THE ROCKPILE

March, 2026

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER CELEBRATES ANNUAL SABR DAY







On Saturday February 7th, around 50 of our chapter members and their guests gathered to celebrate the 17th annual SABR Day at Stoney's in Denver, CO. The festivities kicked off with a rendition of "Centerfield" performed by chapter Vice-President Kurt Wells and included the 2nd presentation of the annual Herb Shankman Award and our annual trivia contest, won by Mike Roberts (remarkably for the 3rd year straight).

But the highlight of the event was, without doubt, the Q&A panel of former Rockies alumni – Pitcher Denny Stark and SS/2B Clint Barmes which was led by Kurt. Denny and Clint spent over an hour answering questions then hung around afterward to mingle with the guests.

The festivities concluded with our traditional game of catch at Sunken Gardens Park in what was one of the best SABR Day celebrations in chapter history.

WARM UP ACT

Joe Adona



The wait is over! Spring Training camps are in full swing and the games are underway. The countdown to Opening Day is on!

Spring Training is a time when rookies chase their dreams, veterans refine their craft, and fans bask in the optimism of a new season. Countless fans will migrate to the south for vacation to shake off aches of winter to see our favorite players shake off the aches of winter.

Before the days of multi-million dollar contracts, most baseball players had to work extra jobs during the off season to feed their families. Not all players stayed in shape over the winter, so spring training gave them a chance to return to a more athletic physique. Spring training also built team unity and afforded managers and coaches a chance to evaluate their team's talent for the season. It also allowed fans pay to watch the spring games but the teams barnstormed their way back to their home cities, playing exhibition games along the way to bring in more income.

The origins of Spring Training remain vague and vary based on which sources you believe.
The earliest evidence points to the fact that in 1870 the Cincinnati Red Stockings and the Chicago White Stockings (today's Chicago Cubs) held organized camps in New Orleans to prepare for the upcoming season.

By the 1890s, teams such as the Pittsburgh Pirates and Cleveland Spiders also began conducting spring training in the South. By the early 1900s spring training was in wide use.

Florida and Arizona

In 1913, the Chicago Cubs and Cleveland Indians became the first teams to hold spring training in Florida, playing exhibition games against each other in Tampa.

The next decade saw a proliferation of teams migrating to Florida. Cities like St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Sarasota became spring training hubs – grew into tourist destination

By the 1920s, the "Grapefruit League" was born, a term reportedly coined by sportswriter Al Lang. Lang, who also served as mayor of St. Petersburg, was instrumental in luring teams to the region. His efforts paid off, as teams like the New York Yankees, Boston Red Sox, and Philadelphia Phillies established training camps in Florida. St. Petersburg's waterfront saw the likes of Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig perfecting their swings, captivating fans and solidifying the state's place in baseball history.

During the years of World War II, spring training in Florida ceased. Minor League baseball was cancelled, but the Major Leagues continued play with the approval of President Franklin Roosevelt who said that "America's Pastime should continue because it boosted homeland morale." But spring training had to be held close to the teams' home fields, so trains could be used to transport troops and supplies, not baseball players

In 1947, the Cleveland Indians and New York Giants became the first teams to hold spring training in Arizona, spurred by the efforts of businessman and sports promoter Bill Veeck. Veeck, who owned the Indians at the time, believed the dry desert air would be ideal for players' conditioning and health.

By the 1960s, Arizona had established itself as a coequal partner in the spring training tradition. By 1990, an equal number of teams held camps in Arizona and Florida.

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DINNER WITH A DRAGON

Alex Weinheimer





In 1985, Bret Saberhagen took home the AL Cy Young Award, while Doc Gooden was the unanimous NL winner. Their Japanese counterpart was Chinichi Dragon star Tatsuo Komatsu, who won the prestigious Sawamura Award for best pitcher in Nippon Professional Baseball that year. Komatsu spent his entire 17-year NPB career with the Dragons, who are based in Nagoya, Japan, the nation's third-largest metro area. It is a very industrial city with the nation's largest port and considerable industry, including Toyota.

Last June, my wife and I visited and attended a Dragon game at the Nagoya Dome, their home since 1997. It is hidden in a quiet residential area, and a short walk from the baseball powerhouse high school, Aikodai Meiden Kokko, that produced Ichiro. The stadium interior features exposed geodesic beams that light up before and after games, while the team's official songs and contingent of mascots entertain on the field. We got to see the home team win after a seven-inning, one-run performance by their starter, but it probably wasn't the baseball highlight of the day.

