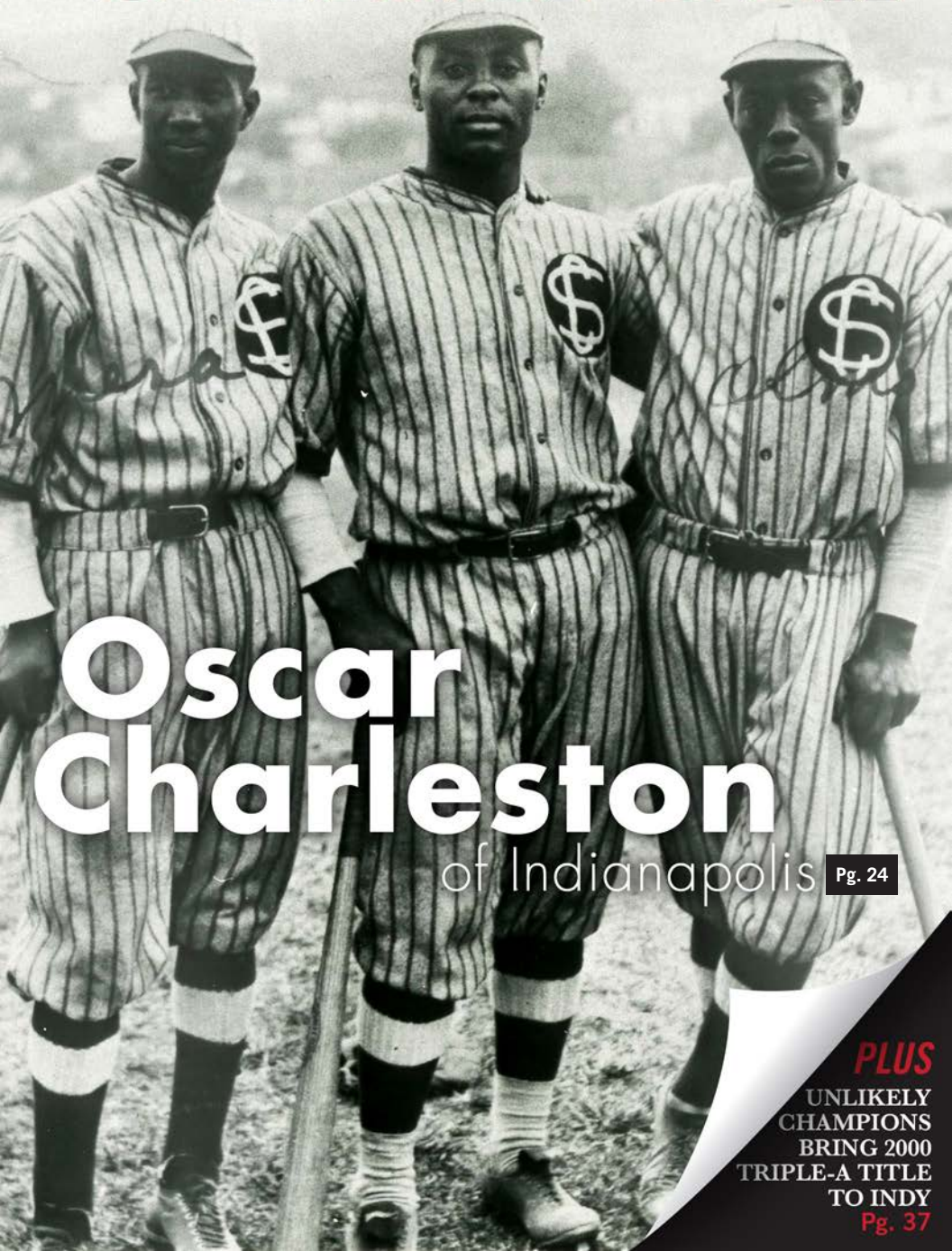


# Curtain Call



## Oscar Charleston

of Indianapolis Pg. 24

**PLUS**  
UNLIKELY  
CHAMPIONS  
BRING 2000  
TRIPLE-A TITLE  
TO INDY  
Pg. 37





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# Curtain Call

THE OFFICIAL INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS MAGAZINE

APRIL 2020 | ISSUE 1

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*at Victory Field*

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## ALL-TIME CAREER BATTING LEADERS

### BATTING AVG.

(MINIMUM 200 AB)

Jim Dyck	.378
Benny Kauff*	.370
M.L. "Biddy" Dolan*	.368
Champ Summers	.368
Vernon Washington	.367

### HOME RUNS

David Revering	92
Jim Hicks	71
Rocky Colavito	68
Razor Shines	68
Arturo DeFreites	66

*\*Kauff and Dolan produced their career averages for the Indianapolis Hoosiers in the Federal League*

### RBI

Walter Rehg	547
Edward Sicking	496
John L. Riddle	483
Razor Shines	404
Henry Schreiber	400

