



EMIL ROTHE CHICAGO CHAPTER

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Chicago Dogs fans, donning their best hot dog costumes, packed Rosemont's Impact Field to celebrate the 2019 season opener.

CHICAGO DOGS HOME OPENER AT IMPACT FIELD

BY: JOHN RACANELLI



The excitement was palpable as fans made their way into Impact Field for the Chicago Dogs' home opener on May 17, 2019. Some were excited for start of the 2019 American Association season. Others were hoping to see former Cubs firebrand Carlos Zambrano make his debut for Chicago as he continued his comeback bid at 38. All 6,511 there, however, were primed to be forever immortalized as part of the "world's largest gathering of wieners in one location" thanks to a cheeky hot dog costume giveaway.

Situated along the western edge of I-294 in suburban Rosemont, Impact Field is now in its second season of operation as home of the Dogs. Led by former Red Sox slugger Butch Hobson, the club got 2019 off to a hot start in this game. After giving up a solo shot in the top of the first, the Dogs scored three runs in the bottom of the first and tacked on six in the second. Unfortunately, rain began to fall and the deluge sent the unholy crowd of soaking wet, hotdog-clad fans scurrying for cover. After an hour-long rain delay, the Dogs cruised to a 12-5 victory.

Owned by the Village of Rosemont, the ballpark is clean and modern but, ultimately, lacks that certain charm that so epitomizes minor league baseball. What the ballpark lacks in charm, however, the Dogs make up for in quality baseball action and non-stop fun. The Dogs' mascot—a giant furry mustard bottle named Squeeze—roams the stands for high-fives and photos. Squeeze is often stalked by a villainous ketchup bottle, a clever embodiment of Chicago's immutable edict that forbids topping a hot dog with ketchup.

Impact Field has a parking garage on Balmoral, just south of the park. The \$3.00 cost is surprisingly reasonable, but a parking garage is not necessarily a great design for hundreds of cars leaving at the same time. (Do yourself a big favor and back into your parking spot and plan extra time to leave.) If you take public transportation, Impact Field is just a mile walk from the Blue Line Rosemont Station.

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

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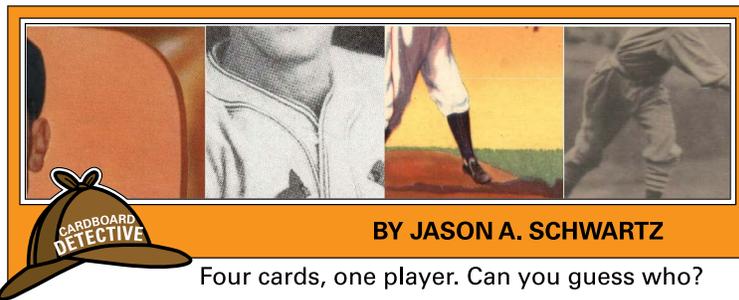
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BY JASON A. SCHWARTZ

Four cards, one player. Can you guess who?

STRIKEOUTS PER NINE INNINGS, CAREER*

MONTHLY TOP 10 (THROUGH MAY 21, 2019)

#	PITCHER	YEARS	K/9IP
1	CHRIS SALE (LHP)	2010-PRESENT	10.9497
2	RANDY JOHNSON (LHP)	1988-2009	10.6098
3	STEPHEN STRASBURG (RHP)	2010-PRESENT	10.6081
4	MAX SCHERZER (RHP)	2008-PRESENT	10.4553
5	KERRY WOOD (RHP)	1998-2012	10.3174
6	PEDRO MARTINEZ (RHP)	1992-2009	10.0398
7	COREY KLUBER (RHP)	2011-PRESENT	9.8005
8	CHRIS ARCHER (RHP)	2012-PRESENT	9.7382
9	CLAYTON KERSHAW (LHP)	2008-PRESENT	9.7374
10	NOLAN RYAN (RHP)	1966, 1968-1993	9.5481

*Six of the top 10 members of this list are still active. Of the retired members, only Kerry Wood is not in the Hall of Fame.



Chicago Dogs fans celebrate the first pitch of the 2019 season on a cold and damp opening night at Impact Field.

DOGS HOME OPENER (CONTINUED)

The concessions and beer selection have been vastly improved from last season. Food and drink will cost near Major League levels, however, so plan accordingly. If you are looking for an authentic Chicago hot dog, visit the Weiner's Circle outpost for a Clark Street location taste, minus the sassy employee experience.

