

# The Base Ball Player's Chronicle

SPRING

2001

ISSUE 3

VOLUME 7

A Quarterly Publication of the Vintage Base Ball Association

## The Lost Art of Fair-Foul Hitting by Robert Schaefer/ SABR

Base ball matured and came of age during the last third of the nineteenth century. The quality of the game improved as a result of actions taken by a cadre of thoughtful sportswriters and managers who subjected the conduct of games played to critical analysis at the end of each season. Based on their evaluations, recommendations for changes were made. Captain Harry Wright, of the Boston Red Stockings, along with sportswriter Henry Chadwick, continually sought ways in which to improve the game. Chadwick's column was published in the influential periodical, *The New York Clipper*, as well as in other daily newspapers. The record of his thoughts now provide invaluable insights for the reasons underlying proposed rule changes, both for rules that were adopted and those that were rejected. One of the burning issues of the early 1870s concerned the rule for determining fair and foul hits. The existing rule permitted a method of batting that became known as fair-foul hitting. During its own time, the art of fair-foul hitting was embroiled in controversy, and today is vastly misunderstood.

Very simply, if a batted ball first bounced in fair territory, the ball was in play no matter where it rolled after its initial contact with the ground. No doubt some batted balls, by accident, initially struck the ground fair and then went foul, just as happens today. However, a select group of clever hitters perfected a technique for deliberately striking the ball in a manner so that a spin - "English" - was imparted to it. After first touching the ground in fair territory the "English" caused the ball to twist sharply off into the foul ground, far from the normal defensive position of the infielders stationed within the foul lines. According to the rules, this type of hit was in play and the fielders were obliged to give chase as the ball skipped to the recesses of the foul grounds.

The striker almost always earned first base, and very frequently two bases, on this type of hit. The technique was called fair-foul hitting. Strikers who were skilled in the art of fair-foul hitting had a huge advantage, as there was no practical way to post the infielders in defense against it and at the same time adequately cover the fair ground between the bases.

Fair-foul hitting presented a dilemma for the defense. In the 1870s the second baseman was usually stationed in the immediate vicinity of his base, a considerable distance from the first baseman. Scientific hitters attempted to exploit this large opening by poking ground balls between first and second. Not only did the infielders have to be wary of a well-placed hit in this area, but they also had to guard the foul ground behind both first and third base. The typical response to the threat of a fair-foul hit was to position the first and third basemen directly on their respective bases, with one foot in foul ground. This defensive posture only exacerbated the middle infielder's problem by further opening up the diamond, providing additional room in fair territory for an innocuous ground ball to trickle into the outfield for a safe hit. Thus the mere existence of the fair-foul hit inflated the batting averages of all the other hitters, as the first and third basemen hugged the foul lines in anticipation of the fair-foul, causing gaping "holes" toward the center of the diamond.

According to newspaper accounts of the nineteenth century, the creator of the fair-foul hit was Dickey Pearce, the innovative short fielder of the old Brooklyn Atlantics. Indeed, Pearce himself claimed this honor. Henry Chadwick shed additional light on the heritage of fair-

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Ross Barnes exhibiting the "fair-foul" technique.

Photo: Transcendental Graphics



VINTAGE  
BASE BALL  
ASSOCIATION

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## 2002 Convention Update by Stinky Freyer

The 2002 Vintage Base Ball Association International Convention was held April 6 and 7 in the beautiful city of London, Ontario. The first night got off to an auspicious start when the pre-planned party at the Labatt Brewery was canceled, due to a work stoppage. Several members then made it on to the Elephant and Crown Pub. It was probably a good thing that I didn't find the boys. Many a bleary eye was witnessed the next morning.

Cap'n Mark Heppner opened with some always enthusiastic remarks on the state of vintage base ball.

Greg Rhodes made an excellent presentation, "To Tally or Not to Tally? To Slide or Not to Slide? Basing Our Play and Customs on the Historical Record." Rhodes was helped in this analysis by John Husman. Rhodes touched on 24 points and raised a great discussion afterward. This was quite timely, for the issue of "Accurate Game Reproductions" has become a hotbed of discussion among both the VBBA and SABR Membership. I hope to print Mr. Rhodes' and Mr. Husman's analysis in the near future.

