

Rocky Mountain SABR Newsletter

August, 2024

Attending the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony: A Baseball Fan's Dream Come True

Ken Reed

We needed to find a couple folding lawn chairs.

My brother-in-law, Jeff, and I were in Cooperstown, New York for the 2024 Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony, featuring the Colorado Rockies' Todd Helton. It was our first trip to Cooperstown. We were both excited about checking off a major item on our Bucket Lists.

On Saturday, July 20th, the day before the induction ceremony, Jeff and I decided to check out the site where the ceremony would be held. What we found was a huge expanse of green grass covered to a large degree by folding lawn chairs. We talked to a few people and learned that attendees come early, even days before the ceremony, to set up lawn chairs to reserve their spot on the lawn for the ceremony. (There is no cost to attend the induction ceremony.)

Having flown in from Colorado, neither of us had a lawn chair. Not wanting to just sit on the ground during the ceremony and try to look over people sitting in chairs, we embarked on a quest to find two cheap folding lawn chairs. After striking out at four or five stores ("We're all sold out," was the common response when we inquired about lawn chairs.), we came across a thrift store. Once again, we were told that they were out of lawn chairs, but the lady at the check-out counter said there was some indoor furniture for 50% off out back. We were getting a little desperate by this time, so we looked behind the store and found a couple dining room table chairs for \$7.50 each. We glanced at each other and said, "What the heck!" and bought them.

Back at the induction site, we carried our dining room table chairs out on the lawn and plunked them down alongside hundreds of folding lawn chairs. A lady looked at us and laughed and asked us if we had brought the chairs from our hotel. We said "No" and told her about our big chair adventure and she let out a hearty laugh. Later that evening, I ran into her on Main St. She pointed me out to her companion and said, "There's the Chair Guy!" and they both giggled while I smiled.

Well, the next day when we arrived at the ceremony, we found our dining room chairs in the spot we left them, now surrounded by a wide array of folding lawn chairs. Our dining room chairs served their purpose perfectly. The ceremony, on a beautiful 77-degree day, was terrific. Since we had walked a mile or so to the ceremony site, we left the chairs on the lawn. I imagine that today they might be for sale once again back at that same thrift store.

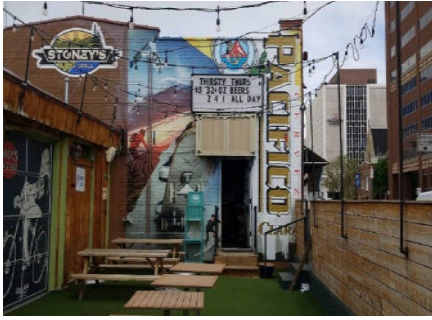
Other than our strange quest for lawn chairs, everything else about our trip to Cooperstown went very smoothly. The town itself is beautiful and the streets and homes are immaculate. Two blocks off Main Street is a beautiful nine-mile lake surrounded by lush green trees.

In a lot of ways, it was like being shipped back to the 1950's. There aren't any chain restaurants or hotels to be found in Cooperstown. Not a McDonald's in sight. Main St. is filled with old-time storefronts, most of them selling baseball merchandise and memorabilia. These baseball shops were like extensions of the Hall itself.

Restaurants were quaint and the people working them friendly. Jeff and I ate breakfast at the smallest diner I've ever seen. It had room for only six tables. We were seated across from a father and son from Austin, Texas, who were big Adrian Beltre fans. Beltre was being inducted along with Helton, the Minneosta Twins' Joe Mauer and long-time manager Jim Leyland. Like we did with everyone we met, we had a fun conversation with the father/son duo from Texas.



[Continued on Page 5](#)



AUGUST ROCKY MOUNTAIN SABR LUNCHEON

On Wednesday, August 21st, we will have an in-person Rocky Mountain SABR gathering at Stoney's Bar & Grill.

The luncheon will begin at noon and will go to about 1:30 PM.

Stoney's is located at 1111 Lincoln St, Denver, CO 80203. There is plenty of on street metered parking.

[Map](#)

Plenty of New Purple Prospects in the Pipeline.

Patrick Lyons

It's that time once again when an arrival of new prospects plant fresh seeds on the farm and bring a newfound hope to every fan base in Major League Baseball. For the Colorado Rockies, 24 young men found their way in the purple pipeline with promise of one day bringing it to fruition on the corner of 20th and Blake.

