

Society for American Baseball Research, Rogers Hornsby Chapter

Serving Central and South Texas Since 2006

Ohtani news, Mexican food and decade-by-decade hit leaders quiz keep us warm at December meeting



December Newsletter

By Gilbert D. Martinez

A day after news that Shohei Ohtani had signed with the Los Angeles Dodgers for the richest professional sports contract in history, chapter members gathered in

Cedar Park on Sunday to consider the implications for baseball and beyond.

Sixteen members and guests pondered the frantic news of the preceding days about a private jet flying from Southern California to Toronto and the wild speculation that another team in blue would be landing the most sought-after free agent of the offseason.

But by midafternoon on Saturday, the world learned that Ohtani picked another team in blue, make that Dodger blue.

One of our resident Dodger fans, Jerry Miller, was delighted. Your humble author, meanwhile, was glad to see Ohtani leave the American League West!

Another member, Jan Larson, he of the many MLB caps, sported a Yankees cap in anticipation that Juan Soto being traded to the Yankees would be the talk of the meeting. Indeed, the Yankees acquired Soto in a trade with the San Diego Padres on Wednesday night, but that quickly became old news when we found out about Ohtani.

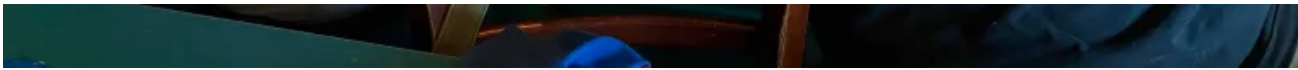




In addition to a Mexican food lunch at Serranos on Pecan Park Boulevard, Linda and Monte Cely brought delicious home-baked treats for everyone. We munched on them along with chips and salsa and had small gift bags with a sampling of the desserts to take home with us. We had plenty of leftovers, which were enjoyed by the hardworking staff at Serranos. Thanks so much to the Celys for the yummy confections!

As winner of last month's monthly quiz, Cy Morong fashioned a quiz that had us span decades of baseball history. Quiz extraordinaires Jim Baker (40 points) and Jerry Miller (36) took top honors, surprising no one with their baseball knowledge. Chris Crombar, a friend of Tom Wancho and prospective SABR member, came in third with 35 points with his brother, Rob, notching 33 points. Longtime member Jan Larson, able to join us after a few absences, came in fifth with 32 points.





For their victories, Jim (pictured above, right) took home “The Baseball Maniac’s Almanac (Sixth Edition),” edited by Bert Randolph Sugar with Ken Samelson, and Jerry won “The National Baseball Hall of Fame Collection” with an introduction by Cal Ripken, Jr.

Test your knowledge and memory by taking a swing at Cy’s quiz below. The answers immediately follow the questions.

This was the 205th consecutive month in which the chapter has met, a streak dating to December 2006.

Next meeting: Our biggest of the year

Please make plans to join us on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024, for the 18th Annual Bill Gilbert Winter Meeting at Texas State University in San Marcos! It’s our biggest event of the year. Winter Meeting Coordinator Jerry Miller is putting the finishing touches on the meeting agenda. We’ll share more information about the meeting a few days after Christmas.

Also, we’re planning on having a Zoom meeting on Saturday, Feb. 3, to celebrate National SABR Day. More details to come.

Baseball Memories update

By Monte Cely

In 2015, Hornsby Chapter volunteers led by Jim Kenton started SABR’s first baseball reminiscence program. Reminiscence, recalling pleasant memories of the past, has proven to be an effective way to improve the quality of life of those dealing with dementia, chronic health problems, isolation, or loneliness. Since then, the number of programs using baseball as a reminiscence topic has grown both locally and nationally.

2023 marked a year of getting back to normal as local volunteers have been able to resume in-person sessions with participants, care partners, and supporting staff at partner organizations. “The Baseball Guys” have been back at the Kerrville Veterans Administration Hospital for several months now. Their 90-minute monthly program is serving 10-15 veterans and supporting staff. Jim reports that the Kerrville staff have recommended the program to their colleagues at the Audie Murphy VA in San Antonio as well, opening the door for potentially another VA program.

Likewise, since February the “Baseball Memories” team has been presenting a 90-minute monthly program at Williamson County AGE of Central Texas in Round Rock. The audience at this adult day care facility is a large, diverse group – usually numbering around 30 participants and staff. We have an excellent relationship with the AGE management team, and they are very supportive and enthusiastic about the program.

Over the past eight-plus years, 15 Hornsby Chapter members, along with several spouses, have volunteered to facilitate or otherwise assist with these programs. Everyone involved has found this to be a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

There are plenty of opportunities to get involved in this valuable community service program. In addition to plenty of baseball (of course), we also add music, video, history, and other sports in order to invoke a broad range of pleasant memories from a diverse audience. If you’d consider volunteering, have an idea for a new program in your community, or just would like to learn more, please contact Monte Cely at cely@swbell.net.

Bill Veeck foresaw Statcast... in 1965

Cy Morong shared on the email list something he saw on social media. It’s a page out of “The Hustler’s Handbook” by Bill Veeck with Ed Linn, in which Veeck essentially describes a perspective on baseball analytics that has become commonplace today. The catch? He did it in 1965, when this book was published.

I was so intent upon getting the maximum value out of my Pitchometer that I got no value out of it at all. Before it was unveiled, I was unhorsed. The Pitchometer still sits there, like a coiled tiger, unheard, unseen, unleashed.

