

A Bohn to Pick

Terry Bohn is providing a low-cost service to chapter members who, like him, share the frustration of having a baseball encyclopedia or similar reference book become outdated after only a year. For \$4.95, Terry is offering a copy of the complete season and career batting, pitching, and fielding (for every defensive position played) records of every player ever to play for the Twins. For \$9.95, he will send an updated version after every season for as long as you ask for it. With each order Terry will include a list of the Twins' top ten individual season and career leaders in every significant batting, pitching, and defensive category, which will also be updated annually.

You can order via mail, phone, or e-mail at the following, respectively: 307 5th Avenue NW, Mandan, North Dakota 58554; 701-663-1596; TerryB1929@aol.com.

Cow Chips

Chapter Members Noted and Quoted in Twin Cities' Newspapers

Pete Hepokoski successfully lobbied the StarTribune, Newspaper of the Twin Cities to include the title of the Sunday crossword puzzle, thereby yielding a valuable clue to the solution. . . . **Glenn Gostick** was cited in **Charley Walter's** column in the St. Paul Pioneer Press with insights related to **Kirby Puckett's** eye problems and similar ailments suffered by **George Sisler** in 1923. The blurb included a nice (and obviously recent) photo of Gos. . . . In other news, **Stretch Gregory** went to Indianapolis to visit his folks, the **Gregorys**. . . **Paul Rittenhouse** is coaching the softball team that his daughter, **Greta**, plays on. . . . The **Rekela** family got a dog, **Scully**.

Pace of Games—Part II

The April 1996 *Mule Kicks* contained information related to the slowing pace of baseball games, using as a barometer the total time of a game divided by the number of batters in it. A discussion of this topic followed at the Spring Chapter meeting with the issue raised regarding increased time between half-innings to accommodate sponsors. Although it was agreed that only one minute was allotted for commercials during half-inning breaks in the 1960s, no one had exact numbers as to how much time an average break between half-innings actually lasted back then.

Fortunately, a few days later Glenn Gostick provided some insights with a 1968 article from The Sporting News regarding a time/motion study done by a Baltimore engineer at three major-league games that year. The average pace of these three games was 2 minutes, 4 seconds per batter. The breakdown included the total amount of time between half-innings, which came out to an average of 1 minute, 56 seconds per half-inning break.

I compared this to times that I tracked at two American League and two National League games in 1993, a quarter-century after the Baltimore study (with 90 seconds apparently being allotted for commercials between half-innings). The average time per batter in these games was 2 minutes, 18 seconds—14 seconds more per batter than in the games studied in 1968. The average number of batters in all of these games was 74.4, meaning that the extra 14 seconds per batter would amount to an additional 17 minutes, 22 seconds per game.

The average time between half-innings in the 1993 games was 2 minutes, 26 seconds—30 seconds more than the average in 1968. The extra 30 seconds per half-inning results in an additional 8 minutes, 30 seconds (8 minutes if the home team doesn't bat in the last of the ninth) to the overall game time—still less than half of the additional 17 minutes, 22 seconds cited above. This means that another eight minutes of dead time (not the result of more batters or baserunners, etc.) is unaccounted for and appears to be because of each batter's turn at the plate taking more time overall. (It is not the result of differences in mid-inning pitching changes since all seven games used in these compilations were rather consistent—either two or three mid-inning changes—in this regard.)

Baseball did attempt to address the issue of time between half-innings in speed-up attempts that went into effect last July. While these efforts didn't scale back the advertisers' time during the breaks, they did call for the batter and pitcher to be ready to start as soon as possible after the commercials were completed. These efforts made a difference as the average half-inning break in games I studied was 2 minutes, 10 seconds, a savings of 16 seconds (from the 1993 times) that could shave approximately four-and-a-half minutes of dead time off a game. More speed-up rules were to have taken place in 1996; however, it appears that efforts have instead regressed. The efficiency attempts are no longer being followed, and the average time between half-innings is back up to around 2 minutes, 29 seconds.

Scott Nelson Guest at Chapter Meeting

Scott Nelson was a guest of John DiMeglio's at the Spring Chapter Meeting. Scott is a former teacher at Mankato West High school, where he had the chance to instruct two DiMeglios. He taught English and Journalism in addition to serving as an adviser to the school's newspaper, West Side Story.

Scott is currently president of the Mankato Area Retired Educators' Association.