

THE BALTIMORE CHOP

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SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH



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O's Home Openers:

There From the Beginning

Author's note: The Orioles have played 69 home openers dating back to April 15, 1954. I attended that first game with my dad, and as best I can recall I've been to every opening day since, save the four years I served in the U.S. Navy, 1970-73. The team observed my absence by going 4-0 over that span.

The following represents a collection of thoughts, impressions, statistics, and stories on Orioles home openers, which, for me, stand as the best days of our sporting years, a time of rebirth, renewal, and the launching of another season of baseball, the sport which the renowned columnist John Steadman dubbed "the greatest game God ever invented!"



And so, on Thursday, April 15, my father whisked me away to one of the grandest days of my young life. First, a stopover at home so I could change out of my uniform and into my brand-new Orioles jacket. My mother, tending to my two young sisters, gave us a farewell hug and made us promise to bring home a win.

Our trip from Dickeyville to Baltimore's Memorial Stadium would through the lush green of Leakin Park, around the trolley hub of Walbrook Junction, past Druid Hill Park and then over to 28th Street and Greenmount, an

Openers ▶ Page 7

President's Message

Since the last time we touched base, we ended up getting a full 162-game season and we are even closer to SABR 50 in August.

As of this writing, the panels and academic presentations are still being assembled and finalized. The Red Sox game for Friday night August 19 is confirmed, and a few possible convention ad-ons are still being hashed out.

COVID-19 delayed this long-awaited date by more than two years. But hopefully convention-goers will say it was worth it in the end. Some people are still hesitant to travel, and with prices soaring, some people may stay away due to cost. But we still plan putting on the best possible convention that we can.

Although Towson University hosted a convention back in 1982, this will be the first one in the city giving attendees full access to the Inner Harbor, Camden Yards, and the rest of the downtown. Baltimore the city has endured a lot over the last decade, but with people starting to come back out and

President ▶ Page 8

By Mike Gibbons

I turned 7 on April 11, 1954. For that birthday, my parents announced I would be attending the Orioles' very first home opener four days later. I just about went through the roof of our Dickeyville home in northwest Baltimore, but opted instead to soar about our fenced-in yard with dog Nicky hot on my heels.

My mom arranged with the nuns at St. Agnes School for me to be fetched by my father around noon to go to the ballgame. That set in motion an approved opening day "hooky" pattern that extended through 1961, my last year in grade school.



**SABR 50
August 17-21**

The Baltimore Babe Ruth Chapter is proud to host SABR 50 in August.

Please remember:

- Register for the convention at sabr.org/convention.
- The all-inclusive package price (\$335 for SABR members, \$365 for non-members) is good until July 22.
- SABR is looking for volunteers to stuff goody bags and help with registration and during the convention. Contact Jessica Smyth at SABR: jsmyth@sabr.org
- Watch for information on possible volunteer opportunities with BBRC.
- There is no special discount for BBRC members or volunteers.

SABR Baltimore Babe Ruth Chapter Formed 2015

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Find us on [Facebook](#), too.

Calendar

Regularly scheduled events

Zoom registration links are sent by the chapter

Peeps @ The Peeb (in-person and Zoom)

Conversation, nibbles, libations

First Wednesday of the month, 7-9 PM

Peabody Heights Brewery, 401 E. 30th St., Baltimore

Talkin' Baseball (Zoom only until further notice)

Since 2001, Bob Davids Chapter hosts a guest speaker

First Saturday of the month, 9 A.M.

Called Shot Lunch (in-person only)

BYO lunch and talk baseball

Third Wednesday of the month, noon

Babe Ruth Museum, 216 Emory St., Baltimore

Baltimore Baseball Babble (Zoom only)

Free-for-all baseball chat, not recorded

Last Sunday of the month, 7-9 P.M.

May

18: Called Shot Lunch

No Baltimore Baseball Babble in honor of Memorial Day

June

1: Peeps @ The Peeb, discussion and preview of the upcoming SABR 50 convention in Baltimore

4: Talkin' Baseball

15: Called Shot Lunch

25: Baltimore Baseball Babble

July

2: Talking' Baseball

6: Peeps @ The Peeb

20: Called Shot Lunch

31: Baltimore Baseball Babble

August

17-21: SABR 50, Hyatt Regency Inner Harbor

BBRC Raffle on Tap

Stay tuned for information on the first BBRC cash raffle fundraiser. It will likely begin in June, and the drawing will happen in October. Cash prizes!

Getting to Know ... Bill Stetka

For Bill Stetka, baseball and the Orioles (and his life) are intertwined.

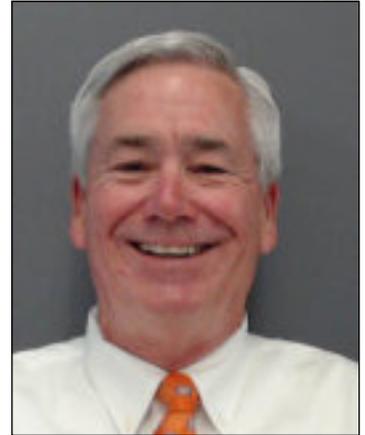
Born in Baltimore, raised in Bel Air and now living in Columbia, Stetka is the Orioles director of alumni and team historian. He created the alumni office in 2008 after working in newspapers (he covered the O's for the late Baltimore News American) and public relations. He's been a SABR member since 2017.

His first baseball game, an 8-0 victory over the Twins on April 15, 1961 at Memorial Stadium, was followed by a memorable dinner:

"My dad had been in the Navy with a Twins player, Pete Whisenant, and brought him home for dinner after the game," he says. "I wondered who he'd bring the next time we went to a game."

It goes without saying that the Orioles are his favorite team.

Favorite player? "Brooks Robinson is a one-and-only, but as a high school right fielder I revered Roberto Clemente and wore No. 21."



For favorite ballparks not in Baltimore, he goes to Pennsylvania and votes for Connie Mack Stadium in Philadelphia (past) and PNC Park in Pittsburgh (current).