### RUNS

Edward Sicking	788
<b>Ted Beard</b>	<b>683</b>
Walter Rehg	682
Alex Reilley	517
Wid Matthews	473

### DOUBLES

Edward Sicking	210
Walter Rehg	205
John L. Riddle	193
Ted Beard	139
Razor Shines	138

### STOLEN BASES

Alex Reilley	282
Otto Williams	164
Herman Bronkie	152
Edward Sicking	138
Walter Rehg	133





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## TED BEARD | OF

**BATS:** Left

**THROWS:** Left

**HEIGHT:** 5'8"

**WEIGHT:** 165 lbs

**BORN:** 1/7/1921 in Woodsboro, MD

**DIED:** 12/30/2011 in Fishers, IN

	G	PA	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	CS	BB	SO	BA
MAJOR LEAGUE TOTALS	194	194	474	80	94	11	6	6	35	16	6	194	194	.198
INDIANAPOLIS TOTALS	977	3885**	3113	683	880	139	76	45	320	114	0**	707**	521**	.283

\*\*COLUMNS INCOMPLETE ON BASEBALL REFERENCE

### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Former outfielder Ted Beard kept finding his way to Indianapolis in the 1940s, '50s and '60s. Thirteen of his 19 years in the minor leagues were spent in Indy, which made him the longest-tenured position player in franchise history. His time in the Circle City lands him among all-time career batting leaders in not only runs scored and doubles but also games played, hits, triples and walks.

Beard first donned an Indians uniform in 1947, but only saw one at-bat after spending the majority of the season with the York White Roses of the Interstate League (B League).

He returned to Indy in 1948 and made a name for himself both at the plate and in the outfield. He hit .301 (154-for-511) with career highs in doubles (31), triples (17) and runs scored (131), and he led the American Association in triples, runs scored and walks (128). Fans nicknamed him "The Arm" after he recorded 31 outfield assists that same year. His stellar season in Indianapolis led to his major league debut with Pittsburgh the same year on Sept. 5 vs. Chicago (NL), sparking a big-league career that would span seven seasons.

He spent part of five straight seasons in Indianapolis before Pittsburgh moved its affiliation to the West Coast. In 1956, Beard returned to Indianapolis with the Cleveland organization, and when the Tribe became a White Sox affiliate the next year, he stayed put in the Circle City.

In 1957, Beard hit for a career-high .347 mark (121-for-349) with 20 doubles, 12 triples and 10 home runs. He spent the entirety of the next six seasons in Indianapolis, including an 85-game stint as player-manager in 1960, before retiring in 1963 at the age of 42.





# BEST *Seat* IN THE HOUSE

Baseball meets luxury in the Tribe's new Elements Financial Club

by ANNA KAYSER

In the early 1990s, Bruce Schumacher – the current chairman and CEO of the Indianapolis Indians – took his car to a gravel parking lot at the corner of West Street and Maryland Street. He pointed it toward the north-northeast, the way a ballpark should be built to account for the sun, and looked up. The skyline of downtown Indy was spread out in front of him, and in that moment one of the most iconic views in Minor League Baseball was born.

Now, entering its 24th year as Indianapolis' home to professional baseball, Victory Field is expanding its ticket options with new premium selections for fans to enjoy. The Elements Financial Club is set to open its doors this season and will provide one of the best views of downtown Indianapolis from behind home plate. The project marks the largest stadium upgrade since The Vic opened its gates in July 1996 and will provide baseball fans a broad mix of premium ticket options to enjoy America's pastime in the Circle City.

"The Indians have been striving for a way to give fans an unparalleled premium experience while enjoying the game and one of the best views of downtown Indianapolis the city has to offer," Indians President and General Manager Randy Lewandowski said. "Our possibilities for the Elements Financial Club are endless, and we look forward to welcoming in this new era of luxury to Victory Field."

As you enter the home plate club from a set of double doors on the third base line, the space opens into a lounge where fans can enjoy an all-you-can-eat rotating menu of gourmet food stations, four draft beer taps and house wine all included with a club ticket.

In the center of the club stands a full-service bar in the shape of a home plate, where fans can also purchase craft beer, mixed drinks and cocktails.

Among other features of the 4,500 square foot, temperature-controlled interior space are 12 big screen TVs, including one four-screen video wall that can be set to serve as a staple viewing experience in the space.

The indoor and outdoor spaces meet at a 37-foot retractable glass wall, which will allow fans to see, hear and feel all the elements of the game from inside the comfort of the club. Open-table seating will be available for fans with a club ticket both inside and outside.

Staircases extend from the outdoor club space to 10 private four-person loge boxes, available for fans on a quarter-season rotation. These loge boxes give fans a personal seating option with a special vantage point of the game.

