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The Ultimate Seven-Game Fall Classic: Game Four

By Mike Lynch

In part one of my Ultimate Seven-Game Fall Classic series, I featured Game One of the 1988 World Series between the Oakland A's and Los Angeles Dodgers, won by the latter on Kirk Gibson's walk-off two-run homer off Dennis Eckersley, ironic because it was Eck who coined the phrase "walk-off piece." Part two featured an epic 14-inning battle between the Boston Red Sox and Brooklyn Robins in Game Two of the 1916 Fall Classic in which Babe Ruth went the distance. For Game Three, I stayed in the Deadball Era and featured Dickie Kerr's surprising victory over the Cincinnati Reds in the 1919 World Series that was tainted by the Black Sox scandal.

For Game Four, I'm going with a contest that went from being a one-sided affair to a slugfest that boasted more total runs than the first three games in this Ultimate Seven-Game Fall Classic combined.

October 12, 1929—Chicago Cubs at Philadelphia Athletics: By 1929 the Philadelphia Athletics had come full circle. Fifteen years earlier, Connie Mack's boys had won 99 games before being swept by the "Miracle Braves" of Boston in the 1914 World Series. Only a year later, after Mack sold off, traded or lost his best players to the Federal League, the A's finished in last place with 56 fewer wins. In fact they finished last for seven straight seasons before coming in seventh in 1922, then improved each season until they won another pennant in 1929 with a then-franchise best record of 104-46.

They were so dominant they finished 18 games ahead of the runner-up Yankees; scored just shy of six runs per game; led the league in ERA at 3.44, more than half a run lower than the runners-up, and boasted the best defense. Mack's infield consisted of Hall of Famers Mickey Cochrane and Jimmie Foxx, Max "Camera Eye" Bishop, who walked a league-leading 128 times against only 44 strikeouts, and utility man Jimmy Dykes, who posted a .950 OPS while playing three different positions. The outfield, led by Hall of Famer Al Simmons, was just as good, with "Bucketfoot Al" in left, Mule Haas in center and Bing Miller in right. Foxx and Simmons combined for 67 homers and 275 RBIs, accounting for 33% of the team's runs batted in.

The Cubs' path was also littered with failure, especially in 1925 when they finished in last place, but they had remained moderately competitive since winning their last



Connie Mack's A's enjoyed one last hurrah from 1929-31 before slipping back into the second division for most of the rest of his life.

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World Series in 1908, finishing with winning records 14 times in 20 years leading up to the '29 season, but only two pennants and no World Series titles. Behind skipper Joe McCarthy, the Cubs dominated the field, winning 98 games and finishing 10 1/2 games in front of the second-place Pittsburgh Pirates.

The Cubs were just as potent offensively as the A's; they scored more runs per game at 6.29 and were .93 runs better than league average (the A's were .97 better than average.) Chicago had only one above average hitter in its infield, but his name was Rogers Hornsby, the best hitter in the National League and that year's MVP. They also had an extremely productive outfield, led by Hall of Fame center fielder Hack Wilson, who was flanked by Riggs Stephenson in left and Hall of Famer Kiki Cuyler in right. All three drove in 100+ runs in the regular season, and the duo of Hornsby and Wilson combined for 78 homers and 308 RBIs, and, like Foxx and Simmons, accounted for a third of the team's runs batted in between them.

The Athletics fired the first salvo in Game One when surprise starter, 35-year-old, 14-year veteran Howard Ehmke, soft tossed his way to a 3-1 win, in which he struck out a then World Series record 13 batters. "He never once shot a fast ball at the Cubs. In fact, there is no fast one anymore. The fastest he has is merely a change of pace ball for the faster pitchers. He used a slow, hesitating curve. He used a sharp-breaking, shoulder high 'duster.' He curved a cross-fire, inside. He threw a floating outside curve. But NOT ONCE did the Cubs get a good ball to hit." According to *The Neyer/James Guide to Pitchers*, Joe Tinker claimed that Ehmke could make his curve ball "talk."

Game Two also went to the A's behind George Earnshaw and Lefty Grove, who combined for a 9-3 win, and Jimmie Foxx and Al Simmons, who homered and drove in seven runs between them. Cubs hurler Guy Bush cut the deficit to one with a 3-1 victory in Game Three in Philadelphia, and it looked like the Bruins would even the Series at 2-2 when they went into the bottom of the seventh of Game Four with a seemingly insurmountable lead of 8-0 with staff ace Charlie Root on the mound. But then all hell broke loose.

Prior to Game Four betting odds went from 8 to 1 in favor of the A's to only 2 to 1, and Game Four odds were 11 to 10 with Philadelphia the favorite. Writers had no idea who would toss the fourth game for the Cubs, speculating that it would probably be Root, but could also be 36-year-old veteran southpaw Art Nehf or 22-game winner Pat Malone. "If Malone or Nehf could win tomorrow, wouldn't the Cubs hold the winning hand with Root ready for Monday and Guy Bush coming back in the sixth game in Chicago?" asked the *Chicago Tribune*. Either way, it was thought that McCarthy would name a starter only after Mack did.

