

KELTNER'S HOT CORNER



Ken Keltner Badger State Chapter

January 2021 In This Issue:

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Upcoming Events:

Meet WI Newest Major Leaguers
Thursday, January 21 - 7 PM (CT)



SABR Day - National

January 30, 1:00 - 3:00 (CST)
With Bob Kostas & Tim Mead



Joint Chapter - SABR Day Milwaukee & Chicago

February 13 - 11:30 AM (CT)

- ◆ Scott Bush, SABR CEO
Minor League Reorganization
- ◆ Negro League Panel w/Scott Simkus, Sean Gibson & Other
Special guests



SABR Analytics Conference

Online: March 11-14, 2021

Direct questions or comments to:
Dennis D. Degenhardt
bovine9@icloud.com
262-339-9968 (Cell)

Happy New Year!

Upcoming Virtual Meetings

Meet Wisconsin Newest Major Leaguers
Thursday, January 21 - 7:00 (CT)



During the 2020 season, four Wisconsin natives made their major league debut. Join us for a panel discussion with Kyle Cody (Rangers), J.P. Feyereisen (Brewers), Jonathan Stiever (White Sox) and Daulton Varsho (D'Backs) as they discuss their baseball career, big league debut and 2020. To learn more about all four, see the updated article in this *Keltner Hot Corner*.

Watch your email for the Zoom invite information.

National SABR Day

January 30, 1:00 - 3:00 (CT)

SABR commemorates its 50th anniversary in 2021 and will launch its year-long celebration with [SABR Day](#) on Saturday, January 30. SABR Day will be hosted virtually around the globe for the first time, giving baseball fans a chance to come together — wherever they live — to share their love of the game.

Broadcasting legend **Bob Costas** and Baseball Hall of Fame president **Tim Mead** will headline the SABR DAY event. We look forward to bringing together as many members as possible to help kick off SABR'S Golden

Anniversary. It sounds like it will be a day we don't want to miss. [Register for the virtual event](#), which is FREE for all SABR members. Also bring a friend to introduce to SABR. A \$10 donation will be requested of non-members.



FEATURED SPEAKERS FOR FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL SABR DAY EVENT:



Bob Costas



Tim Mead

Details at SABR.org/sabrday.
All baseball fans are welcome to attend.

Chicago-Milwaukee Virtual Joint Chapter SABR Day Saturday, February 13, 11:30- 2:30 (CT)

With COVID and SABR's stay at home policy, our annual Joint Chapter Meeting with the Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter is going virtual. We will discuss two of the bigger news items in Major League Baseball on Saturday, February 13.

The Good, Bad and Ugly of the Minor Leagues Reorganization

Scott Bush, SABR's CEO, will discuss the ramifications of the MLB's changes in minor league baseball. Before joining SABR, Bush was an executive with several minor league organizations and understands how this will affect the minors. He will also look at the ramifications for our teams in Chicago and Milwaukee.

Perspectives on MLB Negro Leagues Announcement

A Negro League panel with Sean Gibson, Scott Simkus, and other special guests TBD will cover MLB's announcement regarding the Negro Leagues and an effort to rename the MVP Award for Josh Gibson.

Watch your email for further details and the Zoom invite information in early February.



Keltner Book Korner

Ken Keltner Book Club Meeting
Wednesday, February 10th, 7:00 PM CT
With Bob Buege

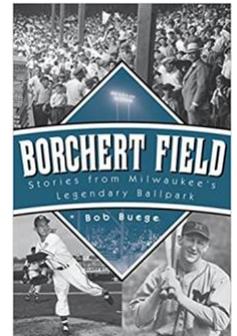
Book Club News by Mary Shea

Greetings, Keltner Bookworms,

Our next virtual meeting will be Wednesday, February 10th, at 7:00 PM CT. We'll be covering *Borchert Field: Stories from Milwaukee's Legendary Ballpark*, by our very own Bob Buege, who will join us for the meeting. It's a well-researched and super fun read, including an amazing array of characters: baseball Hall of Fame players, managers, and owners, as well as other notable and interesting figures who made their way to the ramshackle ballpark on 8th and Chambers.

The book is available locally at [Boswell Books](#), or it can be ordered online at the publisher, the [Wisconsin Historical Society](#). Please join us as we discuss these stories that provide a rich and entertaining part of Milwaukee history. The Zoom info will be sent in early February. Please let [Mary Shea](#) know if you have any questions.

Happy reading!



The Big Fella with Jane Leavy



On December 9th, *Washington Post* writer Jane Leavy and nationally acclaimed author of the ["The Big Fella"](#), joined our Keltner Book Club Meeting to talk about her book on Babe Ruth. She discussed writing the book and the Babe with 34 in attendance, one of our largest meetings and one of the best. Her book was a different look at Ruth and her knowledge of the era was fascinating history. Leavy does not holding back her opinions making for a very interesting meeting. Her book is much more than another book on Babe Ruth. She also discusses he books on Sandy Koufax and Mickey Mantle as well as other baseball thoughts. To view the meeting click, on the arrow.

SABERMETRICS PRIMER By Dave Weller

Fielding Independent Pitching, or FIP

This month, we will take a look at our first pitching stat, Fielding Independent Pitching, or FIP. Traditional pitching stats have a tendency to reward pitchers for being on a good team more than how well he pitches. Take wins, for example. [Jacob deGrom](#) is considered one of the best pitchers in the last few years, winning the NL Cy Young award in 2018 and 2019. However, he has only had one season with 15 wins, and was a combined 21-71 in his Cy Young campaigns. In contrast, [Stephen Strasburg](#) won 18 games in 2019 alone.

ERA attempts to correct this by focusing on earned runs, so a poor defensive team that commits a lot of errors does not count against a pitcher too much. However, it does not account for all of the runs a poor defense can give up. A ball that drops that would be caught by a fielder with better range will not count as an error, so it will count against the pitcher.

FIP focuses on how many home runs, walks, and hit by pitches are given up and how many strikeouts a pitcher has. The actual formula is $(13*HR + 3*(BB+HBP) - 2*SO)/IP + C$. As you can see, giving up home runs has a huge effect, and the effect of walking or hitting a batter is slightly larger than striking one out. The constant is used to give the average FIP the same value for the average ERA in MLB that season. So, if the average ERA is 4.22 and the average FIP without the constant is 4.00, then C would be 0.22.

FIP only accounts for things that the defense has nothing to do with (other than the occasional inside the ballpark home run). It is possible that a pitcher can give up a low amount of home runs and have a high strikeout to walk ratio, but still give up a ton of hits. This could lead to a good FIP, but a poor ERA.

[Noah Syndergaard](#) and [Jose Quintana](#) both had a top 15 FIP in the NL in 2019, but had the 28th and 34th best ERA, respectively. They both gave up more than 190 hits and 100 or more runs. This could be because the Mets and Cubs finished at the bottom of Baseball Reference's Defensive Runs Saved Above Average (Rdrs) stat. In other words, both Syndergaard and Quintana pitched well in 2019, but their defenses let them down. On the other hand, [Hyun Hin Ryu](#) led the league with a 2.32 ERA but had a FIP of 3.10. This was due in large part to the Dodger defense, who had the best Rdrs in the NL.