Once you begin to think in terms of scoreboard clockings, the possibilities are endless. You can install a giant stopwatch to time the batter's speed to first base. (The clock would be run by an old scout who has been timing runners in the bushes all his life.) On extra-base hits, he has only to let the clock keep running and we have the time it takes for each man to run out a double or a triple. The fun comes, obviously, when a triple is hit by a man who is either lightning fast or dreadfully slow. You are involving the fans in a whole set of new arguments and establishing a whole new set of records. Who is the fastest man on the team? Who is the best *base runner* on the team? (Not necessarily the same thing at all.)

The electronics industry, having advanced to the point where it can bounce pictures off a satellite, is quite capable of developing anything you want. There is no reason whatsoever why an electronic system could not be set up to enable you to chart each pitch electronically on a scoreboard screen. The screen would record the speed of each pitch, the kind of pitch (curve, knuckle ball, sinker, etc.) and a profile of the exact path the ball followed, so that everybody in the park would be able to see how much the curve broke, how high the fast ball hopped and what part of the plate the pitch hit.

The announcer passes this information on to the viewer at home, not always, to be sure, with exacting accuracy. Why should the viewer at home have more information than the paying customer?

One of the myths by which we live is that the "real" baseball fan loves a 1-0 game and abhors a "sloppy" 8-6 game. Even the most cursory studies show that fans love 8-6 games and are bored to death by classic 1-0 pitchers' battles.

When a great pitcher is at his best, his strategy and his control are things of rare beauty and his stuff is wondrous to behold.

Here's a link to the tweet: <https://twitter.com/bhayes162/status/1732943065323655527>

Decade batting titles and home run titles quiz

By Cy Morong

For each decade, name one player (and only one player) who won at least two batting titles. You will get 2 points if he did indeed win at least two batting titles.

You will get one bonus point if the player you named also won the most batting titles in that decade.

1900-09

1910-19

1920-29

1930-39

1940-49

1950-59

1960-69

1970-79

1980-89

1990-99

2000-09

2010-19

For each decade, name one player (and only one player) who won at least two HR titles. You will get 2 points if he did indeed win at least two HR titles. You will get one bonus point if the player you named also won the most HR titles in that decade.

1900-09

1910-19

1920-29

1930-39

1940-49

1950-59

1960-69

1970-79

1980-89

1990-99

2000-09

2010-19

Tie Breaker 1. How many career HRs did Jeff Bagwell hit?

Tie Breaker 2. How many career hits did Craig Biggio have?

Answers

For each decade, name one player (and only one player) who won at least two HR titles. You will get 2 points if he did indeed win at least two HR titles. You will get one bonus point if the player you named also won the most HR titles in that decade.

1900-09) Honus Wagner 7, Lajoie 4, Cobb 3

1910-19) Cobb 8, Daubert 2, Roush 2

1920-29) Hornsby 7, Heilman 4, Sisler 2

1930-39) Foxx 2, Al Simmons 2, Paul Waner 2

1940-49) Ted Williams 4, Musial 3

1950-59) Musial 4, Ted Williams 2, Aaron 2, Ashburn 2, Fain 2

1960-69) Clemente 4, Yastrzemski 3, Runnels 2, Oliva 2, Rose 2, Tommy Davis 2

1970-79) Carew 6, Madlock 2, Dave Parker 2

1980-89) Boggs 5, Gwynn 4, Madlock 2

1990-99) Gwynn 4, Larry Walker 2, Edgar Martinez 2

2000-09) Joe Mauer 3, Ichiro Suzuki 2, Bonds 2

2010-19) Miguel Cabrera 4, Altuve 3, Yelich 2

For each decade, name one player (and only one player) who won at least two HR titles. You will get 2 points if he did indeed win at least two HR titles. You will get one bonus point if the player you named also won the most HR titles in that decade

1900-09) Harry Davis 4, Crawford 2, Tim Jordan 2

1910-19) Gavvy Cravath 6, Baker 4, Pipp 2, Ruth 2, Schulte 2, Dave Robertson 2

1920-29) Ruth 8, Hack Wilson 3, Cy Williams 2, Hornsby

2

1930-39) Ott 5, Foxx 4, Klein 3, Gehrig 3, Ruth 2, Greenberg 2

1940-49) Ted Williams 4, Kiner 4, Mize 3, Greenberg 2, Bill Nicholson
2

1950-59) Mantle 3, Kiner 3, Rosen 2, Doby 2, Mathews 2

1960-69) Killebrew 5, Aaron 3, Mays 3, McCovey 3

1970-79) Schmidt 3, Dick Allen 2, Reggie Jackson 2, Rice 2, Bench 2, Stargell 2,
Foster 2

1980-89) Schmidt 5, Reggie Jackson 2, Dale Murphy
2

1990-99) Griffey 4, McGwire 3, Cecil Fielder 2, Juan Gonzalez 2

2000-09) AROD 4, Sosa 2, Ryan Howard 2

2010-19) Arenado 3, Bautista 2, Chris Davis 2, Stanton 2

Tie Breaker 1. How many career HRs did Jeff Bagwell hit? 449

Tie Breaker 2. How many career hits did Craig Biggio have? 3,060



Gilbert Martinez / December 11, 2023 / Hornsby News /