



EMIL ROTHE CHICAGO CHAPTER

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022 • VOLUME 13 • EDITION 1

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Above: On Saturday, November 20, 2021, Bill Pearch (back row, far left) joined the Schott-Pelican Chapter of SABR at the Holiday Inn Westbank Tower in Gretna, LA. They discussed the Philadelphia Athletics of the 1920s and 1930s and enjoyed a trivia challenge.

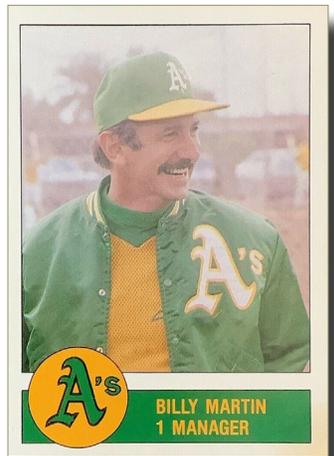
THE OTHER BILLY BALL

BY: JASON SCHWARTZ



When most fans think of “Billy Ball” in 1980 they think of Billy Martin’s Oakland A’s. Under Martin’s leadership the team improved 29 games and jumped from seventh to second in the American League West. This brand of Billy Ball was characterized by aggressiveness on the base paths, pushing starting pitchers to their breaking point, and approaching every game with maximum effort and intensity.

Here in Chicago we had another brand of Billy Ball going in the person of Cubs first baseman Bill Buckner. Not yet an All-Star, Buckner nonetheless entered the 1980 season with a .291 career batting mark and a well-deserved reputation as one of the game’s top contact hitters. Remarkably, Buckner had never once struck out more than twice in a game and had a per 162 game average of only 29 whiffs. In his three seasons as a Cub to date he struck out 69 times. And that’s total, not per season!



As Cubs fans know, 1980 would prove to be Buckner’s best season ever at the plate, pacing the National League with a .324 average and swatting 41 doubles. His hot start to the season saw him bat .383 for the month of April while striking out a total of ... are you ready for this? ... zero times! Who does this?? In my lifetime maybe Ichiro, Tony Gwynn, and Rod Carew.

Imagine then the outrage in the “Baseball in the 80s” [Facebook group](#) when [Craig Judges](#) dared to characterize Buckner’s career—2,715 hits, .289 batting average, and all—as below average! Naturally the entire argument hinged on relatively modern analytics like WAR and OPS+, which only compounded the outrage of the army of commenters. Even I got in on the action, questioning whether OPS/OPS+, which treat strikeouts and

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BY JASON A. SCHWARTZ

Four cards, one player. Can you guess who?



WHAT THE HALL?

SHINING A POSITIVE LIGHT ON THE 2022 HALL OF FAME BALLOT

BY: JOE BOOK

The Baseball Writers' Association of America will reveal the results of their 2022 Baseball Hall of Fame vote, and the buildup to the announcement will be more intense than ever. This year's ballot includes users, abusers and boozers, but the good deeds done by the candidates are rarely aired. MLB partners with quite a few national charities and initiatives, but the work done by individual players goes largely unrecognized when it comes time for ballot deliberation.

The players listed below might not have the career numbers to earn election this year, but they certainly check the character box on the voters' consideration list.

Mark Buehrle – The former White Sox star has been an active supporter of animal shelters and other animal welfare causes for many years. Among other initiatives, Buehrle is an Ambassador with Athletes For Animals, which raises and grants money to rescue and shelter groups across North America.

Jake Peavy – The 2007 NL Cy Young Award winner started the Peavy Family Foundation, which helps underserved and at-risk communities across the United States, but recently turned its focus to his hometown of Mobile, Alabama. The foundation offers programs that teach children financial skills, position underprivileged children as apprentices to professional artists, and engage in music mentorship to help students understand and participate in the music industry.

Scott Rolen – Charity work has been part of Rolen's life for several decades. He created the E5 Foundation more than 20 years ago, and established a 115-acre recreation site in southern Indiana, which offers camps and sports experiences for children and families dealing with hardship or illness.