"Being a part of the planning for Cal Ripken's 2131 celebration, and then seeing it all come to fruition" is how he describes his favorite baseball memory.

For hobbies, you can find him playing golf, doing crossword puzzles, and watching sports.

And, something most people don't know about him: He's a big fan of Broadway musicals.

Welcome, New Members

Mark Eisen	Pikesville
Doug Foster	Accokeek
Leslie McAdoo	Baltimore
Tim Sanders	Carlsbad, California
Megan Schaab	Burke, Virginia
Mike Shawn	Rockville
Steve Shawn	Rockville
Dwayne Sims	Mitchellville
Mark Warren	Hydes

Chop Deadlines

Summer 2022	June 30
Fall 2022	September 30
Winter 2022-23	December 31
Spring 2023	March 31

This Tournament Has Been on the Clock since 1967

By Ruth Sadler

With major-league games inching toward an average of 3 hours, 15 minutes, MLB is looking at ways to speed up things. A clock might be at your favorite major-league park next season after clock-ruled minor-league games were 20 minutes faster than those without.

But what's shiny and new in Organized Ball is old hat in Bridgeton, New Jersey, where they've run a tournament on the clock since 1967.

The clock started as novelty for the tournament, according to Dave Hitchner, who has been associated with the tournament for most of its existence. There was also a practical reason: "It was felt the clock would enable a doubleheader in one evening," said Hitchner in an email. "The addition of the designated hitter also helped in attracting fans and speeding up the games."

Those two features led tournament organizers to contact MLB.

"As I understand, after its second year of existence in 1969, the MLB commissioner's office was contacted regarding the DH and unique Speed Up Rules," said Hitchner. "Hall of Famer Monte Irvin represented the commissioner's office and attended the tournament, taking back his observations regarding both the DH and Speed Up Rules." The American League adopted a DH in 1973, but it wasn't the Bridgeton one, who can hit for either the pitcher or catcher but only once in an inning.

Hitchner, who has served on the tournament committee and its protest committee as well as operating the scoreboard and clock, said that, he has twice sent the tournament's rules to the commissioner's office. All the recent talk of speeding up the game has not sent MLB back to Bridgeton for advice.

Trivia Corner

The Orioles have been blessed with 17 different Gold Glove winners who have won the award a total of 71 times. See how many blanks you can correctly fill. Answer on Page 9.

Name	Number	Year(s)
Shortstop		
Catcher		
Pitcher		
Third Base		
First Base		
Second Base		
Outfield		



The scoreboard is on the left, and the tournament clock is above the sign to the right. Woodruff Energy is the clock sponsor and purchased and maintains it. Alden Field is named for tournament founder Jerry Alden. A timekeeper operates the clock. (Photo by Dave Hitchner)

The tournament grew out of the success of the city's hosting the Babe Ruth tournament in 1962. It has evolved from an event featuring semi-pro and former semi-pro players from as far as New York and Washington, D.C., to one with mostly local high school and college players.

Hitchner says the rules have been tweaked over the years but the basic rules haven't changed. Time and motion are minimized, resulting in seven-inning games lasting about 1 hour, 20 minutes:

Change of sides must be made in 90 seconds. Penalty: ball or strike.

The pitcher has 20 seconds to start his windup after he gets the ball from the catcher or a fielder. Penalty: ball.

The pitcher has 10 seconds to start his windup after a pickoff attempt. Penalty: ball.

The batter has 10 seconds to get into the box after the clock starts. Penalty: strike.

Protests are limited to 40 seconds. Penalty after warning: ball or strike.

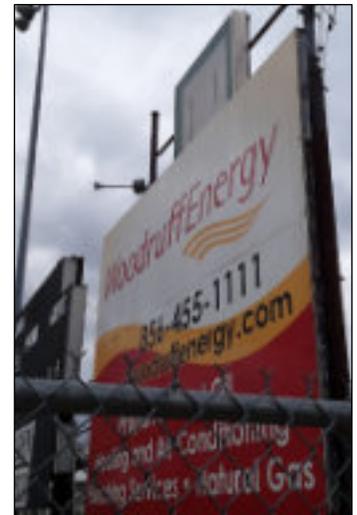
Pitchers get five warmup pitches between innings; new pitchers get six.

After an out, only one throw is allowed, and the catcher may throw to third after a strikeout. After an outfield out, the ball is thrown to an infielder, who throws it to the pitcher.

A pitcher will be removed from the pitching position after a second mound visit by the coach or defensive player. Subsequent mound visits result in subsequent pitchers being removed from pitching.

There is a 10-run mercy rule, except for the championship game.

"Originally, the clock was uniquely attracting fans due to its sometimes-controversial nature," said Hitchner. "Early on, there was one game where the winning runs were on base and it was the bottom of the seventh inning. The batter



A 10-foot fence encloses the scoreboard and clock. (Photo by Dave Hitchner)

Two Enduring Chroniclers of Baseball in Baltimore

Chuck Thompson: Voice of Influence

By Francis Kinlaw

The induction of Chuck Thompson into the broadcasters' wing of the Hall of Fame in the summer of 1993 revived memories of my boyhood in North Carolina and caused me to wonder how many other young fans were brought closer to the game of baseball by Thompson's distinctive voice.

If you are old enough to remember when the Braves were in Milwaukee, you can also remember when no major-league team on the East Coast



of the United States resided south of Washington, D.C. Just 40 miles north of Washington was Baltimore, a blue-collar city that had landed the St. Louis Browns franchise following the 1953 season. The Orioles (as well as the beloved Colts of the NFL) provided a significant identity to the town in the world of sports. Down in the Tar Heel State, I latched onto that identity by occasionally purchasing a Sunday edition of the Baltimore *News American* at a local

newsstand and listening to Thompson's vivid descriptions of many Orioles games on my treasured Philco radio.

The Orioles of the mid-1950s seemed young and vulnerable, much like I viewed myself during my preteen and teenage years. Only catcher Gus Triandos was a threat to hit balls with power; the rest of the early Birds (including Gene Woodling, Cal Abrams, and the unforgettable Willie Miranda) were singles hitters playing in a ballpark with challenging dimensions. The pitching was better than the hitting when guys like Bob Turley, Don Larsen, Billy O'Dell, and Connie Johnson ventured to the mound.