For dinner, I found an izakaya, a Japanese pub featuring a wide array of food, near our hotel, that looked promising. Even with the name (Seafood Zan), an address, and a smartphone in hand, it was a challenge to find the place. We ventured through a packed district, popping in and out of buildings before finding the correct tiny, carpet-padded elevator. A few floors up, we exited and ducked under a black curtain to find the smoke-filled joint and its proprietor, Tatsuo Komatsu.

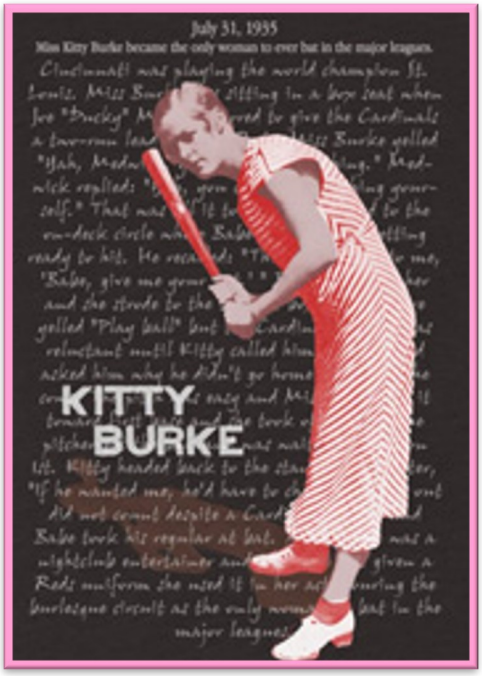
It took a little convincing to the former Dragon pitcher and his staff that a couple of gaijin (foreigners) had, in fact, intentionally stumbled in. The only other patrons at the time were businessmen sharing a few rounds, smokes, and raw and roasted bits of fish after work.

Throughout our meal, Komatsu took our orders, delivered our drinks and food, and eventually began sitting down and sharing the meal. The menu features grilled fish and meats from Komatsu's rural, coastal birthplace, and includes some exotic items you can't find anywhere in the US or most of Japan. He was eager to serve up some of his favorites while sharing a bite and toasts. We also talked about baseball as much as we could, aided by Google Translate, and a waiter who picked up a bit of English while studying abroad. At the end of our lengthy dinner, our gracious host took a picture with me, gave me one of his baseball cards, and gifted my wife a box of Dragon mascot cookies.

Watching professional baseball in Japan is such an amazing experience. It's a different style of the game, with unique traditions, played in front of knowledgeable fans. Most American fans who attend a game in Japan comment on the kindness and respect they experience at a stadium. We enjoyed the same during our dinner with a Dragon.

The Lady In Red: The Legacy of Kitty Burke's At-Bat

Joe Adona



March marks the celebration of Woman's History Month.

In recent years, there have been some notable and significant achievements for women in Major League baseball. - Some of the more notable ones include –

- Claire Smith: First woman to win the BBWAA Career Excellence Award in 2017.
- Alyssa Nakken (San Francisco Giants) In 2020, she became the first woman to hold a Major League coaching position. On April 12, 2022, she became the first woman to coach on the field during a regular-season MLB game. In 2023, she became the first woman to interview for an MLB managerial role.
- Kim Ng: Appointed General Manager of the Miami Marlins in 2020, becoming the first woman to serve as a GM in MLB history.
- Rachel Balkovec (New York Yankees): Became the first full-time female manager of a minor league affiliate (Tampa) in 2021.
- Sarah Langs, Heidi Watney, Lauren Gardner, and Melanie Newman: Formed the first all-women broadcast team to call an MLB game in 2021.
- Jen Pawol: became the first woman to umpire a regular-season MLB game in 2025.

With all of this momentum, how long will it be before we see a woman step into the box and get an at-bat in a regular season MLB game? Well, it actually already happened – sort of.

As most baseball fans know, the Cincinnati Reds hosted the first night major-league game on May 24, 1935. The attendance1 of 20,422 made the first night baseball game an immediate success in the declining-attendance era of the Great Depression. Night baseball, along with many other innovations of the era, was the brainchild of Larry MacPhail, a successful business owner and innovator, that night baseball was just the thing the sluggish Reds needed to bring people to the ballpark. The Reds scheduled seven home games under the lights for 1935

On Tuesday, July 30, they opened a three-game series against the defending World Series champion St. Louis Cardinals in a game where Baseball Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis was in attendance as the guest of owner Powel Crosley.

