

Rocky Mountain SABR Newsletter

September, 2024

Highlights of SABR 52—Minneapolis

Greg Petty



The 52nd SABR National Convention was held in Minneapolis August 7-11. Our Rocky Mountain Chapter was well represented with John Salvino, Dan Evans, Paul Parker, James and Victor Comparato, Jerrod Cotosman, Harry Keller, Chris Moyer, Dave Mundo, Greg Petty, and Nick Wilson attending.

The conference was kicked off by a very nice welcome reception Wednesday evening. The next day the opening remarks were made by Minnesota Twins President of Baseball Operations Derek Falvey. That was followed by a Twins hitters panel with Hall of Fame members Tony Oliva and Rod Carew being interviewed by Kris Atteberry lead play-by-play voice of the Twins

Later that day was a Twins pitcher panel with 12 year Twin Glen Perkins, former Twin and Rockie LaTroy Hawkins, and Hall of Famers Jim Kaat and Bert Blyleven. This was especially interesting with Kaat and Blyleven definitely old school and especially Hawkins sometimes disagreeing by explaining current ways of teaching pitching.

That night people could either choose to take a tour of Target Field or go to a Triple-A game with the Columbus Clippers (Guardians) vs the St. Paul Saints (Twins). The next night people could go to the major league game between the Twins & Guardians. Will Brennan led off the game for the Clippers with a HR and got 2 more hits. The next day he went 4-for-7 for the Guardians in their doubleheader with the Twins.

Friday morning there was an interesting panel on umpiring with recently retired 26 MLB umpire Jeff Nelson and 6 year minor league umpire Emma Charlesworth-Seiler. That was followed by a terrific Twins Analytics panel with 4 people from their front office discussing how they use analytics. And on Saturday morning there was a fascinating panel (including the Twins President and CEO) discussing the present and future of baseball broadcasts and streaming. The Twins went all out to make their people available for SABR, and greatly added to the entire convention experience.

In addition to these and more general sessions, there were dozens of varied research presentations. And all presentations gave those in the audience a chance to ask questions. - You can read about and listen to highlights of all panels, presentations and committee meetings by going to <https://sabr.org/convention/>

Finally, there were numerous committee meetings. In the Baseball Card meeting chapter was asked to describe how Brian Werner has developed our baseball cards group. And in the Baseball Memories meeting, we described our then upcoming baseball memories event on August 14, which is the first such under the banner of Major League Memories, a collaboration among the MLB, the Alzheimer's Association, and SABR.

[Some pictures of the convention are here on our website](#)

SEPTEMBER ROCKY MOUNTAIN SABR LUNCHEON

On Tuesday September 17th, we will have an in-person Rocky Mountain SABR gathering **at a new venue**—Brooklyn's near Ball Arena

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

Brooklyn's is located at 901 Auraria Parkway, Denver. There is a parking lot in back of the building.

[Map](#)



RM SABR Participates Baseball Memories Program Event



On August 14, members of the RM SABR Chapter accompanied by Rockies broadcaster Cory Sullivan visited the senior care facility Vi at Highlands Ranch for the first event of the Baseball Memories program in Denver. This program is part of a partnership with the Alzheimer's Association (ALZ).

There were about 30 attendees, 9 from the memory care part of Vi and then the remaining were their "Independent Living" residents.

Rebecca Engle from ALZ did a great job kicking off the event, followed by SABR

member Dave Mundo asking the residents some of the initial questions in the facilitator guide (Who has been to a ML game? What's your favorite part about going to a game? etc.). Right off the bat, the residents were very engaged, saying what their favorite teams and players were, what they liked about going to an MLB game, etc.

This was followed by the playing of the National Anthem after which Dave started to interview Cory Sullivan, asking him about growing up & how he became interested in baseball, etc. The interview proceeded including some resident questions. The questions were tied into topics like nostalgia, giving advice to others based on experience, etc. - things thought would resonate with the residents.

