



Umpire and Rules Committee

"It ain't nothin' until we call it"

Winter 2002



Word from the Crew Chief

Welcome to the new Umpires and Rules Committee newsletter. As I have said before I am honored to lead you, but want to stress this is your committee, not mine. I hope that all of you will contribute to make URC a fulfilling part of your SABR experience.

In keeping with the last sentence, I want to announce some initiatives. First, URC will have its own internet forum, similar to that of SABR-L and other committees. This will hopefully facilitate communication and give us a point of contact with fellow members. Instructions on how to join are contained in these pages.

Second, I want to encourage contributions by members. The best way to do this is to open these pages up to your research. Please let me know what you want to see. It is most difficult to produce a newsletter as a solo effort. I included Operation Catfish not as an ego trip, but to fill space.

Third, I would like the committee to begin thinking about a biography project. My thoughts are these biographies ought to be thumbnail sketches should eventually be published in this newsletter, or possibly some other publication. I would appreciate direction from you on this. Understand the Deadball Committee is already involved in such a project. We have to be content to keep it internal to SABR or find some other avenue for distribution.

If you have thoughts on this or any other projects, please feel free to contact me all of my contact information in the SABR Membership Directory is correct.

URC Internet Forum

With the kind assistance of Rod Nelson, the Umpire and Rules Committee has its own web forum. Joining is simple.

Go to

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SABRumpires/>

This address is all one line for those of you unfamiliar with list serves. Rules and how to send messages are on the page. One thing I like about it is you cannot attach files to the messages, which will cut down the chance of spreading computer viruses. Any SABR member is free to participate.

Member List

Here is a list of members of the committee, based on the records on hand.

Dave Anderson, William Atkison, Robert Bailey, Jim Bard, Joey Baretta, Greg Beston, Dennis Bingham, Jeff Bobin, Richard Carletti, Mike Carter, Richard Cohen, Greg Crouse, Clyde Cripe, Stefan Csik, Charles Dautel, Ted DiTullio, Reid Duffy, Dr. Michael Gallichio, Larry Gerlach, Steven Gietshier, Jerry Gregory, Milton Gustafson, Tim Hannan, Joe Heitkamp, Bill Himmelmann, Denver Howard, Tom Hufford, Steve Johnson, Jim Kearney, Mark Maddox, Robert McAfee, John Matthew IV, Leonard Miller, James Miner, David Nemeec, Fred Nichols, Phyllis Otto, Pete Palmer, Doug Pappas, John Pardon, Claudia Perry, J. Fred Schaak, Fred Schuld, John Schwartz, Lee Shedroff, Tom Shieber, Jerry Sulecki, Brad Sullivan, Dean Sullivan, Gene Sunnen, David Vincent, Charles Wilson III, Walter Wilson, Larry Young.

You can contact fellow committee members through the SABR membership directory.



Operation Catfish
By
Dave Anderson

As some of you know, I have been involved in a great deal of research on the life and work of Bill Klem, a man universally recognized as among the great umpires in baseball history.

For years Klem's biography in the Hall of Fame program made the claim, "he umpired exclusively behind the plate his first 16 years because of his superior ability on balls and strikes."

Hired in 1905, Klem was among five umpires hired by the National League, so he worked his share of solo games but also rotated between plate and bases when he had a partner.

This pattern persisted throughout most of his career. The myth of his exclusive home plate work was tough to disprove, but once evidence was shown to the Hall of Fame, it was agreed to change the wording of the biographical sketch.

When researching this angle of Klem's life, I noticed Klem never mentioned such a claim. He claimed to be among the first umpires to use hand signals, but never claimed such grueling duty.

A possible source of the myth may be Klem's obituary written by Fred Lieb in *The Sporting News* of September 26, 1951. Lieb writes that Klem worked exclusively behind the plate for 16 years, primarily to help fellow umpire Bob Emslie. Lieb claimed Klem's offer to help Emslie added nine years to Emslie's career. Klem and Emslie worked a majority of games together during the mid-teens, and Klem did a great deal of plate work but Emslie would spell him from time to time.

That is a short summary of the work I have done on Klem, if you wish more detail, let me know and I will send you a copy of the presentation I did at the Milwaukee Convention.

Research Corner

In order to further research efforts of this committee, I would like to steer you to some sources of information. First, our own Reid Duffy has an index of umpire articles, which may help in your personal efforts. He can be contacted from the Membership Directory.

SABR member Eric Enders of Cooperstown can also be a big help. For a reasonable fee, he can retrieve information and articles from the Hall of Fame Library. Eric's company is Triple E Productions, 19 Beech Street, Cooperstown, NY 13326, (607)547-1871 or www.ericenders.com.

Another research source is a gentleman from Fort Wayne named Denver Howard, 6440 Fairfield, #110, Fort Wayne, IN 46807. He has amassed a wonderful index of umpire related articles that may be of help to many of you.

Finally, REFEREE Magazine, the official publication of the National Association of Sports Officials is a wonderful source of information to active officials and those interested in the profession. REFEREE can be contacted P.O. Box 161, Franksville, WI 53126.