Top: National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (Bill Pearch); Insets (top to bottom): Mark Buehrle (Ron Vesely/MLB Photos via Getty Images); Jake Peavy (FriarWire); Scott Rolen (Brad Mangin/MLB Photos via Getty Images); Jimmy Rollins (Sporting News / Getty Images); Mark Teixeira (Lisa Blumenfeld/Getty Images)

Jimmy Rollins – The 2007 NL MVP is the founder of the Rollins Family Foundation, which supports children in need in the Philadelphia area. Rollins partnered with the Saint Francis Veterinary Center in New Jersey to open the Johari & Jimmy Rollins Center for Animal Rehabilitation in 2013, and was selected as the 2014 Roberto Clemente Award recipient for his service to the community.

Mark Teixeira – Tex began supporting communities with scholarships more than 20 years ago, and continues his charity work through many different initiatives. Teixeira recently became the face of the Stand Strong For Men's Health campaign, and was selected as the 2018 Heisman Humanitarian for his work with DREAM, a New York non-profit that enriches the lives of inner-city youth. 🐾



PITTSBURGH'S FEDERAL LEAGUERS NEEDED EXTRAS TO DEFEAT A SEMIPRO SQUAD

BY: BILL PEARCH

With his team tied atop the Federal League standings, Pittsburgh Rebels player-manager Ennis Telfair "Rebel" Oakes faced a dilemma. After enduring a 10-5 loss to the Chicago Whales at Weeghman Park on Sunday, June 6, 1915, Oakes' team had a week-long hiatus dubbed as "an odd turn of the schedule" by the Kansas City Star. Oakes pondered a strategy to keep his players sharp while they remained idle from regulation play. He arranged a series of exhibition games against teams of disparate talent along the Rebels' route to Handlan's Park and their next official game on the road against the St. Louis Terriers.

On Monday, June 7, the Rebels were knee-deep in the 1915 Federal League pennant race, tied with the Kansas City Packers. They were also in ankle-deep mud squaring off against the F.L. Smiths, a semiprofessional outfit from Dwight, Illinois.

Known primarily for the Keeley Institute's unorthodox treatment of alcoholism, Dwight was the home of a baseball team owned and sponsored by Col. Frank L. Smith. Smith's legacy is complicated. He served one term as a congressman and was chairman of the Illinois Commerce Commission. Following his election as an Illinois senator, Smith never assumed the role due to evidence of campaign fraud and corruption. At the time, he was a local banker with aspirations of earning the Republican nomination for Illinois' 1916 gubernatorial election. As a devoted baseball fan, Col. Smith had a knack for attracting professional teams to his hometown's West Side Park. Located approximately 60 miles southwest of Chicago, Dwight fell firmly within Oakes' sights.

That afternoon, despite a fifty-cent price of admission, the biting wind and soggy conditions limited the crowd to a spattering of enthusiastic rooters. In its issue the following morning, the Pittsburgh Post noted that "the field was three inches deep with mud" which perhaps motivated Oakes to rest most of his regulars. Facing a squad of semipro, he assigned pitching duties to Charles Bunn "Bunny" Hearn. Hearn, a 24-year-old lefthander who bounced around various professional ranks since 1910, would oppose a 27-year-old righthander determined to sign another pro contract. Eddie Higgins, a Dwight native who enjoyed a fleeting stint with Roger Bresnahan's St. Louis Cardinals in 1909 and 1910, handled mound duties for the locals.

Higgins demonstrated flashes of his days dominating the Three-I League as a rookie starting pitcher with the 1908 Bloomington (Illinois) Bloomers, but shoddy defense—ten errors—proved problematic. He blanked the Rebels until Steve Yerkes, starting second baseman and Rebels regular, crossed the plate courtesy of two singles and an error in the third inning.

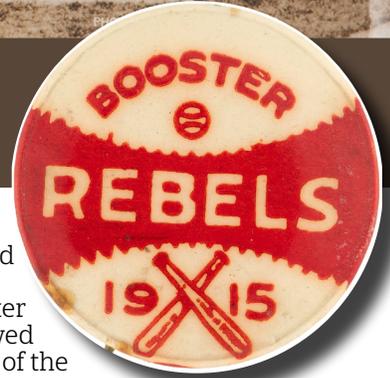
Hearn's last Federal League action came in a seven-inning losing effort against the Brooklyn Tip-Tops on May 26. Was he hamstrung by the adverse conditions? Maybe he underestimated

his opponents as he surrendered five early runs with two in the first and three in the second. After composing himself, Hearn allowed an additional run in the bottom of the fourth inning.

