



# EMIL ROTHE CHICAGO CHAPTER

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**Above:** Chicago White Sox play-by-play and Fox Sports national broadcaster Jason Benetti will deliver the Keynote Address during the SABR 51's Awards Luncheon. Legendary team owner, promoter, and publicist Mike Veeck will be featured in "Fun is Good: A Veeck Family Legacy," a conversation highlighting his family's storied impact on baseball and its deep Chicago ties.

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## WHY I LOVE THE WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC (AND YOU SHOULD, TOO!)

BY: TIM CZUBA

For me, it started with the 1987 Canada Cup. Sure, there had been previous Canada Cups and other international tournaments, but without Cable TV, which I didn't get until 1985, seeing these international competitions with professional athletes was something I only read about in my youth. Just for this article, *let's forget about the Soccer World Cup, ok?*

U.S. Hockey was still in its infancy in fielding a competitive team, so I looked to our neighbors to the North and cheered for Team Canada, especially against the Soviet Union. *Oh, and can we all agree up front that the Soviet Red Army Team were professionals? Thank you.* Not only did I get to see my favorite NHL'ers come together on one team, but the absolute selling point was seeing Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux play on the same line. The two of them combined to score the tournament winning goal against those Soviets. It was the best hockey I'd ever seen, I'll never forget it, and I was hooked.

Pickin's were slim, though, after that. Yes, another Canada Cup was played in 1991 and the name was changed to the World Championship of Hockey in 1996 (a momentous coming out party for USA Hockey). Then, the United States sent the Dream Team to the 1992 Olympics, and that was more about flexing of our overwhelming basketball muscles than anything else, but it fed my love for seeing my American heroes play together and represent my country.

After professional hockey players were allowed to play in the 1998 Olympics and pros continued to play Olympic basketball,

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 –



BY JASON A. SCHWARTZ

Four cards, one player. Can you guess who?



# TOKYO: EXPERIENCING JAPANESE BASEBALL HISTORY



BY: BILL PEARCH

During college, I joked that my mission as a baseball enthusiast was to discover North America nine innings at a time. After years of experiencing games in my local market, that somewhat facetious goal became a reality.

Always pursuing new baseball adventures, I've attended home games in every MLB market throughout the United States and Canada. I even watched Game Five of the 2018 World Series in the heart of Mexico City as the Boston Red Sox defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers amidst the St. Jude's Day fireworks. When I opened my Christmas gift last December, my jaw dropped. My wife and I were going to the World Baseball Classic in Tokyo, Japan.

My wife, an unrivaled adventure planner, organized a one-week experience filled with exquisite culinary dishes, neighborhood markets, several Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, and of course the iconic cherry blossoms which started bursting with color. Mixed in with the local culture, naturally, we visited several Japanese baseball locales.

Having recently read SABR's latest publication, *Nichibeï Yakyu: US Tours of Japan, 1907-1958* (Volume 1), I became aware of Horace Wilson's Japanese baseball significance. Wilson, an American teacher from Maine, was responsible for introducing baseball to his students at the First Middle School of the First University District (which became Tokyo University) in 1872. On that site, located in Chiyoda (a special ward in central Tokyo)



**Top:** Tokyo Dome mosaic. (Photo: Bill Pearch)

**Above:** Bill Pearch standing near "The Birthplace of Baseball in Japan" statue. (Photo: Susan Wilson)

**Bottom:** Entrance to the Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum located at Tokyo Dome. (Photo: Bill Pearch)

near Kyoritsu Women's University, a statue called *The Birthplace of Baseball* in Japan commemorates the location of the playing ground where Wilson and his students first played the game.

While roaming Ueno Park searching for the first wave of vibrant cherry blossoms, we stumbled upon an unexpected piece of Japanese baseball history. Masaoka Shiki Memorial Baseball Park honors one of Japan's famed poets and greatest haiku masters. Born in 1867, Masaoka Shiki played a significant role in developing the craft of haiku. During his youth, Shiki became



*Above: The University of Michigan's 1899 baseball team. Dr. Lehr is seated in the third row on the far right. (Photo: BBT1899, Michigan Union, Michigan Union records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan)*

# DR. HERBERT E. LEHR: LIMITED INNINGS



BY: BILL PEARCH

As the junior partner of Romberger & Smith, Col. Frank L. Smith wore multiple hats. Following a stint in Chicago's Rock Island Railroad Englewood office, Smith returned to his hometown of Dwight, Illinois, and entered into business with Charles L. Romberger. Together they founded one of the largest firms in Central Illinois. By day Smith was a banker and land dealer, but after hours, he fulfilled his lifelong passion and managed the firm's semiprofessional baseball team named the Dwight R&S. While managing the local nine, Smith had a knack for securing elite homegrown talent and distinguished newcomers, including Dr. Herbert Lehr, who hailed from downstate Illinois.

In November 1900, 23-year-old Herbert Lehr purchased Dr. S.H. Potter's dental practice and established an office in Dwight. The 1898 University of Michigan graduate placed ads in the Dwight Star & Herald guaranteeing "first-class work," and "moderate charges." How Smith and Lehr became acquainted is unclear, but the 6-foot-tall dentist's athletic prowess meshed with Smith's vision to elevate his baseball team's profile.

As an undergrad, Lehr was a three-sport star earning the nickname, King Lehr. The Michigan Alumnus remembered the Marine, Illinois, native as "one of the University's greatest athletes," and "a remarkable specimen of physical manhood."

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 -



## GET PUBLISHED!

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



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CAN YOU CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER TO THESE TRIVIA QUESTIONS ABOUT MLB'S OPENING DAY?