The Ohio River Valley and much of the Midwest were in a severe heat wave; Cincinnati recorded a 97-degree high temperature that day and 100-degree highs were forecast for the remainder of the week.

The crowds surged that night at Crosley Field, officially reaching 35,000 in a ballpark that had a capacity of 25,000. The Reds were unprepared and understaffed for such a massive crowd packed into their classic ballpark. The team admitted to not having enough ushers, gatekeepers, and ticker sellers on hand, anticipating a maximum crowd of 20,000.

By the time Reds pitcher Tony Freitas delivered the first pitch at 8:58 P.M., almost 30 minutes late to allow the massive crowd to be managed into place, things were already beginning to unravel. Then 2,500 fans on a special train from Dayton arrived late and found their reserved seats taken. Fights soon broke out in the grandstand, Cincinnati vs. Dayton over the rightful ownership of the seats.

Kitty Burke (continued)

A compromise was struck allowing the overflow crowd to sit on the field in foul territory.

They didn't stay there; soon the overflow fans occupied deep right field three to four deep along the outfield wall and then in foul territory between the dugouts and the field, wrapping all the way around from right field to the left-field line, some eight to nine rows deep. Players had to walk through the crowd to get to the batter's box. Reds manager Chuck Dressen could follow the game only by looking at the scoreboard

One of the people who spilled onto the field and wound up to the right side of home plate was a diminutive, attractive, and vocal blonde in a flaming red dress named Kitty Burke, a local nightclub entertainer and baseball fan. Burke had some rather sharp heckling skills and carried on running heckling conversation with Cardinals left fielder Joe Medwick and pitcher Paul "Daffy" Dean, letting them both know what she thought of them, and telling Medwick she could hit better than he could.

In the bottom of the eighth, time was called when two St. Louis outfielders collided. While they were attended to, Burke saw her chance. She ducked under the rope trying to hold the crowd back, grabbed the bat from Reds' on-deck hitter, Babe Herman, and stepped into the batter's box, daring Dean to pitch to her. Paul Dean smiled and went along with the joke, lobbing an underhand pitch to her. Burke swung and hit a grounder back to Dean. She ran part way to first but stopped when she realized Dean would beat her to first. The umpires apparently didn't object. Kitty Burke would go on to promote herself as the first woman to have an at-bat in a major-league game and even used a Reds uniform in her nightclub shows.

2025 HERB SHANKMAN AWARD WINNER — BRIAN WERNER



At our SABR Day gathering on February 7th, the 2nd annual Herb Shankman award was presented to Brian Werner.

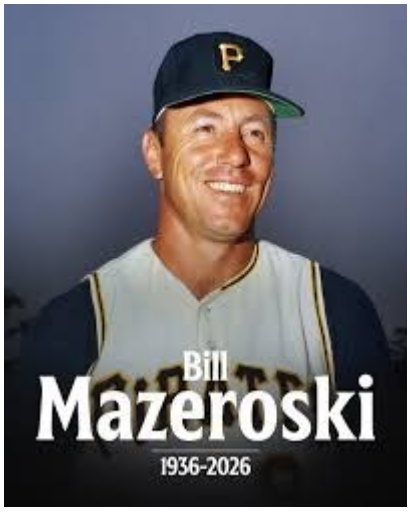
An active member of our chapter since 1986, Brian instituted our chapter's excellent Baseball Card collectors' group, which has been acknowledged by SABR National as the best of any chapter. Brian, along with Andrew Orcutt, runs the quarterly meetings, which are very well attended and enjoyed.