Despite a five-run deficit, Oakes refused to make substitutions and jeopardize his regulars. Yerkes whittled away at the semipro's lead and clubbed a two-run home run off of Higgins in the fifth inning. The F.L. Smiths maintained a 6-3 advantage while both teams hung zeroes on the scoreboard during the sixth and seventh innings. Third-string catcher Orié Kerlin, who debuted with the Rebels one day earlier against the Whales, singled off of Higgins. When third baseman Jimmie Savage stepped to the plate, he singled and plated Kerlin to make the score 6-4.

Three outs away from an improbable defeat, left fielder Cy Rheam singled to open the ninth inning. First baseman Hugh Bradley knotted the score at 6-6 when he hammered a Higgins fastball for a mammoth home run over the left-center field wall. The Rebels held the F.L. Smiths scoreless in the bottom of the ninth to force extra innings, and neither team plated a run in the 10th.

With two outs in the top of the 11th inning, Lewis reached first due to an errant throw. He proceeded to steal second base, then advanced to third on an O'Connor single. With Kerlin at



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TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME?

BY: SCOTT LINDHOLM

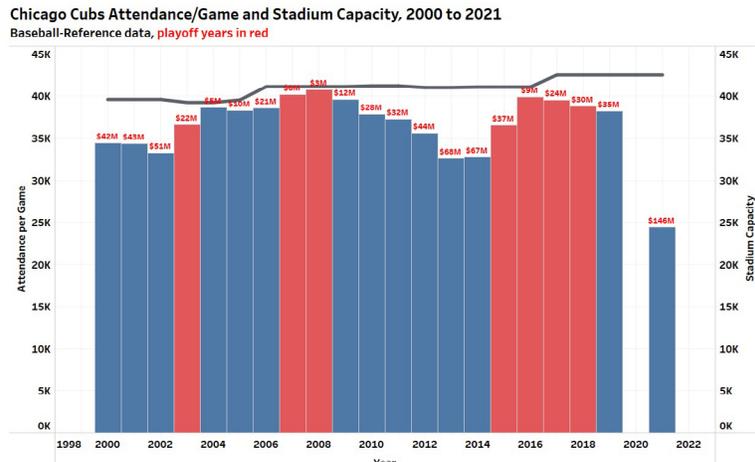
Baseball attendance has been on a downward slide for the past ten years or so. The highest total attendance in baseball history was in 2007, with just under 80 million in total league attendance. That number had dropped to around 69 million by 2019. Since the pandemic hit, all conclusions about attendance have to be rethought.

Historically, there are five teams that have proven they can generate home crowds come heck or high water—the Yankees, Dodgers, Cubs, Cardinals and Red Sox. Since they moved from Candlestick Park, the Giants were trying to reach that status, but they dropped off after their last World Series win in 2014. It must be stated that these conclusions are only valid since around 2000, and that for all the teams except the Cubs, all have been fairly successful in that time period.

The question is whether the Cubs or White Sox still have the ability to pull in fans like they used to. They are two completely different teams with two completely different fan bases going

Top: Fans watch the White Sox defeat the Houston Astros during Game 3 of the 2021 ALDS; Inset: White Sox and Cubs fans enjoy a game at Wrigley Field on August 7, 2021. (Photos: Bill Pearch)

in two completely different directions. In 2021, the Cubs drew over 24,000 a game, which was seventh in MLB. They weren't able to draw full crowds until mid-June, but even if we adjust for that, they drew just over 31,500 in the fifty games they were able to have capacity crowds. That's below their low-water mark of 32,500 in 2013 that prompted them to solicit silent partners for a cash infusion. This chart show Cubs average attendance since 2000:



GET PUBLISHED!