Next, "Deano" Thilgen, gave a fascinating Oral History of 19th Century Minnesota Base Ball. His research and accompanying handout were excerpts of early

base ball articles in Minnesota. Deano spoke about the "How and Why" baseball spread in early Minnesota, much had to do with the advent of the train. I commend Mr. Thilgen on a thoughtful presentation.

Following Deano, was Ms. Connie Bodner and Mr. Jim Mossgraber from the Genesee Valley Country Village Museum, in Mumford, NY. The Genesee Valley Museum has started their own baseball program, complete with, what is believed to be known, replica of a 19th Century Ball Park, Silver Base Ball Park.

Genesee Valley supports 4 teams, the Excelsiors, Live Oaks, Knickerbockers, and Rochester BBC. Their slide presentation and discussion made everyone's imagination twinkle with thoughts of baseball.

And finally, I, Stinky Freyer, gave a presentation on the Vintage Ballist website. Mark Rucker, a 19th Century Pictorial Historian and myself, have started a website that you can buy hard to find prints or put those prints on a t-shirt. Vintage Ballist can also print modern team shirts. For more information the Vintage

ballist is a at [www.vintageballist.com](http://www.vintageballist.com).

The night ended with a fine dinner and a wonderful Oral History of Canadian Base Ball given by local news writer Chip Martin.

Chip spoke of the first documented game at Beachville, Ont. 1838, and the first professional Canadian team, the Tecumsehs of London. He also talked about the history of Labatt Park in London, Ont. the oldest existing ballpark in North America built in 1877. Mr. Martin is hoping to find a publisher to print this book. Any suggestions, e-mail me, John Freyer, at [fryorama@aol.com](mailto:fryorama@aol.com).

I left early on Sunday, I will recap the business end of the Convention, once I get the minutes from the meetings in the next issue. I'd like to thank SABR for use of the Fair/Foul article. The original full length version was printed in SABR's "The National Pastime Number 20," 2000. Check out [www.sabr.org](http://www.sabr.org) for details.

I also have for sale, some VBBA t-shirts, all have the VBBA Logo on the front. \$20 green long sleeve, \$15 black or white short sleeve. E-mail me at [fryorama@aol.com](mailto:fryorama@aol.com).

## Do you enjoy the Newsletter ? Join the VBBA

The VINTAGE BASE BALL ASSOCIATION needs your support. The cost to continue printing this newsletter comes from membership fees.

The VINTAGE BASE BALL ASSOCIATION exists to try to educate fans about the origins of America's Game.

The VINTAGE BASE BALL ASSOCIATION is trying to expand the sports' focus, by using tools like the Newsletter and the VBBA Website ([www.vbba.com](http://www.vbba.com)) to further communicate

the "Glory of the Game."

Individual Membership costs only \$10 per year, which includes four issues of the Base Ball Player's Player Chronicle. Even if you play for a team, join as an individual and help support our cause.

Just starting a team? Become an Associate member: it's only \$35 per year.

Have an established team? Become a Full Member and help us push the VBBA to the next level. Full Member ship is only \$50 per year.

Make checks or money orders out to the Vintage Base Ball Association. Mail to the Treasurer of the VBBA: John Wells 40 Winthrop Columbus OH 43214

## 2002 Tournament Schedules

\* Needs Additional Teams

### APRIL

April 28 Old Bethpage, NY  
New York vs. New Jersey Tournament  
(RAINED OUT)  
Contact Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich  
E-mail: NYMutuals@aol.com

### MAY

\*May 11-12 Fishers, IN  
Conner Prairie Spring Festival  
Host: White River BBC Contact: Dan Freas  
E-mail: freas@connerprairie.org

\*May 19 Chagrin Falls, OH  
FOSP Horse Show and Art Market at  
Metro Parks Polo Grounds  
Host: Forest City BBC Contact: Ghost  
Gardner E-mail: theforestcity@yahoo.com

\*May 24-27 Chagrin Falls, OH  
Chagrin Falls Blossom Time Festival  
Host: Forest City BBC Contact: Ghost  
Gardner E-mail: theforestcity@yahoo.com

\*May 26 Huber Heights, OH  
Clodbuster Tournament  
Host: Carriage Hill Clodbusters Contact:  
Nate Buckner  
E-mail: yankeeoh@hotmail.com