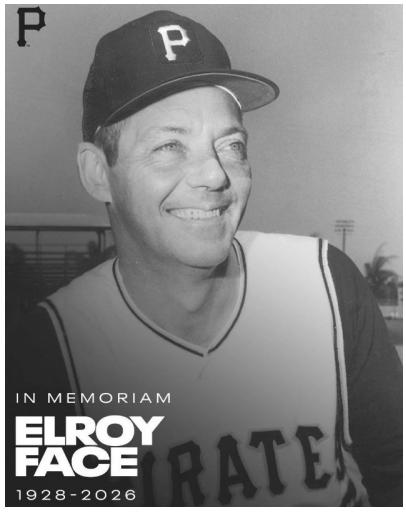
In November, Brian was able to get Astros reliever Bryan King (a Colorado native) to come and speak at our luncheon who spent close to 45 minutes fielding questions from the chapter

He's also been a key contributor to our Colorado Born Players Almanac project and supports the community-at-large by conducting tours of Coors Field including periodic private tours for our chapter members. Brian has a genuine passion for baseball and a true kindness toward others.

RIP TO TWO GREAT BUCS

Joe Adona





Few will argue against the 1960 World Series being one of the greatest and most memorable in baseball history.

Over the past two weeks, we lost two prominent members of the great Pirate team who pulled off the stunning upset of the heavily favored Yankees in that series, bringing the number of surviving team members down from 4 to 2.

Bill Mazeroski, regarded by many to be the greatest fielding second baseman of all time , passed away on February 20th at the age of 89.

The son of a coal miner, he was born in Wheeling, West Virginia in a house without electricity on Sept. 5, 1936, and raised in the Ohio River Valley region. He made his Pirates debut in 1956 at the age of 19. Two years later, he won the first of his eight Gold Glove Awards. Two years after that, in 1960, he had his everlasting moment.

In Game 7, with the score tied, 9-9, Mazeroski led off the bottom of the ninth against Yankees righthander Ralph Terry. He took the first pitch, a ball, and said later that he just wanted to get a base hit to start the inning. Then he swung at the second pitch, launched it more than 400 feet over the head of left fielder Yogi Berra and started running.

The Pirates' victory was an enormous upset. The Yankees, playing in the World Series for the 10th time in 12 years, outscored the Pirates 55-27 in the Series

There’s a bronze statue of a young Mazeroski -- arms outstretched, cap in his right hand, right leg kicked up behind him -- along the Allegheny River outside PNC Park.

The eight-time Gold Glove Award winner, two-time World Series champion and Hall of Famer remains alone in the history books as the only player to hit a walk-off home run in Game 7 of a World Series.

Elroy Face stood just 5-foot-8 and around 155 to 160 pounds, but there were weren't many more dominant relief pitchers in baseball in his prime.

Known as the “Baron of the Bullpen”, he has the National League record for most games won in relief at 96 and has the franchise record for appearances (802) and for saves (188), but those all came prior to 1969 when saves became an official statistic.

He was a three-time consecutive All-Star from 1959-61, but his 1959 season was the best of his career and maybe of any relief pitcher ever.

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WPBL Season Set To Kick Off

Karen Bent



The Women's Pro Baseball League (WPBL) is scheduled to commence its inaugural season in August 2026. The League is comprised of four teams located in Boston, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco. The team locations at this time, however, seem to be in name only, as the entire season will be played in Robin Roberts Stadium in Springfield, IL.

The initial season will last for a total of 7 weeks - four weeks of regular season, one week of All Star competition, followed by two weeks of playoffs. The games will be held on Thursday through Sunday, with each team playing two games over those four days. The games will be 7 innings, and aluminum bats will be used. There will be a four day training period (spring training?) prior to the start of the season. All players are expected to maintain playing form on their own.

The draft for the WPBL was held in November. Each team drafted 30 players. Of the 120 total players, 61 are from the US, 20 from Canada, 10 from Japan, 9 each from Australia and Mexico, 4 from South Korea, 2 from Puerto Rico, and one from Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Curacao, United Kingdom, and France.

The number one pick, Kelsie Whitmore, has played for the Savannah Bananas, as well as some independent teams and the Staten Island Ferry Hawks of the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball. Another well recognized name is Mo'ne Davis, who gained fame pitching in the 2014 Little League World Series earning a win and a shutout.

The draft had an age range from 17 (must be 18 by May 1, 2026) to 40 years old, with the average age being 23.6 years. The age with the most draftees is 22.

The draft included 39 pitchers, 9 for Boston and San Francisco with 2 lefties for each team, 8 for LA (one leftie), and 13 for New York (one leftie).

SF selected 19 of their 30 players from the US, while the New York team selected only 10 homegrown players.