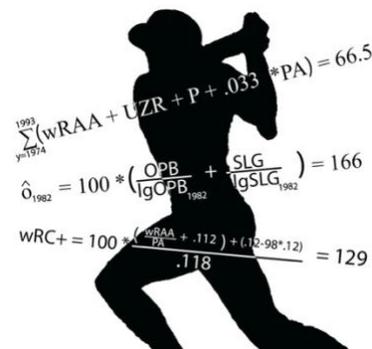
Notable FIP:

Not surprisingly, the all-time FIP leaders pitched in the Dead Ball Era. [Ed Walsh](#) finished his career in 1917 with a career record 2.02 FIP. [Christy Mathewson](#) set the single season mark with the 1908 New York Giants when he recorded a FIP of 1.29. The active career FIP leader is deGrom at 2.75, who overtook [Clayton Kershaw](#) (2.75) in 2020. In 1999, [Pedro Martinez](#) had the lowest FIP (1.39) since 1910, and the third lowest ever behind Mathewson and [Walter Johnson](#) (1.38 in 1910). Kershaw has the lowest FIP in the current century with 1.81 in 2014.

[Dan Plesac](#) is the career leader (minimum 500 innings pitched or 50 decisions) for the Brewers with a 3.30 FIP with [Teddy Higuera](#) (3.49), [Chris Bosio](#) (3.50), [Ben Sheets](#) (3.56), and [Yovani Gallardo](#) (3.71) rounding out the top 5. Sheets set the single season Brewer mark at 2.43 in 2006. [CC Sabathia](#) put the team on his back in 2008, as evidenced by his 2.44 FIP. [Zack Greinke](#) (2.53 in 2012), Sheets (2.65 in 2004), and Higuera (2.80 in 1988) round out the top 5 single seasons in Brewer history.

Send your sabermetric questions to [Dave Weller](#).

Next month we will take a look at BABIP.





Moving On: The players and others who passed away in 2020

Let's pause to remember those with local connections who passed away this past year.

By [Kyle Lobner](#) Dec 31, 2020

Today we continue our annual tradition of taking a moment before turning the calendar to a new year to remember figures from the Brewers' and Wisconsin's baseball history that we've lost over the last twelve months.

This year has been difficult for so many and for so many reasons, of course, and that's reflected here: Seventeen former Brewers, Milwaukee Braves,

Wisconsin natives and others with ties to baseball in Wisconsin passed away this year, as compared to 12 last year.

Thanks as always to [Stathead](#) and [David Schultz](#) for their help compiling this list. While the list is comprehensive to the best of our knowledge, please let us know in the comments if we missed anyone.

[Ed Sprague](#), age 74, passed away on January 10

A native of Boston, Sprague had pitched parts of five seasons in the majors as a member of three organizations when the Brewers purchased him from the Cardinals in September of 1973. In Milwaukee he found an opportunity to do something he'd rarely done before: Emerge from the bullpen and start games.

Sprague was very good in a swingman role for the 1974 team, making 10 starts and ten relief appearances and posting a 2.39 ERA while working a career-high 94 innings. He returned to the Brewers for the 1975 and 1976 seasons but was unable to match that success, was released in 1976 and never played pro ball again.

Sprague's son, also named Ed Sprague, played in the majors from 1991-2001, was an All Star third baseman as a Pirate in 1999 and won World Series with the Blue Jays in 1992 and 1993.

[Narciso Elvira](#), age 52, passed away on January 29

A native of Tlaxilixcoyan, Mexico, Elvira signed with the Brewers in December of 1986 and went on to become one of the organization's top pitching prospects. After a successful season with low-A Beloit and two with High-A Stockton, Baseball America rated Elvira as the #23 prospect in all of baseball before the 1990 season. He had pitched above A-ball just four times when the Brewers called him up to the majors that September and used him four times in relief.

Those four relief appearances, unfortunately, are the full extent of Elvira's MLB ledger. He returned to the minors in 1991 (where Baseball America again listed him as a Top 100 prospect) but was unable to repeat his success. He eventually pitched in Japan, Korea and back in his native Mexico before calling it a career in 2009.

Elvira had previously been targeted by Mexican gangs, including a 2015 kidnapping. In January he and his 20-year-old son were **[ambushed in their car and shot](#)**.

[Angel Echevarria](#), age 48, passed away on February 7

A Rutgers University alum, Echevarria had played parts of five seasons in the majors with the Rockies when the Brewers claimed him off waivers during the 2000 season. Over portions of the next two years he would play in 106 games for Milwaukee as a pinch hitter, first baseman and corner outfielder.

After his brief Brewers tenure was over Echevarria spent a season with the Cubs, then two in Japan as a member of the Nippon Ham Fighters. He was running a baseball instruction business in his

hometown of Bridgeport, Connecticut and passed suddenly after falling and hitting his head. [Jack Etkin of Forbes](#) has much more on his life.

[Tony Fernandez](#), age 57, passed away on February 16

A five-time All Star, four-time Gold Glove winner at shortstop and the owner of a World Series ring from the 1993 Blue Jays, it looked like Fernandez's baseball career was all but over when he joined the Brewers for spring training in 2001, attempting a comeback after sitting out the entire 2000 season. Fernandez, however, cracked the Brewers' Opening Day roster and played in 28 of their first 40 games, capped by a performance on May 16 where he homered for just the 93rd time in his 17 MLB seasons. The Brewers released him two weeks later and he returned to Toronto for a fourth and final stint with the Blue Jays.

Fernandez logged 2,276 hits and over 1,000 runs in his 2,158 MLB games, making him one of just 158 players in MLB history to do both. In 2007 he appeared on the Hall of Fame ballot but did not receive enough votes to be considered a second time. [Steve Gardner of USA Today](#) wrote an obituary for him.

[Johnny Antonelli](#), age 89, passed away on February 28

Antonelli's 12-year MLB career started with some notoriety: In 1948 he received an amateur signing bonus in excess of \$50,000, the largest in MLB history, and joined the Boston Braves as an 18-year-old. Without ever having played a game in the majors Antonelli was earning more than twice as much as Braves ace Johnny Sain. He pitched rarely, did not appear in the postseason and despite the fact that he was on the roster all year his teammates voted not to award him a World Series share.

Five years later Antonelli had pitched parts of three seasons in the majors and served in the military for two years in Korea when he returned to the big leagues and followed the Braves to Milwaukee for the 1953 season. He pitched in 31 games for the inaugural club, posting a 3.18 ERA across 175 1/3 innings. Following that season the Braves traded him to the Giants in a six-player deal and he went on to win both the ERA title and a World Series in New York in 1954. Antonelli eventually returned to Milwaukee for the final nine games of his MLB career in 1961. He was a six-time All Star.

Antonelli's passing leaves just three surviving members of the 1953 Braves: Del Crandall, Joey Jay and Mel Roach. Alexander Edelman wrote [Antonelli's SABR Bio](#).

[Don Pavletich](#), age 81, passed away on March 5

A Milwaukee native and West Allis Nathan Hale High School alum, Pavletich signed with the Reds in 1957 and made his MLB debut later that same season, facing his hometown Milwaukee Braves. After brief stints with the Reds in 1957 and 1959 he stuck with the team in 1962 and went on to play 12 MLB seasons as a catcher and first baseman, appearing in 536 games.

