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Play Ball!

The Rise of Baseball as America's Pastime

Course Guidebook

Bruce Markusen
National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

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Prior to working at the Hall of Fame, Mr. Markusen hosted a nightly sports talk show for more than eight years in Utica, New York. He took calls from listeners, interviewed athletes and coaches, and contributed to prerecorded programs. Additionally, Mr. Markusen has served as a consultant for the Smithsonian Institution's online and traveling exhibits on Roberto Clemente.

As a historian of baseball, Mr. Markusen has written several books about the sport, including *A Baseball Dynasty: Charlie Finley's Swingin' A's*, which earned the Seymour Medal from the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) as 1998's best book of baseball history. He has also written biographies of Roberto Clemente, Ted Williams, and Orlando Cepeda as well as a compilation of short stories about the New York Mets.

Mr. Markusen has received the Cliff Kachline Award, given out by the SABR to an individual for career achievements as a writer and researcher. He has also

received the McFarland-SABR Baseball Research Award for his article "The First All-Black Lineup" about the historic lineup employed by the Pittsburgh Pirates on September 1, 1971.

Mr. Markusen lives in Cooperstown, New York, with his wife, Sue, and their daughter, Madeline. ●

About Our Partner

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York, is an independent nonprofit educational institution. It is dedicated to fostering an appreciation of the historical development of baseball and its impact on our culture by collecting, preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting its collections for a global audience, as well as honoring those who have made outstanding contributions to America's national pastime. Since opening its doors for the first time on June 12, 1939, the Hall of Fame has stood as the definitive repository of the game's treasures and as a symbol of the most profound individual honor bestowed on an athlete. It is every fan's "field of dreams," with its stories, legends, and magic shared from generation to generation.

This course, *Play Ball! The Rise of Baseball as America's Pastime*, serves as a retrospective of the game's early days, leading up to the year 1920. The course is presented by broadcaster, writer, educator, and Hall of Fame staffer Bruce Markusen, and the lead writer for the course is baseball historian Peter Morris, with contributions from author Scott Pitoniak.

This course's 24 lectures survey the roots of baseball and the American public's shift from viewing it as a child's game to a worthwhile pursuit for adults. As that perception changed, so did the game's status transform—from a strictly amateur sport to one in which players could make a living as professionals. The course sifts through the myriad leagues and associations that formed during this time, as well as developments like new ballparks, new statistics, protective equipment for players, and the shifting relationship between baseball and the press.

During these years, baseball became deeply intertwined with American culture and society. To reflect that, the course also covers the intersections of baseball with race, gender, business, and labor issues as well as the monumental event

of World War I. The course tells these stories in much the same way that the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum does: through the use of artifacts, photographs, and tales that bring the game to life and memorialize its towering figures. ●

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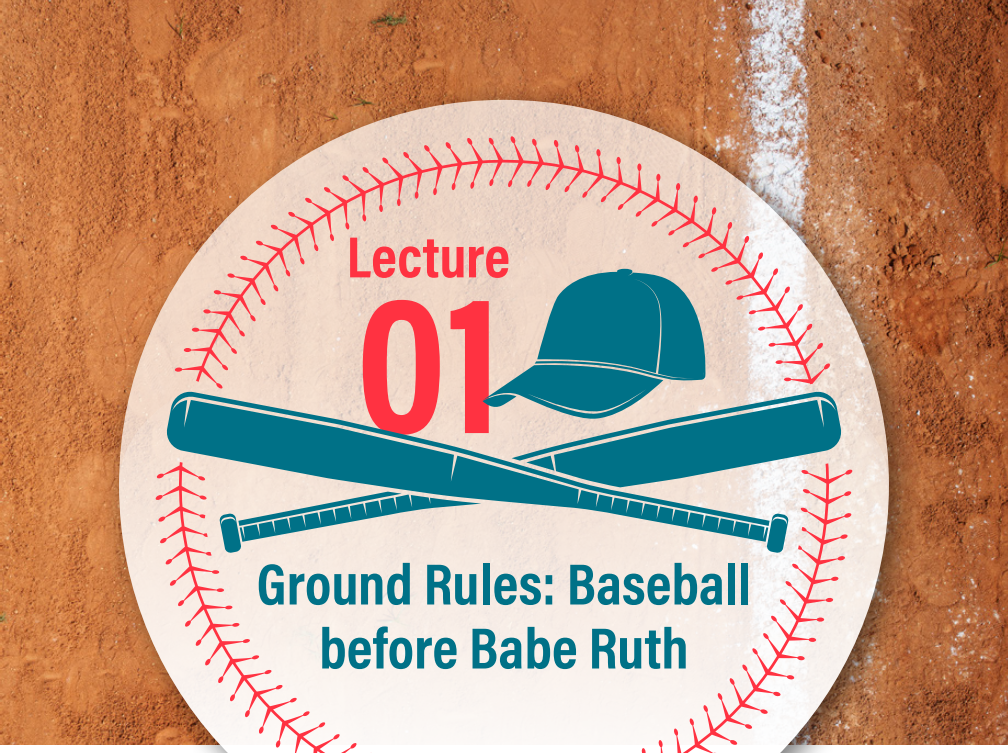


Lecture 01

Ground Rules: Baseball before Babe Ruth

This course focuses on baseball in the years before 1920. To kick the course off, this opening lecture focuses on why 1920 serves as such a good dividing line.

The Year 1920

- The year 1920 is a useful line of demarcation. Within a year or two of that date, an enormous number of changes took place that transformed the role of baseball in American life.

- There were major national and global developments around this time that have had a lasting impact on American culture. World War I had only recently ended, and America had emerged from its previous isolation as one of the leading players on the world stage. The war years also witnessed a migration of more than half a million African Americans, who left the South to pursue the prospect of good-paying jobs in northern factories.

- Additionally, the role of women was rapidly evolving—a fact dramatically illustrated on August 18, 1920, by the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which finally gave women the right to vote. The 1920s also ushered in Prohibition, the first commercial radio station, and a seemingly endless succession of short-lived fads.

- As the world outside baseball was spinning in unexpected and unpredictable ways, the baseball world was, if anything, in an even greater state of flux. Consider just a few of the events that make the years around 1920 so pivotal for baseball:

    - First, the 1919 World Series was fixed. Eight White Sox players—the so-called Black Sox—attended meetings to discuss a plot by which they would intentionally lose the World Series. News of the scandal broke the following September, with the White Sox locked in a tight pennant race.

    - Second, in response to the Black Sox scandal, the game's governing body was scrapped and replaced with a single commissioner: Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who was given far-reaching powers to act in the best interests of the game.

    - Third, the northward migration of African Americans contributed to the founding of the Negro National League in 1920. This was the first of the leagues that became collectively known as the Negro leagues.

- Fourth, in 1922, the Supreme Court upheld the controversial reserve clause, a ruling that meant that teams could retain the rights to a player for as long as they chose.

- Each of these developments would have important long-term implications for the basis of competition within professional baseball. Yet perhaps the most momentous change of all in 1920 was a very simple one: a decision to begin replacing the baseball more often.

Babe Ruth and a New Era

- One man's statistical record testifies to the consequences of that decision. In 1918, Red Sox pitcher George Herman "Babe" Ruth was given the chance to play the outfield when not scheduled to pitch, and he responded by belting a league-leading 11 home runs in 317 at-bats.

- Boston's pitcher-turned-batter experiment was repeated in 1919, and Ruth responded with 29 home runs. Knowledgeable baseball observers were inclined to view Ruth's 29 home runs as a once-in-a-generation achievement.


Babe Ruth

- Ruth was famously sold that offseason to the New York Yankees, where he became a full-time outfielder and proceeded to belt 54 home runs, obliterating the standard that had created such a stir one year earlier. He

again broke his own record the following season with 59 home runs, and did so once more in 1927, when he hit 60 home runs. Perhaps even more remarkably, after becoming the first player to eclipse the 30-home-run barrier on July 9, 1920, he slugged at least 40 home runs in 11 of the next 13 seasons.

- By 1929, the previously unattained 30-home-run milestone had been topped by 12 other major leaguers, four of whom had done so twice. This mean that while Ruth deserves credit for catalyzing a fundamental and permanent change in how baseball was played, other factors also contributed. One of the biggest of those factors was the ball itself.

- The years between 1900 and 1920 are often referred to as baseball's deadball era. The ball used in a typical major league game during those years was far different from the lively ball that Babe Ruth repeatedly clubbed over big league fences during the 1920s and early 1930s. However, there is an inaccurate belief that a livelier baseball was introduced in 1920, ending the deadball era and ushering in a new one.

- Another misconception is that the death of Ray Chapman led to the introduction of a livelier baseball. Chapman was the star shortstop for Cleveland when he was struck by a pitched ball and fatally injured during a 1920 game against Ruth's Yankees. However, to say that his tragic death made Ruth's home run exploits possible is, at best, a considerable overstatement.

- Umpires had been instructed before the 1920 season to replace baseballs more frequently. While there is no way to be certain why

Colorful Nomenclature

The nomenclature of the game's early era was often incredibly colorful. A reader who opened the morning paper to peruse a game account written in the 1860s was liable to find a towering pop-up referred to as a "sky scraper," a ground ball as a "daisy cutter" or a "gopher hunter," or a slow base runner as an "ice wagon."

Chapman did not pick up the fatal pitch, it probably had more to do with the dark, rainy conditions.

Baseballs in the Early Years

- The question remains: Why did the 1920 season launch an offensive explosion? To fully answer that question, it is necessary to go back to the game's early years in the 1840s. In those days, there were some prodigious sluggers, thanks in large part to what the *Brooklyn Eagle* called "rude, homemade balls" that helped to distinguish baseball from earlier bat-and-ball games. Those balls, according to that newspaper's 1884 account, were "made of rubber" and were quite lively.

- While this was great for batters, it was much less so for the fielders of the era, who found it extremely difficult to record outs. An even more daunting problem was that because so much work was necessary to create a baseball, replacements could be difficult to come by. After a long hit, if the ball was lost, play stopped while members of both teams and spectators searched for it, reflecting its status as a precious commodity.

- In light of these concerns, attempts were made to modify the baseball to make it less rubbery. But this was no easy matter, as without the rubber, the ball was liable to become so hard as to be downright hazardous to catch. Uniformity was even more difficult for manufacturers of baseballs to achieve, with the result that the same two teams that engaged in a slugfest one day might struggle to hit the ball out of the infield the following day.

- A cork-centered baseball that better combined resiliency and rigidity was actually introduced in 1909, a decade before Babe Ruth began rewriting the record books. The change resulted in an immediate uptick in offense. However, as with earlier baseballs, the longer the ball remained in play, the more sluggish it became. Moreover, when a new ball was put in play, most pitchers promptly began defacing it

with spit and a variety of other substances designed to make it more difficult to hit.

- Most batters continued to concentrate on ball placement, rather than slugging—that is, taking the short swings that were the hallmark of the era. Even when Ruth began taking lusty cuts at the ball with impressive results, few hitters followed his example, which meant that the overall increase in scoring and power hitting was modest.

- Scores of 2-1 and 1-0 remained commonplace until after the 1919 season, when a dramatic rule change was enacted. The use of the spitball and other pitches that involved defacing the baseball was severely restricted and ultimately prohibited. To make that ban viable, umpires were instructed to replace the ball on a regular basis.

- In addition to being a dramatic change, it was also an expensive one, but the owners believed that the fans would respond to more slugging. They were proven right. During the 1920 season, Ruth responded by taking only 71 games to break the home run record he had set the previous season, and he had amassed 42 homers by the time of Ray Chapman's death in mid-August.

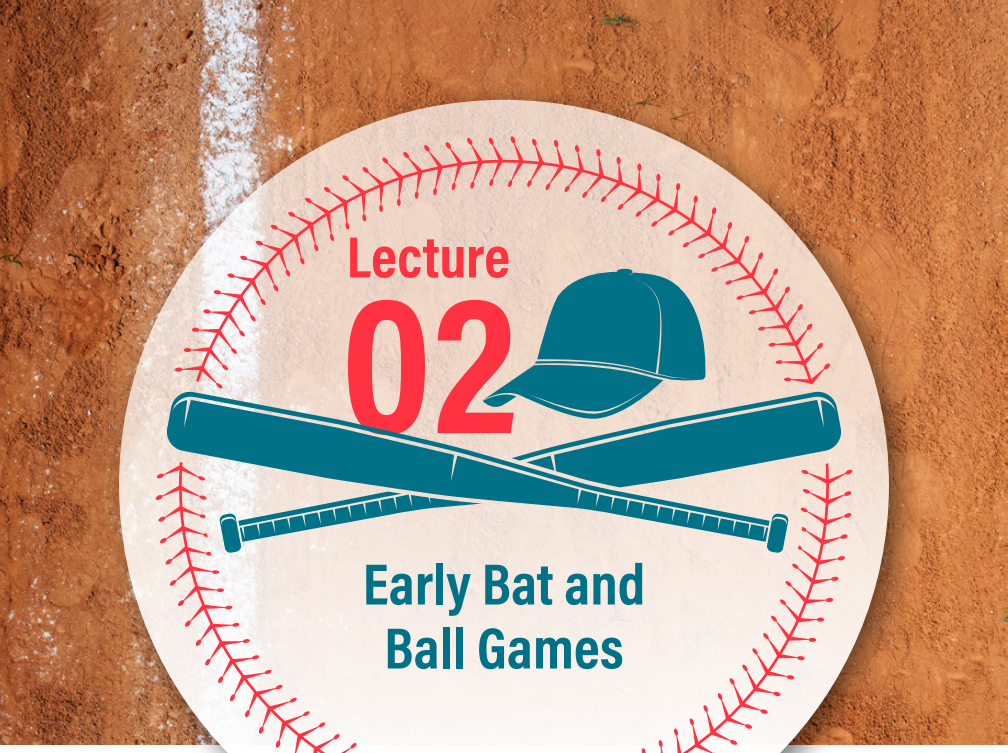
- In short, while the Chapman tragedy drew added attention to the benefits of keeping a clean ball in play at all times, when it occurred, all of the pieces were already in place to bring about the home run explosion of the 1920s. More fundamentally, the new instruction to change the ball regularly during the course of the game does seem to mark a turning point in baseball history.

Uniformity in 1920

- Prior to 1920, the pace of change in major league baseball tended to be rapid, dramatic, and unpredictable, with new ideas regularly being tried in hopes of arriving at standards that were practical and could be

agreed on. By 1920, however, uniformity had been achieved in most important regards.

- Negro league teams of the era could not afford the added expense of constantly replacing the baseball, so their use of the spitball and other trick pitches continued. As a result, so too did the exciting, aggressive style of play that became closely associated with the Negro leagues in the years between World War I and World War II.



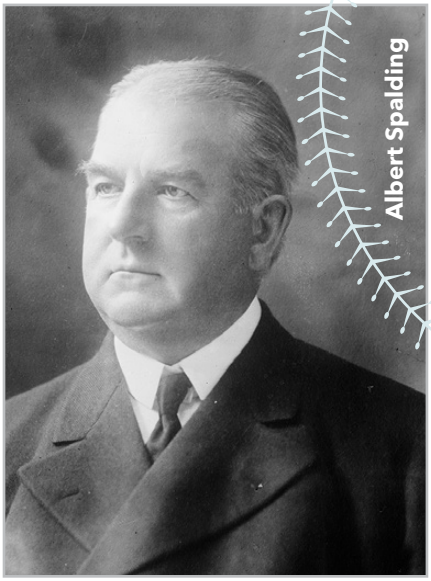
Lecture

02

Early Bat and Ball Games

This lecture looks at an early dispute about baseball's origins and the games that preceded it. It also focuses on early innovator and player Albert Goodwill Spalding, who made many contributions to the game of baseball. He was one of the greatest stars of baseball's first professional league, the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players, and in 1876, he played a major role in the founding of the National League. He also arranged a baseball tour of England in 1874 followed by an around-the-world tour in 1888.

A Bewildering Game


Albert Spalding

- As the 19th century gave way to the 20th, Americans had long since made their peace with the idea of grown men playing baseball, but on Spalding's two overseas tours, the game had often been met with bewilderment. The American tourists found it particularly mortifying that, on both visits to England, all too many of the locals had chortled that the game resembled rounders, a child's game.

- Another of Albert Spalding's savvy promotional ventures was an annual baseball handbook known as *Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide*. Although the guide was proudly billed as an official publication of the National League, it in fact had no such status.

- However, few of the readers who picked up the guidebook and bought the products it hawked were aware of that distinction, in large part because Spalding had entrusted its editorship to Henry Chadwick, a legendary sportswriter. Chadwick's vast experience and unquestioned authority enabled the guide to become an important cog in the vast corporate empire of its namesake.

- Nevertheless, Spalding became increasingly exasperated by one of Henry Chadwick's many preoccupations. Having grown up in England playing rounders, the venerable editor informed anyone who

would listen that baseball had developed from the game he had played as a child.

- Such assertions from one of his own employees were too much for Spalding, who at last penned a first-person article on the subject for the 1905 edition of the guide. After peevishly accusing Chadwick of being "rocked in a Rounders cradle" and weaned on "Rounders pap," the sporting goods titan announced that baseball was not derived from the "asinine pastime" of rounders but from "the old colonial game of 'One Old Cat.'"

- The heated rhetoric that Spalding employed could not entirely obscure a glaring weak spot in his reasoning. Although he correctly pointed out that Chadwick had little basis for his claims about rounders, Spalding was just as unable to provide evidence to support his theory. Indeed, it looked suspiciously as though both men were simply assuming their own boyhood experiences to be universal.

A Panel

- To address this deficiency, Spalding appointed a seven-man panel to reach a verdict and invited readers to mail in their contributions to the secretary of the commission, James Sullivan. Unfortunately, while Spalding selected panelists of considerable distinction, they were ill suited for the assignment.

- The panel took a shoddy and lackadaisical approach to researching baseball's origins. In fairness, however, there was no obvious starting point. If they focused their attention on simple bat and ball games, there was an embarrassment of riches, with such games having been played all over the country for as long as anyone could remember.

- In some parts of the country, these games were known by names like one old cat—the name used by Spalding. However, these names had

many variations, making tracking the games imprecise. Rules and formats of the game also varied from place to place.

- However, we have a very good idea of how one old cat was played by the boys in Spalding's hometown because he provided a detailed account of the game in his 1911 book *America's National Game*. In his description, the game involved three participants, two of whom threw the ball back and forth. The third tried to hit it with his bat.

- When the batter succeeded, he then ran to the object designated as a base in hopes of making a tally. Meanwhile, the other two boys ran in pursuit of the ball. If one of the boys retrieved the ball before the batter reached the base, he could throw it at the batter and try to soak him. Once a fielder succeeded in doing so, it became his turn at bat.

- Still, two eyewitnesses might use completely different names to describe the same bat and ball game. Regional variations added to the confusion; for example, residents of Connecticut were more likely to play a simplified version of cricket known as wicket. Additionally, a family of games known as town ball flourished in such cities as Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and St. Louis.

- Perhaps the most confounding issue of all is that there was no obvious explanation for how and why these games gave way to baseball. Most knowledgeable observers agreed that the New York Knickerbockers had made an important contribution when they wrote down a set of rules in 1845, but this was far from straightforward. There were a number of significant differences between what eventually emerged as the standard version of baseball and the simpler bat and ball games that preceded it.

The Panel, Continued

- Considering that Spalding was already fed up with Englishmen snickering about the resemblance between baseball and the childish

British game of rounders, the members of his panel certainly didn't want to report back that baseball was derived from a game played by English children of both sexes.

- The prospects of satisfying Spalding looked even bleaker when letters from the public began pouring in. To the dismay of the commission, the submissions contained recollections of a seemingly endless number of childish bat and ball games with rules that varied.

- Under the circumstances, the panelists must have been relieved when they read a letter from an elderly man named Abner Graves, who provided a much more straightforward explanation of baseball's origins. Graves's letter described how, 65 years earlier, he and some other small boys had gathered to play ball in Elihu Phinney's cow pasture in Cooperstown, New York, when "Abner Doubleday ... made a plan of improvement on town ball ... calling it 'Base Ball.'"

- When it came time for the panelists to reveal their findings, they rubber-stamped Abner Graves's tale as the invention of baseball. The notion of Cooperstown as the birthplace of baseball and 1839 as its birth date became an enduring American myth. The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum made its official opening in 1939 amid a summer-long celebration of baseball's supposed centennial.

The Founding Fathers

At least two of America's founding fathers played bat and ball games. In 1779, an eyewitness reported that George Washington "sometimes throws and catches a ball for whole hours with his aides-de-camp." Another founding father, Benjamin Rush, lamented in old age "how much time I wasted when a boy in playing cat."

After the Panel

- It is unlikely that Abner Doubleday actually invented baseball in Cooperstown. However, for a full half-century after Spalding's panel reported back, its erroneous conclusions were rarely challenged.

Those who did question the findings found themselves shouting into the wind.

- Eventually, awareness mounted of the folly of anointing Abner Doubleday as the inventor of baseball, but instead of yielding a more sophisticated understanding of baseball's origins, the metaphorical pendulum in the Chadwick-Spalding debate swung back to the equally unsatisfactory theory that baseball was an offshoot of rounders.

- More recently, however, a detailed study by historian David Block determined that the name rounders was never in common use in the United States, but that one old cat and similar games were familiar pastimes. This does not mean Spalding was correct, though: In a predominantly oral culture, the name by which any particular bat and ball game went by was not terribly meaningful.

- That point is dramatically underscored by the ongoing efforts to find references to a game known as baseball in preindustrial America, which has yielded some notable successes. In 1823, for instance, an account in a New York newspaper told of "a company of active young men playing the manly and athletic game of 'base ball.'" However, such occurrences were rare.

Conclusion

- Albert Goodwill Spalding and Henry Chadwick were both correct to imagine that the game they knew as baseball owed a great deal to the simpler games they had played during their boyhoods. Yet in the end, the debate they started amounts to little more than an exercise in semantics that has obscured the real origins of baseball.

- It is helpful to shelve unanswerable questions like who invented baseball and which game it evolved from in favor of trying to pinpoint why baseball emerged in the middle of the 19th century. Prior to

the 1830s, the United States was an agricultural society, in which the entire year revolved around the harvest.

- Children played bat and ball games when the climate permitted and a suitable field was available. They did so in much the way that children have always played games: with participants coming and going, and with the game itself liable to be abandoned if a more interesting pursuit arose.

- On top of that, travel was difficult enough that many Americans had never ventured more than 10 miles from their home. In addition, this was a society dominated by oral modes of communication. Those who played bat and ball games felt no compelling reason to create a uniform version or to give precise names to their activities.

- By the 1830s, that world was beginning to vanish. Americans began to move to the cities, and their ties to seasonal patterns and natural rhythms gradually weakened. The boundaries between childhood and adulthood also began to blur, making it less clear at what age ball games became inappropriate—or whether they ever did.

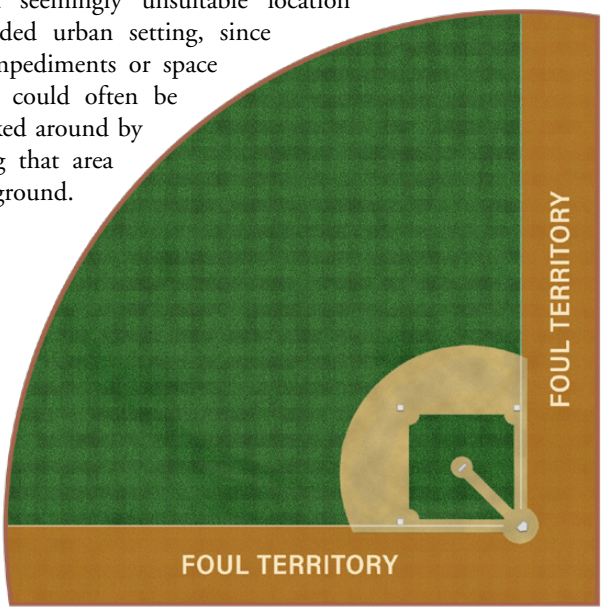
- As American cities grew increasingly crowded, finding anywhere to play without breaking windows or doing damage to surrounding objects became more and more difficult. But as young men began to live in closer quarters and to move about more freely, it also became possible for them to compete against one another at the bat and ball games they had enjoyed since childhood.

- All of these new developments created the need to make those games adaptable and standardized so that baseball players could compete against one another. This is where New York's Knickerbocker club entered the picture. In 1845, they took the historic step of writing down 20 club rules.

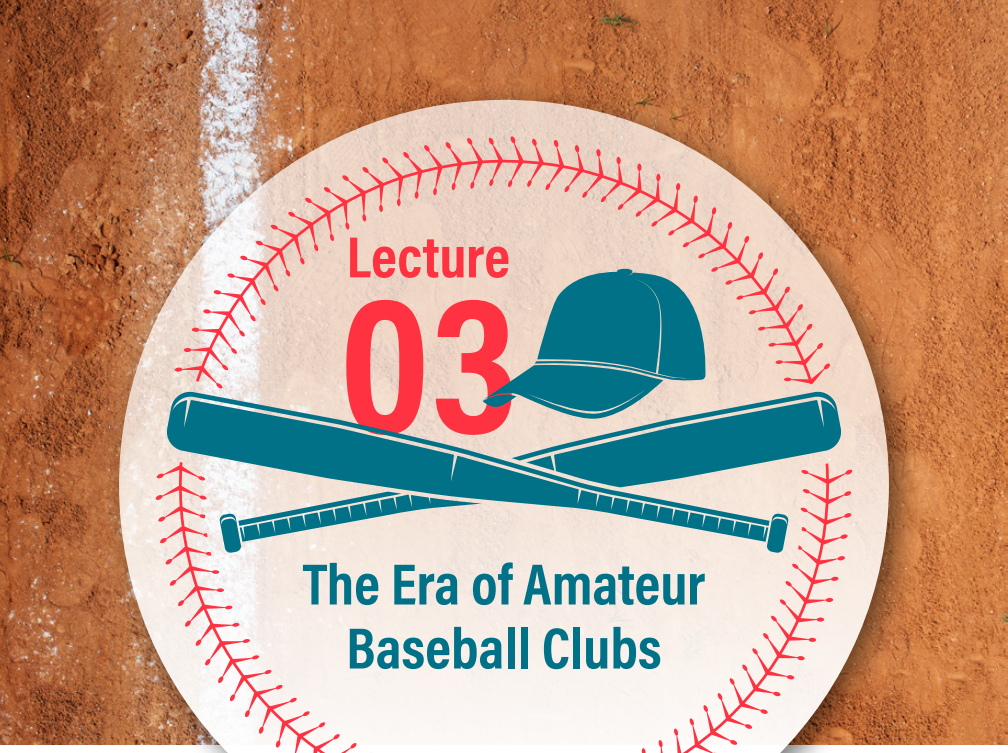
- As William Wheaton, the man who helped to formulate those rules, would later explain nonchalantly, that process began when he was a

member of an earlier club called the Gotham Base Ball Club. That club was obliged to prohibit fielders from recording outs by throwing the ball at base runners. This rule change was unpopular in many quarters, but it had the significant advantage of differentiating the resulting version from the children's games that made use of very soft balls.

- The process of adapting the game to its new surroundings continued with the Knickerbockers, whose 1845 rules designated three-quarters of the field as foul territory. This practice made it easier to retrofit play to a seemingly unsuitable location in a crowded urban setting, since physical impediments or space limitations could often be easily worked around by considering that area to be foul ground.



- In summary, then, it is not true that Abner Doubleday, the Knickerbockers, or anyone else invented baseball. Collectively, though, the Knickerbockers and predecessors like the Gotham club did help to reinvent a familiar child's game by starting the process of making it suitable to be played by adults in the cities of mid-19th-century America.



Lecture 03

The Era of Amateur Baseball Clubs

Many of the men who played baseball between roughly 1855 and 1867 came to regard that era as a golden age. But were those years truly a golden age, or have they been distorted by nostalgia? This lecture takes a look at that question.

Cities and Clubs

- One defining characteristic of the United States prior to the mid-19th century was that none of its cities had yet approached the size of European metropolises like London, Paris, and Naples. However, the Industrial Revolution wrought rapid change. As Americans moved

from farms and small towns to increasingly bustling cities, they felt an acute longing for the sense of community that they'd left behind.

- To address that deficiency, they founded such a wide variety of fraternal organizations, benevolent societies, and relief associations that it became common to refer to the United States as a "nation of joiners." Clubs became popular in the United States for similar reasons—and from the start, they were very different from their counterparts in England. Whereas British clubs were typically restricted to those of high birth or social standing, American clubs brought together those with a specific bond, such as a shared interest, occupation, or activity.

- The first baseball clubs were of this type, as their very names indicated. For example, because the Eckford club hailed from Brooklyn, the modern custom would be to refer to its ballplaying contingent as the Brooklyn Eckfords. But during the amateur era, the name was instead the Eckford Base Ball Club of Brooklyn, a nomenclature that drew attention to its status as a club. The word *team* only entered the baseball lexicon in 1868, just as the period that many of these men thought of as a golden age drew to a close.

- The selection of a club name also reflected the pride taken by the members in the traits they shared. Many clubs, for example, took names that proclaimed their civic or national pride. With voluntarism said to be a "test of a young man's good citizenship," there was a close link between volunteer firefighting companies and baseball clubs. One of the greatest New York City clubs of the era was the Mutual Base Ball Club, which was formed by members of the Mutual Hook and Ladder Company No. 1.

- Workplace bonds also yielded many clubs. Another New York club was formed by medical students and doctors who called themselves the Aesculapians in a nod to Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine.

- The Eckford club itself was composed of expert shipbuilders and other artisans who worked at the New York shipyards. The club was

named in honor of Henry Eckford, a legendary New York shipbuilder.

Emblems of Membership

Many baseball clubs of the 1850s and 1860s had their own logos, ribbons, songs, and other emblems of membership.

The New York Knickerbockers

- No pre–Civil War club did more to advance the game than the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club of New York City. The Knickerbockers experienced very little success on the playing field. Their significance instead comes from their historic decision to write down their rules in 1845. The rules were essentially a list of the modifications they'd made to a familiar game that many Americans had played during childhood.

- Over the next decade, onlookers were more inclined to mock them for playing a child's game than to inquire about their rules. The Knickerbockers themselves seemed often on the verge of abandoning baseball. However, writing down the rules proved very fortuitous when the way Americans learned new information was revolutionized.

- Newspaper circulation almost doubled nationwide between 1850 and 1860, and the 1855 publication of the Knickerbocker Rules in the sporting press and New York newspapers found a receptive audience. In contrast to the oral tradition previously used to transmit the rules, the rules could now spread more uniformly.

- Until this time, each region had played its own distinctive bat and ball game. Most New Englanders enjoyed a game called round ball (or the Massachusetts game). Pennsylvanians and residents of several other states opted for town ball. Virginians played round town. Connecticut residents preferred a cricket hybrid called wicket. Several other games flourished in isolated pockets of the country.

- Under these circumstances, it would have taken decades to create a standard version by means of oral transmission—even in the unlikely event that every region agreed to give up its familiar rules. Yet with the

help of the telegraph and the railroad, the power of the printed word was such that—within five years—the New York rules replaced most of the other versions. In less than a decade, it stood alone.

- The triumph of the Knickerbocker Rules was also directly responsible for that club taking a leadership role in providing a greater degree of organization. Its members called the 1857 meeting that brought into being the sport's first governing body, the National Association of Base Ball Players, which annually published its constitution, bylaws, and rules and regulations of the game of baseball.

Baseball during the Civil War

- Although it's sometimes said that the Civil War was responsible for the spread of baseball to the four corners of the United States, the evidence points to the more remarkable conclusion that the game's success between 1855 and 1867 was achieved in spite of the war. Dramatic growth took place in the years before the first shots were fired at Fort Sumter in 1861—an actual historical event in which Abner Doubleday, the mythical inventor of baseball, really did take part.

- Most clubs founded during these years disbanded at the start of the war. And while there are some documented instances of soldiers playing baseball, these were by no means common.

- Baseball was very much a young man's game during these years. For participants, the sense of belonging that came from club membership and the rapid diffusion of the written rules remained important factors. Two additional factors assumed an increasingly prominent role: the game's inherent flexibility and the natural rivalries that emerged.

- Baseball's flexibility came from that fact that it could be played with improvised equipment on almost any site that had even a modest amount of flat ground. For example, a club formed in Baraboo,

Wisconsin, in 1866 used homemade bats. This club also used a number of different playing fields according to availability.

- The natural rivalries developed between clubs representing nearby towns. Land travel was still plagued by so many formidable obstacles in the mid-19th century. This gave the prospect of a visit to or from a neighboring community considerable excitement.

Membership of Clubs

- The membership of these baseball clubs grew rapidly, far exceeding the nine players who could take the field. Belonging to a club was a privilege, not a right. Members had to be elected, and anyone who did not fulfill their duties was liable to be expelled.

- Foremost among their responsibilities was paying club dues in a timely manner. A high level of conduct and regular attendance were also required, with fines issued to offenders. Many clubs underscored the privilege of membership by inviting local dignitaries to become honorary members.

- However, the issue of social class was particularly tricky. In theory, there was nothing to stop any white man from taking part, but because play had to take place during daylight hours and Sunday games were deemed sacrilegious, a workingman would have to forgo much of a day's pay to represent his club.

- Furthermore, while some African American ball clubs of the era were able to compete against their white counterparts, others could not gain entry. Additionally, women were encouraged to be supporters of baseball clubs, but they found themselves unwelcome if they attempted to assume any other role.

Amateurism versus Professionalism

- The National Association of Base Ball Players banned professional play in 1859. This statute would be largely a moot point until enclosed ballparks were used on a regular basis. Nevertheless, the prohibition had considerable symbolic significance as an affirmation that baseball clubs would continue to be member-sustained amateur clubs.

- However, the game's new governing body also took charge of the rules, and it began to review and modify them each off-season. As the game moved inevitably toward professionalism, the most beloved features of baseball's amateur era were jeopardized or shunted to the side.

- Under-the-table payments became rampant. One manifestation was the creation of East Coast powerhouses. A Midwestern journalist explained to his confused readers that these clubs were "made up not only of gentlemen who are members from the love of exercise and sport, but in a large degree of professional base ball players who do but little save practice their favorite game."

- So-called revolvers did even more damage. These were hired-gun ballplayers who jumped from club to club, ruining the much-anticipated rivalries between neighboring towns. After the 1868 season, the National Association of Base Ball Players was forced to admit that its prohibition on professional play was a "dead letter" and repealed it, officially bringing the game's amateur era to an end.

After the Rise of Professionalism

- Professionalism intruded so strongly that by the mid-1870s, clubs like the Atlantics and the Eckfords had given up baseball entirely, reverting to being social clubs. As the earlier years faded into memory, many participants expressed dismay that baseball would never again be the same.