The league was co-founded by Justine Siegal. In 2009 Siegal became the first female coach of a professional men's baseball team, working for the Brockton Rox, an independent Canadian American Association (Can-Am) team. In 2001, she thew batting practice for the Cleveland Indians during spring training, and in 2015 was hired by the Oakland Athletics for two weeks to coach their instructional league. In 1998 Siegal started a non-profit organization, Baseball for All, an organization that works toward gender equity in youth baseball.

Official contracts were extended and signed in January 2026. Each team signed fifteen players. As of now, there is not an official plan for the other fifteen originally drafted. Each team is subject to a salary cap of $95,000, resulting in an average season salary of approximately $6,300.

Specific rules for the league are still being ironed out, with no current decision on use of the DH or pitch clock.

PSA's Parent Moves to Acquire Beckett After SGC Deal, Prompting FTC Scrutiny

Andrew Orcutt

The third-party trading card grading landscape is shifting in a meaningful way. In 2024, Collectors Holdings, the parent company of PSA, acquired rival grader SGC, and it recently announced its agreement to also purchase Beckett Media, which owns Beckett Grading Services. The financial terms for both deals were not disclosed, but the impact is straightforward: PSA's owner is moving to bring two of its most established rivals under the same corporate umbrella and monopolize the trading card grading business.

The SGC acquisition closed in February 2024. In December 2025, Collectors announced its agreement to purchase Beckett, stating that Beckett will remain an independent brand and that there will be no pricing changes tied directly to the transaction. Similar assurances followed the SGC deal. But even with those promises, the consolidation has attracted political attention. Rep. Pat Ryan of New York sent a letter to the Federal Trade Commission urging the agency to investigate whether the transactions amount to monopolization, arguing that one owner could soon control more than 80 percent of the world's graded-card volume.

For collectors, this is not just a headline about corporate activity. PSA has long held a dominant position in modern and high-end resale markets, but SGC built substantial loyalty, particularly among vintage collectors, by offering competitive pricing and distinct card-holder presentation. Beckett has similarly long operated with its own identity, combining grading services such as BGS and BVG with a legacy rooted in pricing guides and hobby media. Each brand developed its own following, philosophy, and market perception. Bringing them together under shared ownership represents one of the most significant structural changes in grading history.

Grading sits at the center of today's baseball card market. A company's label on a graded card affects auction results, marketplace visibility, registry participation, and overall card liquidity. When a collector chooses a grading company, they are choosing how the broader market will interpret and price their card. Competition among graders has therefore extended beyond fees. It has included turnaround times, customer service, grading consistency, slab design, registry ecosystems, and perceived independence. Many collectors value having real alternatives, especially when standards or turnaround performance shift.

Rep. Ryan's letter frames grading companies as essential infrastructure in a multibillion-dollar collectibles economy. His concern is that consolidation could reduce competition over time, even if immediate pricing remains unchanged. He also points to broader issues of independence and trust, arguing that when one entity controls multiple major brands, the market may perceive those brands differently. He has asked the FTC to review the transactions and consider potential remedies if regulators determine the consolidation harms competition.

Collectors Holdings, on the other hand, has focused on continuity. It has said that Beckett will continue operating as its own brand and emphasized that no pricing changes are being implemented as part of the transaction. From a business standpoint, maintaining the distinct identities of PSA, SGC, and Beckett would preserve brand equity and customer loyalty. The long-term question is how those brands will function competitively while sharing common ownership, leadership, and strategic direction. For instance, many loyal SGC customers have reported changes in turnaround times and overall service since its acquisition. - **Continued on Page 13**

HAVE YOU HEARD OF …. Dan Litwhiler?

Joe Adona



He didn't just show up on Labor Day, he exploded into baseball and then quietly changed it forever.

September 1940, the Phillies are desperate for power. Then a new outfielder steps in and detonates the box score - a grand slam, a triple, a double, two singles - eight RBIs in a double header. The headline screams, “Dangerous Dan Litwhiler, a slugging schoolteacher from upstate Pennsylvania”. But that day was only the beginning. Dan Litwhiler didn't just hit baseballs, he studied them, taught them, reimagined them. Litwhiler hit .281 for his career and won a World Series ring with St. Louis in 1944. In 1942, he did something no one had ever done before, played every game of a full season without making a single error.

How? He invented a glove with the fingers tied together, so the ball wouldn't escape. That glove now sits in Cooperstown. He never stopped inventing and innovating. He came up with the prototype for the radar gun and crafted training tools and teaching methods that are still used today. He coached nearly 30 years in college, won championships, sent players to the majors, and helped take baseball around the world.