"For years, our premium seating inventory has had to work hard to keep up with the growing demand of this market," Indians Director of Tickets - Premium Services and Events Kerry Vick said. "The Club now gives us a comfortable mix of hospitality products that should position us well for the next decade or more. It was inspired by the demand from our fans and designed with their input in mind, so we're excited to finally open the doors and let them experience it."

This newest upgrade to Victory Field was implemented with the fans in mind. The unique, saturated sports market strives to offer fans the best possible experiences day in and day out, and the Indians are right in the middle of it all.

"What we have found at Victory Field is that there is more and more demand for premium space," Schumacher said. "The ability to have that not only for Indianapolis Indians games, but 365 days a year, is a great opportunity to give people what they have become used to in the Indianapolis sports market."

The capacity of the indoor lounge will range from 200-400 people – depending on whether





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**"The ability to have that not only for Indianapolis Indians games, but 365 days a year, is a great opportunity to give people what they have become used to in the Indianapolis sports market."**  
- Bruce Schumacher

it's a game day or external event — while bringing Victory Field into the Indianapolis year-round events market for the first time. During road trips and the offseason, the space turns from a ticketed experience to a rental opportunity where guests can host weddings and receptions, holiday and graduation parties, breakfasts and luncheons, corporate business meetings, and countless other events.

The Indians strive to make Victory Field a can't-miss destination, and with the addition of the Elements Financial Club, anyone can enjoy the view from the corner of West and Maryland in an event of their choosing. Whether it's baseball season or not, the Tribe will always be in the heart of Indianapolis. ♥



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## BEYOND *the* BALLPARK

with Cody Ponce

Right-hander Cody Ponce is no stranger to baseball in Indianapolis after closing the 2019 season with the Tribe. We sat down and learned the ins and outs of Ponce's life outside of baseball, including his favorite movie, favorite restaurant and which baseball players would make up his starting five in a pickup basketball game.

### Q: What's your favorite movie?

A: That's a tough one. I mean, there's so many movies that I love and that have a childhood pastime with me. Obviously, every baseball player grew up with *The Sandlot*, *The Natural* or *The Rookie*. I'm going to have to go with *Remember the Titans*, just to see the perseverance that they all had to go through. It was really cool to see how far they all came and how they became a family, not just a team.

### Q: If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

A: To be able to teleport would be cool, but I think flight – to be like Superman – I think would be really cool. Teleportation would be awesome to be able to get from one place to the next in the blink of an eye, but I think flight is cool because you can see everything as you're flying over it.

### Q: What's your favorite restaurant in Indianapolis?

A: Let's go First Watch. First Watch has the health factor of everything and being able to have that home cooked meal. Whether it be game day or not game day, going in there was very nice, made me feel at home, that warm feeling.

### Q: If you were to play a pickup basketball game, who would be on your starting five?

A: Okay, we're going to have to go with Andrew Lee (Double-A Harrisburg, WSH), Monte Harrison (Triple-A Wichita, MIL), me and Jo Adell (Triple-A Salt Lake, LAA). This is tricky. I heard Joe Musgrove is good.

### Q: What is your favorite thing to do outside of baseball?

A: Golf is one of them. It's a way to escape everything, it's very competitive at the same time so it kind of keeps your competitive edge. I'd also have to say fishing. It's just such a relaxing thing, I mean they call it fishing not catching for a reason. You might go out there and not get anything for the day or you might get a couple, you never know.

### Q: What is your go-to Netflix show?

A: Right now I am watching *Hell on Wheels*, but I'd have to say my go-to Netflix show is *Peaky Blinders* just because of the storyline and how cool everything used to be back in the day.

### Q: What would you be doing if you didn't play baseball?

A: I grew up racing, so I would have to be a racecar driver, whether it be NASCAR... I think I'd do my best, even though I'm too tall I'd want to be in Formula One, kind of like Lewis Hamilton.

### Q: What is the first thing you do when you go back to your hometown?

A: First thing I do is I get to be with my puppy, who I love the most.

### Q: Who was your hero growing up?

A: My hero is my dad, for sure. My dad was a hard worker. To grow up and be something like him will be honestly probably the best thing ever.





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# THIS MONTH IN INDIANS HISTORY

1989  
**APRIL 5**



The Tribe won their season opener over Nashville by a 4-2 score at Bush Stadium, and right-hander **Mark Gardner** picked up his first of a team-high 12 wins with 5.0 innings of two-run ball. The future 99-game winner in the big leagues also led the American Association with 175 strikeouts that summer. Gardner bookended Indy's fourth consecutive American Association title by later pitching 8.0 shutout innings in Game 5 of the American Association championship on Sept. 6 at Omaha, a 5-0 Tribe win.