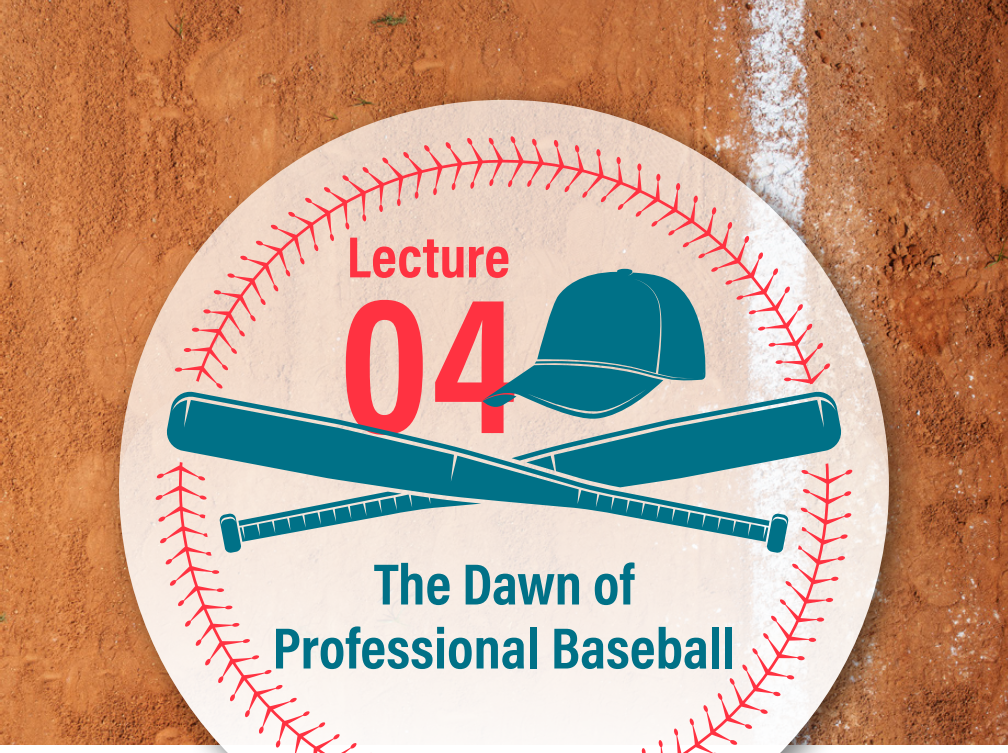
- In some ways, they were right. The sense of belonging that was conveyed by club membership would never again be as central to the playing experience, and no genuinely amateur club would ever again seriously compete for supremacy against the best professional teams.

- Yet hindsight also made it possible to see the game in a new light, raising doubts about whether it really was a golden age after all. The clubs that some men remembered with great fondness brought back memories for others of the most aristocratic English social clubs and their exclusionary practices.

- As for the failed ban on professionalism, the most outspoken defender of the rule was Frank Pidgeon, the former pitcher and star of the Eckford club. While some advocated a middle ground in which players could be compensated for lost wages and travel expenses while still being considered amateurs, Pidgeon led the hard-liners in arguing against pay.

- There is a notable irony about Pidgeon's position, however. At a lavish dinner thrown in 1851 to celebrate a victory of the yacht *America*, Pidgeon's close friend George Steers was not invited despite having designed the yacht. Steers was not considered a social equal of the yachting crowd.

- As the treatment of Steers suggests, while the issue of amateurism in sports is often thought of as a question of purity, it was never that simple. The same doors that admitted some into membership were often used to keep others out.



Lecture 04

The Dawn of Professional Baseball

A group of Cincinnatians made the bold decision in 1869 to form what is often—although imprecisely—considered to be the first professional baseball team. Until then, many baseball onlookers had been more inclined to make fun of the grown men who enjoyed this child's game than to purchase tickets. But things had begun to change by 1858, when baseball borrowed a competitive model that had worked well for horse racing: the best-two-out-of-three series.

The Best-Two-out-of-Three Series

- This format was popularized in 1823, when a thoroughbred horse race took place on Long Island between an undefeated stallion named American Eclipse—who was considered to be the champion of the northern United States—and his fleet southern counterpart, Sir Henry. The two horses split the first two heats before Eclipse pulled away to claim the third race and give northerners bragging rights. The event's success yielded a continuing series of equestrian races that was renewed in 1832, 1840, 1842, and 1845.

- During the 1850s, baseball surpassed horse racing in popularity, making it natural to borrow a format that had proved so successful. With most of that interest confined to the northeast part of the country, however, baseball could not make use of sectional divisions.

- Instead, in the summer of 1858, the civic pride of New Yorkers was channeled into a three-game series pitting the best players from Brooklyn—drawn from the Atlantic, Excelsior, Putnam, and Eckford clubs—against their local counterparts from the Knickerbocker, Gotham, Eagle, Empire, and Union of Morrisania clubs.

- All three contests took place at a racetrack in Astoria, which was then a village in the northwest corner of Queens. When that racetrack opened in 1854, it was initially called the National Race Course. Two years later, it was rechristened the Fashion Race Course in honor of the victorious thoroughbred in the 1842 North-South race.

- The Fashion Race Course was enclosed on all sides, which made it possible to collect admission to a baseball game for the first time. The experimental series attracted considerable attention, and it was both an artistic and a financial success.

- Despite the popularity of the Fashion Race Course series, some observers were troubled by the number of spectators who emulated racetrack patrons by wagering on the games. Baseball's first governing body, the National Association of Base Ball Players, or NABBP, took

note by banning professional play in 1859, but from the start, this rule was controversial.

Controversy over Professionalism

- The advent of enclosed ballparks in the early 1860s facilitated the collection of admission fees, but it didn't resolve the issue of professionalism. To advocates of professional play, this was a welcome change that made it easier for working-class players to take part because gate receipts could be used to compensate them.

- But the issue was not that simple, as a *Brooklyn Eagle* reporter highlighted by assuring readers that fenced-in grounds would "provide a suitable place for ball playing, where ladies can witness the game without being annoyed by the indecorous behavior of the rowdies who attend some of the first-class matches." This raises a question: Had greater access for the members of one group been achieved at the expense of another?

- Although the larger dispute continued to rage, practical considerations eventually carried the day. The NABBP continued to maintain its ban on professionalism, but enforcement depended on self-reporting. Because it was impossible to prevent clubs from making under-the-table payments to star players, the rule was gradually rendered moot, and baseball drifted toward professionalism.

- In hopes of staving off open professionalism, attempts were made to find middle ground, but they enjoyed mixed results at best. Some clubs didn't explicitly pay salaries, but they did use ticket sales to compensate athletes for the wages they lost from taking out time from their conventional jobs as well as the cost of travel and a growing list of other expenses.

- Other clubs tried paying only the players who played the most important positions, but this created hard feelings. Making matters worse, clubs

that did not recruit professionals increasingly found themselves overmatched. The disparity was exacerbated by the head start gained by players of the northeast, many of whom had mastered baseball before their counterparts in other regions had even taken it up.

Matters Come to a Head

- Professionalism became all the more polarizing when the price of grandstand admission for important games rose from 10 cents to 25 cents. Then, the price rose to 50 cents. In an era when unskilled laborers earned less than 10 dollars over the course of a 60-hour workweek, it seemed possible that baseball might eventually be priced out of reach for working-class fans and players.

- With under-the-table payments becoming more common with each passing year, matters eventually came to a head. Some detractors of professionalism now claimed that employees who absented themselves to play baseball were damaging American businesses. However, the most anguished complaints came from those who saw the issue in moral terms, and were convinced that making a living from the game was fundamentally wrong.

- Keep in mind that the Industrial Revolution had brought dramatic changes to the American lifestyle. At first, it appeared that industrialization would ease the physical demands of many chores and create the prospect of more leisure time. However, once Americans began moving to the cities in droves, they began working outside the home at jobs unlike anything they had experienced before.

- Factory work in particular meant performing the same monotonous task over and over without ever experiencing the satisfaction of seeing the finished product. The indoor air was typically awful. Even office jobs could be tedious and unfulfilling.

- The growing specter of urban alienation in the industrial age placed the question of professional baseball—a game played on the grass and framed by the backdrop of the great outdoors—in a new light. Many observers became convinced that the hypocrisy of teams making under-the-table payments to their players was doing more harm to the game than professionalism itself.

- The New York sportswriter Henry Chadwick reasoned in 1866 that, "Where money is to be made, men will resort to the means of making it. If we can, therefore, guide them by an honest path to the goal of their ambition, let us do it, rather than force them to seek it by the wide road of dishonor and fraud."

- The following summer, a 16-year-old Rockford, Illinois, pitcher named Albert Goodwill Spalding led his hometown club to a stunning victory over a touring East Coast powerhouse. While his talents led his teammates to reward him with a silver pocket watch, they also led to the offer of a nominal job at a Chicago grocery store—at a generous rate of pay—so that he could play for the city's most prominent club.

- The issues raised by this offer troubled Spalding. He held heartfelt discussions with his widowed mother and with the man who had become a father figure to him. Eventually, he concluded that there was nothing inherently wrong with professional baseball. Instead, he believed, the real problem lay with the workarounds made necessary by the National Association of Base Ball Players' rule.

Harry Wright

- Another major figure in the launch of professional baseball was Harry Wright, who would one day join Chadwick and Spalding in the Hall of Fame. He had been an outfielder for the Knickerbockers who had gone hitless during the first game of the landmark 1858 baseball series.


Harry Wright

- Wright agreed with Chadwick and Spalding that there was nothing wrong with making a living as an athlete, so long as an honest day's work was done and the spectators who paid to watch were given their money's worth.

- It was not, however, Wright's fate to earn much money for his proficiency at playing baseball. The Knickerbockers were a strictly amateur club, so his sporting income was limited to the 12 dollars a week he made as the professional bowler for the St. George Cricket Club. He received a raise in 1860 when he succeeded his father as the cricket club pro, but the Civil War then put severe limits on activity in both sports. By the time the fighting ended, cricket was losing favor among Americans, and baseball was not yet established as a reliable way to make a living.

- Now 31 and facing such uncertain prospects, Harry Wright gladly agreed to move west when Cincinnati's Union Cricket Club offered him a better-paying position as its cricket pro in 1866. As it happened, the Union Cricket Club shared grounds with the baseball club recently formed by some of the city's lawyers and businessmen, and Wright was soon serving as its captain. Before long, with "baseball fever" sweeping the country, the baseball club lured him away from the cricket club.

- The outbreak of baseball's popularity also rendered the NABBP's position on professionalism moot. A number of ostensibly amateur clubs embarked on lengthy exhibition tours that were difficult to reconcile with the full-time jobs that the players supposedly held down.

- After the 1868 season, the NABBP reluctantly gave clubs the option of competing as amateurs or as professionals. Only about 10 clubs chose professionalism, among them the one in Cincinnati captained by Harry Wright. The club was now paying players' salaries that ranged from 600 to 1,400 dollars a man.

The Red Stockings

- Although Wright's team was formally known as the Cincinnati Base Ball Club, it became universally known as the Red Stockings because of the players' pantaloons, which drew attention to their red hosiery. Even more attention was merited by the remarkable success the club enjoyed in that first season of openly professional play.

- With Harry Wright providing expert coaching and playing the outfield—while his younger brother George starred at bat and in the field—the Red Stockings compiled an undefeated record in all

57 games they played against NABBP clubs, both professional and amateur. They vanquished all of the nation's top clubs, and even took advantage of the newly completed Transcontinental Railroad to make a trip to California.

- The decision to travel west in the midst of this historic, undefeated season also resonates. The Pacific Coast would not boast teams to rival the Red Stockings for many years to come. From a competitive standpoint, the trip accomplished little. However, the long train ride made a symbolic statement about baseball's right to be regarded as the national pastime. It also pointed the way to the game's future: Professional baseball depends on being able to transport players from one city to another, both quickly and cheaply.

Conclusion

- Wright and club officials took pains to attribute their remarkable success story to such time-honored virtues as diligent training, discipline, abstinence from alcohol, and adherence to a strong work ethic. During the offseason, the players faithfully reported to local workplaces, and a widely circulated listing of each player's profession was compiled.

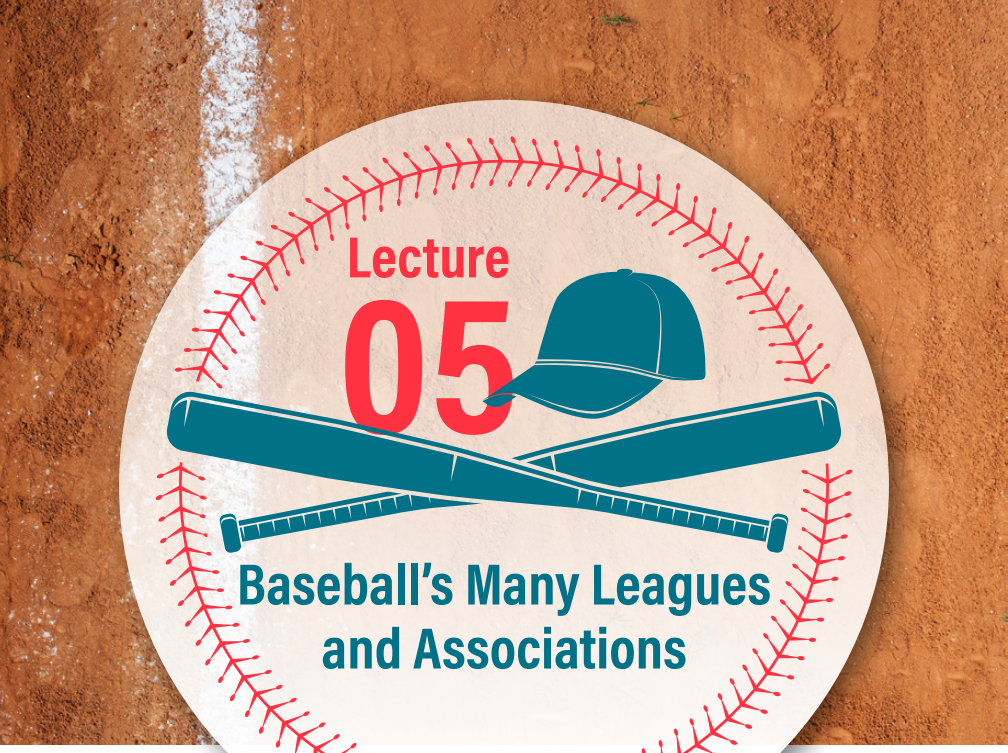
- However, a club member later revealed that "few of them ever did a stroke of work" at their reported jobs. It's even more unlikely that the club's outstanding play was due to temperance.

- The lineup of the Red Stockings also raised issues. One by one, after Harry Wright's arrival, distinguished lawyers like Drausin Wulsin and insurance executives like Henry Glassford were replaced by imported professionals from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. By the 1869 season, first baseman Charley Gould was the only original Cincinnatian left. While the new additions undoubtedly made the team stronger, many of the players shunted aside were angry and disappointed.

- Also misleading is the oft-stated description of the Red Stockings as baseball's first professional team. There were other clubs prior to 1869 whose players all received compensation. They simply didn't admit doing so. It is more precise to describe 1869 as the advent of openly professional play than to identify the Red Stockings as the first such club.

- While these factors clarify the legacy of the 1869 Red Stockings, they scarcely diminish the club's significance. By enlisting the services of a talented group of players—and ensuring that their public behavior remained above reproach—Harry Wright disarmed many naysayers of professionalism and helped to pave the way for baseball's success.

- After only one more season, the Red Stockings disbanded. Harry Wright and several players took their signature red stockings to Boston, with the 1871 club immediately embracing the nickname by issuing ornate gold pins to each player. The move from Cincinnati to Boston also explains why the names of not one but two current teams—the Cincinnati Reds and the Boston Red Sox—pay homage to that legendary ball club.



Lecture

05

Baseball's Many Leagues and Associations

Although the 1869 Red Stockings created tremendous excitement about professional baseball, suggesting that profits might be achievable, the following season showed that there was still an enormous impediment to be overcome. In stark contrast to the undefeated mark of the Red Stockings, a number of clubs compiled impressive records in 1870, but each of them suffered at least four defeats, making it difficult to determine who deserved the championship.

The only fair way to determine a champion is to have every entrant play a comparable number of games against opponents of comparable ability, but doing so was by no means easy. In the years that followed, a prolonged series of experiments took place to find an acceptable format.

Leagues versus Associations

- One of the most important decisions to be made when forming an organization of clubs was whether to call it a league or an association. The members of a league tended to feature stronger central leadership, making it easier to ensure uniformity, fairness, and consistency. An association, by contrast, was a much looser arrangement that provided far less central leadership, leaving most important decisions to the individual teams and with the roster of entries liable to change dramatically from year to year.

- The first professional baseball organization, the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players, founded in 1871, was an extreme example of the latter arrangement. Any team could join by submitting an entry fee of 10 dollars, so the association was a loose confederation of teams without any centralized leadership.

- Schedules and player contracts were left to individual teams. Entries were not granted territorial exclusivity, so multiple teams could and often did represent the same city. Biased officiating by local umpires was a recurring problem, as was gambling.

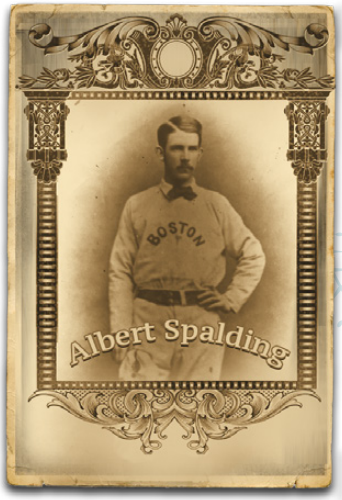
- The National Association encountered many predictable problems and only survived for five years. However, it should be remembered as a triumph because, against all odds, it showed that the concept of such a league was viable.

A Groundbreaking Association

When the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players was formed in 1871, there was no precedent for a professional sports league in North America.

Albert Goodwill Spalding and Chicago

- Boston Red Stockings pitcher Albert Goodwill Spalding was one of the brightest stars in the National Association. However, his time there left him all too familiar with the shortcomings of the National Association.



ALBERT SPALDING	
Win–loss record	252–65
Earned run average	2.13
Strikeouts	248
Batting average	.313
Hits	613
Runs batted in	338

- When he was approached by William Hulbert, the ambitious president of the Chicago White Stockings, Spalding and three other Boston stars signed contracts to play the 1876 season in Chicago. Spalding, then 25 years old, became Hulbert's right-hand man in effecting a fundamental overhaul of baseball's organizational structure.

- When the new National League formed after the 1875 season, the already unstable National Association folded. The aims of the National League were clear from the start. In short, players would play, and experienced business owners would handle baseball's business end, a new direction that was buttressed by a host of new policies.

The National League's Structure

- In an overt attempt to correct the National Association's lack of centralized leadership, the structural modifications introduced by the National League included limiting membership to a select number of clubs with formal criteria for admission, granting exclusive territorial rights to those franchises, and providing league-wide scheduling.

- A new emphasis was also soon placed on player discipline, which by 1880 had led to the creation of a published blacklist. It also led to a controversial rule initially known as the five-man agreement or five-man rule because it allowed each team to reserve exclusive rights to five of its players.

- This rule drew ire because it deprived players of much of their leverage at contract time. Still, Hulbert and his fellow National League owners continued to expand the five-man agreement, and before long they had inserted a standard reserve clause into the fine print of every player contract.

- In a country where slavery was still a recent and deeply painful memory, many demanded how such a clause could be ethically or legally justified. To counter such criticisms, the National League owners sought to seize the moral high ground. Pointing to their bans on Sunday baseball and alcohol sales and to the requirement of an admission charge of 50 cents, they insisted that these policies were necessary to "elevate" the game by making it worthy of the patronage of the most refined spectators.

- All complaints about the harshness of their disciplinary tactics were likewise met with reminders of the problems that plagued the National Association. Many found such arguments unconvincing and believed that the National League had overcorrected to address these issues. The result was that it faced a steady procession of competitors.

Competitors to the National League

- The first of the competitors was formed only one year after the demise of the National Association, which it closely resembled in most regards. Perhaps the most significant difference was that, in recognition of Canadian teams in the Ontario cities of London and Guelph, it was initially known as the International Association. This was the last true association, offering talented teams and players the opportunity

to compete for a pennant with none of the potentially troublesome features that a league's insistence on uniformity could bring.

- By its third season both Canadian entries had dropped out. The association adopted the name of its defunct predecessor: the National Association. However, many of its teams were plagued by financial woes, and this second incarnation of the National Association passed out of existence after the 1880 season.

- One year later, the association concept was revived with several important modifications. While this American Association continued to grant autonomy to its teams on important issues like ticket prices, alcohol sales, and Sunday games, it took a number of steps that gave it greater structure, such as creating an organization-wide schedule and granting territorial rights. In effect, this was a hybrid made up of what its organizers saw as the most appealing features of the National League and the two now-defunct associations.

- When the American Association began play in 1882, it soon became clear that it had found the formula for success in cities like Cincinnati, Louisville, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. These locations had sizable populations of immigrants from Germany and other European countries where Sabbath observance was more relaxed and where the opportunity to enjoy a cold beer at the ballpark was appreciated.

- Supporters of the National League sought to discredit the new challenger by deriding their liberal attitude, but fans paid little heed. After only one season, the established league and the upstart association signed a formal peace treaty in which the American Association agreed to adopt the reserve clause.

- That document, the National Agreement of 1883, paved the way for exhibition and postseason games between the National League and the American Association. In addition, because any minor league that agreed to recognize the reserve clause was also welcome to sign the National Agreement, it created the larger umbrella that became

known as Organized Baseball. Thereafter, rivals would be derided as so-called outlaws or wreckers by the proponents of the leagues that had agreed to be part of Organized Baseball.

Continued Competition

- The major league owners were thrilled about the control they had gained over salaries by means of innovations like the reserve clause and the blacklist, but the players were increasingly disgruntled, leading a series of challengers to step forward.

- The Union Association debuted in 1884 and both components of that name signaled its intentions: The word *association* placed it squarely in the tradition of decentralized predecessors like the National Association, while the term *union* was more provocative. Workers' unions of the era were extremely polarizing entities, with the loyalty they evoked in many working men equaled in intensity by the hostility that many Americans felt toward them.

- Unfortunately, only St. Louis owner Henry Lucas had the financial means to afford the salaries of established stars. This created a competitive imbalance that ruined the Union Association's first pennant race. It never had a chance to rectify that problem, folding after a single season.

- The financial losses of the Union Association made investors leery of such ventures, but the players continued to chafe at their inability to control either their salaries or where they played. In 1885, the Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball Players—the game's first union—was organized, with New York Giants star John Ward at its head.

- Ward and his fellow players began lining up the investors needed to organize their own league, and in 1890, the Players' National League (commonly known as the Players' League) took the field. A few star players chose to cast their lots with the National League or the

American Association, but more than 100 established major leaguers joined the Players' National League, including most of the game's biggest stars.

- This league introduced several new features, including a much-needed second umpire, but these were little more than tweaks. As the word league in the name suggests, this was not a battle over an organizational structure. Instead, it was a battle about how to divide the proceeds and about whether the reserve clause would appear in the contracts of the players. Sensing this, a large number of fans chose to side with neither group, but instead to stay home.

The 1890s

- With games in all three major leagues played in front of spectators disguised as empty seats, the 1890 season soon turned into a battle for survival. That fall, the investors who had backed the Players' National League proved more desperate to get out, and baseball once again had only two major leagues. In the aftermath of the chaotic 1890 season, the already shaky relationship between the National League and American Association was further aggravated by wrangles over returnees from the Players' National League.

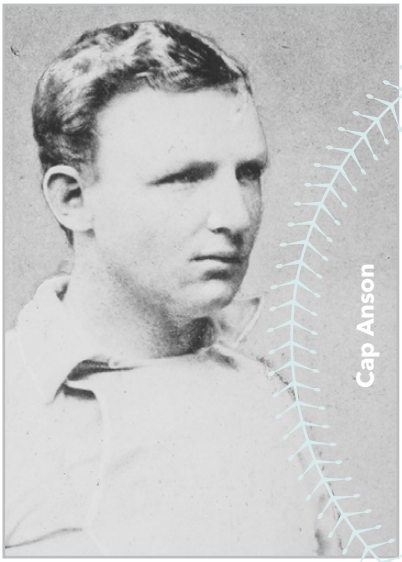
The Pirates

After the 1890 season, Pittsburgh's National League team was accused of the piracy of infielder Louis Bierbauer, earning it the Pirates nickname that endures to this day.

- At the end of the 1891 season, eight National League teams and four American Association teams were combined to form a single league. Additionally, two different attempts were made to revive the American Association.

- The most prominent player involved in a failed 1894 attempt was popular veteran second baseman Fred Pfeffer, who escaped the National League's blacklist when more than 10,000 fans signed a petition pledging a boycott

of major league games if he were blacklisted. The league settled for issuing a modest fine that Pfeffer's supporters paid on his behalf, while claiming that the next offender would be banished permanently.


Cap Anson

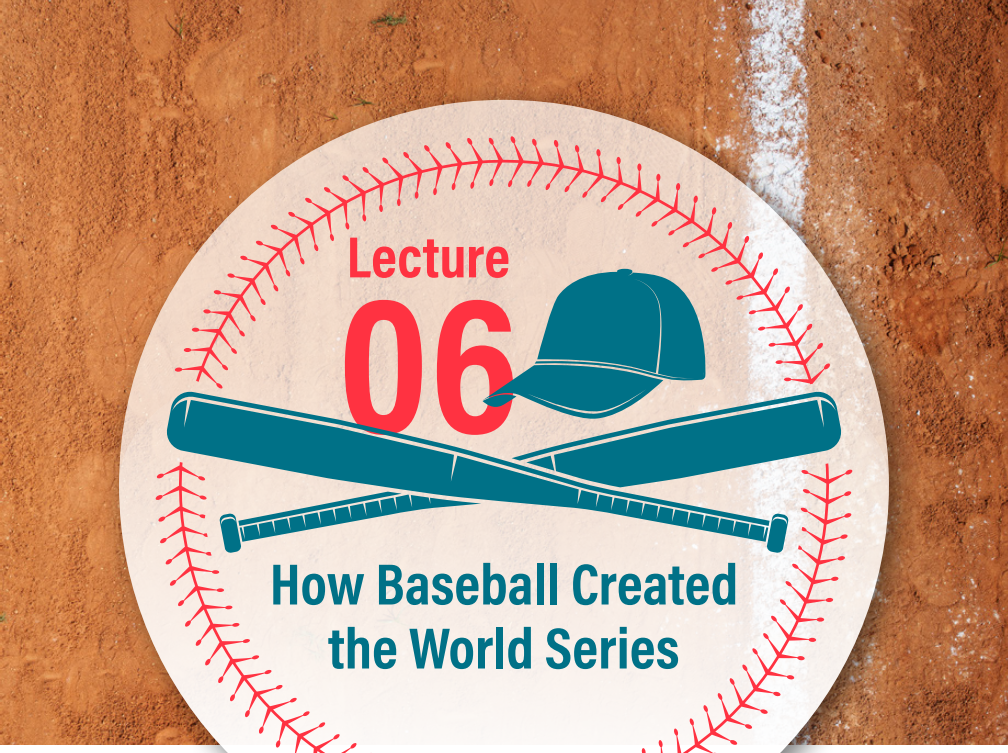
- Another effort to reorganize the American Association occurred five years later, in 1899. The most notable participant was Cap Anson, long known for his fierce loyalty to the National League. When relieved of his managerial duties in Chicago after the 1897 season, Anson became an outspoken critic of the league. This effort also failed, but the involvement of men so little inclined to insurrection as Pfeffer and Anson highlighted the crying need for changes to baseball's structure.

Ban Johnson and the American League

- The field was now clear for baseball executive Ban Johnson. His decision, in 1900, to call the American League a league rather than an association showed that he saw no need to dramatically alter the structure of baseball. He had spent years as a Cincinnati sportswriter and then at the helm of the Western League (a minor league that was the forerunner to the American League). This experience convinced him that such a league could be operated much more efficiently and that the competition of the dual-league structure of the 1880s had been good for baseball.

- The American League's first two seasons witnessed a flurry of clandestine player signings and name-calling. In 1903, John Brush and his fellow National League owners were forced to concede that Johnson's league had come to stay.

- They signed a peace treaty that restored the same basic arrangement that had been created 20 years earlier when the National League had agreed to recognize the American Association as its equal. The wisdom of that decision was made apparent when it was followed by 50 years of such remarkable stability that none of the 16 teams in either league folded or relocated. After a tumultuous three decades, baseball had found a formula for 20th-century success.



Lecture 06

How Baseball Created the World Series

On September 22, 1904, the New York Giants won the first game of a doubleheader against the visiting Cincinnati Reds, clinching the National League pennant. However, the rival American League remained locked in a tight battle. Four days later, with the public and press excited about the prospect of a postseason championship series, the Giants' owner John T. Brush announced that his team would not face the American League champions, alluding to the American League as a "minor league."

However, the previous year, the Boston Americans (today known as the Red Sox) had played a postseason series against the National League's pennant-winning Pittsburgh Pirates, defeating them in a best-of-nine contest. Many fans

were convinced that Brush feared a similar embarrassment, and they openly accused the Giants owner of cowardice.

The swift and forceful public backlash against Brush's refusal to play a postseason championship series was all the more surprising because it had been a long, hard battle to convince Americans that they could trust the results of such a series. This lecture looks at that battle.

The Early Years

- Team sports had been uncommon in the United States prior to the mid-19th century. Sporting activities were mostly restricted to simple tests of prowess, and the public, expecting the strongest or fastest contestant to win every time, tended to be deeply suspicious of any surprising results.

- During the years of explosive economic growth after the Civil War, there was the additional issue that baseball games were contests between the members of rival social clubs, which made it essential to keep competitiveness in check. While a winner or loser had to be acknowledged, great care was taken to stress that the outcome was not the most important thing.

- At the conclusion of each game, both sides gave three cheers for one another and the umpire, after which the captain of the losing nine presented a trophy to the captain of the winners. The trophy in question was none other than the game ball.

A Strain on Sportsmanship

Over time, growing competitive fervor began to put a strain on baseball's high level of sportsmanship. After an 1860 championship match between two Brooklyn clubs ended in dispute, each side turned to the newspapers to claim that they cared not about the outcome of the game but rather about the feelings of the women in the grandstand.

Attempts to Find a Competitive Format

- Eventually, an increased emphasis on winning outstripped all attempts to devise a workable format for competition. Many early clubs used a single-game challenge system borrowed from boxing, but a number of significant disadvantages emerged. The one-game format meant that only one side could enjoy home-field advantage.

- Shrewd club captains began looking for other ways to gain an edge. The holder of a title might keep a strong challenger from getting a chance at dethroning the champion by accepting only the challenges of weaker opponents.

- Such problems led many regions to switch to a best-two-out-of-three approach, borrowed from horse racing. Unfortunately, this format gave the clubs a financial incentive to split the first two games. By playing the maximum number of contests, they could maximize their revenue.

- It was that very situation in 1865 that resulted in the first acknowledged fixed baseball match, with one of the players agreeing to the conspiracy after a crooked teammate assured him that losing the game wouldn't hurt the club. As suspicion of the outcome became rampant, a term was borrowed from the world of horse racing: *hippodroming*, which referred to any situation in which the paying public was presented with a supposed sporting competition that in fact had a predetermined outcome.

- Experiments were also made with tournaments, but the number of games that had to be played made them ill-suited for baseball. Bad weather, travel problems, and no-shows also wreaked havoc.

Professional Play

- The advent of openly professional play in 1869 created more problems. Even though the famous Cincinnati Red Stockings compiled an undefeated record that season—besting every top club—the various

New York clubs took advantage of the challenge system to prevent the club from Ohio from ever playing for the national championship. The following season saw clubs from four different states have a legitimate claim to be the nation's best.

- North America's first professional sports league, the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players, was formed in March of 1871, with entrance open to any club willing to pay a fee of 10 dollars. The money raised from the entrance fees was spent on the purchase of a pennant to be awarded to the champion. Unfortunately, an odd hybrid format was adopted for the inaugural season. Teams played best-of-five series against each other, with the winner of the most series (not games) earning the right to fly the pennant.

- The National Association's confusing most-series-won format was soon scrapped. However, its use of a pennant to symbolize the championship became an enduring tradition that was continued when the National League debuted in 1876, and it continues to this day.

The American Association

- Public recognition and acceptance brought much-needed legitimacy to the idea of a season-long competition between the same teams. It did not, however, do the same for post-season series. After all, what is the point of a championship series in which the same teams compete once again? As a result, games played after the championship series ended were still regarded as mere exhibitions.

- However, the idea of a postseason championship became viable—at least in concept—when a second major league, the American Association, was formed in 1882. The National League champions from Chicago and their American Association counterparts from Cincinnati played a postseason series that fall. Still, nobody regarded the games as anything more than exhibitions, as was shown when

Chicago fielded a lineup for the opener with pitcher Larry Corcoran playing shortstop in place of future Hall of Famer Mike Kelly.

- When Cincinnati won that game, Chicago presented a more normal lineup in winning the second game. However, with the stage set for an exciting conclusion, the series was abruptly abandoned due to apparent scheduling conflicts.

- The two leagues resolved some of their differences before the 1883 season. But a significant talent difference remained, and a scheduled series between the two was quietly canceled after the American Association's standard-bearer lost a series of postseason exhibition games against National League also-rans.

- After the 1884 season, a three-game series was played between the National League champion Providence Greys and the American Association's pennant-winning New York Metropolitans. These games were billed for the first time as being for the world championship, but they came nowhere near to living up to that billing.

- Providence won the first two games handily to wrap up the series. Following gentlemanly custom, the third game was still expected to be played, but there was little interest in it. Eventually, Metropolitans manager Jim Mutrie offered to let Providence choose the umpire. The Greys manager cunningly selected New York's Tim Keefe for the role, thus ensuring the star pitcher couldn't participate in the game, and Providence coasted to victory.

- Although the 1884 series had reinforced all of the reasons for regarding such games as exhibitions, a postseason series between the champions of the two major leagues became an annual fall tradition that continued through 1890. Importantly, the initial talent imbalance disappeared during those years, yielding tightly fought series and memorable moments that drew considerable attention from the press and public.

The Struggle Continues

- Nevertheless, these games still had a hard time escaping the perception of being exhibitions. The owners of that year's champion teams negotiated the format and number of contests again each fall. Whether to play a predetermined number of games or a best-of format was a particularly difficult decision. The predetermined number could render many games meaningless, while a best-of series could lead to charges of teams benefitting financially by artificially extending the series to the maximum number of games.

- In several years, neutral-site games were included, creating an unfortunate resemblance to touring exhibits like the traveling circuses of Barnum & Bailey. That was especially the case in the 1887 series, a 15-game contest that took place in nine different cities. A more fundamental problem was that a short postseason series undermined the message that an entire summer's worth of games was necessary to determine a champion.

- Postseason matchups of the champions of the National League and American Association ended in 1891 when the two rival organizations merged into a single 12-team league, initially dubbed the Big League. This soon became known as the National League.

- It initially borrowed a split-season format that had previously worked well in a minor league. This approach gave each National League team a fresh start at mid-season, but left the first-half winner with no outward incentive during the second half. Accusations of hippodroming flew. Attendance also fell off dramatically in the second half of that season. The postseason—pitting the winners of each split season against each other—failed to attract much interest, so the scheme was abandoned.