The quality of those teams wasn't very high, but Thompson's descriptive comments made hot and humid summer evenings in North Carolina pass in pleasant fashion. Often denigrated by opposing fans as a "homer", Thompson did root openly for the Orioles, but a partisan nature never affected his accuracy. (One of his few mistakes unfortunately occurred before a national audience, when he identified Art Ditmar instead of Ralph Terry as the pitcher who surrendered Bill Mazeroski's home run that brought the curtain down on the 1960 World Series.) His conversational tone and signature phrases—"Ain't the beer cold!" and "Go to war, Miss Agnes!"—were received well by fans of the Orioles and/or Colts.

Although Reggie Jackson drew most of the attention from the public on Induction Day in Cooperstown in 1993, Chuck Thompson will always mean much more to me than the player who proclaimed himself to be "the straw that stirs the drink." For long before Reggie came into my life, the gentleman from Baltimore was stirring my enthusiasm for baseball. As a personality and a broadcaster, what a splendid ambassador for the game he was!

Frommer Opinions in *Washington Post*

SABR member Fred Frommer has written two opinion pieces for the *Washington Post*, one on the DH (March 11, 2022) and one on Jackie Robinson (April 14, 2022):

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2022/03/11/dh-rule-national-league-american-league/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2022/04/14/jackie-robinson-mlb-managers-frank-robinson/>

Jim Bready: Baseball Historian Extraordinaire

By Mark R. Millikin

James (Jim) H. Bready was proud of the fact he was the first Marylander to join SABR in its first year, 1971. Born on February 20, 1919, he graduated from Woodbury High and Moorestown Friends in New Jersey, earned a B.A. in American history at Haverford College and an M.A. in European history at Harvard. He served in the U. S. Army in Europe for almost five years in World War II. After a short stint on the *Washington Post* copy desk in 1945, he took a similar job at the Baltimore *Evening Sun* that year and stayed in one capacity or another with *The Evening Sun* for 60 years. His zest for life showed in his exuberance and enthusiasm, his smile, and his energy. He knew how to turn a phrase, insert his wit, and coin new terms that were a joy for his readers. His writing style "spared neither fact nor humor," one publication noted. When the Orioles won their first AL pennant in 1966, Baltimore became Pennantsburg-on-the-Patapsco; following the World Series win over the Dodgers, the city became Championsville-on-the-Chesapeake.

In his fourth edition of *The Home Team*, Bready wrote of Orioles manager Earl Weaver, "The Thousand Victory Man": "Earl Weaver as the 1970's drew to a close, had gone gray in Oriole service. Not yet hoarse, though. There in the dugout he stood watching play on field. Safe? Whaddya mean? Safe! Out comes No. 4. Out the words flow. Out also he goes from the game... His arguments had purpose: *Exegesis* – one more of the Official Rules overlooked. *Diversion* – to protect one of his players. *Forehandedness* – to incline a fair-minded umpire to decide the next close play in the Orioles' favor."

He met his future wife, Mary Hortop, at a branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library and they had three sons, Richard, Chris, and Steve. Bready was a editorial writer, book reviewer, and features writer for *The Evening Sun* until his semi-retirement in 1985. He kept writing bi-weekly, then monthly, book reviews about regional books for *The Evening Sun* until it folded in 1995, then for *The Sun* until November 2005.

Bob Maisel, sports editor of the *The Sun*, wrote in July 1971, "Bready isn't in sports, having bypassed the fun-and-games beat to become an editorial writer for *The Evening Sun*. But, you'll rarely find anybody more interested in baseball, its history and its records."

Long before digital versions of old newspaper editions and the internet, Bready made frequent trips to the central Enoch Pratt Free Library to pore through microfilm copies of old editions of Baltimore newspapers, especially *The Sun* and *Sunday Sun*, *The Evening Sun*, and the *News*, *News Post*,



Jim Bready and Mark Millikin at the Babe Ruth Museum in 2000.

'Not Unusual' (Who's Vic Roznovsky?)

By Pat Brown

When someone mentions the 1966 world champion Orioles, the names of the team's Hall of Fame players come immediately to mind: Frank, Brooks, Aparicio, and Palmer. However, for many baseball fans, even the names of many of the other players are well-known as well: Paul Blair, Davey Johnson, Dave McNally, Stu Miller, Moe Drabowsky, Boog Powell. So when I was reading about Boog's achievements in 1966 in Baltimore Baseball & Barbecue with Boog Powell, written by Boog and Rob Kasper, and came across this passage "Later [in August] in Baltimore, he and journeyman Vic Roznovsky hit back-to-back pinch-hit home runs in the ninth inning ... against the Red Sox.", my first reaction was "Who's Vic Roznovsky?"