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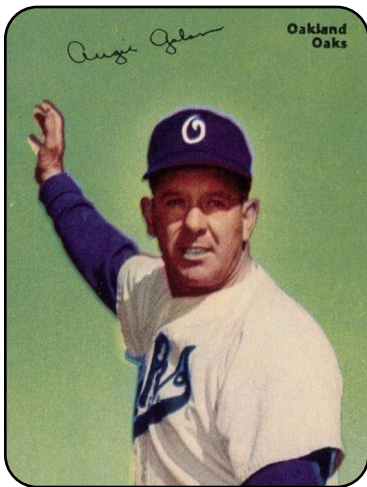
**Vecteezy**

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**Noun Project**



# RANDOM TANDEM

**AUGIE GALAN & STAN HACK**  
BY: JASON SCHWARTZ



Between 1922 and 1940, a Chicago Cubs player led the National League in times caught stealing 11 of the 17 seasons the statistic was recorded.

Not to be outdone, a Chicago White Sox player led the American League 11 of the 12 seasons between 1940 and 1951. This random tandem focuses on the two teammates who tied for the league lead in 1937, Augie Galan and Stan Hack.

## **AUGIE GALAN**

Born: Berkeley, CA

Led NL in times caught stealing: 1935, 1937  
1953 Mother's Cookies card as manager of California team

## **STAN HACK**

Born: Sacramento, CA

Led NL in times caught stealing: 1936-1940  
1953 Mother's Cookies card as manager of California team

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## JAPANESE BASEBALL HISTORY (CONT.)



*Above: The cenotaph, or requiem monument, honors the Japanese baseball players who were mobilized and died during World War II. Originally erected in 1981, it was moved to its current location following the construction of Tokyo Dome in 1988. (Photo: Bill Peach)*

infatuated with baseball and played the game regularly as a teenager. Some of his earliest haiku celebrate his passion for baseball and helped to popularize the sport in Japan. Shiki was only 34 when he passed away after suffering from tuberculosis. The Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum secured Shiki's baseball legacy and passion for the game during his 2002 enshrinement ceremony.

Prior to attending the quarterfinal game at Tokyo Dome between Australia and Cuba, we found time to visit the Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. The museum, founded in 1959, includes all of the artifacts and memorabilia visitors would expect. While not the same scale and magnitude as the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York, its contents honor the players, executives, and writers who helped the Japanese game evolve from its humble roots to its current incarnation. Everything a baseball fan can imagine is inside from historic uniforms and equipment to banners and pennants, and numerous individual and team awards. Similar to upstate New York, the Japanese hall of plaques features a powerful walk through the local game's past. The iconic names are all there: Sadaharu Oh, the aforementioned Wilson, and Hideo Nomo are enshrined. But so many other individuals were included that I made a return visit the following afternoon.

Standing just outside of the Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum is a particularly moving memorial. The cenotaph, also called the requiem monument, honors the Japanese baseball players who were mobilized and died during battle in World War II. This solemn monument, originally erected in 1981 and moved to its current location following the construction of Tokyo Dome in 1988, serves as a touching memorial amongst the bustling amenities and activities of the larger Tokyo Dome City complex.

Having attended home games for all 30 MLB franchises, I happily added Tokyo Dome to my list of new baseball venues.

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 –

# WHY I LOVE THE WBC (CONT.)

I hungered for a worldwide tournament in my favorite sport ... baseball. Low and behold the World Baseball Classic came to fruition in 2006. It was finally time to see some of the best of the best play for their country in an awesome tournament!

The problem with the first WBC was that Team USA didn't really take the tournament seriously. They had a stocked roster of position players (sound familiar?) like A-Rod, Jeter, Chipper Jones, Ken Griffey, jr., and Chase Utley, but the starting pitching was underwhelming (also sound familiar?). Roger Clemens was at the end of his career and PED's didn't help anymore. Yes, Jake Peavy and Dontrelle Willis also participated, but they never really lived up to the hype of their early successes. The bullpen was good, but manager Jim Lefebvre was hardly progressive enough to leverage that strength. Being that the tournament took place three weeks or so into spring training, it was expected that those participating would begin their training a few weeks before. It didn't seem that way as the US sluggers, other than Jr., were using the tournament to ramp it up. Throw in the fact that Big League teams were dictating playing time do's and don'ts, and it was a recipe for disaster.

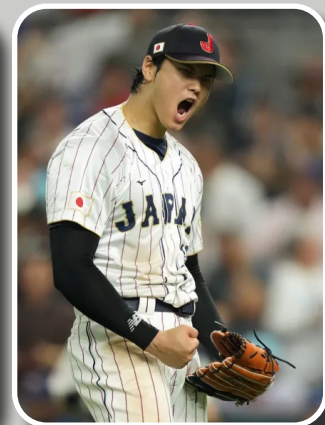
What I didn't know was how important this tournament was to the Big League players of all the Latin teams. Also, Team Japan had been training, TOGETHER, for six weeks prior to the tournament. Other Asian teams weren't far behind. The Cubans were in the middle of their season! Again, a recipe for disaster for Team USA. Talent was not going to be enough.

Needless to say, the US was eliminated in the second round and most US baseball fans yawned. The 2009 and 2013 WBCs for Team USA were more of the same. Great position players, suspect starting pitching, lots of interference from MLB clubs, and a lot of apathy. I have to say I felt bad for David Wright in 2009 and 2013 as he seemed to be the only one who got it like I did.

Then things changed.