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

PATENT PORTAL: BASEBALL BAT WITH TRAINING WEIGHT

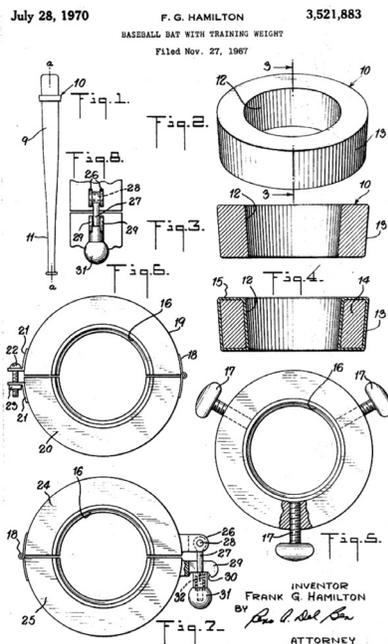
BY: JOHN RACANELLI



On August 3, 1967, the Yankees traded catcher Elston Howard to the first-place Boston Red Sox, ending a tenure in New York that saw Howard make 12 All-Star teams, win two Gold Gloves, and be awarded the 1963 American League MVP. Howard's Major League career had been played exclusively with the Yankees, but for an 18-game stint as a teenaged right fielder with Buck O'Neil's 1948 Kansas City Monarchs (NAL).

Howard had batted just .196 for New York in 1967 and was even worse for Boston as he hit just .147 over the final 42 games of the season. Howard's focus—perhaps—may have been elsewhere in 1967 as he was on the verge of introducing a revolutionary device, one that would change the on-deck circle forever.

Shortly after the Red Sox season ended in 1967 with a disappointing World Series loss to the Cardinals, Howard and two co-inventors based in northeast New Jersey filed a patent application on November 27 for an invention called the "Baseball Bat with Training Weight." Dubbed a "doughnut" by Howard, the plastic-coated cast iron ring weighed about one and a half pounds. It sought to replace lead-filled wooden warmup bats and had the advantage of offering the batter practice swings with his own bat and handle construction. The device was also touted for its strength and conditioning use in "developing the wrist and forearm and the snap of the wrist of the batter."



Prior to the 1968 season, Howard was informed by manager Dick Williams that the Red Sox wanted him around mostly to work with the pitchers and "weren't too worried about how much hitting [he] did." As he geared up for 1968 season, Howard made the rounds to other spring training camps in Florida to introduce his invention to the other teams. All were interested except the Mets—who refused to accept the supply until the plastic coating was changed from red to blue.

By April 1968, the "Elston Howard Bat Weight" was advertised for sale at Bernard's Sport Center in northeast New Jersey. Within months the device was being sold by sporting good stores all over the United States. The doughnut remains a hit and is still found in the on-deck circles of baseball diamonds at all levels. ♡

Sources:

- United States Patent No. 3,521,883, issued July 28, 1970.
- Cliff Keane, "Howard's 'Bat Weight' Proposal to Help Hitters," *Boston Globe*, January 5, 1968: 27.
- Tom Kelly, "Cards Roar into Spring on Paper," *Tampa Bay Times*, March 10, 1968: 43.
- Bernard's Sport Center advertisement, *The (Ridgewood, New Jersey) Sunday News*, April 7, 1968: 120.
- Jerry's Sport Shop advertisement, *The (Belton, Missouri) Star-Herald*, May 2, 1968: 17.
- www.baseball-reference.com

5

Elston Howard's

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CHICAGO RANDOM TANDEM



RYAN TEPERA & CRAIG KIMBREL

Ryan Tepera and Craig Kimbrel are the only pitchers to log at least one save in the same season for both the Chicago White Sox and Chicago Cubs (2021).

Courtesy of David Marran (aka @SoxNerd on Twitter)

**Have a sweet Chicago Random Tandem?
Send it to j.racanelli@hotmail.com!**

VISIT US ONLINE - SABRCHICAGO.COM



HEINEMANN PARK / PELICAN STADIUM

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Home of the New Orleans Pelicans from 1915 through 1957, this marker stands at the former site of Heinemann Park / Pelican Stadium in New Orleans, Louisiana at the corner of Carrollton and Tulane avenues (29.968666, -90.106595). The ballpark also hosted the New Orleans Black Pelicans, New Orleans Creoles (featuring Toni Stone), and the New Orleans–St. Louis Stars, who played home games there 1940–1941. Additionally, the ballpark served as the spring training site for the Cleveland Guardians and Boston Red Sox. 📍

If you go out of your way to visit old ballparks, historical markers, statues, or gravesites we would love to hear about it! Send your experiences and photos to j.racanelli@hotmail.com!