With the second-largest bonus pool and third overall pick in the 2024 MLB Draft, Colorado could have easily spread that capital and targeted a quartet of top-25 players with four selections in the first 77 picks. However, they did not opt for quantity over quality this time. Instead, they let it ride when the 2024 Golden Spike Award winner was passed over by both Cleveland at no. 1 and Cincinnati at no. 2.



OF/3B Charlie Condon from the University of Georgia signed with the Rockies for an MLB record \$9.25 million bonus. The 21-year-old led the NCAA in batting (.433), home runs (37), slugging percentage (1.009) and OPS (1.565). Those 37 homers set a BBCOR-era (since 2011) record. Condon, who may end up in a cluttered Coors Field outfield, is arguably the best college hitter drafted by the Rockies since fellow Golden Spikes Award and SEC alum Todd Helton.

With the 38th overall selection, RHP Brody Brecht was taken out of the University of Iowa. The 6'4" starter ranked fourth in the nation with a 14.71 strikeouts-per-nine. The former Hawkeyes wide receiver went 10-9 with a 3.49 ERA on the mound. (Yes, he played football at Iowa City. Brecht joins a long list of former two-way athletes selected by the Rockies. Also: Seth Smith, Kyle Parker, Russell Willson, Michael Vick and, of course, Peyton Manning's backup quarterback, Helton.)

Colorado's final pick on day one of the three-day affair was OF/1B Jared Thomas out of Texas. The 21-year-old sophomore slashed .349/.435/.635 (87-for-249) in 60 games for the Longhorns. He went 18-for-18 in stolen bases and earned First-Team All-Big 12 honors in the process.

Of the 21 players drafted, the Rockies did not draft a single player from the high school ranks. A total of 13 pitchers were selected, with the remaining eight comprised of two catchers, three infielders and three infield/outfield players.

Other notable selections taken on the second and third day of the draft:

- C Cole Messina (3rd Rd): won the Johnny Bench Award as the top Division 1 catcher; named to the SEC All-Tournament team after setting a tournament record with 16 RBI through five games with South Carolina
- C Alan Espinal (11th Rd): SEC All-Region Second Team for Vanderbilt where he led the team in slugging (.545) and home runs (13)

[Continued on Page 6](#)

BASEBALL CARD MEETING— AUG 17th

We've located a place to hold our next meeting and apologies for a rather short notice but we were hoping to have a meeting in August. We've picked Sat. **August 17 at 11 am at Stoney's Restaurant at 1111 Lincoln Street near downtown Denver.**

I'll have an agenda to send out and post soon and if you have a topic or idea let me know asap. We'll have members who attended the National Card Show and SABR annual meeting in attendance to let us know how both those events went from a baseball card perspective.

Email me Brian Werner with any questions or ideas. - brianwerner281@gmail.com



SLACK ROLLOUT

A few weeks back, we successfully completed the rolled out of a Slack workspace for our chapter.

Slack is an excellent way for our members to have online discussions, share data and stay up to date on any chapter or baseball related topics.

Since the rollout, many of our members have joined and are using it regularly and have provided very positive feedback.

If you haven't already, please join us and try it out.

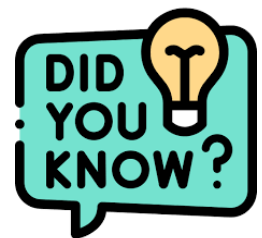
To join, all you need to do is click on the invite link – https://join.slack.com/t/rockymountain-req8137/shared_invite/zt-2my2be1mf-6uHL3~je4DUJPPIMxCKNWA

This short video demonstrates how Slack can be used.

<https://youtu.be/cdbNZtZjYA4>

DID YOU KNOW ...

While the ground rule double is a common occurrence, a ground rule triple is possible as well. This occurs when a player attempts to use his hat to stop a ball on the ground or in the air. Using a hat is a penalty of three bases to both the batter and any runner(s) on base.



National Sports Collectors Convention

Andrew Orcutt

Last week, my dad, Jamie, and I journeyed to Cleveland for the National Sports Collectors Convention (the “National”), a Guardians game, and a visit to a historic ballpark. After attending our first National last year in Chicago, we enjoyed another vacation centered around America’s Pastime and our baseball card passion.

