderated online discussion group for members of the Scouts Research Committee. Its purpose is to foster interactive communication regarding areas of interest about professional baseball scouts and player development personnel. Subscribers are also encouraged to post research requests as well as the URLs, titles and/or brief summaries of "Baseball Scouts in the News" articles that they believe would be of interest to other committee members.

To join, send an email to [SABRscouts-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:SABRscouts-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**\*20 TO 80 IS A STANDARD SCOUTING SCALE**



### **Advance Scouting**

One of the loneliest jobs in baseball has to be that of the advance scout. Dana Levangie and Scott Bradley are the two advance scouts for the Red Sox, with former Boston bullpen catcher Levangie (1997-2004) getting the bulk of the work. Levangie, a six-year minor league catcher before joining the big league club for bullpen duty, typically travels four to eight days ahead of the team, scouting a team the Sox will face a couple of series later. Thus, when the Red Sox host the White Sox the first week of September, Levangie will have been in Chicago for the final days of August watching how the reigning World Champions play the visiting Devil Rays. The White Sox are in Kansas City for the three days before they come to Boston, but the pitchers the Red Sox will face at Fenway are the ones that will be on the mound against Tampa Bay.

And Levangie never sees his own team play. Every game is a road game, and he never gets to enjoy the companionship of his teammates. The other scouts he meets on the road are not the same from city to city, as each follows his own schedule. It truly is one of the loneliest jobs - but one of the most crucial jobs as well. Levangie is part of the "team behind the team" that gathers information to help the Red Sox succeed.

During postgame remarks on more than one occasion during the first half of the 2006 season, Curt Schilling credited the work of the advance scouts in helping formulate the game plan that enabled him to succeed. Of course, Varitek has to call the game and Schilling has to execute, but the game plan is one developed through the combined efforts of a number of people and Schilling was quick with praise on the days when things went well.



### **Advance Video**

Over the last few years, the Red Sox have accumulated video of opposing players - pitchers and hitters - that they might have occasion to face. Their system allows each batter to study video of the starting pitcher and likely relievers from the opposition, and to do so in considerable situational detail. Billy Broadbent has been Boston's major league video coordinator since 1997. He travels with the team and is available home and away to players and coaches, effectively the liaison between advance scouting coordinator Kyle Evans and the Red Sox coaching staff. He travels with a server and four laptops, no longer the now-primitive VCR and single monitor of even just a half-dozen years ago.

Since the newer system was first implemented in 2002, any coach or player can draw on an extensive database showing real-time game footage. For instance, suppose you were a left-handed batter expecting to face Mike Mussina in Yankee Stadium in mid-September. You could call up video of every at-bat you had previously had facing Mussina to see how he'd worked you in the past. You could call up recent video from his last five starts to see how he attacked other left-handed batters. Did he often start off throwing strikes? Was there a pattern he might follow as he got deeper into the count? If you even wanted to know the pitch he had most often thrown in 2-0 counts, you could isolate those at-bats. It's a very sophisticated system allowing any number of ways to "slice and dice" the available video data.



**Advance scouting coordinator** Kyle Evans is in his first year as Advance Scouting Coordinator for the Red Sox. A former pitcher with six years of experience in the Indians system behind him, Evans got as far as Double A with Cleveland but now is a key component of the Red Sox major league effort. "This is my first job on this side of the game," he says, and he's pleased to

be part of such a successful organization. "I know there are things that we're doing here that are definitely ahead of the game. We're obviously very guarded about our trade secrets," he adds, "but it's definitely an organization that prides itself as being a step ahead in terms of the information we have access to and can provide to the players and staff."

Evans is in constant contact with Levangie and Scott Bradley, but there is by no means a constrained channel of communication. "Dana spends a lot of time on the road watching games and trying to take in as much information as he possibly can, to get something of value to the coaching staff and to the players. He spends a lot of time talking to me, but he talks on a regular directly with Jason Varitek and with [bench coach] Brad Mills, trying to relay what he's seen. He also talks to Al Nipper quite a bit, on the pitching side."

Levangie will talk to quite a few people. "I talk to Brad Mills, to Nipper. I talk to Papa Jack, when I feel things are needed. He has a lot of history as far as the guys he's seen. If there's a new guy on board, I'll mention it." With Varitek, though, there's a special catcher-to-catcher connection. "We'll talk about every hitter. We'll go over every hitter. He'll have his own image of how he's going to approach them, but I'll try to sell him on what I've seen at that point." Levangie's conversations often continue after the game, too. "I talk to Billy on a daily basis, so he can tell me what happened, what stood out, how we did as a team, who'd doing what. I talk to Tito occasionally. Tito has a lot to do before each series. He respects his coaches a lot and he asks a lot from them, so I try to go through Brad."