Mack had gone unconventional the whole series, starting Ehmke in Game One, and Earnshaw in both Games Two and Three, while using his ace, Lefty Grove, in relief. Earnshaw led the staff in wins with 24 and Grove was certainly no stranger to the bullpen; in fact, he'd go on to record 55 saves during his 17-year career and led the American League in both wins and saves in 1930. But Grove was arguably the best starting pitcher in all of baseball in 1929, pacing the junior circuit in winning percentage (.769), ERA (2.81), starts (37), strikeouts (170), K/9 (5.6), and K/BB ratio (2.10), and leading all hurlers in Wins Above Replacement, Adjusted Pitching Runs and Adjusted Pitching Wins.

In Game Two, Grove replaced an ineffective Earnshaw in the fifth and tossed 4 1/3 shutout innings, fanning six of the 16 batters he faced. Earnshaw, who averaged almost 7 1/3 innings per start during the regular season, was given the Game Three start after tossing only 4 2/3 in Game Two, and was very good, allowing only one earned run on six hits and two walks, while fanning 10, but a Jimmy Dykes error led to two unearned runs in the sixth in the Cubs' 3-1 win.

Before Game Four, Mack threw the Cubs another curveball, so to speak, when he named 46-year-old spitballer and control artist John Picus "Jack" Quinn as his starting

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hurler. Frank Young of the *Washington Post* called Mack's pitching selections a "deep mystery" and joked that he should be investigated by the local police. "Mack has been the only major league manager who has made a guessing game of his probable mound starters, not only throughout the regular season play, but in the present world series," wrote Young. "Mack has fooled all of the so-called experts...consistently and did so again this afternoon..." On October 15, Mack finally explained that Grove was not feeling well and though it was nothing serious, the Athletics' skipper didn't feel his ace could go nine innings, which is why he'd been coming out of the bullpen.

Quinn, born Joannes Pajkos, was of Austro-Hungarian descent, one of only four major leaguers born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He began his career with the Yankees in 1909, becoming only the second Austro-Hungarian in major league history, won a career-high 26 games in 1914 for Baltimore of the Federal League, and ended up with 247 wins and a 3.29 ERA in 23 seasons. According to the *Neyer/James Guide to Pitchers*, Quinn boasted a fastball, curve and spitball from 1909-1915, but had made the spitter his primary pitch by 1920 and eschewed the fastball in favor of a changeup. Quinn had been solid but unspectacular in 1929, going 11-9 with a 3.97 ERA in 35 appearances, and finished fifth in the A.L. in BB/9 at 2.18.

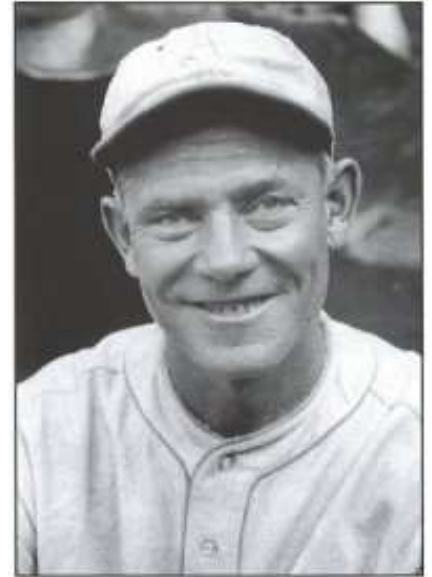
Root threw a fastball and curve and employed a sidearm delivery. Prior to the 1929 season, he told *Baseball Magazine* that the key to his success was in the movement of his pitches. "The hardest ball to hit is one whose velocity and course are both difficult to gauge," he told the mag. Root explained that his various grips on his fastball made it sail as if it had been doctored or sink as it crossed the plate, depending on how he held it. "It is the grip of the fingers which imparts curious twists to the ball rather than any strength of pitching arm," the hurler insisted. Root went 19-6 with a 3.47 ERA in 1929 and led the league in winning percentage at .760, and he'd been very good in Game One, holding the A's to one run on three hits in seven innings, the lone tally coming courtesy of a Foxx seventh inning solo blast.

Fans in Philadelphia were so eager to see Game Four that they spent the night outside the ballpark, then filled the \$1 bleacher seats in less than 90 minutes, forcing Shibe Park attendants to close the gates at 9:10 in the morning, more than four hours before the game was scheduled to begin.

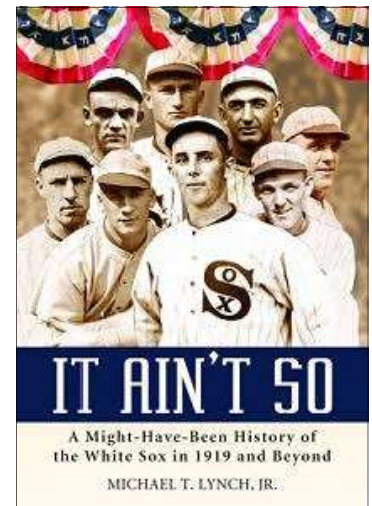
"The game started calmly and decorously," wrote John Reitinger in the *Los Angeles Times*. "The crowd gave old Jack Quinn a good hand when he walked to the pitching mound." Quinn got off to a shaky start when he issued a walk to leadoff man Norm McMillan and a single to cleanup hitter Hack Wilson, but he sandwiched strikeouts of Rogers Hornsby and Kiki Cuyler around Wilson's hit to end the threat. "There is a superstition among ballplayers that to strike out the first batter means trouble later on," wrote Reitinger. "So Jack felt safe."