- Postseason series were revived in 1894 when Pittsburgh Pirates president William Chase Temple offered the ornate silver Temple Cup for the winner of a best-of-seven series to be played between the league's first- and second-place finishers. However, this format had limited success.

- The Temple Cup was scrapped after the 1897 season, though the format was revived for one last fling in 1900 when the *Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph* newspaper sponsored another postseason series between the National League's top two finishers, offering a magnificent silver trophy to the winning club. After that, it was not until 1969—with the creation of eastern and western divisions in each league—that Major League Baseball's championship format again included rematches of in-season contestants.

The Split Season, Revived

In 1981—in the wake of an eight-week players' strike— the split-season concept was tried again. Once again, it proved to be problematic. The Cincinnati Reds finished with the best record in major league baseball that year, but the Reds didn't make the playoffs because they won neither half of the split season.

The Late 1890s and Early 1900s

- In the late 1890s, former Cincinnati sportswriter Ban Johnson transformed a minor association known as the Western League into

the renamed American League of Professional Baseball Clubs. In 1901, it proclaimed itself to be a major league. This made possible a new postseason series between champions that had not already faced each other.

- At first, the animosity between the two leagues was too intense to allow a showdown to take place. Johnson's teams began to make signing raids on National League players. That meant war, and both sides knew that destroying the other league's competitive balance was the most effective method.

- Even after a provisional peace agreement was reached in 1903, strict rules were created to restrict interleague trades so that teams in one league could not affect the other league's pennant race. As a result, before the 1960s, significant trades between the two leagues were rare.

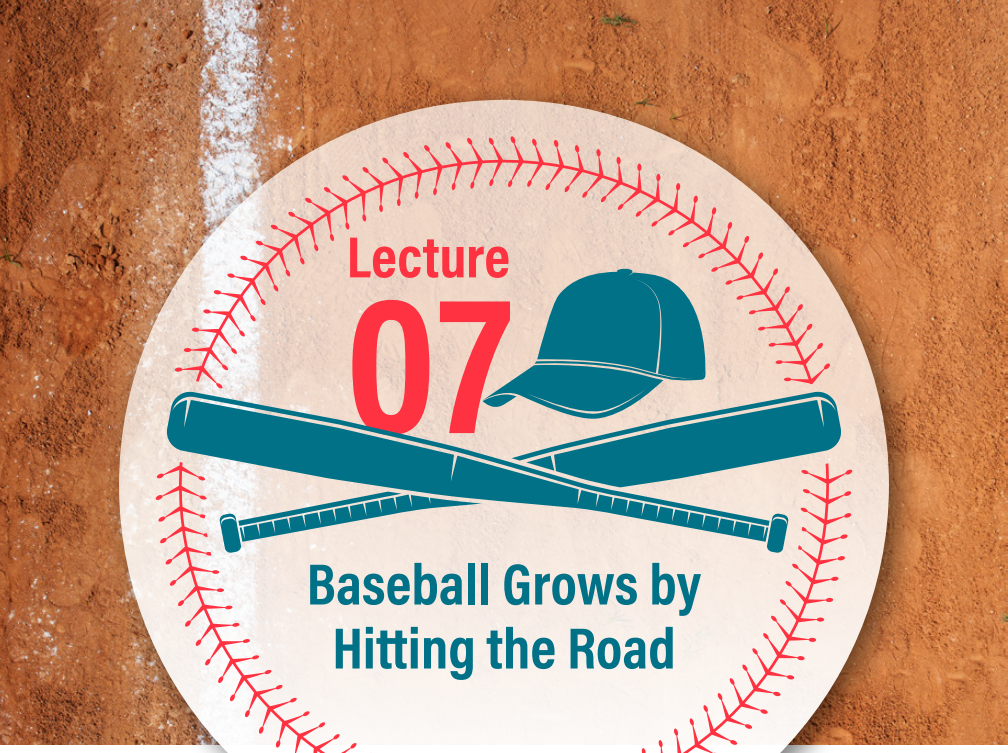
After the 1903 Peace Agreement

- The 1903 peace agreement made possible the staging of a postseason series, at last. This first so-called World Series saw the Boston Americans upset the National League Pirates. According to *Boston Globe* sportswriter Tim Murnane, a former major leaguer himself, many within baseball continued to perceive these events as being "but exhibition games."

- This was when New York Giants owner John Brush expressed the preference of many National League owners in a statement, which ruled out the possibility of a postseason championship series. He did not consider the American League a major rival.

- The Giants refused to face the American League champion after the 1904 season. However, that winter, John Brush bowed to public opinion and drew up what was known as the Brush Rules. They laid the foundation for the World Series to become an annual event and an overwhelming success.

- Each fall in the years that followed, huge crowds gathered outside newspaper offices all over the country to watch giant scoreboards that were regularly updated via telegraph. Thanks to these developments, the World Series had made major strides toward becoming established as an American institution.



Lecture 07

Baseball Grows by Hitting the Road

In the final decade of the 18th century, a few visionaries outlined plans for steamboats capable of traversing interior waterways and ending Americans' dependence on the currents. In the early years of the 19th century, the steamboat caught on, and soon Americans were building massive canals that made it possible to form communities in previously landlocked areas of the Midwest. Soon, the railroad provided an additional boost to transportation, and America became more mobile than ever before. The sudden new access to faraway places exerted a powerful influence over every aspect of American life, including leisure activities like baseball.

Travel, Leisure, and Baseball

- With the nation's busy cities increasingly plagued by noise and pollution, one of the most popular uses of the new modes of transportation was as an escape from the hubbub. Picnic groves and other alluring destinations proliferated on the outskirts of major cities. Before long, specific railroad lines were being designed for the purpose of transporting people to and from leisurely areas.

- Two New Jersey towns that played roles in this process were the longtime homes of extremely influential pioneer baseball clubs. Camden served as the home base of the Olympic Ball Club of Philadelphia, while Hoboken's Elysian Fields did so for the Knickerbockers and numerous other New York City clubs.

- The Knickerbockers had already been forced to vacate a couple of sites in Manhattan before settling at the Elysian Fields in the mid-1840s, so in the absence of a ferry to Hoboken, their members might have been forced to give up baseball entirely. Instead, the club thrived in its new home, creating the rules that became the basis of the original regulation version of baseball.

- The reward for this standardization was that it became possible for players in one community to compete against rivals from other communities, and in a few cases to host one of the game's legendary clubs. Particularly noteworthy in this regard were two tours that the renowned Excelsior club of Brooklyn took in the summer of 1860, first to five cities in upstate New York and later to Philadelphia and Baltimore.

The Civil War

- The following spring, the first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter, bringing baseball tours to an abrupt halt. The Civil War has often been credited with helping to spur baseball's dramatic postwar growth by bringing young men from various parts of the country into close proximity. However, lulls in the fighting were more suited to

informal ball play than the new formalized version of the game, and it appears to have been significantly more common for schools to be the place where such mingling helped to spread the word.

- Fort Wayne native Bob Fisher, for instance, founded that city's Kekionga club around 1866 after returning home from school in New Jersey and discovering that nobody in Fort Wayne was familiar with the new version. Because the new ease of transportation allowed many parents the luxury of sending their children to faraway schools, that same story played out in countless American communities.

After the Civil War

- When the Civil War ended in 1865, the efforts of these students were complemented by the resumption of baseball tours, including several that took advantage of the rapidly expanding network of railroads to cross the mighty Allegheny Mountains. In 1867, the National club of Washington DC toured the Midwest and racked up a series of one-sided victories before a shocking defeat to the Forest City club of Rockford, Illinois. This event launched the career of a teenaged pitcher from Rockford: Albert Goodwill Spalding.

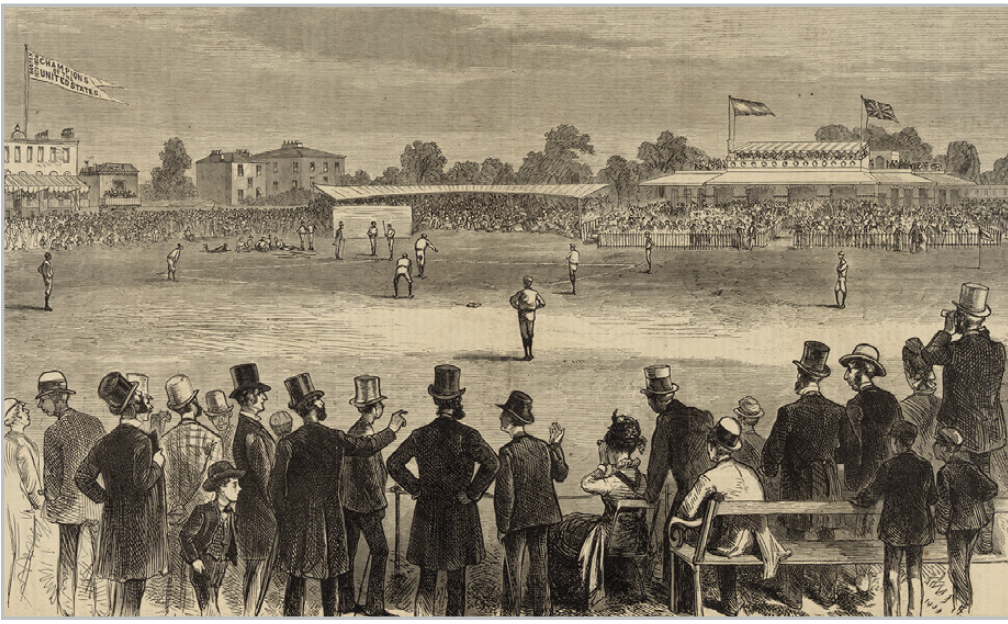
- Two years later, another tour of the Midwest by a different club from Washington DC provided a vivid reminder that, while the railroads made such jaunts possible, they were still fraught with hazards. When the Olympic club missed its train from Cincinnati to Philadelphia, they were forced to ask the operators of a freight train to hitch an extra boxcar to the end and let them ride in it. It was a very uncomfortable way of completing a 600-mile overnight trip through the Alleghenies, but they arrived in Philadelphia an hour before game time.

- With each tour, the bonds between two regions long separated by a seemingly impassable mountain range were strengthened, and so too was baseball's status as the national pastime. In 1868, George F. Sands of

Cincinnati became the first Midwesterner to serve as president of baseball's first governing body, the National Association of Base Ball Players.

- One year later, the standard-bearer for Sands's hometown, the Red Stockings, helped to add another region to that mix by taking advantage of the newly completed Transcontinental Railroad to make the once-arduous trip to California for a series of baseball games. That Cincinnati Red Stockings club also marked the advent of open professionalism, which left many cities fielding teams devoid of players with local ties.

- However, many players still tried to uphold the good name of the city they represented, with some looking to find ways to continue the spread of the game. By then, Albert Spalding was one of the National Association's brightest stars, and in January 1874, he traveled to England to arrange a summer tour of that country by his Boston team and the Philadelphia Athletics.



Financial Concerns

- For those in charge of most early professional teams, a pressing concern was staying financially solvent. Here, travel was of critical importance. While the railroads made it possible for teams to spend the summer traveling the country to play baseball, the expenses of doing so remained enormous. With red ink the norm, early teams tried to limit their traveling parties to 9 or 10 men, with the 10th man often a beleaguered manager who would have to scramble to find a substitute if an injury took place.

- For that matter, managers often left strategy to the team captain to devote more time to scheduling, a slow and tedious process that typically involved posting letters, checking each reply against train schedules, making the necessary reservations, and then hoping against hope that the game did not run long.

Nineteenth-century games often ended early because a team had to catch a train.

Improvements to the Process

- After the National League was founded in 1876, there were more welcome developments, beginning one year later when the onerous responsibility of scheduling league games was centralized. By the 1880s, profits had begun to replace red ink, with lower railroad fares one of the most significant factors.

- In the years that followed, the continued expansion of the nation's train network was a great boon to professional teams. The expansion allowed most of the teams in many leagues to be joined together by a single railroad line and inspiring some to begin the custom of conducting spring training in warmer climes.

A World Tour

- In 1888, a number of players went on a world tour, which was the brainchild of Albert Goodwill Spalding, then the owner of the Chicago White Stockings. One notable member of the tour was White Stockings outfielder Jimmy Ryan, who referred to the event in his diary as an "Australian" baseball tour.

- Ryan and his fellow players had been told that their final destination was Australia, where they would put on displays of baseball being played at its highest levels. Spalding would set up markets for his sporting goods firm to sell baseball implements and other sporting goods paraphernalia.

- Instead, midway through the trip, Spalding approached the players with the idea of extending the voyage beyond Australia. Yet as historian Mark Lamster argues in his insightful history of the tour, the apparent "change of plans" that Spalding announced was almost certainly something that Spalding had been planning all along.

- The most obvious reason for the subterfuge was that the traveling party included Giants shortstop John Ward, the leader of a recently formed player's union. It would be very handy to have him out of the country when Spalding and his fellow owners announced their plans to revise their labor policy and curtail player salaries for the 1889 season.


John Ward

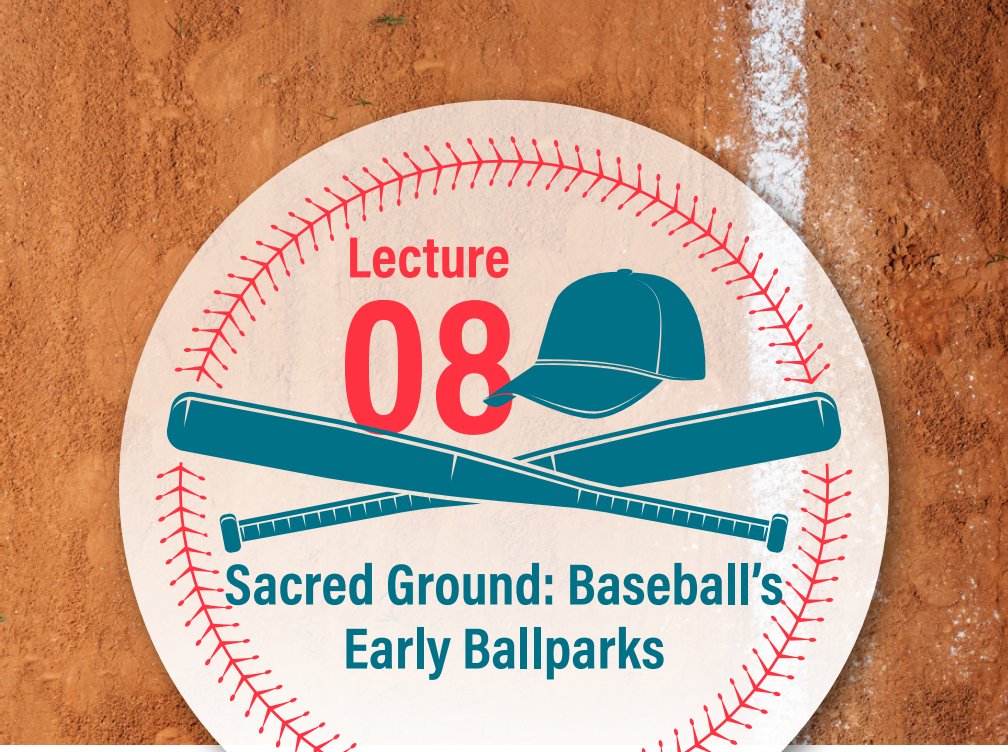
- In any event, the players assented, and the ambitious outing was essentially transformed into an around-the-world tour. In the months that followed, the ballplayers continued their travels by means of rickshaws, camels, ships, trains, and horses. They paid visits to such sites as the Eiffel Tower, the Great Sphinx, and the Coliseum, and gave displays of America's national pastime to a handful of monarchs and countless commoners. As they traversed the globe, Spalding continued to pursue new markets for his sporting goods firm.

- All too often, the ball games were met with incomprehension rather than interest, and seem to have been quickly forgotten. However, it would be going too far to conclude that the world tour of 1888–1889 did nothing to help baseball's growth in foreign lands.

Conclusion

- Despite the lack of tangible results, the expeditions continued, including another world tour after the 1913 season and many less ambitious ventures. Many of the countries that played host to these exhibitions showed just as little interest, but there were already some notable instances where baseball had taken root, such as Cuba and Japan.

- Reflecting this hit-and-miss process, while baseball today is not popular in every part of the world, there is a long list of countries that share the American passion for the game. Additionally, the contributions of numerous foreign players have thrilled major league fans, especially in recent years. Jimmy Ryan, Albert Goodwill Spalding, and the rest of the world tourists helped to set that in motion with their historic tour.



Lecture 08

Sacred Ground: Baseball's Early Ballparks

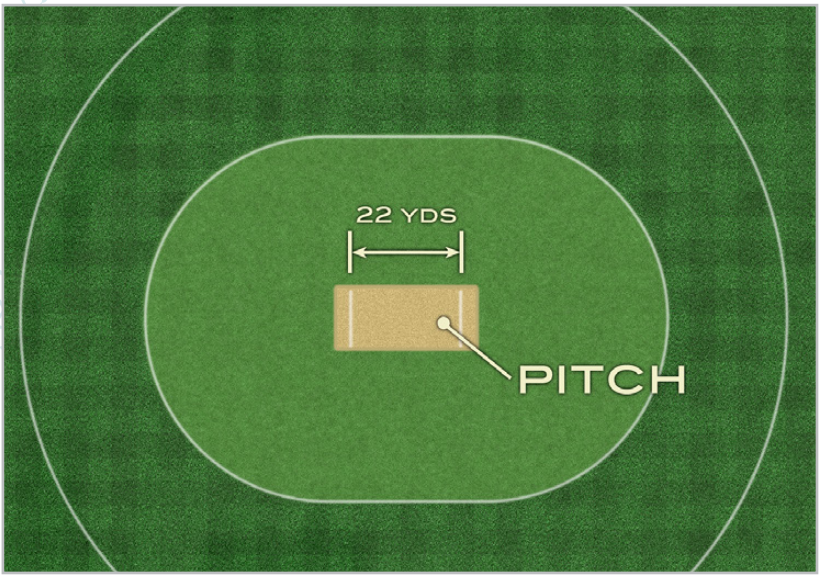
Today, many American cities feature ballparks that double as longstanding civic landmarks. For example, baseball at Wrigley Field has become such a tradition that not even the oldest fan can remember the Chicago Cubs having any other home park. But while the roots of that tradition speak to the length of the love affair between Americans and their national pastime, the opening of Wrigley Field in 1914 also represented the end of another important tradition—one in which ballparks were defined by their surroundings. That era, starting with the early days of America, is the subject of this lecture.

Land Surveying

- Land surveying was an important and highly respected profession in 18th-century America. Surveyors avoided overlapping claims in large part with a surveying tool known as Gunter's chain. This tool, named for the Englishman Edmund Gunter, was 22 yards in length and composed of 100 links in groups of 10. Using the time-honored surveying method of metes and bounds, a trained surveyor could start at a designated obstacle—the mete—and create precise bounds, or boundaries.

- Gunter's chain also exerted a significant influence over the American national pastime. Because England has a very flat terrain and much of its land was settled by the Middle Ages, it was not uncommon to find the large, level plots of land necessary to play cricket.

- It is no coincidence that a cricket pitch (the area where most of the action takes place) is 22 yards long: Cricketers simply stretched out Gunter's chain. However, in addition to measuring the pitch, it was



also necessary that the pitch be located in the center of a very large plot of land that was level and clear.

- That was by no means an easy task in wilderness-covered America. With flat land uncommon in mainland European countries, bat and ball games were rare there. It would have been logical to imagine that that would be the case in the New World as well. However, colonial Americans simply played modified versions of bat and ball games, such as three old cat and wicket.

- Play in a country with such ill-suited terrain required accommodations. For example, the most obvious concession was the use of a soft ball that could not be hit very far, which made it possible to play such games in a very constricted area. If the shortage of land was acute, the bat might be eliminated, with the players instead hitting the ball with their hands.

The Mid-19th Century

- For those wishing to play baseball prior to the mid-19th century, the biggest difficulty had been that any suitable field would instead be claimed for farming purposes. However, by the 1840s, cities like New York were bursting at the seams, which meant that any plot of land suitable for baseball in or near those cities was also desirable for business purposes. Additionally, as the game evolved, players began using a harder ball, and their lengthy hits accentuated the problem of finding a suitable site on which to play.

- The early years of baseball were characterized by the difficulty of finding appropriate sites. For example, the Knickerbockers were forced to move three times in short succession because the sites they chose in Manhattan were too small or were coopted for other purposes. Eventually, they made a permanent home at the Elysian Fields in Hoboken. However, trees in the outfield made fielding difficult.

The Economics of Elysian Fields

Elysian Fields had been designed with the purpose of making money for its owner, Colonel John Stevens, a wealthy ferryboat merchant. Recognizing that its location made it an ideal resort for New Yorkers seeking to escape from the city, Stevens purchased the entire area and made admission free to all—but he cunningly charged for the ferry ride there.

The First Enclosed Ballpark

- The first enclosed ballpark, Union Grounds, opened in 1862 in Brooklyn. Businessman William Cammeyer bought one of Brooklyn's many vacant lots and converted it into an ice skating rink.

- The success of the venture led him to construct a fence and a seating area the next spring in hopes of hosting warm-weather recreational activities. In his initial plans for the Union Grounds, he estimated that baseball would account for a tiny fraction of the total revenues, but instead it proved such a popular spectator sport that it became the principal attraction.

The Spread of 19th-Century Ballparks

- Other entrepreneurs soon began constructing their own diamonds, and this flurry of activity brought significant changes to baseball. Outfields had previously extended to the horizon or the nearest natural blockade, but with these parks now being fully enclosed, batters could swing for the fences by trying to hit the ball out of the ballpark.

- In light of the limited funds that owners were able to spend on them, 19th-century ballparks were regarded as temporary structures. Team owners spent as little money as they could for a piece of land that nobody else wanted, and then hired talented groundskeepers to get the field ready for play.

- In most cases, these ballparks featured limited seating capacities and few amenities of any kind. Worst of all, their wood frames made them firetraps that burned down with distressing regularity.

- One thing that could be said in favor of 19th-century ballparks was that their diminutive size produced considerable intimacy, with spectators close to the action. In the early years, players were liable to sprawl on the ground or even sit with the spectators while their teammates were batting. In 1882, the National League mandated that ballparks feature a bench, and during the 1890s, the first covered benches and dugouts made their appearance.

The Early 1900s

- By the early 1900s, the technology needed to reconfigure land was becoming available. For example, after the 1902 season, American League president Ban Johnson was eager to put a franchise in New York City. New Giants manager John McGraw reported to team owner John Brush that he had "gone over Manhattan Island from the Battery to the Harlem river very carefully and could not find a spot large enough to play a game of three old cat."

- However, Johnson's operatives outwitted McGraw, securing a lease on a lot in the city's Highland region that was described as "nothing more or less than a rocky hill." By spending more than two-thirds of the construction costs on dynamiting and excavating the site, they had their ballpark ready for opening day.

- In response to the urgent need to secure land before it became hopelessly expensive, a whole wave of more permanent ballparks sprung up in the first two decades of the 20th century. The building frenzy began in 1905 when the minor league Senators of Columbus, Ohio, tore down their grandstand and replaced it with a double-decked concrete-and-steel grandstand with a far greater seating capacity.

- The major league owners took note and an extraordinary makeover began in 1909. The opening that year of Pittsburgh's Forbes Field and Philadelphia's Shibe Park began a seven-year period in which every major league team except the Phillies either erected a new concrete-and-steel ballpark or gave their grandstands concrete-and-steel facelifts.

- Iconic double- and triple-decked edifices such as Brooklyn's Ebbets Field, Boston's Fenway Park, and the Detroit ballpark that eventually became known as Tiger Stadium mirrored the vertical expansion of the 20th-century American cities. In addition to affording far more seating than their ramshackle predecessors, they featured fire-resistant materials, fan-friendly ramps, and steel-reinforced concrete foundations. Luxury seating was also available at many of them.

- Reflecting the preoccupation of 20th-century real estate developers, location was crucial to the major league owners who built these

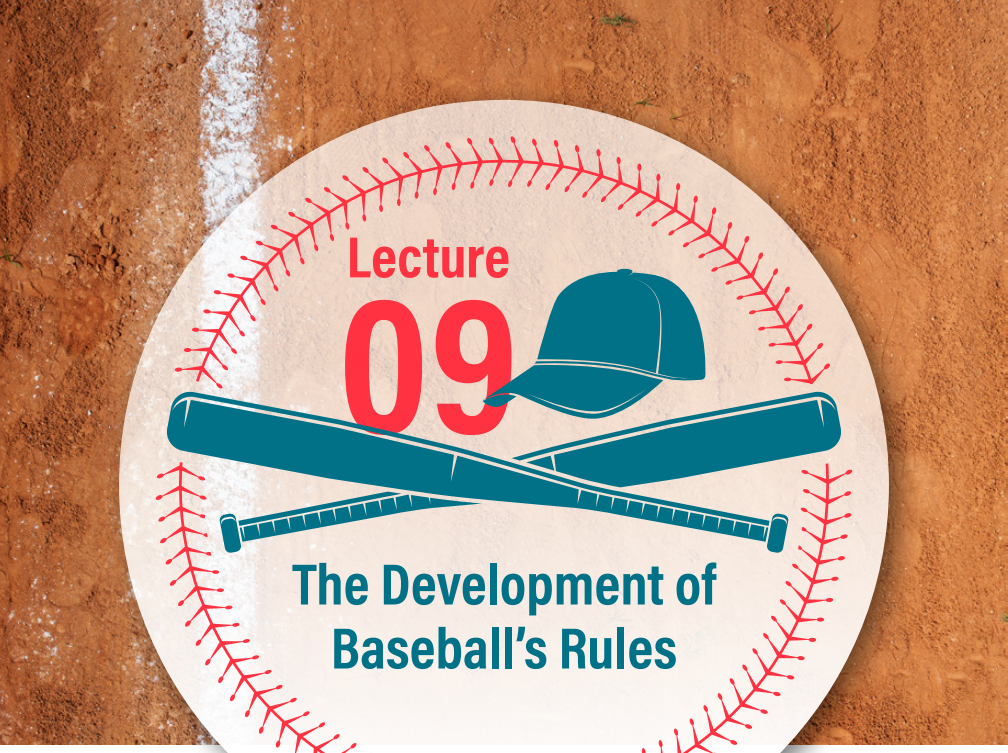
concrete-and-steel ballparks or secured long-term leases on them. They were by no means averse to bargains, with Ebbets Field being built on the site of a longtime garbage pit.

- Their focus was on finding a site where land value was likely to appreciate. A particularly common ploy was to purchase land on the outskirts of town, in the expectation that the city would soon expand in that direction. More than a few team owners also had stakes in the local trolley and streetcar companies, so their choice of such out-of-the-way locations created synergy between the two businesses.

Conclusion

- While these new stadiums represented upgrades over their predecessors in many key ways, they included reminders of the days when surveyors depended on metes and bounds. For example, Fenway Park has unusual outfield dimensions because it was essentially retrofitted into an awkwardly shaped city block.

- When the Cubs relocated to Wrigley Field in 1916, the act confirmed a remarkable transformation: A mere seven years earlier, no major league team had played in a steel-and-concrete stadium, but with the move of the Cubs, 15 of the 16 did. In addition, its cozy dimensions and the way that it was organically built into the surrounding neighborhood speak to the days when baseball parks yielded to natural obstacles—not the other way around.



Lecture 09

The Development of Baseball's Rules

A litany of rule changes took place in the 75-year period between 1845, when the Knickerbocker club of New York City framed the first written rules, and 1920, when it became customary to replace the baseball on a regular basis. No brief summary can possibly do justice to all of those changes, but this lecture describes a basic shift in how the game's rules were crafted and enforced.

The Original Rules

- When the Knickerbockers framed their original rules, they didn't have to worry much about enforcement, relying instead on the implicit assumption that the members of a baseball club would consider it a

privilege to wear that uniform and would act accordingly. Thus, most early rules came in the form of broad guidelines about how members should conduct themselves. Details were provided only when it was necessary to address a specific problem.

- Victory was desirable, but success was only considered worthwhile if it had been achieved with honor. Winning in a way that violated the agreed-on principles of sportsmanship brought disgrace to the player and shame to the club whose uniform he wore. Accordingly, such staples as nine players per side and nine innings per game are nowhere to be found in the 20 rules adopted by the Knickerbocker club in 1845.

- There was more firmness in the rules that governed certain points of play. Rule number 13, for example, ends with the stern admonition that "in no instance is a ball to be thrown at [a base runner]." Likewise, rule number 10 specified that a batted ball that landed "outside the range of the first and third base" was considered a foul ball, and base runners were not allowed to advance.

- Arguably the most important of the rules was number 17, which stated: "All disputes and differences relative to the game, to be decided by the Umpire, from which there is no appeal." In effect, while a few troublesome points of play had been resolved and some basic guidelines had been put down, the details were left to the umpire, and no arguing would be tolerated.

- Three years later, the Knickerbockers adopted a revised set of rules, but the only significant tweak served to clarify when base runners could be forced out. Following the 1853 season, the Knickerbockers met with two other New York clubs, the Gothams and the Eagles, to hammer out a mutually agreeable set of rules.

- When those new rules were disseminated in spring of 1854, the only meaningful change spelled out the distance between the pitcher and the batter. In short, it worked perfectly well to count on the players

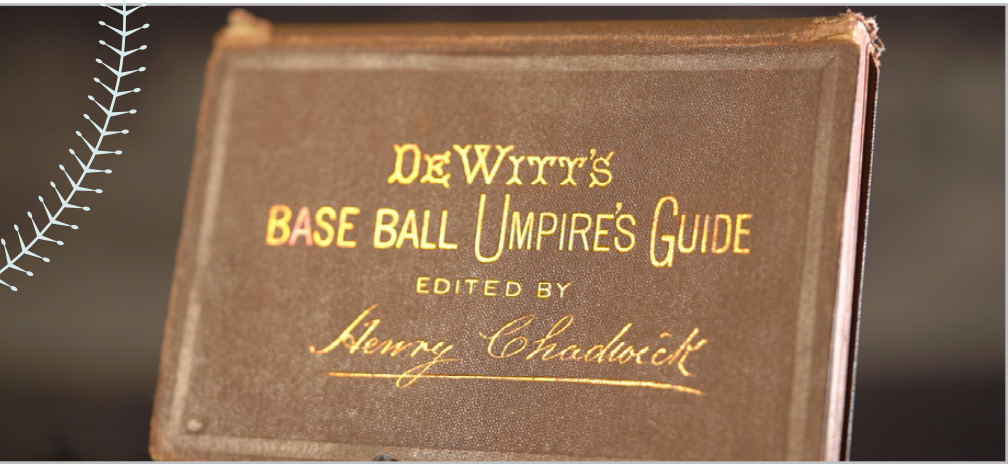
to behave in an honorable manner and to leave it up to the umpire to decide any points not specifically covered in the guidelines.

After the 1856 Season

- Matters changed when the rapid spread of the game during the 1856 season created a clear need to modify the so-called easy mode of play. As a result, that winter, the number of innings per game and the numbers of players on each side were both set at nine, where they have remained ever since.

- Although the general standard of conduct remained high, the umpire was being called on to enforce the rules with increasing frequency. They rarely had prior experience, and they weren't being paid for their services, making them understandably reluctant to create ill will by enforcing an arcane statute.

- Under the circumstances, players became increasingly prone to using tactics that would have once been considered dishonorable, drawing more attention to the need for effective enforcement. During the 1870s, guides published especially for umpires reflected this additional



focus on arbiters. More importantly, it finally became common to pay umpires for their work. This much-needed change failed to resolve the underlying problem.

- Due to financial constraints, umpires were typically local men hired by the home team, who knew that any call that went against them would bring hoots of derision from the crowd and would make future assignments less likely. Visiting teams soon learned not to expect favorable rulings on any play that was remotely close.

- Eventually, this problem became so severe that National League secretary Nick Young made the bold decision to hire no umpires who hailed from any of the cities of the league, but the flaw in this new approach soon became apparent. The new, inexperienced umpires struggled, especially as players tricked them.

Pitchers and Umpires

- Pitchers were particularly prone to trickery. Some background is necessary: Today, a common phrase refers to a pitcher being "knocked out of the box," which means they give up so many hits that they have to be pulled from the game. Batted balls up the middle are still said to be hit "through the box." In the 1880s, though, those terms were more than just figures of speech.

- In those days, while delivering the ball, the pitcher was required to remain within a rectangular area delineated by chalk, the front line of which was located just 50 feet from home. This was the pitcher's box.

- Aside from this restriction, the pitcher's preliminary motions were limited only by his imagination and agility. Pitchers responded to this liberty by crafting some extremely innovative deliveries. Notably, Louisville pitcher Guy Hecker enjoyed particular success with his bizarre motion.

- There were persistent whispers that Hecker was stepping over the chalk lines at the front of the box, thereby gaining a crucial advantage. Thus, when Hecker took the field for a July 1884 game, he discovered that Cincinnati player-manager Will White had scattered smooth, flat stones alongside the chalk lines, putting a pitcher who overstepped the boundary at risk of a nasty fall.

- Throughout the 1870s, rule-makers had introduced a steady succession of new delivery restrictions in hopes of restoring the original intention that the ball be pitched, not thrown. All proved unenforceable.

- Against this backdrop, the pitcher's box struck many as a last resort. When it proved so difficult to ensure compliance that teams sought to enforce the rule by piling stones around the box, it was easy to conclude that the game was on the verge of descending into anarchy.

A Disconnect

- At the heart of the problem was a fundamental disconnect between the umpires who had to administer the rules and the owners and club officials who wrote them. Matters only got worse during the 1890s, as arguments with umpires became increasingly contentious and occasionally even turned violent. In many cases, there was an ulterior motive for all of the shouting, whether to waste time before the sunset

ended play or just to give the home fans someone else to blame for a defeat.

- The owners and league presidents encouraged umpires to fine the worst offenders, but this naturally served only to make the guilty parties even angrier. On top of all these indignities, save for a few short-lived experiments, only one umpire officiated each game, so a lone man had to endure the browbeating and try to make sense of rules that often proved woefully ill-suited to a baseball diamond. Predictably, the issue of the "home umpire" became even more apparent, as the 1890s saw the percentage of games won by the home team reach the highest levels in baseball history.

Signs of Change

- Even with some ongoing issues, by the late 1800s, there were finally signs of change. In 1893, when the current pitching distance of 60 feet, 6 inches was adopted, the pitcher's box was officially eliminated in favor of a single plate that the pitcher's foot had to remain in contact with. To reduce the number of spills, however, that plate was made of rubber and soon became known as the pitcher's rubber.

- Another change was the infield fly rule. Fielders had been intentionally allowing pop-ups to drop in hopes of turning double plays since the 1860s, but the game's rule makers were slow to respond to what became known as the trapped ball play. One reason for the delay was that the playing fields of the 1860s were rarely level or free of obstacles, which meant that letting a pop-up drop could backfire spectacularly.

- After the advent of openly professional baseball, however, playing fields improved dramatically, making it much easier to execute double plays in such situations. In 1883, National League secretary Nick Young essayed a modest fix by instructing umpires to rule that a catch had been made if they believed that the fielder had deliberately dropped the ball. However, umpires who attempted to follow Young's

instructions found themselves embroiled in intense arguments, and most arbiters soon began disregarding the advice.

