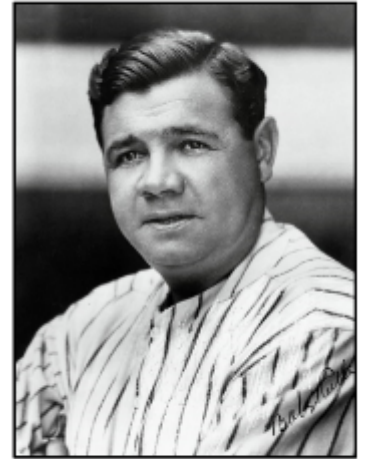




Babe Ruth

7-time World Series Champion
Career Batting Average: .342
Career Home Runs: 714
Career Pitching Record: 94-46
Career ERA: 2.28
1st in All-Time slugging percentage: .690
1st in All-Time OPS: 1.164



2019 Campaign

Edition No. 16

August 2, 2019

CUBS KILL IT

Okay, let's admit it, we all knew it was coming. Shamu's **Cubs** finally got their collective act together and put together a monster performance during Week 18, scoring 636.7 points. Now *that's* more like a Shamu-drafted and Shamu-managed team, but it might be just a little too late. To compete for the title, that is. It's never too late to move up in the standings, and with that eye-popping performance, Shamu skipped right past the **Tribe** and into 11th place. Just like George Jefferson, he's *movin' on up*.

He'll get sore if I don't mention it, so let me point out here that Itchie's **Skipjacks** were the second-highest scoring bunch of the week with 559.7 points, allowing him to remain in 6th place in the standings, just one rung below his Five Fountains neighbor. Of course, as soon as those pitching caps kick in, the **Jax** will be plummeting southward toward the bottom.

Jim Ed's **Redbirds** had only the eighth highest total for the week, tied with the **Bombers** at 477.5 points, but because the **Wahoos** only had a slightly better week with 486.1 points, the **Crimson Chirpers** remain in 1st place in the standings. But can they hold on? That is the \$64,000 question.

Although I know I previously forwarded these to you, we will include hereinbelow the standings through 18 weeks, the point totals for Week 18, the Top 25 Lists for pitchers and hitters, and the Who's Hot and Who's Not lists, all for your reading enjoyment.

**STANDINGS THRU WEEK 18
ENDING JULY 28, 2019**

1	Redbirds	8750.9	-
2	Wahoos	8662.7	88.2
3	Monarchs	8489.8	261.1
4	Bums	8443.2	307.7
5	Senators	8329.3	421.6
6	Skipjacks	8254.6	496.3
7	Chiefs	7810.8	940.1
8	Bombers	7801.8	949.1
9	Tigers	7690.3	1060.6
10	Bears	7566.7	1184.2
11	Cubs	7538.0	1212.9
12	Tribe	7499.1	1251.8
13	Blues	6982.0	1768.9

**POINTS FOR WEEK 18
ENDING JULY 28, 2019**

1	Cubs	636.7
2	Skipjacks	559.7
3	Bums	530.1
4	Chiefs	522.0
5	Monarchs	503.7
6	Wahoos	486.1
7	Senators	479.4
8	Redbirds	477.5
9	Bombers	477.5
10	Bears	462.6
11	Tribe	446.5
12	Blues	380.6
13	Tigers	371.3

TOP 25 PITCHERS

1.	Justin Verlander	Bums	593.0
2.	Gerrit Cole	Senators	587.0
3.	Max Scherzer	Wahoos	538.0
4.	Stephen Strasburg	Bombers	522.0
5.	Hyun-Jin Ryu	Cubs	510.0

6.	Charlie Morton	Redbirds	509.0
7.	Zack Greinke	Chiefs	500.0
8.	Shane Bieber	Senators	490.0
9.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	468.0
10.	Lance Lynn	Bums	463.0
11.	Jacob deGrom	Skipjacks	452.0
12.	Luis Castillo	Monarchs	439.0
13.	Patrick Corbin	Senators	438.0
14.	Clayton Kershaw	Tigers	429.0
15.	José Berríos	Monarchs	427.0
16.	Walker Buehler	Skipjacks	421.0
17.	Aaron Nola	Wahoos	419.0
18.	Matthew Boyd	Wahoos	416.0
19.	Mike Minor	Bums	412.0
20.	Lucas Giolito	Tribe	404.0
21.	Mike Fiers	Senators	403.0
22.	Madison Bumgarner	Bombers	402.0
23.	Brandon Woodruff	Redbirds	397.0
24.	Wade Miley	Bums	396.0
25.	Chris Sale	Chiefs	395.0