Quinn then navigated the next two frames largely unscathed, getting help from his shortstop Joe Boley, who snared a grounder by Root and threw him out at first by an eyelash. "Root's out, Boley to Foxx in the third inning, was a hair-raising piece of fielding," Reitinger recounted. "Boley extended himself to the human limit to get Root's fast bouncer and threw to first while off balance. Foxx made a nifty one-hand catch to the wide throw. Then Boley came across with another fine piece of fielding in throwing out Hornsby to end the inning."

Root, on the other hand, was mostly masterful, setting down the A's in order in the first and second before allowing a leadoff single to Dykes in the third. Dykes went to



At 46, Jack Quinn was and still is the oldest pitcher ever to start a World Series game. His last major league appearance came only days after his 50th birthday.



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second when Cuyler misplayed the ball, then advanced to third on a Boley sacrifice. But Root buckled down and struck out Quinn—"Root made violent protest to [home plate umpire Roy] Van Graflan on a third ball, but fanned Quinn on the next pitch"—then coaxed Max Bishop to ground to first baseman Charlie "Jolly Cholly" Grimm, and the game remained scoreless going into the fourth.

Van Graflan had been under heavy fire since the start. According to the *Washington Post*, Cuyler protested his called third strike in the first "quite strenuously," and when Root threw what many thought should have been strike three at Quinn, not only did the hurler protest, but, according to reports, the whole Cubs squad argued the call. Then in the third, Boley's grounder to Grimm was called foul by the arbiter only to be overruled by first base ump Bill Klem, who ruled it fair, which drew protests from the Athletics. "Too bad Van didn't have his pet alligator with him," joked John Keiran in the *New York Times*. "The saurian would have repulsed both attacks with heavy losses."

The Cubs broke through first in the top of the fourth when Cuyler slashed a one-out single past Foxx, then scampered all the way around to third on a two-base error by right fielder Bing Miller, putting the go-ahead run only 90 feet away. When Riggs Stephenson popped out to Boley for the second out, it looked like Quinn might escape unharmed, but Grimm deposited a two-run shot over the right field wall to give the Cubs a 2-0 lead before Quinn could retire the side.

Root retired the A's in the bottom of the frame but not without help. Mule Haas led off with a pop up that catcher Zach Taylor hauled in but not before almost colliding with McMillan. Mickey Cochrane hit a full count pitch to left for a double, but was caught in a rundown between second and third when Al Simmons grounded to McMillan who threw to Hornsby for the second out of the inning. "Simmons rammed one at McMillan and the good horse doctor came up with it and discovered Cochrane halfway between second and third," wrote Ed Burns in the *Chicago Tribune*. "Mac chased him back toward second, then tossed the ball to Hornsby for the put-out." Jimmie Foxx belted a shot to deep left-center field that was pulled down by Hack Wilson just in front of the outfield wall to end the inning.

Quinn had an easy time with the Cubs in the fifth, but Root ran into more potential trouble in the A's half of the inning when Miller led off with a single off the pitcher's glove and Wilson dropped Dykes' routine fly ball to put runners at first and second with no outs. The sun wreaked havoc on Wilson and the pitchers as it began to set behind the grandstand and the Cubs center fielder ended up having a game he'd rather forget. But he had one spectacular play left in him when he speared Boley's long drive for the second out of the inning.

"Boley drove a great smack into right center," wrote Burns. "Hack started pedaling a mile a minute. It looked like a sure triple to everybody but Hack. But the pudgy one shagged it with one hand, and there were two outs and Dykes still was on second."

"Hack Wilson brought down the house with a galloping grab of Boley's liner as it was going sixty miles an hour over his head in the fifth," wrote Keiran. "It came shortly after Hack had dropped an easy fly hit out there by Jimmy Dykes, thus giving the stout slugger a glorious chance to redeem himself. He took it."

Had a double steal attempted by the A's prior to Boley's drive been successful, the A's would have plated their first run and cut the score to 2-1. But Taylor threw out Miller trying to steal third, Wilson hauled in Boley's drive and Root fanned Quinn to escape the jam. The Mackmen certainly could have used that run and others that might have scored absent Wilson's spectacular grab, especially when the Cubs lit Quinn up in the sixth.

Hornsby opened the frame with a single, Wilson slapped a hit to right, then Cuyler, after two failed sacrifice attempts, drove in Hornsby with the Cubs' third straight safety. Bishop knocked down Stephenson's hit but not before Wilson scored and the Cubs had their second run of the inning and still no outs. That ended Quinn's day as Mack replaced him with lefty Rube Walberg. "Rogers Hornsby, who had fanned for the

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seventh time to the accompaniment of hoots in the first inning, led the sixth inning attack, most vicious yet put on by the Cubs," wrote Alan J. Gould. "The Rajah, as well as Wilson, Cuyler and Stephenson, singled in succession as Chicago's 'murderers' row' functioned all together for the first time. Two runs were over and Quinn was out."