**Jason Varitek** Having worked together for years while Levangie was bullpen catcher for Boston, Varitek has a strong rapport with the scout. "Having been with Dana and having developed a great deal of trust in him and his knowledge of the game...he observes the game so much there's probably nobody in the advance scouting world that I would trust as much as him." Varitek explains that his game preparation takes 2 1/2 to 3 hours prior to each series, beginning with his own player-by-player outline of the upcoming opposition. "I'll make my notes, then I'll hear from Dana. I like to have mine done first so we have a comparison of what they've seen and what I think. We add in Billy with the video and the pitching coach's work and the bullpen coach's work, and you have a big compiled pool of information."

Then he sits down and formulates the game plan with the starting pitcher. Sometimes there isn't a great deal of time to prepare. The Red Sox were in Atlanta for a Sunday night game on June 18, then

flew home afterward with the Washington Nationals due in the next evening. "I had to do it the night before. I knew we were going to have a short day. I had to do it all on the plane." Once a series gets underway, preparation for subsequent games in the series can be a 10- or 15-minute review. Of course, game plans are one thing and execution another. The scouting might be dead on, but it all comes down to pitchers' strengths: "Who's on the mound? You can't always pitch guys certain ways if the guy on the mound doesn't have that capability. You have to take that information and interpolate and extrapolate it, and come up with a plan." On a given day, a pitcher might have difficulty, say, locating. "Then you have to mix and match even more, and try and think out of the box a little bit."

One thing Varitek knows: "Everybody's always put in their work." That said, though, "They can do their work, and it still comes down to our execution, using that information properly and making on-field and game-time adjustments."



### **Information flow**

It is by no means just Varitek who receives the information. Kyle Evans further explains the information flow: "The way it sets up is that Dana sends in reports that come to me. I try to filter the information along with what I can pick up watching a lot of video and having access to some different numbers and things that we have here in the office, to try and compile an accurate picture of the opposing team and specifically the players on the opposing team. We're very fortunate to have a guy like Jason Varitek, who takes so much pride in the way he calls the game and how well he knows the opposing hitters. And so we definitely make sure there's a lot of information there in terms of having an accurate picture of the other hitters strengths and weaknesses."

The reports typically are prepared by the advance scouts in text form, using templates developed by the Red Sox over time, Evans says, using forms "that the players and coaches are comfortable with. Everything goes into those formats. Dana and Scott both feed information into those templates and then I follow through and update it and try to make things a little more complete. I put in a little more statistical information for them as well. At any point in time, we can print out very up-to-date spray charts and the like. Anybody would have access to certain things, but we definitely...it's one of the places that the Red Sox try to get an edge, having access to things that the average person couldn't come across."

Evans tailors the reports to each recipient, developing different information specific to, for instance, the tasks of the individual coaches. "Each of the coaches gets a scouting report in one form or another. [So do] certain players who definitely take a more active role in terms of scouting the other teams. In Jason Varitek and Curt Schilling, I would say we have two of the most prepared players in the major leagues. In my opinion, Curt Schilling is one of the best pitchers in the major leagues at actually executing a scouting report. It makes my job a lot of fun to be able to game-plan for a guy like Curt."

There are players, of course, who rely more on instinct than on preparation. Billy Broadbent recalled that Nomar Garciaparra "very rarely looked" at video, yet as a two-time batting champion was clearly successful despite drawing on the available information much more sparingly. Evans agrees that there are players that "you wouldn't recommend trying to go outside of their strengths. That's one of the biggest things that you have to take into consideration, someone's ability to execute a scouting plan. That's why I say it's a real pleasure to get a chance to do this for someone like Curt. But we take into account everybody we have on the staff. That's one of the places where there's so much value in having Tek take an interest in it, because he does have a really good rapport with the pitching staff. Those guys trust him to call a game, and I think it's a big deal to make sure that he's prepared in a way that he continues to earn their trust. There aren't a ton of players running around with a 'C' on their jersey. He's a special player." *To be continued in the next issue...*