After the interview, there were two videos of Cory that were played, with him voicing over them. One of the videos was of his MLB debut showing his family in the stands celebrating his first hit!

Finally, the group was led in the singing of "Take me out to the Ballgame" followed by some additional Q&A before wrapping up with a group photo. Some attendees stayed on to talk to Cory and some of the other RM SABR folks.

Thanks to Jim Kellogg, our Rockies contact, for supplying some nice swag that was distributed to the attendees.

Two of the local ALZ reps in attendance expressed interest in doing similar programs at other centers and have started to put us in contact with personnel at other senior care centers.

[Link to short segment aired on 9 News about the event](#)

Winning with Analytics in the Cape Cod League

Quinn Booth

If you're a hardcore baseball fan, you know of the Cape Cod League as a crucial cog in the developmental system. The best collegiate players go to play on the Cape, honing their skills with wood bats while receiving high quality looks from scouts. For most baseball stakeholders, the Cape functions as a machine to churn out individual prospects, less

concerned about the wins and standings. But as part of the staff of a Cape team this summer, I can promise you that we wanted to win. And we, the Hyannis Harbor Hawks, wanted to win every single day.



Our gamedays always started with advanced scouting, using a blend of traditional and analytical methods. Roster churn in the Cape is inevitable, so we created detailed reports on each of the opponents' new additions. Does the starter's fastball cut or sink? Will the cleanup hitter swing at first pitch? Who are we likely to see in relief, and how can we beat them? We sought to answer all of these questions for our coaches and players, with visuals, charts and often just baseball speak. Because if the people on the field can't actually apply our research, then it means nothing.

Each intern was assigned a specific team to scout, and when we played that team, you sat in the dugout during the game to explain the scouting reports. This was my favorite part of the summer. If they made a pitching change, it would be my duty to explain the shape and velocity of each pitch in the new arm's arsenal to the next few hitters. It's hard to beat the feeling you get when your scouting report leads to a base hit. During the pitching phase, the game's dugout intern would help our pitching coaches call the game, emphasizing the pitches and locations where certain batters struggled. Nothing in baseball works 100% of the time, and our calls got burned sometimes, but I believe the data gave us an edge over other Cape teams.

Beyond advanced scouting responsibilities, I had freedom to explore my own side projects, just as long as they could lead to us winning. So I created a model to help identify potential replacement players, and I developed reports for our catchers that helped them improve defensively. In addition to helping our team, this work will add to my portfolio and help me land a job for an MLB team (Rockies, let me know!) or baseball analytics company.

Overall, the experience, location and community were all unbeatable. I learned more about baseball this summer than I have the rest of my life combined. I formed lifelong bonds with fellow interns and the Hyannis community, who come out to a lively ballpark for good baseball, a pure atmosphere and decades-old rivalries. Cape tradition is as strong as ever—certain fields still refuse to use lights, and have to start their games early. Through all the years, the league has retained its personal connection and intimacy, which flows through the historic ballparks, lifelong host families and players themselves. The analytics have found a way into the game there, sure, but I believe that the best parts of baseball all remain exactly the way they should be.

Read more about my work on my Substack or Twitter:

<https://quinnbooth.substack.com/>

<https://x.com/QuinnmBooth>

My Experience at the SABR 52 National Convention

John Salvino



For me, there is a unique feeling I find in the transition that takes place upon returning home from any trip. Taking time to reflect on what met my expectations, what new things I learned, the people I met and stories they told that will stay with me the longest and, perhaps more than anything else, what unplanned or unscripted things took place, is an important part of the experience. Coming back from the SABR 52 convention in Minneapolis was no different.

Settling in back home, my thoughts turned to how, less than a week prior, I was settling into my hotel room and heading to registration. At the registration desk, I remember seeing a few familiar faces, making some quick conversations and stepping into line to get registered.