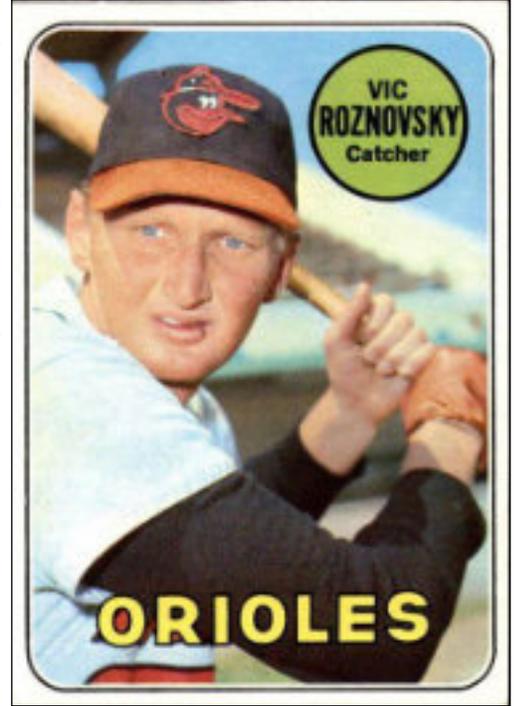
Actually, that was a question that also came up in Baltimore in 1966. In a column in the July 23, 1966, edition of the Baltimore Evening Sun, Bill Tanton mentions that after the Orioles obtained Roznovsky from the Cubs the previous spring, an Orioles official in response to a question about the new acquisition's first name said it was Leon. For the record, Victor Joseph Roznovsky was born in Shiner, Texas, on October 19, 1938, and died recently (January 18, 2022) in Fresno, California, at the age of 83. An extensive obituary can be found at <https://ripbaseball.com/2022/01/29/obituary-vic-roznovsky-1938-2022>. According to an interview Roznovsky gave to Bob Maisel of the Baltimore Sun in July 1966, his high school was so small it did not have a baseball team, so, while he played a lot of catch, he did not play baseball until he attended a tryout camp for the Pirates before the 1958 season. Still, because he could throw, he was signed by the Pirates out of that camp but really did not have a position. The Pirates initially tried him as an outfielder and sent him to their Class D San Angelo (Texas) team in the Sophomore League. They eventually determined he was too slow for the outfield and in 1959 tried him as a catcher for 28 games. Ordinarily one would think a transition to first base would be a possible move, but the then-San Angelo/Roswell Pirates had a 19-year-old prospect named Willie Stargell manning that position. Despite batting .291 and .293 in the previous two seasons, Roznovsky was released by the Pirates before the 1960 season. According to his Maisel interview, after his release, Roznovsky called the Giants and told them he could catch. So San Francisco brought him to spring training and quickly found out he couldn't when he broke his hand trying. However, after this temporary setback, Roznovsky eventually learned and was in the San Francisco minor-league system, making it as far as Class AA as a left-handed-hitting catcher/outfielder (and a third baseman when needed), until the Cubs drafted him in the December 1963 minor-league draft. Roznovsky started the season in Class AAA but was called up when Cubs catcher Jim Schaffer suffered a broken hand. He debuted with the Cubs on June 28 against Houston as a pinch hitter for starting pitcher Ernie Broglio and grounded out against Colt .45s pitcher Don Nottebart. His first hit came in his first start against San Francisco — he singled up the middle against pitcher Ron Herbel. Roznovsky got a fair number of starts and had his batting average over .300 in late July. Eventually, his 18 strikeouts overcame his 15 hits and he ended the season with a .197 batting average. In 1965, the Cubs had four players sharing the catching duties, with Roznovsky getting the most work, appearing in 71 games. He hit .221 (38 hits and 30 strikeouts), but hit three homers, all in the month of May, with the first one coming against the Astros on Mother's Day. Roznovsky became expendable after the Cubs acquired a young prospect named Randy Hundley from the Giants in December 1965. The Orioles, who were looking for someone to back up Andy Etchebarren after losing experienced catchers Charlie Lau and Dick Brown,

traded for Roznovsky on March 30, 1966, sending outfielder Carl Warwick to the Cubs.

Starting the 1966 season, he was up and down between the Orioles and Class AAA, but was called up in June when the Orioles optioned catcher Camilo Carreon to Rochester of the International League. He did a respectable job when called upon. For example, as described in the aforementioned "Leon" column, he replaced Etchebarren, who was hit by a pitched ball on his throwing hand, before a key series with second-place Detroit in late July, and with Roznovsky behind the plate for all three games, the Orioles

swept the series. Then on August 26, 1966, Lee Stange of the Red Sox was shutting out the Orioles on six hits and took a 2-0 lead into the bottom of the ninth when Roznovsky, pitch-hitting for catcher Larry Haney, led off with a home run (his only one of the year and the only pinch-hit homer of his career) and then Powell, who was recovering from a bone chip in the ring finger in his left hand and was pinch-hitting for pitcher Eddie Fisher, followed with his 33rd homer of the year. This was the first occurrence of back-to-back pinch-hit homers in the American League. The Orioles went on to win the game in the 12th on Russ Snyder's bases-loaded single. Roznovsky was bothered late in the season by a ruptured disc in his back that would need off-season surgery. However, he wasn't needed in the World Series, as Etchebarren caught every inning. "It would have been nice to at least get into the box score, but just being a part of the world championship team has to be the biggest thrill of my baseball career," Roznovsky said. He did receive a full World Series share of \$11,683.04, which was a couple thousand more than his reported salary of \$9,000 that year.

Roznovsky started 1967 back in the minor leagues. The Orioles recalled him in May, looking for some batting help, but Roznovsky batted just .206 and ended up pinch-hitting almost as much as he caught. In 1968, Baltimore selected Elrod Hendricks from the Angels in the Rule 5 Draft, which left no room for Roznovsky on the big-league roster, and he spent the entire season at Class AAA Rochester. Even though he broke a bone in a finger early in the season and ended up splitting time with several catchers, he did have the opportunity to catch 1966 Orioles teammates Palmer and Wally Bunker at Rochester that year. The 29-year-old Roznovsky did not hit well, batting .238 and driving in 34 runs in 93 games. When he realized that he would not be on the major-league roster in 1969, he said that he would quit baseball instead of spending another year in Class AAA.



Roznovsky ► Page 9

SABR Member Shines Light on Controversial Player

By Barry Sparks

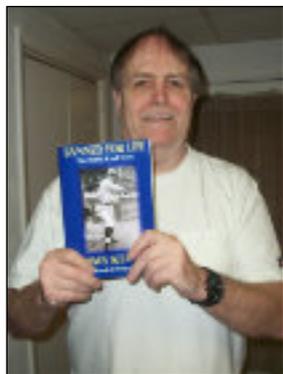
Baseball historian and author Jimmy Keenan of Glen Rock, Pennsylvania, has chronicled the life of a controversial baseball player in his latest book, *Banned for Life: The Benny Kauff Story*.

Like Shoeless Joe Jackson, Kauff (pronounced Cowf) was banned for life by commissioner Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis. Both Jackson and Kauff were found not guilty in court, but Landis used his dictatorial powers to ban them.