Grimm laid down a beautiful sacrifice bunt that not only advanced both runners but went for a hit, and when Walberg threw the ball past Foxx and into right field in a vain attempt to get Grimm at first, Cuyler and Stephenson both scored and Grimm went all the way to third. Taylor drove in Grimm with a sacrifice fly for the Cubs' fifth run of the inning and seventh of the game, but Walberg settled down and struck out both Root and McMillan to stop the bleeding.

"Five runs in the sixth, for a total of seven, looked big to the followers of the Cubs and they had clear visions of clinching the series on Chicago soil," wrote Reitingner, "but old Cap Anson once said that a ball game is not over until the last man is out in the last inning." Reitingner proved prescient but Root was still having his way with the A's hitters and looked invincible when he set the Mackmen down in order in the bottom of the sixth.

"For six innings the bulky, stolid Charlie Root, who the fates had treated rather unkindly in the first game in Chicago, appeared riding on his way to a merited revenge," wrote John Drebingner in the *New York Times*. "Over the period he had held the mightiest of Mack sluggers in a grip of iron, allowing only three scattered hits and mowing them down as though they were men of straw."

The Cubs struck again in the seventh, scoring their eighth run of the game off knuckleballer Eddie Rommel, who replaced Walberg to start the inning. Hornsby smoked a one-out triple over Haas' head, Wilson walked and Cuyler drove in Hornsby with his third hit of the game. The *Washington Post* speculated that Mack had conceded defeat by taking Walberg out of the game, figuring the A's skipper wanted to save the southpaw for the rest of the series. But Rommel was no slouch, having gone 12-2 during the regular season with a 2.85 ERA, second lowest on the staff behind Grove.

Though he allowed three straight runners to reach base, he coaxed a nifty double play off the bat of Stephenson that many insisted was a momentum shifter. "Then came the stroke that marked the limit of Cub mastery," wrote William E. Brandt, "a double play, Dykes to Bishop to Foxx, which was a marvel of fielding speed and precision all the way through, the flashiest double play of the series so far. The Cubs were merely more than repulsed in a scoring drive. Within five minutes they were fighting furiously to block a barrage of hits."

In what Burns coined the "unbelievable seventh," the A's broke out their hitting sticks and began an improbable comeback. "It was warm and sunny, but the great crowd sulked and sat in silence as Al Simmons stepped to the plate to open the Athletic half of the seventh," wrote Drebingner. "Two and three-fifths seconds later the storm broke."

"If ever a club looked beaten it was the A's," recalled Gould, "yet with a savagery that has never before been duplicated in the annals of the world's series, they leaped upon Root, drove him from the box, knocked out his two successors, Art Nehf and Sheriff Blake, in short order, and were stopped by Pat Malone only after fifteen men had gone to bat."

Simmons opened the onslaught with a massive home run to left that hit the roof of the double deck grandstand and gave the A's their first run. Foxx singled to right, then



Cubs center fielder Hack Wilson posted a 1.160 OPS in the 1929 Fall Classic but a handful of his misplays in the outfield cost the Cubs a chance to tie the Series.

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Miller dropped a Texas Leaguer into center that Wilson lost in the sun. Dykes singled to score Foxx, and Boley singled to score Miller and suddenly the score was 8-3 in favor of the Cubs. Veteran first sacker "Tioga George" Burns pinch hit for Rommel and lifted an easy pop up to shortstop Woody English for the first out of the inning. Bishop singled over Root's head to score Dykes and end Root's day.

"By now the crowd had set up a terrifying din," wrote Drebinger. "The Cubs began to squirm uneasily and there was much activity on the Chicago bench as manager Joe McCarthy waved frantically to four or five pitchers warming up furiously in the bullpen. Root was taken out of the box and Arthur Nehf, veteran lefthander, took his place." Nehf, in his 15th and final season, had gone 8-5 with a career-worst 5.59 ERA in 32 appearances, more than half of which came in relief. This particular turn on the mound would prove to be his last in the majors as he wrapped up a career that saw him go 184-120 in more than 450 games.

"There were two on the bases and only one out as George William Haas, called Mule for short, stepped to the plate," wrote Drebinger. "A moment later there was a roar that almost shook the famed Liberty Bell off its pedestal six miles away." Nehf was greeted by a routine fly ball off the bat of Haas that should have gone for the second out, but Wilson lost the ball in the sun for the third time in the contest and it got past him for a three-run homer. Drebinger wrote that the ball was belted to deep center field and that Wilson raced back and appeared to have corralled the sphere but "as it came down it crossed the glaring sun" and Wilson lost sight of it at the last second. "The ball almost struck him as it landed at his feet," wrote Drebinger, "and as it rolled away Boley and Bishop scampered wildly over the plate and Haas, too, completed the circuit for a home run."