Jim Leyland signed on to manage the United States in the 2017 WBC. He wasn't a shill for MLB like Joe Torre was and he signed on early on in the process. I remember reading an article in which Leyland laid out his expectations for those who wanted to play for Team USA. First, Leyland said it was inconceivable that the United States had not fared better in previous WBCs. It was our game (THANK YOU!) and it was important that the roster was built as a team and not just a roster of all-stars. The players had to be committed to the process (YES!) and totally buy in to playing for your country

The 2017 US roster was not a list of all-stars like the previous three teams. Yes, starting pitching was in short supply, but Leyland had evolved enough as a manager to utilize a strong bullpen. Gamers like Eric Hosmer, Brandon Crawford and Ian Kinsler supplemented stars like Nolan Arenado and Buster Posey. The overall feeling was that this US team cared about playing in a tournament of a game that was born in the US and it showed. Team USA dropped the Japanese in the semis and Puerto Rico in the finals to finally win. The passion I saw on the Gretzky and Lemieux line, in Charles Barkley and Magic



**Top:** Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux celebrate during the 1987 Canada Cup.

**Middle:** Team USA third baseman David Wright celebrates his five RBI performance during a 7-1 win over Puerto Rico in the 2013 World Baseball Classic.

**Bottom:** In an epic moment, Japan secured the 2023 World Baseball Classic championship with a 3-2 win over Team USA when Shohei Ohtani fanned his Los Angeles Angels teammate Mike Trout.



# WHY I LOVE THE WBC (CONT.)



Johnson, was finally on display from some of my favorite players in our sport. It was awesome and memorable to see!

Now, why should you love the WBC as much as I do...

The WBC that just concluded was, by far, the best international tournament I have ever seen for a sport I care about. *Again, forget the Soccer World Cup.* No question, the Latin teams still care about this tournament more than any other teams do, and it shows. Having experienced the fan experience at the 2013 WBC semis and finals, I felt privileged to stand among the thunder sticks of the Japanese fans and the vuvuzelas of the Puerto Rican fans. The Japanese are still the cool, fundamentally sound and totally prepared team that is a sum of its parts. The Australian National team has made huge strides with their homegrown talent and will be a big factor in the 2026 WBC. European teams like Italy, while still supplemented by MLB pros are now producing their own talent ready to compete. Throw in newcomers like the Czech Republic and the game of baseball has never been healthier.

And our Team USA? While the team kind of reverted back to the all-star team of early WBC's with, again, the lack of our best starting pitchers, the best American born player today, Mike Trout, has bought into the passion of playing for his country. With that, he brought Mookie Betts and others who also experienced the enjoyment and importance of playing with USA on their chest and will sell this to other US players who will carry the torch in 2026. Now, if we can just get some of our best young starters to commit to this awesome tournament. Dylan Cease, I'm talking to you, and I hope Lance Lynn does as well.

## SCOREBOARD PUZZLER



Baseball season is back in full swing! Let's test your scoreboard identification skills. From the clues in this photo (provided by Cary Smith), can you successfully guess the exact date of the game? You may need to zoom in. Some of the clues might be deceiving. Good luck.

Our January-February 2023 issue had two correct guesses. The photo featured Wrigley Field for NFL games on October 16, 1955. The Bears thumped Baltimore 38-10 capped by a 51-yard TD pass from George Blanda to Gene Schroeder.

Ed Hartig / Cary Smith

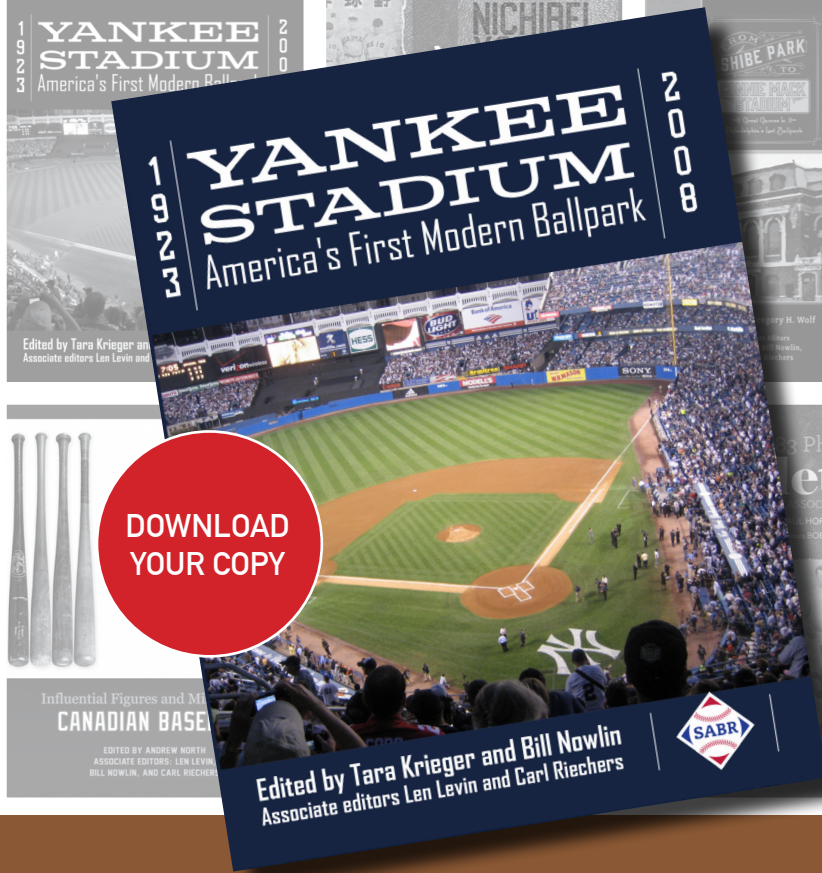
Do you have a scoreboard photo that will have your fellow chapter members scratching their heads? Send it to Bill Pearch at [wcpsearch@comcast.net](mailto:wcpsearch@comcast.net). Note that photos are not limited to Chicago ballparks.