Top: Heinemann Park historical marker (Photo: Bill Pearch); Inset: Heinemann Park sat on the corner of Tulane and Carrollton avenues until 1957. (Photo: NOLA.com / Historic New Orleans Collection)

CHAPTER IN-PERSON LUNCH

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 2022 - NOON

Pints Elmhurst
112 S. York Street
Elmhurst, IL 60126

Have questions? Contact Bill Pearch via email at wcpearch@comcast.net



CLICK HERE TO PLAY
CAN YOU NAME THE MLB
PLAYERS WITH AT LEAST
100 HR HIT IN ONE STADIUM?

SOME ARTWORK PROVIDED BY:

Vecteezy

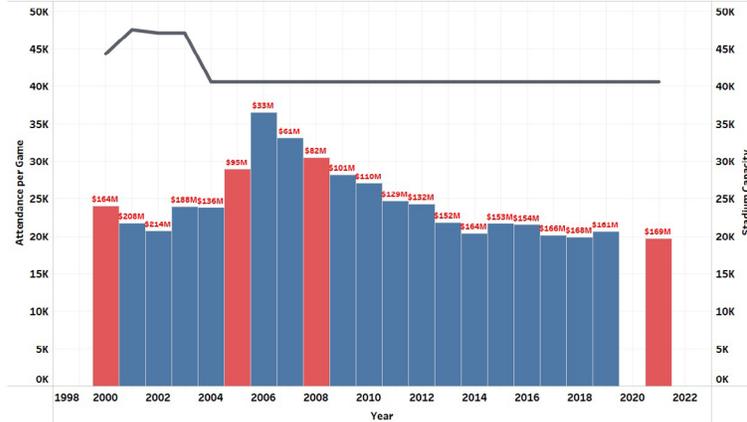
CUBS/SOX ATTENDANCE (CONTINUED)

There's a number I play with shown in this chart, which is my guess at how much revenue teams lose by not having full crowds. In the Cubs case in 2021, that number was around \$146 million.

The White Sox couldn't have capacity crowds until late June, and their fans showed up like they usually do—tepidly. They drew just over 32,000 in that first game on June 25th, and finished the season with an average home attendance of just under 28,000 in the games where they could allow full crowds. For the White Sox, this isn't bad, and their overall average attendance of almost 20,000 was good for 13th in MLB. This chart shows White Sox average attendance since 2000:

Chicago White Sox Attendance/Game and Stadium Capacity, 2000 to 2021

Baseball-Reference data, **playoff years in red**



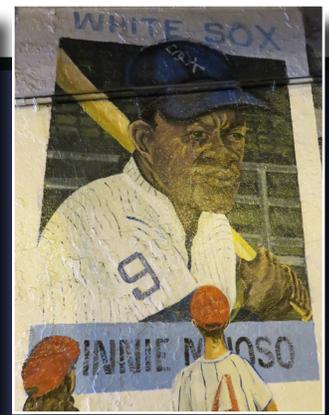
But we're discussing a climate in which avid fans hadn't been able to attend games for almost one-and-a-half years, and it appears they still chose not to attend. The reasons are many—the Cubs essentially gave up on the season on July 31st, health issues are still around, but the White Sox had an exciting team that was among the best in the AL, and fans still didn't turn out.

As the labor negotiations for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement continue to slog along (expect very little progress prior to mid-February), these are realities teams and players are going to have to acknowledge. Until fans start coming back to stadiums, there's going to be a hit to revenues. How dramatic remains to be seen, since television money is the primary source of revenue these days, but every fan who doesn't attend a game costs teams a good chunk of change.

Normal in baseball terms is in the process of being redefined. The CBA negotiations were always going to be ugly, but they really couldn't have come at a worse time. Whether the attendance issues of both Chicago teams were the result of the peculiar events of the past two years, or are instead indicative of a new trend of decreased attendance, can't be answered yet. But the signs don't look good. 🍌

TELL YOUR BASEBALL STORY

We all have great baseball stories. Go ahead and share some with your fellow SABR Chicago Chapter members. Contact Bill Pearch, newsletter editor, via email at wpearch@comcast.net to schedule a brief interview.