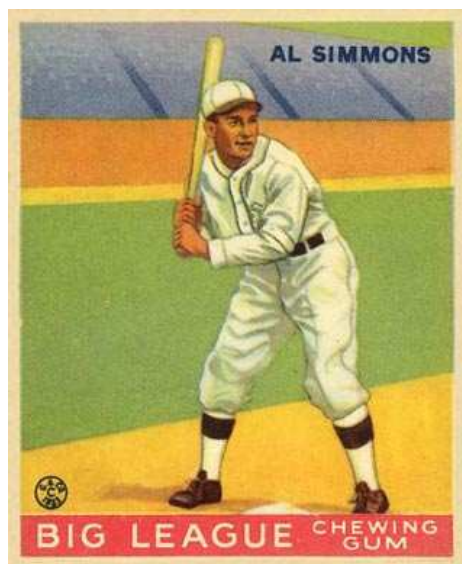
The *New York Times* wrote that it was a "hard drive" to center, but the *Washington Post* called Haas' hit an "ordinary fly" and Gould opined that it was an "easy fly ball." Brandt described it as a "short hard fly" that was misjudged by Wilson, "then was overrun by Wilson's desperate lunge to catch the ball before it fell." Legendary sportswriter Shirley Povich called it an "ordinary fly" that resulted in a "gift home run" when Wilson made a "ludicrous attempt to make the catch." Wilson later explained that he didn't see Haas' fly ball until just before it hit the ground. "I stuck out my bare hand to get it, but it bounced past for a homer."

But Burns wasn't buying Wilson's excuse. "Losing the balls in the sun usually is condoned," wrote Burns, "but Hack had had his warning that his sun glasses were not adequate. He muffed an easy fly in the fifth, which should have caused him to get smokier equipment."

The fluke roundtripper pulled the A's to within one at 8-7, but they weren't finished yet. Nehf walked Cochrane on five pitches and was removed from the game in favor of Blake. "Cochrane walked and Manager McCarthy unceremoniously yanked Nehf, a world's series hero for another day, and called on Sheriff Blake to stem the surging Mack attack," wrote Drebinger. "He stemmed it like a man sticking his head in an electric fan." Just as Nehf had been victimized by bad luck, so was Blake when Simmons' hard grounder to third skipped over McMillan's head and into left field for a single. "...there was a distinct trace of luck attached to the single which he lashed to left and which took an eccentric bounce over McMillan's left shoulder, sending Cochrane to second," wrote Povich.

"Breaks," said Nehf after the game. "I'll say they got 'em. The second hit of Al Simmons in the seventh was a perfect double play ball and it bounced over McMillan's head. We [the New York Giants] lost a series in the same manner to the Senators in 1924." Foxx followed with a single that plated Cochrane with the tying run and the score was knotted at 8-8. "...the turmoil in the stands was now quite indescribable," Drebinger recalled. "A great gathering of staid Philadelphians had suddenly gone completely out of their minds."

After only two batters, Blake was removed and Pat Malone was summoned into the



A's slugger Al Simmons homered twice in the Series, the second of which hit the roof of the double deck grandstand in left field.

game. Malone had a very good career, although it lasted only 10 years. He led the N.L. in wins in 1929 and 1930, going 42-19 in those two seasons, and paced the senior circuit in shutouts and strikeouts in 1929, and complete games in 1930. When his major league career ended in 1937 at the age of 34, Malone boasted a record of 134-92 and had a 3.74 ERA in 357 games. He won 22 games in 1929 and fanned a league-leading 166 batters with a fastball that *Baseball Magazine's* F.C. Lane claimed was one of the best in baseball. But Malone also had control issues, tossing a league-worst 10 wild pitches in 1928 and walking a career-high 102 batters and hitting a team-high six batters in '29.

So it was of little surprise when he drilled Miller with his first pitch to load the bases. That brought up Dykes, the 13th batter of the inning, who was 2-for-3 with an RBI and had gotten on base in all three of his plate appearances. Dykes belted a long liner to left that Riggs Stephenson caught, but only briefly. "Chunky Jimmy Dykes was up, swinging savagely," wrote Gould. "He caught a fast ball and pasted it on a line toward deep left field. Riggs Stephenson dashed madly for it, barely got his fingers on the ball, but was unable to hold it." Simmons and Foxx came home on the drive and the A's were up, 10-8, and still had only one out. Malone fanned Boley and Burns to end the historic and record-setting inning.

By the time the dust settled, the Athletics had broken or tied nine World Series records, most of which had been previously held by the 1921 Giants, including most hits, most runs and most men sent to the plate in one inning.

"Nothing short of another boot of the lantern by Mrs. O'Leary's cow—a kick that set Chicago on fire—could have exceeded the consternation of Cub fans as they listened to radio accounts of the Bruin debacle in the seventh inning of today's world series game at Philadelphia," wrote the *Los Angeles Times*. Drebinger wrote that the seventh inning "brought in its wake a typhoon, tornado and hurricane...as a surging Mack attack swept on and flattened all before it..." Gould called the onslaught an "avalanche of destructive hitting," and, sticking with the nature theme, used words like "lightning," "cyclone" and "tidal wave" to describe the fateful seventh inning; Brandt dubbed the A's "the greatest last ditch resurgents a world's series assemblage ever applauded"; Povich called the 10-run barrage "stunning in its very force and continuity and swallowing in its completeness."