## SCOUTS IN THE NEWS

It is with great sadness that we mark the passing of seven members of the scouting fraternity in the past quarter. **John Jordan “Buck” O’Neil**, the former Kansas City Monarch player-manager best known as the ambassador for the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum was the first black major league coach and a longtime scout for the Chicago Cubs and Kansas City Royals. Buck is credited for the signings of George Altman, Lou Brock, Joe Carter, Oscar Gamble, Lou Johnson, Donnie Moore, Lee Smith among others. After passing away October 6<sup>th</sup>, Major League Baseball offered a moment of silence in his memory during each postseason series and thousands lined up to pay their respects while his body lay in repose at the NLBM. SABR Scouts Committee member Keith Olbermann offers this video tribute. <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/15208545>

**Syd Thrift**, the founder of the Kansas City Royals' baseball academy and Pirates' General Manager during a successful run in the 1980s, left us on September 18th at 77 after knee-replacement surgery. He is credited with signing Frank White, Bobby Bonilla, Al Oliver, Dave Parker, Woodie Fryman and Don Money. <http://www.kansascity.com/mld/kansascity/sports/15559516.htm>

At the age of 93, **“Broadway” Charlie Wagner** had spent over 70 years in the Red Sox organization when he passed away on August 30<sup>th</sup> in his hometown of Reading, PA. Fittingly he was found after attending that night’s ballgame. He was credited with signing Dick Gernert and Danny Sheaffer. Harvey Frommer recollects <http://www.travel-watch.com/rememberingbroadwaycharliewagner1.htm>

Former PCL great and Padre scout, native Brooklyn **Al Heist** passed October 2<sup>nd</sup> in Oklahoma. Heist signed Doug Gwosdz, Andy Hawkins, Kevin McReynolds and Bob Shirley.

Veteran Giants scout **Gene Thompson** passed away in Scottsdale August 24<sup>th</sup> at age 89. Among his signees were Hall of Famers Orlando Cepeda and Willie McCovey along with Jim Barr, Tom Haller and Craig Lefferts and Jose Pagan. **William “Scrapy” Allen** who scouted for the Pirates in the 1950s and 1960s passed away August 4<sup>th</sup> in Pittsburgh.

And as this edition goes out, it has just been reported that longtime scout **Jerry Gardner** (currently the Southern California scout for the Devil Rays) passed on Friday October 13<sup>th</sup>. Gardner is credited with signing Bob Bailey, Dock Ellis, Tommy Sisk, Bobby Tolan and an outfielder named Barry Bonds.

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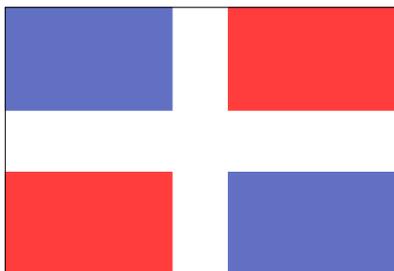
## PROFILE OF A SCOUT: EPY GUERRERO

By Jim Sandoval

It is not often one gets to meet a legend. I recently had the opportunity to meet **EPIFANIO “EPY” GUERRERO**, the longtime scout in Latin America who has signed 50 players who have reached the major leagues. Among his signees are Cesar Cedeno, Carlos Delgado, Tony Fernandez, Jose Mesa and Damaso Garcia. “The National” newspaper once ranked Epy the 16<sup>th</sup> most influential person in the game, ahead of such luminaries as Pat Gillick (at the time his boss), Peter Gammons, Frank Robinson and Jerry Reinsdorf.

Epy himself was signed by John Mullen and played minor league ball in the 1960’s for the Milwaukee Braves. In 1967 he began his scouting career, working with Pat Gillick and the Houston Astros where he remained until 1973. Both men moved over to the Yankees through 1976 and then both moved on to build two World Series champions with the Toronto Blue Jays. Epy stayed with the Blue Jays through 1995. He then spent 1996-2003 with the Milwaukee Brewers. The last three years he has worked an independent scout in the Dominican Republic.

Guerrero has four sons who currently work in professional baseball. Sandy spent 2006 as the hitting coach for the Southern League runner-up Huntsville Stars in the Brewers organization. Mike serves as the manager for West Virginia, the A level affiliate of the Brewers. Patrick, with the Mariners and Fred with the Twins are following their dad's footsteps into the scouting profession.



The Dominican Republic honored Epy with its highest decoration. According to his son Sandy he was named a lifetime consul of the Dominican Republic, basically granting him diplomatic status. He was also honored by the Dominican Summer League as one of its pioneers.