2005  
**APRIL 8**



**Graham Koonce** belted the first of four walk-off homers for the Tribe in Indy's second game of the 2005 season. The Tribe first baseman launched a solo shot off Pawtucket's Jason Kershner to open the bottom of the ninth, giving the Indians a 7-6 win. The long ball was Koonce's first of a team-high 23 on the season. The Indians later reached the postseason before falling to Toledo in the Governors' Cup championship, 3-0.

1993  
**APRIL 11**



On this date in 1993, **Brian Dorsett** tied a single-game franchise record with three home runs as the Tribe earned their first win of the season with an 11-1 triumph over Oklahoma City at Bush Stadium. Dorsett, born in Terre Haute, Ind. and an Indiana State University product, hit 18 home runs and drove in 57 runs in just 77 games for the Tribe that year. He returned to Indy in 1995 and belted 16 more home runs in 91 games before retiring after the 1996 season.



1956  
APRIL 20



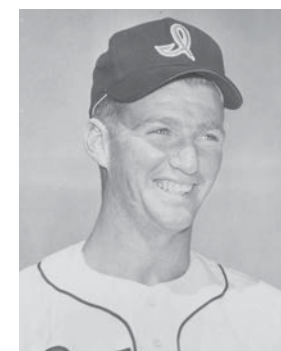
**Roger Maris** hit a pair of home runs for Indy in an 8-7 home loss to Denver. Maris ripped 17 homers that year and led the Indians to an American Association pennant, American Association championship and Junior World Series title. Five years later, he set MLB's single-season home run record with 61 homers for the Yankees.

1992  
2016  
APRIL 22



After leading the Indians to Game 5 of the Governors' Cup championship in 2015, **Josh Bell** put up massive numbers for the Tribe in 2016, including hitting for the cycle in a 13-1 rout on April 22 at Louisville. He finished 4-for-5 with five RBI and two runs scored and became the fourth player to hit for the cycle in the Victory Field era.

1954  
APRIL 25



In the second game of a twin bill at Columbus, left-hander **Herb Score** fanned 11 batters in a 7.0-inning, complete-game effort to give the Indians an 8-1 win and doubleheader sweep. The victory was the first of an American Association-leading 22 wins for the southpaw. He also led the league in ERA (2.62) and strikeouts (330), the latter holding as the American Association single-season record to this day.

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1998  
APRIL 28



Tribe hurler **Steve Parris** recorded 16 strikeouts over 7.0 innings of two-run ball, and the Indians rolled to a 14-3 win over Charlotte at Victory Field. The 16 punchouts set a new Victory Field era record, a feat that lasted until Ian Snell fanned 17 Mud Hens on June 28, 2009.

2012  
APRIL 29



Three Indians combined on a no-hitter in Durham, just the second no-no in the Victory Field era and first since Ian Snell spun a 9.0-inning no-hitter in 2005. **Justin Wilson** got the nod and threw 7.1 innings, yielding two walks with nine strikeouts. Jose Diaz then recorded the final two outs in the eighth inning before Doug Slaten slammed the door with a 1-2-3 ninth to give Indy a 2-0 victory. The no-hitter was just the third combined effort of 12 no-hitters in franchise history and first since Randy Johnson and Pat Pacillo combined for 8.0 no-hit innings on Aug. 6, 1988 at Nashville.

1963  
APRIL 30



The Indians split a doubleheader at Richmond to finish the month of April at 8-7 overall, 1.5 games out of first place in the International League Southern Division. Third baseman **Don Buford** hit .308 (16-for-52) in 14 April games and went on to lead the IL in batting average (.336), hits (206), doubles (41), runs scored (114) and stolen bases (42) en route to team and league MVP honors. The Tribe finished the 1963 campaign as Southern Division champions and defeated both Syracuse (4-1) and Atlanta (4-1) in consecutive best-of-seven series to win their first Governors' Cup.



# Oscar Charleston

## of Indianapolis

***Celebrating the Negro Leagues' 100-year anniversary  
and an Indy baseball legend***

by **MIKE LOPRESTI**

It is a very big year to remember baseball's Negro Leagues, with Indianapolis in the middle of it, for lots of good reasons. To find one of the best, let's go to Floral Park Cemetery on the west side of town.

The small grave marker, flat to the ground, can be hard to find. There's only room for a few words. *Oscar M. Charleston. Indiana.* Something about his military rank in World War I, and the dates of his birth and death – Oct. 14, 1896, and Oct. 5, 1954. That's it. No hint of what he meant to the game that became his life. No hint that here lies an Indianapolis native son, who belongs in the very inner pantheon of baseball. No hint that, in a recent list in *The Athletic* of the best players of all time, Charleston was all the way up at No. 5, ahead of the likes of Stan Musial, Ty Cobb and Walter Johnson. Oscar Charleston of Indianapolis.