Pavletich's playing career ended just down the road from where it started: In 1971 the Red Sox sent him to the Brewers in the ten-player deal that brought George Scott to Milwaukee and sent Tommy Harper to Boston. The Brewers, however, released Pavletich near the end of spring training and he never played in the majors again. He remained in the area, however, where he worked in real estate for many years. He was still living in Brookfield when he passed away. Bill Nowlin wrote [his SABR Bio](#).

[Bill Bartholomay](#), age 91, passed away on March 25

After working in the insurance industry for several years, in November of 1962 Bartholomay was just 34 years old when he was part of a group that purchased the Milwaukee Braves from then-owner Lou Perini, who had moved the team from Boston about a decade earlier.

Bartholomay, who lived in Chicago, would soon start the process of moving the team to Atlanta to become MLB's first outpost in the deep south. The move was controversial and drawn out and made Bartholomay an extremely unpopular figure during the franchise's final three years in Milwaukee and beyond. In 1976 he sold the Braves to Ted Turner, but remained with the team as chairman.

[Jim Wynn](#), age 78, passed away on March 26

Nicknamed “The Toy Cannon,” Wynn played 15 MLB seasons, including eleven in Houston, before passing through Milwaukee on the final tour of his career. The Brewers were the second of two teams for Wynn in 1977 and he played 36 games with them, struggling to recapture the skills that had made him one of baseball’s most patient power hitters.

Despite a .175 batting average, .289 on-base and .237 slugging in his disastrous final season, Wynn finished his career with a .366 on-base percentage and drew 1,224 walks, walking nearly as often as he got a hit (1,665 times). [Mark Armour wrote his SABR Bio](#).

[Ed Farmer](#), age 70, passed away on April 1

Better known for his work elsewhere, Farmer pitched three games with the 1978 Brewers as part of his return from a three-year stint largely out of baseball. He worked eleven innings for the Crew in relief that September and allowed just one run, and the Brewers traded him to the Rangers that winter. Even with that long gap in his career Farmer pitched 11 MLB seasons and was an All-Star with the 1980 White Sox.

Farmer is likely best remembered for his other career in Chicago: He was a radio broadcaster for the White Sox for 30 years, even calling one game this spring just weeks before his passing. He had been the team’s play-by-play man on broadcasts since 2006. [RIPBaseball.com](#) has much more on his life.

[Arnold Umbach](#), age 77, passed away on May 30

A veteran of the Little League World Series, Umbach was a wild but effective minor leaguer in the Milwaukee Braves’ organization in the early 1960’s before eventually getting the call to make a spot start in the majors on the season’s second-to-last day in 1964. In his big league debut he pitched 8 1/3 innings and worked around eleven hits, allowing five runs in [a game the Braves won 11-5](#).

Umbach returned to the minors for the 1965 season and by the time he resurfaced in the big leagues in 1966 the Braves had moved on to Atlanta. He pitched 22 times (three starts) for the Braves in their first season in the south, then was never called upon to perform in the majors again. David E. Skelton wrote [his SABR Bio](#).

[Frank Bolling](#), age 88, passed away on July 11

The younger brother of seven-year MLB infielder Milt Bolling, Frank played 12 years in the big leagues as a second baseman and was something of a star on the Milwaukee Braves’ final teams in Milwaukee. After joining the team in a six-player trade in December of 1960 Bolling proceeded to play in the next four All-Star Games, two each in 1961 and 1962 (the final years where two games were played).

Bolling played 680 games for the Braves during their final five seasons in Milwaukee, then retired after one partial season in Atlanta. [RIP Baseball](#) has his obituary.

[Bob Sebra](#), age 58, passed away on July 22

A fifth round pick in the 1983 draft, Sebra had pitched parts of five seasons in the majors as a Ranger, Expo, Phillie and Red when the Brewers acquired him in a four-player trade that sent Glenn Braggs to Cincinnati in June of 1990. He immediately joined the bullpen in Milwaukee and was heavily used there, pitching in ten of the Brewers’ next 17 games.

Sebra’s MLB career ended in ugly fashion later that same month, when he triggered a brawl by hitting Tracy Jones of the Mariners with a pitch. He was one of eight players suspended for the incident but the Brewers opted to send him to AAA instead of waiting for his return, and he never pitched in the majors again. [RIP Baseball](#) has more on that incident specifically and Sebra’s baseball life in general.

[Bert Thiel](#), age 94, passed away on July 31

A native of Marion, Wisconsin, Thiel was a longtime minor leaguer whose lone opportunity in the majors came early in the Boston Braves’ final season. He pitched four games for the Braves that April before returning to the minors.

Thiel was one of two surviving players who appeared in a game for the Boston Braves. The other is the aforementioned Del Crandall. Dennis Degenhardt and Thomas Van Hyning wrote [his SABR Bio](#).

[Hal Raether](#), age 87, passed away on September 26

A Lake Mills, Wisconsin native and UW-Madison alum, Raether was signed out of college by the Philadelphia A's in 1954 and immediately added to their big league roster and debuted on July 4 of that year, the only MLB game he would pitch that season. Raether returned to the minors in 1955 but was drafted and served in the Army, causing him to miss most of the 1955 and 1956 seasons. He eventually returned to baseball and pitched one more game in the majors in 1957, the second and final of his MLB career.

Per [his obituary](#), Raether was a teacher and coach in the Milwaukee area following his playing career, then became the athletic director for the Minneapolis Athletic Club.

[Lou Johnson](#), age 86, passed away on October 1

Credited as being the first black major leaguer from Lexington, Kentucky, Johnson's first three stints in the big leagues were brief: He was a Cub for 34 games in 1960, made just one appearance and never batted for the 1961 Angels, then played in 61 games for the 1962 Milwaukee Braves. He performed well that season, batting .282 with a .349 on-base and .453 slugging, but had to wait a while for another opportunity: The Braves traded him the following May and he didn't appear in the majors again until 1965.

Johnson is likely best remembered for what happened next: He homered twice for the Dodgers in the 1965 World Series, including the long ball that plated the first run in a 2-0 Game Seven victory. In 2004 the City of Lexington renamed a street "Lou Johnson Way" in his honor. [The Lexington Herald Leader](#) has much more on his life.

[Denis Menke](#), age 80, passed away on December 1

A utility infielder, Menke made his major league debut with the 1962 Milwaukee Braves and stuck with the team for their final four seasons in the city before following them to Atlanta in 1966. His Baseball Reference page says his nicknames were "Menk," which makes some sense, and "Tomato Face," although neither his [SABR Bio](#) nor [his obituary](#) explain that one.

All told, Menke played 13 seasons in the majors and was an All Star for the Astros in 1969 and 1970. He played in the postseason twice, including for the Reds in the 1972 World Series.

[Phil Niekro](#), age 81, passed away on December 26

A 24-year MLB pitcher, five-time All Star and Gold Glove winner and a Hall of Famer, "Knucksie" started his unique major league career in Milwaukee; He pitched 51 games (one start) for the Braves in their last two seasons in County Stadium in 1964 and 1965.