- Amid mounting annoyance on the part of fans and consternation from umpires, the National League at last introduced a rule in 1894 that eliminated the issue of intent entirely. Under this new approach, the umpire was to call an out on any routine infield pop-up if the placement of the base runners and the number of outs made it possible for a double play to be turned. This was still a subjective call, but the intensity of the disputes was lessened with the question of intent removed.

Further Changes

- Numerous other rule changes were implemented specifically to aid the umpire, thereby cutting down on disputes, which in turn cut down on lulls in game action. For example, prior to 1887, the first and third base bags were centered on the left and right corners of the infield diamond, such that half the bag was in fair territory and half in foul. If a batted ball hit the base, the umpire had to quickly decide which half of the base had been struck.

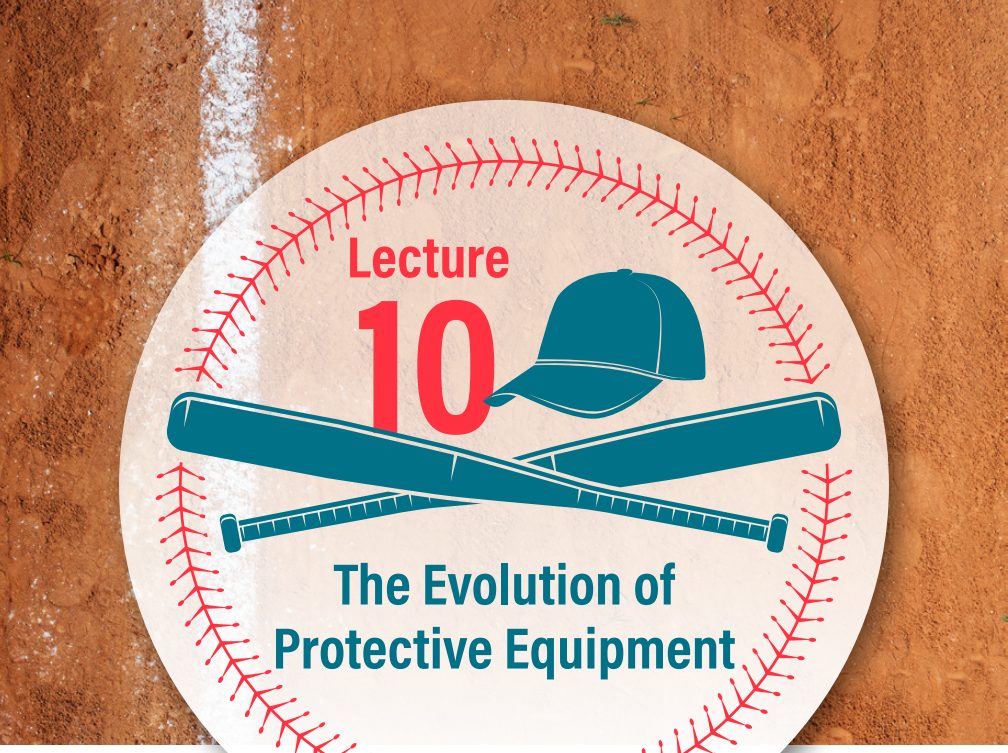
- With each base just 15 inches wide, the decision was nearly impossible. Rule makers solved the problem in 1887, the same year they restricted the pitcher to keep one foot on the back line of the box. By moving the first and third base bags such that no portion of them was in foul territory, the decision was rendered quite simple: If the ball hits the bag, it must be called fair.

- The number of umpires assigned to games also grew steadily throughout the first half of the 20th century until four-man crews became the norm for regular-season games in 1953. This steady increase helped to ensure that an umpire in close proximity to the play would make the calls. It also afforded much-needed support when an unpopular call was made. As visiting teams began to get a fairer

shake from the men in blue, the winning percentage of the home team steadily decreased from its disturbing peak in the 1890s.

- More fundamentally, the game's rule makers at last adjusted to the reality that the old honor code was dead and buried, with players now bound only by the letter of the law. In recognition of that new state of affairs, it became the norm to try to spell out how every conceivable scenario should be handled.

- Ever since then, rules have been tweaked to create a better balance between batting and fielding, power and speed, and the game's other basic equilibriums. Changes have been made with particular frequency to ensure that the duel between the pitcher and batter does not tilt too far toward either group.



Lecture 10

The Evolution of Protective Equipment

The introduction of the earliest baseball equipment featured the interplay of principles, profits, and practicality with competing ideals of manhood. To show how it played out, this lecture starts by going back to the middle of the 19th century before looking at the integration of protective equipment.

The Early Days

- Because a bat was a dangerous enough object in a youngster's hands, safety necessitated the use of a soft, rubbery ball. Unfortunately, such a ball stamped these games as child's play, so the first American men to take them up were ridiculed for their unmanly pursuit.

- To make the game more appropriate for adults, the Knickerbocker club introduced a harder, livelier ball that solved one problem but created another. That dilemma has plagued baseball ever since: how to ensure that play is lively and exciting enough to enthrall adults without yielding so many severe injuries that players become reluctant to participate.

- The Knickerbockers were by no means unmindful of this concern, and to their credit, a couple of their most important rules were designed to reduce the risk of injury. For instance, they struck the practice of soaking a base runner—that is, striking him with the ball to retire him—from their rules. Safety played a less obvious role in the Knickerbockers' decisions to require underhand pitching and to create the concept of foul territory, but in both cases, that was a major consideration.

- Under the Knickerbocker Rules, a lone catcher positioned himself at a safe distance behind the plate. However, when pitchers began creeping closer to home in an effort to give the batter less time to react to their delivery, it was all too often the catcher who paid the price, with foul balls causing grievous injuries.

- Numerous rule changes were introduced in hopes of limiting pitchers to strictly underhand motions, but when all of them failed, catchers once again could gain a strategic advantage by playing close to the plate.

- Ignoring the dangers, men like Civil War veteran Nat Hicks did exactly that. Others, such as Mart King, followed suit. Such fearlessness made men like Nat Hicks and Mart King revered figures in an era that greatly valued manly traits and rugged individualism.

Hidden from View

The only two pieces of protective equipment known to have been in use before the mid-1870s were hidden from view: the jockstrap and the catcher's rubber, the latter a protective device that was squeezed between the teeth in the hopes of preventing the catcher from being knocked out.

- A few players experimented with gloves, but these were so-called kid's gloves that were usually flesh-colored so as to avoid notice. Again, players did not want to be seen as bowing to safety concerns.

The Harvard Mask

- Following the 1876 season, Harvard baseball captain Fred Thayer had a problem: New catcher Jim Tyng absorbed the brunt of several foul tips and became reticent to play the position without protection. After mulling over Tyng's concerns, Thayer set to work.

- Using a fencing mask as his prototype, he added a forehead and a chin rest, and then commissioned a local tinsmith to create a mask sturdy enough to withstand the pounding it was sure to receive. When Harvard opened the spring season on April 12, 1877, Tyng strode behind the plate with his face covered by the new mask, sending shockwaves through the baseball world: He had been willing to admit the need for protective equipment.

- Though Tyng was initially met with some derision, by the following spring, most professional catchers were sporting the new mask. By 1886, it had become so standard that the *Boston Globe* observed, "No catcher thinks of playing behind the bat now without having his head encased in a mask."

- Thayer received a patent on his design. A few years later, he successfully sued Albert Goodwill Spalding's sporting goods firm for patent infringement and began collecting royalties.

Chest Protection

- Soon, the catcher's torso also had protection. Charley Bennett of Detroit, then a National League team, began wearing a chest protector in 1883. Bennett attributed his use of the new piece of equipment to

the concerns of a family member. His wife Alice had been so troubled by the frequent blows to his chest that she created the device herself.

- The chest protector was greeted with far fewer catcalls about the cowardice of its wearers, but it did need fine-tuning. The model rigged up by Alice Bennett was very effective at cushioning the blow of pitches, but it limited the catcher's range of motion.

- Fortunately, the problem soon came to the attention of prolific Hartford inventor William Gray, who borrowed the design of the pneumatic tire to create an inflatable protector that covered the catcher's entire chest and groin area without interfering with his movements. Gray was soon busily at work on his next invention, the payphone, so he sold the patent for the chest protector to Spalding's sporting goods company.

Gloves

- By then, Spalding had already been involved in the development of another piece of equipment. The game's premier pitcher while playing for Boston in the first half of the 1870s, Spalding had signed to play the 1876 season with Chicago.

- Although still in his 20s, Spalding's inability to master the curveball had already started him thinking about a career after baseball. Within a year of his arrival in Chicago, those reflections had led him to make two dramatic decisions, moving from the pitching area to first base and opening his own sporting goods firm.

- Symbolically, after becoming a first baseman, Spalding rejected the customary flesh-colored gloves in favor of a very conspicuous black glove. His batting average plummeted at his new position, however, and after only one season, he retired from active play to devote himself to his firm.

CATCHERS' GLOVES.

Spalding's Trade-Marked Catchers' Gloves.

After considerable expense and many experiments we have finally perfected a Catcher's Glove that meets with general favor from professional catchers.

The old style of open backed gloves introduced by us several years ago is still adhered to, but the quality of material and workmanship has been materially improved, until now we are justified in claiming the best line of catchers' gloves in the market. These gloves do not interfere with throwing, can be easily put on and taken off, and no player subject to sore hands should be without a pair. Our new patent seamless palm glove is admittedly the finest glove ever made, and is used by all professional catchers. We make them in ten different grades, as follows:

Price of Full Left-Hand Gloves.

No. 3-0. Spalding's Special League Catchers' Gloves. Patented, both gloves without seams in palm. Full left-hand back stop glove, made of heaviest Indian-tanned or drab buckskin, the very best that can be produced. The full left-hand glove is extra padded and sole leather finger tips to prevent the low curve balls from breaking or otherwise injuring the fingers. The right-hand glove is made with open back and fingerless, thoroughly padded. We especially recommend this glove for catchers. Each pair packed in separate box..... $5 00

No. 4-0. Spalding's Special League Catchers' or Fielders' Gloves, full left-hand soft-tips, lined, drab color buckskin..... 5 00

No. 2-0. Spalding's League Regulation Catchers' Gloves full left-hand, with tips, good quality buckskin, same style of gloves as 3-0, not quite so heavy..... 3 50

No. 3.A. Full left-hand "Spring Buck" with sole leather tips..... 3 00

No. A. Full left-hand buckskin without tips..... 2 50

No. AA. Full left-hand oiled tan sheepskin, without tips..... 1 25

CHICAGO. **A. G. SPALDING & BROS.** NEW YORK.

Catching Revisions

- Spalding's choice of a black glove likely only had an indirect influence by inspiring others to be more open about the need for safety. Fear of ridicule was not the most important obstacle to acceptance of the glove. A much more daunting problem was that before anything resembling today's mitts and fielding gloves could emerge, ballplayers had to revise the method they had always used to catch.

- In the early days of baseball, a two-handed catching technique was universal, regardless of position. Additionally, fielders of the 1870s also had to be prepared to immediately launch a throw. As a result, only a few catchers and first basemen wore gloves, and those who did opted for a pair of extremely light ones. Their use was understandably seen as a precaution against injury, not as an aid to catching the ball.

- This only changed in the mid-1880s, when the underhand pitching motion required by the Knickerbockers was finally replaced with an overhand delivery. This enabled pitchers to increase the speed of their offerings. Catchers tried padding their gloves with cotton batting, sponges, grass, and even beefsteaks, but the force had become too great for the human hand to absorb.

- In desperation, attempts were made to reengineer the glove, and soon provisional versions of the pocket and the webbing were introduced. Catchers then had to make the adjustment to a new technique in which the ball was snared in a glove worn on their non-throwing hand and then immediately secured by the throwing hand.

- By 1888, most catchers were wearing a glove that incorporated the basic principles of the catcher's mitt. Other fielders had begun to appreciate the benefits of this new approach and were conspicuously sporting gloves on their non-throwing hands.

- Spalding was once again monitoring the situation closely. By 1890, his firm was advertising a wide selection of mitts and gloves for the left

hand, along with throwing gloves for the right hand. The throwing glove soon passed into history.

The Cumulative Effect

- These latest additions to the ballplayer's gear were generally met with less mockery than their predecessors. Overall, the cumulative effect of 15 years of innovation directed toward the safety of fielders was staggering. The mask, chest protector, and mitt combined to swathe much of the catcher's body in bulky equipment, while most of the other fielders sported some sort of glove, many of them large and amply padded.

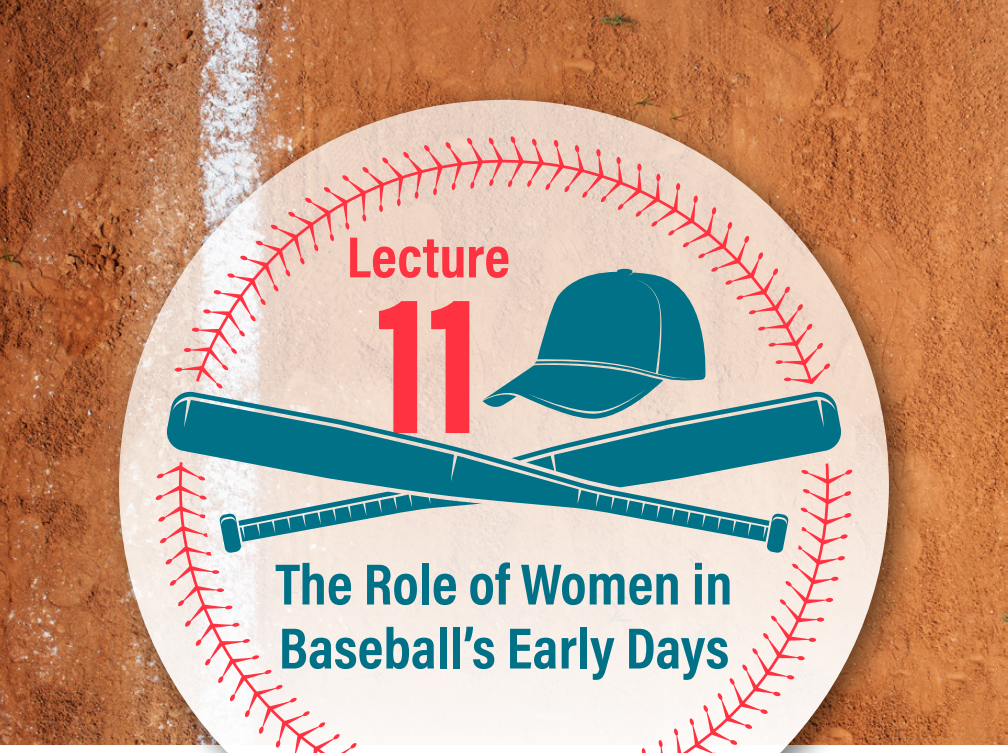
- Many onlookers viewed this as a welcome development that would prevent injuries and encourage more players to take up baseball. Sporting goods manufacturers like Spalding used their advertisements to drive home this message.

- However, to the old-timers who still cherished their memories of the fearlessness of the likes of Nat Hicks, the proliferation of protective equipment removed two crucial elements from baseball: skill and courage. Such old-timers were even more disdainful of the infielders and outfielders whose gloves appeared to do the catching for them.

- In 1905, the A. J. Reach sporting goods firm marketed an inflatable head protector. Giants catcher and future Hall of Famer Roger Bresnahan, returning from being beaned by a pitch in mid-June of 1907, briefly experimented with the device, but ultimately returned to batting without head protection.

- Unafraid to try new equipment, Bresnahan is better remembered for his adoption of a more familiar piece of protective equipment on Opening Day in 1907. The next day's *New York Times* reported that Bresnahan "created somewhat of a sensation when he appeared behind the bat for the start of play, by donning cricket leg guards."

- Leg protection, sometimes donned by middle infielders and carefully hidden underneath pants and stockings, had been experimented with well back into the 19th century. But like Tyng and his mask and Spalding and his black glove, Bresnahan wore his protective equipment openly and without fear of derision.



Lecture 11

The Role of Women in Baseball's Early Days

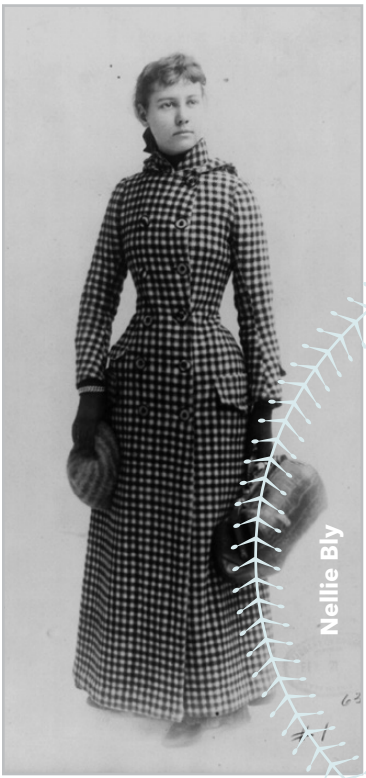
In the 19th century, conventional gender roles were carefully followed when it came to women's presence in baseball. Encouragement was offered to women who accepted suitably feminine functions, but mockery and condemnation greeted exceptions. Still, many women found ways to contribute to and play the game.

Women as Spectators

- Topping the list of women's roles was that of spectator. As a rule, the biggest reason for encouraging their attendance was the belief that the "true woman's" superior moral nature prevented the coarse behavior that marred all-male environments.

- Faith in this idea was so widespread that the inducements for women included prime seating in a reserved section of the grandstand, especially comfortable chairs (sometimes covered by an awning), special facilities for freshening up, and staff members assigned to attend to their needs.

- Unfortunately, the list of roles deemed suitable for 19th-century women largely ended with that of spectator. A *Sporting Life* correspondent bluntly observed in 1886, "the only decent public connection women can have with the game is as spectators." In some cases, women showed their loyalty by organizing offseason dances and balls or proudly wearing hand-knitted sweaters of the club colors, but these too were supportive activities that posed no challenge to conventional gender roles.



Irene Meredith and Ella Black

- There was one partial exception, but it too was instructive. In 1890, reporter Irene Meredith often covered baseball for the *Pittsburgh Leader*, while another Pittsburgh woman wrote a column for *Sporting Life* under the byline of Ella Black. Nellie Bly, also of Pittsburgh, had recently blazed a trail in journalism, so there were no significant protests about the efforts of these two women, but neither did they receive much encouragement.

- Ella Black, for example, lamented her inability to interview the ballplayers, and she also expressed regret that some people ridiculed the idea of a woman writing about baseball. Neither Black nor Irene Meredith seems to have continued covering baseball after 1890.

Women Playing Baseball

- Women who attempted to play baseball in public places were also confronted by a long series of obstacles. Their problems began with the familiar question of what to wear, and here they simply could not win.

- During the 1860s, male ballplayers began donning knickerbocker-style pants, which directed attention to the shape of the lower leg. Women, however, knew that they would be condemned before taking the diamond if they wore bloomers or any remotely suitable outfit. However, with a skirt on, the already challenging maneuvers of the diamond became infinitely more difficult and their inevitable misplays were ridiculed. Reporters added to their humiliation by providing lengthy accounts of wardrobe malfunctions.

- This reception was enough to deter most women from playing baseball, but those who persisted were liable to be directly accused of sexual misconduct. An 1875 game, for example, was denounced as "a revolting exhibition of impropriety." Nine years later, the members of a touring female club were described as "jaunty in style, brazen in manner, and peculiar in dress," while their behavior at a train depot was also derided.

A Safe Haven

- One safe haven did allow a select number of 19th-century American women to play baseball without encountering scorn. In 1861, citing the signs of declining female vitality as one of his reasons, wealthy

Poughkeepsie brewer Matthew Vassar donated much of his fortune to establish the all-female Vassar College.

- In light of widespread doubts that the female constitution was suited to higher education, the opening of an academically rigorous women's college was itself groundbreaking. Yet the faculty went still further by devoting considerable attention to fitness and health, including exercise sessions during which students wore loose dresses without corsets. If they chose, the students could wear those outfits during regular campus activities.

- Vassar's first class was admitted in the fall of 1865. By the following spring, both the 12-member Laurel club and the 11-member Abenakis club were taking advantage of this greater flexibility of dress.

- Other women's colleges sprang up in the ensuing years, allowing Vassar players to compete against students from Smith College, Wellesley College, and Barnard College. The friendly rivalry expanded in 1891

when a newly formed team at Mount Holyoke College wryly reported that its players had "gone through most of the experiences naturally connected with the game, though disabling the umpire is a pleasure in store for the future."

Fashion and Sports

- The opportunity for higher education was still uncommon, so most women who tried to play sports were confronted with the familiar issue of dress. When an ice-skating frenzy swept the country in the 1860s, the participants included more than a few women.

- Some took advantage of a bold new fashion trend to wear crinoline underskirts beneath their knee-length skating dresses, while a few went still further by taking the ice in bloomer costumes. Even these daring women, however, took such precautions as covering their costumes with a more discreet garment when off the ice and initially learning to skate in private settings.

- A similar mania followed for croquet, which required so little strenuous activity that women ran little risk of unwelcome exposure. When croquet proved too tame to have much staying power, many newly built croquet courts were converted into tennis courts.

- Although tennis is now a very physically demanding sport, as played by 19th-century American women, it featured so little movement and so much gentle tapping of the ball back and forth over the net that it was mocked. Ice-skating, croquet, and tennis thus all provided telling indicators of how severely the sporting options for women were limited by clothing restrictions.

Developments in Fashion

- The 1870s saw a new fashion that offered women a greater range of motion without violating societal standards. This time the design was

a divided skirt, but critics ignored that distinction and referred to them as *bloomers*.

- There was an even bigger uproar when a physician named Mary Walker began wearing men's trousers in public. Although her service as a Civil War surgeon earned her the Medal of Honor, press coverage made that distinction seem trivial by comparison with her decision to wear trousers. While she endured persistent ridicule and a number of arrests, most women lost interest in the bifurcated skirts.

- They made a comeback in 1895, however, when a cycling fad took place. Once again, there were detractors, but a new generation of American women was no longer willing to accept arbitrary fashion guidelines that effectively consigned them to sedentary lifestyles.

- The cycling craze faded within a few years, but by then, many young women were taking it as a source of pride to be known as *bloomer girls*. They defiantly carried the fashion statement into the newly invented game of basketball and into baseball, where they gained so much popularity that bloomer girls soon became a generic term for barnstorming female teams.

- Hostile public officials still presented obstacles. When a team called the Boston Bloomer Girls made a swing through Minnesota in 1895, for example, the mayor of Duluth unilaterally cancelled the game scheduled for that town because, he explained, he disapproved of women "appearing in public in trousers." By this time, however, the forces of resistance were no match for the determination of the women who donned the controversial outfits, and the public was soon won over.

The "New Woman"

- By then, the country was abuzz with talk of the "new woman," a supposedly mysterious creature who insisted on being a participant in activities that the "true woman" had watched from the sidelines.

Many used the term disparagingly, but once again, those pegged as new women adopted the label with pride as they took part in new adventures, baseball among them.

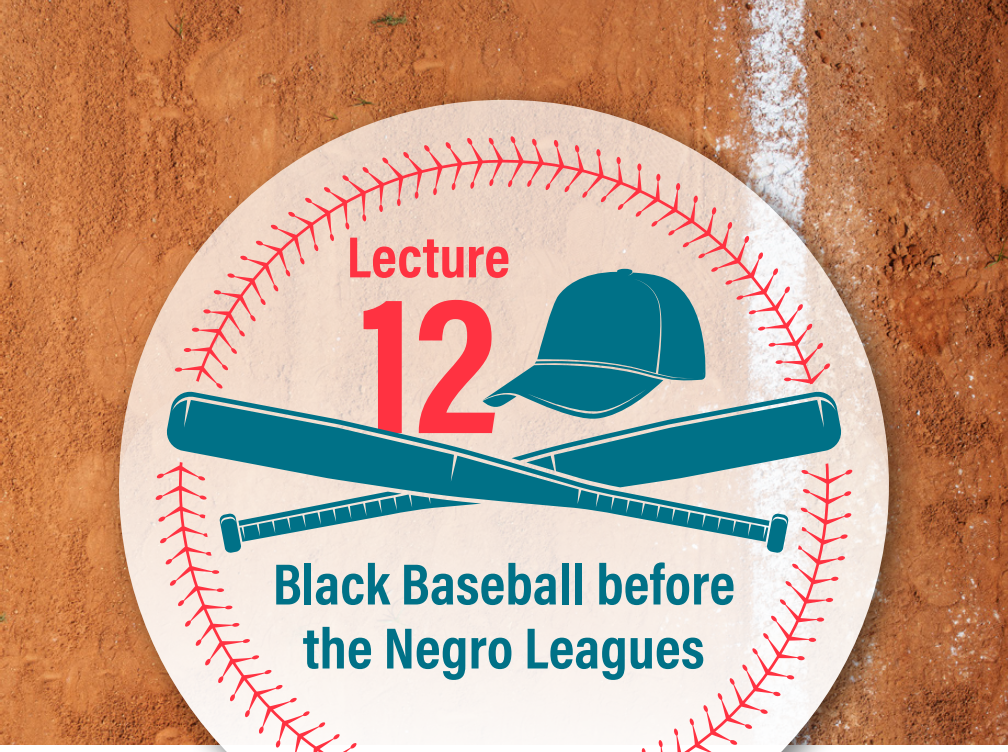
- A gifted teenaged pitcher named Alta Weiss, for instance, headed the Weiss All-Stars, a popular attraction at county fairs and similar events. Another example was Lizzie Murphy, who initially faced so much pressure to pursue a more feminine vocation that she almost quit. During a two-decade career as a professional, she had the unprecedented opportunity to twice face major leaguers in exhibition games.

- Weiss and Murphy had determination in spades. So too did Amanda Clement of South Dakota, who began six years of umpiring semiprofessional games as a teenager in 1905 and earned national renown—along with enough money to put her through college, launching a career as a physical education instructor and coach.

- Some of the women who broke new ground couldn't quite understand what all the fuss was about. Colorado native Ina Eloise Young served as official scorer for her hometown team and covered the 1908 World Series. "It doesn't seem strange to me that I should be able to comprehend baseball better than the average man," Young remarked, "because I have known the game since I was a girl."

- While relatively few early 20th-century women were able to take such active roles, far more showed their interest in baseball by taking seats in the stands. Overall, this generation of female fans showed a higher level of engagement.

- There was still a long way to go, but progress was finally being made toward bringing back the days when both sexes could share in the joys of playing baseball. A much bigger step was taken in 1920 when the passage of the 19th Amendment guaranteed women the right to vote. One pioneer who narrowly missed out on witnessing that triumph was Dr. Mary Walker, who had died one year earlier—and had been buried wearing trousers.



Lecture 12

Black Baseball before the Negro Leagues

During the years that followed emancipation, many were confident that African Americans would soon claim all the privileges of their new freedom. This optimism could often be found on the baseball diamond as well, though hopes of baseball becoming a vista of racial harmony were soon checked. This lecture follows the persistent efforts of African American players, managers, and team owners in the late 19th and early 20th century, which eventually led to the formation of the Negro National League.

The 1870s

- Until the 1880s, it was rare for white ballplayers to be extremely open about their objections to interracial play, so there often appeared to be few barriers to African American participation. Some significant triumphs for African Americans resulted, including the 1875 admission of the Mutual Base Ball Club of Washington DC to the National Amateur Association of Base Ball Players and the debut of black ballplayer Bud Fowler in the International Association three years later.

- On other occasions, there were telltale signs that the welcome was conditional at best. For example, in 1879, the professional career of a mixed-race Brown University student named William Edward White mysteriously ended after one National League game in which he played very well. Under the circumstances, it cannot be assumed that racial prejudice was responsible, but it does look suspiciously as though whispered objections led to that opportunity being quietly withdrawn.

- If this were indeed the case, it would be consistent with a recurring pattern during these years. Just as surreptitious devices like grandfather clauses and poll taxes were used to prevent African Americans from voting without explicitly prohibiting them from casting their ballots, so too African Americans were often excluded from baseball without anybody having to admit responsibility.

- A particularly notorious example took place in Philadelphia, where an African American club called the Pythians successfully arranged games against several prominent white opponents, including the city's pioneer club, the Olympics. Following the 1867 season, the Pythians applied for membership in both the Pennsylvania Association of Amateur Base Ball Players and the National Association of Base Ball Players, only to encounter oblique yet formidable resistance.

The 1880s

- The pattern of roadblocks repeated itself when African American player Fleet Walker signed to play for Toledo in the Northwestern League. At the 1883 Northwestern League convention where a proposal to exclude African Americans was debated, the delegate who had introduced the resolution eventually withdrew it. The delegate also requested that all mentions of it be struck from the official minutes. Discrimination, it seemed, was never anybody's fault.

- The nation's racial climate grew even uglier during the mid-1880s, making open expressions of bigotry more common. At every turn, African Americans found themselves hemmed in by Jim Crow laws, intimidated by the threat of lynching, and essentially abandoned by the federal government and the courts.

- This same trend carried over to the sports world. Some ballplayers began joining figures like Cap Anson—a star player who helped erect the color barrier—in his overt acts of intolerance. In Syracuse, for example, two minor leaguers declined to pose for an 1887 team picture alongside pitcher Robert Higgins, a black teammate. To the club's credit, the following season, Syracuse brought back Higgins while adding Fleet Walker.

- The racist insults were compounded by the disappearance of African Americans from major league rosters. Initially, that absence could be rationalized by pointing to the limited number of African Americans in professional ball and to the reduced availability of positions after the Union Association folded in 1884.

- However, a duo of talented 20-year-olds, Frank Grant and George Stovey, made their minor league debuts in spectacular fashion in 1886. When no major league team showed interest in either player, such justifications began to ring hollow.

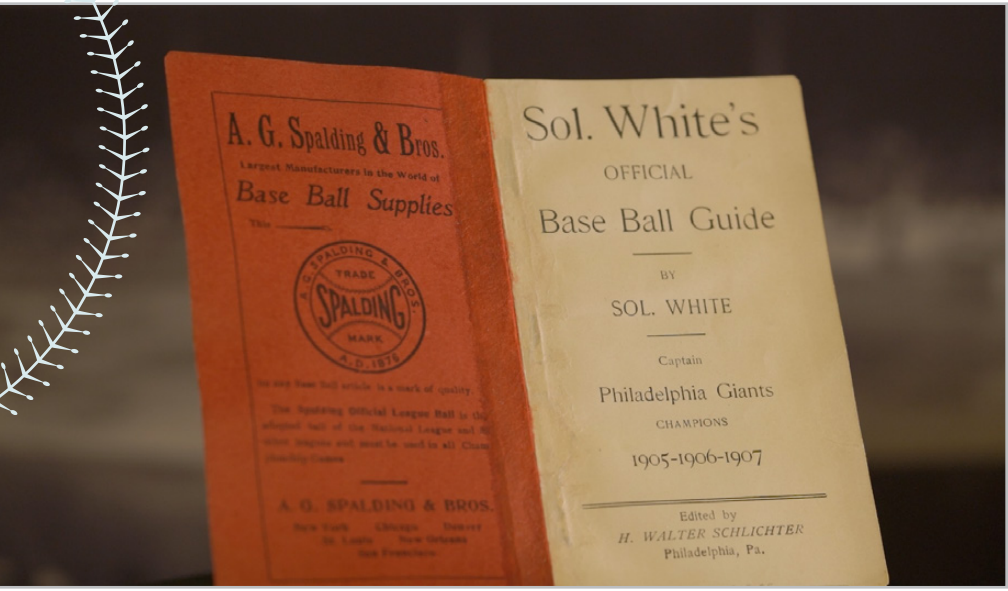
Traveling Teams

- The first in a series of attempts to create all-black professional leagues was made in 1886, but few of them survived for long, if they took the field at all. With no other alternative, most players joined independent traveling teams and became men without a home, endlessly traversing the nation's train depots and dusty roads to get to their next game.

- African American teenager Sol White, for example, tore up the Ohio State League in 1887, batting .370, but with the color barrier becoming increasingly rigid, he was not even offered a contract that winter. Rather than

Traveling Difficulties

The difficulties of travel could be terribly discouraging for African American players. Traveling meant that the indignities inflicted by Jim Crow laws could manifest themselves at any moment, thwarting attempts to address such basic needs as sleep and nourishment.



representing the end of Sol White's baseball odyssey, however, that was just the start of a 25-year playing career that enabled him to write the first history of black baseball. Today, Sol White is enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

- By the early 20th century, more than 60 African American teams were taking to the road on an annual basis. Not only did the players gain experience and refine their skills, but the managers of these tours also found ways to streamline the scheduling and travel arrangements to ease the hardships of the road.

- Traveling also afforded African American players with a chance to prove their merits against their white counterparts, allowing stars like Pete Hill, Andrew "Rube" Foster, Smokey Joe Williams, and John Henry "Pop" Lloyd to show that they could hold their own against the best white players.

The Early 20th Century

- The first two decades of the 20th century saw a number of winter leagues open their doors to African Americans. Circuits such as the Florida Hotel League (popularly known as the Coconut League), the California Winter League, and the Cuban League allowed many players to make baseball virtually a year-round livelihood. The participation of players from the two major leagues in several of these leagues gave African Americans additional opportunities to demonstrate that race alone was keeping them from competing at the highest level of the sport.

- Entertainment was often a prominent component of traveling teams' games, especially when the home side was hopelessly overmatched and the game itself held no suspense and little inherent interest. As such, traveling teams tried to find ways to give the spectators something to laugh at or to marvel at. Such efforts required delicacy, however,

because the last thing a barnstorming team wanted was to embarrass their hosts.

- Clowning by African-American ballplayers was especially problematic. Every member of a black traveling team, reported Sol White, "would do a funny stunt during a game back in the eighties and early nineties." Some participants considered these shenanigans to be harmless fun, while others were resigned to view them as unavoidable.

- However, many African American clubs were disturbed that these exhibitions played into the same demeaning racial stereotypes as minstrel shows. Instead, they sought other means of amusing a bored crowd or simply tried to provide what one reporter's account described as "a sort of 'get' spirit … which carries the spectators back a good many years in ball playing."

- In addition, clowning led many observers to imagine that African-American players did not take the game as seriously as did their white counterparts. Such suppositions were profoundly disturbing to men like Rube Foster. In a three-decade career that began in 1897, Foster established himself both as one of the best pitchers and as one of the best managers of the era, black or white.

Rube Foster's Impact

- Foster was also able to reap the financial rewards of his skill in the pitching box, often garnering almost year-round paychecks by joining a winter-league team after a summer of crisscrossing the United States. The remuneration increased after he formed the Chicago American Giants in 1911 and began a 15-year tenure as the manager of one of black baseball's greatest teams, during which he made the transition from player-manager to bench manager.

- Yet with each passing year, Rube Foster's ambitions gradually shifted from individual success to a vision of African Americans giving up

the traveling-team lifestyle and putting down permanent roots. The fatigue of constant travel and the opportunity for fans to cheer on their home team both contributed to Foster's dream. He was truly motivated, however, by the worry that traveling African American team members would never receive their due as ballplayers because their successes would be perceived as the result of innate natural ability, not of hard work and dedication to refining those skills.