WHO'S HOT -- PITCHERS

1.	Stephen Strasburg	Bombers	73.0
2.	Gerrit Cole	Senators	72.0
3.	Iván Nova	Bombers	70.0
4.	Marco Gonzales	Wahoos	61.0
5.	Mike Clevinger	Monarchs	59.0
6.	Matthew Boyd	Wahoos	50.0
7.	Jason Vargas	Cubs	49.0
	Wade Miley	Bums	49.0
9.	Eduardo Rodriguez	Skipjacks	48.0
	Shane Bieber	Senators	48.0
11.	Robbie Ray	Bears	46.0
12.	Aaron Nola	Wahoos	45.0
13.	Madison Bumgarner	Bombers	43.0
14.	Steven Matz	Tribe	42.0
15.	Danny Duffy	Monarchs	41.0
16.	Zac Gallen	Chiefs	40.0
	Mike Fiers	Senators	40.0
18.	Jacob deGrom	Skipjacks	38.0
19.	Roenis Elías	Blues	37.0
	Justin Verlander	Bums	37.0
	Caleb Smith	Redbirds	37.0
22.	Charlie Morton	Redbirds	36.0

23.	Trevor Williams	Skipjacks	33.0
24.	Asher Wojciechowski	Skipjacks	32.0
	German Márquez	Tribe	32.0

WHO'S NOT -- PITCHERS

1.	Masahiro Tanaka	Tigers	-27.0
2.	Jordan Lyles	Tribe	-15.0
3.	CC Sabathia	Monarchs	-14.0
4.	Ryan Borucki	Bombers	-13.0
	Jake Odorizzi	Bombers	-13.0
	Zach Davies	Senators	-13.0
	Merrill Kelly	Tribe	-13.0
8.	Griffin Canning	Bears	-11.0
9.	Dylan Covey	Bombers	-10.0
10.	Daniel Ponce de Leon	Blues	-7.0
	Eric Lauer	Senators	-7.0
12.	J.A. Happ	Wahoos	-5.0
13.	James Paxton	Bombers	-4.0
	Joe Musgrove	Tigers	-4.0
	Jordan Yamamoto	Blues	-4.0
16.	John Means	Skipjacks	-3.0
	Dylan Cease	Bears	-3.0
	Luis Castillo	Monarchs	-3.0
	Jakob Junis	Blues	-3.0
	Lucas Giolito	Tribe	-3.0
21.	Walker Buehler	Skipjacks	-2.0
22.	Brett Anderson	Tigers	-1.0

TOP 25 HITTERS

1.	Christian Yelich	Redbirds	566.7
2.	Mike Trout	Monarchs	556.4
3.	Cody Bellinger	Bombers	541.2
4.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	514.4
5.	Rafael Devers	Blues	492.5
6.	Freddie Freeman	Monarchs	491.6
7.	Mookie Betts	Chiefs	475.2
8.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Redbirds	468.9
9.	Josh Bell	Chiefs	466.8
10.	Anthony Rendon	Cubs	460.7
11.	Alex Bregman	Bears	459.2
12.	Ketel Marte	Skipjacks	454.8
13.	Pete Alonso	Tribe	453.6
14.	Eduardo Escobar	Wahoos	443.0

15.	Kris Bryant	Tigers	438.9
	Nolan Arenado	Blues	438.9
17.	Anthony Rizzo	Bears	434.2
18.	DJ LeMahieu	Monarchs	430.0
19.	Marcus Semien	Redbirds	427.9
20.	Trevor Story	Wahoos	427.4
21.	Rhys Hoskins	Tribe	424.9
22.	Charlie Blackmon	Skipjacks	424.2
23.	Carlos Santana	Blues	423.9
24.	Whit Merrifield	Bums	421.9
25.	Max Muncy	Monarchs	417.3