A lot of people in Charleston's hometown might not have a clue about his place in the history of the sport. Peyton Manning has a statue outside Lucas Oil Stadium, Larry Bird and Oscar Robertson are secure in their legends. But what of the seventh of 11 children, son of a construction worker, who grew up playing ball on the sandlots of Indy? Who knows about him? The president of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum on the phone from Kansas City, he knows.

"He's not that household name in the Negro Leagues from a mainstream standpoint, like the Satchel Paiges and Papa Bells and Josh Gibsons," Bob Kendrick was saying. Or Buck O'Neil, another superstar from the Negro Leagues. Anyway, Kendrick went on. "That was why it was always so eye-opening when Buck O'Neil would say – and he would say this without hesitation – that Oscar Charleston was the greatest baseball player he had ever seen. That he was Willie Mays before we knew who Willie Mays was."

Kendrick can go on and on about Charleston.

How he worked as a batboy for the Indianapolis ABCs of the Negro Leagues, a team whose moment in history shines brightly this year. More on that later. How he lied about his age to get into the military at age 15 and served in World War I. "I think that gives you an indication of the toughness about Oscar Charleston," Kendrick said. "All of the players that I have met from the Negro Leagues who knew him, and some who saw him, all talk about him with great reverence."







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## "The only thing he didn't do was sell popcorn."

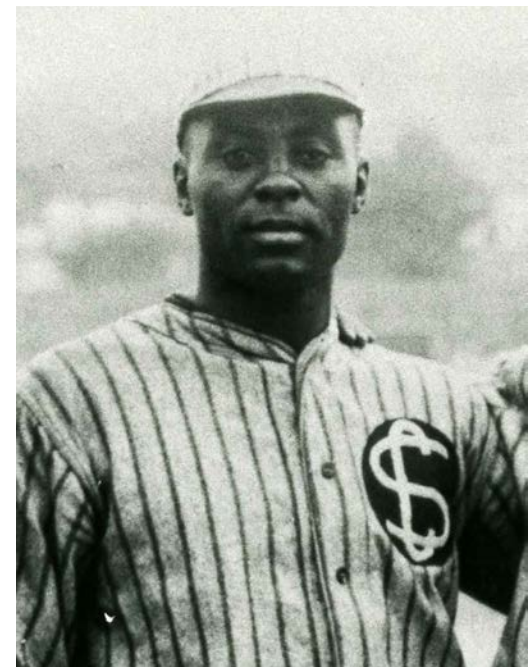
How Charleston returned to Indianapolis to start a four-decade career in baseball as a player and manager. How his production in the Negro Leagues was startling for many teams. *The Hoosier Comet*, people called him, for his speed.

"In the '21 season, Oscar Charleston led the Negro Leagues in home runs, triples, doubles, stolen bases and batting average. The only thing he didn't do was sell popcorn," Kendrick said. Yeah, but what would he have done in the big leagues, had the door not been closed? Well, in exhibition games against white major leaguers of his day, Oscar Charleston hit .326. That's how good he was.

Or Kendrick can talk about how Charleston was fiery and intensely proud and competitive as a player and man, such as the time he ripped the hood off a Ku Klux Klan member. "And lived to tell about it," Kendrick said. "That's how bad Oscar Charleston was." But how he could also be gentle enough to manage an Indianapolis team with women on the roster. "His on-field demeanor and as a manager were totally different. He would fight you. But as a manager, he was as nurturing an individual as you would ever meet."

This is why Charleston's small, easy-to-miss gravesite nettles Bob Kendrick. Until the coronavirus intervened, Kendrick was to be in town on May 2 for an important anniversary ceremony. On May 2, 1920, a century ago, the Indianapolis ABCs beat the Chicago American Giants 4-2 in Washington Park, which was located not far from where Victory Field stands now. It was the debut of the Negro National League, generally recognized as the official beginning of the true Negro Leagues. While in town, Kendrick had something else on his list, too.

"As we look at the commemoration of 100 years since that first game, it's obviously



with a steady eye toward also acknowledging the greatness of Oscar Charleston. We just recently found out that he was buried in a relatively non-descript gravesite at Floral Park Cemetery. So that kind of prompted my mind that OK, as part of the centennial celebration as we go back into Indianapolis to commemorate this game, we need to rectify that situation and put a proper headstone on the gravesite of Oscar Charleston."

That will have to come post-virus, when the world returns to a more normal orbit. But Charleston has been gone since 1954. Another month or two is probably OK.

The Negro Leagues – offering opportunity to a baseball-loving population that the all-white major leagues would not – played in dozens of places. From the Seattle Steelheads to the New York Black Yankees. From the Chattanooga Choo-Choos to the Jacksonville Red Caps. From the Birmingham Black Barons, who once included Willie Mays, to the Kansas City Monarchs with an infielder named Ernie Banks, to the Baltimore Elite Giants with catcher Roy Campanella.



The Negro Leagues landed in Dayton and Austin and Harrisburg.

And Indianapolis.