Probably the most unique feature of Impact Field is its proximity to I-294, which features the atmospheric—but not necessarily distracting—sights and sounds of highway traffic. When you visit, make a point to walk down past the leftfield corner to marvel at the netting erected to prevent any well-struck baseballs from landing on the interstate. According to Dogs executive, Evan Gersonde, a ball would have to travel more than 600 feet to clear the protective netting. Could part-time DH Carlos Zambrano be that guy?

Next time you are in the mood for a ballgame, head out to Impact Field for a doggone good time. You can find more information at www.thechicagodogs.com.

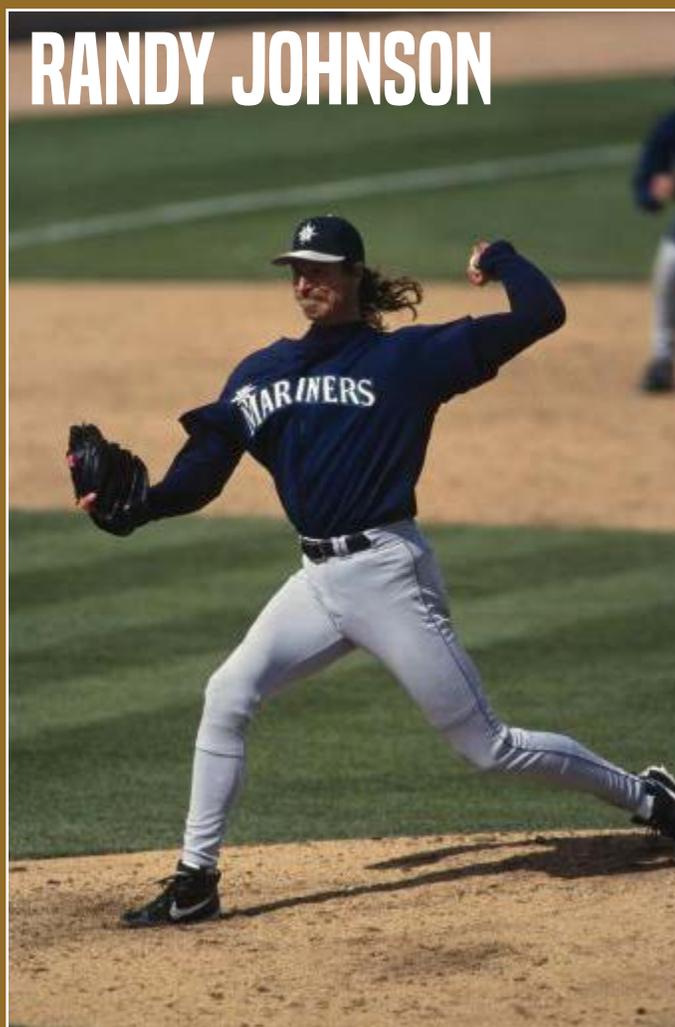
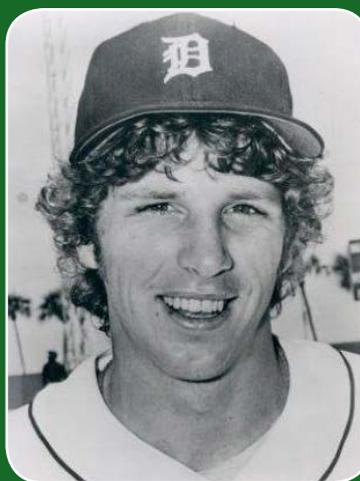


Photo: Brad Mangin/National Baseball Hall of Fame Library



PASTIME PASSAGE...

"YOU WIN A FEW BASEBALL GAMES AND ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU'RE SURROUNDED BY REPORTERS AND TV MEN WITH CAMERAS ASKING YOU ABOUT VIETNAM AND RACE RELATIONS AND STUFF LIKE THAT. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM YET."

— MARK FIDRYCH

Quote: *Detroit Free Press*,
September 19, 1976 /
Photo: Public Domain

WHAT'S ON DECK?