Long after the cheers faded, Dan Litwhiler kept building the game, piece by piece. His name may not echo the loudest, but the game itself still bears his fingerprints.

PLEASE HELP US BY TAKING A QUICK SURVEY



A few weeks back, we sent out a survey form via email to get feedback from our members on the types of activities and events that they’d be most interested in. This feedback is very important and helpful for our planning and to provide the best possible experience for all of you. If you haven’t done so already, please take 2 minutes to do so by clicking **this link**. Thanks!!

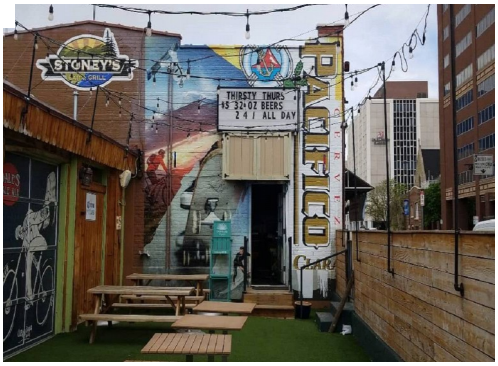
MARCH ROCKY MOUNTAIN SABR LUNCHEON

On Wednesday, March 18th, 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.

The luncheon is **open to both members and non-members** and is a great opportunity to discuss baseball with fellow baseball fans.



BUCS — continued from page 6

Face posted an 18-1 record, with his .947 winning percentage, the best of any major league pitcher with at least 13 appearances. Only three pitchers since 1900 have posted at least a .900 winning percentage in a season since 1901, according to SABR. He'd go on to carry a 22-game winning streak that extended from 1958 to 1959. The streak was broken on September 11, 1959, in Los Angeles, when he lost the game on a broken-bat single by Charlie Neal.

A native of Averill Park, New York, Face would have turned 98 in eight days and had been the third oldest living former major league player. Face's passing on February 12th leaves just two surviving members of that 1960 Pirates Series roster: Vern Law (95) and Bob Skinner (94). Pitcher Bennie Daniels (93) was on the Pirates roster but did not appear in the WS.

2026 NATIONAL SABR CONVENTION

Join us in Cleveland, Ohio, this summer for SABR's 54th annual convention on July 29–August 2, 2026, at the Hilton Downtown Cleveland hotel! Conference and hotel registration for SABR 54 is now available below. Click here for complete details on SABR 54 Early-Bird Registration and optional sessions.
The annual SABR convention, which is open to all baseball fans, includes top featured speakers from around the baseball world — front office executives, players, managers, scouts, journalists, historians, and analysts — innovative panel discussions, groundbreaking research presentations, ballgames, the SABR Trivia Contest, and most of all, the opportunity to make and renew baseball friendships over the course of this exciting and memorable event.

Along with a fantastic speaking lineup, here are more highlights to look forward to at SABR 54:

- **Cleveland Guardians vs. Arizona Diamondbacks** game on Friday, July 31, featuring a pregame buffet for SABR members that will give attendees a great opportunity to socialize and network.
- Exciting optional programming including a **bus tour of historic Cleveland baseball sites**, featuring a stop at League Park (former home of the Indians and Buckeyes amongst numerous others) where you'll be able to play catch on the same grounds where Babe Ruth hit his 500th home run.
- Upgraded **Welcome Reception** featuring great food, drink, and SABR award presentations.
- Expanded **Closing Ceremonies** featuring our famous Trivia Contest, which will again include the popular "Immaculate Feud" segment and expanded opportunities for participation.
- **Social gatherings**, including coffee talks on Thursday and Friday morning and an Open House at the Cleveland Public Library, to help first-timers and veterans alike make the most of their convention and SABR experience.
- **A fantastic hotel property** at the Hilton Cleveland Downtown, conveniently located within walking distance of Progressive Field and other downtown attractions like the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Registration: Click here for complete information on SABR 54 Early-Bird Registration and optional sessions.

