

# THE SQUIBBER

Spring 2018

*The Squibber* is the chapter's quarterly newsletter. It is emailed to chapter members roughly every three months. If you're a Bob Davids chapter member and are not getting the *Squibber*, please check that your email address and chapter affiliations listed on the SABR site are correct. Please send submissions for future editions to Squibber editor Walt Cherniak at [wcherniakjr@aol.com](mailto:wcherniakjr@aol.com).

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**Trivia Question:** Which three players hit safely in all three World Series played by the Washington Senators? (see answer below)

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## TALKIN' BASEBALL: Upcoming Speakers Announced

Here is the speaker schedule for upcoming meetings of the "Talkin' Baseball" group.

On April 4, David Rapp will discuss his book, *"Tinkers to Evers to Chance: The Chicago Cubs and the Dawn of Modern America."*

On May 5, Ted Leavengood will discuss his book, *"Dick Bosman on Pitching, Lessons from the Life of a Major League Ballplayer and Pitching Coach."*

On June 2, Paul Dickson will discuss his book, "*Leo Durocher: Baseball's Prodigal Son.*"

On July 7, Ken Mars will discuss his book, "*Baltimore Baseball: First Pitch to First Pennant; 1854-1894.*"

The Talkin' Baseball group meets on the first Saturday of each month at 9 a.m. Meetings are held at Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia, Md. Come and bring a friend!

### **BOSMAN BOOK AVAILABLE: Book Signing Events Scheduled**

The new book by Bob Davids Chapter member Ted Leavengood, "*Dick Bosman on Pitching, Lessons from the Life of a Major League Ballplayer and Pitching Coach,*" is now available for shipping from Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Use promo code RLFANDF30 and get a 30 percent discount.

Leavengood co-wrote the book with Bosman, the former Washington Senators ace and long-time pitching coach. The authors have scheduled book-signing events on the following dates:

Saturday, April 14, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Barnes and Noble Books, Montrose Crossing Shopping Center, 12089 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md.

Saturday, April 14, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Barnes and Noble Books, Potomac Yards Plaza, 3651 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Alexandria, Va.

Saturday, April 14, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Glory Days Grille, Barcroft Plaza, 6341 Columbia Pike, Falls Church, Va.

Saturday, May 5, 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Talking' Baseball, Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia, Md.

### **IT AIN'T OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER: HIGHLIGHTS FROM TWO DECADES OF COLLECTING ORAL HISTORY, By Dave Paulson**

At the 1998 SABR national convention in San Francisco, there were various committee meetings taking place. I saw a room marked "Oral History" and went in. Chairman Rick

Bradley was conducting the meeting and it became apparent that the purpose of the committee was to interview ballplayers to get their stories and experiences.

This excited me, getting to meet and talk with major league ballplayers. I talked with Rick after the meeting and he gave me some suggestions and literature on how to go about the interview. Since then I have conducted 85 interviews, and one never knows what will be revealed, especially at the end.

My very first interview was with Jack Merson on Sept. 18, 1998. He lived in Elkridge, Md., about 20 minutes away from my home. He had a very short major league career, starting in 1951 and ending in 1953. After we finished, he invited me into his study. Lined up on a shelf was a series of baseball with autographs. Jack said each year he was in the minors and majors, he would get teammates and opponents to autograph a baseball. He had compiled many players who turned out to be stars, including a few Hall of Famers.

Now we go to Feb. 20, 2008 in Sarasota, Fla., where Don Carman had retired. At the end of the interview, I asked Don what he did after baseball. He replied he went back to college, got a master's in Psychology and went to work for Scott Boras! If a player was in a slump, or had a personal problem, Boras would contact Don (an ex-player) who by phone or in person would empathize and try to put Boras' client at ease to solve the issue. No wonder Boras is so successful as an agent.

Nine days later I met with Steve Korcheck, also in Sarasota. By chance, I had sat behind Steve at our college graduation (George Washington University) but I only knew him as a third-team All-American linebacker. He was selected by the San Francisco 49ers in the third round but chose an offer from the Washington Senators, where he caught for a few years. I asked him what he did when he retired. Steve became assistant baseball coach at Manatee Community College in Sarasota and get a master's degree. A few years later, he was appointed president of the college! In his 15 years in that position, enrollment grew from 800 to 5,000.

On the morning of Aug. 28, 2008, I interviewed Nicole Sherry at Camden Yards, home of the Baltimore Orioles. Nicole was the second woman hired as head groundskeeper by a major league team. After the interview in her office, she asked me if I wanted to go with her onto the field, the team being on the road. You betcha! As we approached the bullpen area, I noticed a few baseballs on the ground and Nicole said I could have one. In the bullpens, I noticed bathrooms, which made sense, but I never would have thought about that while watching a game.

And on Sep. 7, 2009, I interviewed Dallas Green at his beautiful farm in Pennsylvania. After the interview, Dallas took me out to his garage. I have never seen a cleaner, more immaculate garage. In it he had framed articles hanging from the walls, various awards on shelves, and lots of memorabilia scattered throughout. He told me no one went into the garage without his permission.