Jackson's ban stemmed from his involvement with the 1919 Black Sox scandal. Kauff's ban was the result of a September 1919 incident when teammate Heinie Zimmerman tried to bribe him and fellow New York Giant Fred Toney. Although Kauff immediately reported the bribe, an air of suspicion engulfed him. A complex stolen car case that same year raised questions about Kauff's involvement.

"I knew about Kauff's case and I thought it needed to be explored more, particularly since the court found him innocent," said Keenan, who spent five years researching and writing the book. "It seemed to me that he got a raw deal."

Kauff, a 5-foot-8, 175-pound, left-handed-hitting outfielder, was known as the "Ty Cobb of the Federal League". He won league batting titles in 1914 (.370) and 1915 (.342) while playing for the Indianapolis Hoosiers and the Brooklyn Tip Tops. Besides hitting .370 in 1914, Kauff collected 211 hits, 44 doubles, 13 triples, and eight homers. He scored 120 runs, tallied 95 RBI and stole 75 bases.



Kauff, a native of Pomeroy, Ohio, was a shameless self-promoter, flashy dresser, and aggressive player, particularly on the bases (he once got picked off first base three times in one game).

The outfielder was involved in contract disputes throughout his career. When the Federal League folded after the 1915 season, Kauff joined the New York Giants and played for manager John McGraw.

He boasted he would hit .370 for the Giants (he batted .264).

"Benny was a rebel in a number of ways," said Keenan, a regular contributor to SABR publications and author of *The Lystons: A Story of One Baltimore Family and Our National Pastime*.

"He knew his worth and he wanted to be paid accordingly. His actions and relentless bragging rubbed a lot of people the wrong way. I think he irritated Judge Landis, and his past activities played a role in his ban."

The stolen car case didn't come to trial until 1921, two years after the incident. Although Kauff was declared not guilty by the court, Landis didn't feel justice had been served. He suspended Kauff and later put him on baseball's ineligible list, essentially banning him for life.

Landis wrote that Kauff "could not return (to baseball) without impairing the morale of other players and doing further injury to the good name of Organized Baseball."

So, did Kauff get a raw deal?

"I think so," said Keenan, citing his extensive research. "I believe the testimony of two convicted car thieves heavily influenced Landis' decision."

Keenan admits Kauff had flaws, but he believes he was a good teammate.

"I think I would liked to have played ball with him. He seemed to love the game, and he always hustled," he said.

Kauff was 30 years old when his eight-year major-league career ended after the 1920 season. His lifetime batting average is .313.



Tony Mendez with Shirley Povich and Walter Johnson.

Something New at Povich Field

When the Bethesda Big Train begins its season in the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League on June 7, there will be a little more Cooperstown at Shirley Povich Field.

The Big Train's home ballpark, located in Cabin John Park a few blocks from Westfield Montgomery Mall, features an entrance designed to look like the entrance to Cooperstown's Doubleday Field. What's new is a sculpture of two Washington icons honored in Cooperstown. It shows long-time Washington Post writer Shirley Povich interviewing Walter Johnson, for whom the Big Train team is named. Povich received the 1975 BBWAA Career Excellence Award, and Johnson was a member of the Hall of Fame's inaugural class of 1936.

The man behind the work is Toby Mendez, who created the sculptures of Frank Robinson, Brooks Robinson, Earl Weaver, Jim Palmer, Eddie Murray, and Cal Ripken Jr. at Camden Yards. Mendez will be the special guest at the July 18 Big Train game.

More than 40 percent of the players in its 22-year history have gone on to play professional baseball. This spring there were 19 Big Train alumni playing in spring training games with big-league teams, and five alums were on major-league rosters once the season began. Bill Murphy, the co-pitching coach of the Houston Astros, is also a Big Train alum.

Schedule and ticket details for the defending regular-season and playoff champion Big Train: <http://www.bigtrain.org/>

New Babe Ruth Museum Exhibit Features Babe Ruth Rookie Card

Before Babe Ruth was a rookie, there was the rookie card. The card, part of a 1914 set printed by the old Baltimore News, is the centerpiece of a new exhibit at the Babe Ruth Museum that traces the journey of Baltimore's most famous baseball player to Boston, then to New York and the stories that are part of his legend.

The first card featuring Ruth is joined by 14 other cards from the set of International League Orioles, a grouping on loan from the cards' anonymous owner.

Visit the house where Babe Ruth was born, 216 Emory St., Wednesday through Sunday from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. and on all days when the Orioles are home until 6 P.M.

Openers ► From Page 1

important baseball intersection where an all-wooden home of the minor-league champion Orioles had burned to the ground 10 years earlier.

Parking would prove cumbersome in that this was our first "game-day" experience. Dad didn't know the secret nooks and crannies of neighborhood parking that he would come to rely on later, and so we inched our way onto the large public lot directly across 33rd Street from Memorial Stadium's main entrance.

Next, as we hurried our way on foot through a sea of cars and across 33rd Street, I had no problem playing student to my father's teaching, as he excitedly introduced me to the magical world of major-league baseball. His first instruction was to have me take in Memorial Stadium's famous World War II inscription. "Time cannot dim the glory of their deeds," it began.

Making our way inside, we hastened up the ramp to our lower reserve seats, first base side. Seeing that ballfield, immaculate in its profound greens and browns, white foul lines, home plate, and batter's box proved an "oh my" moment I'd never forget. Then there was the low murmur of 45,000 fans talking baseball, anticipation high for a shared first experience ... Baltimore hosting a major-league game. Dad pointed out a few of the players we had been reading about in the sports pages, nervously warming in front of the home team's first-base dugout. And there was Vice President Richard Nixon, throwing out the inaugural pitch about 100 feet down in front of us. I expect he was the first famous person I ever saw in person.

The game was exciting, if not slightly confusing to me, still a baseball novice. "Bullet" Bob Turley was on the mound for the home team, pitching to catcher Clint "Scrap-iron" Courtney, who would hit the ballpark's first home run. The Orioles won, 3-1, over the White Sox that day, and Dad and I did bring home a victory for my mom.

Ants!