GET YOUR PENCILS AND SCORECARDS READY

- **SABR 49 - SAN DIEGO**

June 26-30, 2019
Manchester Grand Hyatt
1 Market Place
San Diego, CA 92101



[CLICK FOR DETAILS](#)

- **CHAPTER GAME #3**

June 29, 2019 - 6:05 p.m.
Lake Erie Crushers vs.
Windy City ThunderBolts
Ozinga Field
14011 South Kenton Avenue
Crestwood, IL 60418

[CLICK FOR DIRECTIONS](#)

- **CHAPTER MEETING**

September 14, 2019 - 1 p.m.
Lisle Public Library
777 Front Street
Lisle, IL 60532

[CLICK FOR DIRECTIONS](#)



SABR Chicago's June meeting presenters included (left to right): Vice Chair Richard Smiley, Jason Schwartz, Don Zminda and Abbey Botkin.

JUNE 2019 MEETING VIDEOS

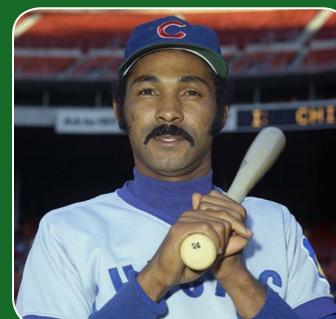
If you were not able to attend our most recent chapter meeting on June 1 at the Glen Ellyn Public Library, there is no need to fear. All have of the presentations available on our Facebook page. Click the links below and enjoy.

- Part 1 - Richard Smiley introductions; Don Zminda discusses Harry Caray
- Part 2 - Jason Schwartz discusses Baseball Card Research Highlights
- Part 3 - Abbey Botkin discusses Javy Baez's Spiritual Baseball Ancestor; Richard Smiley discusses the 2019 MLB Draft

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

[Part 3](#)



CHICAGO RANDOM TANDEM DICK ALLEN AND BILLY WILLIAMS

Left: In 1972, White Sox first baseman Dick Allen led the AL in SLG (.603), OPS (1.023) and OPS+ (199)

Right: That same year, Cubs leftfielder Billy Williams led the NL in SLG (.606), OPS (1.005) and OPS+ (171)

FIRST GAME JITTERS HIT DUPAGE PISTOL SHRIMP ORGANIZATION

BY: TIM CZUBA



On May 30, I had the pleasure of attending the inaugural game of the DuPage Pistol Shrimp, Chicagoland's newest collegiate, wood bat summer league team and member of the Prospect League. Bugs were evident, both on the field and off, as the Pistol Shrimp struggled, losing 10-1 to the Normal CornBelters.

Arriving at the Benedictine University Sports Complex in Lisle about a half hour prior to game time, I was looking for a food fix of standard ballpark fare, but was disappointed to find out that the concessions had no hotdogs, only snacks such as nachos and popcorn. I was, however, able to buy a reasonably priced beer as I waited for the food trucks I was told were coming. More on that later.

The P.A. system was blaring as the teams took infield practice. The stadium is beautiful, part of the larger college complex, but with about 300 seats, all located around the diamond, the extremely loud music was not necessary to reach the crowd. The field has a handful of high top tables and I settled in at one of them, forgoing my seats. With tickets costing as little as \$5.00, my table seat was located almost directly behind home plate; it was a wonderful location!

I noticed many glitches by the organization that night, not least of which was the fact that the Shrimp did not have jerseys or game hats. The team wore Pistol Shrimp t-shirts with numbers on the back and Hemingway caps. That explains why the team shop table did not have the very attractive game caps advertised on the website. The P.A. announcer made a point of telling us fans that the reason for the uniform gaff was due to the tariff war with China.

The in-game experience was terrific as interns did several giveaways between innings, dancing on the dugout to songs like the Chicken Dance and being extremely friendly. Two food trucks did indeed come, one serving Mexican food and the other cupcakes. Both were excellent. The game itself was rather forgettable. Starting Shrimp pitcher, Luke Fitton, from Waubensee Community College, was obviously nervous giving up five runs in the first on two hits, four walks and a hit batter. "Nuke" LaLoosh would have been proud. Garrett Goetz, also from Waubensee Community College, drove in the first ever run in franchise history in the seventh with a single.

All in all, while the experience was a mixed bag, I am willing to overlook the problems I saw and will definitely return for another game. The location and park are excellent and I am sure the team will amp up its professionalism with experience. Go Shrimp!

Logo and photos courtesy of the DuPage Pistol Shrimp website and Facebook page.