Niekro is well known, of course, for being one of the most prolific knuckleballers in MLB history. He's the subject of one of Bob Uecker's most famous anecdotes, where he said the best way to catch a knuckleball was to "wait for it to stop rolling and pick it up." Niekro, for his part, credited Uecker with encouraging him to throw his knuckleball more often and in all counts.

Despite not playing in his first All-Star game until age 30, Niekro eventually was selected to five of them. The last came in 1984, when he was already 45 years old. Niekro pitched over 5,400 innings in the majors across 24 seasons, recording 318 wins and a 3.35 career ERA. When he retired in 1987 he was the last active former Milwaukee Brave, 22 years after the franchise had relocated. He was selected to the Hall of Fame in 1997, his fifth season of eligibility. Tom Hufford wrote [his SABR Bio](#).

Kyle Lobner has been producing daily content about the history of baseball in the state of Wisconsin since March at Today in Brewers History. Check it out at <https://www.patreon.com/KyleLobner>

This article also appeared in [Brew Crew Ball](#)

Audrey Kuenn Passed, December 20, 2020, at age 90

By Adam McCalvy [@AdamMcCalvy](#)

December 21, 2020

MILWAUKEE -- Audrey Kuenn, the wife of the Brewers' only World Series manager, Harvey Kuenn, and who was affectionately known as "mom" to many of the players of that era, has passed away, the team announced Monday.

"We are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Audrey Kuenn, wife of Brewers manager Harvey Kuenn and mother of longtime Brewers scout Harvey Kuenn Jr.," the Brewers said in a statement. "Our deepest condolences go to her family and loved ones."



Audrey Kuenn was the second wife of Harvey, a native of West Allis, Wis., who won an American League batting title with the Tigers before a second career as a hitting coach and manager. When he took over an underperforming Brewers team in May 1982 and instituted a more hands-off managerial style, "Harvey's Wallbangers" surged to the franchise's first-ever division title and eventually won the American League pennant.

Audrey Kuenn was a visible partner. After Robin Yount converted a ground ball to shortstop for the final out of Game 5 of the 1982 AL Championship Series, sending the Brewers to the 1982 "Suds Series" against the Cardinals, ABC's telecast showed Audrey in the stands, head tilted back and screaming with elation. After so many years of waiting for a moment like that, Brewers fans knew the feeling.

Future Hall of Famers Yount and Ted Simmons are among those who say Harvey Kuenn was like a dad, and Audrey like a mom. In Spring Training, the Kuenns had players over for dinner. During the season, they often gathered a few blocks away at Cesar's Inn on 56th St. and National Ave., a tavern in the shadow of County Stadium run by Audrey and Harvey. Both tended bar, Harvey getting around on a wooden leg after his right lower leg was amputated in 1980.

"We were like a family," Audrey Kuenn once said. "It was just the neatest group of people you ever wanted to meet. I don't think we'll ever see it again, not like it was then. Where can you find a one-legged manager that has a tavern across the street from the ballpark?"

After Harvey Kuenn's death in 1988, Audrey Kuenn remained connected to the team, appearing on Harvey's behalf in 2005 when Harvey was inducted to the Walk of Fame at Miller Park, and more recently in '17 at a gathering of the 1982 team. Her son, Harvey Jr., until recently worked as an amateur scout for the Brewers.

Special thanks to [Adam McCalvy](#), who has covered the Brewers for MLB.com since 2001, for allowing us to reprint his article. Follow him on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and like him on [Facebook](#).

Opportunity to Contribute to a New SABR Bio Book



Bill Nowlin is looking to attract new authors for a new project approved by SABR's new editorial board to be published sometime in 2022. The subject is One-Win Wonders (major leaguers who won only one big league game). This will be a companion to the One-Hit Wonders which is coming out soon.

Tom Ruane of Retrosheet has compiled a list of all of the players (mostly pitchers, of course) who won only one game. If you are interested in writing about one of these players, contact [Bill Nowlin](#).

Nowlin is very interested in helping new authors and he wants to offer opportunities for some of the new authors. If you have been thinking about a bio, but haven't taken the step, yet, think about writing about one of these players. SABR has volunteer editors who will help you. And there are a lot of players on the list to choose from which will help achieve an array of different sorts on one-win wonders. Think about who you might be interested in and why you think your candidate may fit the project.

[SABR 50 at 50: Baseball Cards](#)

As part of the [SABR 50 at 50 project](#) to commemorate the organization's fiftieth anniversary, the SABR Baseball Cards Committee offers [50 cards for the past 50 years](#).



This isn't a ranking or even a list of the "best" card for each year but rather a look at the hobby as it has changed over the past five decades and the way the history of baseball has been reflected in cards over that same time.

We invite you to read the list and the short description for each of the cards. Click on the title to read stories from the [SABR Baseball Cards Blog](#), the [SABR BioProject](#), or other baseball authors about these cards or the players pictured in them. To view both the front and back sides of each card, click on the card image.

How many of these cards do you remember? Did you once have any or lucky enough to still do so?

Early Registration Now Open for 2021 SABR Virtual Analytics Conference

Early registration is now open for the **SABR Virtual Analytics Conference**, which will be held over four days in online sessions from March 11-14, 2021. We'll bring together the top minds in the baseball analytics community to discuss, debate, and share insightful ways to analyze and examine the great game of baseball. [Register today to join us!](#)



Programming will run on Thursday and Friday evening from 6:30-9:00 p.m. Eastern, all day Saturday from 12:00-8:00 p.m. Eastern, and Sunday afternoon from 1:00-5:00 p.m. EDT.

Registration: [Click here to register for the 2021 SABR Virtual Analytics Conference](#). Early-bird registration is \$75 for SABR members, \$100 for non-members, and \$50 for currently enrolled high school or college students (includes one-year SABR membership). *Students should email [Scott Carter](#) with a photo of their student ID to receive the discounted registration link.*

Stay tuned for more details on guest speakers, panelists, and presenters! Visit [SABR.org/analytics](#) to learn more.

Wisconsin Players Major League Debut - 2020 **By Dennis D Degenhardt**

Although the 2020 baseball season will go down in history with many interesting footnotes, four Wisconsin born players joined the ranks of Major Leaguers during the COVID season.



[Kyle Cody](#) made his major league debut on August 21, 2020 at age 26, becoming the 19,812 big leaguer.

He was born on August 9, 1994 in Chippewa Falls and attended [McDonnell Central Catholic High School](#); the Macks only alum to play professional baseball. Cody was named the winner of the [Pat Richter Award](#) for the 2011-12 school year by the Wisconsin Sports Network as the Triple Play Triple Threat Male Athlete of the Year¹ for his prowess in baseball, football and basketball; four trips to WIAA State Tournaments, Five First-Team All-Conference selections and state football records. The Macks baseball squad were the Wisconsin Division Four runner-up three consecutive years during Cody's high school career. As a

¹ Cody excelled in three sports and was recognized as a senior by the Wisconsin Sports Network in the announcement, https://www.wissports.net/news_article/show/167645.

senior, he had 6-0 record with a 0.89 ERA and was named to the Cloverbelt All-Conference first team for the second straight year and Wisconsin Baseball Coaches Association's (WBCA) All-State second-team². He was the Gatorade baseball player of the year for Wisconsin in 2012³.