## **IN NATS' FIRST SEASON, JOHN PATTERSON HAD 'THE LOOK OF AN ACE,' By Jeff Stuart**

When baseball came back to Washington in 2005, I had my eye on John Patterson. I was not the only one seeing a resemblance between Patterson and Jim Palmer. Palmer had become a favorite of mine when I started going to Orioles games at Municipal Stadium a few years after the Senators left. So for me, Patterson was a useful object of transition in beginning to root for a Washington team again.

At 6-5, Patterson was taller than Palmer. But he wore Palmer's No. 22 and seemed to have the same graceful overhand delivery and mound presence that Palmer had. He had the look of an ace.

The first time I saw Patterson in person, he did not disappoint. He had lost his first start of the year to the Marlins in Miami. The Marlins seemed to have a curious curse on the National for several years. But Patterson went seven innings and gave up only two earned runs. He evened his record in his second start, defeating the Diamondbacks at RFK Stadium and allowing no earned runs in seven innings.

On Thursday, April 16, Patterson was matched against future Hall of Famer John Smoltz of the Braves at RFK. Again, he went seven innings without allowing an earned run, giving up two hits and striking out six. The weather was bad, a persistent heavy drizzle that at times became a downpour. But Patterson pitched brilliantly. Jose Guillen drove in the Nationals' only run with a two-out RBI single in the fourth,

Catcher Brian Schneider said of Patterson, "You look at his ERA (0.83) and just the way he's dominating hitters right now. If you've watched these games, it's kind of hard not to put him up there as our best starter."

The umpires never stopped the game, even as there was continual maintenance on the pitcher's mound, which Patterson described as "sloppy and slick." Hector Carrasco

pitched a perfect eighth. By the ninth inning the grounds crew was pouring bags of a drying agent on the infield. But there were still standing puddles. Chad Cordero came on to try and get his fourth save. But Marcus Giles singled, Chipper Jones walked and Johnny Estrada singled, loading the bases. With the rain falling, Cordero came back to strike out Brian Jordan and LaRoche, bringing what was left of the announced crowd of 30,728 to its feet.

Raul Mondesi bounced the next ball to Guzman's right, toward the hole. The shortstop cut it off, and decided he couldn't make a play at second. "His hand was full of dirt and water," said third baseman Vinny Castillo. Guzman's throw pulled baseman Nick Johnson off the bag and skipped toward the Braves' dugout, an error that allowed two runs to score. The Nationals dropped a 2-1 decision.

The sloppy infield, which "was so bad," said Nationals second baseman Jose Vidro. "I'm just glad no one got hurt." "We probably didn't deserve to win the game," conceded Atlanta first baseman and future Nat Adam LaRoche. I can't say I was happy leaving the game. It was heartbreak. But Patterson was my guy.

He had 11 no-decisions by late July and his record was just 4-2. That didn't reflect how well he pitched.

"I know what I'm doing," Patterson said. "The team knows what I'm doing. And that's all I'm really concerned with right now."

In four starts in July, Patterson has a 1.33 ERA, twice pitched shutout ball for at least seven innings, and walked only seven while striking out 32 in 27 innings. That culminated in what was arguably his most important start of the year, when the Nationals were reeling -- having lost nine of 12, in their worst slump of the year.

So on July 20, he shut out the Colorado Rockies, 4-0, at RFK. Asked if he felt pressure to end the skid, Patterson was direct. "Yeah," he said. "I did. I wanted a win tonight, plain and simple. That's all I was trying to do." Patterson pitched into the ninth inning, allowing just three singles, striking out eight and walking just two.

On August 5, Patterson threw the Nationals' first complete-game shutout and the first of his career, defeating the Dodgers at RFK, 7-0. He allowed just four hits, had no walk and struck out a career high 13. "How much better can you get?" Manager Frank Robinson wondered afterward.

Patterson retired 12 straight until Cesar Izturis hit a double in the sixth, a ball that should have been caught by left fielder Preston Wilson. After returning for the ninth, buoyed by Guzman's bases-loaded single and Wilkerson's grand slam that broke open a 2-0 game, Patterson allowed a two-out single to Oscar Robles before retiring Milton Bradley on a liner to center.

It had been a long time coming. Afterward, Patterson said, "It's the first time in my career I've been happy. For the first time in my career, I feel comfortable in the clubhouse," he said. "I feel comfortable with the city. I feel comfortable with the fans. I love playing for Frank Robinson. He motivates me in so many ways because I have so much respect for him. I feel like I'm in my element."

On Sept. 7 in San Diego Patterson pitched his second complete game, defeating the Padres, 5-1 and beating Padres ace Jake Peavy. He was dominant again, setting down the last 14 men he faced, finishing the night with no walks and six strikeouts.