GET YOUR BASEBALL RESEARCH PUBLISHED

Are you conducting baseball research? SABR's Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter can help. We are looking for new articles to publish in the Chapter's monthly newsletter and social media outlets. Submit your articles to Chapter Secretary David Malamut via email at david@malamut.net. Submittal deadlines are the 15th of each month for inclusion in the next edition.



CLICK HERE TO PLAY
CAN YOU NAME THE RELOCATIONS,
REPLACEMENTS AND EXPANSIONS
THAT MADE MLB WHAT IT IS TODAY?



DWIGHT, ILLINOIS: WHERE BIG-LEAGUE TALENT MET SMALL-TOWN AMERICA

BY: BILL PEARCH



In her new book, *The Big Fella: Babe Ruth and the World He Created*, award-winning author Jane Leavy used a three-week barnstorming tour from October 1927 as the structure for telling the Sultan of Swat's life story. Baseball barnstorming tours were commonplace in the early 20th century long before free agency, multi-year contracts and life-changing salaries. For baseball fans living too far from major-league cities, barnstorming tours brought the national pastime much closer to home. These games weren't just exhibitions and sideshow events; these were opportunities for local semi-pro teams to measure their skills against that era's living legends.

Earlier this year, I had a chance encounter with Mary Flott, my former high school English and communications teacher. Recalling my insatiable interest in Chicago Cubs baseball during my days as a student at Dwight High School, she asked if I knew that the Cubs once visited the town and played against a local semi-pro team. Much to my astonishment, I did not. She introduced me to Kim Dreschel, a docent from the Dwight Historical Society.

During my electronic and face-to-face discussions with Dreschel, he unlocked the story of Dwight's semi-pro baseball team from the early 1900s, the F.L. Smiths. At the time – and possibly still today – Dwight was best known as the home of the Keeley Institute, where alcoholics were administered the Keeley Cure (also known as the "gold cure"). The baseball team's name came from its founder and owner, Colonel Frank Leslie Smith. During his youth, Frank L. Smith was known for his aggressiveness and will to dominate. He had a passion for baseball, but enjoyed even more engaging in the on-field scuffles that oftentimes brought his sandlot games to an early end.¹ As an adult, the Colonel is best known as the chairman of the Illinois Commerce Commission who attempted to buy a United States Senate seat in 1926.²

For a community with less than 3,000 residents at that time, the F.L. Smiths attracted several future major leaguers such as "Turkey" Mike Donlin (St. Louis Perfectos/Cardinals, Baltimore Orioles, Cincinnati Reds, New York Giants, Boston Rustlers and Pittsburgh Pirates), George Cutshaw (Brooklyn Dodgers/Superbas/Robins, Pittsburgh Pirates and Detroit Tigers) and Eddie Higgins (St. Louis Cardinals). Between the years of 1907 and 1915, the F.L. Smiths played at least five barnstorming games against big-league talent from the American, National and Federal leagues. The Detroit Tigers, Washington Senators, Chicago Cubs, Pittsburgh Rebels and Chicago Whales all passed through the village on the Chicago and Alton Railroad southwest of Chicago.

While news clippings exist for each of those games, the treasure of the Dwight Historical Society's collection is a sepia tone photograph from October 22, 1907. The photo is the only known record of the game between Ty Cobb's Detroit Tigers and the F.L. Smiths played at Dwight's West Side Park. The Tigers, having just lost the World Series to the Chicago Cubs, made a brief barnstorming tour through the Midwest. Detroit hammered Dwight that afternoon, 8-1. Following the game, the locals hosted a banquet in honor of the American League champions.

Contemporary players are often labeled as prima donnas who complain about the difficulties of intercity travel and grueling schedules, but attitudes were much the same 100 years ago. Look no further than July 7, 1915. The Federal League's Pittsburgh Rebels had a nearly one-week-long gap in their schedule and stopped in Dwight for a mid-season exhibition game. Pittsburgh's manager "Rebel" Oakes refused to play his starting roster that afternoon due to players wading through ankle-deep mud at West Side Park. The Rebels were in a pennant race with the Kansas City Packers. As the Pittsburgh Press reported the next morning, "Manager Oakes will probably take defeat from the future greats rather than risk injuring his men."³

Today, nothing remains of Dwight's West Side Park or the F.L. Smiths save for occasional photographs and a few tales documented in local newspapers. The site of the former park, located along what is now old Route 66, consists of apartments and homes today. Frank L. Smith would serve as a member of the United States House of Representative from Illinois' 17th District from 1919 to 1921. In 1921, he became the chairman of the Illinois Commerce Commission. At the close of 1926, Illinois Governor Len Small appointed Smith to fill the U.S. Senate seat of the late William B. McKinley, but the Senate voted to not allow him to qualify due to questionable campaign donations from public utilities. During a special election in 1927, Smith was once again denied. Smith passed away in 1950 at the age of 82.