Following high school, believing he had a future in baseball, he accepted a scholarship with the University of Kentucky where Cody pitched for four years. During his sophomore season, working out of the pen in 18 of the 24 games pitched, he was 4-0 with his best UK ERA, 2.80, while leading the team with five saves. By his senior season, he was in the rotation for all 14 appearances finishing 6-2 with a 3.35 ERA, second on the team with Ks and third in innings pitched. Overall, he appeared in 61 games with 42 starts finishing with a 17-9 record, 4.04 ERA and 205 strikeouts. He is one of the [Wildcats](#) 42 major leaguers. Also, while in college, he played two years in the Cape Cod League during the summer, starting two games following his freshman year in 2013 with the Wareham Gatemen, winning one and losing one. Cody returned to the Gatemen the following year; starting eight games with a 2-3 record, 2.80 ERA and fanning 33 in 35 1/3 innings pitched.

Cody was drafted three times; first, out of high school in the 33rd round by the Phillies in 2012; then, by the Twins in the second round in 2015; and, lastly, in the sixth round by the Rangers in June 2016. He signed with Texas and pitched in A-ball in 2016 and 2017; winning the organization's Nolan Ryan Minor League Pitcher of the year in 2017⁴ starting 23 games with a 9-6 record, 2.64 ERA and 136 Ks in 126 innings pitched. During spring training in 2018, the tall, 6' 7", right hander suffered soreness in his pitching elbow and tried rehabbing it for three months. After two appearances with the Rangers Arizona Rookie League team, he had Tommy John surgery in July, missing the remainder of the season and all of 2019 rehabbing the arm.

In 2020, the Rangers added Cody, a top prospect, to their 60-man player pool and he was pitching at their Alternate Training Site⁵ when he was recalled on August 20. The hard throwing righty's debut, the following night in Seattle, is a game he will never forget. Needing only 13 pitches, he struck out the side in the bottom of the eighth, whiffing outfielder Branden Bishop and catcher Joseph Odon looking, while shortstop J.P. Crawford went down swinging. His fastball was clocked at 96 and 97. You can see his debut at: [WEAU 13 News](#). Cody earned his first win in the majors; a five inning start on September 20 at Anaheim; surrendering only one run on three hits while fanning five with no free passes as the Rangers topped the Angels 7-2. After pitching out of the pen in his first three appearances, he started five times finishing the season with a 1-1 record (his loss was in his first start at Seattle) with a solid 1.59 ERA in 22 2/3 innings pitched and 1.235 WHIP.

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[J.P. Feyereisen's](#) big league entrance occurred on July 24, 2020, at age 27, with his home state Milwaukee Brewers, the 19,686th major leaguer.

Born Jonathan Paul Feyereisen on February 7, 1993 in River Falls, he became [River Falls High School's](#) third professional baseball player and first to play in the Show. From Little League to high school, he mostly played third base until his high school coach, needing a pitcher for a double header, asked for a volunteer. Feyereisen stepped forward and won the game yielding only two runs over seven innings⁶. He became a pitcher.

After graduating high school, he pitched for [UW- Stevens Point](#) which has sent three pitchers to the majors. In his junior year, Feyereisen was ranked by *Baseball America* as the top Division III

² IBID.

³ The Gatorade Player of the year recognizes the elite high school student-athletes for their athletic excellence, academic achievement and exemplary character, <https://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/winner/state>.

⁴ *WEAU 13 News*, August 21, 2020, <https://www.weau.com/2020/08/22/kyle-cody-makes-his-debut-with-the-texas-rangers/>.

⁵ Texas's alternate site is at their former ballpark, Globe Life Park, across the street from their new digs in Globe Life Field.

⁶ Randy Miller, "12 things about Yankees prospect J.P. Feyereisen, who added velocity in unique way," [New Jersey Advanced Media for NJ.com](#), October 17, 2016.

prospect. In 2013, he was named the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) Pitcher of the Year and First Team All-Midwest Region selection. In three years as a Pointer, Feyereisen compiled a 15-5 record; starting 26 of 36 games; with a 3.05 ERA and whiffing 141 over 180 innings pitched⁷. He also played for Wisconsin Rapids in the Northwoods League during the summers of 2012 and 2013. Working out of the bullpen each year, Feyereisen appeared in four games in his first season with the Rafters with a 3.12 ERA over eight innings; striking out eight while walking only one. He returned the following year as the team's closer and was an All-Star team. He worked in 22 games going 3-1 with 11 saves (Rafters record) in 31 innings. He struck out more than one hitter per inning, 38, with a team best 1.16 ERA.

The right hander was drafted by the Cleveland on June 7, 2014, in the 16th round of the Amateur Draft. He signed two days later then reported to Mahoning Valley in the Short Season New York-Penn League. Working out of the bullpen Feyereisen did not give up an earned run in 15 appearances covering 17 innings. He had three decisions, all wins. He started a trend that would follow him throughout the minors, a solid ability to strikeout more than one batter per inning pitched, with a strong strike out to walk ratio (SO/W) 12.7. The following season, he played at two full season A level teams working a combined 46 games, tossing 47 2/3 innings pitched that led to 12 saves; with a 2.08 ERA; and a 10.6 SO/K with 56 Ks. Feyereisen was promoted to the Double A, Akron Rubber Ducks in 2016 making 33 appearances before being traded by the Indians along with three other prospects⁸ to the Yankees for [Andrew Miller](#) at the July 31, 2016 trading deadline. He pitched in nine more games for the Yankee's Double A Trenton Thunder, also in the Eastern League, and was named an All-Star after going 7-3 in 42 games with a 1.70 ERA whiffing 78 for a 12.0 SO/W. In 2017, the hard throwing reliever worked in 13 games with Trenton before promotion to the Triple A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre where he pitched in relief for three years. Feyereisen appeared in 101 games for the RailBirds making the International League All-Star team in 2019. He continued striking out more batters than innings pitched, 195 in 164 2/3 and had a 10.7 SO/W. On September 1, 2019, after his best AAA season, 10-2, 7 saves, a 2.85 ERA with a 13.8 SO/K, Milwaukee acquired him from New York for infield prospect, Brenny Escanio, and international bonus slot money. The Brewers added Feyereisen to the their 40-man roster that November.

After a strong showing in spring training, before the 2020 season was shutdown, Feyereisen was added to the 60-man roster when play resumed. He then made the Opening Day roster becoming the tenth⁹ Wisconsin player to work for the Brew Crew. He entered the season's first game in the bottom of the eighth inning with Milwaukee trailing Chicago, at Wrigley Field, 2-0. After getting an Ian Happ pop-fly to third for the first out, Feyereisen notched his first major league strikeout, punching out Kris Bryant for out number two. Next up was Anthony Rizzo and he surrendered his first big-league hit, a solo home run, on a 2-0 fastball. He then retired the side when Javier Baez grounded to short in the 3-0 Chicago victory. When rosters were reduced from 30 to 28 players on August 6, Feyereisen was returned to the Brewer's Alternate Site in Appleton without pitching in another game. The big club recalled him on August 23 and he relieved in five games with his best a two inning outing versus Pittsburgh retiring all six batters faced with Ks in a 5-1 home victory on August 30. Feyereisen's rookie season had no decisions in 9 1/3 IP with a 5.79 ERA in six mound visits.