“Indianapolis plays such a key role in this story and I’m going to venture a guess that there are a lot of people in Indianapolis who have no idea their city’s connectivity to the history of the Negro Leagues,” Kendrick said. “The people who do know something about the Negro Leagues, they’ve probably heard about the Indianapolis Clowns and not the ABCs. C. I. Taylor (of the ABCs) was a tremendous manager. Matter of fact he’s highly regarded as one of the greatest managers, not only in the history of the Negro Leagues but the history of this game.”

There had been widespread baseball back to the 1800s, but May 2, 1920 is when the golden age of the Negro Leagues began. The ABCs were the hosts the day it all started. The team had been created by the American Brewing Company -- hence their nickname -- and been one of the premier teams in black baseball in the early part of the century. In 1920, with Charleston in the lineup, they finished fourth in the inaugural Negro National League season. Charleston left for the St. Louis Giants in 1921, Taylor died in 1922, and the team soon faded away.

Charleston’s career took him from team to team, including the Homestead Grays and Pittsburgh Crawfords, two flagship franchises of the Negro Leagues. According to Kendrick, each had five future Hall of Famers on the roster when Charleston played.

Meanwhile, back in Indianapolis, a team called the Clowns was earning its niche.

Legend has it, the Clowns were first formed in Miami in the mid-1930s, with one of the founders a bootlegger. By 1943, they had become the Cincinnati Clowns, then the Cincinnati-Indianapolis Clowns, then the Indianapolis Clowns for good in 1946.

They could play baseball, certainly. But part of their persona was a barnstorming act as well, with music and comic skits and a mascot called Richard “King Tut” King,

wielding a giant glove and doing all manner of routines without a ball. Goose Tatum, who won fame as a Harlem Globetrotter in basketball, could also play baseball and was often part of the show, with a hidden ball trick.

“Goose could play, Goose was a slick-fielding first baseman,” Kendrick said. “We’ve got some video of him playing at old Victory Field, and he’s putting on a show. He and King Tut and the guys are doing the Globetrotter routines, but then you see these snippets of his masterful skills around first base. Major League Baseball tried to sign Goose but he didn’t want to go to the minor leagues.”



*Negro American League Champions*

The Clowns were entertaining enough that three decades later, Hollywood would produce a movie inspired by them – The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings, starring James Earl Jones, Richard Pryor and Billy Dee Williams.

That side of the Clowns came from a New York showman named Syd Pollock, who ran the club and decided for his team to thrive, it needed to do more than play the game.

“It’s interesting with the Clowns, because the Clowns are a part of what has created this stereotypical depiction of the Negro Leagues,” Kendrick said. “The Clowns are mightily important to this story because the

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Clowns have probably been one of the most misconstrued of all Negro League teams because they brought the entertainment level to the game that I'm not sure we've seen since. They were masterful. But some teams took that as, that is all that the Negro Leagues were. This kind of vaudevillian side-show so to speak, and that is not all that the Negro Leagues were.

"I think that's where the controversy comes in, the fact that you had these white men helping create this kind of vaudevillian entertainment spectacle. They had King Tut, probably today what you'd call a mascot. But the rest of the guys were serious baseball players. You ask one of those guys to dress up in a clown outfit, you'd have to fight him."

The clock was ticking on the Negro Leagues starting in 1947, when Jackie Robinson integrated the major leagues. Given the inevitable flow of black players to the majors that would follow, what future did the Negro Leagues have? But the Clowns had one glorious era left in them.

They won the Negro American League championship in 1950 and Sam Harrison won the triple crown. They won again in 1951, and according to records, did not play one home game. "They were," Kendrick said, "the ultimate barnstorming team." In 1952, Pollock signed, for \$200 a month, a teenage shortstop who didn't have much interest in entertaining or hidden ball tricks. His name was Hank Aaron.

Aaron hit cleanup for Indianapolis but was soon gone to the Boston Braves' organization. The Clowns won another title. In 1953, Pollock brought in another infielder named Toni Stone, who would hit .243 as a Negro Leagues player. Did we mention she was a woman?

The Clowns added a fourth and last championship in 1954, with several new faces. One was Oscar Charleston, lured out of retirement to manage the team.



Two others were Connie Morgan and Mamie "Peanut" Johnson, two more female players. But that was the last hurrah as far as championships. By fall, Charleston was gone, killed by a stroke, and buried in... well, you know.

Meanwhile, the Negro Leagues were fading fast. The Clowns hung on a few more decades as a traveling entertainment show, but the end came in the 1980s, the last flickering light of what was once a bright coast-to-coast inferno of Negro Leagues baseball.

"People have such a strong identity to two specific teams, the Kansas City Monarchs and the Indianapolis Clowns, because they were barnstorming tremendously," Kendrick said. "People remember that with great fondness, but that doesn't diminish how great a team the Clowns really were."