TOP TEN: MOST CAREER HBP FOR CHICAGO PLAYERS

| RANK | BATTER | TOTAL | TEAM |
|------|----------------|-------|-----------|
| 1 | ANTHONY RIZZO | 165 | CUBS |
| 2 | MINNIE MINOSO | 145 | WHITE SOX |
| 3 | FRANK CHANCE | 137 | CUBS |
| 4 | NELLIE FOX | 125 | WHITE SOX |
| 5 | JOSE ABREU | 105* | WHITE SOX |
| 6 | PAUL KONERKO | 101 | WHITE SOX |
| 7 | SHERM LOLLAR | 101 | WHITE SOX |
| 8 | KRIS BRYANT | 86 | CUBS |
| 9 | CARLTON FISK | 84 | WHITE SOX |
| 10 | CARLOS QUENTIN | 78 | WHITE SOX |

*STILL ACTIVE WITH WHITE SOX

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

PITTSBURGH REBELS (CONTINUED)

the plate, Lewis and O'Connor attempted a double steal. Higgins tried to nail O'Connor at second base. Knight, Dwight's shortstop, fired the ball home to nail the lead runner but his throw was low and skipped off of home plate and landed in the crowd. Both baserunners scored giving Pittsburgh its first lead of the game. Hearn sealed the F.L. Smiths' fate in the bottom of the 11th inning to win, 8-6.

Although he benched a majority of his star performers, Oakes awoke to criticism from his home media. On June 8, the Pittsburgh Press chastised the manager's plan noting that "the chances were too great to be taken with a club fighting for first place" in suboptimal playing conditions and the slightest mishap "might put one player out of the game for the remainder of the season." Armed with that knowledge, Oakes' team packed up and headed to Morris and Springfield, Illinois to close out the week. 🍌

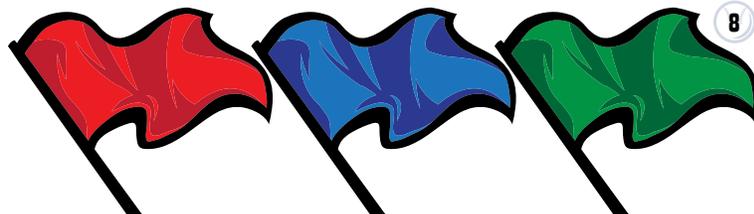
This article originally appeared in [Here's the Pitch: the IBWAA Newsletter on November 15, 2021.](#)

SCOREBOARD PUZZLER



No baseball? No problem. Let's test your scoreboard identification skills as the regular season winds down. From the clues in this photo, can you successfully guess the ballpark and the exact date of the game? You may need to zoom in. Some of the clues might be deceiving. Good luck.

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



8

ZEMAN'S ZINGERS

BY: DAVE ZEMAN

There may be a baseball lockout, but our latest round of trivia questions will fill the void. Fans of *Jeopardy!* will be familiar with before and after categories. For these questions, two answers are combined to make one correct response. Ready? Play ball!

1. Saved 37 games for the 2011 Mariners / One of Wilson's 14 points
2. Dodgers 100 RBI man with two MLB brothers / E.T. friend
3. Literary simian / Batter with 600 2B, 100 3B and 300 HR
4. Early triple crown winner / Super Bowl XL MVP
5. White Sox 20-game winner / Mining engineer U.S. president

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2021: HOW DID YOU DO?