\*May 22-27 Old Colorado City, Colorado

Springs, CO Colorado Territory Days  
Old Time Base Ball Tourney  
Host: Rocky Mountain SABR  
Contact: Rod Nelson  
E-mail: RockyMtnSABR@aol.com

### JUNE

\*June 8 Grand Rapids, MI  
Silas K. Pierce Cup  
Host: Kent BBC Contact: Gordon  
Olson E-mail: golson@grpl.org

June 29 Fairmont Park, Philadelphia,  
PA 1876 National Barnstorming Tour  
Contact Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich  
E-mail: NYMutuals@aol.com

June 30 Boston Commons, Boston, MA  
1876 National Barnstorming Tour  
Contact Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich  
E-mail: NYMutuals@aol.com

### JULY

July 1- Akron, OH  
1876 National Barnstorming Tour  
Contact Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich  
E-mail: NYMutuals@aol.com

July 3- Midway Village, Rockford, IL  
1876 National Barnstorming Tour  
Contact Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich  
E-mail: NYMutuals@aol.com

July 4- Cincinnati, OH  
1876 National Barnstorming Tour  
Contact Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich  
E-mail: NYMutuals@aol.com

\*July 5- Louisville, KY 1876 National  
Barnstorming Tour  
Contact Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich  
E-mail: NYMutuals@aol.com

\*July 5-7 Hartford, CT Hartford Vin-  
tage baseball Tournament 1860s and  
1880s Bushnell Park and Trinity College  
Host: Hartford Senators Contact: Greg  
Martin E-mail: gmmarketing@attbi.com

July 6 Hannibal, MO  
Hannibal Days Tournament  
Host: Washington BBC Contact:  
Mike "The Preacher" Farris E-mail:  
wbbc@midwest-vintage-base-ball.com

July 6- Hannibal, MO  
1876 National Barnstorming Tour  
Contact Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich  
E-mail: NYMutuals@aol.com

July 7- Hartford, CT  
1876 National Barnstorming Tour  
Contact Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich  
E-mail: NYMutuals@aol.com 4

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## Couple of Questions

Readers: I have a couple of questions that have been posed to me regarding a couple of issues, I would like your input.

1. I'm looking to compile a resource for equipment. If you

know of any sources, including umpire clothes, ladies period dresses, balls, bats, bases, signs, whatever, send me a name and number. I really need a name for a source for

ump clothes.

2. What do you do for insurance for your team?

Send responses to: Fryorma@aol.com

## Writers, Photographers and Correspondents Needed

Have an interesting story? Know someone with a cool job outside of baseball? Do you take really good pictures at Base Ball games? Well my friend, we need you.

The Base Ball Player's Chronicle is

looking to expand its information base. We are looking for the following stories to include in our next issue: General Baseball History, Team History, Current Players' Profiles, Travelogues, photographs and anything else pertaining

to Vintage Base Ball. Don't be shy about submitting an article. This is definitely not the Reader's Digest.

To submit, send to John Freyer at fryorama@aol.com or fax to (708) 499-6181.



\*July 19-21 Vintage Sports Days Labatt Park, London, Ont., Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, St. Mary's, Ont., Victoria Park, Woodstock, Ont.  
Contact: Gary Curgin  
E-mail: gary@sport-travel.com

July 28 Akron, OH Akron Cup at Stan Hywet Hall

Host: Akron Black Stockings Contact: Mark Heppner E-mail: MHeppner@stanhywet.org

## AUGUST

\*August 3-4 Old Bethpage, NY  
Old Time Base Ball Festival  
Host: Old Bethpage Village Restoration  
Contact: Ken Balcom E-mail: otb@optonline.net

\*August 4 Cincinnati, OH  
Heritage Village Vintage Base Ball Tournament

Host: Cincinnati Red Stockings and Buckeyes Contact: Greg Rhodes  
E-mail: roadwest@fuse.net

\*August 31-Sept. 1 Columbus, OH  
11\* Ohio Cup Vintage Base Ball Festival  
Host: Ohio Village Muffins and Columbus Capitals. Contact: Doug Smith  
E-mail: dsmith@ohiohistory.org