### 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 [wcpsearch@comcast.net](mailto:wcpsearch@comcast.net) to schedule a brief interview.

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## YANKEE STADIUM 1923-2008: AMERICA'S FIRST MODERN BALLPARK

*Yankee Stadium 1923-2008: America's First Modern Ballpark* represents a 100th anniversary celebration of the original Yankee Stadium. The work is the combined effort of 79 SABR members. Intended as a multipurpose venue from the outset, the Stadium is seen through 40 essays covering not only baseball, but memorable football games, boxing matches, soccer seasons, track and field meets, and wrestling competitions, not to mention rodeos, concerts, and religious and political assemblies. Baseball was always central, though, and the book also includes accounts of 50 of the most notable games in the history of The House that Ruth Built.

**Contributors:** Malcolm Allen, Perry Barber, John Bauer, Jake Bell, Dana Berry, Luis A. Blandon, Thomas J. Brown Jr., John J. Burbridge Jr., Frederick C. "Rick" Bush, Vincent J. Cannato, Ken Carrano, Alan Cohen, Richard Cuicchi, Rich D'Ambrosio, Ray Danner, Larry DeFillipo, Bryan Dietzler, Daniel R. Epstein, Scott Ferkovich, Brian Frank, John Fredland, Craig Garretson, Gordon J. Gattie, Michael Gibbons, Bob Golon, Gene Gomes, Jim Griffin, Ed Gruver, Vince Guerrieri, Donna L. Halper, Sharon Hamilton, Bruce Harris, Paul Hofmann, Jeff Allan Howard, Mike Huber, Lew Insler, Kirk C. Jenkins, Don Jensen, Bill Johnson, Stephen Keeney, Thomas E. Kern, David Krell, Tara Krieger, Kevin Larkin, Len Levin, David H. Lippman, Nick Malian, Mitchell Manoff, Scott Melesky, Thomas Merrick, Andrew Milner, Chad Moody, Tony Morante, Tom Naylor, Dan Neumann, Bill Nowlin, Tim Odzer, James Overmyer, Ralph Peluso, Zac Petrillo, Jack Pfeifer, Scott Pitoniak, Bill Pruden, Todd Radom, Alan Raylesberg, Mike Richard, Carl Riechers, Harry Schoger, Paul Semendinger, Lyle Spatz, Mark S. Sternman, Aaron Tallent, Cecilia Tan, Stew Thornley, Doug Vogel, Joseph Wancho, Bob Webster, Mike Whiteman, and Tim Wiles.

## NICHIBEI YAKYU: US TOURS OF JAPAN, 1907-1958 (VOLUME 1)

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of Japanese baseball, the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) is proud to publish *Nichibeï Yakyu: US Tours of Japan*. Over 100 baseball teams from the United States and Hawaii have crossed the Pacific to play baseball in Japan. *Nichibeï Yakyu: US Tours of Japan* is the first book written in English that focuses on these international tours.

Volume 1 focuses on tours between 1907 and 1958. During this time period, many of the sport's greatest stars—including Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Ty Cobb, Joe DiMaggio, Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle, Jackie Robinson—played in the Land of the Rising Sun. These tours helped spread the game across the globe, spawned thousands of individual friendships, and helped bring nations together through the mutual love of baseball.

Lead editor Robert K. Fitts is the author of seven books on Japanese baseball and Japanese baseball cards. Fitts is the founder of SABR's Asian Baseball Committee and a recipient of the society's 2013 Seymour Medal for best baseball book of 2012, the 2019 McFarland-SABR Baseball Research Award, the 2012 Doug Pappas Award for best research presentation at the SABR convention, and the 2006 and 2021 SABR Research Awards. He has twice been a finalist for the Casey Award and has received two silver medals at the Independent Publisher Book Awards. While living in Tokyo in 1993-94, Fitts began collecting Japanese baseball cards and now runs Rob's Japanese Cards LLC. Information on Rob's work is available at [RobFitts.com](http://RobFitts.com).

**Contributors:** Adam Berenbak, Stephen D. Boren, Mark Brunke, Carter Cromwell, James E. Elfers, Robert K. Fitts, James Forr, Christopher Frey, John Harney, Tom Hawthorn, Len Levin, Satoshi Matsumiya, Yoichi Nagata, Roberta J. Newman, Joe Niese, Bill Nowlin, Ralph Pearce, Carl Riechers, Keith Spalding Robbins, C. Paul Rogers III, Allan H. "Bud" Selig, Yobun Shima, Dennis Snelling, Bill Staples Jr., Yusuke Suzumura, Steven K. Wisensale, and Kat Williams.