STAT of the MONTH— Expected Fielding Independent Pitching (xFIP)

Expected Fielding Independent Pitching (xFIP) is statistic that estimates a pitcher's expected run prevention independent of the performance of their defense. xFIP is based on outcomes that do not involve defense; strikeouts, walks, hit by pitches, and fly balls allowed. xFIP uses those statistics and approximates a pitcher's ERA assuming average outcomes on balls in play and a league average home run per fly ball ratio. While it is not a complete accounting of pitcher performance, it is generally a better representation of performance than ERA. xFIP differs from FIP in that it normalizes a pitcher's home runs allowed based on their fly ball rate rather than simply using the raw number of home runs allowed. The constant changes with the run environment, but the formula is:

$$xFIP = \frac{13\times(Fly\ Balls \times LgHR/FB\%) + 3\times(BB+HBP) - 2\times K}{IP} + FIP\ constant$$

2025 MLB xFIP LEADERS

#	Name	Team	K/9	BB/9	K/BB	HR/9	K%	BB%	K-BB%	AVG	WHIP	BABIP	LOB%	ERA-	FIP-	xFIP-	ERA	FIP	E-F	xFIP	SIERA
1	Garrett Crochet	BOS	11.18	2.02	5.54	1.05	31.3%	5.7%	25.7%	.216	1.03	.290	84.3%	61	68	63	2.59	2.89	-0.30	2.64	2.86
2	Tarik Skubal	DET	11.10	1.52	7.30	0.83	32.2%	4.4%	27.8%	.199	0.89	.273	80.6%	54	58	63	2.21	2.45	-0.24	2.66	2.71
3	Cristopher Sánchez	PHI	9.45	1.96	4.82	0.53	26.3%	5.5%	20.8%	.226	1.06	.298	79.8%	58	61	68	2.50	2.55	-0.06	2.77	3.02
4	Logan Webb	SFG	9.74	2.00	4.87	0.61	26.2%	5.4%	20.8%	.261	1.24	.346	74.3%	78	66	68	3.22	2.60	0.61	2.78	3.14
5	Paul Skenes	PIT	10.36	2.01	5.14	0.53	29.5%	5.7%	23.7%	.199	0.95	.273	82.4%	46	58	74	1.97	2.36	-0.40	3.03	3.10
6	Yoshinobu Yamamoto	LAD	10.42	3.06	3.41	0.73	29.4%	8.6%	20.8%	.182	0.99	.243	78.5%	59	70	74	2.49	2.94	-0.45	3.05	3.32
7	Sonny Gray	STL	10.01	1.89	5.29	1.25	26.7%	5.0%	21.6%	.260	1.23	.329	69.6%	104	84	75	4.28	3.39	0.89	3.07	3.29
8	Hunter Brown	HOU	10.00	2.77	3.61	0.83	28.3%	7.8%	20.4%	.200	1.03	.262	82.0%	60	75	76	2.43	3.14	-0.71	3.19	3.39
9	Jesús Luzardo	PHI	10.58	2.79	3.79	0.78	28.5%	7.5%	21.0%	.239	1.22	.324	69.4%	92	69	79	3.92	2.90	1.02	3.25	3.40
10	Bryan Woo	SEA	9.55	1.74	5.50	1.25	27.1%	4.9%	22.2%	.198	0.93	.238	80.4%	77	86	79	2.94	3.47	-0.53	3.33	3.30



ROCKY MOUNTAIN SABR WEBSITE

For all the latest news and events, recorded meetings, past newsletters, etc. of our chapter, visit our website **https://rmsabr.org/**.

Be sure to check out our **blog** section to read the latest member submitted articles.

Hot Springs, AK

Many of the teams came to Hot Springs, Arkansas, which has been called the "original birthplace of baseball spring training." Three fields were built there from 1894 to 1912 and spring training games were being played there on a regular basis.

One of the earliest recorded spring training camps was held in 1886, when the Chicago White Stockings (now the Chicago Cubs) traveled to Hot Springs, Arkansas. Led by team president Albert Spalding and Hall of Fame player-manager Cap Anson, the White Stockings embraced the idea of heading south for mild weather and outdoor practice. Hot Springs, known for its therapeutic baths, provided an ideal environment for players to shed weight and prepare for the grueling season ahead.

It's safe to say that Hot Springs was the first collective destination spot and birthplace for what fans know as spring training. The first team to come to the famous Spa City for that purpose was the Chicago White Stockings (today's Cubs) in 1886. Sporting goods magnate and team owner A.G. Spalding and player/manager Cap Anson wanted a new way to get their players in shape and "boil out the alcoholic microbes" from the hard-drinking players.