WHO'S HOT -- HITTERS

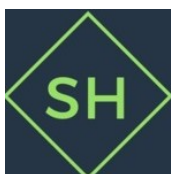
1.	Nelson Cruz	Cubs	73.5
2.	Paul Goldschmidt	Bums	58.9
3.	Andrew Benintendi	Cubs	57.6
4.	José Ramírez	Cubs	57.0
5.	Didi Gregorius	Monarchs	49.7
6.	J.D. Martinez	Bums	49.0
7.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	48.4
8.	Francisco Lindor	Cubs	47.2
9.	Rafael Devers	Blues	46.1
10.	Jose Altuve	Skipjacks	44.0
11.	Miguel Sanó	Bums	43.7
12.	Renato Núñez	Cubs	43.2
13.	Anthony Rendon	Cubs	43.1
14.	Jorge Polanco	Senators	42.9
15.	Jonathan Villar	Bombers	42.7
16.	Mookie Betts	Chiefs	42.5
17.	Rougned Odor	Redbirds	41.9
18.	Max Kepler	Monarchs	41.5
19.	Travis d'Arnaud	Tigers	40.5
20.	Paul DeJong	Tribe	40.4
21.	Josh VanMeter	Tigers	39.8
22.	Danny Santana	Bears	39.3
23.	Starling Marte	Skipjacks	38.0
24.	Gio Urshela	Bombers	37.6
25.	Eugenio Suárez	Redbirds	36.9

WHO'S NOT -- HITTERS

1.	Gary Sánchez	Monarchs	-5.9
2.	Dominic Smith	Bombers	-5.0
3.	Brandon Belt	Bums	-4.8

4.	A.J. Pollock	Blues	-3.5
5.	Avisaíl García	Bums	-1.5
	Eloy Jiménez	Chiefs	-1.5
7.	Khris Davis	Bombers	-1.0
	David Peralta	Bears	-1.0
9.	Garrett Cooper	Redbirds	-0.9
10.	Freddy Galvis	Tribe	-0.6
11.	Nicholas Castellanos	Wahoos	-0.5

SHORT HOPS



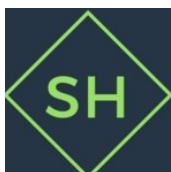
Of the top 25 pitchers through 18 weeks, 12 were selected in the first five rounds of the Draft, and 16 through the first ten rounds of the Draft. The only two who were not drafted on Draft Day were Mike Minor of the **Bums** and Lucas Giolito of the **Tribe**.



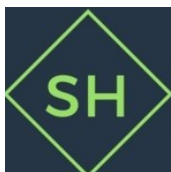
Magpie has four pitchers in the Top 25, with Verlander, Lynn, Miley and Minor. Verlander went in the 2nd round, Lynn went in the 23rd round, Miley in the 27th, and Minor through free agency. Part of the Plan or Itchie-like magic? You decide.



Of the Top 25 hitters, 16 of them were drafted in the first 5 rounds. For the next 5 rounds after that, only 1 top 25 hitter was picked, Devers in the 7th round by Sunny. There were only two hitters in the Top 25 who were not drafted on Draft Day, Max Muncy of the **Monarchs** and Pete Alonso of the **Tribe**.

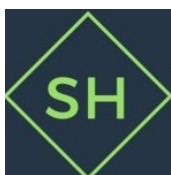


In summation, then, out of the Top 50 hitters and pitchers combined, 46 of them were picked up on Draft Day and 4 as free agents.



The **Monarchs** and **Bums** both have six players total on the Top 25 Hitter and Pitcher lists. The **Redbirds**, **Wahoos** and **Senators** are next with 5 players on the combined lists, followed by the **Skipjacks** and **Chiefs** with 4 apiece. The **Blues**, **Bombers** and **Tribe** each have 3 players on the combined lists (with Underbelly having picked up 2 out of his 3 as free agents, meaning he only selected one player on

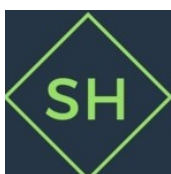
Draft Day who is in the Top 25 of either list--ouch) and the **Bears** and **Cubs** each have 2 players on the combined lists.



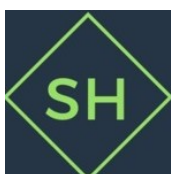
On the Who's Hot -- Pitchers' list, three hurlers, Steven Strasburg, Gerrit Cole and Iván Nova, all had 70 or more points for the week, meaning two stellar outings apiece.



New entries on the Who's Hot -- Pitchers' list include Zac Gallen (is this the guy in the *Hangover* movie?) of the **Chiefs**; Roenis Elías of the scraping-the-barrel-bottom **Blues**; and Asher Wojciechowski (wasn't he a detective on *Barney Miller*?) of the **Skipjacks**. Good pick ups.