After getting my lanyard and checking my name on the tag, I looked down to see that there were still hundreds of badges, all virtually identical to mine, that needed to be picked up. I had gotten there pretty early so this was to be expected. My eyes shifted slightly to the left and I saw something that I didn't expect. At the front of one of the stacks below me was a name tag that stood out. It, like all the others, was identical to mine except for one thing, the name on it. Instead of my name on it, this one said Tony Oliva.

Tony Oliva, the Hall of Fame outfielder from the Minnesota Twins, was on a panel of speakers the next day, so it made sense that he would have a badge, as I am sure other Hall of Fame Twins players on the panel the next day, Rod Carew, Bert Blyleven and Jim Kaat did as well. But for some reason, this subtle experience I am describing, while it took only a few seconds, took me so much by surprise that it made an unexpected impression on me. After all, what could I have in common with Tony Oliva, or any of these Hall of Famers? I have to admit, it wasn't immediate but, the obvious answer eventually dawned on me. It was baseball. However, on this day it was not only baseball, it was that baseball led us, all of the convention attendees, to Minneapolis for that SABR event.

The next day, one of the many highlights of the trip for me, was getting to see Rod Carew and Tony Oliva share their baseball and life experiences as part of the panel. Equally satisfying to me was watching presentations, connecting with other SABR members and hearing about their baseball and life experiences as well. For a life-long baseball fan who enjoys the connections that are made because of the game as much as the game itself, I found fulfillment in every event and encounter along the way.

As with every trip that comes to an end, there is time to reflect, which is usually followed by thoughts and plans for the next trip. While it won't be my next trip, I already know that I plan to attend the SABR 53 convention that will be in the Dallas area next summer. I hope anyone who takes the time to read this will consider it as well.

WRITERS WANTED

Do you have an interesting baseball story, observation, opinion, etc. that you'd like to share with the chapter or a greater audience? If so, please consider writing something to submit to our newsletter or website blog.

The topic can be anything you feel is of interest or relevant (i.e. baseball history, analytics, player bios, stadiums, the business of baseball, etc.).

Site visitation has grown considerably over the past few months and with plans in place for further promotion of our site, visitation could grow by more than tenfold before the end of the year - giving your words a broad audience.

If you are interested in contributing a story, please contact us at—info@rmsabr.org



STAT OF THE MONTH— FIP

FIP is a measurement of a pitcher's performance that strips out the role of defense, luck, and sequencing, making it a more stable indicator of how a pitcher actually performed over a given period of time than a runs allowed based statistic that would be highly dependent on the quality of defense played behind him, for example. Certain pitchers have shown an ability to consistently post lower ERAs than their FIP suggests, but overall FIP captures most pitchers' true performance quite well. For this reason, FanGraphs' version of Wins Above Replacement (WAR) for pitchers is based on FIP rather than on ERA and even analysts who prefer a different method of determining WAR find FIP to be extremely useful and informative.



Calculation:

Here is the formula for FIP:

$$FIP = ((13*HR)+(3*(BB+HBP))-(2*K))/IP + constant$$

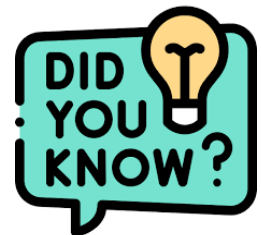


ROCKIES SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Ryan Feltner (28)	September 2nd
Ryan Spilborghs (45)	September 5th
Dakota Hudson (30)	September 13th

DID YOU KNOW ...

Whether it is due to a ball going out of the park, getting dirty or damaged, it has been said that a single MLB ball only lasts six-to-seven pitches. Interestingly enough, it is also been said that a typical game goes through five-to-six dozen balls, though a single club must have 90 on hand for each game. In contrast, it was not uncommon in the early 20th century for a single ball to be used for the entire game!



TRIVIA— TRADE DEADLINE SPECIAL

Q— Name the only 3 players in baseball history that were active in the major leagues the same season that their fathers were inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

EMAIL your answer to - info@rmsabr.org

The first response with the correct answer wins this brand new Coors Field SGA [Ryan McMahan bobblehead](#)

LAST MONTH'S ANSWER— Dexter Fowler