### LET'S TALK SABR BOOKS!

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

# HISTORY HUNTERS

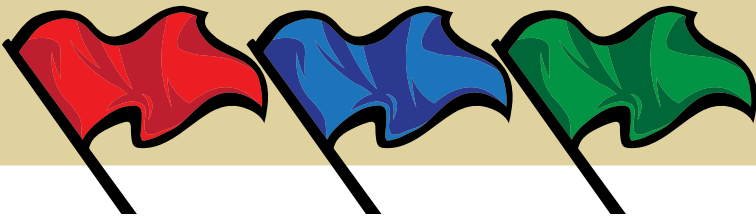
## OHIO HISTORICAL MARKER

### WAKEMAN RED CAP FIELD

The Wakeman Red Caps, perhaps one of this area's best semi-pro baseball teams during the 1930s and 40s, first played night baseball under lights installed at Wakeman Field on July 24, 1935. The Field, no longer extant, was bounded by Hyde, Clark, Pleasant, and Townsend (Ohio River) streets. The game was played only two months after Franklin D. Roosevelt switched on lights at Crosley Field for the Cincinnati Reds. The Reds were part of the Wakeman Baseball Club, an organization which had been in 1889 and was sponsored by Charles S. Clark, Sr. Clark, Sr. was inspiring local baseball players, playing night baseball in the area. It was a great honor. Wakeman Field was annually placed on the American Baseball

GIVE THE MAP A TEST DRIVE

## WAKEMAN RED CAP FIELD WAKEMAN, OHIO



### ZEMAN'S ZINGERS

BY: DAVE ZEMAN

The 2023 MLB regular season is underway. How did your favorite start? Fans of *Jeopardy!* will be familiar with before and after categories. For these questions, two answers are combined to make one correct response. Ready to play ball? Here's the pitch!

1. Married woman sung about in a 1967 movie soundtrack / middle infielder with 300+ HR and .300+ BA
2. Actress who wanted to hear "Misty" / Hall of Famer who struck out in his only major league at bat
3. Posted a sub 1.00 ERA in 1914 / long-time portrayer of a character who valued logic
4. Actor who died filming *Wagons East* / Cubs opening day leftfielder in 1993
5. Won 15 games as a rookie for the 1954 Cardinals / wrote *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*

*Above:* Located in Wakeman Community Park at Cooper St. and U.S. 20 in Wakeman, Ohio (41.254819, -82.400815), this marks the site of a local ballpark that hosted annual Ethiopian Clowns games and other appearances by Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, and Jesse Owens.

If you are interested in joining the 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 [jracanelli@hotmail.com](mailto:jracanelli@hotmail.com)!

## JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023: HOW DID YOU DO?

1. Lower facial muscle / ended MLB career with the 1945 White Sox, finishing 8th in AL batting average  
**Orbicularis Oris Hockett**
2. Short-lived gunslinger / won 30-plus games a record seven times **Billy the Kid Nichols**
3. First to be drafted first overall by the Chicago Bears / only Idaho-born player with 100-plus career home runs  
**Tom Harmon Killebrew**
4. Dodger with a 1948 no-hitter / Thelma Lou's beau  
**Rex Barney Fife**
5. Homered in first MLB at bat in 1984 / long-time attraction of the Ed Sullivan Theater **Andre David Letterman**



# JAPANESE BASEBALL HISTORY (CONT.)



## TOP 10: MOST CAREER HOME RUN TOTALS FOR CHICAGO CATCHERS (MINIMUM 80% OF GAMES PLAYED AT POSITION):

RANK	PLAYER	HR	YEARS	TEAM
1	GABBY HARTNETT	231	1922-1940	CUBS
2	CARLTON FISK	214	1981-1993	WHITE SOX
3	SHERM LOLLAR	124	1952-1963	WHITE SOX
4	JODY DAVIS	122	1981-1988	CUBS
5	A.J. PIERZYNSKI	118	2005-2012	WHITE SOX
6	WILLSON CONTRERAS	117	2016-2022	CUBS
7	RON KARKOVICE	96	1986-1997	WHITE SOX
8	RANDY HUNDLEY	80	1966-1977	CUBS
9	GEOVANY SOTO	77	2005-2012	CUBS
10	ED HERRMANN	68	1967-1974	WHITE SOX

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



*Above: WBC quarterfinal - Australia vs. Cuba at Tokyo Dome on Wednesday, March 15. (Photo: Bill Peach)*

We were on hand to watch Cuba advance to the semifinals after edging Australia, 4-3, during quarterfinal play. Being from Chicago, this game had a distinct White Sox connection with Yoan Moncada and Luis Robert, Jr. donning Cuba's uniform. Australia grabbed an early 1-0 lead on Rixon Wingrove's RBI double in the top of the second inning. Robert, Jr. evened the score in the third when he grounded out and plated Roel Santos. Cuba took control of the game when they scored three in the bottom of the fifth. Australia cut the score close when Wingrove belted a two-run homer in the top of the sixth.

Other than waiting in long lines for concessions and the World Baseball Classic team shop at Tokyo Dome, our first exposure to Japanese baseball was wonderful. We closed out our amazing week in Japan by flying to Miami's LoanDepot Park to catch two games. We watched the United States demolish Cuba during the semifinals, 14-2, and Japan edge the USA, 3-2. And yes, we witnessed Shohei Ohtani strike out Mike Trout in person.

- According to Major League Baseball, the 2023 World Baseball Classic final drew a combined 5.2 million viewers to become the most-watched WBC tournament game since its inception in 2006.
- Inspired by the writings of Masaoka Shiki, I decided to take a stab at haiku writing to honor my favorite team, the Chicago Cubs:

*Gloomy, overcast  
Series tied, in the balance  
Cue the Cleveland rain*

This article originally appeared in *Here's the Pitch: the IBWAA Newsletter* on Monday, March 27, 2023.

## 2023 NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

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

**MAY-JUNE 2023**  
Published: May 7  
Content Deadline: April 23

**SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2023**  
Published: Sept. 3  
Content Deadline: August 6

**JULY-AUGUST 2023**  
Published: July 2  
Content Deadline: June 11

**NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2023**  
Published: Nov. 5  
Content Deadline: Oct. 8



## DR. LEHR: LIMITED INNINGS (CONT.)

He earned varsity honors in baseball (pitcher), football (left guard), and track and field team (shot put). Of particular note, Lehr started at left tackle during the first football game played between Michigan and Ohio State on Saturday, October 16, 1897.