"I love pointing out the picture of Aaron standing at the train station in Mobile, Ala., when people walk through the museum, because I think in a lot of ways it is an aha moment," Kendrick said. "I think there's always a little bit of doubt and skepticism about just how great the Negro Leagues were. And then you come to this picture of a baby-faced Henry Aaron standing at the train station about to leave – probably for the first time ever – to go join the Indianapolis Clowns. The light bulb goes on and this stuff starts to make sense."

"Because there is this possibility that Oscar Charleston might have been as good as ol' Bob is saying he was." ♥





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## FOR A DAY

by **CHEYNE REITER**

When the leaves change color and temperatures cool after baseball season in Indianapolis, the Tribe front office ramps up its volunteer efforts to carry the team through the offseason. This past January, a unique opportunity presented itself through the Tribe's partnership with Junior Achievement – a chance for Indians staff members to become teachers for a day.

Many Tribe employees spent the day with the fourth graders of Sand Creek Elementary School. The Tribe front office volunteered its time teaching Junior Achievement's JA In A Day curriculum on owning and operating a business. Indianapolis Indians volunteers taught Junior Achievement's hands-on, interactive curriculum about personal finance, career paths, entrepreneurship and employability skills. A total of six classrooms participated from Sand Creek Elementary, impacting more than 120 students.

"The Indianapolis Indians fully support Junior Achievement's mission of preparing Central Indiana youth for a future career, no matter the path," said Indianapolis Indians President and General Manager Randy Lewandowski. "There's nothing more important than an education. We're committed to supporting the children in our community by volunteering and providing resources to help them grow into our leaders of tomorrow."

Junior Achievement and Sand Creek Elementary School were equally as excited in welcoming Indians staff back for a second year to serve as volunteer teachers.

"JA is thrilled to have established a strong partnership with the Indianapolis Indians to educate and inspire students to own their future success. This JA Day event is an exciting opportunity to make a big difference in the lives of these young students in a single day," said Jennifer Burk, JA's President and CEO. ♥

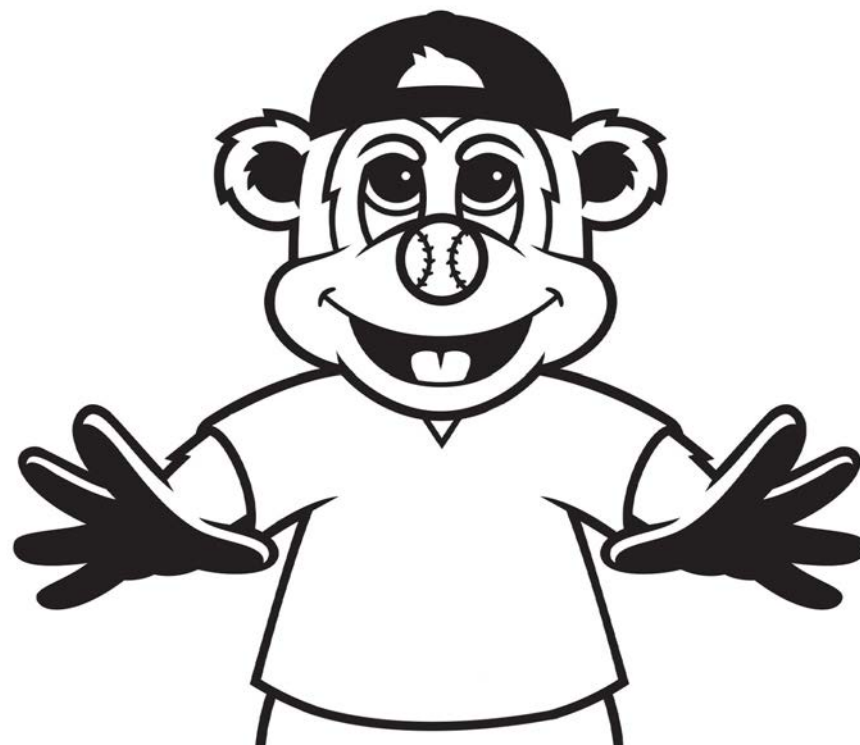
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## UNLIKELY CHAMPIONS

*The Governors' Cup returned to Indianapolis in 2000 with the help of a new team on the field*

by MEGAN GARCIA

**W**hen the calendar flipped into the new millennium, the Indianapolis Indians went from being unsure of what a new affiliation would bring to finishing as the unlikely champions of the final Triple-A World Series.

Since being crowned American Association champions in 1994, Indy made it to the postseason three times but fell short from bringing another trophy to Indianapolis as an affiliate of the Cincinnati Reds. The 1999 season – and Indianapolis' connection to the Reds – ended with the Tribe in second place of the International League West Division, 9.5 games behind the Columbus Clippers.