- This reasoning led Foster to conclude that African Americans would receive long-overdue opportunities only if they formed their own league. He was willing to sacrifice to make that possible.

- Hopes of forming such a league, however, continued to be stymied by a number of factors, including the ongoing feuds between Foster and such rival owners as C. I. Taylor of the Indianapolis ABCs and Ed Bolden of the Hilldale Club, a black ball club from just west of Philadelphia. The ill will raised the larger question of whether men with the drive and competitive fire to build powerhouse teams would be able to set aside their differences to forge a stable and successful league.

The Negro National League

- One obstacle was that there was no guarantee that a league of African American players would be financially viable. White fans could not be counted on to attend games when there were no white faces on the playing field. This necessitated reliance on the support of African Americans, a population that had less disposable income and had historically been concentrated in the rural South.

- By the turn of the century, African Americans had begun moving to the cities and to the North, but new issues emerged. In the east, there was the daunting problem that Sunday baseball was prohibited in many of the largest cities. The Midwest appeared somewhat more promising, but all too often northward migration created population clusters that made competitive balance elusive.

- Significant changes eventually pointed to a far greater prospect of success. First, half a million African Americans relocated to the north between 1916 and 1919 in what became known as the Great African American Migration, almost overnight creating viable markets in the industrialized cities of the Great Lakes region.

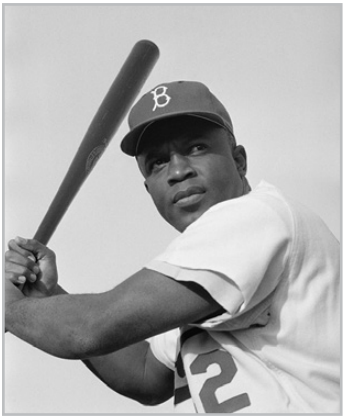
- Second, World War I finally came to an end in 1918—and in the relief and exhilaration that followed, Americans flocked to ballparks in 1919. Third, Rube Foster continued to be driven by his vision of a professional league that African Americans could embrace as their own.

- With all these factors converging, the Negro National League was organized at a meeting in Kansas City on February 13, 1920. When the teams took the field that spring, it was apparent how much thought and effort had been put into making the new venture work.

- With entrants representing the cities of Chicago, Detroit, Kansas City, St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Dayton, a season-long schedule of

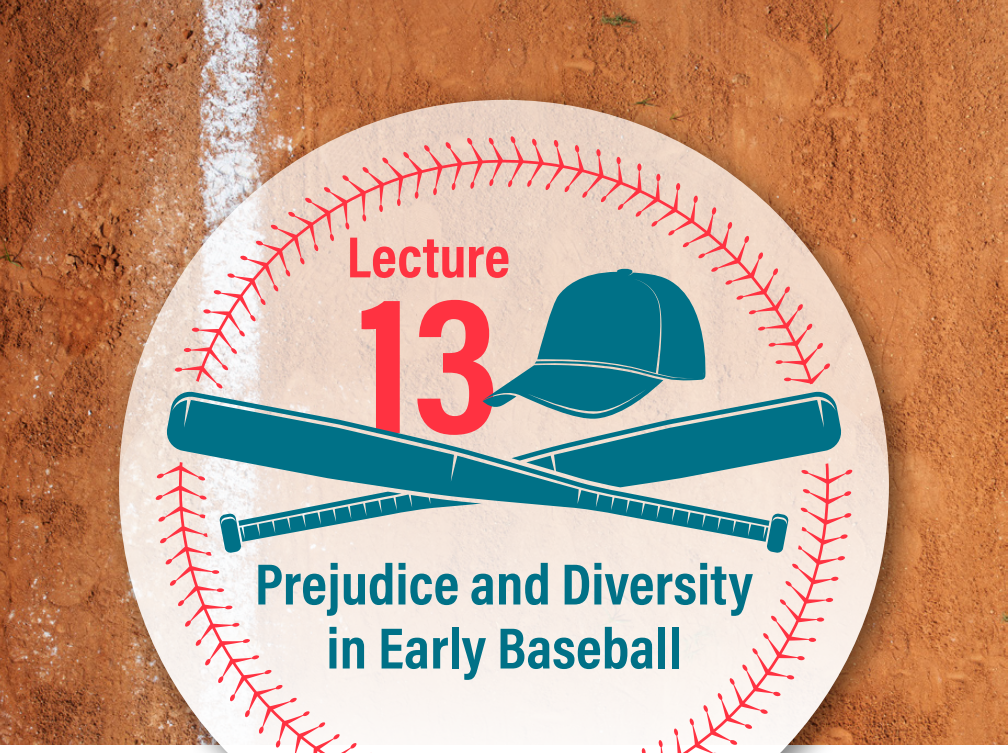
Jackie Robinson

Jackie Robinson was born to impoverished African American sharecroppers in rural Georgia on January 31, 1919. Sixteen months later, in the same month that the Negro National League took the field for the first time, the Robinson family left for a new life in Pasadena, California. The state was not a beacon of racial harmony during the 1920s and 1930s, but Jackie Robinson was able to take advantage of its more tolerant climate to star in four sports at UCLA, paving the way for him to shatter baseball's color barrier.



games was possible. Foster and other owners received press accolades for transferring some of their better players to their weaker rivals with the aim of fielding more equal teams. Although Foster's Chicago American Giants claimed the league's first three pennants, in each of those seasons, the competition was stiff.

- The Negro National League was the first of the leagues that are now collectively referred to as the Negro leagues, which became one of the largest industries to be predominantly owned and operated by African Americans. Even more importantly, the Negro leagues became a powerful symbol of the indomitable spirit that had impelled the migration of a long-oppressed people.



Lecture 13

Prejudice and Diversity in Early Baseball

The inspiring example of deaf ballplayer Billy Hoy—who enjoyed a long, successful career—led longtime major league owner Albert Goodwill Spalding to depict baseball as the embodiment of the democratic ideal. However, despite Spalding's claim that the baseball diamond stood as a beacon of equality, immigrants, members of minority groups, and handicapped aspirants had to overcome some significant obstacles just to take part. Worse still, in many cases, those impediments were deliberately placed in their way as the result of prejudice.

Irish Americans

- By the time the first professional baseball league, the National Association, commenced play in 1871, Irish Americans were already enjoying enough success that numerous distinctively Irish names were found on team rosters. Their numbers continued to increase in the years that followed, and by the 1880s, many of the game's brightest stars were men of Irish heritage. Because of that success story, it is tempting to imagine that the children of Irish immigrants had to overcome little more than the occasional ill-conceived stereotypical remark, but that was not the case.

- When Ireland's Great Potato Famine impelled over one million refugees to flee across the Atlantic in the late 1840s and early 1850s, they met with little sympathy. In large part, the chilly reception could be traced directly back to the Catholic faith of the newcomers.

- Because most Irish emigrants had exhausted their life savings to earn passage to America, they had no alternative but to accept jobs digging the nation's rapidly expanding canal network or performing similar forms of manual labor in the very cities where they were viewed with hostility.

- Many observers came to believe that Irish Americans were destined to form a permanent underclass, so the emergence of baseball as a professional sport in the 1860s afforded much-needed hope. However, many aspiring ballplayers of Irish descent were denied the chance to prove their abilities.

- The Red Stockings of Cincinnati afford a reminder of just how much Irish Americans had to overcome to simply earn a chance to play professional ball. Following the 1870 season, the team disbanded and manager Harry Wright relocated to Boston, bringing many of the players along with him.

- Conspicuous by his absence, however, was Irish-born outfielder Andy Leonard, with the result that there were no Irish surnames on Boston's initial National Association entry. Ironically, the only two players of

Irish heritage on that team were Harry Wright and his brother George, but because it was their mother who had been born in Ireland, that reality was concealed by their unthreatening Anglo surname.

Irish American Successes

- One year later, Harry Wright was reunited with Andy Leonard in Boston, and the following year he also enlisted the services of a gifted young player named Jim O'Rourke. In a sad reminder of the persistence of anti-Irish sentiment, however, a credible source maintained that Wright suggested that O'Rourke drop the telltale O'. He refused and went on to a Hall of Fame–worthy career.

- Irish Americans also began taking advantage of other opportunities afforded by baseball, with the likes of John McGraw and Charles Comiskey using their playing careers as a springboard to lengthy tenures as managers and/or team owners. Some Irish Americans even took advantage of the knowledge passed along by canal-building workers to become legendary groundskeepers.

- The five sons of immigrants Morris and Bridget Murphy, for example, grew up playing baseball in the Irish Hill district of Indianapolis, but only one had the skill necessary to play major league ball. The other four, however, enjoyed success at groundskeeping.

- Still, these success stories did not end prejudice against citizens of Irish heritage or members of the Catholic faith. Nonetheless, by the end of the 19th century, the lot of Irish Americans had improved dramatically.

Other Immigrant Groups

- By then, other immigrant groups had begun to be represented on major league diamonds, led by a large contingent of German Americans that included such luminaries as Honus Wagner. Names of French origin like those of Anthony Robitaille, Claude Gouzzie, Charles Phillippe,

and superstar Napoleon Lajoie also began to appear, though their surnames were often frightfully mispronounced and/or truncated in box scores. Also becoming increasingly prominent were players whose ancestors hailed from such countries as the Netherlands and many British colonies.

- Baseball was often used to teach immigrant children the ways of their new country. With the goal of assimilation in mind, afterschool programs were devised to allow immigrant children to play baseball, but these were often a source of concern for their parents.

- This was especially true of Jewish parents, who had few prominent Jewish players to look to. In the 1860s and 1870s, New Yorker Lipman Pike had been one of the game's most feared power hitters, yet few Jewish players followed in Pike's footsteps.

- Part of the problem was that many of the programs that offered children the opportunity to take part in baseball were overseen by organizations such as the YMCA or the Boy Scouts. Because these organizations actively promoted Protestant values and beliefs, Catholic and Jewish parents understandably worried that participation would undermine their children's faith.

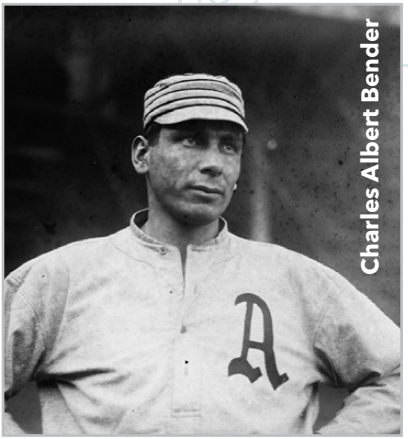
- Eventually, though, most Jewish parents felt obliged to get their children involved in the game. There was a lag before their offspring began to make their way onto major league rosters, despite manager John McGraw's efforts to find a Jewish star for the New York Giants, thereby providing a drawing card for Jewish fans. But at last Hank Greenberg, born in New York City on the first day of 1911, joined the majors. He won two MVP awards and even challenged Babe Ruth's single-season home run record. Most of the Catholic parents who had arrived in the United States from southern and western Europe in the late 19th century also followed this course.

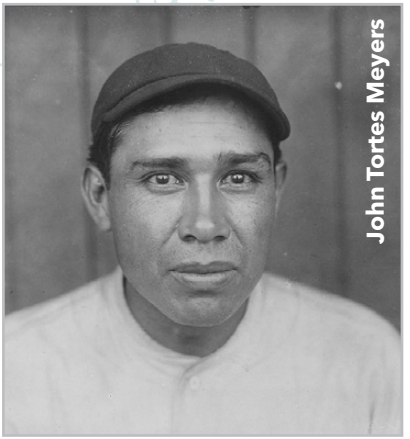
The Color Barrier

- Baseball still did not have a place for all youngsters. Professional baseball's odious color barrier made participation more difficult for many minority groups.

- A significant number of Native Americans enjoyed major league careers, including John Tortes Meyers, Moses Yellow Horse, Olympic hero Jim Thorpe, and pitcher Charles Albert Bender (a Hall of Famer). Yet the path to the major leagues was by no means easy for these men.

- Thorpe was stripped of his Olympic track and field medals for having played professional baseball, while Meyers, Bender, and other Native American ballplayers were invariably nicknamed Chief. Their heritage was also drawn attention to in numerous other ways, including war whoops from spectators, racially tinged depictions that showed them wielding tomahawks, and frequent stereotyping in the sporting press.


Charles Albert Bender


John Tortes Meyers

- It was a similar story for the few professional players of East Asian or Hispanic descent. No systematic attempts were made to prevent members of either group from playing baseball, yet they were discouraged in all sorts of subtle and unsubtle ways. It was not until the 1960s that a player known to be of East Asian descent played in either the American or National League. A few players of Hispanic descent did play in the white major leagues before Jackie Robinson's debut, but only after questions about their race had been addressed.

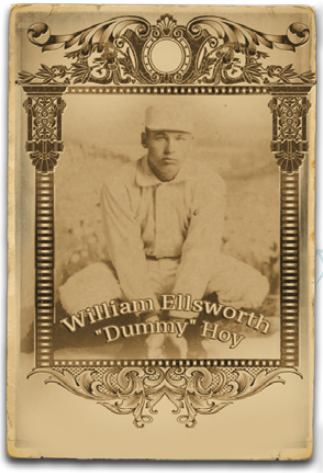
Players with Handicaps

- Baseball fell far short of exemplifying the democratic spirit of Albert Goodwill Spalding's imagination. However, the contributions of the many players who worked long and hard to bring it closer to that ideal should not be ignored. The players who overcame prejudice and physical handicaps to reach the major leagues could never count on receiving special concessions and allowances, and they even had to guard against opponents who tried to exploit their handicaps.

- Billy Hoy, for example, was tactlessly tagged with the nickname of Dummy, as were many of the deaf or hearing-impaired players of the era. But if he resented the tactless nickname, he never complained about it, instead quietly going about his business and finding ways to address the challenges posed by his deafness. As a student at the Ohio School for the Deaf in Columbus, for example, Hoy played catcher, third base, and various outfield positions, but after turning professional, he made a successful transition to center field to minimize the risk of collisions and miscommunications.

Hand Signals

Billy Hoy found many new ways to compensate for his disability. One summer, he explained to a reporter that his teammates used hand signals to communicate information about game situations. The signals sent to Billy Hoy by his teammates are sometimes said to have been the inspiration for the ball and strike signals that were adopted by umpires a few years later. The evidence for this claim is weak, but the signals do show that by the start of the 20th century, there was an increasing willingness in baseball to embrace diversity.



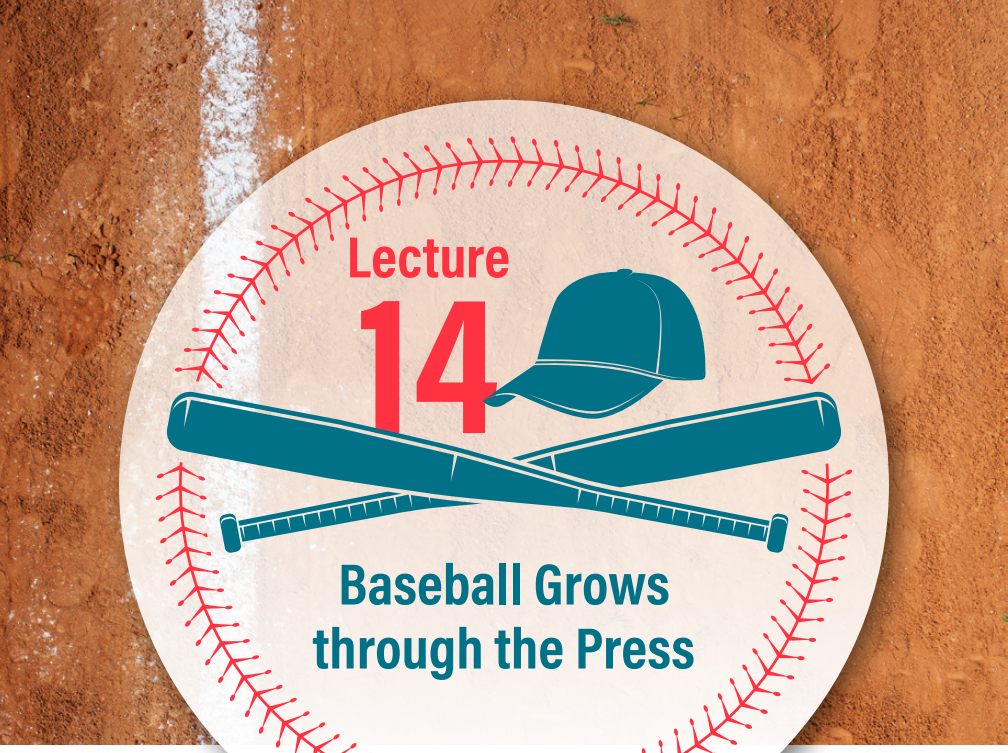
WILLIAM ELLSWORTH HOY

1888 Rookie Season Stats

Batting average	.274
On-base percentage	.374
Slugging percentage	.338
Walks	69
Stolen bases	82

- During his sophomore season with Washington, Billy Hoy even got the better of several Cleveland infielders who tried to take advantage of his handicap. When Hoy reached second base and did not appear to be paying attention, the ball was passed to Cleveland's second baseman Cub Stricker, who snuck behind Hoy in an attempt to pull the hidden-ball trick. Hoy detected their maneuver, smacked the ball out of Stricker's hand, and scampered down to third.

- Buoyed by Hoy's inspiration, the Ohio School for the Deaf became renowned for its baseball teams, and a number of other alumni went on to careers in professional baseball. His success also helped to ease the way for William Deegan, Luther Taylor, George M. Leitner, R. C. Stephenson, and several other deaf ballplayers to reach the major leagues.



Lecture 14

Baseball Grows through the Press

For a time early in baseball's history, the game and newspapers enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. This lecture looks at how different forces came to strain that relationship. In the end, however, symbiosis again developed, in which both baseball and the newspaper were able to achieve greater heights than either could have done on its own.

The Mid-1880s

- In the 1800s, as the ability to disseminate information with new tools like the telegraph grew, so too did Americans' appetite for news. By 1860, some 3,000 newspapers were competing to provide that news,

making it no easy matter to track down fresh stories. Baseball came in handy in this regard because, unlike most newsworthy events, games were scheduled in advance. Just as importantly, if late-breaking news intervened, accounts of the game could easily be shortened or dropped entirely.

- While newspapers reaped the benefits of baseball's success, they amply repaid that debt by all they did to turn baseball from a child's game into an acceptable activity for adults. By sparking debates about the comparative merits of clubs from different towns, press coverage also made the previously unthinkable idea of arranging interregional competitions viable. That made it necessary to address the many rules differences, and reporters were able to help by fostering discussions of each version's pros and cons.

- Baseball's considerable momentum came to an abrupt halt with the Civil War, and newspapers shifted their coverage to the conflict. By the war's end, many newspapers had expanded from modest four-page affairs to twice that size, creating a dire need for material that would engage peacetime readers.

- The stage was set for the fates of baseball and the newspaper to become even more closely intertwined. As an unprecedented rash of postwar baseball enthusiasm swept the country in 1866 and 1867, baseball clubs were only too happy to help fulfill the papers' need for content.

- In many cases, baseball club secretaries even provided accounts, leaving the editor with little more to do than find room for the latest news about the home team. However, the reliability and objectivity of the club secretary was by no means a certainty. An additional problem was that once a newspaper began publishing accounts of the doings of one local baseball club, every team in town was liable to demand similar consideration, no matter how inexperienced or young their players.

The Late 1860s and 1870s

- By the end of the 1860s, some newspapers had begun charging ball clubs to publish accounts of their games and meetings, while many ballplayers had become convinced that they had no need of the press. In light of the deteriorating relationship between baseball and the press, many editors must have longed to drop coverage of the sport altogether, but they had much to lose by doing so.

- Editors tended to assign coverage of important games to one of their reporters. As it became common for experienced journalists to spend much of an afternoon watching a ball game instead of covering graver matters, it raised a new dilemma: What should appear in an account of a baseball game?

- In baseball's early years, most reporters opted for one of two techniques. The first was to devote little space to the game action, instead describing the crowd and the weather, identifying the umpire, and recording noteworthy features such as pregame and postgame festivities and the transportation methods used by spectators. The other common method was to report the result of each at-bat sequentially, which consumed so much space that it left little room for commentary.

- Neither type of account made for compelling reading, so reporters soon began to experiment. The introduction of the box score offered a partial solution because these handy encapsulations of each player's contributions eliminated the need to summarize every at-bat, freeing up room for additional details.

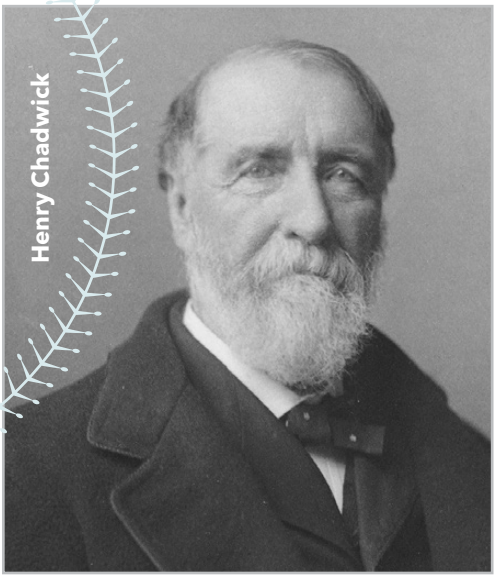
- Finding an effective way to use that space, however, proved to be far from easy because of some imposing technical challenges. A significant number of the readers of a game account already knew the final score. Once box scores were at hand, it was far from clear what more the account ought to tell readers. To solve this dilemma, many reporters attempted to provide insight into why one team won, but these efforts also proved problematic.

Henry Chadwick's Role

- It eventually became clear that the writing skills and attention to detail that held a reporter in good stead when covering most news stories were insufficient for covering a baseball game. Henry Chadwick, however, lost no sleep over this issue.

- For more than half a century, Chadwick pursued a vision of building up the game by tirelessly crusading against the players he believed were trying to tear baseball down by gambling, drinking, or violating their contracts. He was just as persistent about describing the action on the field in terms of moral absolutes. Chadwick was just as unshakable in his ideas for improving the game's rules and strategies, though some of his notions were curious.

- Chadwick's long tenure and breadth of knowledge made him well suited to the important task of situating recent baseball events within a larger context. However, his aim of building up the game was ill suited to writing game accounts, and during the 1870s, Chadwick increasingly left that task to others, especially after becoming editor of *Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide*.


Henry Chadwick

Henry Chadwick is the only writer commemorated with a plaque in the gallery of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

- In effect, baseball's reportage began to split into two distinct streams. Writers like Chadwick used a wide lens to provide greater perspective, setting the stage for the sports columnist to emerge. Meanwhile, others were doing the underappreciated work of refining the much narrower lens of the game account.

The Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

- Two trends are discernable in the experimentation of the final three decades of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century. One was that reporters began plucking one pivotal moment or a single key theme from the wealth of details. Once that crucial play or theme had been identified, the flow of the game often determined which other events to mention and how to organize them.

- The second key development was a shift away from trying to explain why one team had won. Such efforts by no means disappeared, but when they did appear, they were more likely to take the form of the description of a key event rather than an analysis of why it happened.

- Meanwhile, new developments kept cropping up that necessitated adjustments to newspaper coverage of baseball. As the technology associated with the telegraph continued to improve, for example, it became common for telegraph operators to transmit line scores from the ballpark itself, increasing the likelihood that readers would know the outcome before reading the next day's paper. The sporting press also came into its own during these years, so the daily newspaper also had to compete with weeklies such as *Sporting Life* and *The Sporting News*.

- These new competitors made it incumbent on sportswriters to use inside information provided by players and owners, but both groups were still apt to become uncommunicative during a losing streak. The mounting labor strife of the 1880s gave these crucial sources all the more reason to be tight-lipped.

- Matters hit rock bottom in 1890 when reporters were caught in the middle of the war between the Players' League and the established leagues. Both sides suddenly became eager to talk to reporters, but according to Chicago owner Albert Goodwill Spalding, neither of them "ever furnished to the press one solitary truthful statement."

- The lot of the sportswriter was eased somewhat when the Players' League folded after that season. However, ongoing tensions between players and owners still made it difficult to simultaneously maintain good working relationships with both groups.

- Another significant consequence of the Players' League war was that, for the first time, major league teams began to assign employees to send out press releases. This proved to be a mixed blessing for reporters, however. While the ready availability of material was a godsend when a deadline loomed, press releases were of course created with the aim of casting the team in a favorable light, so reliance on them compromised journalistic independence. Through all these challenges, reporters fought hard to preserve their objectivity and they did much to keep the game going at a time when its future was in jeopardy.

The many trials and tribulations of the 1890s yielded an enduring camaraderie among the beat reporters.

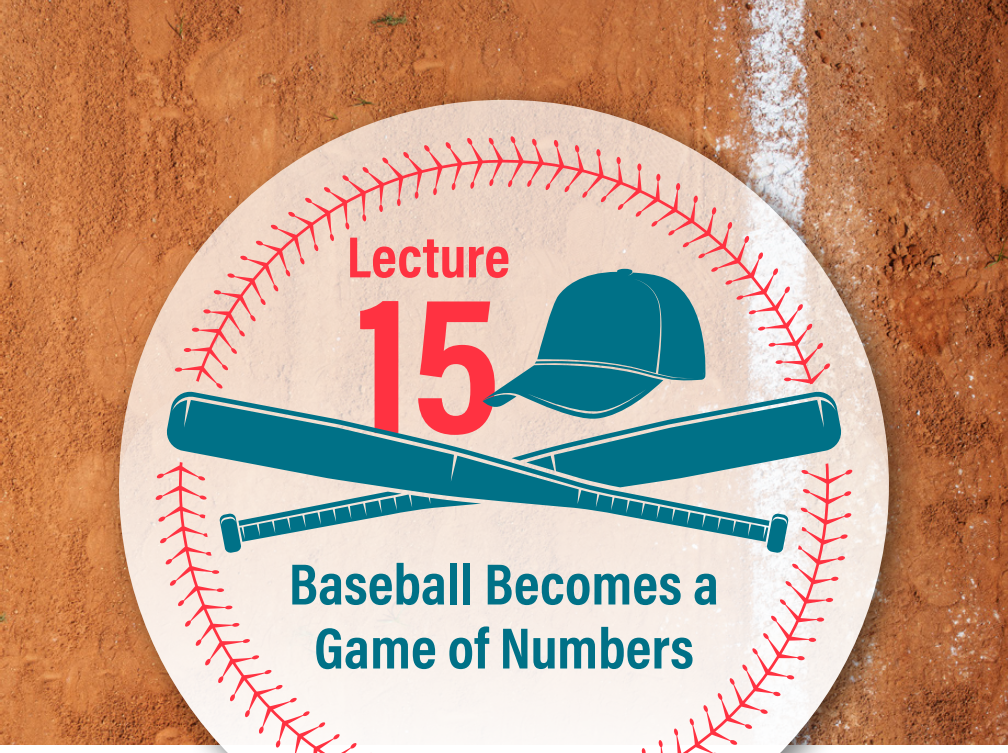
Conclusion

- The early 20th-century newspapers' baseball columns and game accounts were augmented by the addition of new features, including photos and diagrams, expanded statistical coverage, and guest columns at World Series time that bore the byline of a famous player—although more often than not, these latter pieces were ghostwritten. Postgame access to the dressing room also started to become common, making it easier for reporters to enliven their accounts with comments from the players, though that opportunity brought increased deadline pressure and the new threat of players claiming to have been misquoted.

- Light verse also came to play a prominent role on the baseball page, with the likes of Ring Lardner, Grantland Rice, and John Kieran contributing whimsical rhymes about the national pastime. The most enduring such poem, however, was written by Franklin P. Adams and first published in the *New York Evening Mail* on July 12, 1910, under the title "That Double Play Again," only to later be renamed "Baseball's Sad Lexicon." Neither of those titles rings a bell with most baseball fans, but they are much more likely to recognize its opening lines:

  > These are the saddest of possible words:
  >
  > "Tinker to Evers to Chance."

- A final development of great significance from these years was the rapid growth of African American press in the northern cities to which the African American population was relocating. Coverage of the great African American baseball teams of the age became a mainstay of these newspapers.



Lecture 15

Baseball Becomes a Game of Numbers

In the early 1900s, statistics such as batting average were still new enough to be tinged with considerable glamor. This lecture looks at early methods of analyzing baseball statistics, how they evolved, and how such statistics came to play a bigger role in baseball and coverage of the game.

The Early Years

- During baseball's early years, spectators often tracked the score by simply making notches on a stick. In fact, the word *score* comes from the very act of scoring such notches.

- As for individual statistics, they were based largely on those of cricket, in which there is a straightforward relationship between runs and hits. A cricket batsman who hits the ball can elect not to run, but if he does so, there are only two possible outcomes: He makes his way safely between the wickets, scoring a run (or runs), or he is *dismissed*—which is cricket terminology for "put out."

- To get a good sense of a cricket batsman's aptitude, it is only necessary to compare the number of runs to the number of dismissals. This required division, of course, but the troublesome decimal points were avoided by a method termed *average and over*. The average of a player who scored 10 runs with three dismissals was said to be 3-1: three runs every time he bats, with one left over.

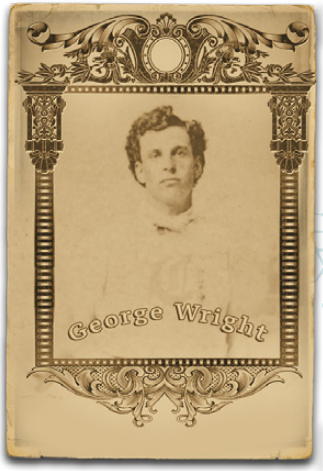
- In short, cricket lacks the concept of a hit because it isn't necessary. In baseball, however, hits and runs are not synonymous, and the difference is crucial. A player can collect a base hit but be left on base without scoring. As a result, evaluating the skill of a baseball batter is, in general, more difficult than doing so for a cricket batsman.

George Wright's Numbers

- During the 1860s, however, this consideration seemed minor. Consider the batting statistics compiled by George Wright of the Red Stockings of Cincinnati during that club's historic undefeated season of 1869. As reported at the time, Wright had:

    - 304 hits in 483 at-bats for a .629 batting average.
    - 49 home runs.
    - 0 strikeouts.

- The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from those numbers is that George Wright was an outstanding hitter, and indeed he was. Many



GEORGE WRIGHT
Red Stockings of Cincinnati
1869 Season

At bats	483
Hits	304
Batting Average	.629
Home runs	49
Strikeouts	0

authorities consider him to be that decade's greatest player, and he has a plaque in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

- However, George Wright's numbers also serve as a vivid reminder that a statistical record cannot be used for the purpose of comparison without understanding the context in which it was compiled. In his case, with pitchers limited to underhand deliveries, fielders lacking gloves, and a rubbery ball the norm, recording outs was very difficult work, and clubs commonly ran up 70 or more runs in a game.

- It is a similar story with Wright's seemingly incomprehensible total of zero strikeouts. Given the limitations on pitching deliveries, strikeouts were rare and were even a bit of an embarrassment for an accomplished batter. As a team, the Red Stockings struck out only eight times all season.

- Finally, there is the matter of George Wright's 49 home runs. Although Wright was unquestionably a great home run hitter, even in the context of the era, the difference between the value of a home run and a shorter base hit was far less than it is today.

- Today, base runners score about one-third of the time, which puts a premium on home runs. By contrast, the 1869 season saw George Wright cross the plate 339 times while being left on base at inning's end only 28 times—a scoring rate of more than 90 percent. In that environment, while a home run was certainly advantageous, a player who made a shorter hit was nearly as likely to score, explaining why baseball adopted cricket's average and over.

- This approach was obviously imperfect: Batters on strong teams typically get more chances to bat, as do hitters at the top of the order. Additionally, a player is more likely to score if followed in the order by stellar hitters. Nonetheless, average and over was an easily calculated metric that gave a reasonable approximation of batting skill.

Henry Chadwick

- Most knowledgeable observers considered average and over more than adequate for measuring batting proficiency, but not English-born sportswriter Henry Chadwick. Having entered journalism as a cricket reporter, he was among the first to recognize that runs scored was not a great way to judge a baseball player's contribution. For instance, he maintained that "there is but one true criterion of skill at the bat, and that is the number of times bases are made on clean hits."

- Initially, even those who recognized the merits of Chadwick's contention wondered whether the increased accuracy justified all the bother. Keeping track of base hits, after all, required a great deal of effort.

- In 1870, however, a desire to better balance offense and defense led many clubs to adopt a much less lively baseball known as the dead ball. The increased use of the dead ball caused scoring to plummet, creating the need for new statistics.

- When zeroes unexpectedly began to appear on the blackboards that had started to function as scoreboards, referring to run-less innings as

goose eggs memorialized their shape. Failing to score a run for an entire game remained such a rare occurrence that when a Chicago team posted nine straight goose eggs in July 1870, the terms *Chicagoed* and *Chicago defeats* entered baseball parlance. Eventually, these would be termed *shutouts*.

- Use of the dead ball had an even more transformative effect on the statistical measurement of baseball. With teams struggling to avoid Chicago defeats, the wisdom of Chadwick's recommendation became obvious, and hits replaced runs scored as the standard measure of hitting proficiency.

- As part of the quest for greater accuracy, within a few years it became customary to divide the number of hits by the number of at-bats, rather than the number of games, while the imprecise average and over method was also replaced with a figure calculated to three decimal places. The batting average had been born.

Box Scores

- Baseball box scores also changed dramatically. In the game's early years, it had been common to provide only a line score, along with the runs and outs for each batter. During the 1870s, additional categories such as hits and at-bats became increasingly common. Some newspapers went still further by appending a wide array of tidbits of information, such as extra-base hits, details on the work of the pitchers and fielders, the umpire's name, attendance, time, and assorted other minutiae.

- Baseball statistics came to be based on the principle of charging the results of each at-bat to both batter and pitcher. For that matter, if the ball was hit to a fielder, the fielder's record was either credited with a chance accepted or charged with an error.

Problems with Statistics

- The wealth of data thus created led to numerous new statistical measures, some of which made little sense. In 1880, for example, the National League tracked bases run, a cricket-based statistic that credited three bases run to a player stranded on third base at inning's end. However, there was no inherent value to just reaching third base, so the ill-conceived category was abandoned after that season.

- One of the first awards offered on the basis of individual statistics was also insufficiently thought out. In 1879, James McKay of Buffalo offered a medal to the National League player who had the best total after adding their fielding average to their batting average. Unfortunately, as soon became evident, first basemen typically had the highest fielding averages, leaving players at other positions with little chance of winning. As a result, the criteria for the McKay Medal were revised.

- Miscalculations were another common problem. In an extreme example, Cap Anson was declared the winner of the National League batting title following the 1879 season with an impressive .407 batting average, yet subsequent reexaminations revealed that he actually only batted .317 that year.

- A more fundamental problem with this emphasis on statistical records was that, as one reporter put it in 1878, it encouraged professionals to "play for themselves and their records, rather than for their clubs." Players even began sniping at official scorers when a ruling damaged their numbers.