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⁷ Scott A. Williams, "Former UWSP, Wisconsin Rapids Rafters pitcher JP Feyereisen signs with Cleveland Indians," [Stevens Point Journal Media](#), June 10, 2014.

⁸ Included in the deal were Akron teammates [Clint Frazier](#) and fellow Wisconsinite, [Ben Heller](#), plus [Justus Sheffield](#). Heller, a year older than Feyereisen, was born in Milwaukee and attended UW-Whitewater. They were teammates on the 2012 Wisconsin Rapids Rafters before connecting again in 2015 with the Lynchburg Hilltops and would team up with the Scranton/Wilkes-Bare RailRiders in 2017.

⁹ Tom Haudricort, "River Falls native Feyereisen makes team," [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#), July 24, 2020, 4B.



[Daulton Varsho](#) made his debut on July 30, 2020 at age 24, the 19,743 in MLB history.

He was born on July 2, 1996 in Marshfield. His father [Gary Varsho](#), former eight year major leaguer, named him after his Phillies teammate, [Darren Daulton](#)¹⁰. Both Varshos attended [Marshfield High School](#) and are the only alums with major league experience. He was the Tigers catcher earning the WBCA All-State second-team as a junior and the first-team as a senior when he hit .459. After graduating in 2014, he enrolled at [UW-Milwaukee](#). The Panther catcher was named the [Horizon League](#) Player of the Year as a sophomore in 2016, after batting .381/.447/.610. Over his three years at UWM, he throws right, bats left (like his father), slashed, .335/.428/.572 with a 1.000 OPS and is the first Panther to make the majors. When the college seasons ended, Varsho caught for the Eau Claire Express in the Northwoods League during the summers following his freshman and sophomore years where he was coached by his uncle, Dale Varsho. He made the All-Star team each year.¹¹ In his second year with the Express, he led the NWL in total bases, 141; was second in homers, 15 and RBIs, 63; third in slugging (SLG), .588 and had the fourth best OPS, 1.014.

The Arizona Diamondbacks selected Varsho in the second round, 68th pick overall in the June 2017 amateur draft. After signing, he was assigned to short-season A, in Hillsboro, Oregon of the Northwest League, where he led the Hops in RBIs, SLG and OPS. The following season, he played primarily in Visalia, California, getting into 80 games,¹² 55 behind the plate, and leading the Rawhides in stolen bases and finished third in homers. For 2019, Varsho was promoted to Double A with the Southern League, Jackson (Tennessee) Generals where he was named the organization's Player of the Year after slashing .301/.378/.520. He again led the team in stolen bases (21), tied for the tops with 18 dingers and led in runs scored. The D-backs, wanting to take advantage of his bat with both power and speed, started playing Varsho in the outfield, four times, and he caught in 76 games. In addition, he participated in the Futures Game at Progressive Field in 2019. Entering the 2020 season, Varsho was ranked by MLB Pipeline as the No. 3 prospect in the D-backs system and the No. 80 prospect in the MLB Top 100 rankings.

Once the 2020 season resumed, Varsho, one of D'Backs top prospects, was assigned to Arizona's Alternate Training Site. Needing offensive help with the team struggling to score runs, the front office recalled him to the major league roster on July 30. In his debut that same evening, the slugging catcher entered the game as a pinch hitter for DH Tim Lincecum in the bottom of the ninth inning. With two outs, facing the Dodgers Pedro Baez, he walked on six pitches on a 3-2 count in the Diamondbacks 6-3 loss. He began slowly, starting only seven games in August. His first base hit was on August 9, a ninth inning double, on the road, off San Diego's Tim Hill. Turn the calendar and September was completely different story. Varsho started 25 games and things started to fall into place with his first multi-hit game on the fourth including his first two RBIs. Then the lefty batting, center fielder followed that up the following night with his first four bagger; a seventh inning, solo shot off the Giants Trevor Gott into McCovey Cove. Over the final 19 games, Varsho improved his end of August batting average from .160 to .194 going 15 for 61 (.245) before going hitless in the final game of the season to finish at .188. Of his 15 base hits in that period, eight were for extra bases, including all three of his 2020 dingers; yielding a .484 SLG. For the season, his versatility proved beneficial as Varsho played 19 games in the outfield, 14 in center, and five in left. He was also the backstop in 10 contests and filled the DH role seven times. He did not commit a single error and finished 1.000 FLD% for the season. Varsho was named the SB Nation Rookie of the Year for Arizona on December 20, 2020.¹³

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¹⁰ Matt Breen, "Named after Darren Daulton, he's a major-league prospect - and a catcher, too," [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), August 21, 2017,

¹¹ Michael Skurzewski, "Marshfield grad Daulton Varsho picked by Diamondbacks in MLB Draft," [Marshfieldnewsherald.com](#), June 12, 2017.

¹² Varsho played three games for the Rookie League AZL Diamondbacks in 2018 where he was 6-for-12 with four extra-base hits.

¹³ Jim McLennan, "2020 Rookie of the Year: Daulton Varsho," [SB Nation](#), December 20, 2020
January 4, 2021



Jonathan Stiever became the 19,871 major leaguer, on September 13, when he made his debut, at age 23, with the Chicago White Sox.

Born in Cedarburg on May 12, 1997 he grew up in the city 20 miles north of Milwaukee, where he received all-state honors in football and baseball in his 2015 senior year at Cedarburg High. Stiever was a second-team Summer All-State pitcher with a 7-1 record and a 1.90 ERA. (During his junior year he went 8-1 while notching a 1.20 ERA.) He was also a successful football player for the Bulldogs, named to the First Team All-State teams as both a defensive back and wide receiver. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* named him the Wisconsin High School Football Player of the Year¹⁴.

With a stronger interest in cowhide over pigskin, Stiever enrolled at [Indiana University](#)¹⁵ to play Big Ten baseball. He became the Hoosier's Friday night starter (top starter) in 2017, his sophomore year, where he led the Big 10 in SO/K (6.33), 14th in the country, with 57 whiffs and only nine walks in 14 starts.¹⁶ The hard throwing righty continued in his Friday night role in his junior year fanning 97 batters in 16 starts, with a 3.03 strikeout ratio. Stiever finished his collegiate career with a 10-11 record with a 3.56 ERA with 184 Ks in 217.2 innings pitched. He only walked 46 for a 4.00 ratio and was a first-team Big Ten choice. During the summers following his first and second years at IU, he played in summer development leagues. The first year was with the Vermont Mountaineers of the New England Collegiate Baseball League where he started six times in nine contests, finishing 1-2 with a 3.03 ERA. The following year, Stiever was in the prestigious Cape Cod League at Brewster, Massachusetts working out of the pen for all but one of his ten games. The Cedarburg native dominated the Whitecaps with a 12.50 SO/K ratio (25/2) in 28 1/3 innings, winning 3-of-4 decisions.