## SEPTEMBER

TBA Providence, RI  
4th Annual Rhode Island Vintage Base Ball Tournament Host: Providence Grays Contact: Kevin Faria  
E-mail: providencegrays@rimail.com

\*September 14-15 Piqua, OH  
Piqua Sterling BBC Festival

Host: Piqua Sterlings Contact: Brian Black E-mail: snake1866@earthlink.net

\*September 21 Decatur, IL  
Stephen A. Douglas Cup  
Host: Rock Springs Ground Squirrels  
Contact: Robert Grindy  
E-mail: rgrindy@richland.cc.il.us

## OCTOBER

\* Chagrin Falls, OH  
Forest City Fall Classic  
Host: Forest City BBC  
Contact: Ghost Gardner  
E-mail: theforestcitys@yahoo.com

Visit [www.vbba.org](http://www.vbba.org) for times and locations. If I missed your tournament, send me the skinny at [fryorama@aol.com](mailto:fryorama@aol.com)

# Art of Fair/Foul Hitting (Continued from Page 1)

foul hitting in an 1894 article by declaring that he himself had originated the concept! He said that the bunt grew out of fair-foul hitting and that he had suggested the idea of fair-foul hitting in 1864:

"I pointed out to Pearce the advantage of hitting the ball so that it should become a fair-foul hit, especially when a runner was on base; as, in such a case, even if the fielder got the ball to first in time - which was usually impossible - the runner on first would easily get to second safely." Pearce acted on Chadwick's suggestion and practiced the art of the fair-foul hit until he had it down flawlessly. He used the fair-foul with such regularity that the infielders would anticipate this type of hit and creep in close on him, ready to pounce on his fair-foul. Chadwick reported that should the infielders do that Dickey would trick them by pretending to prepare for a fair-foul and then just tap the ball over their heads for a safe hit.

Just how did a scientific hitter accomplish the art of fair-foul hitting? First of all, the hitter had a colossal advantage in that, according to the rules of the 1860s and '70s, any pitch he fouled off was not charged as a strike. This allowed him to make as many unsuccessful attempts at a fair-foul hit as he cared to without accumulating strikes. In addition, up until the strike zone was established in 1887, the striker had the privilege of calling for his pitch. That is, he could specify his preference for either a high pitch - one from his shoulders down to his belt, or a low pitch - one from his belt down to his knees. His preference then defined his unique strike zone for that time at bat and the pitcher was obliged to deliver the ball to this region. To a great extent, fair-foul hitting was made possible by the batter's prerogative to call for his pitch. When a

hitter planned to make a fair-foul hit, he always called for a low pitch. Chadwick tells us that a fair-foul hit could never be made except from a low ball, and then the striker needed to step well out so as to hit the ball down to the ground within the foul lines. The hitter's key for success was to hit down on the ball and deliver a glancing blow so that a spin was imparted to it. This spin was vital for the ball to veer sharply off into the foul ground, far from the reach of the fielders. The idea that a fair-foul was an easy hit to make was, in Chadwick's succinct phrase, "absurd." Chadwick related that the slightest miscalculation on the part of the striker transformed the ventured fair-foul hit into an easily caught foul bound, or a chance to field the striker out at first base. The foul bound rule provided that a striker was out should a player field a foul ball after its first bounce.

*Other famous players, such as George Wright and Davey Force, duplicated Pearce's fair-foul hitting. The art of fair-foul hitting spread and by the early 1870s many strikers employed this style. Of course, some strikers used the technique more often and effectively than did others. Captain Adrian Anson (a.k.a. "Cap") described his former Philadelphia A's teammate, James "Lefty" McMullen as a "rattling good batsman who excelled in fair-foul hitting." They were teammates for only a single season, 1874, and McMullen hit .346 that year. Levi Meyerle, twice the batting champion*

*of the National Association, also frequently promoted the fair-foul hit. Davey Egger, also of Philadelphia, was another fair-foul hitter of great fame.*

The most renowned practitioner of fair-foul hitting was The Great and Only Barnes, who won three batting titles in six years, and hit over .400 in four of those years. Although history now remembers Ross Barnes primarily for his masterful exploitation of the fair-foul rule, in truth he was a complete hitter who did not rely exclusively on that technique for his success. However, the high regard for him as a fair-foul hitter is made clear in the following excerpts. On July 3, 1872, the Boston Evening Journal reported the match between the Red Stockings and The Forest City nine of Cleveland. We pick up the action in the ninth inning:

"There were now two hands out and no runs made and the Bostons one run behind and it certainly looked as if it were all day with the invincible Reds but their friends were not to be disappointed in their favorites in winning a game when defeat seemed certain. Barnes was the next striker, and upon hi  
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## Muffins Travel to Historic Jefferson College by Never Wrong Grish

For the fourth year the Historic Jefferson College of Natchez, Mississippi hosted a tournament of vintage base ball matches that were played Saturday, November 3rd. Invited to the event were the Mutuals from New York and a contingent representing the Ohio Village Muffins. Unfortunately, recent events in New York found the Mutuals attending memorial services for several of their fallen comrades and families. It fell upon the gentlemen from Ohio to play three matches that day.

The local nine are known as the Natchez Democrats, but actually hail from the western shores of the Big Muddy in Louisiana where they play modern AA softball. A stout and powerful bunch they were, long on muscle, speed and ability and quite youthful. The Muffins had traveled many hours with seven experienced ballists. Rounding out there nine were Kevin 'Jumbo Shrimp' Grish, an independent player associated with the Chicago Salmon and Elk Grove Bucks and an English gentleman who went by the moniker 'Mate'.

The Mississippi Museums Association and their representative H. Clark Burkett had enlisted the services of two dedicated umpires to officiate over the tourney. From New York came Mickey 'The Lip' Tangle, a distinguished umpire and ballist associated with the Atlantic Base Ball Club of Nesconset, New York. The other umpire was your humble narrator, Ray 'Never Wrong' Grish from Des Plaines, Illinois, associated with the Chi-

cago Salmon Club.

The day was sunny and warm, perfect base ball weather. The



Group Photo of the Ohio Village Muffins and the Natchez Democrats at Historic Jefferson College. Photo: Clark Burkett

venue for this game, the campus of Historic Jefferson College, is steeped in base ball tradition. Images of ballists and matches are on display in their museum and the diamond laid out that day mirrored the position used over 100 years ago. In fact several of the live oak trees that came into play in 1872 were still in play today. The most interesting aspect of the playing field was the required position of the left fielder, who found himself in a valley nearly forty feet below the level of the base paths. Unable to catch sight of the hurler or the striker, he would therefore rely heavily upon the voiced instructions of the rover as to the suspected flight of the ball when struck into left field. The second umpire was a necessity to adequately judge the plays made in left field.

The first match found the Muffins enjoying a short lived lead, tallying two first inning aces. But alas, the young powerful Democrats brought heavy lumber to the plate and struck many a ball deep into the out field and sizzling liners that were unplayable by the infielders. In addition to their overpowering offense, the Democrats had brought along a stunning defense that seemed impenetrable once they were used to the harder, smaller ball.

Acrobatic catches, frozen rope throws and a bit of luck kept the Democrats ahead and the Ohio nine frustrated. The final score of match one was Muffins, 7 Democrats, considerably more.

The second of the three matches enjoyed that day was less lopsided, however the final tally again favored the locals.

The third match of the day found both teams tired yet absorbed in the competition. The score see-sawed one or two tallies an inning but found the Democrats ahead after a ninth inning that brought seven men to the scorer's table. The day concluded with a supper of period food including hams, cobbler and ale. Both teams agreed that the day was well spent and the next year's tournament plans have been initiated.