- These developments were very distressing to the likes of James McKay, who sought to use individual statistics to encourage all-around play, and Henry Chadwick, who believed they would reveal the performer who had "played earnestly and steadily through the season." Chadwick became so concerned that the man who had once championed the base hit as the "one true criterion of skill at the bat" eventually maintained instead that a batter's proficiency was "shown

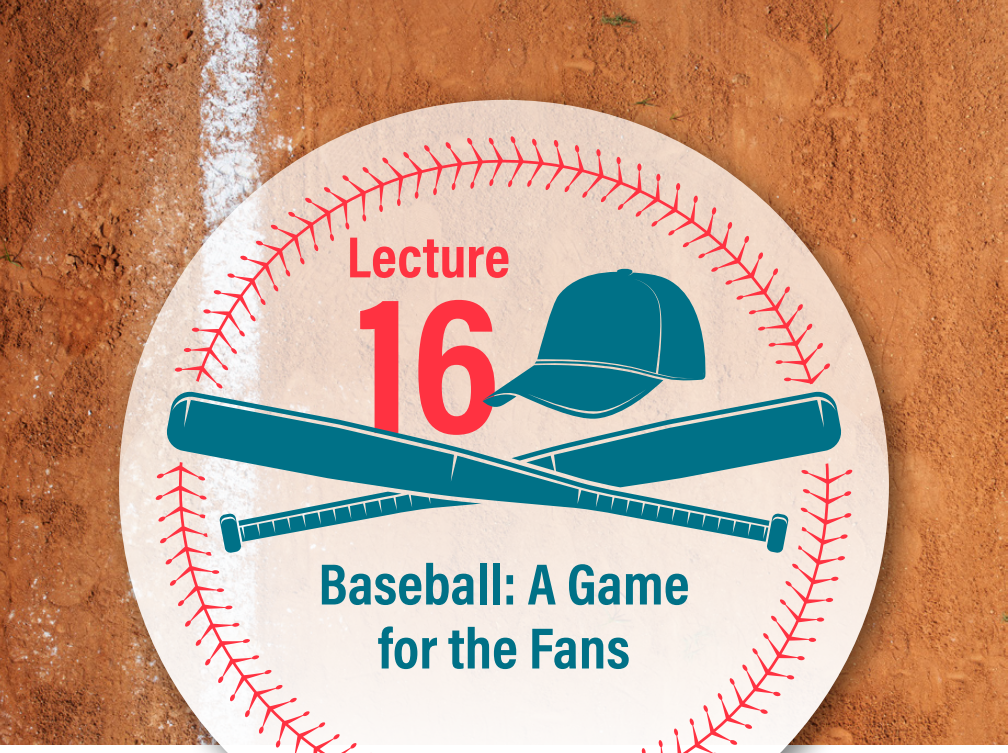
by the number of base hits he makes which forward runners, not by the figures of his base hit percentage."

Conclusion

- Despite all such shortcomings and second thoughts, too many had become accustomed to gauging batting proficiency by means of the statistical record in general, and by batting average in particular, for there to be any question of turning back. In the years that followed, the meticulous record keepers compiled and arranged an enormous quantity of data.

- By the 20th century, some very significant benefits were becoming apparent. Perhaps the most obvious was that to keep pace, reporters and fans had to become far more adept at juggling numbers, a trend that neatly complemented their increasing importance in all aspects of American society.

- In particular, kids who previously showed little engagement with math class began to rattle off the statistics of their favorite players and teams. Eventually, the backs of the baseball cards that children flipped and traded became covered with an array of numbers that would once have been met with incomprehension. A subtler advantage, but one that was just as significant, was that all the data began to infuse meaning into games in which nothing appeared to be at stake.



Lecture 16

Baseball: A Game for the Fans

By the beginning of the 1900s, baseball had been acknowledged as the national pastime for almost half a century, but it was suddenly being celebrated with a renewed vigor that recalled the fervor it had inspired during its early years. This lecture looks at what had changed.

Background

- In the 1860s, when baseball had spread like wildfire throughout the country, civic pride had typically been all it took to fill the grandstand and meet the financial needs of the home club. In recognition of their role as ambassadors for a community, the members of such clubs

often adopted the name of that community or of a local landmark or industry. Some even sported emblems that drew attention to their hometown. Their supporters reciprocated by displays of loyalty and by reaching into their pocketbooks when needed.

- However, the arrival of open professionalism was accompanied by the practice of importing paid players. Locals soon began to feel much less of a stake in the hometown club. As a result of these developments, there was little prestige in being a baseball fan during the first two decades of openly professional play.

- Some fans fired off long letters to team leaders filled with ideas for improving the local team. Other fans were just as convinced that a homemade bat that they had crafted was just what their favorite player needed to improve his hitting—though the recipients rarely saw it that way.

- The intimacy of 19th-century ballparks made it possible for a leather-lunged onlooker to initiate a dialogue with the participants. However, fans who insisted on offering advice or asking impertinent questions were liable to be pointedly reminded of their lack of expertise.

Fan as an Insult

The word *fan* was originally a derogatory term. Although often said to be a shortened version of *fanatic*, a careful examination of the evidence suggests that it actually derived from a perceived resemblance to a different type of fan—the kind that blows wind but produces no substance. The other term commonly used to describe diehard baseball enthusiasts during these years was no more flattering: *crank*.

Changes to Fandom in the 1890s

- The tendency of some fans to take their passion for baseball beyond the bounds of reason didn't end in the 1890s; indeed, it endures to this day. But the experience of the typical

fan did undergo significant change during that decade, mirroring a larger societal shift.

- All across the country, the leaders of what became known as the Progressive movement were demanding change—specifically, insisting that the rich and powerful listen to the voice of common folks, and clamoring for their government to look out for the interests of the less fortunate. Likewise, baseball fans began to recognize that professional baseball could not survive without their support, and they too began to insist on their right to be heard.

- Major league owners were slow to accommodate such demands, so the first signs of change became evident on the diamonds of traveling, semipro, and minor league teams. However, in the major leagues, eventually a new respect began to be shown for the voice of the fan.

- The new willingness to listen to the input of the crowd soon began to be reflected on the field. Talk of banning the slide, for example, died out when it became clear that fans loved the hustle displayed when

Clark Griffith

a player hit the dirt. Chicago pitching ace Clark Griffith likewise admitted that he was following the lead of the paying customers in refusing to issue intentional walks.

The Turn of the Century

- By the dawn of the 20th century, the term *crank* had faded out, and the only slightly less insulting word *fan* was adopted by many spectators as a badge of honor. The Royal Rooters—a contingent of enthusiastic Boston fans—adopted colorful badges, which signified a renewed sense of belonging. The essence of the Royal Rooters was the restoration of the ballpark's sense of community and togetherness.

- At the turn of the century, team owners belatedly began looking for ways to generate fan loyalty, such as scheduling doubleheaders as part of the regular season. While many questioned the wisdom of a tactic that effectively amounted to giving a product away for free, the large crowds testified to the fans' appreciation of this bargain. More fundamentally, such gestures led the faithful to view ownership in a more favorable light, which deepened their allegiance to the team and ensured plenty of repeat business.

- More signs of the new responsiveness of team management followed. After the Washington Senators compiled a woeful 43-94 record in 1903, new owners purchased the team. In an effort to start afresh after yet another dismal season in 1904, they offered a season ticket for the person who submitted the best suggestion for a new team nickname.

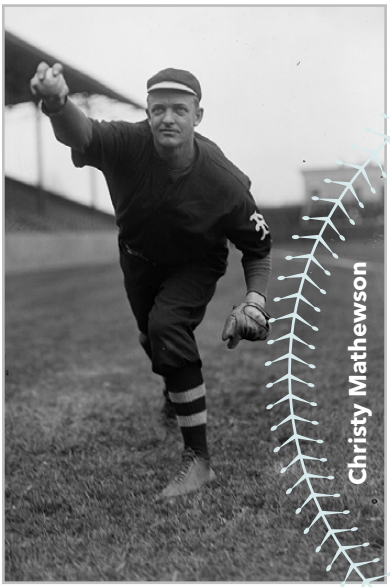
- The team was flooded with more than 2,000 responses, many of them from fans who had obviously given the matter a great deal of thought. In a curious preview of things to come, the name Nationals was selected, but it failed to capture the public imagination, so the team continued to be known as the Senators.

Cleaning Up the Game

- An increasing emphasis was placed on the ballpark as a place where parents could bring their children. In practice, it was fathers and sons who most often took advantage of this opportunity, but by no means was that always the case.

- Great pains had been taken to make female spectators feel welcome at ballparks starting from the very early days of the game. Such attentiveness again became evident during the first decade of the 20th century. The new concern about the comfort of both women and children led to bathroom upgrades and the introduction of amenities designed with the needs of both groups in mind. A minor league team in Columbus, Ohio, even opened a nursery in 1903 to make it easier for mothers with young families to enjoy the ball game.

- Teams also put more effort into ensuring that players treated umpires with respect, and they drew attention to improved player conduct. Parents became much more comfortable with ballplayers serving as role models for their children once the frequency and vehemence of arguments with umpires were reduced and once the clean-cut lifestyles of college-educated athletes like Giants ace Christy Mathewson had been extensively publicized.


Christy Mathewson

- Particularly obvious was a new commitment to keeping ballparks neat and tidy, something that had long been conspicuously absent. The soiled and disheveled

uniforms of the players were also addressed. For instance, in 1906 the National League requested clubs to provide the visitors with dressing rooms.

- In the years that followed, a series of dazzling new concrete-and-steel ballparks opened. By devoting great attention to their cleanliness and upkeep, owners gave further testimony to their family-friendly approach.

Souvenirs

- In the 19th century, the same enthusiasts who sent homemade bats to the players also showed their admiration by presenting them with gifts. Detroit catcher Charley Bennett, for example, became such a popular favorite that on separate occasions spectators presented him with a pocket watch and with a wheelbarrow loaded with 520 silver dollars that he wheeled around the bases to the delight of the crowd.

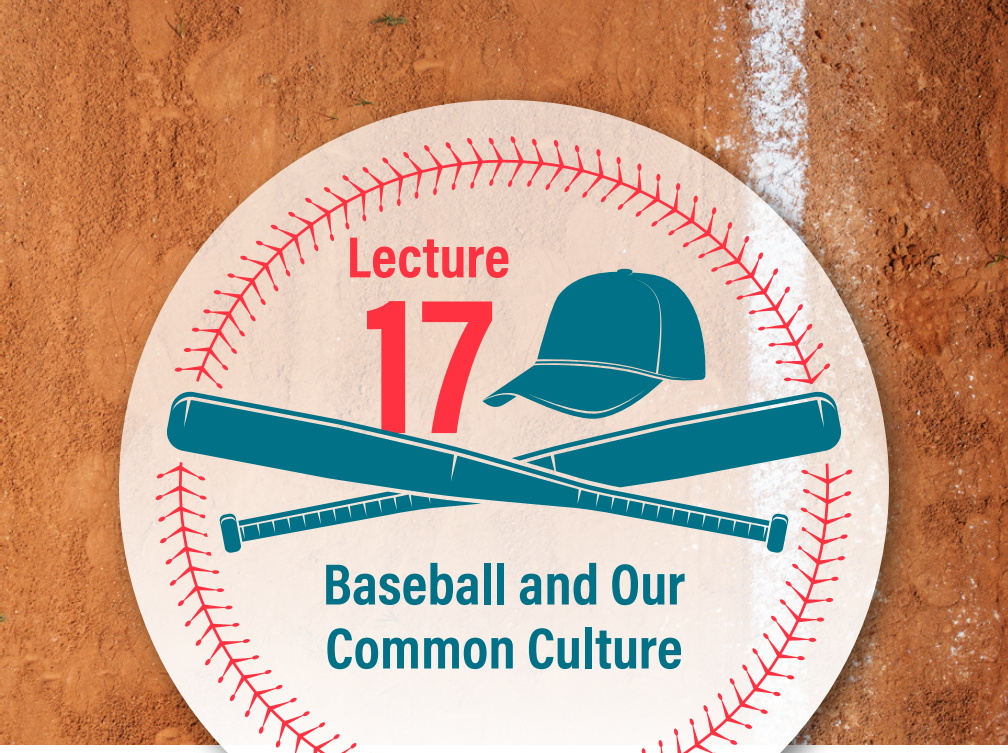
- Until the early years of the 20th century, however, it was much less common for the spectators themselves to take home souvenirs. Over time, such keepsakes became more common, more varied, and more elaborate.

- Prior to 1890, for instance, it was virtually unheard of to ask for a player's autograph, but such requests soon became commonplace. Scorecards dated back to the 1860s, but their utilitarian appearance usually led them to be discarded at game's end. In the years that followed, they gradually became more elegant—and thus more worthy of retaining.

- They also began to be complemented by scorebooks that were often quite lavish, such as a 32-page scorebook issued in 1890 that was designed by Brooklyn team secretary Charley Ebbets, later to become the team owner. Baseball cards began to proliferate in the 1880s when cigarette manufacturers started mass-producing them, and they too became more popular and more prized after the turn of the century.

Even ticket stubs acquired more visual appeal and were seen as treasures to be preserved.

- The magical ability of these objects to preserve that ballpark experience for months and years afterward helped to fill the void left by the erosion of civic pride. As was abundantly clear to the loving parents of a child who headed for the exits with a cherished souvenir in hand, at least some spectators were once again leaving the ballpark after a defeat with smiles on their faces.



Lecture 17

Baseball and Our Common Culture

Baseball had become deeply ingrained in American culture by the mid-to-late 19th century. This lecture explores how the national pastime permeated and influenced American society during those booming times and how nearly all Americans came to participate in the game in a variety of ways, often without even knowing it.

"Casey at the Bat"

- One notable poem related to baseball is "Casey at the Bat," written by Ernest Lawrence Taylor in 1888. He wasn't seeking to compose a

masterpiece, but rather a comic ballad that would fill space in the San Francisco newspaper for which he was a contributor.

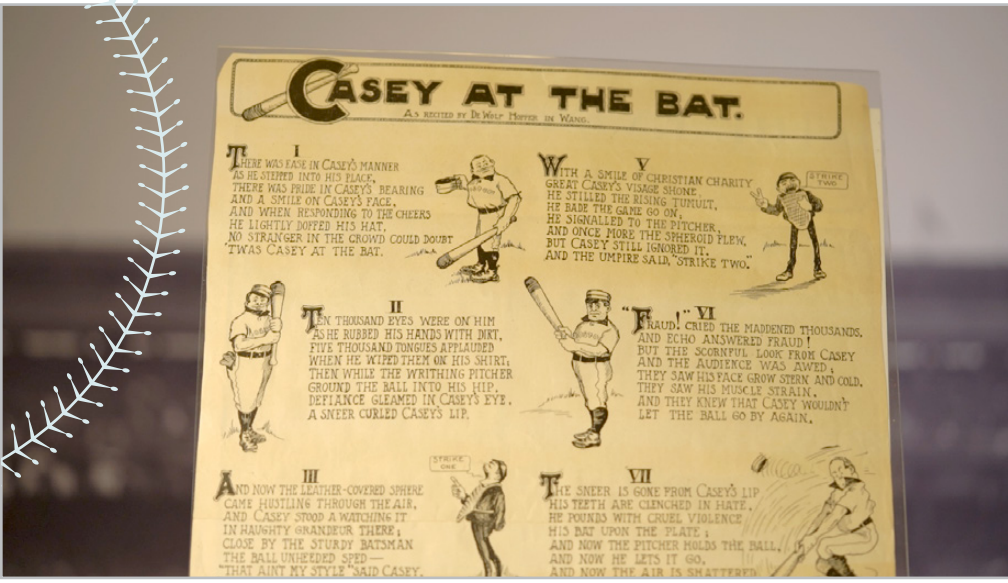
- His poem appeared in *The Daily Examiner* that June 3, and it is about a fictitious baseball slugger failing in the clutch. It might have remained lost in obscurity were it not for a series of fortuitous events. One instance was a memorable night on a Broadway stage, when famous vaudeville actor DeWolf Hopper brought the anonymous writer's words to life and theatergoers to their feet.

- As a result, "Casey at the Bat" would become one of the most beloved and recited poems in American history. Its indelible character, Casey, might have struck out, but Thayer smacked a metaphorical home run, as did Hopper. He would perform the roughly six-minute poem, by his estimates, at least 10,000 times.

- On its initial publication, San Francisco readers got a chuckle from the poem, and it was reprinted in a few Hearst papers on the East Coast. It might have died there, never to be read again even by Thayer, were it not for a sequence of some highly improbable events.

- On August 14, 1888, the Chicago White Stockings were in New York City to play the Giants at the Polo Grounds. Hopper was a huge baseball fan, like many of his fellow cast members of the McCaull Comic Opera Company. Roughly 80 of them decided to attend that day's game, and they invited members from both ball clubs to take in their performance of *Prince Methusalem* that night at Wallack's Theater.

- That night, members of both teams showed up in formal attire, receiving ovations. Hopper wanted to do something special to acknowledge the baseball heroes. The day before, a friend of his, playwright Archibald Clavering Gunter, had suggested that Hopper memorize and perform "Casey at the Bat," and that is exactly what Hopper did.



- Delivering his lines magnificently, Hopper built to the suspenseful, climactic end. Virtually everyone in the audience was expecting mighty Casey to be the hero and deliver his team to victory. When they learned that he'd struck out, they were stunned. The performance seemed somehow more powerful with that failure finish.

- The theatergoers paused for a second or two to digest the surprise ending; then, they rose to their feet and gave Hopper a thunderous applause. He was so moved by their reaction that he decided to perform it again. Gradually, it became the signature act of his career.

America's Grip on Baseball

- The ballplayers in attendance for Hopper's premiere performance obviously grasped the urgency of the baseball suspense unfolding.

However, so did the regular theatergoers. Baseball had established firm roots in American culture.

- One of the reasons for this was economic. During this era of rapid growth, Americans were experiencing prosperity like never before. Real wages rose nearly 60 percent between 1860 and 1890. In addition to having more cash in their wallets, members of the burgeoning middle class had more time on their hands. And more of that money and time was being devoted to things related to baseball.

"Take Me Out to the Ball Game"

- Roughly two decades after mighty Casey struck out, another example of performance art would underscore the game's place in America's common culture, this time via song. On May 2, 1908, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" would be submitted for copyright by lyricist Jack Norworth and composer Albert von Tilzer.

- Like "Casey at the Bat," this ditty spoke to Americans' deepening interest in the game, and over time would trail only the "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "Happy Birthday" as the nation's most sung songs. Interestingly, the two men behind its creation would claim they had never attended a baseball game before composing the tune.

- Norworth and his wife, Nora Bayes, had experienced vaudeville success performing "Shine On, Harvest Moon" for the Ziegfeld Follies in the early months of 1908. Along with von Tilzer, they believed "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" could enjoy similar commercial success, given that it was eminently sing-able and that waltzes and baseball had become all the rage.

- Bayes is thought to be the first to perform the song publicly, but it didn't really take off until Billy Murray and the Haydn Quartet recorded it for Victor Records in 1908, even though Murray did not sing on it. After that recording, the song soared in popularity.

Baseball and Advertising

- Consumers' passion for baseball could be exploited to convince them to purchase goods and merchandise—yet another sign of how influential the sport had become. For example, take the relationship between beer sales and baseball. In 1889, two of the diamond's brightest stars—Adrian "Cap" Anson and William "Buck" Ewing—posed for a colorful lithograph for E. & J. Burke, Irish distillers, brewers, and bottlers based in New York City.

- The tobacco industry also took advantage of baseball's broad cultural appeal. Tobacco companies such as Allen & Ginter began including baseball cards in packages of cigarettes. They believed customers would be enticed to collect the cards, one enclosed in every pack, and thus buy more cigarettes. The strategy worked, resulting in increased sales of cigarettes and other tobacco products.

Souvenirs

- Scorecards from baseball games became a popular souvenir. As the public's knowledge of the sport increased, fans began to score games they attended, using various numbers and symbols to chronicle what had transpired with each batter. This provided them with a special kind of keepsake because by reviewing their markings at a later time, they could relive the game and recall their ballpark experience. In an effort to entice sales, scorecards often featured visually stimulating covers: ornate illustrations, myriad advertisements, and even player photographs.

- As fan worship increased, souvenirs became more sophisticated. Few ballplayers were more idolized than Honus Wagner at the start of the 20th century. In 1909, the Pittsburgh Pirates shortstop won the seventh of his eight National League batting titles while leading his team to a world championship.

- That also was the year Wagner was immortalized with miniature statuettes known as billikens, which were good luck charms that were

a fad at the time. These Wagner statues sold in the Pittsburgh area, and they would become collector's items because of their limited run and three-dimensionality.

- Unfortunately, many American institutions reflected the racism of the era, and products associated with the game often echoed this attitude. One such example was a metal toy bank called the dark town battery, which

featured three African American players in garishly colorful uniforms. By placing a coin in the pitcher's hand and pressing a lever, the mechanism caused the coin to whizz by the batter and pass through a hole in the catcher, thereby depositing it into the bank. The figures were stereotypically cartoonish, reflecting the bigoted representations of African Americans during those Jim Crow times.

Baseball at Home

- With baseball's popularity skyrocketing, people brought the national pastime into their homes. For instance, baseball themes worked their way into board games. Milton Bradley produced a game called Parlor Base Ball in 1878. The game featured a spinner, which randomly selected one of nearly 200 different scenarios. Participants kept track of their base runners by moving checkers around a large board illustrated with a baseball diamond. Soon, other companies, big and small, began to flood the market with their own versions of at-home baseball games.

- In 1913, the National Baseball Playing Card Company would combine the popularity of such parlor games with the growing interest in baseball cards, releasing a deck in which more than three-quarters of the 52 playing cards featured photographs of major league players. Each card also listed the outcome of a baseball play. For example, if you drew pitcher Cy Young's card, you would be out on a foul fly. If you selected catcher Red Dooin's card, you recorded a hit.

Baseball and Language

- As baseball gained a foothold in homes across the country, its influence on language grew. While *bush league* was (and is) a term synonymous with *minor league* in baseball, beyond the diamond, it has come to mean something or someone who is "unsophisticated."

- While a batter takes his position by *stepping up to the plate*, Americans have embraced the term to mean "taking responsibility." Additionally, *home run* has become part of the American vernacular as meaning a "major success."

- The connection between baseball and language ran deeper than idioms and jargon. Nineteenth- and early 20th-century wordsmiths helped grow the sport, not only through reporting games and other baseball news, but also through baseball fiction. In 1884, Noah Brooks became one of the first authors to write a baseball novel: *Our Base Ball Club and How It Won the Championship*.

- One of the earliest children's books to use baseball as a teaching tool would be published a year later. Titled *Base Ball: A B C*, it presented the alphabet through baseball illustrations and a series of rhymes as young readers worked their way through each letter.

- Book publishers, like other businesses, were beginning to appreciate the selling power of ballplayers. During the first decades of the 20th century, pitcher Christy Mathewson's baseball prowess, good looks, and integrity helped him transcend the game.

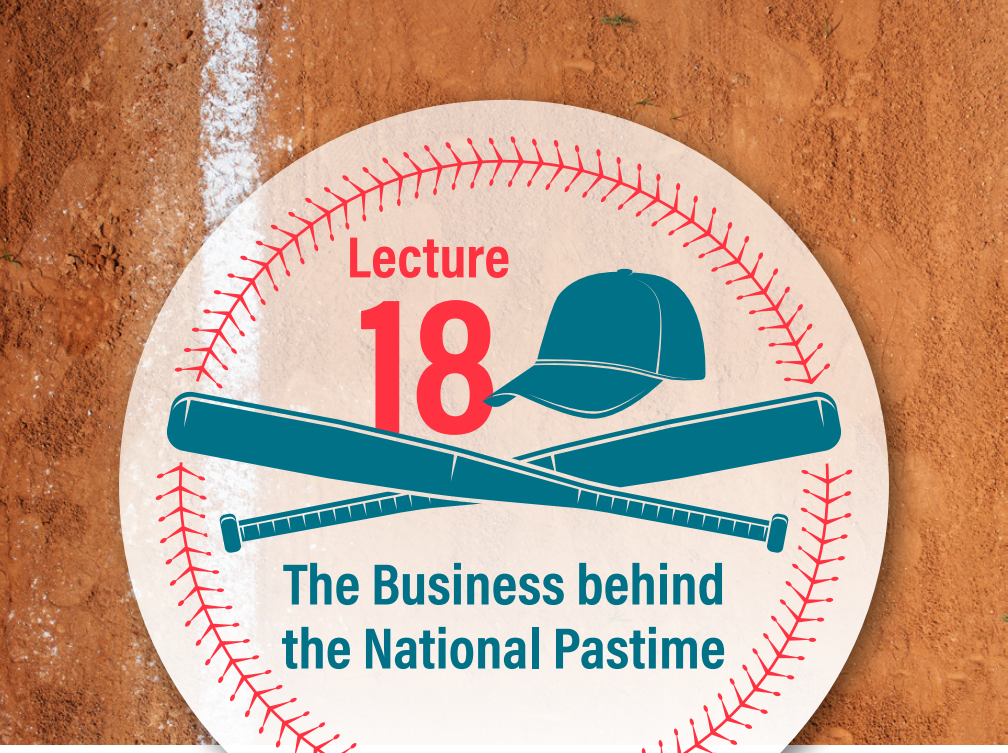
- The winner of more than 300 games and the brightest star on what was at the time New York's most celebrated club, the Giants' pitcher became a successful entrepreneur with a number of works of juvenile fiction. His first, titled *Won in the Ninth*, was published in 1910 and featured characters ripped straight from the big league diamonds of the day.

- Mathewson's first work of nonfiction, titled *Pitching in a Pinch*, was published in 1912. It provided an insider's view of the game and is considered the first of the tell-all books, though his was a tame recounting compared to ones that would follow a half-century later.

- Mathewson returned to fiction with four alliteratively titled baseball novels. *Pitcher Pollock* was published in 1914, and would be followed

in successive years by *Catcher Craig*, *First Base Faulkner*, and *Second Base Sloan*.

- Though Mathewson was listed as the author on the books' covers, they actually were ghostwritten by John Wheeler and wonderfully illustrated by Charles M. Relyea. The books sold because of the extraordinary popularity of Mathewson and the game he played.



Lecture 18

The Business behind the National Pastime

Harry M. Stevens rose from hardscrabble origins to earn acclaim as a pioneer sports caterer. In 1894 he acquired the scorecard concession at New York's Polo Grounds, and in 1901, he played a huge role in popularizing hot dogs at games. The growth of his concession business was merely the most visible element of a much larger story that saw a host of enterprising turn-of-the-century Americans find new ways to market and sell baseball-themed goods—and to advance the success of the game itself.

Twentieth-century American consumers sought recognizable brands that they could trust. When Harry Stevens entered the baseball-concessions business in the 1880s, his was a classic example of a small business that thrived by meeting an existing need.

Corporate America and Baseball

- The intersections between corporate America and the national pastime date all the way back to the strictly amateur clubs of baseball's earliest years. While membership dues paid for most club expenses, it was not uncommon for club members to solicit contributions from local merchants to replace a fence or purchase new uniforms.

- Large crowds were already assembling to watch baseball games by the end of the 1850s, making it easy to envision sizable profits. A major step was taken in that direction in 1858 when admission fees were successfully collected at a three-game series played at the Fashion Race Course in Astoria, New York.

- Eventually, entrepreneurs began to erect enclosed ballparks, and many of them experienced initial success. The first such park, the Union Grounds in Brooklyn, opened in 1862 and served a dual purpose: hosting games during baseball season and serving as a skating rink during the wintertime.

- But when competitors rapidly sprang up, the marketplace became crowded, causing profits to diminish. An even more daunting problem presented itself when the players took advantage of that competition to demand a hefty cut of the proceeds. Knowing that the games could hardly take place without players, the ballpark owners reluctantly accepted their terms. Ballpark ownership became a much less attractive proposition.

The Professional Era

- When baseball's openly professional era began in 1869, the leverage of the players enabled them to assume an even more dominant role. Shareholders typically provided the capital for professional teams, but there was so much competition for the services of talented players that their salaries ate up much of the revenue.

- With no check on the leverage of the players, they had the biggest say in team and league decision-making when baseball's first professional league, the National Association, began play in 1871. As for the financial backers of these teams, profits remained so elusive that few received any dividends. Teams were apt to abruptly disband in midseason, leaving so many unpaid bills that the investment had to be written off as a learning experience.

- These ongoing efforts to make baseball a paying proposition also revealed that, for all the fans who could afford to buy tickets, there were many more who had no intention of paying for something that they were accustomed to enjoying for free. In light of the many risks, most shrewd entrepreneurs concluded that baseball was a fundamentally unsound business proposition.

The National League

- The formation of the National League in 1876 shifted control of baseball's finances from the player to the team owner, making it possible for aspiring entrepreneurs to devise schemes for improving ticket sales. These did not always go as planned.

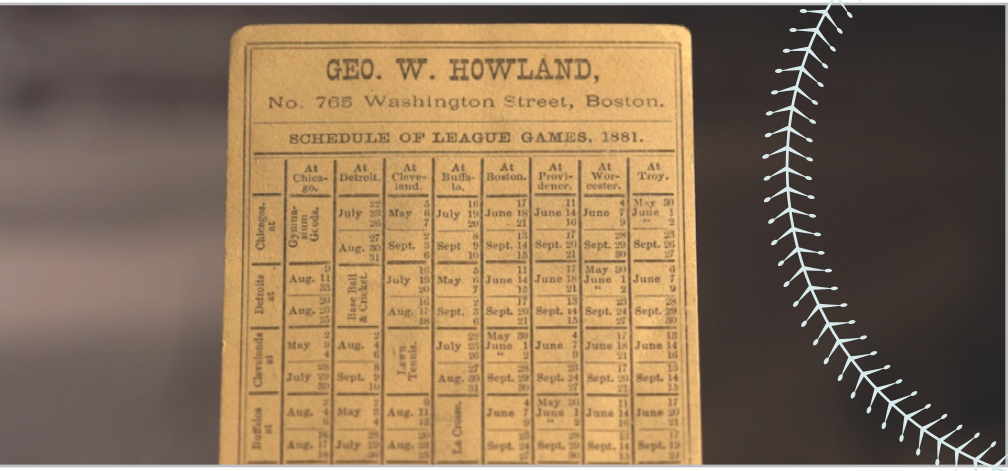
- In 1878, for instance, a new National League entry in Indianapolis plastered the city with bills that featured images of catcher Silver Flint and pitcher Ed Nolan with the inscriptions "The Champion Catcher of America" and "The Only Nolan." These images were met with derision. With ticket sales not receiving the expected boost, Indianapolis pulled out of the National League after a single season.

- Some teams ignored that chastening example and made more blatant attempts at commercialization, provoking an even fiercer backlash. In Rochester, New York, a minor league team called the Hop Bitters was sponsored by the Hop Bitters Manufacturing Company. This infuriated renowned journalist and temperance proponent Henry Chadwick, who went to considerable lengths to avoid referring to the team by name.

Business Associations

- With anything that smacked of commercializing baseball apt to cause such resentment during the 1870s and 1880s, any effort to suggest an association between a ball club and another business required great delicacy. Two years after the National League released its first league-wide schedule in 1877, merchants in two league cities earned praise for printing and giving away pocket schedules that also featured a firm logo.

- Those schedules proved to be useful because they were free and met a need, but there was still understandable reluctance to attempt anything on a larger scale. The idea of selling advertising space on outfield fences, for example, was first proposed in the mid-1870s,



but it was a full decade before any team was willing to risk a public backlash by actually doing so.

- The first known instance of a ballplayer endorsing a commercial product was also suitably modest. In 1877, a professional catcher named John Dolan offered a testimonial for a particular liniment's ability to soothe the pain of an injured hand.

Crowd Sizes

- In the first two decades after the founding of the National League, the owners of professional baseball teams all too often overreacted to the unpredictability of crowd size by acting as though nothing they did had any effect on attendance. Aggressive advertising campaigns did little to help, but there were nonetheless many fans who followed the team and would be more inclined to visit the ballpark if they viewed the team and its owners in a positive light.

- Subtler forms of outreach that focused on solidifying public and press relations might well have accomplished much, but owners

instead showed more inclination to snipe at reporters who published critical accounts. Several even tried to prevent Western Union from telegraphing game results.

Changing Times

- By the turn of the century, necessity was forcing American businesses of all types to explore a wide range of ways to increase sales. In the realm of baseball, minor league and semiprofessional teams led the way.

- One example comes from J. Wallace Page, who grew up on a farm in southeastern Michigan. His background inspired him to create a product suited to the needs of farmers. Barbed wire rapidly achieved popularity after its 1873 invention by Joseph Glidden, but the frequent injuries to livestock that brushed against its barbs led Page to design a modified version that instead used woven wire.

- He still faced the daunting problem that farmers needed to see its most important feature to appreciate its value. In 1895, his Page Fence Wire Company sponsored an African American team called the Page Fence Giants and engaged the services of such players as Bud Fowler and future Hall of Famer Sol White.

- That approach had elicited protests in the 1870s, but times were changing, and a useful product like a fence was viewed much more sympathetically than earlier items. As a result, there was little backlash as the Page Fence Giants crisscrossed the country in a private touring railroad car. They gained a reputation as the nation's premier African American team, and Page Fence Wire Company representatives set up demonstrations at games to explain the woven wire design to the curious.

New Owners

- By the new century, a new generation of major league owners that included former players like Connie Mack and Clark Griffith were

showing the influence of these new ideas. They used promotional and public relations techniques that spread the word about their teams in less abrasive ways and made genuine efforts to monitor customer satisfaction.

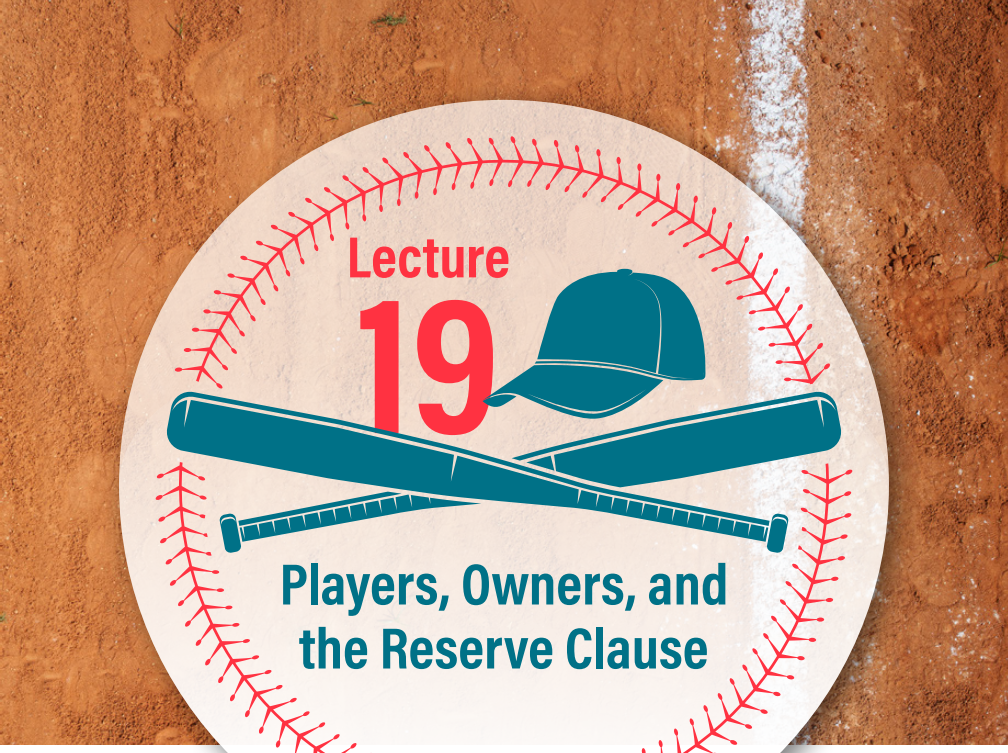
- One of the first noteworthy examples occurred in the final years of the 19th century, when Cincinnati business manager Frank Bancroft began regularly scheduling the Reds to play two games on the same day for the price of a single admission. Bancroft also coined an attention-grabbing term for these events: *doubleheaders*. The concept's success was such that other clubs began rushing to stage doubleheaders.