My father and I followed that first opening day routine to the letter in 1955, except for being interrupted by one of the strangest scenes I have ever experienced. When we got



Lou and Jan Gibbons, Mike's parents (big Orioles fans).

home from school so I could change out of my uniform, we were confronted by an almost-hysterical woman at the front door who slightly resembled my mother. She was screaming, "There are ants, ants, everywhere in the kitchen!" When we got there, the red and yellow floor tiles were covered by a sea of black ants, or at least that's what I thought. Mom was yelling, "Ants," as Dad was saying, "But they have wings." Regardless, and with our opening day clock ticking, we successfully began vacuuming up and sweeping away the "flying ants." Then, it was off to 33rd Street, ants be damned! Dad maneuvered his tan DeSoto as fast as he dared through clogged game traffic and was able to secure parking in one of his

newly discovered neighborhood nooks and crannies. We missed most of the pregame ceremonies but were on hand for the first pitch.

When we got home, my mother gave us the good news ... the "flying ants" had not returned. Which partially offset our bad news; the Orioles had lost to Boston, 7-1. Those ants, by the way, turned out to be termites, which a few years later munched through the joists supporting my parents' den, just feet from the kitchen, causing a massive pest extermination and house remodeling project.

Games to Remember

Every home opener is remarkable in its own right: the advent of a new season, the pregame pageantry, rookies making their major-league debuts, and a chance to cheer on heroes like Big Gus Triandos, Bobby Young, Brooksie, Eddie, Palmer, Cal, Adam Jones and on and on and on.

But a couple of games particularly stand out for me, and I'm certain I am not alone with these choices. In 1989 the Orioles opened against mighty Roger Clemens and his Eastern Division champion Red Sox. Our Birds, coming off an historic 1988 season when they lost 21 in a row to start the campaign, and then finishing with a franchise worst 54-107, were decided underdogs. On a glorious April 3, before 52,000 orange-clad fans, Cal Ripken Jr. knocked a three-run homer off Clemens and then cheered with his teammates as Craig Worthington singled in the game-winner in the 11th. It was the start of the team's famous "Why Not" season, in which they climbed from "worst to almost first" in one remarkable comeback campaign.

For the team, and for me personally, 1991 was another significant

opener. For the Orioles, that April 8 c o n f e s t against the White Sox would be the last at Memorial Stadium. For me, it p r o v e d memorable for a couple of reasons.



The 1991 opener—the tradition continues with wife Sandi and son Michael.

First, the Babe Ruth Museum had sought and received permission from the Orioles to place a motorized panoramic camera on the pitcher's mound to capture the two teams forming along the first and third baselines during pregame introductions. If the 360-degree photo turned out, we planned to do it again for the final game at Memorial Stadium, scheduled for October 6 against the Tigers. The shot worked, and we did indeed capture the postgame celebration at the end of the season.

The '91 opener also marked the first Babe Ruth Museum Opening Day Block Party, which proved successful enough that we repeated the effort in 1992, the Orioles' first home opener at Camden Yards. We've continued the tradition ever since, including this year, when we hosted Block Party No. 31!

And speaking of the first opener at Camden Yards, that has to go down as one of my all-time favorites. The museum had assisted the Orioles during the design and construction of Oriole Park, including co-producing "The Base Ball," an inaugural gala held two nights before the home opener. 4,000 guests were on hand to celebrate the new ballpark, and they were treated to an on-field appearance by actor

Openers ► Page 8



A final photo from the Gibbons photo album: Opening Day taken from his seat.

Openers ▶ From Page 7

James Earl Jones, who read the dedication speech for “Baltimore’s new Field of Dreams,” a speech written by yours truly.

As for that 1992 opener, well, it could not have gone better. We closed our block party a little ahead of time in order to walk the two short blocks to Camden Yards to watch the festivities. The team honored many of the key players who contributed to making the downtown ballpark, with its signature Camden Yards Warehouse, a reality. Dignitaries included Governor William Donald Schaefer, whose passionate vision for Baltimore’s renaissance included Oriole Park at Camden Yards.

Veteran Rick Sutcliffe, an off-season acquisition, was on the hill for the home team, and he pitched a masterful 2-0 shutout for the victory. As the oldest opening day starter in club history at 35, Sutcliffe held Cleveland to five hits. The Orioles scored both runs off loser Charles Nagy in the fifth inning when Chris Hoiles doubled home Sam Horn and Bill Ripken squeezed Leo Gomez safely across the plate! The Indians’ Paul Sorrento collected the first base-knock in the new ballpark with a second-inning single. Two days later, Sorrento hit the first home run at Oriole Park. That ball is on display at the Babe Ruth Museum!

In the End

I will close by offering you a few opening day factoids. The Orioles compiled a 24-14 home-opener record at Memorial Stadium and have gone 21-10 at Camden Yards. Boston (11), New York (8), and Kansas City (8) have been the most frequent opening day opponents. And this year’s opener against Milwaukee proved to be the first time a National League team has provided opening day competition.

The tradition started by my mom and dad in 1954 has carried over today, as my wife and son have been to every opening day with me except when Michael was serving his country in Iraq. Here’s hoping we can keep it going for many, many years to come.

Mike Gibbons is a director at-large of the BBRC and director emeritus of the Babe Ruth Museum. All photos in this article are from his family photo collection.



President ▶ From Page 1

spend money, there is new life about to be breathed back into Charm City.

I encourage chapter members and baseball fans everywhere to come to SABR 50. This is not a members-only country club event. It is open to everyone, and it will celebrate baseball history in Maryland which goes back to the 1860s. This city and state have offered a lot over the generations, and it is time to commemorate and celebrate the contributions this region has made to our great game.

Our chapter will continue to have monthly meetings, and we look to co-hosting another minor-league outing later in the summer. But the focus right now is preparing for SABR 50. For those members who attend every year (I have only been to four myself) this event will be something a long time coming. Time to catch up with old friends, make some new ones, and enjoy the company of fellow baseball enthusiasts as we learn more about the game together.

Reach out with any questions. Looking forward to it!