He was the 136th selection in the June 5, 2018 draft's fifth round by the Chicago White Sox; the fourth player chosen from the Big Ten. Reporting to the Rookie Pioneer League franchise in Great Falls, Montana, he continued with his high strikeout ratio, for the Voyagers, 4.33 in 13 starts with only one decision, a loss and a 4.18 ERA. Stiever played at two levels of A-ball in 2019, hurling for the Kannapolis (North Carolina) Intimidators in the SALLY League (South Atlantic). Making 14 starts, he continued fanning batters at a high rate, 77 in 74 innings with only 14 base-on-balls. He had a 4-6 record tossing a 4.74 ERA before being promoted to the advanced A, Carolina League, Winston-Salem (NC). It is with the Dash, where he credits pitching coach Matt Zelinski with helping him understand the analytics of pitching.¹⁷ And that knowledge made a big difference as Stiever, making 12 starts, again whiffed 77 hitters in 71 innings and he cut his ERA in more than half to 2.15 while going 6-4. With his performance, he was named the ChiSox MLB Pipeline Pitching Prospect of the Year.¹⁸

Like many other teams creating their 60-man pool for the shortened 2020 seasons, the White Sox included Stiever on the roster. Because he was a top prospect needing seasoning, Chicago sent him to their Schaumburg, Illinois alternate training facility in July when the season started. With Dallas Keuchel injured, Chicago needing a starter, recalled Stiever to take his place. He made his first start above Class A in The Show; getting the nod to face Detroit at Comerica Park on September 13. The rookie, nervous and excited, walked the lead-off hitter, Victor Reyes; but he was retired attempting to steal second base. Next, Stiever also walked the second batter, Will Castro, who advanced to second when the third hitter, Miguel Cabrera, singled to left. Stiever then retired the cleanup hitter, Jeimer Candelario, on a pop foul for the second out. Almost out of the inning, he gave up an RBI single to Jorge Bonafacio but got out of the inning notching his first major league strikeout getting Daz Cameron swinging. That was the only run allowed in his 3 2/3 innings pitched. He fanned two more

¹⁴ Cedarburg High School Athletics, <https://cedarburg.sportngin.com/wherearetheynow>

¹⁵ When Stiever joined the ChiSox, he became the 35th big league Hoosier (of 172 who played professional baseball).

¹⁶ Leigha Bruce, "Stiever stifles the competition," *The Dashboard*, July 26, 2019.

¹⁷ JR Radcliffe, "Cedarburg's Jonathan Stiever makes major-league impression with White Sox first start above Class A," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, September 17, 2020.

¹⁸ Scott Merkin, "Pipeline names White Sox Prospects of the Year," mlb.com, September 19, 2019.

batters and allowed another hit in the Sox 5-2 victory. Stiever made a second start on September 18, a loss in Cincinnati where he lasted 2 2/3 innings giving up four homers, three in the third inning. Stiever returned to Schaumburg on the 19th when Keuchel returned from the IL, ending his season.
Last Revised January 2021

Lee Kluck to Speak at Nine

Fellow Ken Keltner member, Lee Kluck, will make a presentation at the [Nine Spring Training Conference](#) on baseball history and culture. His topic will be "Go West Young Man": Harry Dalton, the California Angels, and a Case of Manifest Destiny Derailed. This will be Kluck's fourth appearance at the conference which will be virtual this year over three weekends. March 5-6, 12-13, 19-20.

Research Assistance Request

For anyone with access to the Milwaukee Journal Archive online via the Milwaukee Public Library, Rex Hamann of the American Association Almanac seeks your assistance for a project to tabulate each of the 164 home runs of the Milwaukee Brewers 1936 season. This project is ongoing and the list has been completed, but the total comes up short. If you have an interest in assisting with this project, please contact Rex, the editor of the *American Association Almanac*, for further information. He is available via email at pureout@msn.com or by phone at: 763-862-8187.

The American Association Angle by Rex Hamann of The American Association Almanac

Part 3- Blues and Brews Vie in the Finals

The December issue of the Hot Corner featured an article on the rugged battles between the Milwaukee Brewers and Kansas City Blues during second half of the 1952 American Association season. Kansas City dominated Milwaukee during the first half, but the Brewers evened the score during their final 11 tilts. The tenor of their tribulations changed little during the playoffs that year. The current article summarizes their first three contests of the 1952 playoffs' final round.



The American Association playoffs were a tradition beginning in 1933. In 1935 the league adopted the Shaughnessy plan which seeded the top four teams in the final standings to fight it out for the American Association championship (the first-place team won the pennant, but it was up to the winner of the playoffs to claim the league championship). Pennant-winning Milwaukee defeated third-place Kansas City in a five-game first round of the 1951 playoffs, achieving the unique distinction as a "triple crown winner," having won the pennant, the championship and the Junior World Series in a six-game set against the Montreal Royals.

Milwaukee defeated third-place Kansas City in a five-game first round of the 1951 playoffs, achieving the unique distinction as a "triple crown winner," having won the pennant, the championship and the Junior World Series in a six-game set against the Montreal Royals.

In 1952 the league's postseason commenced Sept. 9 with second-place Kansas City hosting the fourth-place Minneapolis Millers; the first-place Brewers took on the third-place St. Paul Saints. Kansas City copped their semifinal round in five games, while Milwaukee advanced with a four-game sweep of the Saints. The final round between the circuit's top two teams promised an electric competitive atmosphere not only for the local fans but for the baseball world as a whole. The following game accounts provide a glimpse into the intensity of the first three contests of the Association's seven-game final round for the 1952 playoffs.

Game 1: Monday, Sept. 15, 1952. Kansas City Blues at Milwaukee Brewers

It's another "true" playoff series in the American Association's final round as the Blues visit Milwaukee in the best-of-seven tournament. It's a historic occasion as the Brewers are playing their final games at Borchert Field, the all-wooden structure built in 1888 on Milwaukee's near north side, in their 51st season. It's their 12th playoff appearance as the Brewers are again American Association champions and are looking to grab the pennant against a very tough Kansas City squad making its ninth playoff appearance. **George "Twinkletoes" Selkirk** sends young lefty phenom **Jim Russell** (5-4) to the mound for the Blues, while Brewer skipper **Bucky Walters** tabs big **Gene Conley** (11-4) for the starting task. With just over 4,400 in-house for the weekday evening contest, it's an unusual pitchers' duel at one of the league's most hitter-friendly venues.

Conley comes into the contest after beating the Blues in three of four regular season contests. He keeps the Blues quiet the first three innings. The Brewers get on the board in the third after leadoff batter **Bill Bruton** (cf), having forced the singling Conley at second, scores on a base hit and a sacrifice fly. But in the fourth, the Blues take advantage of a walk to **Bob Cerv** (rf) when, with one away, **Bill Skowron** (lf) drills a high, outside fastball "a-way" over the right-field fence for his 35th home run of the season. The score remains 2-1, Blues, until the Brewer seventh when Bruton doubles, then plates again on a single by **George Crowe** (1b). The Cream City nine takes the lead in the eighth. Russell strikes out **Billy Klaus** (ss) to open the frame before **Buzz Clarkson** (3b) wallops a single off the facing off the fence in left. **Dewey Williams** (c) then doubles to left, pushing Clarkson to third before **Pete Whisenant** (rf) flies out, allowing Clarkson to score the lead run.