With his academic degree and athletic honors in hand, Lehr relocated from Ann Arbor, Michigan to Springfield, Illinois. As he commenced practicing dentistry in 1898, the Edwardsville Intelligencer noted that he occasionally pitched for the nearby Lincoln, Illinois town team.

Lehr garnered interest from professional leagues during the waning days of the 19th century. Manager Connie Mack of the Western League's Milwaukee Brewers claimed the 190-pound hurler in late March and arranged an exhibition between Mack's squad and the University of Michigan. The Brewers throttled the collegians, 15-0, on April 17. Lehr pitched into the fifth inning, but despite surrendering 11 runs, the Detroit Free Press noted that he "has plenty of speed and good curves" and "works the corners of the plate to excellent advantage." Afterward, the St. Paul Globe added that he "pitches a fairly good game, but a few more seasons in minor leagues would be beneficial."

Though Mack declined to sign Lehr, he continued pitching for his alma mater and continued to don his collegiate baseball and football uniforms into 1899, as he finished his doctorate degree. While traveling to Chicago for a June series, Lehr secured a trial with Tom Burns and Frank Selee, managers of the Chicago and Boston National League franchises respectively. Neither the Chicago Orphans nor Boston Beaneaters opted to sign him.

"He has some speed," Burns said, "but speed alone is not sufficient to make a good pitcher."

Undeterred, Lehr joined the Indiana-Illinois League's franchise in Bloomington, Illinois. There he shared playing time with several future major leaguers, including Billy Kinloch, Tim O'Rourke, Bobby Rothenmel, and Bob Wicker.

Despite The (Decatur, Illinois) Daily Review noting that Lehr "had excellent offers from various league teams," he limited his athletic endeavors during 1900 to baseball and football club teams in Springfield, Illinois, to focus his energies on his dental practice.

Dr. Lehr married Springfield native Mabel Wellman on February 5, 1901. After their honeymoon, the newlyweds settled in Dwight where Lehr awaited Col. Smith's first pitching assignment.

The Dwight R&S opened its 1901 campaign before a large crowd on June 27, against a squad from neighboring Odell, Illinois. Col. Smith tapped Lehr with pitching duties, and according to the Dwight Star & Herald, he "pitched slow, easy drop teasers." Lehr earned the win as Dwight defeated Odell, 7-1, in a rain-shortened affair.

Rumors began circulating that Lehr would join the Three-I League's Bloomington Blues. On August 11, he pitched the Blues to a 5-2 victory over the Davenport River Rats before a crowd of 1,200 fans. "He pitched winning ball," Bloomington's The Pantagraph noted, and "he had the sluggers from Iowa completely at his mercy."



*Above: Dr. Lehr, wearing his glove, pictured with Michigan baseball team captain Guy W. Lunn. Photo: HS4412, Sam Sturgis photograph collection, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan*

As Smith's team gained notoriety, they faced superior competition. On August 14, Lehr and his Dwight teammates carried a 4-3 lead over the Chicago Unions into the top of the ninth. The former collegiate hurler surrendered three runs during the top of the ninth inning as the Unions edged the R&S, 6-4. "Several league teams would like to have Lehr pitch for them," the local newspaper printed despite the late collapse, "and he only has to say the word to break into the big leagues."

One thousand fans traveled to Dwight on August 27, 1901, to witness the most significant baseball game in local history. Col. Smith organized a contest against the traveling Nebraska Indians and granted Lehr pitching honors. The Dwight R&S plated four runs in the bottom of the first inning as Lehr was unhittable until the third. He struck out four and walked two before the floodgates opened. The game ended in 16-6 onslaught in favor of the barnstormers. Despite the final score, Lehr's performance piqued the interest of Chicago's semiprofessional circuit.

As Col. Smith gained control of Romberger's portion of the firm in 1902, Smith rebranded the Dwight R&S after himself. Lehr also made new arrangements for the upcoming season. Along with pitching for the Frank L. Smiths, he frequently appeared with two Chicago-based semipro squads, the Spaldings and Marquettes.

Lehr's career was skyrocketing until fortunes turned when he contracted a virulent form of tuberculosis in April 1903. In May he and his wife traveled through the pitcher's childhood home to visit relatives before relocating to Colorado in hopes that a favorable climate would spark a recovery. After several months in the mountains, Lehr succumbed to his illness on July 30.

When Lehr passed, numerous obituaries remembered the 25-year-old pitcher as "exceptionally bright" and "of a genial, happy disposition." Lehr rests in his family's plot at Marine Cemetery, south of his childhood home.

This article originally appeared in *Here's the Pitch: the IBWAA Newsletter* on Monday, February 27, 2023.

***Thank you to Kim Drechsel, Dwight Historical Society volunteer and SABR Central Illinois member; and Tere Elizalde, Bentley Historical Library reference assistant for access to their respective archives.***



## BABE RUTH VISITS JOLIET, ILLINOIS



BY: SEAN KOLODZIEJ

In September 2022, a group of friends and I visited Bishop's Hill Winery in Joliet, Illinois for a wine tasting. I knew that the striking limestone building, built to look like a castle, had been a brewery back in the late 1800s. I didn't know I was about to discover a forgotten piece of baseball history.