Sources:

- 1) Wooddy, Carroll H. *The Case of Frank L. Smith: A Study in Representative Government*. Chicago, Illinois. The University of Chicago Press, 1931.
- 2) McClelland, Edward. "The (Other) Man Who Tried to Buy a Senate Seat." <https://www.nbcchicago.com/blogs/ward-room/The-Man-Who-Tried-To-Buy-A-Senate-Seat-123097393.html>
- 3) "Rebels Lose in Race by Idleness." *Pittsburgh Press*. June 8, 1915.

Special thanks to SABR Chicago member Bruce Allardice.

SABR MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: TOM ROBAK

BY: BILL PEARCH

“Luis Aparicio and Bob Rush were my favorites,” said Tom Robak. “Little Louie was exciting to watch, and Rush’s was the first North Sider baseball card that I owned. He also had a passing resemblance to my Dad’s cousin.” Today he admits to rooting for both of Chicago’s baseball teams, but having grown up on the South Side, he does favor the White Sox.

“My uncle was a vice president and scored tickets for my first game through work,” Robak said. But no, the game was not at the corner of 35th and Shields. “My dad drove the two of us north to my uncle’s house, then we rode the Addison bus to Wrigley Field.” He recalled their view from the front-row, upper deck seats on the third-base side.

Jim King, Gene Baker, Dee Fondy, Eddie Miksis and Bob Skinner will be linked eternally in Robak’s memory. “I remember the home runs,” he said, recalling that Saturday doubleheader at Clark and Addison. Four Chicago Cubs hit long balls that afternoon en route to a twin bill sweep of the Pittsburgh Pirates on Saturday, July 14, 1956. Skinner hit the lone home run for the visitors. Bob Rush pitched a complete game, scattered 10 hits and earned his eighth win of the season in the opener.

Later that summer, Robak’s parents cultivated their son’s growing passion for baseball and treated him to a game closer to home. For his eighth birthday, they brought their young son to Comiskey Park for an evening affair against the Cleveland Indians on Saturday, September 1. “Looking back, I’m amazed we got into that game,” he said. “We had box seats directly behind the Indians’ dugout. A foul ball whizzed just above our heads and bounced in the stairwell.” The game was a wonderful birthday present despite Cleveland’s 5-1 win over the White Sox.

As Tom grew older, he enjoyed his time playing on the diamond. “I played baseball in my church’s league,” he said. “Then I played two years in the Bogan Little League on Chicago’s South Side. And of course, there were the neighborhood sandlot games.” Robak admitted that he never made it any further than Little League. “I played first base and was a good enough fielder, but I was a terrible hitter.”

Looking back, the White Sox World Series of 1959 and 2005 are the most memorable to Robak. “What an exciting year,” he said, recalling the Go-Go Sox of 1959. Aparicio was just a kid, but played a critical role in the excitement that ensued that summer. “I was an 11-year-old who paid attention to everything I could from television to radio and newspapers.” His dad would salvage as many copies of the Sun-Times, Chicago Tribune and Daily News as he could.

Thanks to the Los Angeles Dodgers, the 1959 World Series did not end the way Robak hoped. Let’s fast-forward 46 years to 2005. “That was a roller-coaster year on many levels,” he said, noting that the White Sox built up a 15-game lead as late as August 1. “August was a rough month for me, too. My daughter got engaged, but the next day I returned to work, I learned that my employer sold the company and everyone would soon be out of work.” Two weeks later, his mother-in-law passed away.

“There was a lot of stress,” Robak said. The World Series against the Houston Astros began the weekend after his last day at work. “The pennant race and an 11-1 march through the postseason provided a good diversion.” In 2005, the end result was far sweeter than in ‘59.