Anson had just learned about the benefits of Hot Springs' therapeutic waters. There were also mountains to climb to get the players' legs in shape. And the trip south would provide warmer weather, so the team could get in significant playing time. The White Stockings won the pennant that year, and baseball teams were quick to follow Spalding's example of finding southern climes to get in shape for the season

Hot Springs saw the most consistent visitation from teams. The Cleveland Spiders and big right-handed pitcher "Cy" Young came, as did the Cincinnati Reds and the Pittsburgh Pirates with its star shortstop Honus Wagner.

The Red Sox first came in 1909 and visited 13 times through 1923. Wagner was an established star who would go on to win six National League batting titles. However, it was a 19-year-old unknown Red Sox left-handed pitcher who came to the Spa City in 1915, who would eventually become the most iconic player in baseball history.

Babe Ruth fell in love with Hot Springs – all of it; the golf course, betting on the horses at Oaklawn, the restaurants, the casinos and all of the other nightlife temptations that accompanied it. Before he played his first regular season game in 1915, he'd lost his entire $2,500 big league salary for the year gambling in Hot Springs.

Ruth soon became baseball's best left-handed pitcher. A thin bench, an injury to the team's first baseman and Ruth's incessant politicking finally gave him his first chance to play a position other than pitcher.

It was St. Patrick's Day 1918, and Ruth made the most of his opportunity against the Brooklyn Dodgers. He hit a home run his first time up. But it was his second home run of the day that began his unstoppable rise to the title of the "Sultan of Swat." The ball left his bat and cleared the playing field of Whittington Park in rightfield, soared over Whittington Avenue and landed in the Arkansas Alligator Farm, a tourist attraction, across the street.

The Babe's love affair with the city lasted on past his retirement from baseball in 1935.

During it's time. almost half of the 295 players, managers and executives enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame spent time in Hot Springs, including some of the best of the Negro Leagues.

Spring training has had a profound impact on the communities that host it. Cities like Lakeland, Florida, and Scottsdale, Arizona, have built economies around the influx of fans and teams each spring

The economic benefits are immense. Spring training brings millions of dollars in tourism revenue, creating jobs and boosting local businesses. Fans, many of whom travel from northern states, enjoy not only baseball but also the leisure and hospitality that these cities offer.

PSA's Parent Moves to Acquire Beckett — Continued from Page 8

Regulatory outcomes remain uncertain. The FTC does not typically comment on potential investigations unless formal action is taken. The agency could decide no intervention is warranted. It could also open a review that leads to negotiated conditions or further scrutiny. Regardless of regulatory involvement, the structure of third-party grading has already changed.

For baseball card collectors, the practical implications matter most. Will grading fees remain competitive over the next several years? Will turnaround times improve, stabilize, or compress across brands? Will grading standards remain distinct across the separate companies? How will registry programs and submission relationships evolve? And will competing companies such as CGC gain additional share if collectors seek greater separation from the largest ownership group?

The hobby has experienced rapid booms and corrections over the past five years, and grading companies have played a central role in those cycles. Backlogs, pricing adjustments, and scaling challenges reshaped submission patterns during peak years. Now, consolidation introduces a new variable. It may create operational stability and shared resources across brands. It may also concentrate decision-making in ways that change how competition functions.

What is certain is that the era of multiple independently-owned legacy grading giants competing side by side is coming to an end. With SGC already acquired and Beckett expected to follow, the grading industry is entering a new phase. How that phase unfolds will depend on corporate execution, market response, and whether regulators decide to intervene. For collectors, it marks a moment worth watching closely, as grading remains the foundation on which much of the modern baseball card market is built.

MARCH 7th -BASEBALL CARD COLLECTORS MEETING



We will be holding our next Rocky Mountain SABR baseball card group meeting on Saturday, March 7 beginning at 11 am.

The meeting will be held at Stoney's at 1111 N. Lincoln in downtown Denver.

Meeting Agenda (subject to change)

1. Introductions
2. Member Spotlight
3. Denver Baseball Card show recap
4. Who's on your Mount Rushmore of baseball cards
5. Baseball card trivia
6. Sending cards to players for autographs
7. SABR Project - Colorado born players almanac
8. Wax Pack Gods site
9. Topps Set Presentation - 1973
10. Open Forum