With a two-run lead, Mack sent his ace, Lefty Grove, to the mound to slam the door on the Cubs. He fanned two of the three batters he faced in the eighth, including pinch hitter Gabby Hartnett, then turned the trick again in the ninth, throwing only two pitches out of the strike zone. When Hornsby flied out to Miller with two down, the comeback was complete. "In the eighth and ninth the Cubs were feeble fumblers at empty space when they stood up with bats against Grove's fast ball," recounted Brandt. Grove's fourth strikeout victim, Woody English, was the forty-fourth for the Cubs in the series, tying a record they'd break two days later in Game Five.

Following the historic contest the two clubhouses were in diametrically opposite moods. The Athletics' was full of "cheering, singing and just plain incoherent shouting," according to Ed Neil. The Cubs' was morose. "In another dressing room, only a few yards away, there were tears very close to the surface, if tears can ever really get that close to a ball player."

Connie Mack tried to address his players but was overcome by emotion and walked out of the clubhouse after making a brief statement. "I've never seen anything like that rally," he said as he walked away. "There isn't anything in baseball history to compare with it. It was the greatest display of punch and fighting ability I've seen on a ball field."

Meanwhile, according to Neil, Hack Wilson was in no mood to talk. "He was heartbroken and burning with pent-up rage at the same time." But Irving Vaughan saw a different Wilson after the game. "Hack knew that the game went away because the sun blinded him," wrote the *Chicago Tribune* sportswriter, "but he wasn't moaning and put-

What They Said

"Imagine me, for instance, selling either [Jack] Coombs, [Chief] Bender or [Eddie] Plank to Washington or Boston for any amount, fifty, seventy-five, or a hundred thousand. Why, if I attempted such a thing I might as well pack the Athletics up and get out of Philadelphia."

—Connie Mack two years before he began selling off all of his best players in 1914.

ting on a false face of lengthy vertical dimensions. He didn't hide in the clubhouse after the game...Hack walked into the [hotel] lobby with a smile on his face...He showed he wasn't bothered by the difference of a couple thousand dollars and something he couldn't help."

Cubs skipper Joe McCarthy was quick to exonerate Wilson. "You can't beat the sun, can you?" he asked after the game. "They may want to blame Wilson. You can't fasten it on him. The poor kid simply lost the ball in the sun, and he didn't put the sun there." McCarthy did, however, blame bad breaks for the loss. "The breaks of the game beat us today, but we're not whipped in this series by any means. We got the worst breaks I have ever seen."

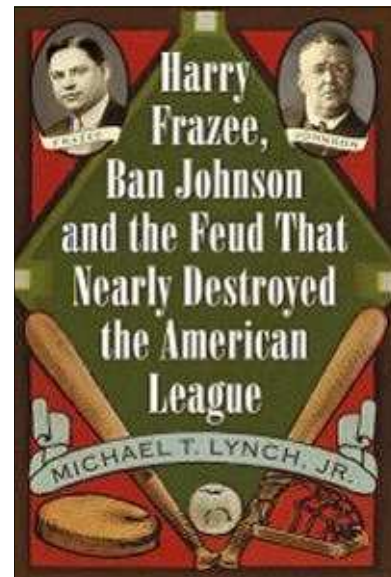
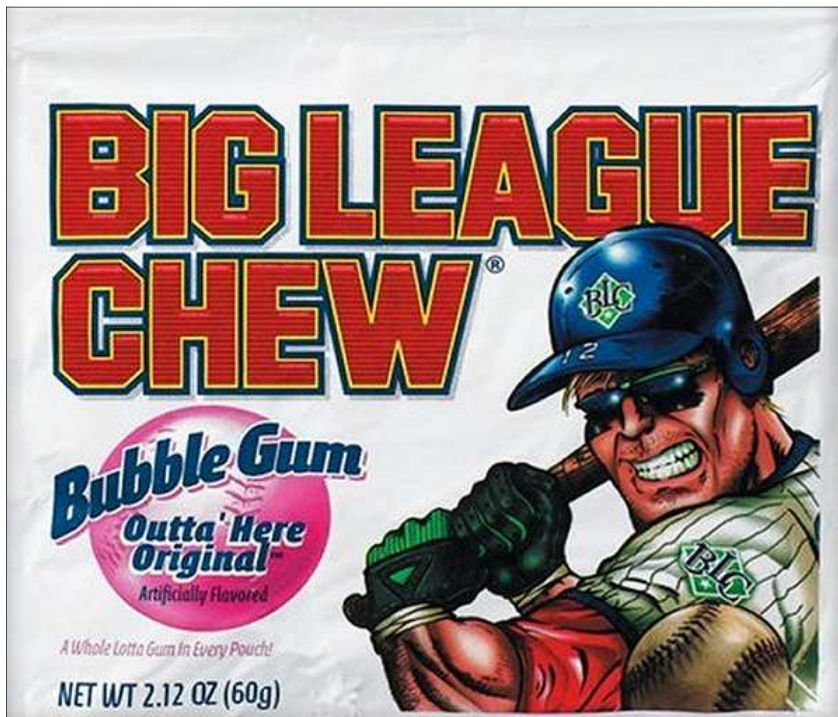
Roscoe McGowen wasn't convinced. "The Athletics left the park tonight again cockily confident, but the Cubs retired, carrying only grim determination."