# Vintage Base Ball Website: [www.vbba.org](http://www.vbba.org)

## Vintage Team Records for 2001

Men's	W-L-T
Ohio Village Muffins (Columbus, OH)	33-13-3
Deep River Grinders (Hobart, IN)	27-5-3
Providence (RI) Grays	20-7
Rochester Hills (MI) Grangers	19-4
Carriage Hill Clodbusters (Dayton, OH)	19-4
Akron (OH) Black Stockings	17-9-1
New York (NY) Mutuals	16-2
Hoover Sweepers (Canton, OH)	15-11
Rock Springs Ground Squirrels (Decatur, IL)	15-14
Great Black Swamp Frogs (Toledo, OH)	14-5-1
Elizabeth (NJ) Resolutes	14-9
Forest City BBC (Cincinnati, OH)	12-4
Bristol (RI) Blues	12-11
Colorado Territorial All _stars	9-1
Cincinnati (OH) Red Stockings	9-17-1
Middletown (CT) Mansfields	8-16
Rochester (NY) BBC	7-0
Roxbury (NY) Nine	6-4
St. Croix (MN) BBC	5-5
Cincinnati (OH) Buckeyes	5-5-1
Mackville Mudcats (Atwood, IL)	5-6
Quicksteps BBC (Minneapolis, MN)	5-6
Nielsen (FL) Monitors	4-0-2
Hartford (CT) Dark Blues	4-2
Mastodon Mine (CO) Minstrels	4-3
Hartford (CT) Senators	3-2
Denver Blue Stockings	3-3
New York Knickerbockers	3-4
Rooster BBC (Rochester, MN)	3-4
Broomfield (CO) Sweepers	2-0
Grand Island (NE) Old Glories	2-1-1
Littleton (CO) Rough and Readies	2-4
New York Excelsiors	2-5
Rochester (NY) Live Oaks	2-5
Laramie (WY) Lawmen	1-0
Central City (CO) Stars	1-2
Berthoud (CO) Blues	1-4
Westville Crackers and Biscuits	(7 games played)
Women's	W-L-T
Ohio Village Lady Diamonds	8-1
Carriage Hill Lady Clodbusters	4-2
Akron Lady Locks	1-6
Colorado Lady Columbines	0-0

## Origin of the Tally Bell

One thing I have come to find since doing this newsletter, is the constant yammering about the origins of the "Tally Bell." -jf

Though the Muffins began playing a regular schedule in 1981, they did not use the bell for about the first nine years. About 1990, the Muffin leadership installed the tally bell. It is said that Columbus baseball historian, Joe Santry, who is the current historian of the minor league Columbus Clippers, was the inspiration for this.

Joe Santry was active in SABR and did a lot of oral history projects. Joe said that he talked with a old time player - I don't have a name at this point- so lets call him Mr. A. Mr. A. tells Joe Santry that when he was a boy he heard a former notable player from the 1860's say that his club used a bell that was rung when runs were scored. Joe Santry knows the name of Mr. A and the 1860s player.

This served as the Muffins inspiration to begin using the tally bell in about 1990.

As the Muffins helped a large number of clubs form in Ohio & other states, this practice spread through vintage base ball. This practice was seen as gospel, spectators were told that this is how it was done in the 1860s. This was unfortunate and probably incorrect.

With the founding of the VBBA ,the "old Muffin rules" were looked at and came under fire. The Muffins have changed their rules quite a lot in the last four years. Since then, they have also been telling Muffin/Diamond Program members and spectators and other clubs that the tally bell is a custom of our club but they do not know absolutely sure that it was done in 1860.

They still choose to continue to use the bell because it a custom of their vintage club. Some may be very concerned with why they do this if it was not widely done at the time. They have evidence that it was done by a club in the 1860s, and so long as they tell spectators, etc, that it is their club custom only, then they will continue to use the bell.

I will try to contact Mr. Santry at the Columbus Clippers. If he can expand on the story, I will follow up with an article.

In the mean time, just play ball and worry about your batting average, not what everyone else is doing wrong.

Stinky Freyer

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## Art of Fair/Foul Hitting (Cont.)

pended the result of the game, as a base hit would at least bring in the tying run. After waiting for a ball that suited him, he hit one of his favorite fair fouls, for which he is getting an enviable reputation, and as the ball traveled out toward the left field, Rogers and Harry Wright came dashing home and winning the game. Applause long and loud was awarded Barnes as he rested on second base, where his hit carried him."

Making an accurate call of fair or foul on the first bounce was a daunting task for the umpire. Keep in mind that in the 1870s the umpire did not stand directly behind the catcher. He was located several feet off to the side of the home plate, in foul ground. This off set location denied him an optimum view the area just in front of the home plate, the very spot where the fair-foul hit was likely to take its first bounce. In addition, his view of the ball was often blocked by the batter running towards first base or by the catcher as he attempted to field it. The umpire's decision on virtually any fair-foul hit was certain to displease one team or the other. When the umpire's ruling was in the wrong, the catcher delighted in pointing to the exact spot where the ball first touched the ground, showing him up in front of the crowd. This tended to inflame the crowd if the call was against the home team. Naturally, the wronged team vigorously protested the umpire's tainted decision, and in extreme cases, walked off the field in protest. This did not please the paying customers, as refunds were not provided. The main objection to fair-foul hitting lay in the umpire's limited ability to make the correct call of fair or foul. The observers of the game soon realized that a rule change governing fouls would ease the umpire's burden. But defining the most appropriate foul rule proved to be elusive.