In addition to sampling the wine, our group hoped to explore the building and grounds of the winery. Rumor had it that underground tunnels still existed from back when the Fred Sehring Brewery was operating at that same location. We were thrilled when the owners of the winery generously invited us to tour the castle as well as the surrounding area. Phil Soto, one of the owners, led us into the basement where he shared the history of the property with us. He also told us he was in talks to acquire a photograph of Babe Ruth hanging out in one of the local Joliet breweries. I was interested in learning more and Phil showed me a picture he had taken of the photograph on his phone. It revealed a young-looking Ruth seated with quite a few other men that I didn't recognize. I told Phil I guessed the photograph was taken in the early 1920s based on Ruth's youthful appearance. Later that night, I began researching the photo. Not only was Ruth in Joliet at a brewery, but he got in trouble for being there.

On January 12, 1921, Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis was elected MLB's first commissioner. He decided to enforce a ban

*Above: A private detective's photo, taken at a Joliet, Illinois brewery in 1922, featured Babe Ruth and several New York Yankees teammates and led to fines for all players.*

prohibiting players from World Series teams to barnstorm after the season ended. "Well, I'm notifying you that I am going to violate the rule and I don't care what you do about it," Ruth was quoted as saying. True to his word, Ruth began his barnstorming tour right after the Yankees lost the World Series to their cross-town rival, the New York Giants. Even though the tour was cut short due to bad weather and the Yankees owners pleading with Ruth to stop, Landis still suspended Ruth and teammate Bob Meusel from Opening Day of 1922 until May 20.

On March 10, 1922, the Yankees, relieved that Ruth was not suspended the entire season, signed him to a three-year contract worth \$52,000 per year. Included in this contract was a morals clause stating "the player shall at all times during the training and playing season of the term of this contract and any renewals thereof refrain entirely from the use of intoxicating liquors and that he shall not during the training and playing season in each year stay up later than 1 o'clock A.M. on any day without the permission and consent of the Club's manager."

Prior to the start of the season, Yankees' manager Miller Huggins named Ruth team captain. After sitting out the first six weeks of the season due to his suspension, the Babe finally returned on May 20. Ruth quickly made headlines for all the wrong reasons. Within five days, he was ejected from a game for throwing dirt on an umpire and then charging into the stands to confront some hecklers. Due to these actions, he was stripped of his team captaincy, fined \$200, and suspended for one day.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 —

# 2023 MLB HORSE RACE



BY: JOE BOOK

Many baseball experts will offer their predictions for the 2023 MLB season. Most of those articles will feature the same mundane grids and interchangeable interpretation. The prognostication business lacks creativity these days.

Instead of rolling out an unimaginative stab at the final results, this article offers the point-of-view of a horse handicapper. While some would argue that I am neither a baseball expert nor a pony pundit, refer back to this commentary in November to compare this to the actual race results.

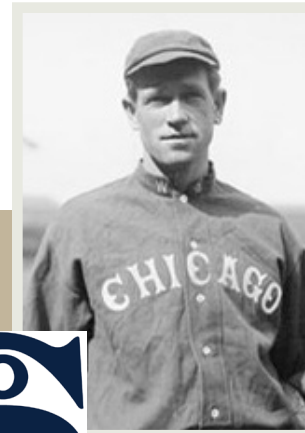
**AL East** – TORONTO broke slowly, contended throughout, and closed the gap on NEW YORK on the backstretch before they drew off driving. NEW YORK was away alertly, set a fast pace, but faded down the stretch. BALTIMORE stumbled out of the gate and lost ground before they rallied and found their best stride late. BOSTON bucked at the start, failed to menace, and showed little. TAMPA BAY was no factor, fell far back, and failed to respond.



**AL Central** – MINNESOTA broke sharply before being brushed by CLEVELAND at the 1/4 before they assumed command and finished all out fully extended. CLEVELAND contended and drew even before being outfinished, clearly second best. CHICAGO broke in air, showed brief speed, flattened out, and was no threat. DETROIT and KANSAS CITY were badly outrun, distanced by the field, and returned sore.

**AL West** – HOUSTON was much the best from the start, saved ground, and was unchallenged. LOS ANGELES was no match for the winner, was well placed, but could not rally down the stretch. TEXAS was off slowly but showed speed through the turn before failing to respond. SEATTLE was erratic, was checked repeatedly, and was no threat. OAKLAND showed little, stumbled, and was eased.

**NL East** – NEW YORK showed the way in hand, set a pressured pace, was ridden out, and just lasted. ATLANTA was never far back, contended throughout, but was outfinished and just missed. PHILADELPHIA battled broken equipment early, but steadied and closed with a rush. MIAMI rushed to contention early before they failed to sustain the bid and faded badly. WASHINGTON stumbled out of the gate, steadied briefly, then fell.



## PASTIME PASSAGES

**“It means the pennant for us, for Chase will strengthen the Sox 100 percent.”**

— White Sox owner Charles Comiskey on the trade for Hal Chase completed June 1.  
The 1913 Chicago White Sox finished in fifth place.  
Rock Island (Illinois) Argus, June 2, 1913.

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

**NL Central** – ST. LOUIS set a fast pace, faded at the 1/2, dueled with MILWAUKEE, came again, and just lasted for the victory. MILWAUKEE hung well but lacked late response and was second best. CHICAGO broke with good speed, was well placed, but lost ground after the 1/2 and finished best of the second flight. PITTSBURGH and CINCINNATI bumped each other out of the gate, were both distanced, and had no speed in a dull effort.

**NL West** – SAN DIEGO was fractious in gate and was off slowly, made a quick move after the 1/4, loomed boldly, rushed to the lead, and finished fully extended. LOS ANGELES drew off early then flattened out before being carried out in a good effort. SAN FRANCISCO held position in the middle of the pack for the entirety, showed little and was no factor. ARIZONA and COLORADO were no threat. COLORADO disliked half the track and ran with ARIZONA far back.