Since its creation in 1980, the National has been an annual highlight in the sports card and memorabilia hobby. It stands as the largest sports card show in the world, attracting nearly 100,000 collectors each year to convention centers in various cities in the United States. The event features a mix of high-end auction houses showcasing millions of dollars worth of memorabilia alongside bins of 10-cent “junk wax” cards.

This year, the National was organized into several distinct sections: case breaking, auction houses, corporate booths, autographs, and dealer tables. This layout created a melting pot of collectors with diverse interests.

In one corner, young influencers known as “breakers” entertained live audiences by opening boxes worth tens of thousands of dollars, tapping into the “gambler” mentality of many modern collectors. In stark contrast, nearly half of the show was dedicated to vintage collectors, featuring hundreds of tables brimming with rare and valuable cards across all sports and popular culture. Among these were grails like the 1959 Home Run Derby Mantle, a Cracker Jack Joe Jackson, signed 1951 and 1952 Mantle cards, and Christy Mathewson rookie cards.

Unsurprisingly, many dealers this year were seeking significant premiums over online sales of comparable cards. The attendance at the show, along with these prices, reflected the continued health of the hobby and demand for vintage cards that ramped up during the pandemic. This presented a challenge for collectors, as it was difficult to find bargains.

Despite these challenges, we were ecstatic with the results of our three-days at the show, as we returned home with some extremely rare pieces. Our three most exciting finds were a 1947 Bond Bread Jackie Robinson rookie card, a 1960 Japanese Sadaharu Oh, and a 1945-46 Caramelo Deportivo Minnie Miñoso. The 1947 Bond Bread was the first card set featuring Jackie Robinson, making it a great piece of baseball history. The Miñoso is a unique Cuban card pre-dating his American rookie by seven years. The Sadaharu Oh is a second year card of the Japanese home run king, who ended his career with 868 home runs!

However, the auction houses were the highlight of the convention, showcasing some of the most awe-inspiring artifacts in baseball history. Heritage Auctions, in particular, displayed extraordinary pieces such as a Shoeless Joe Jackson bat, a Jackie Robinson uniform, a Ty Cobb cleat, a Lou Gehrig jersey, and the crown jewel: the jersey Babe Ruth wore when he famously called his shot.

We rounded out our trip with a Guardians game at Progressive Field (in our ongoing quest to pick off all of the Major League ballparks), and a visit to League Park, what’s left of the historic ball field where greats such as Tris Speaker, Satchel Paige, Cy Young and Ty Cobb played, and where Babe Ruth hit his 500th home run. The first ball game was played there in 1891, featuring Cy Young as the starting pitcher for the Cleveland Spiders.

The National will return to Chicago next year, another historic baseball city, and whether you are a collector or a baseball history fanatic, it is a great way to connect to the game.

COOPERSTOWN (Continued from Page 1)

The camaraderie of being in a small town with thousands of fellow passionate baseball fans was tremendous. Everyone seemed in a great mood. Conversations came easily. There was a large contingent of Colorado Rockies fans, but Twins fans took the prize for biggest turnout. Joe Mauer is clearly a beloved figure in Twins Territory.

Cooperstown is home to an exquisitely preserved old baseball park, Doubleday Field. I had heard about Doubleday Field but I didn't realize the entrance to the park was right off Main St. One oddity of visiting Doubleday Field on this weekend was seeing Denny McLain, the former Detroit Tiger, and the last 30-game winner in the big leagues, sitting behind a folding table signing autographs and hawking his book. We walked right up to him and had a quick chat. Pete Rose was also signing autographs in a shop on Main St., but he was well-protected in the back of a store. You needed to pay a fee just to walk back to where he was signing.

We spent several hours, over two days, going through the Hall of Fame itself. (Tip: If you go to the Hall of Fame during induction weekend, be sure to buy a membership to the Hall of Fame. That membership allows entry to the Hall an hour before the masses can come in.) The Baseball Hall of Fame exceeded my high expectations. The plaque gallery on the first floor is awe-inspiring, and the other floors had numerous outstanding exhibits about various aspects of baseball history. I've attended the football and basketball Halls and baseball's shrine is by far the best.