Despite the fact that Ross Barnes, the acclaimed virtuoso of the fair-foul art, was his own star player, Captain Harry Wright led the crusade against the fair-foul hit. In late October of 1876, the Bostons played an exhibition match using a new foul rule designed by Harry Wright. Wright's rule made all batted balls that pass outside the foul lines before reaching first base or third base foul, and all batted balls that strike the ground and remain within the foul lines until they reach either first or third base fair. His proposed foul rule is instantly recognized as the one in force today. The Clipper reported that the result of play under the new rule was satisfactory to the spectators. Spectator satisfaction and acceptance of new rules were the ultimate criteria by which proposed changes were judged. The Clipper concluded, "of all the plans presented to obviate the difficulties that followed in the wake of

fair-fouls, Harry Wright's proposed rule appeared to be the best." It is, the Clipper went on, "desirable that the vexatious



Dickey Pearce  
Photo: Bob Schaefer

doubts of the accuracy of the umpire in judging fair-fouls be removed in some way or other, and we know of no more feasible rule than this new one."

Wright finally succeeded in overcoming Chadwick's objections and his new foul rule was adopted for the 1877 season. It had broad consequences. In addition to instantly ending the era of fair-foul hitting, adoption of the new foul rule altered the diamond once more by allowing the home plate to be moved back into fair territory. This was done concurrent with the foul rule change in 1877. However, the new rule allowed bunts to remain as part of the hitter's repertoire, as he could still "block" a pitched ball so it would go to the field comparatively dead, in front of the home base and on fair ground. For reasons that were not explained, the foul bound rule did not accompany the fair-foul hit into obscurity, but was retained by the National League until 1883.

On January 13, 1877, The Clipper ob-

served that:

"Under the new rule the first and third basemen will not be required to stand as near to the foul ball lines as hitherto. Now the infielders will be able to consolidate their forces so as to secure more ground balls than they did before."

This implied that batting averages would decline in 1877, as fewer ground balls would be able to penetrate the now concentrated infielders. The reverse proved to be the case. With the fair-foul rule in full force in 1876, the National League posted a .265 batting average, and a slugging average of .321. Despite not having the advantage of the fair-foul hit in 1877, the League's batting average climbed to .271 and the slugging average increased to .338. These increases in batting were due to a change completely unrelated to the fair-foul rule, viz., the selection of a newly designed ball. The 1877 National League convention selected an official ball containing a one-ounce rubber center, making it much livelier than its predecessor. Use of the rubber ball was made compulsory in all League games for the 1877 season. The goal was to make all games uniformly lively and attract more paying customers.

None of the observers of the national pastime anticipated that Barnes' domination with the ash would be diminished as a result of the loss of his favorite fair-foul hit. To the contrary, it was widely predicted that Barnes would enjoy a sensational season in 1877 due to the official lively ball. Tragically, during the winter of 1876-77, Barnes was stricken with a debilitating disease called the ague, which closely resembles malaria. This disease robbed him of his strength and stamina and forced Barnes to miss most of the 1877 season. He never fully recovered. Although Barnes made several attempts to resume his career, he did not approach his previous standard of excellence, either as a hitter or as a fielder. At the end of the 1881 season, at the age of 31, Barnes abandoned all efforts to play professional base ball. Because of the enduring and pervasive effects of his illness, we cannot accurately judge the effect that eliminating the art of the fair-foul hit had on Barnes' career. To place him in the proper perspective, Ross Barnes was conspicuously more proficient at a very difficult style of hitting than any of his contemporaries.