As for the playoffs, ATLANTA defeated TORONTO after they both drew clear from their respective leagues. At the Eclipse Awards ceremony, the following honors were bestowed:

- AL Horse of the Year: Vladimir Guerrero, Jr., TORONTO
- NL Horse of the Year: Ronald Acuna, Jr., ATLANTA
- AL Turf Horse of the Year (Cy Young): Shane Bieber, CLEVELAND
- NL Turf Horse of the Year (Cy Young): Corbin Burnes, MILWAUKEE
- AL Jockey of the Year: John Schneider, TORONTO
- NL Jockey of the Year: Oliver Marmol, ST. LOUIS
- AL Champion Two-Year-Old (ROY): Hunter Brown, HOUSTON
- NL Champion Two-Year-Old (ROY): Corbin Carroll, ARIZONA

# RUTH VISITS JOLIET (CONT.)

While playing Cleveland on June 19, Ruth was again ejected for arguing with an umpire and, the next day, had to be separated by ballplayers before coming to blows with the same umpire. This time, Ruth was suspended five games and fined \$1,500.

In response to all of this, the Yankees management hired a private detective named Jimmy Kelly to follow Ruth and his teammates on an upcoming road trip through the Midwest. Kelly passed himself off as a wealthy traveling salesman and slowly gained the trust of Yankee players by buying them drinks and offering them tips on gambling on horse racing.

On July 31, 1922, the New York Yankees played the Chicago White Sox at Comiskey Park. The Yankees lost the game, 3-2. Ruth walked three times, but was held hitless in his other at-bat. After the game, Ruth approached teammate Whitey Witt and said, "Look, Whitey, a friend of mine is havin' a ham 'n cabbage dinner out at his brewery tonight." Seeing Kelly nearby, Ruth said, "Bring him along too if you want."

The brewery Ruth and some teammates went to that night was part of the E. Porter Brewing Company, started by Edwin Porter in 1858 and located less than a mile away from Bishop's Hill Winery in Joliet. The brewery was technically closed due to Prohibition, but that did not stop anyone from having a good time, including former Joliet Chief of Police N.J. Fornango. After a few hours, Kelly appeared with a camera and asked everyone to pose for a photo. Included in the photo were Ruth and fellow Yankee teammates Bob Meusel, Lefty O'Doul, Fred Hofmann, and Whitey Witt.

The photo made its way back to the Yankees management, and all the players involved were fined an undisclosed amount of money. After learning that Kelly was the informant, Ruth said, "If I get my hands on that sonofabitch, I'll kill him! I'll kill him just as sure as you're born."

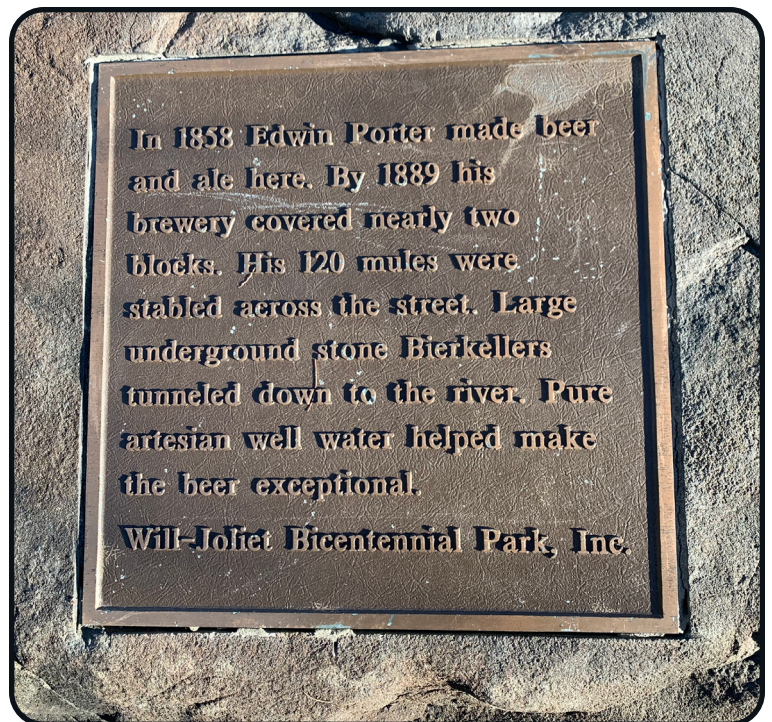
The Yankees management continued to employ private detectives the rest of the season. The last payment to the detective agency "bore the explanation of \$259.50 for a 'Ruth matter.'" Ruth himself was suspended four different times throughout the season for a total of 44 days and fined over \$10,000. The Yankees and Ruth would eventually win the American League pennant but lose again to the New York Giants in the World Series.

While the E. Porter Brewing Company closed in 1935 and was demolished in the 1960s, the land where it once stood is now part of Billie Limacher Bicentennial Park.

If you ever find yourself in Joliet, I would highly recommend Bishop's Hill Winery. The wine was delicious, the staff was friendly, and the building and grounds are magnificent. The sense of history surrounds you. Lucky for me, some of that history included Babe Ruth. 🍷

## Sources:

1. Leavy, Jane. *The Big Fella* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2018), 202
2. Leavy, 209
3. Wagenheim, Kal. *Babe Ruth: His Life and Legend* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992), 115
4. Wagenheim, 115
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6. Leavy, 211



**Top:** An undated photo of Joliet's Porter Brewery.  
**Middle and Bottom:** Photos of the historic plaque marking the former location of Joliet's Porter Brewery. (Photos: Sean Kolodziej)