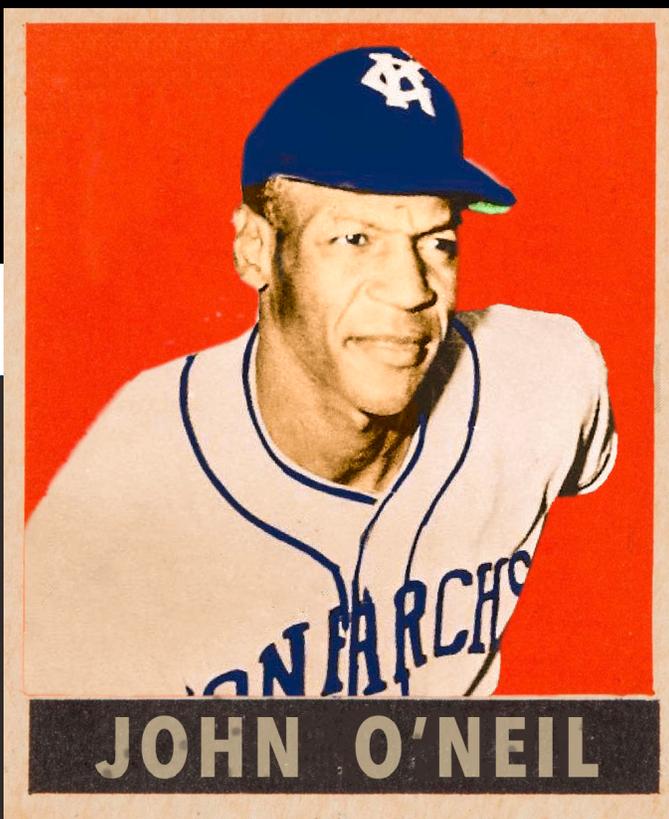
1. Three pitchers have thrown shutouts in the World Series since 2000. Who accomplished this increasingly rare feat? / **Randy Johnson (2001), Josh Beckett (2003), and Madison Bumgarner (2014).** Jack Morris tossed the last shutout by an American Leaguer (1991).
2. Before Jorge Soler, what two players were World Series MVPs after starting that season with another team? / **Donn Clendenon in 1969; Steve Pearce in 2018.**
3. Twenty-one grand slams have been hit in World Series competition but only five by National Leaguers. Name this quintet. / **Chuck Hiller (1962), Ken Boyer (1964), Lonnie Smith (1992), Addison Russell (2016), and Adam Duvall (2021).**
4. What was the sole fall classic featuring a 1-0 victory by each of the teams? / **1949 saw the New York Yankees and then the Brooklyn Dodgers win 1-0 during the series' first two games.**
5. Besides the last question's answer what was the only other World Series with two 1-0 contests? / **The Baltimore Orioles twice blanked the Los Angeles Dodgers 1-0 in 1966.**

PASTIME PASSAGE

On being denied election to the Hall of Fame in 2006 by the Committee on African American Baseball, "I know these are honorable people. They voted with their heart. That's all you can ask."

—John "Buck" O'Neil
Joe Posnanski, "After Shock, an Outcry for O'Neil,"
Kansas City Star, March 5, 2006: 39

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



BILLY BALL (CONTINUED)

productive outs equally, could fairly be applied to a player who virtually never struck out.

True, today's baseball intelligentsia [has the data](#) to prove that a hitter's strikeouts are, at least within a hair, no worse than other outs since A) they often occur with two outs or the bases empty, and B) preclude double plays. But seriously, does anyone in their right mind truly believe that Bill Buckner's amazing zero-strikeout April did nothing for his team?

Thus began my quest to restore this baseball hero's honor, proving his preternatural ability to make contact really did matter. To do this, I reviewed every one of his out's, inning by inning and [game by game](#), tracking how often his "productive outs" moved a runner over who eventually scored. I wanted to show that Buckner's brand of Billy Ball mattered.

After 50 outs, which took me past April and into early May, I gave up. Had I proved my case that quickly? Just the opposite, I'm afraid. Of Buckner's first 50 outs, of which none were strikeouts, there were only two where runners advanced at all. Exactly zero of these runners went on to score. In other words, Buckner's 50 contact outs helped the Cubs offense exactly as much as if all 50 had been strikeouts. Mind blown.

Whatever your view of analytics, I should stress here that this conclusion is not based on analytics (though it might have been predicted by them). Rather, it's a methodical look at Buckner's actual plate appearances. Just how long did it take for one of Buckner's contact outs to actually matter?