On the Who's Not -- Pitchers' list we find Masahiro Tanaka of the **Tigers** at the very top with **-27**. Not to stereotype, but don't let that dude anywhere near a sword or it will be harakiri for sure.



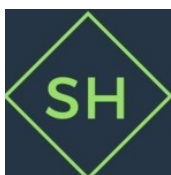
Mike Trout just keeps moving up the leader board, now at No. 2 among all hitters with 556.4 points, just 10.3 points behind Christian Yelich. If the Fish stays healthy, is there any doubt that he will finish on top? Not in this facile mind.



I was personally surprised to see Rafael Devers of the **Blues** in the No. 5 position with 492.5 points. I had no idea this guy was capable of having this type of year. I'll draft him early next year, just ahead of his Reversion to the Mean.



Taking a peek at the Who's Hot -- Hitters' list, we find Nelson Cruz at the top with a 73.5 point week for the **Cubs**. Somebody take a tape measure to that guy's head. He must be hanging with Josh Bell.



As pointed out earlier, Shamu had 4 of the 8 hottest hitters for the week (Cruz, Benintendi, Ramírez and Lindor, and 6 out of the top 13 (add in Renato Núñez and Anthony Rendon), so it's not real difficult to see how his team got to 636.7 points for the week. If all these cats

stay hot, Shamu might make it all the way up 7th or even 6th place by the end of the year.

DIS AND DAT



Dis and Dat

What's a fella got to do to make a trade around here? I posted my trade-wants, needs, and have-to-offers on the website, just looking for a little action from anyone in need, and I have also proposed individual trades to three or four or five of you, with nary a response. Crickets. What's wrong, Bluto, are you afraid?

I'd even welcome a vintage Bait-and-Switch proposal from You-Know-Who. Anything but this disheartening radio silence.

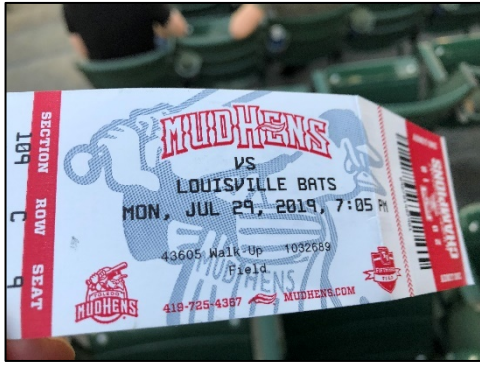


Dis and Dat

And speaking of radio silence, unless I missed it, I've never heard back from Big Guy from the question posed to him in the last issue of *From the Bullpen*. Here it is again: **"Is Big Guy *more* sure that the Van Shoulder Episode happened on the Detroit-to-Toronto leg and not the Toronto-to-Cleveland leg, or that the original Draft took place in my first apartment unit at 10681 Hamilton Plaza, and not at 10920 Spaulding Plaza? Or is he *equally* certain of these two things?"**

What say you, Memory Master?

HOLY TOLEDO!