—Peter Coolbaugh

SABR Attendees See Hopkins Win 2

Members of the Babe Ruth Chapter attended a double-header between Johns Hopkins and Franklin and Marshall (F&M) on Saturday, April 16. Those in attendance were Jim Considine, Patrick Brown and his wife Karen, Rich Ottone and his brother Vincent, Bruce Brown, and John Burbridge.

The first game saw F&M take a quick 3-0 lead, only to see Hopkins tie the score in the bottom of the second. F&M then hit three home runs in the top of the third to take a 6-3 lead. In the bottom of the sixth, Matthew Cooper hit a grand slam for Hopkins, giving the Blue Jays a 7-6 lead. The SABR members were then treated to an inside-the-park home run by Shawn Steuerer in the bottom of the seventh, lengthening the lead to 8-6. The lead held as Hopkins pitcher Matthew Dillard hurled a complete game, retiring twenty of the last 21 batters.

In the second game, Hopkins fell behind 2-0 in the top of the first, but stormed back behind six home runs to win, 13-6. The sweep left, Johns Hopkins was one game back of F&M in race for the Centennial Conference.

We appreciated the cooperation of the Johns Hopkins Athletic Department, as we had seats reserved and were acknowledged on the scoreboard during the first game. Several of the members in attendance commented on the need to do this again next year. Good luck to Baltimore’s Johns Hopkins baseball team as it pursues the Centennial Crown.

—John Burbridge



Clock ▶ From Page 3

had a count of two balls and two strikes; he stepped out of the batter's box, and, after a few seconds, the clock operator rang the bell, indicating a penalty of a strike for taking too long. As a result, the batter struck out and the game ended." However, he added, clock violations have decreased markedly over the years.

Hitchner, who attended the first tournament because his wife got tickets from the bank where she worked, has seen the tournament's popularity wane.

"Fans came to support their home teams due to having sons, grandsons, husbands, and boyfriends on the team playing. With radio and newspapers the media of the day, coverage was widely popular. Today, Facebook is about the only mode of getting the word out about the tournament," he said. "Local newspapers seem less interested. Whenever special guests were included to appear, there might be some media coverage, but less likely in most recent years."

Those special guests have included Mickey Mantle, Joe DiMaggio, Willie Mays, and Pete Rose, as well as former Phillies. "Willie Mays gave one of his Gold Gloves to the tournament and it was placed in the adjacent All Sports Museum of Southern New Jersey in exchange for two baskets of peaches and plums!"

This year's tournament runs May 22-29. (<https://bridgetoninvitationallbaseballtournament.sportngin.com/home>) for photos.

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Email correspondence with Dave Hitchner.

https://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/33767554/pitch-clock-shaving-20-minutes-minor-league-games-scoring-nearly-same



Bobby Schantz (left), 1952 MVP and one of the oldest living players, was a guest at last year's tournament. Shown with Dave Hitchner.

When SABR Came to Towson: 1982

It's been 40 years since the SABR convention has been in Baltimore.

In 1982, SABR 12 convened at Towson State University, technically in the 'burbs, but only by a mile and half. SABR blocked rooms in a dorm, and meals were available in the student union. It was the second straight year SABR went collegiate, and five of the six conventions between 1981 and 1986 were held on college campuses with dorm accommodations and dining hall food.

The February 1982 issue of The SABR Bulletin announced: "A COMMITMENT HAS BEEN MADE to hold the 1982 National Meeting at Towson State University on the northern fringe of Baltimore on June 25-27. This is a very nice campus area and is only 15-20 minutes north of Memorial Stadium. The main attraction, however, is economic, as the meal costs are moderate and the room accommodations in the Tower Residence Hall are remarkably, even recessionally, reasonable (\$13 per night for a single and \$16 for a double)."

Roznovsky ▶ From Page 5

Baltimore traded him on April 11, 1969 to the Phillies in exchange for John Sullivan and minor-league pitcher Anthony Giresi. Even though he stayed on the Phillies roster all season, he backed up Mike Ryan and Dave Watkins and appeared just twice as a catcher for a total of four innings. In 13 games, he had three hits in 13 at-bats, along with 4 strikeouts, 1 walk and 1 RBI, for a .231 batting (and slugging) average. His last major-league appearance was as a pinch hitter for pitcher John Boozer on October 1, 1969. He grounded out against Reggie Cleveland, who was making his debut with the Cardinals. On October 3, 1969, Roznovsky was sold to the Phillies' Eugene (Oregon) Class AAA farm team (as was John Boozer), but 1969 turned out to be Roznovsky's (and Boozer's) last season in professional baseball. Over five major-league seasons, Roznovsky played in a total of 205 games, with a .218/.273/.281 slash line. He had 99 hits, with 15 doubles, one triple and four home runs. He drove in 38 runs and scored 22.

The day after the back-to-back pinch-hit homers, Roznovsky was the subject of a story, published nationwide, by Gordon Beard of the Associated Press which featured the line "The unusual is not unusual for a guy like Vic Roznovsky." The article points out that in his next two times up in the August 26 game, Orioles manager Hank Bauer had Roznovsky bunt a base runner into scoring position, to which Roznovsky joked after the game, "Can you believe that? I guess Hank figured I had hit my homer for the year." Considering that it turned out to be the last home run Roznovsky would hit in the majors, maybe Bauer was on to something!