Unfortunately "grim determination" wasn't enough. Pat Malone started Game Five in Philadelphia and was brilliant through eight innings, allowing only two hits and a walk and striking out three while protecting a 2-0 lead. But the A's struck late again and put the World Series away with a three-run rally in the bottom of the ninth for a 3-2 walk-off victory and a 4-games-to-1 Series win.

On Deck—The Ultimate Seven-Game Fall Classic: Game Five



A's ace Lefty Grove received no starts in the '29 Fall Classic but hurled 6 1/3 innings of scoreless relief in two appearances, and fanned 10 of the 22 batters he faced.



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FOUL TIPS

In 1920, there was at least one place in the deep South where white and black men could play baseball together: Prison. This story is from June 23, 1920, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*.

PRISON'S BASEBALL BATTERY TO BE HANGED ON SAME DAY

Governor Parker Fixes Date of Execution for Doyle, the Brutal Slayer of Levy, and Tillman, Negro Killer, for September 17.

Governor Parker Tuesday in Baton Rouge signed the death warrant of Edward C. Doyle and fixed September 17 as the date for Doyle's execution.

At the same time, Governor Parker set September 17 as the date for hanging Charles Tillman, a negro convicted of murder.

Doyle, who is captain of the Criminal League's leading baseball team at the Parish Prison, was pitching on the mound when news of Governor Parker's action reached the prison yard.

Behind the bat, catching, was Tillman.

There was little emotion shown by either when the news was heard. Doyle wound up and grooved one to

a waiting batter, while Tillman, unmoved, smothered it coolly.

"What can I do or say?" asked Doyle. "There is nothing. I am trusting in my attorney and God—they're my only hopes."

Tillman had nothing to say.

Doyle was convicted for the murder of Gus D. Levy May 9, 1919. Though he has time and again said he would meet his fate like a man when the time came, he has been equally persistent in placing hope in every chance or near chance which bobbed up.

Gus D. Levy's murder has kept citizens of New Orleans talking since the day Doyle confessed. Slow have been the wheels of justice. Too slow, in the opinion of many.

-Scott Simkus

Skipppers, Stars and NASCAR

By Scott Simkus

"It may be that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong- but that is the way to bet."

-Damon Runyon

I was born and raised north of the Mason Dixon line, so I've never spent much time thinking about cheesy grits, Lynyrd Skynyrd, or Paula Deen's "all butter, all the time Southin' cuisine," but I must confess, the world of NASCAR has gotten all tangled up in my brain lately.

Tony LaRussa retired the other day as the manager with the third most wins in Major League history. Third most, ever. If he'd stayed on with the Redbirds for just one more year, he would have easily passed John McGraw, ascending to the number two slot, behind the uncatchable Connie Mack. Love him or loathe him, if baseball teams were a high performance NASCAR vehicle, most of us would trust LaRussa with the keys.

Now, as for the ride home *after* the champagne-soaked championship bash, knowing Tony's track record, we might opt for the taxi cab, but that's a story for a different day.

Fact is, LaRussa will sail into the Hall of Fame, going down in history as one of the greatest skipppers of all-time. Thirty-three seasons, 2728 victories, six league pennants and 3 World Series Championships, Tony's resume speaks for itself.

I know he did things differently than his competitors, but what was it that made him *great*? Did he know how to handle 25 different personalities in the club house, kicking guys in the pants when needed, while patting others on the back? I don't doubt he did, but there must be other managers who never got rehired after their first termination who were equally adept at placating a couple dozen different egos. Was he brilliant at handling his bullpen? Sure, sometimes. When the game was on the line, did he make the right call more often than not? His record would suggest the affirmative. Was he innovative? Yeah, he batted the pitcher eighth once in awhile, even though there is no quantifiable evidence this really made his team better or worse.

LaRussa was probably good at all the good things we associate with great managers, but I'm not sure any of these specific qualities are what separates him from the herd.

When boiled down, I suppose Tony's genius is the same as Connie Mack's or Joe Torre's or John McGraw's or Casey Stengel's: More often than not, he simply Didn't Screw Things Up. When he had a talented bunch, he knew how to keep it from crashing and burning, and this is what kept him employed from 1979 to 2011.

Ownership trusted giving this guy the keys to the ballclub, year after year after year.

Look at the top 25 managers of all-time in terms of victories, and you'll see 25 unique individuals. Men who had different temperaments and employed different in-game philosophies. Nice guys, assholes, idiots and geniuses. There are college-educated men and some who barely finished high school. Guys who relied on the long-ball and men who were masters of the deadball style. There's a black guy and white guys and



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Tweet of the Week:

"I still think Gene is the greatest Freese ever."

some fellas of Hispanic heritage. There isn't one type of "Great Manager" or one successful style; there are a lot of different guys who were all good at not screwing things up.

This may not make sense to some of you, but I started working on the STARS system because I wanted to create a tool for gauging the fluctuation of talent in the old Negro Leagues. As you know, we've been talking a LOT about the white big leagues (and minors) in relation to STARS the past few weeks, and I plan on discussing it even further in the upcoming weeks, but keep in mind this has all been by design.