I can't recommend a trip to Cooperstown and the Hall of Fame enough. Even better, is a visit during the annual induction ceremony. While there, save some time for a stroll through the small town to admire the country homes (with big porches and gorgeous flower beds), classic-style inns, and historic churches. A boat trip around the lake would be another nice touch.

Oh, and if you book a trip to baseball's mecca for the induction ceremony, don't forget to do some early lawn chair planning!



BABIP is
batting
average
on balls in
play....

STAT OF THE MONTH— BABIP

BABIP measures a player's batting average exclusively on balls hit into the field of play, removing outcomes not affected by the opposing defense (namely home runs and strikeouts).

For example, a hitter who goes 2-for-5 with a home run and a strikeout would have a .333 BABIP. He's 1-for-3 on the balls he put in play.

The formula - $(H - HR)/(AB - K - HR + SF)$

Why it's useful

BABIP can be used to provide some context when evaluating both pitchers and hitters. The league average BABIP is typically around .300. Pitchers who have allowed a high percentage of hits on balls in play will typically regress to the mean, and vice versa. In other words, over time, they'll see fewer (or more) balls in play fall for hits, and therefore experience better (or worse) results in terms of run prevention. The same applies for batters who have seen a high or low percentage of their balls in play drop in for hits.

That said, skill can play a role in BABIP, as some pitchers are adept at generating weak contact, while some hitters excel at producing hard-hit balls. For example, Clayton Kershaw finished the 2019 season with a lifetime .270 BABIP allowed, while Mike Trout ended the campaign with a career .348 BABIP.

Last season, Rockies outfielder Nolan Jones led all MLB players with at least 400 AB's, with a BABIP of .401.

PURPLE PROSPECTS (Continued from Page 5)

- LHP Everett Catlett (12th Rd): 6'7" southpaw from Georgetown, First-Team All Big East Conference

The final three prospects for the Rockies came courtesy of the trade deadline. Though hurtling towards 100 losses for the second consecutive season, GM Bill Schmidt was only able to come to an agreement for two of his players: relievers Nick Mears and Jalen Beeks.

Mears, still under control for the next three years, brought back RHP Bradley Blalock and RHP Yujanyer Herrera from the Milwaukee Brewers. Blalock, 23, made his debut earlier this year and is currently on the 40-man roster. He's already joined the Double-A starting rotation in Hartford. Herrera, 20, is also a starter. He posted a 2.91 ERA mostly in Class A for the Brewers and has appeared in one game for High-A Spokane thus far.

The return for Beeks was only one player, but it was an interesting one. LHP Luis Peralta is the younger brother of Brewers' ace Freddy Peralta. He made huge strides this season after struggling throughout much of his professional career. Peralta went 4-0 with a 0.91 ERA before coming over to Colorado. Much of the southpaw reliever's success comes courtesy of missing bats, striking out 41% of batters, eighth-best in the minors in 2024 (min. 30 IP).

So what does this latest influx of impressive prospects mean for the Rockies? Patience. While the powers-that-be attempt to figure out how to halt six-consecutive losing seasons, the next generation of purple pinstripers will be plying their trade in hopes of becoming the next Charlie Blackmon, Ryan McMahon or Germán Márquez.

Until then, patience.



ROCKIES AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Ezequiel Tovar (23)	- August 1st
Brendon Rodgers (28)	- August 9th
Michael Toggia (26)	- August 16th



TRIVIA— TRADE DEADLINE SPECIAL

Q -Rockies traded Larry Walker to the St. Louis Cardinals for three pitchers on August 6, 2004. The salary relief allowed them to give nearly \$1 million to a 14th round pick in the 2004 MLB Draft. Which one-time All-Star, one-time World Series Champ and one-time "actor" on Saturday Night Live benefited from the Walker trade?

EMAIL your answer to - info@rmsabr.org

The first response with the correct answer wins this brand new [Coors Field SGA truckers cap](#).

LAST MONTH'S ANSWER—

Q1—What pitcher threw 14 consecutive scoreless innings in All-Star competition?

A—JR Richard

Q2—Which pitcher started the All-Star Game then played only one MLB game the rest of his career? **A—** Juan Marichal

First correct answer— Bruce McClure