The victory was the Nationals' fourth in a row and kept them within 2.5 games of Houston in the race for the National League's wild-card playoff berth.

After finishing 9-7 with a 3.13 ERA and 185 strikeouts in 2005, Patterson said, "The excitement of the first half was incredible. The second half was like somebody punching you in the gut."

The success of 2005 was short-lived, however. On April 15, 2006 Patterson pitched eight innings and struck out 13 Marlins, allowing just one earned run as the Nats won, 2-1 and stopped a six-game losing streak. But within a week, he was on the disabled list with a right elbow injury.

Patterson made it to the mound only 15 times in 2006 and 2007 combined, as he dealt with nerve-related injuries in the elbow. When the Nats reported to spring training camp in Viera, Fla., in February 2008, Patterson felt healthy and was very much aiming to being the opening night starter at the new Nationals Park.

But it was not to be. He never pitched in the majors again, his career over at age 29.

Patterson, from West Orange, Texas, was drafted by the Montreal Expos with the fifth overall pick of the 1996 Major League Baseball Draft. Montreal lost the draft rights to

Patterson on a legal technicality, so he signed with the expansion Arizona Diamondbacks for \$6.1 million.

In his 2002 rookie season he had a 3.22 ERA. But after a disappointing 2003 he was traded back to the Expos in exchange for reliever Randy Choate. Today, Patterson lives in Prosper, Texas. On Nov. 10, 2007, he married 2005 Miss District of Columbia Shannon Schambeau, who was fourth runner-up in the 2006 Miss America pageant.

As a fan, I have moved on to Max Scherzer and Stephen Strasburg, but I will always remember John Patterson and that look of an ace on a soggy day in April 2005 at RFK.

### **WINNING WITH A ROOKIE MANAGER: WILL HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF? By Gary Sarnoff**

As Opening Day of the 2018 season approaches and the Washington Nationals usher in another new managerial era, there is a question worth asking in Washington: Will history repeat itself?

On Oct. 20, 2017, eight days after the Nationals were defeated in Game 5 of the NLDS, the Washington baseball club announced that Manager Dusty Baker would not be returning in 2018, a decision that did not sit well with Washington baseball fans.

“They told me that they wanted to go a different direction,” a disappointed Baker said. “It’s hard to understand.” The Washington baseball fans agreed. “Mr. Baker won divisional titles in both years he managed the Nationals,” said a disgruntled fan. “He should not have been fired.”

For fans familiar with the history of baseball in Washington, the story had a familiar ring.

On Oct. 23, 1923, eight days after the Washington Senators rallied behind Manager Donie Bush to finish in the first division of the American League standings, the local fans and sportswriters were stunned to learn that Bush would not be back in 1924.

One *Washington Star* sportswriter sounded like Dusty Baker when he told his readers that the decision was “hard to understand.” Another local sportswriter agreed: “The Washington baseball fans stuck with Bush all season and were satisfied with the showing of the club.” The fans also spoke out: “The Washington baseball fans have been insulted. It is with great regret that we read about the release of Donie Bush.”

Both managers were well-received upon their hiring. “In getting to know Dusty and identifying what we want in our next on-field leader of our team, we are happy to have him on board,” said Nationals General Manager Mike Rizzo. “Bush knows baseball,” Senators team President Clark Griffith told reporters. “As a player, he was one of the best infielders the game has ever known. He was an aggressive player who always wanted to win. I can say with confidence that I would have to go a long way to find a candidate better suited for the position.”

While the fans and media were content with the jobs that Baker and Bush were doing, the owners appeared to be less impressed. As the two managers’ contracts approached their expiration dates, questions began to swirl over their contract renewals. “We do not discuss contracts,” said a spokesman representing the Nationals owners. “We are fortunate to have him in our dugout. That said, Dusty Baker has been a real asset to our club. His work ethic and experience have earned him the respect of the clubhouse. We are fortunate to have him in the dugout.”

Like the Lerner family, Griffith avoided the contract question when asked. Like Baker, Bush appeared to be in good standing. “What counts is he has the confidence and respect of the players,” penned one local sportswriter.

When the Lerner family became the owners of the Nationals in 2006, they wanted an energetic manager who would lead the team to the promised land of a World Series championship. Back in December of 1919, when Griffith and his ownership partner William Richardson purchased the Senators, he wanted an enthusiastic young manager who could grow with his team and lead the franchise to the first world championship in city history. He went through three skippers until he found the right man in rookie Manager Bucky Harris, and in 1924, as we all know, the Senators, under the direction of Harris, went all the way.

Now in 2018, we have a rookie manager in Dave Martinez who will guide a franchise that has been searching for a leader who can fulfill a burning desire to win a world championship.

The the events and circumstances from 1923 and 1924 to 2017 and leading into the 2018 season have been identical to the point that a question is worth asking: Will history repeat itself?

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**Trivia Answer:** Ossie Bluege, Goose Goslin and Sam Rice all hit safely for the Senators in the 1924, 1925 and 1933 World Series.