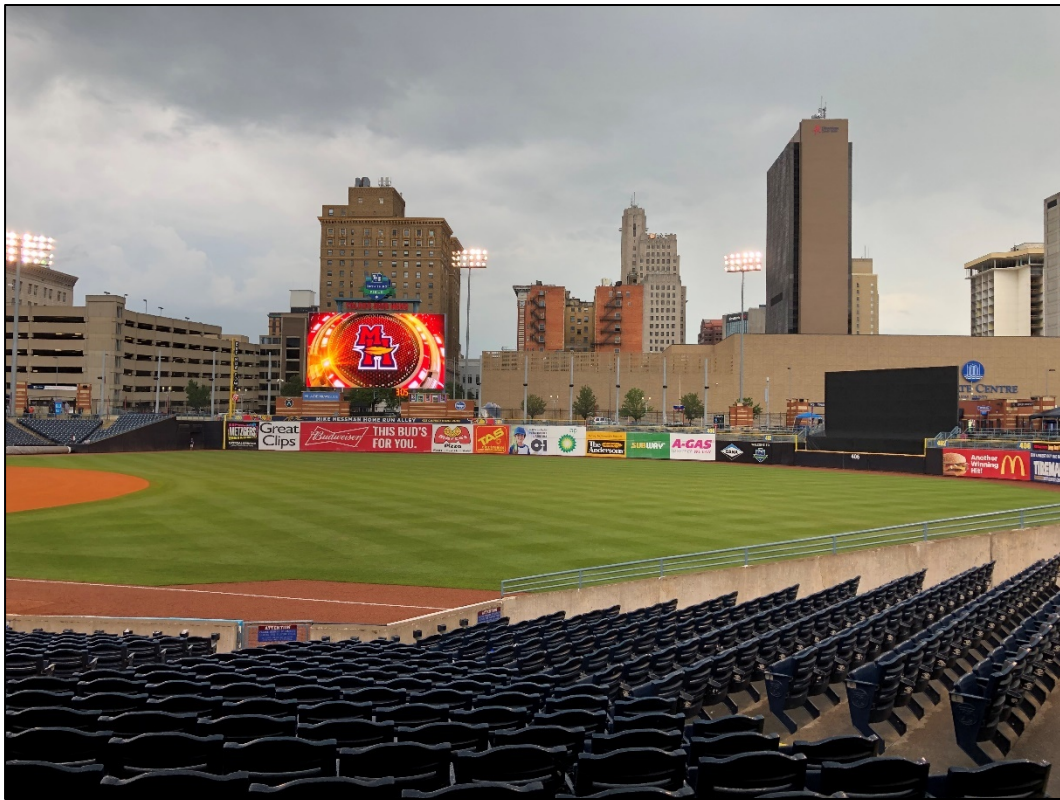


Last week while on assignment, I took a detour and ended up in Toledo, Ohio, on the shore of Lake Erie. My purpose was not to hang out with some of the many Buckeye State Deplorables in this rat-infested Rust Belt city, but, rather, to spend an evening in the friendly confines of Fifth Third Field, home to the iconic Toledo MudHens baseball franchise. While the drive to the ballpark was a bit challenging--if there's a street in Toledo that *isn't* currently under repair, I couldn't find it--once at the park, it was love at first sight. The Holy Tole-dans got this one just right when they built this colorful piece of eye candy in 2001, a replacement for aging Ned Skeldon Stadium.

A few photographs of the MudHens' home nest will do it much more justice than my words:



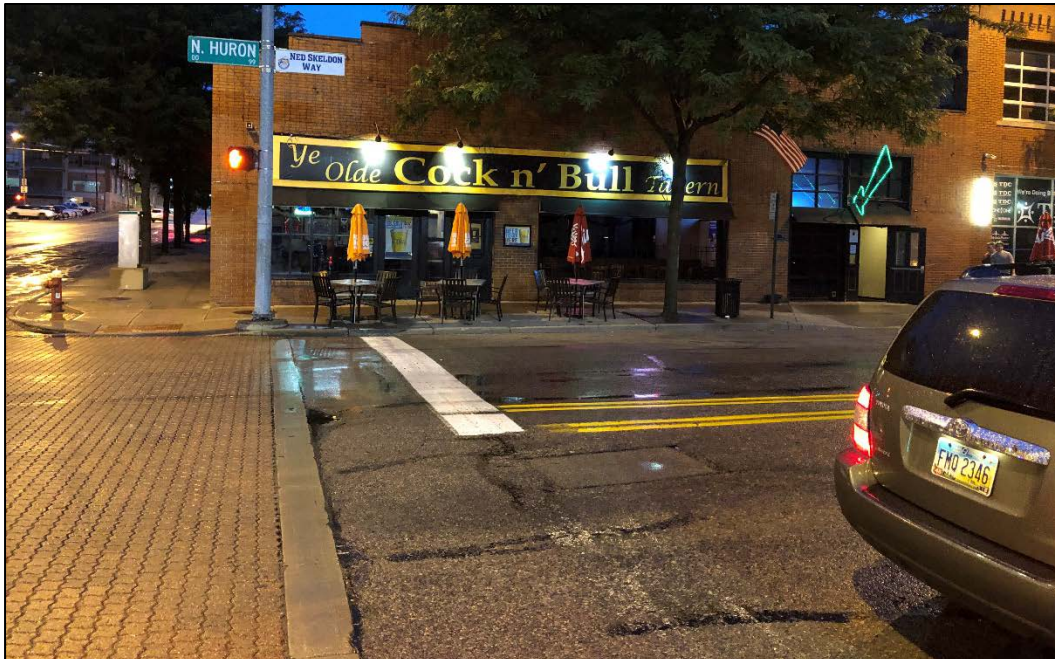
Fifth Third Field



I also loved the two local drinking establishments situated a stone's throw or less from the first and third base lines:



Packo's at the Park



Ye Olde Cock n' Bull Tavern

As I stepped into the ballpark for the 7:05 p.m. game, I was concerned that it might get washed out, since rain was in the forecast with an 80% probability, according to the weather wags. However, while there was intermittent spitting from the skies, the heavy stuff held off so that the game could be played without interruption. The MudHens, the AAA International League farm club for the Detroit Tigers, was pitted against the visiting Louisville Bats (the AAA International League farm club for the Cincinnati Reds) on this particular evening, and both teams were looking to improve upon their positions in the International League standings.