Going into the ninth down, 3-2, the Blues face a tiring Conley who walks the dangerous Skowron to open the inning. **Bill Renna** (cf) slaps a ground single to left before **Vic Power** (3b) advances both runners with a sacrifice. With first base open, the Brewers debate whether to walk number seven hitter **Kal Segrist** (2b), but they elect to pitch to him, and Conley strikes him out. Pinch-hitting **Bob Marquis**, hitting for catcher **Roy Partee**, then drives the first pitch from Conley on a line into right field as Skowron and Renna scamper to the plate with Whisenant in pursuit of the ball.

In the Brewer ninth, the Blues announce a new battery consisting of **Dave Jolly** and **Mickey Owen** (c). Manager Walters immediately declares he's playing the game under protest, as Owen, while acting as first-base coach, had argued a half-swing by **Don Bollweg** (1b) in the first inning, in violation of the league rule against such protests. Jolly, who became a Milwaukee Brave the following year, proceeds to strike out Bruton and **Gene Mauch** (2b), but Crowe keeps hope alive for the home crowd with a scratch single. **Luis Marquez** (lf) draws a walk. And with two out and two aboard, Klaus fans. Ballgame. Conley claims 11 strikeouts, Russell seven, in a nine-inning game that takes two hours, 36 minutes to complete. The Brewers commit no errors. An unheard of *seven combined assists* are registered, Milwaukee *with only two!* **Kansas City 4, Milwaukee 3.**

Game 2: Tuesday, Sept. 16, 1952. Kansas City Blues at Milwaukee Brewers

An error-free game is on tap at "Borchert Orchard," and with 5,480 onlookers supporting their local team, it's a grand night for baseball at Eighth and Chambers. **Ernie Nevel** (7-6) gets the nod for the Blues, locking horns with Brewer ace **Don Liddle** (17-4), the Association's strikeouts leader (159) and ERA king (2.70). Liddle is first to crack, but he gives up only one hit in the first five frames.

In the second inning, Vic Power belts his 17th long ball of the season, a 390-foot shot to center, giving the visitors a 1-0 lead. Nevel is shaky from the outset as the Brewers collect four hits in the first two frames, but it's in the third that he's ousted. Bill Bruton singles to center before Gene Mauch's bunt goes for a hit. Crowe singles, plating Bruton. Luis Marquez lines to Bob Cerv in right as Mauch scores the lead run. Buzz Clarkson's ripping single to center knocks in Crowe and knocks Nevel out of the game before Klaus greets reliever **Rex (Lee) Jones** with a 400-foot triple to right-field power alley, bringing Clarkson home for the game's deciding run.

Batting seventh, **Bob Montag** (rf) plates Klaus with a base hit, Milwaukee's fifth and final tally of the frame before Jones gets out of it with the bases filled. Marquez' long ball in the fourth registers the Brewers' sixth run. Kansas City counters in the eighth when **Art Mazmanian** (ss) singles to left, driving in Kal Segrist. The defensive play of the game is described by *Kansas City Times* sports

writer, **Joe McGuff**: “Segrist came up with a sparkling play in the second inning when he made a great stop on Clarkson’s bouncer over second and then threw to first while still skidding in the dirt to nip the Brewer third baseman by half a step.” Going the distance, Liddle strikes out seven; Jones fan six in 42³ innings. Three Brewer batters register three hits in four at-bats: Crowe (batting third), Klaus (sixth) and Montag (seventh) in promoting the champs’ 15-hit attack. **Milwaukee 7, Kansas City 2.**

Game 3: Wednesday, Sept. 17, 1952. Milwaukee at Kansas City

Backed by a healthy fraternity of big-throated Blues Stadium patrons, Kansas City romps to a 4-0 lead in the first inning against Milwaukee starter **Eddie Blake** (10-3) who does not last the round. Blake defeated the Blues in his three previous outings, but gets in trouble after Art Mazmanian leads off with a double.

The Brew Boys strike back with three in the second featuring Whisenant’s home run, a three-run circuit clout against starter **Art Schallock** (8-6), an opposite- field drive over the right-field fence. Pete Whisenant comes through again in the fourth, this time taking Schallock deep with his left field solo shot.

In the Milwaukee third, Gene Mauch and Blues’ backstop Roy Partee are involved in an odd play. With two out, Mauch attempts to steal second base, sees he’s caught, then freezes some ten yards from the bag. Partee, rather than risking a throw, jogs out to tag the runner, at which point Mauch tries to knock the ball from Partee’s grip, prompting an overtly aggressive tag by the catcher. An intense argument ensues, but what’s done is done...or is it? When Mauch comes to the plate in the fifth, the two players go at it again, but this time it’s an all-out brawl. The dugouts empty before Mauch and Partee are separated and ejected. Sparks continue as the pair enter the tunnel into the clubhouse, prompting Brewer general manager **Richard Smith** to follow them in an effort to promote peace.

After the Blues tie the score in the fifth, Milwaukee registers two runs on just one hit, ending Schallock’s outing in favor of **Johnny Gray** upon whose watch two runs score, credited to Schallock, giving the visitors a 7-5 lead. Another pair in the seventh increases the Brewer lead, courtesy of a walk, a hit batsman and two singles, but the Blues plate three in their half to make it a 9-8 contest. Cerv’s two- run triple, which travels *440 feet* “on the fly,” is the highlight (note: the center field distance at Blues Stadium was 450 feet). Bill Skowron comes to bat and belts one just as far but Bill Bruton, who adjusted his position in center field by backing up after Cerv’s shot, catches the clout while Cerv scores the Blues’ eighth tally. The Brewers, in possession of a tenuous lead, post an insurance run in the ninth after Dave Jolly plunks Luis Marquez (who sustains his second HBP on the night) who plates his second run of the game. Badger-starter **Bert Thiel** comes on in the ninth to contain the hosts, but things get testy after two-out singles by Cerv and Don Bollweg. Thiel then masters Skowron who “flung his bat away disgustedly as the teams headed for the clubhouse....From all angles this was the stormiest game played at the stadium this season and the crowd of 4,194 was in an uproar from the start,” according to the *Kansas City Times*. Bollweg and Cerv each had three hits. For Milwaukee, **Billy Klaus** went 3-for-4, while Whisenant scored three runs and collected six RBI, the 1952 postseason single-game record. As reported in the *Times*, “The third game of the Milwaukee-Kansas City playoff erupted into violent, frenzied battle last night...in a thrilling but slipshod encounter marked by a fight and numerous disputes.” *Now that’s entertainment.*
Milwaukee 10, Kansas City 8.

The American Association Almanac is a bi-annual print publication dedicated to the history of the old American Association. Research is underway for the Spring 2021 issue which will compare each American Association team’s season-high home run total with the opposing home run total for the period 1921 to 1955. To subscribe, please contact Rex Hamann by email at pureout@msn.com. Be sure to ask how to receive your free copy from an assortment of back issues and how to receive a senior citizens’ discount on any purchase.