In my world, to create something workable for the black leagues (or white semipro, for that matter), it first needs to be tested using the incredible reservoir of data available in Organized Baseball. I've always wanted an easy way to wrap my head around how talent is lined up in professional baseball. And the whole exercise is fun. We may (or may not) be dusting off the Holy Grail of league quality here, but we're certainly uncovering some valuable grist for the mill.

What we've learned from STARS thus far: Talent is distributed in an unmistakable pattern, with the best players performing in the big leagues, followed in descending order by the AAA and AA leagues. This isn't a shocking revelation, we knew this already. The real benefit of STARS is we can actually assign a number to each league and compare them to one another. We can finally look at the rogue Federal League, for instance, and see how it compared to the National and American Leagues. In a couple weeks, we'll be able to look at how the two World Wars affected talent in the bigs.

The other thing which is emerging is a little bit unexpected: STARS can almost predict, sight unseen, which teams will finish at the top of a league and which teams will finish at the bottom. That is, if we simply know the player's ages and how many years they each played in the major leagues, we can get very close to predicting the order of finish without even knowing what year it is or who the actual ballplayers are, let alone how they actually performed during the season. We don't need no stinkin' stats.

And...AND it doesn't matter one iota who the MANAGER is.

I'll repeat that: We don't need to know who the manager is.

There's a couple bugs which need to be weeded out first, but we're close to establishing a workable STARS system not just for league quality, but for an individual team's TALENT ON PAPER as well. If the wrinkles can be ironed out (which I believe they can), we'll not only have a STARS team score, we'll also have an expected winning percentage, or expected order of finish, for clubs based solely on their paper talent/STARS score.

“STARS can almost predict, sight unseen, which teams will finish at the top of the league and which teams will finish at the bottom.”

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So what does this all mean?

By now most of you have probably got it.

If, sight unseen, we know how a team is *expected* to finish, we can look at their actual record (and take note of who their manager is) to see if they underperformed, exceeded expectations or finished right where they were supposed to.

That's right: In the near future, we might have a new tool for determining whether teams managed by Tony LaRussa, Connie Mack, Tommy Lasorda and Billy Martin played better or worse than they were expected to perform, based on their STARS/paper score. This is pretty heady stuff in my little galaxy of baseball geeks.

Studying the STARS system is what got me thinking about race cars in the first place. In NASCAR, all the vehicles need to conform to certain competitive standards—they need to be the same weight and height, have the same type of tires, same building materials, same gas tank size, etc. - and this is very different from baseball teams.

Yeah, all of the clubs today have 25-man rosters, but after that, it's a total freakin' crap shoot. The ballparks vary. Some teams keep 12 pitchers, others only 10. The first baseman on one club may hit 35 home runs, while another club's hits only 12. One team spends \$200 million for talent, while others spend less than \$80 million. Once you get passed the 25 man roster, there's a lot of variety which creeps in, immediately segregating contenders from pretenders.

If baseball teams were like race cars, the simple fact is, some of these teams can go 103 miles per hour and others only 84 mph. If the pennant chase was a straight line, there'd be no chance for the slower teams to compete. But it isn't a straight line. Each game is like one trip around the oval, with twists and turns which need to be navigated by the players and manager. Still, after a 162 loops, the clubs that top out at only 84 mph have almost no chance of winning. STARS proves this. The slow pokes need a tremendous break to compete- a crash and burn by several better teams, perhaps.

The old adage is true: You gotta have the talent to win. Tony LaRussa would not have led this year's Houston Astros to the Promised Land. Connie Mack couldn't have steered the Chicago Cubs into a Wild Card berth. These clubs simply don't have the horse power.

Great managers have great rosters. In the near future, we're going to find out how much credit they might deserve for not smashing the finely engineered vehicle into the brick wall during the most difficult turns.

Next week I'm going to get back to some real Outsider baseball and write about the Dry Docks, the top semiprofessional ballclub in Baltimore from 1918 to 1920. At the same time, we'll probably squeeze some quick STARS stuff in there, talk about the Dry Docks versus the Negro Leagues and Major Leagues, and give a quick overview of what we know about semipro ball at this time.

For now, I gotta split. Time to cook some cheesy grits, crank Skynyrd up on the stereo system and watch Paul Deen (mute button activated) on the TV in the background.

And- I heard there's some pro wrestling on tonight!

Hells, yeah!

STARS System

STARS is a common sense method for quantifying league quality. Because of its simplicity, it not only gives us the ability to compare the major leagues to one another, it also allows us to compare the majors, minors and semiprofessional clubs and/or leagues to one another. Once an adjustment factor is developed, STARS will also allow us to compare the Negro league teams to Organized baseball.

STARS stands for Service Time/Age Rating System, and is fueled by three accepted truths:

1. Most of the best players in the world made it to the major leagues.
2. The very BEST of these players usually had the longest careers.
3. All players reach their athletic peak during the late 20s.

How it works: Individual players are assigned a STARS score, based on their playing resume and age. At 28 years old they are considered to be at their peak. STARS has a sliding component, with players losing points for each year they are younger or older than 28.

Individual STARS scores are added to create a Team Score.

Team scores are added to create a League Power Score.

With 3+ seasons calculated already, it's become apparent STARS captures talent (paper talent, at least) in a way never before seen.