Trivia Answer

Name	Number	Year(s)
Shortstop		
Luis Aparicio	2	1964, 1966
Mark Belanger	8	1969, 1971, 1973-78
Cal Ripken Jr.	2	1991-92
J.J. Hardy	3	2012-14
Catcher		
Matt Weiters	2	2011-12
Pitcher		
Jim Palmer	4	1976-79
Mike Mussina	4	1996-99
Third Base		
Brooks Robinson	16	1960-75
Manny Machado	2	2013, 2015
First Base		
Eddie Murray	3	1982-84
Rafael Palmeiro	2	1997-98
Second Base		
Davey Johnson	3	1969-71
Bobby Grich	4	1973-76
Roberto Alomar	2	1996, 1998
Outfield		
Paul Blair	8	1967, 1969-75
Adam Jones	4	2009, 2012-14
Nick Markakis	2	2011, 2014

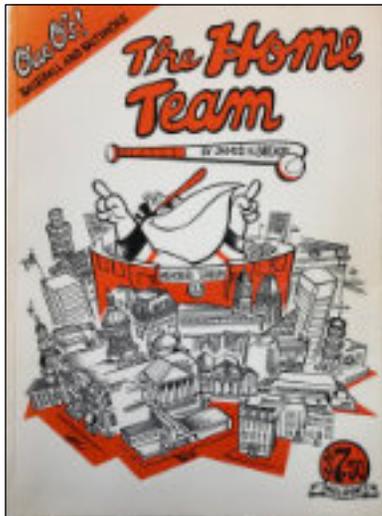


Bready ▶ From Page 4

and *News American*. Bready was always eager to learn more about the personal side of baseball players' lives – what made them tick and what obstacles they had to overcome in life. He greeted any new photo, scorebook program or booklet related to baseball with glee, especially Baltimore items.

Bready collected thousands of photos and baseball memorabilia that he used in his four editions (1958, 1971, 1979, and 1984) of the self-published *The Home Team* that were sold at Memorial Stadium over the years. In a review of the 1958 edition for *The Sunday Sun*, Orioles broadcaster Ernie Harwell wrote: "Bready has not numbed us with numbers. His text is written with wit and erudition—an unbeatable combination."

Bready's various editions of *The Home Team* began with the fascinating story of the earliest known professional baseball



clubs in Baltimore in the 1870s, the John McGraw-led NL Orioles in the 1890s, the short-lived American League Orioles of 1901-1902, and the minor-league Orioles from 1903 through 1953. For Bready, the happiest chapter began in 1954 with the rebirth of the AL Orioles from the St. Louis Browns. All four editions are loaded with historical stories and photos of professional baseball in Baltimore. His *Baseball in Baltimore*, published in 1998 by the Johns Hopkins University Press, is a more

streamlined version of *The Home Team*, covering professional baseball in Baltimore up to the new major-league Orioles in 1954. He left the story of the modern AL Orioles to be told by a future writer.

Bready discovered valuable information about Baltimore's No. 1 contribution to baseball, Babe Ruth, during those many days reading microfilm and sometimes during interviews. He interviewed Otto Knabe, the 1914 Baltimore Terrapins player-manager, in Philadelphia in his retirement. Bready wrote in *Baseball in Baltimore*: "One day early in 1914, Otto Knabe opened a letter from a local bartender. 'You should give my son a tryout,' the message was; 'my son is a terrific pitcher and would win lots of games for your Federal League club.'" Knabe gave George Herman Ruth Sr. the new league's "standard response that the Terrapins were not a growth team, [rather] they were hiring proven major leaguers." Knabe surely regretted within a month or so that he had not given George Jr. a tryout and signed him. Across the street from the Federal Leaguers' Terrapin Park, at Oriole Park, Ruth at 19 was fast becoming the best left-handed starting pitcher in the International League for Jack Dunn's Orioles. Bready interviewed Charles L. Schanberger, Baltimore's 1914 correspondent to *The Sporting News*, who was alive and living in Pikesville in 1966. Schanberger was the official scorer for the first regular-season professional game Ruth played for the 1914 Orioles on April 23 at Oriole Park and recalled those heady days for Bready, showing him the scorebook that held that game's details. Schanberger gave it to Bready for safekeeping, and Bready relayed it to the Babe Ruth Museum after it opened.

Bready wrote an article, "The Babe," for the 1969 Baltimore Orioles yearbook that featured Ruth's four home runs for the Red Sox in an exhibition game vs. the minor-league Orioles on April 18, 1919, at Oriole Park, and two more the following day when Ruth pitched. Bready was a proponent of the push

in Baltimore to restore Ruth's birthplace, his mother Katie's parents' (Mr. and Mrs. Pius Schamberger) rowhouse at 216 Emory Street. Bready's article alerted readers to the commemorative coins that were being sold in 1969 for \$1, a fundraiser to help restore the Schambergers' home and three adjoining rowhouses at 212, 214 and 218 Emory Street.

Lucky for me, Bready agreed to meet me on August 12, 2000, at the Babe Ruth Museum to talk about my interest in writing a book about the 1966 Orioles. He told me that the Orioles' 1966 season was the pinnacle of baseball in Baltimore in the 20th century and wholeheartedly supported my project. When I gave him a half-dozen ears of sweet corn from Calvert County, he exclaimed, "Oh boy, Southern Maryland sweet corn!" Years later, he and I fantasized about what it would feel like to enter a relative's old attic in Baltimore and find a Babe Ruth "rookie card" issued by the *Baltimore News* in 1914, and Bready quickly blurted, "Yippeel!"

He encouraged me to read H. L. Mencken's books, *Happy Days*, *Newspaper Days*, and *Heathen Days*, and Mark Kram's "A Wink at a Homely Girl" in *Sports Illustrated* (October 10, 1966) to better know my hometown of Baltimore. I have happily read all three books several times, along with many of Mencken's other works. Bready pointed me to many sportswriters, columnists, players, and stadium ushers I could interview to jumpstart research for my 1966 Orioles book that was published in 2006. In 2009, I told him I was planning to write a book about the 1969-1971 Orioles, and he replied, "I want to read it!" No more words of encouragement were needed.

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Mark Millikin is the author of The Glory of the 1966 Orioles and Baltimore and The Joy and Heartache of Our 1960s Music, published by St. Johann Press. He is writing a book about the 1969-1971 Orioles.

1982 ▶ From Page 9

When the convention began, on Friday June 25, the Orioles were 35-31, 6½ games out in the AL East. The SABR game was Saturday, and the O's beat the Tigers 4-1, with Dennis Martinez besting Milt Wilcox in a brisk 2:33; both pitchers went the distance; attendance was 31,859. The O's swept the SABR weekend part of the four-game series (they lost Thursday's opener) and were 38-31 when the convention ended.

Towson State became Towson University in 1997.

The Orioles played their last game at Memorial Stadium in 1991, and it was razed in 2001.