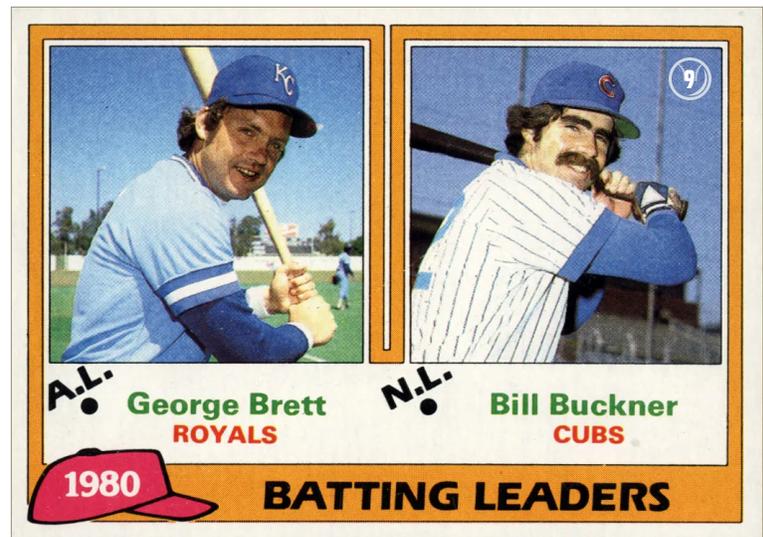
The big day was [May 9](#) in a 6-3 loss to the Giants and Vida Blue. Buckner, already 0-for-2 on the day, came to bat in the bottom of the fifth with runners on first and third and no outs and hit a grounder that scored Lenny Randle. Take that, sabermetrics! Then again, how much did the run matter given that the Cubs lost by three? For a truly productive out, we should look for one that not just changed the score but changed the outcome of the game.

Such a game may have come on [May 25](#) when the Dodgers visited Wrigley. Cubs hitters came to bat in the bottom of the ninth down 1-0 at the hands of ex-Cub hurler Burt Hooton and reliever Bobby Castillo. When Bill Buckner, batting fourth that inning, came to the plate, there was one out with runners on first and third. Buckner's fly out to left advanced Lenny Randle from first to second while the lead runner, Tim Lincecum, held at third. (My guess here is the speedy Randle took advantage of a throw home.)

While Buckner's productive out did not directly score any runs, Larry Biittner followed with a grounder that Dodger shortstop misplayed, causing both the tying and winning runs to score. Had Buckner simply struck out for his at bat, leaving runners at the corners, Biittner's grounder would have at best tied the game and at worst produced a game-ending double play.

By the time the Cubs won this wild one, Buckner was 97 outs into the season. Remarkably, only two came by way of the strikeout and none were double plays. Replace every one of these 97 outs with strikeouts, and there would have been no change in the win-loss column. Out 98, however, turned a likely 16-20 record into 17-19. Obviously, that extra win is not nothing, but it sure is less than what I expected to see.

Still, count me among the many fans who admire Buckner's approach to hitting. I'll continue to die on the hill that the game's much more interesting when balls are put in play. At the same time, my up close look at Buckner's 1980 season very much changed the way I look at "Billy Ball." Fun to watch? Yes. Makes a difference? Not really.



Ultimately then, do I go full modern, and re-assess Buckner (career OPS+ of 100) as a totally average hitter, hence a downright bad hitter for a first baseman? On one level, yes. The Cubs would likely have won more games with just about any other National League team's starting first baseman. At the same time, I still see Buckner as one of the better hitters of his era if not a borderline Hall of Famer.

This may sound illogical, so I'll resolve the paradox by saying I'll never fault a guy for doing his job well. When Buckner played, strikeouts were regarded as much worse than other outs. Likewise, the base on balls, which Buckner saw even fewer of than strikeouts during his career, had not yet attained the exalted status it holds in the game today. Put the ball in play, and good things will happen. That's certainly the advice I always got.

Had managers or coaches told Buckner they'd rather see 100 walks and 100 strikeouts than 20 of each, who's to say he couldn't have done it? Forget value for a second and just think about the skill it takes to put balls in play at the level of a Bill Buckner. Should it be harder or easier than that to recognize and lay off a bad pitch? In my mind, there's no question. Even the great Ted Williams would have surely agreed, calling hitting a baseball "[the hardest thing to do in sports.](#)" So here we have the single most difficult thing to do in all of sports and a man who did it better than almost anyone else in [recent history](#). The impact of his greatness may be rather ho hum in retrospect, but the talent was absolutely elite and should remain worthy of our marvel. 🍌

2022-2023 NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

Chicago's Emil Rothe Chapter is a bimonthly publication.

We are always looking for new contributors. Here is the upcoming production schedule. If you would like to contribute to a future issue of our Chapter newsletter, contact Bill Pearch at wcpearch@comcast.net.

MARCH-APRIL 2022

Published: March 6
Content Deadline: Feb. 6

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022

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