- During the first two decades of the 20th century, teams unveiled numerous imaginative new promotions designed to increase fan allegiance, many of which would have seemed heretical to earlier generations of owners. For example, special days were held to honor specific groups, including Newsboy Day, Schoolchildren's Day, Boosters Day, and Flag Day. The first tentative experiments were made at offering caps and other free items to fans.

- There were also attempts to introduce forms of corporate sponsorship that engaged fans instead of alienating them. One notable example was an American Tobacco Company advertising campaign that debuted in 1909.

- Large wooden bulls were placed deep in the outfields of ballparks to publicize the firm's Bull Durham brand, with a prize of 50 dollars offered to any batter who hit one. The promotion proved costlier to the Cleveland Indians than to the tobacco manufacturer, as Cleveland star Joe Jackson was knocked unconscious when he hit a bull while chasing a fly ball in September of 1913. The campaign was understandably shelved at that point, but the idea was eventually revived in a safer format.

- Additionally, major league teams began showing their appreciation of the value of brand identification. They started placing a new emphasis on logos, team colors, and standard team nicknames.



Lecture 19

Players, Owners, and the Reserve Clause

Hall of Famers Charley Radbourn, George Wright, and Deacon White were all outspoken in denouncing baseball's reserve clause. Another player, Curt Flood, took his objections to the rule all the way to the Supreme Court. Nevertheless, the reserve clause remained a standard part of the baseball contract until the 1970s, and by then its existence was taken for granted by so many within baseball that Flood's fight was widely viewed as being futile. This lecture provides a look at the social, economic, and legal factors that were responsible for that reserve clause crisis.

Background on the Reserve Clause

- The original impetus for the troublesome clause, then known as the five-man agreement or the five-man rule, was the vexing problem of players who were wearing the uniform of one team but had already signed a contract to play for a different team the following year. Prior to 1879, every player was a free agent at season's end, except in the unusual instance of a multiyear contract. Little could be done to prevent a player from negotiating to spend the next season with a different team, but the optics of the situation were an enormous problem.

- After several unsuccessful attempts to do so, on September 29, 1879, at their annual postseason meeting in Buffalo, the National League owners approved an arrangement by which they all agreed not to sign five players that each of them "reserved." Players and other figures, including sportswriter Henry Chadwick, objected.

- However, in the years that followed, the right to reserve players was further strengthened. The first step was to increase the number of players, and within four years, it had risen to a level that owners could essentially retain their entire team. Because it now spanned more than five players per team, when the controversial rule was incorporated into a standard clause in player contracts, it became known as the reserve rule or the reserve clause.

- By any name, the clause became still more formidable when National League owners began to use it in conjunction with the league's blacklist. Some blacklisted players had been accused of very serious offenses, such as plotting to fix games or showing up in no condition to play, but there were no standard criteria, so a team could place a player's name on the list for a far more minor offense and potentially deprive him of his livelihood.

- To compound matters, the owners soon began to operate on the presumption that the clause could be perpetually renewed. In other words, every time they renewed a player's contract for another year, it gave them the right to do so again the following year, which effectively

meant that they could control a player's rights for his entire career if they so chose.

Arguments over the Clause

- Each such change further riled the reserve clause's opponents, who saw it as nothing less than a conspiracy, but the team owners put forward a compelling argument that the league could not survive without it. Former pitching great Albert Goodwill Spalding put forth the basic point that without the reserve clause, a wealthy owner could potentially buy all of the best players.

- This is a very valid concern. But his implicit assumption that there is no other way to solve this problem is far more dubious. Additionally, he claimed that players accepted the need for the clause, which flew in the face of the vehement protests of such former teammates as George Wright and Deacon White.

Blocking Player Movement

- Rival leagues sprung up frequently during the first half-century of professional baseball. Alternative major leagues were supplemented by a much longer list of minor league circuits. This meant that, at least in theory, a player who was unhappy with the contract offered him by a National League team had plenty of alternatives.

- In practice, however, that appearance could be deceptive. Rival leagues were often precariously financed, which made it difficult for them to offer competitive salaries and created the prospect that they would collapse at any time, leaving their players out of a job and in danger of being blacklisted for having spurned the National League team's offer.

- When a challenger did show signs of greater stability, the National League usually moved swiftly to forge an alliance that protected its

reserve clause. The American Association, for example, took the field in 1882 and soon made it clear that it was going to have staying power.

- As a result, after only one season, those two leagues and the most notable minor league (the Northwestern League) negotiated baseball's first National Agreement by which the two other circuits agreed to honor the National League's reserve clause. In the years that followed, more minor leagues were brought under the umbrella of the National Agreement.

Selling and Trading

- Over the course of the next few seasons, National League and American Association teams first attempted to implement a salary cap with a maximum annual salary of 2,000 dollars and then started to sell and trade players to one another. Baseball fans now take such transactions for granted, but that was most definitely not the case in the 1880s. After all, in what other industry can a worker accept a position with a firm in his or her hometown, only to one day be abruptly notified that she or he will henceforth be working for a rival company in a faraway city?

- Adding to the indignity was the fact that the sums involved in many of those sales far exceeded the annual salaries of the players involved. Spalding's Chicago team blazed the trail by selling catcher-outfielder Mike "King" Kelly to Boston in 1887 and pitcher John Clarkson to the same team one year later, in each case for the then-astonishing sum of 10,000 dollars—five times the maximum salary that the two leagues had just tried to implement.

- Giants star John Ward reacted to the sale of Kelly by penning an 1887 article under the title "Is the Base Ball Player a Chattel?" In common parlance, the term *chattel* carried the sinister connotation that the item in question possessed no rights that had to be considered when a transfer occurred. By choosing that inflammatory term, he had

followed the lead of Charley Radbourn, who earlier drew attention to the parallels between the reserve clause and slavery.

A Union Forms

- After the 1885 season, Ward had convinced eight of his Giants teammates to join him in secretly forming a player's union. Over the course of the 1886 season, they persuaded players on rival teams to sign up by promising to fight the reserve clause and other abuses. In November, it was officially announced that the vast majority of National League players were members of a union.

- On the surface, the players seemed to have a solid case that the reserve clause was illegal. One of the fundamental principles of contract law is mutuality—in other words, each party must benefit—and the reserve clause seemed rather obviously to fall short of that standard: The player received no additional benefit from it. For that matter, while contracts effectively bound players to the team in perpetuity, the player could be released on 10 days' notice at any time.

- However, the matter was far from simple. During the 1880s, US Supreme Court rulings were so favorable to business that even the constitutional amendments designed to protect freed African American slaves were used to bolster the property rights of the mysterious new trusts and holding companies that were reshaping the corporate landscape.

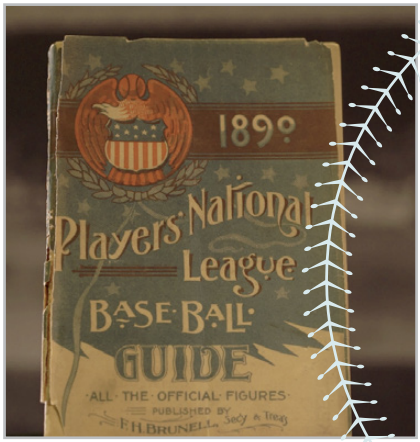
- Additionally, the American public was deeply suspicious of unions in the aftermath of the 1886 deaths of seven police officers and several bystanders when an unknown party detonated a bomb during a labor protest in Chicago's Haymarket Square. In this climate, strident demands from a union composed of men who earned generous wages for playing a game could hardly expect a sympathetic reception, so he and his fellow players moved slowly and cautiously.

The Brotherhood

- Rather than referring to the entity as a union, it was called the Brotherhood, with members of its central committee taking pains to describe it as a benevolent and protective fraternity. They were similarly cautious in their public stance, stressing that they asked only the chance to negotiate.

- Spalding and his fellow owners chose the winter of 1888–1889 to introduce a new salary cap, this time with a maximum annual salary of 2,500 dollars. Additionally, Spalding launched an ambitious around-the-world tour after the 1888 season—a tour that conveniently included Ward. With the leader of the Brotherhood an ocean away at the time of the salary-cap announcement, the players were left at a loss about how to respond.

- When Ward finally returned to the country on the eve of the 1889 season, he convinced the committee that there was no time to mount effective action that season. The Brotherhood began making plans to create their own rival major league. The Players' League took the field one year later in 1890 and provided a strenuous challenge to the two existing major leagues. But when its financial backers decided to cut their losses at season's end, the demise of the Players' League had enormous repercussions.



- For example, it ended the 20-year major league career of Deacon White, who had compiled a stellar .390 on-base percentage in 1890. The much younger

Ward followed White into retirement a few years later to pursue a legal career.

- Even more significantly, the end of the Players' League also cast a lasting pall over all subsequent attempts to fight the reserve clause. New rival major leagues did continue to spring up from time to time, but the results were familiar. When the American League emerged at the outset of the 20th century, its leaders were soon convinced to sign the National Agreement and abide by the reserve clause.

Antitrust Suits

- The Federal League, formed in 1914, was not as willing to acquiesce, and with good reason. In 1890, Congress had passed the Sherman Antitrust Act to prevent monopolistic practices. Initially, the courts interpreted the Sherman Act so narrowly that it stemmed only the most blatant abuses, but by the 20th century, the public mood had shifted dramatically, and a new generation of Supreme Court justices were showing signs of greater receptiveness to workers' rights.

- In light of the longstanding concern that the reserve clause failed to meet the standard of mutuality, the major league owners made a transparent attempt to stave off a legal challenge by stipulating in the 1912 National Agreement that 75 percent of a player's salary was for that year's performance. The balance represented compensation for the right to reserve the player's services for future seasons.

- With those developments in mind, the Federal League launched an antitrust suit against the two established major leagues that had the potential of overturning the reserve clause. League attorneys maneuvered the suit onto the docket of Chicago judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who had earned a reputation as a trustbuster. However, the future baseball commissioner shared the concerns of many fans that the game could not survive without the reserve clause.

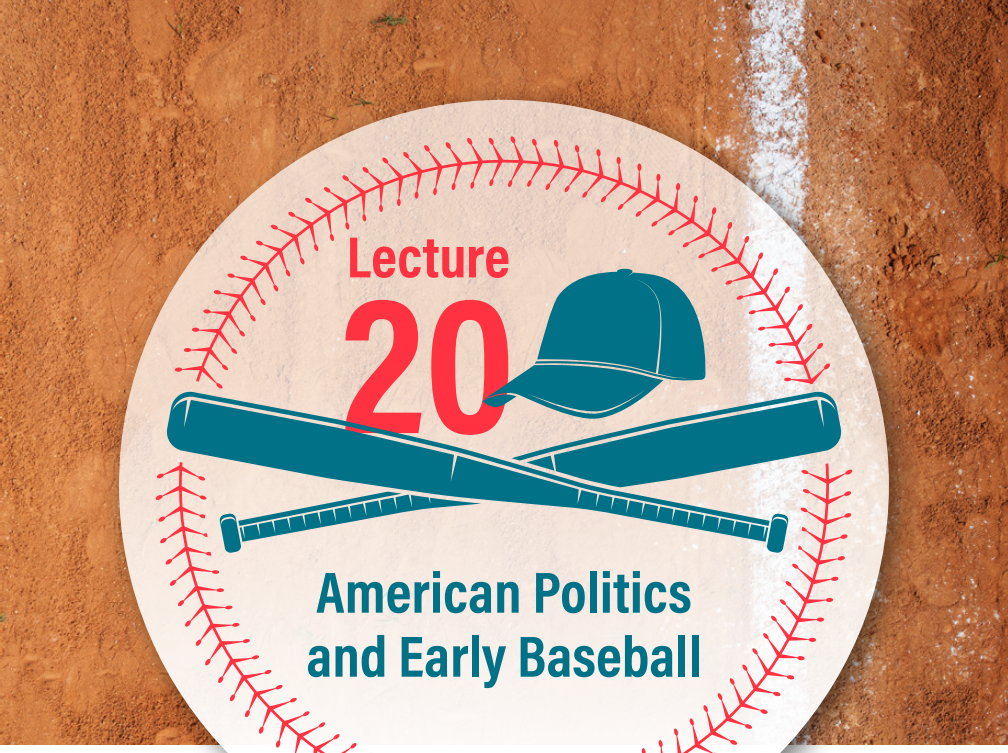
The suit languished on Landis's desk, forcing the upstart circuit to disband after only two seasons.

- Eventually, in 1922, an antitrust case stemming from the Federal League's demise did make its circuitous way to the Supreme Court, headed by newly appointed Chief Justice William Howard Taft. In a unanimous decision, the court held that baseball did not constitute interstate commerce under the Sherman Antitrust Act. Although the ruling did not specifically address the legality of the reserve clause, it effectively created a shield that protected the controversial clause from direct challenge.

- In the years that followed, the court's interpretation of what amounted to interstate commerce shifted dramatically, leaving the 1922 ruling an outlier. Football, for example, was unable to obtain a similar antitrust exemption. However, Supreme Court justices have always been extremely reluctant to directly reverse a precedent established by an earlier court, so the 1922 ruling was reaffirmed in 1953, with the result that many within baseball came to view the reserve clause as unassailable.

- Even in 1972 when Curt Flood brought his case before the court, the 1922 ruling was upheld in a split decision, although the majority opinion acknowledged the exemption to be an "anomaly." Accordingly, the reserve clause remained in force for another three years, until pitchers Andy Messersmith and Dave McNally brought a grievance to baseball's arbitration panel.

- When the panel ruled in favor of the players, the owners made two unsuccessful appeals before feeling obliged to negotiate a compromise by which veteran players could in time qualify for free agency—exactly what John Ward had demanded nine decades earlier.



Lecture 20

American Politics and Early Baseball

On April 14, 1910, President William Howard Taft threw out the first pitch of Opening Day at American League Park, representing a sea change from the prior reluctance of American presidents to associate themselves with baseball. This lecture looks at that shift and how politics became intertwined with baseball.

A Postwar Shift

- In general, 19th-century US presidents and presidential candidates kept the game at arm's length, believing that an association could do them no good and might even do considerable harm. During the first

half of the 1860s, baseball barely registered with most politicians. That made sense: Many Americans saw it as a fad that would soon pass, and there didn't appear to be any way to make money from the game. Additionally, the Civil War was at the forefront of every mind.

- Change began to come when a postwar frenzy for the game made it clear that baseball was likely to remain a fixture of American life. Political insider and baseball enthusiast Arthur Pue Gorman helped to draw those two previously unconnected worlds closer together when he assembled a powerhouse ball club called the Nationals by using Treasury Department appointments to lure gifted players to Washington. It was a similar story in many of the nation's largest cities, most notably in New York City.

- By the end of the 1860s, baseball was an amateur sport in name only. The inevitable adoption of open professionalism took place in 1869, and in turn the game rapidly acquired political overtones. In particular, because all efforts to make profits from baseball are dependent on the availability of suitable playing sites, that issue quickly became politically charged.

- One of the first noteworthy instances occurred in Boston, where new rules that restricted the playing of sports on the Boston Common created so much frustration that the city's ballplayers decided to take action. When municipal elections were held in December of 1869, they created a so-called Red Ball Ticket to help elect candidates, regardless of party, who were favorably inclined to "promoting the physical training of our youth and consequently the public health."

- Sample ballots were distributed on which a red ball appeared next to the name of the candidate endorsed by the ballplayers. Eight of those 12 candidates were victorious, and by the time spring rolled around, baseball was again being played on the Boston Common.

Rising Stakes

- In the years that followed, the stakes kept rising. For example, in New York City, the scarcity of land was such that even well-established local clubs like the Mutuals and the Knickerbockers moved their home fields to Hoboken, New Jersey. When the National League was founded in 1876, the Mutuals were the city's initial representative, yet their home games were played at the Union Grounds in Brooklyn, at the time a separate and distinct city from New York. The Mutuals were bounced from the National League after a single season for failing to complete their schedule, and six long years passed without a major league team to represent New York City.

- That finally changed in 1883, when entries in both major leagues, the National League and the American Association, began playing their home games at a ballpark on 110th Street colloquially known as the Polo Grounds. Even then, however, baseball's foothold in the city remained precarious.

- To allow the two teams—the Giants and the Metropolitans—to use the site, it had been necessary to close several major thoroughfares, so the city retained the right to void the agreement at any time. That fateful provision opened the way for city aldermen to pester the teams' owners with requests for special favors—a dynamic that only intensified after the mayoral election of 1886. In that election, the Tammany Hall political machine orchestrated the candidacy of Abram Hewitt, who defeated, among others, 28-year-old Republican nominee Theodore Roosevelt.

- Before long, baseball and machine politics were so closely intertwined that the American Association Metropolitans gave up the pursuit for a suitable home and disbanded. As for the Giants, one season after winning the 1888 National League pennant, they were forced to play their home games at three different locations.

- Meanwhile, the graft and corruption of New York's municipal politics spread to many other metropolises—as did similar land shortages.

An especially dramatic example took place in Chicago, where team owner Albert Goodwill Spalding had long distributed free passes to local politicians to curry favor. Despite such efforts, however, the city council summarily evicted his team after the 1884 season to make room for a new railroad.

New Transportation

- By then, a new mode of transportation had begun to emerge that would transform the landscape of American cities, thereby deepening the ties between baseball and municipal politics. Horse-drawn omnibuses were already a staple of urban life, but between 1883 and 1895, they gave way to electric streetcars and trolleys, with dramatic consequences.

- A crosstown trip for an evening's entertainment suddenly became feasible, and before long, urbanites began relocating to the suburbs and relying on the new modes of transportation to bring them downtown. City councils held a pivotal role in this process, because they determined who was granted the contract to build a lucrative new trolley line—and which districts received an influx of new business.

- This latter consideration was of crucial importance to the operators of baseball teams. Attendance at sporting events is particularly dependent on access to convenient transportation. With that in mind, many baseball clubs relocated to sites serviced by new trolley lines, and within a few years, streetcar operators had begun purchasing local ball clubs and then erecting ballparks at sites carefully chosen for the ease of bringing passengers to them.

- Arrangements of this sort proved so remunerative that by the turn of the century they had become commonplace

The Dodgers

By 1895, local papers frequently referred to Brooklyn's National League club as the Trolley Dodgers, a nickname that was later shortened to today's familiar Dodgers.

in major and minor league cities all across the country. Owners of baseball clubs who were not able to become streetcar operators were careful to cultivate close relationships with local politicians, knowing that their decisions could make or break a ball club.

New York City Politics

- New York City remained the nation's most congested metropolis, ensuring that every municipal election would be the subject of anticipation for local baseball fans. In January of 1895, the Giants were purchased by Andrew Freedman, a local businessman with impeccable Tammany Hall connections and a knack for shrewd real estate dealings.

- In the years that followed, Freedman showed little interest in making the Giants a better team. However, Freedman's political connections and background in real estate did help him to ensure that the Giants remained the only team in town, which became critical when Ban Johnson's American League emerged as a challenger after the 1900 season.

- Johnson would have dearly loved to create additional buzz by placing a franchise in New York City, but when all efforts to identify a suitable location failed, his league's 1901 season had to be played without one. As a result, all eyes were on the municipal election slated for that November.

- In the first mayoral election since the five boroughs had combined, the Republican Party and the reform-minded Citizens Union party had jointly endorsed a so-called Fusion candidate, Seth Low, in hopes of ending Tammany dominance. New York voters elected Low, who immediately went to work to fulfill his campaign promises of reducing graft and introducing a merit-based system for filling municipal positions.

- News of Low's election was also hailed as a harbinger of change in the baseball world, with some journalists speculating that it would bring an American League team to the city in time for the 1902 season.

However, Ban Johnson did not rush to place an American League team in New York.

- It was not until the 1903 season, after Johnson had time to line up a politically well-connected ownership group, that the team took the field. Success was rare in the early years. Before long, the team began sharing the Polo Grounds with the Giants, earned the Yankees nickname, and was sold to a former Tammany congressman named Jacob Ruppert and his partner Tillinghast L'Hommedieu Huston, who soon created one of the greatest dynasties in all of sports.

Andrew Freedman's Exit

- Likewise, Andrew Freedman's exit from baseball did not take place immediately, yet in this regard, the 1901 New York mayoral election may well have had even more dramatic consequences within the baseball world than anyone anticipated. Freedman had been working on a top-secret scheme that would have converted the eight-team National League into a giant baseball trust, in which the owners of each existing team would receive a specific share of the profits.

- He had already lined up the votes of three other owners, so he needed only to find one more vote to potentially turn baseball into an activity in which the entertainment value rivaled or even took precedence over the competition. Instead, soon after the election setback, an intrepid reporter broke the story of Freedman's scheme.

- With the American public increasingly opposed to trusts of any kind, the Giants owner found himself unable to line up that all-important fifth vote. Faced with a stalemate, Freedman decided to sell the Giants, and he soon got out of baseball permanently.

National Politics

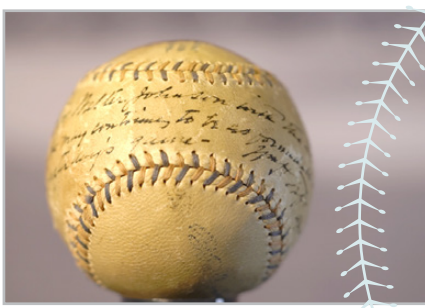
- In light of the increasingly deep bond between baseball and civic politics, the game also began to play a role on the national political scene. Pitcher John Tener was elected to the US House of Representatives in 1908, and two years later became the governor of Pennsylvania.

- More generally, by the first decade of the 20th century, the national economy had rebounded. With the scruffy reputation of professional ballplayers giving way to a more wholesome image, there was far less reason for American politicians to be reluctant to associate themselves with the national pastime.

- The stage appeared to be set for an American president to embrace baseball. It seemed that Theodore Roosevelt, who became president in 1901 following the assassination of William McKinley, would be suited for the role.

- However, Roosevelt restricted his recreational activities to ones that embodied what he dubbed "strenuous life," while denouncing less rugged activities as being suitable only for "mollycoddles." When he decided not to run for reelection in 1908, he warned chosen successor William Howard Taft to exercise great care in his choice of leisure activities.

- Against this backdrop, it would have been understandable had Taft declined the invitation from Ban Johnson to throw out the first pitch of the 1910 season, but the president had a genuine passion for the game. Sensing that Americans would be pleased to know that their president shared their love of the national pastime, Taft made time for the game and effectively used the event as a photo opportunity.



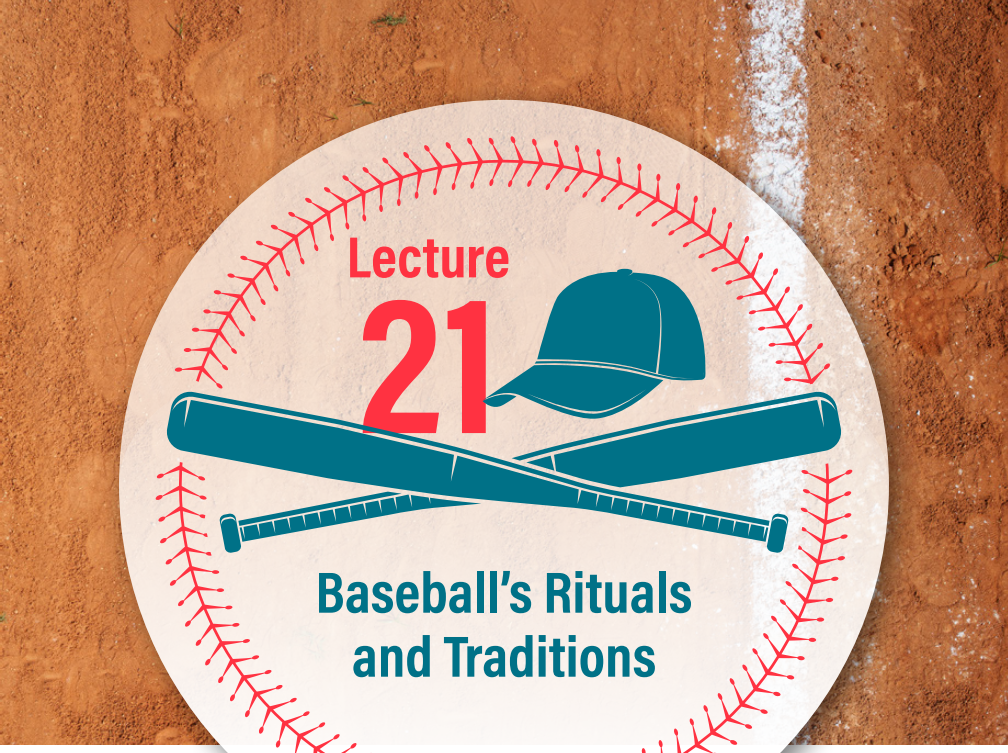
- The next day's sports pages were filled with photos of Taft's pitch, and the historic game was the

first Opening Day to be captured in motion pictures. The following day Taft even signed the first-pitch baseball, adding the inscription: "To Walter Johnson, with the hope that he may continue to be as formidable as in yesterday's game."

Conclusion

- Vivid evidence of the strength of the ties between baseball and the president was provided in 1953, when newly elected president Dwight Eisenhower bypassed the Opening Day tradition established by Taft to play golf. Golf was still seen by many Americans as a pastime for the wealthy, so Eisenhower's decision created widespread indignation.

- The irony of that controversy went beyond the reality that, not that long ago, American presidents had felt reluctant to express any interest in baseball. When members of Dwight Eisenhower's generation were young men, involvement in baseball was not something to be boasted about. In many cases, it was done in a clandestine manner. Within the span of their lifetime, however, baseball had become such a fixture of American life that even a president riding a crest of popularity could not afford to ignore its traditions.



Lecture 21

Baseball's Rituals and Traditions

Why do fielders throw the ball "around the horn" after a strikeout? Why do fans perform the wave? Why do managers wear uniforms, even when their playing days have long since ended? The tempting answer to such questions is that it has always been done that way, but in fact, none of those customs were common practices during the early years of baseball. This lecture looks at how rituals eventually assumed considerable prominence.

The Mid-19th Century

- The role that rituals play in baseball is a complex and multi-faceted topic, but when the game first achieved mass popularity in the

mid-19th century, their function wasn't all that complicated. Many Americans of that era were profoundly skeptical of the notion that anything worthwhile could come of encouraging adults to chase a ball around.

- Placed on the defensive, baseball's proponents borrowed heavily from customs of chivalry to strengthen their case. In medieval times in Europe, a sharp distinction had existed between sporting activities that had the approval of the nobility and religious authorities and those that did not.

- Members of respectable society took a dim view of disfavored sports, so the activities that they did approve of were enveloped in the customs of chivalry. Violence and aggression were nonetheless conspicuous elements of the jousts and other sporting events that were staged at tournaments, but those competitions occurred only within carefully defined parameters.

- These practices carried over to the early years of baseball. Baseball prior to the 1870s was played by clubs, not teams, and considerable effort was put into differentiating the action from the gratuitous

violence and chaos that characterized traditional sports like football, boxing, and even horse racing.

- Toward that end, club names often reflected national pride. Club uniforms, colors, and logos were also selected with care, and keeping the uniform tidy was a point of great pride. Gameday rituals reinforced the message of harmony.

- If the two clubs represented different communities, members of the host club would greet their guests at the train station and conduct them on a tour of the city's attractions. When it was time for the game, ritual assumed a still more prominent role.

- The umpire was usually a local dignitary, who might be seated in a comfortable chair beneath an umbrella and offered a choice of refreshing beverages. Special seats were reserved for female spectators, reflecting the belief that their presence would remind the participants that the outcome of the game was not the most important thing. At the close of play, the captain of the losing side presented the game ball to his counterpart on the victorious side.

- After the presentation, the members of the two clubs typically took turns giving three cheers for their opponents, then joined together to give three more cheers for the umpire, and perhaps even for the spectators. If time permitted, both clubs might then join together for food and drink, along with plenty of merriment. These customs were carefully chosen with a view to ensuring that the competition that took place did not cause either participants or onlookers from focusing too much on the outcome.

A Competitive Spirit Rises

- Before the end of baseball's amateur era, a spirit of competitiveness became increasingly evident. After the advent of open professionalism in 1869, the emphasis increasingly shifted toward results at the

expense of the once-cherished ritual elements. Even the traditional presentation of a trophy ball fell out of use after disgruntled losing sides began substituting weather-beaten old baseballs.

- Many rituals died a natural death, but as they did so, others took their place. Some rituals seemingly disappeared, only to reemerge unexpectedly. Attempts to create new rituals often produced negligible results, yet some extremely unlikely concepts proved to have much more staying power.

- As this process played itself out, a fundamental shift in the role rituals played became apparent. They no longer functioned primarily to make baseball acceptable to members of polite society; instead, their purpose broadened in scope and they came to serve to deepen the bonds of fans of all backgrounds to the national pastime.

- Befitting the expanded role that baseball had begun to play, some of the significant new rituals of the 1880s were introduced by diehard followers. Early in the 1886 season, for example, several hundred loyal New York Giants fans traveled to Philadelphia to watch their favorites take on the Phillies, bringing with them brand-new brooms that they tacked up behind their seats to symbolize the sweep that they hoped to witness.

- But when the Phillies took two out of three games, the New York fans instead handed over the brooms to the Philadelphia players before leaving for home. For the remainder of that season, many of the fans who made the trip to another city to watch the home team play brought brooms along with them, and to this day, brooms are sometimes waved by fans to symbolize a sweep.

During the 1890s, as the social status of ballplayers improved, they became popular targets for autograph seekers.

Reasons for Rituals

- A variety of reasons helped to account for why and when other rituals entered baseball, beginning with the cost involved. For example, numerous formats for practicing batting were experimented with during the 19th century, but clubs had to be mindful of the expense of lost baseballs. As a result, it was not until well into the 20th century that anything resembling the free swinging of today's batting practice emerged.

- Practical considerations could also prove decisive. The customs of purchasing a scorecard and keeping score, for instance, received a major boost by the absence of numbers from player uniforms until well into the 20th century. As long as the scorecard correctly listed the names and positions of the starters for both teams, it was a valuable aid for tracking players.

- The enduring ritual of the seventh-inning stretch also owes much to practical necessity. When the pioneering Red Stocking Club of Cincinnati visited California in 1869, one of the promoters arranged for a 10-minute intermission following the sixth inning in hopes of increasing concession revenue. It proved popular, and before long, the seventh-inning stretch became a custom.

- Rule changes could also play a crucial role. For instance, it was once customary for non-playing managers to wear street clothes. Even after a rule prohibited anyone from stepping on the playing field unless in uniform, a number of managers continued to sit in the dugout dressed in a suit and tie.

- Eventually, most non-playing managers concluded that it was too inconvenient to be barred from going on the field to act as a coach or converse with the umpire, so it became customary for even these men to wear uniforms. By the beginning of the 20th century, only a handful of managers dressed in street clothes for the game.

- There are more than a few rituals that are difficult to satisfactorily account for. The customs of tipping the cap to acknowledge the

crowd and throwing the ball "around the horn" after an out are two of the more noteworthy examples of customs whose origins appear to be lost in the mists of time.

The Wave

Several years before this course's publication, a volunteer at the Hall of Fame discovered a newspaper account of an 1866 match between the Atlantic and Athletic clubs at Brooklyn's Capitoline Grounds. Part of the account describes an activity that sounds like today's ritual of the wave. However, the wave eventually went into an extended hibernation before unexpectedly returning and becoming more popular than ever in the 1980s.

Club Nicknames

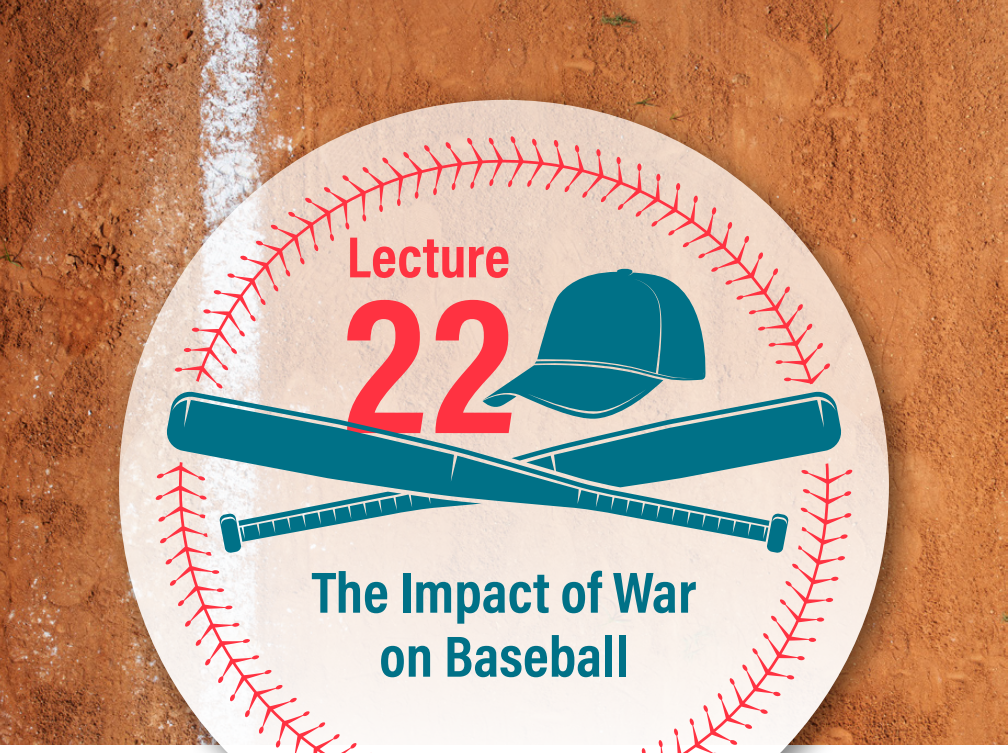
- Perhaps the most notable example of a ritual that reappeared was the club nickname. In the early days of the game, baseball clubs were completely enfolded by the social club that supported it, so their nicknames were simply the name of that club. Thus, baseball clubs that shared the same locale were easily differentiated by their club names rather than city names.