It took the unlikely of players to bring a title back to Indianapolis, but their talent is forever etched into Indians' history. After changing its affiliation from Cincinnati to Milwaukee, Indianapolis had a brand-new team on the field, but a familiar voice behind it all. Along for the ride was longtime Indians play-by-play broadcaster Howard Kellman, who has watched different players wear the Tribe uniform on the road to the big leagues.

"It was our first year with the Milwaukee Brewers and we didn't know what to expect," Kellman said. "There weren't that many guys

from that team who had a real major impact in the major leagues. It was a good team with good players,"

Unlike the 1989 Indians team that carried Hall of Famers Randy Johnson and Larry Walker, the 2000 squad was composed of talent that saw little time in the big leagues. Players like left-handed pitcher Horacio Estrada, who led the IL with 14 wins, and doubles machine Jose Fernandez anchored the new roster to bring Indianapolis its first and only championship in Victory Field history.

Joining Estrada in the starting rotation was right-hander Everett Stull, one of the handful of players to break out in unexpected ways for the Tribe. He went 7-5 with a 2.95 ERA in 16 starts before he joined Milwaukee in early August. He was fourth on the team with 103.2 innings pitched and 74 strikeouts.

The most prominent name on the staff was Ben Sheets, a right-hander selected by Milwaukee with the 10th overall pick in the 1999 First-Year Player Draft. Sheets, who later produced seven double-digit win campaigns for the Brewers, didn't make his first start for the Tribe until mid-June and went 3-5 with a 2.87 ERA in 14 games (13 starts) down the stretch.



Fernandez provided stability in the lineup with his .286 batting average (134-for-468) and 68 RBI. His 37 doubles led Indy and with an OPS of .810, the then-25-year-old was one of the most important bats to keep in the lineup, along with Kurt Bieck (19 HR, 72 RBI), Santiago Perez (74 R, 31 SB) and Creighton Gubanich (16 HR, 71 RBI).

But the overall standout player for the Tribe that year was relief pitcher Bob Scanlan, the right-handed closer with 270 games worth of major league experience at the time. Scanlan's last major league save during his nine-year run in the big leagues came against Seattle on May 29, 1994. Six years later, he led the IL with 35 saves for the Tribe. Scanlan was 34 years old when he was named team MVP.

At the helm of it all was first-year manager Steve Smith, who was a coach for Seattle before joining the Tribe. His time with the club was only for the championship season, but his impact is well-remembered 20 years later.

"He was a terrific manager," Kellman said. "He did a great job [and had] great leadership. He really had his finger on the pulse of the club."

Indianapolis spent the season in a three-team race for first place in the IL West with Louisville and Columbus. The Tribe swept a handful of doubleheaders and rarely slipped more than three games out of first. While the offense kept the Indians in playoff contention, it was the pitching staff that sealed their fate.

Although Indy seemed to be in control for much of the season, the playoffs were anything but guaranteed. Baseball's unpredictability stretches to any level and the 2000 postseason was no different.

"It was a good team that played well when it had to," Kellman said. "You could be a phenomenal team, but you can easily be beaten in a short series, because baseball is so unpredictable."



**Team president and chairman Max Schumacher presents the Indianapolis Indians with the Governors' Cup trophy.**

**RHP Ben Sheets**



**Governors' Cup trophy**



Down 2-1 in a best-of-five series against Durham, the Indians were looking at a first-round exit of the Governors' Cup playoffs. In the must-win Game 4, Indy's bats struck first to turn the series around, scoring three runs before Durham was able to get on the board. Then in the winner-take-all Game 5, Estrada tossed 4.1 scoreless innings in relief during a 6-4 triumph.

Like the first round, it took five games for the Indians to beat Scranton/Wilkes-Barre for the Governors' Cup. The Indians were quick to gain control of the series after losing the first game. Starting pitchers Kane Davis and Rafael Roque held Scranton/Wilkes-Barre at bay in the following games for Indy to take a 2-1 series lead.

The Tribe fell silent in Game 4, 1-0, as Scranton/Wilkes-Barre evened the series. With their backs against the wall, the Indians quickly scored three runs in the final game and didn't look back. They toppled Scranton, 6-1, with Tim Harikkala pitching 8.0 one-run innings. The Governors' Cup returned to Indy for the first time since 1963 and the Tribe punched their ticket to their first Triple-A World Series.

Along with the team was Indy's front office that made the trip to Las Vegas to witness history. The Tribe controlled the series against the Albert Pujols-led Memphis Redbirds – a 3-1 series win that included a walk-off homer by Gubanich in Game 2 – en route to becoming the final Triple-A World Series champions. Indy outscored Memphis 24-18 in the series, with Perez being named series MVP after hitting .462 (6-for-13) with two home runs and three RBI.

"Very satisfying season, I'd say," Kellman said. "Very satisfying and very proud of the group of players, who are good people, and with the great leadership from Steve Smith." ♥



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