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### Known Vintage Base Ball Teams f-full member a- associate member i- individual member # -has not renewed for 2002

<p><b>Canada</b> Woodstock, Ontario Actives -a London, Ontario, Tecumsehs</p> <p><b>Colorado Vintage Base Ball Assoc.-#</b> Broomfield Sweepers -i Littleton Rough and Readies Berthoud Blues Central City Stars Colorado Territorial All Stars Colorado Lady Columbines Denver Blue Stockings Mastodon Mine Minstrels</p> <p><b>Connecticut</b> Middletown Mansfields -f Mystic Oceanics -f Hartford Dark Blues-# Hartford Senators -f Homestead Grays</p> <p><b>Florida</b> Dunedin Railers -f Largo Crackers -a Nielsen Monitors Medicine Men</p> <p><b>Georgia</b> Westville Craftsmen &amp; Biscuits -i</p> <p><b>Iowa</b> Walnut Hill Blue Stockings</p> <p><b>Illinois</b> Mackville Mudcats -a Chicago Salmon Rock Springs Ground Squirrels -f Elk Grove Bucks Creston Regulators -i Midway Village Marauders</p>	<p><b>Indiana</b> Deep River Grinders -f Indianapolis Freetowns Door Village Prairie Dogs Bonneyville Millers White River BBC-f Indianapolis Blues -a</p> <p><b>Kentucky</b> Shaker Village Bully Boys</p> <p><b>Massachusetts</b> Melrose Pondfielders</p> <p><b>Michigan</b> Berrien County Cranberry Boggers-f Greenfield Village Lah De Dahs -f Kent Base Ball Club -f Ludington Mariners -f Salt City Base Ball Club Rochester Grangers -f House of David -f</p> <p><b>Minnesota</b> Saint Croix Base Ball Club- # Quicksteps Base Ball Club-a Roosters BBC -f Winona Lumber Barons</p> <p><b>Mississippi</b> Historic Jefferson College-i</p> <p><b>Missouri</b> Washington BBC-#</p> <p><b>Nebraska Vintage Base Ball Assoc.</b> Railroad Town Roadies Ord Tigers Fort Hartstuff Company C Platteville Valley Bugeaters Beatrice River Bats Wahoo Plowboys</p>	<p><b>Grand Island Old Glories</b></p> <p><b>New Jersey</b> Elizabeth Resolutes -f Flemington Neshanock -f</p> <p><b>New Mexico</b> Albuquerque Telegraphers -i Ft. Bayard Centennial Assoc. Ft. Seldon Leasburg Boys</p> <p><b>New York</b> Old Bethpage Program -# Brooklyn Excelsiors Cold Spring Spiders Glen Head Zig Zags Hempstead Eurekas Hicksville Ozones Rockville Centre Observers Sea Cliff Idlewilds Bellmore Seminoles Mineola Washingtons Huntington Suffolks Westbury Base Ball Club Cooperstown Leather Stockings New York Mutuals-# Freeport Athletics -# Brooklyn Atlantics -f Roxbury Nine BBC -f 1876 Silver Base Ball Park League New York Knickerbockers-f New York Excelsiors-f Rochester Live Oaks-f Rochester BBC-f</p> <p><b>Ohio</b> Akron Black Stockings -f Akron Lady Locks -f Preble Aces -a Summit Merinos -f Lorain County Buckeyes-f Forest Citys Base Ball Club- #</p>	<p><b>Canal Fulton Mules -f</b> Hoover Sweepers -f Ohio Village Muffins-f Columbus Capitals -f Lake County Pirates- # Carriage Hill Clodbusters- # Sycamore Grasshoppers -f Great Black Swamp Frogs -f West Central Ohio BBC-f Pique Sterlings -f Loudon County Stars -f Amherst Sandstone Masons -# Cincinnati Red Stockings-# Cincinnati Buckeyes- #</p> <p><b>Pennsylvania</b> Addison Pike Boys Altoona Mountain Stars</p> <p><b>Rhode Island</b> 1884 Providence Grays -f Bristol Blues -f</p> <p><b>Texas</b> Ft. Davis Base Ball Club Ft. Bliss Cannonballs -f Ft. Concho Base Ball club Sam Rayburn Museum</p> <p><b>West Virginia</b> City of Nitro -f</p> <p><b>Wisconsin</b> Heritage Hill Base Ball Program</p> <p><b>Wyoming</b> Laramie Lawmen</p>
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