Epy graciously confirmed the signing data we have in the Who-Signed-Whom database and added seven more signings to the list.

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## SCOUTS COMMITTEE PROJECTS

Work continues on the committee's major projects. The *Who-Signed-Whom Database* is integrated as part of SABR's Online Encyclopedia in the members-only area of the website at [www.sabr.org](http://www.sabr.org) and displays listings by Player and by Scout. **Rod Nelson** heads up this project and requests that if you have additional entries or corrections to submit, please submit them via the website or send an email with all the particulars including a citation for your source. The listing of signing scouts for all 2006 debuts will appear in the next edition of *20 to 80\**.

*The Scouting Roster* now contains over 6,300 names of scouts and player development figures from baseball's history. **Jim Sandoval** is compiling this database. Eventually, this information will also be available online integrated with by Team and by Year. Please send career information, such as year, title, territory and organization scouted for to Jim. Team media guides are a good source for this data, but the best source we have found for historical scouts data is old copies of the Baseball Bluebook.

We are also looking for biographical information on scouts. Birth, marriage and death information will help with the writing of scouts' biographies. It will also help complete a more accurate historical record for scouts who did not play in the major leagues and are not listed in baseball encyclopedias. The committee has compiled a collection of obituaries which have been uploaded to Frank Russo's website at: [http://thedeaballera.com/Obitlistings\\_Scouts.html](http://thedeaballera.com/Obitlistings_Scouts.html)

A number of scouts have given oral history interviews and a list is accessible from the SABR website at <http://www.sabr.org/sabr.cfm?a=cms,c,351,5,0> Tapes are available for \$3.00 each. For more information, contact David Paulson at (301) 854-2244 or [d2244p@yahoo.com](mailto:d2244p@yahoo.com)

## SCOUTS BOOK PROJECT

**Bill Nowlin** and **Jim Sandoval** have agreed to spearhead a committee book project. Bill recently interviewed **Lou Gorman** about how a General Manager utilizes scouting information. **Ron Anderson** interviewed Ed Scott, who signed Hank Aaron to his first professional contract and also signed George Scott, Oil Can Boyd, Amos Otis, Lynn McGlothen and Dana Williams.

Two professional scouts have agreed to keep a calendar of their travels and duties for us to include in the book.

We will be highlighting different aspects of the profession, including amateur scouts, cross checkers, pro scouts, advance scouts etc. If you are interested in participating in the project, please contact Jim Sandoval. Fair warning: some of you will be solicited to contribute personally. ☺

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## SCOUTS BIOGRAPHY PROJECT

Baseball scouts are colorful subjects for SABR's Biography Project. The committee has a system in place that we can easily work with. If you are interested in writing a biography of a scout, we recommend that you review their research tips, author's guidelines and the SABR style guide at: <http://www.bioproj.sabr.org/> For more info, contact Mark Armour at [markjane@comcast.net](mailto:markjane@comcast.net).

Also please let the co-chairs know so we can compile an updated list of who is working on what biography. The chairmen are committed to provide research assistance and reference material on scouts.

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## RESEARCH NEEDS AND FINDINGS

Any scouts-related research requests can be sent to **Jim Sandoval** to be included in a future edition of *20 to 80\** or shared with the entire committee via the eGroup listed on page one. We encourage your submissions, anything from full-length articles to interesting factoids about professional scouting from members of the committee.

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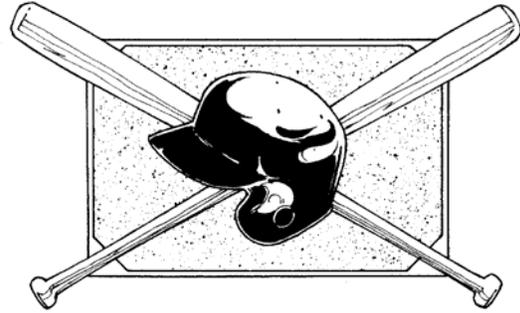
## SABR ANNUAL CONVENTION

We hope you will join us at the 2007 SABR convention will be held in St. Louis. We will convene at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown St. Louis, Missouri, July 26 to 29. The 2008 convention will be in Cleveland, home of SABR HQ. For more info: <http://www.sabr.org/sabr.cfm?a=cms,c,1834,17>

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If you no longer wish to receive this correspondence please send a note to [rnelson@sabr.org](mailto:rnelson@sabr.org) or call the SABR Office at 800-969-SABR (7227) to be removed from the committee list.



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NEWSLETTER**

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