- This practice, however, soon fell into disrepute because nicknames became closely associated with gang culture in late-19th-century American cities. As a result, when the National League made nicknames unnecessary by granting exclusive franchise rights, thereby ensuring that no two clubs would call the same city home, there was every reason to believe that the use of such nicknames would die out entirely. With the aim of ensuring a wholesome image, the National League even added a stipulation to its constitution that prohibited nicknames.

- When the American Association emerged as a rival in 1882, however, its leaders believed that team nicknames still had considerable public appeal. Several American Association teams became known primarily by a nickname. Additionally, by embracing nicknames for American

Association clubs that played in cities that were already homes to established National League clubs, the newcomers easily differentiated themselves from their rivals.

- By the 20th century, it started becoming more common to apply nicknames to college athletic teams, a custom that increased the prestige of such monikers. In turn, it gradually became more common for major league teams to be known by a nickname.



Lecture 22

The Impact of War on Baseball

This lecture looks at the extent to which World War I encroached on the comparatively tranquil national pastime of a country accustomed to being sheltered from war. Additionally, the lecture examines some of the significant interactions between baseball and war prior to 1917.

Before World War I

- In the 69 years between the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 and the 1917 entry of the US into World War I, the only armed conflict with a foreign adversary had been the short-lived Spanish-American War of 1898. With two oceans providing a natural buffer

and the Monroe Doctrine acting as a figurative shield, it was easy to imagine that the horrors of war would rarely intrude.

- War had touched the lives of many prominent figures in the baseball world. Nearly 30 Civil War veterans played in the major leagues. Among other veterans of that conflict were several non-playing managers, along with four of the first five National League presidents.

Baseball in War

During the Civil War, it was not uncommon for captured soldiers to pass time in prisoner-of-war camps playing the game they knew and loved.

- War continued to touch the baseball world in the years that followed. Players for the surprisingly integrated baseball team of the USS *Maine* were among the casualties of the

catastrophe that helped to launch the Spanish-American War of 1898. Only right fielder John H. Bloomer survived the ship's sinking.

- A number of notable baseball figures took an active role in the conflict, including Negro leagues executive C. I. Taylor, while a few even paid the ultimate price. Cuban baseball legend Emilio Sabourín died in a Spanish jail, while 45-year-old William Stearns, whose five-year major league career had ended more than two decades earlier, enlisted and died of typhoid fever.

Baseball and the Armed Forces

- Although the Spanish-American War was short-lived, its effects continued to be felt in the baseball world in the years that followed. Megaphones, for example, became so popular among American troops in Cuba that they soon were being used at the ballpark to announce the names of the players.

- An even more fundamental development saw the volunteer army that the nation had long depended on gradually give way to a professional military after the turn of the century. Such former major leaguers as Tom Maher and Ed Clark opted for careers as soldiers.

- The professionalization of the American armed forces also made it necessary to address the quality of life on military bases, which were all too often ragtag affairs. Baseball came to be seen as part of the solution, simultaneously providing wholesome diversion and helping to improve fitness levels. A few soldiers, like Dave Altizer, even used the military as a springboard into professional baseball.

- There can be little doubt, however, that the most talented baseball-playing military company of the early years of the 20th century was the 25th Infantry, one of the all–African American regiments. Although baseball's color barrier prevented any of the members of the 25th Infantry from competing in the white-only major leagues, such players as Joe Rogan, Andy Cooper, and Walter "Dobie" Moore became some of the brightest stars of the Negro leagues.

- US troops also played a role in developing the popularity of baseball in Latin America. Since first being articulated by President James Monroe in 1823, the Monroe Doctrine had become the hallmark of American foreign policy, leading succeeding generations of politicians and diplomats to maintain neutrality during overseas conflicts but to be far more vigilant about unrest in the western hemisphere.

- As a result, the late 19th and early 20th centuries often saw US troops stationed in Latin American countries during peacetime. American soldiers helped popularize the game in such nations as Venezuela, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic.

The Buildup to World War I

- In the years leading up to World War I, the nation's reliance on a volunteer army meant that most young men knew of war from tales handed down from their fathers and grandfathers, not from firsthand experience. More generally, geographical isolation and isolationist policies had lulled Americans of all ages into thinking of war as something that only happened in faraway lands.

- When the nation made its entry into World War I on April 6, 1917, it had a transformative effect. In the immediate run-up to the US declaring war on Germany, many in the baseball world had expected that the major leagues would be obliged to shut down entirely.

Early in the War

- Less than two months after the declaration of war, Boston Braves catcher Hank Gowdy became the first active player to enlist. However, many remained hopeful that a resolution to the war was imminent. As a result, the 1917 major league season was played to its conclusion, and the war was mostly acknowledged in symbolic fashion. At Red Cross Days, for instance, a portion of the gate receipts was donated to the Red Cross.

- By early 1918, however, there was no escaping the reality that trench warfare had created a virtual stalemate. Believing that a dramatic increase in the deployment of US troops was the only solution, on July 1, American secretary of war Newton Baker issued a "work or fight" order. Initially, major league ball players were given a temporary reprieve, but ultimately baseball was classified as a nonessential occupation.

- With men between the ages of 21 and 31 now subject to conscription, ballplayers who did not qualify for an exemption faced the prospect of being sent to the front lines unless they accepted a job in an industry classified as essential to the war effort. Some followed Gowdy's example by voluntarily enlisting, while a still larger number put their baseball careers on hold to take jobs in munitions factories or shipbuilding plants.

- Under the circumstances, it was widely expected that the baseball season would soon be abandoned. All but one of the minor leagues, the International League, did indeed suspend play indefinitely, but eventually the date for the "work or fight" order to go into effect was moved back to September.

- This allowed the two major leagues to complete an abbreviated season, followed by an early World Series between the Cubs and Red Sox. Nonetheless, the joylessness of the remainder of the major league season was accentuated by the use of subpar-quality baseballs due to wartime shortages and by a continuing exodus of players. Even the mound heroics of a young Red Sox pitcher named Babe Ruth in the World Series was greeted with only limited interest.

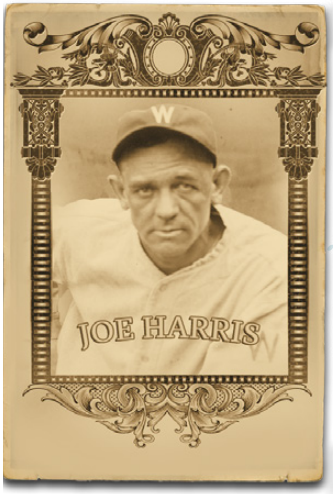
The 1919 Season

- By the end of the 1918 season, few believed that baseball would be played in 1919 at all. On his final trip to New York, Tigers legend Ty Cobb announced that he would soon be enlisting and that he did not expect to resume his career after the war ended.

- When the spectators called on him to make a farewell speech, Cobb clambered atop the dugout and implored them to purchase war stamps. The New York fans responded with a rousing ovation. Over the years, the feisty Cobb had often tormented their favorite team, but on this day, there was only one team.

- However, such farewells were premature. Only months later, the Armistice was signed, and when spring rolled around, major league teams took the field as usual—Cobb included. The crowds also returned to major league ballparks during the 1919 season.

- A number of familiar faces were conspicuously absent. For instance, while injured war veteran and catcher Joe Harris was eventually able to take the field again, others were not so fortunate. The incomparable pitcher Christy Mathewson, for example, now managing the Reds, was



JOE HARRIS	
Batting average	.317
On-base percentage	.404
Slugging percentage	.472
Hits	963
Runs scored	461
RBI	516
Walks	413
Fielding percentage	.987

accidentally gassed while serving in France and he never fully regained his health, dying of tuberculosis seven years later at the age of 45.

- Another poignant reminder of the recent war was a monument unveiled at the Polo Grounds in 1921. The monument hailed former Giants infielder Eddie Grant, who had lost his life on a battlefield in France.

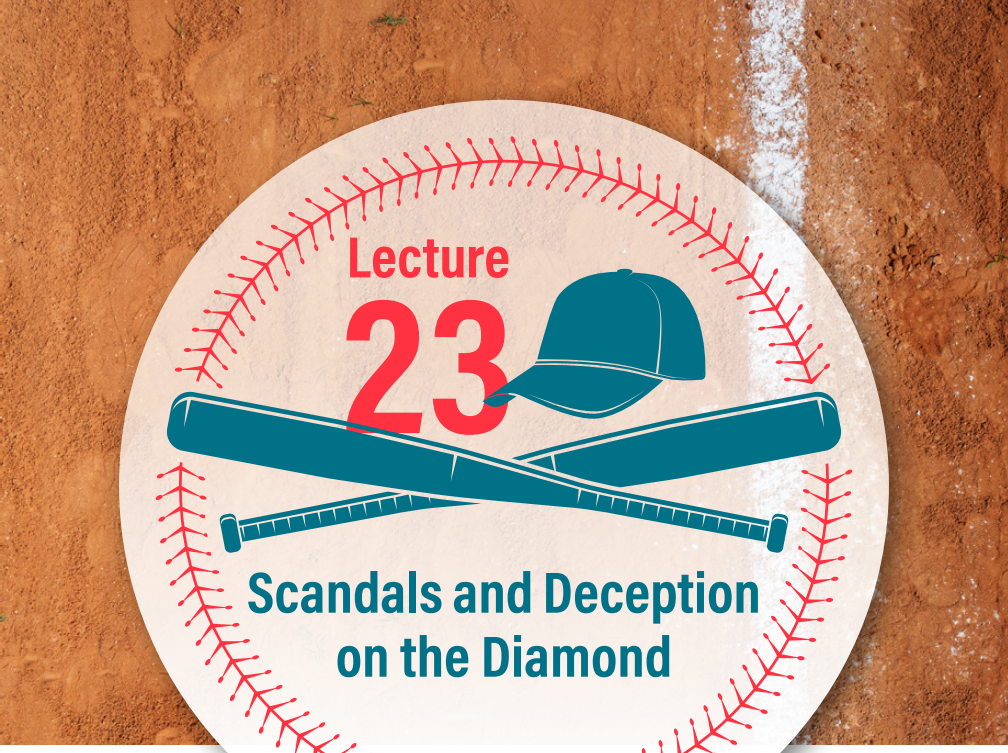
Changes to the Nation

- In the aftermath of the war, the national mindset was profoundly different, and that shift affected every aspect of American life, including the national pastime. No brief summary can do justice to all of the ways in which this new awareness of the precariousness of national security manifested itself, but two are particularly notable.

- The first was a newfound recognition of the critical importance of physical fitness. Because 35 percent of draftees were pronounced physically unfit to serve, Americans were shocked into a nationwide soul-searching. Vitamins soared to prominence as new attention was devoted to nutrition and food safety, to public health, and to exercise in all its forms. The new outlook carried over into the postwar years, with baseball among the many sports that benefited.

Regrettably, patriotism sometimes made an excuse for the suppression of civil liberties and even the blatant harassment of German Americans.

- An even more conspicuous development was an outpouring of patriotic fervor. During the final year of the war, the donations of equipment and funds to the war effort continued, and these initiatives were complemented by new symbols of baseball's support for the troops. Players on both teams engaged in on-field military drills before games, bearing rifles or sometimes using bats in place of firearms. It also became common for baseball clubs to incorporate patriotic emblems and themes into their uniforms, such as the star-spangled outfits worn by the Chicago White Sox during the 1917 World Series.



Lecture 23

Scandals and Deception on the Diamond

In 1919, most Americans were only too happy to avert their eyes away from overseas turmoil in favor of simpler matters, and they were generally inclined to believe that the Chicago White Sox would emerge triumphant in that year's World Series. Instead, several Chicago players turned in subpar performances, and it was Cincinnati that captured the 1919 Fall Classic.

In September of 1920, with the White Sox in the thick of a tight American League pennant race, the shocking news broke that eight players who soon became known as the Black Sox had met with gamblers prior to the previous fall's World Series. They had accepted money to fix the outcome. This lecture focuses on that scandal and other deceptions that have affected baseball.

The Black Sox Scandal

- While there was particular dismay among baseball fans, the nation as a whole expressed an overwhelming sense of betrayal over the Black Sox scandal. Baseball felt obliged to respond forcefully to this outcry. Following the 1920 season, Kenesaw Mountain Landis, a crusading Chicago judge who had made national headlines by subpoenaing John D. Rockefeller, was selected as baseball's first commissioner and given sweeping powers to investigate and address any threat to what came to be phrased as the "best interests of baseball."

- While Landis's powers were broad, his mission was narrow: to make sure that nothing like the World Series gambling scandal of 1919 ever occurred again and, just as importantly, to restore the faith of the American public in how baseball crowned a champion. To fulfill that mission, the new commissioner banished all eight Black Sox players from organized baseball for life and informed everyone associated with the game that they would meet a similar fate if they bet on baseball or took part in game-fixing.

- By also watching over subsequent World Series with an eagle eye, Landis restored the faith of Americans that the result was being determined on the field, not in a darkened alley. For baseball, it was a new beginning.

Fallout of the Black Sox Scandal

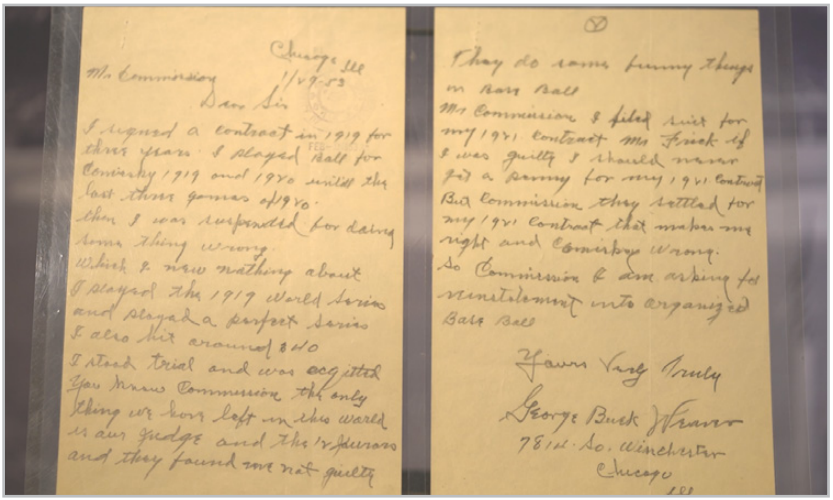
- The unsavory chain of events that became known as the Black Sox scandal is often thought of as baseball's original sin. Seen from this perspective, the 1919 World Series took away the game's innocence, as symbolized by the probably apocryphal tale of the Chicago urchin who called out, "Say it ain't so, Joe," as Sox outfielder "Shoeless" Joe Jackson walked out of a courthouse.

- Others, however, have made a case for the innocence of some of the banished players, most notably for George "Buck" Weaver, a popular nine-year veteran. Weaver always maintained that he neither accepted money to fix the World Series, nor agreed to do so. These claims

Buck Weaver

appear to be true, yet Weaver acknowledged attending the meetings at which the plot was discussed and making the fateful decision to remain silent rather than alert authorities.

- Once the scandal was revealed, that was all that mattered. Even as late as 1953, at the age of 62, George Weaver wrote to then-commissioner



Chicago Ill
1/19-53

Mr. Commissioner
Dear Sir

I signed a contract in 1919 for three years. I played ball for Comiskey 1919 and 1920 until the last three games of 1920. Then I was suspended for doing some thing wrong. Which I new nothing about. I played the 1919 World Series and played a perfect Series I also hit around .340. I stood trial and was acquitted. You Mean Commission the only thing we have left in this world is our Judge and Jurors and they found me not guilty

They do some funny things in ball
Mr Commission I filed suit for my 1921 contract Mr Frick if I was guilty I should never get a penny for my 1921 contract But Commission they settled for my 1921 contract that make me right and Comiskey Wrong.
So Commission I am asking for reinstatement into organized Base Ball

Yours Very Truly
George Buck Weaver
7811 So. Winchester
Chicago
Ill

Ford Frick, asking to be reinstated into Organized Baseball. His pleas fell on deaf ears.

- A lively discussion about the Black Sox scandal continues to this day, its complexity increased by a number of perplexing issues. White Sox owner (and former major league ballplayer) Charles Comiskey, for example, was initially seen as an innocent victim of the conspiracy, only to later be accused of provoking the fix by means of penny-pinching tactics.

- Even in the more straightforward issue of whether Weaver's punishment was fair, there is considerable room for debate. For example, Pants Rowland, Weaver's former manager, maintained: "Squealing in those days was considered almost a crime in itself. And Buck … simply didn't know how to cope with such a situation or the slick operators." Defenders of Weaver also point out that no requirement to report game fixing existed at the time. Yet others feel just as strongly that baseball had to make an example of all eight Black Sox players, Weaver included.

Unwritten and Written Rules

- The lack of consensus as to how Weaver should have handled this moral quandary is at the heart of why it took the game so long to develop clear standards. For that matter, it helps us to understand why to this day baseball has so many unwritten rules about such matters as brushback pitching, bunting to break up a no-hitter, stealing bases with a big lead, and the like.

- Since unwritten rules are inherently difficult to quantify, it is helpful to start by looking at today's written rules. Imagine a runner leading off first base and a left-handed pitcher on the mound, who begins what seems to be a delivery to the plate, only to whip the ball to first base in an attempted pickoff.

- The better the pickoff move, the more likely it is that calls of "balk" will be heard from the team at bat. Sometimes the umpires will agree, which usually prompts an argument from the team in the field. Spectators find it especially confusing, with even diehard fans often unaware of what constitutes a balk.

- Behind the nuances of the balk rule there lurks a fascinating history. The one element of the rule that seems crystal clear is its intent. Rule 8.05 instructs the umpire to call a balk when the pitcher's move is intended to deceive a base runner. But in a very real sense, this is the most befuddling aspect of all: As pitcher Bill Lee once pointed out, every single pick-off move is an effort to deceive a base runner.

- That paradox is a remnant of the first attempts to shape baseball's rulebook in the years before the Civil War, and a closer look at that process reveals another paradox. The absence of clear ethical standards in the years prior to 1920 reflects the result of trying to create ethical standards that were so idealistic that they relied heavily on judging a player's intent. In turn, the inherent subjectivity yielded a dependence on unwritten rules.

The Late 1800s

- In the late 1800s, players felt little compunction about using tactics that were deliberately designed to fool the umpire. With only one umpire overseeing most major league games until the first decade of the 20th century, there were many ways to do this, and players kept devising new ones.

- When a base hit was made with multiple runners on base, for example, cunning base runners knew that the umpire could not possibly keep an eye on all of the action at once, so they often cut in front of a base instead of touching it. Infielders were soon retaliating by obstructing the path of base runners or otherwise trying to slow them down, while

catchers learned how to make noises with their fingers or mitts in hopes of convincing the umpire that a foul tip had occurred.

- Pitchers found a wide variety of ways to doctor the baseball, leading batters to fight back by trying to steal the catcher's signs. Groundskeepers unveiled a particularly long list of dubious tactics that included adding gravel and pebbles to the base paths to slow down would-be base-stealers, slanting the baselines to help or hinder bunters, and modifying the height of the pitching area.

- Were these tactics wrong? From the perspective of the old-timers who had played the game by a strict code of honor and looked at themselves as ambassadors for their hometown, they certainly were. But from the vantage of players who came of age in the 1880s, it was actually possible to argue that a ballplayer who didn't use such tricks wasn't doing everything they could to help their team win.

Money and Baseball

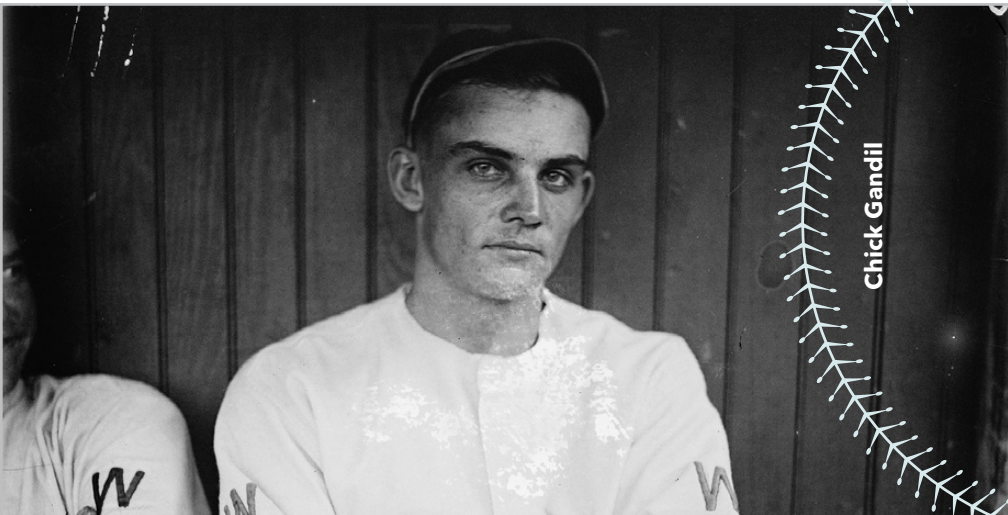
- In these ongoing disputes about how the game should be played, the problems caused by money, gambling, and game fixing became a particular source of contention. Baseball's early efforts to preserve the game's purity by requiring amateurism ignored the reality that such a rule made it difficult, if not impossible, for members of the working classes to take part.

- That complication meant that money entered the game in subtle ways, such as an offer by a wealthy club member to compensate a player for travel expenses or lost wages. Before long, gifted ballplayers were jumping from club to club after being offered well-paying jobs that entailed only nominal duties.

- In the parlance of the day, these so-called revolvers unquestionably violated the ban on professional play adopted by baseball's governing body. But whether their actions were morally wrong was much more debatable.

- Gambling also struck many as a straightforward question of right and wrong. That view was reinforced by the broad powers afforded the commissioner to preserve the integrity of the game as well as specific rules, including what is today known as Rule 21, prohibiting members of teams from betting on ball games. Prior to the Black Sox scandal, however, many Americans not only believed that there was nothing wrong with wagering, but considered a willingness to place a bet when challenged to be an admirable trait.

- Even in the case of game fixing, applying moral absolutes is a tricky business. In 1956, more than 35 years after the scandal, Chick Gandil, the Black Sox player who set up the initial meeting between the gamblers and the eight players, finally agreed to tell his side of the story to a reporter.


Chick Gandil

- In a first-person account in *Sports Illustrated*, Gandil admitted that the players accepted money to throw the World Series and offered no "defense for the thing we conspired to do. It was inexcusable." He insisted, however, that their intent was simply to make some easy money, and that they gave their best effort, but lost as a result of "pure baseball fortune." Whether Gandil's claim is true is difficult to say, but there is good reason to believe that at least some of the players who accepted money from the gamblers did so with the intention of double-crossing them.

Early Game Fixing

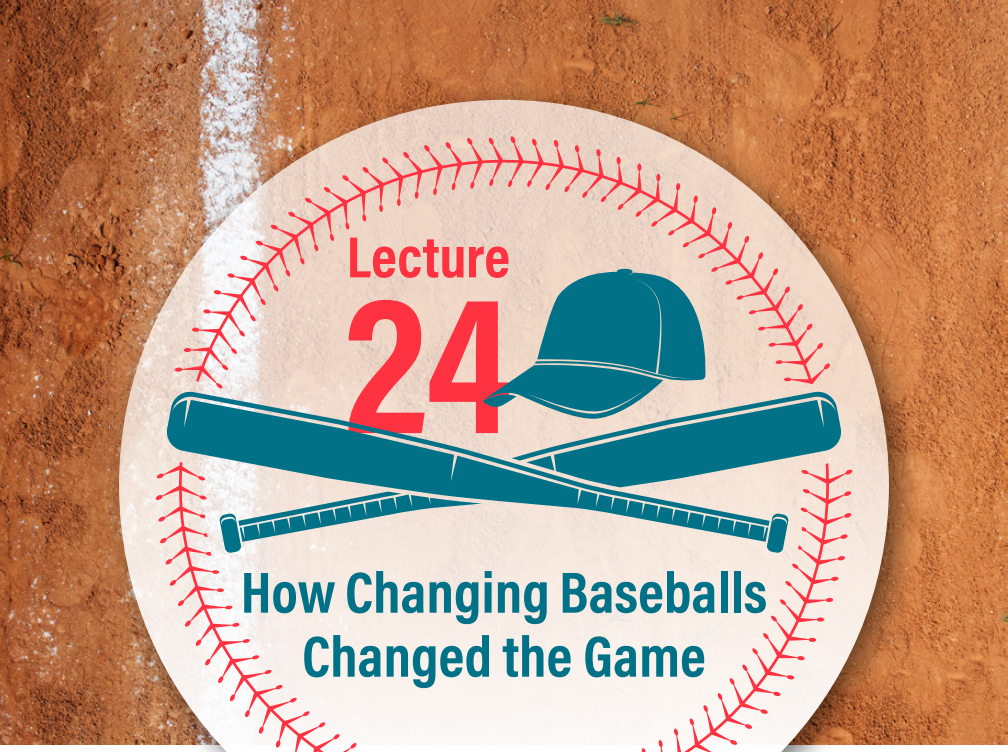
Baseball's first acknowledged game-fixing scandal took place on September 28, 1865. The best-two-out-of-three format meant that both clubs, the Mutuals of New York and the Eckfords of Brooklyn, would profit from extending a series to the full three games. This format led one of the crooked Mutuals to assure a teammate that "we can lose this game without doing the club any harm."

Conclusion

- Though deceptions were present before the Black Sox scandal, the event represented a turning point in how Americans thought about concepts like the right way to play the game and the best interests of baseball. These issues were hotly debated in the years before the scandal, and those arguments revealed some important principles, such as the futility of asking an umpire to judge a player's intent. Nevertheless, as a result of the complexity of the issues involved, what constituted ethical behavior remained open for interpretation.

- When the Black Sox scandal came to light, however, another very important principle became clear: The integrity of baseball is jeopardized not only by actual instances of deception, but by the appearance that it might be taking place. Baseball needed to be above such suspicions.

- To accomplish that, it was necessary to pass and enforce strict rules that did away with all the middle ground, even if someone like Weaver became collateral damage. Although the hiring of Kenesaw Mountain Landis and the creation of the commissioner system led to some of baseball's unwritten rules being transformed into written rules, debates about the right way to play baseball continue to this day, and they should.



Lecture 24

How Changing Baseballs Changed the Game

The makeup of the baseball has played a pervasive role in almost every element of the game, including the first rules crafted by the Knickerbocker club of New York City, the introduction of protective equipment, a long-running debate about how to record outs, fluctuations in the amount of scoring, efforts to find an equilibrium in the battle between pitchers and batters, and a wide array of specific techniques and strategies. This lecture looks at the changing of baseballs over time and other ways the game has evolved.

Finding a Baseball

- Early on, finding a suitable baseball for casual play was no easy matter. Perhaps a family member of one of the players could be called on to donate some of the raw materials needed and could help them with the stitching. In some cases, they might even be able to order a ball, though this was a rare privilege during the game's early years.

- Laying out a playing field and creating the ground rules were thus matters of considerable importance because, if done with care, they helped prevent a ball from being lost. Proper appreciation had to be shown for the player who brought the baseball. It would be a catastrophe if that player decided to "take the ball and go home." It is no wonder that that saying became proverbial.

- Constraints also applied to professional play, particularly during the game's earliest years. Early rules called for play to stop when the ball was lost so that members of both teams could search for it. Not until 1876 were those hunts limited to five minutes.

- Today, it is taken for granted that every ball used during a game will be essentially identical, but this simply could not be assumed prior to 1920. Instead, in those years, a wide range of designs and models were used, including the lemon peel ball, the seamless ball, the familiar figure-eight ball, and countless others, with the interiors prone to even greater variations.

- Nor was uniformity easy to achieve. The National League's inaugural season of 1876 was marred by rumors of teams introducing baseballs with no rubber at all when the visitors came to bat, only to surreptitiously replace those baseballs with livelier ones when it was their turn to bat.

- As a result, an official baseball was adopted for the 1877 season, with Boston sporting goods manufacturer Louis Mahn appointed to produce them. Each baseball would be inspected by the league secretary, then boxed and sealed in foil to prevent such shenanigans.

- However, these new official baseballs were universally panned for being very soft. Mahn tinkered with his formula and eventually produced a more satisfactory baseball, but in the years that followed, the league office continued to receive frequent complaints about baseballs, some of which were overly hard and some of which were mushy.

Batting First

- Another matter was the determination of which team batted first. The rule changed several times during the game's early years before uniformity was achieved. At first, the most frequent practice was to leave the decision up to the captain of the side that won a pregame coin toss or a contest of "hand over hand" on the bat. Eventually, however, it became the prerogative of the home team to decide who would bat first.

- The actual choice was almost always the same: the team with the privilege of deciding would elect to bat first. This was because they wanted to hit a pristine ball. Once baseballs began to be replaced with greater frequency, the approach began to shift, and before long, it was just as common to elect to have the last at-bat. It was not until 1950 that it actually became a major league rule that the home team had to bat last.

- By then, however, it had been decades since any team had actually chosen to bat first. This is a reminder that whenever a change is made to the physical baseball, there are also changes to the game of baseball.

The Foul Strike Rule

- Another interesting bit of baseball history is the evolution of the foul strike rule. In light of the considerable advantages to hitting a clean, white baseball, batters often tried to intentionally foul a well-worn

ball out of play. The deliberate foul was a longstanding tactic by 1910, but it remained controversial.

- A new rule was introduced after the 1886 season that instructed the umpire to call a strike whenever a batter made an "obvious attempt to make a foul hit." This was not entirely ideal because a concerted effort was being made to eliminate questions of intent from the rulebook. In this case, it proved to be a fairly minor problem. To this day, umpires are expected to judge intent on a two-strike bunt attempt, and it is rare to see an argument on such calls.

- As a result, the rule that made a foul bunt a strike worked pretty well, but before long a new and more serious problem emerged. Nobody had a better appreciation of the issue than Hank O'Day, who pitched for five major league teams between 1884 and 1890 before beginning a 30-year career as a National League umpire.

- After making the transition to umpiring, O'Day explained that soon after the 1886 rule change, batters switched tactics and began experimenting with ways to deliberately foul the ball off while making full or half swings. A couple of rule tweaks were attempted, but the results proved negligible and by the turn of the century, the need for more dramatic action had become apparent.

- In 1901, the National League introduced the current rule by which any foul ball is a strike

until there are two strikes, and the American League followed suit two years later. The rule was met with immediate protests, but the foul strike rule became a permanent part of baseball.

Keeping Foul Balls

- Batters had been further discouraged from trying to bat balls out of play by a longtime custom that encouraged youngsters to retrieve and return foul balls by rewarding them with free admission to the ballpark. This ritual proved so appealing that the grounds surrounding a ballpark were often ringed with children hoping to thus gain entrance.

- However, some of those kids had other designs on those baseballs, leading to an increasing number of complaints about stolen balls. This wasn't limited to children outside the ballpark: While it had long been routine for spectators in the grandstand to return any baseball that came their way, this custom also began to fall out of favor.

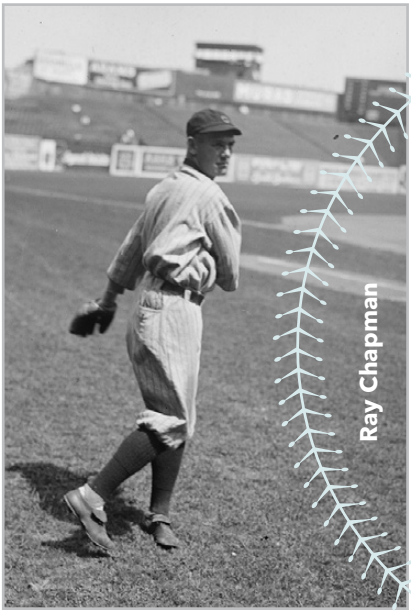
- The owners and operators of the teams that had paid for those baseballs felt dismay. Neutral observers understandably sympathized with this stance, particularly in minor league cities where the added expense could be ill afforded, so teams ground in their heels. Fans in several cities were arrested for trying to keep foul balls.

- But here, too, the outlook shifted once it became customary to replace baseballs after only minimal use. The optics of the efforts of team officials to retrieve those baseballs changed dramatically as soon as they were no longer protecting a valuable asset, but just an object that would soon be discarded anyway.

- In 1916, Cubs owner Charles Weeghman announced a new policy by which fans would be allowed to keep balls hit into the stands at his ballpark (today known as Wrigley Field), although his fellow owners continued to balk at the notion. But the efforts of team employees to retrieve foul balls began to look mean spirited after America

entered World War I and fans began tossing such balls to uniformed servicemen whenever an attempt was made to reclaim them.

- The new rules that were introduced prior to the 1920 season to eliminate the spitball also contributed to the new outlook, as did the tragic death of Cleveland shortstop Ray Chapman. Chapman died after being hit by a pitch during a 1920 game, likely the result of his being unable to see the sodden ball. That event probably strengthened the consensus in favor of replacing the baseball multiple times during a game.


Ray Chapman

- It might even be argued that Henry Ford's auto manufacturing plant in Highland Park, Michigan, also played a role in changing attitudes toward the baseball. Once the price of a Model-T dropped into a range where even working-class families could contemplate the purchase of a car, it gave rise to a new consumer mentality in which items that had once been considered pricey luxuries came to be viewed as attainable parts of the American dream.

- The use of interchangeable parts on Ford's assembly line was crucial to the process that enabled people to see automobiles in a brand new light. Perhaps it is more than a coincidence that, at roughly the same historical moment, Americans began to see the baseball more as an

interchangeable part within the game—an object that needed to be replaced at regular intervals.

- It can be said with more confidence that just such a shift took place in the baseball world at the start of the 1920s and that it represented the end of an era. On May 16, 1921, a Polo Grounds fan named Reuben Berman caught a foul ball and, upon being asked to return the ball, casually tossed it to a fellow spectator.

- After members of the Giants security staff ejected Berman from the ballpark, he successfully sued the club for damages. The Berman case did not set any sort of legal precedent, nor did it lead major league teams to adopt a comprehensive policy, so the issue flared up a few more times over the course of that decade.

A Shift after 1920

- After 1920, it became increasingly apparent that a new consumer mindset was in place. Back in Detroit, Henry Ford's approach was facing a stiff challenge from General Motors, a rival founded by William C. Durant. Durant was forced out in a 1920 power struggle, but by then the firm's greater variety of offerings left it poised to capitalize on the new outlook that became known as planned obsolescence.

- Every year, General Motors was able to roll out new models at several different price points, creating ongoing demand from Americans who already owned a serviceable vehicle but dreaded the thought of falling behind the times. Cars thus came to be seen as both valuable items and as replaceable ones, giving General Motors the best of both worlds and, before the decade's end, forcing Ford to overhaul his own approach.

- Likewise, once fans began marching home from the ballpark with actual game balls, those balls began to take on a special aura again. They weren't precious for the same reason they once had been. However, the very balls that had come to be seen as replaceable objects

in the context of the game itself now attained a special value outside of that context. A lucky spectator who bagged a foul ball was likely to show it off to friends and family members, and then proudly make room for it on the mantlepiece.

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