The game itself wasn't much of a game at all, as the visiting Bats put up a 5-spot in the third inning and never looked back, coasting to a blowout victory that ended up with the Bats on top 13-4. The hitting hero for the Louisville Nine was Chadwick Tromp with a hitting line of 3 2 1 4. The winning pitcher for the Bats was Vladimir Gutierrez, and the losing moundsman for the MudHens was Matt Hall.

The only nod I could see to Jamie Farr of M*A*S*H fame was a funnel stand by the name of *Farr Out Funnels*, which serves up Corporal Klinger Specials to the crowd.



Also, being as it's the year 2019, I thought that it was remarkable that so many of the MudHens fans seemed to be unabashed cigarette smokers, like about 90% of them. Perhaps nobody has broken the news to Toledo that smoking is hazardous to

one's health. Hello. And have any of you heard of climate change? News flash. It's real.

V AS IN VICTORY



The following night I had the great good fortune of finding myself at a baseball game at the joyful minor league ballpark in Indianapolis known as Victory Field, home of the Indianapolis Indians (farm club to the Pittsburgh Pirates), featuring a matchup with the Columbus Clippers. While you would think that the Indians would be a farm club of the Cleveland Indians, you would be wrong. At one time, from 1952 to 1956, the Indianapolis club was a farm affiliate of the Cleveland organization. Some of the well-known Indianapolis Indians alums include: Grover Cleveland Alexander; Nap Lajoie; Rube Marquard; Roy Schack; Roger Maris; Harmon Killebrew; George Foster; Dave Concepcion; Bernie Carbo; Hal McRae; Andres Galarraga; Larry Walker; Randy Johnson; Aaron Boone; Ken Griffey, Sr.; and last but not least, Bob Uecker who batted an anemic .147 while in an Indy uniform.



Victory Field (*The Vic*) is a beauty, and in a great location, smack dab in downtown Indianapolis, close to the Indiana State Capitol, only about a mile from Raymond James Stadium, and right across the street from the towering JW Marriott Hotel. If you ever decide to visit Victory Field, you definitely want to stay at the JW Marriott, which is stumbling distance for fans who have been overserved with adult libations. Itchie has a suite there. It is a beautiful hotel, and I found it interesting that it was hosting a gamers' convention of some sort, and so there were some very interesting characters roaming the halls and playing board games in the lobby and pretty much anywhere there was a table.



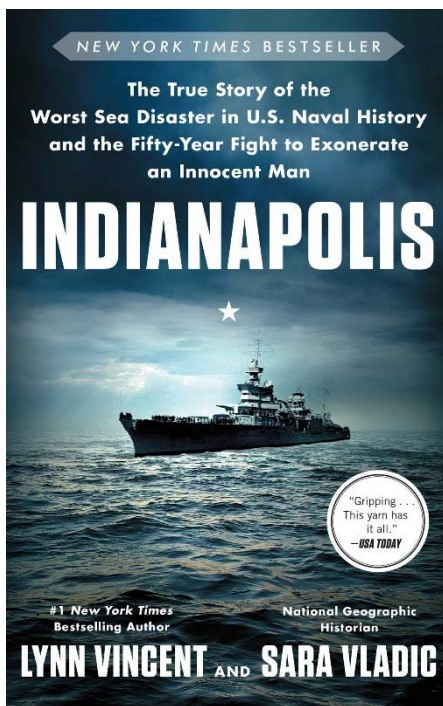
The game was a true fan's delight, starting out as a no-hitter through 2-1/2 frames. In the bottom of the third, Indian centerfielder Jay Martin scratched out a single for the first hit of the game, was advanced by the game's second hit, and then eventually came around and scored, staking the Indians to a 1-0 lead. In the bottom of the next inning, Indian second baseman Kevin Kramer hit a solo home run with two out and nobody on, extending his team's lead to 2-0.