Robak is one of the Emile Rothe chapter’s newest members having joined SABR in May 2019. “I would say [I joined] mostly to learn some more about baseball from those more in the know,” he said. “Possibly to learn some research techniques and discover new resources. I am an avid autograph collector and hope to learn more about some of the player signatures that I have collected.”



Tom Robak, an avid autograph collector, ranks the 1959 and 2005 World Series among his favorite baseball memories.

“He’s not playing anymore, but I still admire what Mark Buehrle accomplished,” Robak said. “He had great team spirit. Tossed a no-hitter and a perfect game.” When Buehrle orchestrated his perfect game, Robak watched most of it at work. “I was glad to get out before the final out and listened to the ending on the radio. I knew my emotions would be hard to control.”

Robak stated that he is hooked on recorded books. “A keystone of my collection is the recorded version of Roger Kahn’s *The Boys of Summer*. There hasn’t been a March or April over the last 20-plus years that I haven’t enjoyed a listen.” That book gave Robak his first glance behind the curtain and demonstrated that ballplayers are susceptible to the same problems fans face following their playing days. “Those infamous Brooklyn Dodgers of the 1950s had to start all over. Some in high-profile jobs and others in far less glorious positions,” he said.

Speaking of the Dodgers of the 1950s, if Robak had the opportunity to travel back in time, he would make his way into Yankee Stadium on October 8, 1956. He would join the 64,519 fans that watched the New York Yankees’ Don Larsen pitch a perfect game against the Brooklyn Dodgers to win Game Five of the World Series. “The year, 1956, was the first year I was interested in baseball,” he said. “What a moment.”

SABR MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

We all have great baseball stories to share. In each issue, we will highlight SABR Chicago Chapter members. Contact Bill Pearch, newsletter editor, via email at wpearch@comcast.net to schedule a brief interview.

REGISTER NOW FOR 2019 SABR "BLACK SOX" SCANDAL CENTENNIAL SYMPOSIUM IN CHICAGO

Registration is now open for the SABR Black Sox Scandal Centennial Symposium on September 27-29, 2019, in Chicago. The SABR Black Sox Scandal Research Committee will host this once-in-a-century event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1919 World Series.

A lot of new information has been uncovered in recent years that has changed our collective knowledge of the Black Sox Scandal and its aftermath. All of these new pieces to the puzzle have provided definitive answers to some old mysteries and raised other questions in their place. It's a story that continues to fascinate baseball fans, writers, and researchers all over the world.

The event — which is open to all baseball fans — will be highlighted by a research symposium on Saturday, September 28 at the Chicago History Museum. The museum is home to an extensive collection of Black Sox artifacts and documents, and we'll gather in the beautiful Morse Genius Chicago Room event space to discuss the continued relevance of the 1919 World Series and its aftermath. A book signing with SABR authors, including our own Scandal on the South Side: The 1919 Chicago White Sox, will follow. More details on panels and presentations will be announced soon.

Our special All-Inclusive Package (\$45 for SABR members, \$60 for non-members) includes admission to the SABR Black Sox Scandal symposium at the Chicago History Museum; a ticket to the Chicago White Sox game on Friday, September 27; and a guided walking tour of downtown Chicago baseball history sites.

Registration for the symposium only is \$20 for SABR members, \$25 for non-members. Extra tickets to the White Sox game are \$20 each and the walking tour (choose one; Friday or Sunday) is \$10 each. Click here to register!

Following the symposium, from 8:00-10:00 p.m. on Saturday evening, we will also gather for a reception at the historic Nisei Lounge near Wrigley Field. The reception is included in your symposium registration.

The full schedule is available online at SABR.org/2019-black-sox-symposium. For questions or more information, please contact Jacob Pomrenke at buckweaver@gmail.com.

Click Here to Register



Eight members of the Chicago White Sox players implicated in the scandal of fixing the 1919 World Series against the Cincinnati Reds. Photo: History.com



Click Here to Read More

EIGHT MYTHS OUT

100 years since the 1919 World Series, new research has revealed new truths about "baseball's darkest hour" — the Black Sox Scandal.

On the centennial anniversary, SABR's Black Sox Scandal Committee sheds light on the biggest myths about the fixing of the 1919 World Series.

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THERE ARE FIVE EASY WAYS TO INTERACT
WITH CHICAGO CHAPTER MEMBERS.
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