In the top half of the fifth, the Clippers, ironically the Triple A farm club for the Cleveland Indians parent club, tied the game up with a two-run jack by catcher Eric Haase, the first damage done to Indy starter James Marvel, who appeared to be cruising until then. I'm still trying to figure out why Haase was batting in the nine-hole for the Clippers, in that this was his 25th home run of the season.

The teams then traded goose eggs until the ninth inning, and the Clippers were unable to get anything going in the top of the ninth, so it appeared that we might be headed for extra innings. However, the Indians' sturdy clean-up hitter was the lead-off batter for the Indians in the bottom of the ninth, and he absolutely seared the first offering by Clippers pitcher Cam Hill, depositing the ball well into the left field bleachers for a walk-off home run. Proverbially, the crowd roared, and just like that, the game was over.

As I stumbled my way out of Victory Field toward my hotel, amidst my fellow fandom of 9,424 people, I took in again what a glorious ball yard I had just spent three soul uplifting hours in attendance. Not that anyone's asking me to be a contributing scribe, but if I could offer one amendment to the Good Book, it would probably read like this: *And on the eighth day, God invented ballparks, and they were good, so very good.*

A FAR DIFFERENT INDIANAPOLIS



By sheer coincidence, while in Indianapolis, I finished the book *Indianapolis: The True Story of the Worst Sea Disaster in U.S. Naval History and the Fifty-Year Fight to Exonerate an Innocent Man*. I had been eyeing this book at airport bookstores for the past several months, and I finally picked it up and dug in. For those of you who don't know the story, the *Indianapolis* was a ginormous U.S. battleship that was sunk by two torpedoes from a Japanese submarine near the end of World War II, throwing 900+ men (some 300 crewmen went down with the ship) into shark-infested seas at a few minutes after midnight on July 30, 1945. This greatest of Naval tragedies happened just weeks after its captain and crew secretly delivered the atomic component parts for Little Boy to the Pacific island of Tinian, where

they would later be loaded, assembled and activated aboard *The Enola Gay* and then dropped on Nagasaki a short time later.

Indianapolis is not a light, airy or soul-satisfying read, by any stretch of the imagination. It is at times disappointing, painful and gruesome as one learns about the horrible demise of so many fresh-faced young men, and about the unjust court-marshalling of the Indianapolis' skipper, Charles B. McVay III, which appeared to be the Navy brass' attempt to find a scapegoat for the inexcusable incompetence of higher-ups. Some of you may recall--I didn't--the reference to this Naval disaster in the original *Jaws* movie, recounted in the book:

Quint [Robert Shaw], the vinegar-tongued fishing boat captain, sits belowdecks with Hooper [Richard Dreyfus], the shark expert, and the island's police chief, Brody [Roy Scheider].

Quint and Hooper are drinking and comparing scars, their mutual disdain dissolving in a haze of booze and sea stories. Brody asks Quint about a scar on his arm. Quint's smile fades, and he places a hand on Hooper's arm. "Mr. Hooper, that's the USS *Indianapolis*."

Hooper's laughter stops like a valve wrenching shut. He stares at Quint in disbelief. "You were on the *Indianapolis*?"

Then Quint launches into one of the most famous monologues in film history:

"Japanese submarine slammed two torpedoes into our side, Chief. We was comin' back from the island of Tinian . . . just delivered the bomb, the Hiroshima bomb. Eleven hundred men went into the water. Vessel went down in twelve minutes . . . Very first light, Chief, the sharks come cruising'. So we formed ourselves into tight groups . . . And the idea was, the shark goes to the nearest man, and then he'd start poundin' and hollerin' and screamin' and sometimes the shark would go away . . . Sometimes he wouldn't go away. Sometimes that shark, he looks right into you. Right into your eyes. You know the thing about a shark, he's got lifeless eyes, black eyes, like a doll's eyes. When he comes at ya, he doesn't seem to be livin'. Until he bites ya and those black eyes roll over white. And then . . . ah, then you hear that terrible high-pitch screamin', and the ocean turns red, and in spite of all the poundin' and the hollerin' they all come in and . . . rip you to pieces.

As always, I would be pleased to loan any of you my copy of the book, dog-eared and dirty that it might be from accompanying me on our Grand Canyon rafting trip of late.

* * * * *

That's it for this issue. Mazel tov.

Skipper