

HJR

85

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

RECAP OF HJR 85

Pacific Rim Baseball Competition

Received February 12, 1990
by Rep. Foster, Koponen, Menard

Heard March 13, 1990

CSHJR 85 (SA) Adopted March 13, 1990

Passed Out of Committee March 13, 1990
3 Do Pass
1 No Recommendation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HJR 85: Pacific Rim Baseball Competition

- Item 1: HJR 85 by Rep. Foster, Koponen, Menard
CSHJR 85 (SA)
- Item 2: Fiscal Note by House State Affairs
- Item 3: Alaska Journal Article: *Baseball Above and Below Zero: The National Pastime in Alaska*
- Item 4: *Baseball's Last Frontier*

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date Referred: February 12, 1990

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: _____

The STATE AFFAIRS Committee considered:

HJR 85

HOUSE JOINT RES. NO. 85

PACIFIC RIM BASEBALL COMPETITION

Relating to baseball between teams from Pacific Rim nations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- be replaced with CSHJR85(SA) the same title
- have attached amendment(s) a new title
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):
(Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS:

(Date/Dept)

- fiscal impact _____
- zero fiscal note HSA
- zero with analysis: _____

- fiscal note(s) _____
- zero fiscal note(s) _____
- zero fn, analysis _____

SIGNING DO PASS:

SIGNING:
(Check approp. column)

	Do Not Pass	No Rec	Amend
<u>Allyce Stanley</u>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

W. A. Bush

Chairman's Signature

STATE OF ALASKA
1990 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL VERSION: _____
PUBLISH DATE: _____

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____
Title: Pacific Rim Baseball
Competition
Sponsor: Foster
Requestor: _____

Agency Affected: _____
BRU: _____
Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
----------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
----------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No fiscal impact.

Prepared by: House State Affairs
Division: _____
Approved by Commissioner: H. A. "Red" Boucher
Agency: _____

Phone: 465-4963
Date: Mar 12, 1990
Date: Mar 12, 1990

Distribution (by preparer):
Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)



BASEBALL -ABOVE AND BELOW ZERO: The National Pastime in Alaska

By Terrence Cole

In an era when baseball is played in air-conditioned stadiums, on artificial grass, and under artificial light, the incredible history of baseball in Alaska seems hard to believe. Americans have always been dedicated to their national pastime. But because of the harsh climate of the North, and the lack of suitable playing fields in the wilderness, the people of Alaska have had to go to far greater lengths to enjoy the grand old game than anyone in the country. From the rocky baseball diamonds on the tide flats in Southeast Alaska, where games were called on account of high tide, to the ball field on the

frozen tundra at Nome, Alaskans played a rugged brand of baseball. In the nineteenth century outdoor exercise was commonly believed to be a preventive for scurvy, and explorers wintering in the arctic ice pack often played ball games during the coldest months of the year to keep from getting the dreaded disease. In the 1890s baseball was especially popular at Herschel Island, the winter base of operations for the whaling industry in the western Arctic, where numerous steam whaling ships and hundreds of men were often forced to spend the winter.¹

By November of each year the

Ballplayers in the Herschel Island league in the 1890s dressed for the weather. Some games were played in temperatures as low as 30 degrees below zero. (ALASKA SPORTSMAN, 1963)

ships of the whaling fleet were solidly frozen in the ice of the bay at Herschel Island, and "spring training" was ready to begin. Ashes were spread along the ice to make the bases and the base paths, and a sail was used as a backstop.² Games in the Herschel Island league went on all winter long until the beginning of the summer whaling season in July, and were seldom canceled due to the weather. Some contests were



Passengers on ships near Nome sometimes played baseball on the ice while waiting for a lead in the ice pack to open. (Glenbow Archives, Calgary)



In the communities of Southeast Alaska the only available space for a ball game was often the beach or the tide flats at low tide. This game was played along the waterfront at Ketchikan, a community which did not have a baseball field on dry land until 1921. (Courtesy of V. Roberts)

reportedly played in temperatures as low as -30° or -40° . The players were dressed in fur parkas, and wore mittens instead of baseball gloves, so it was not easy to catch the ball. Given the hazardous fielding conditions, it was not uncommon for a losing team to score 50 runs or more in a single game.³ Base runners often made spectacular slides on the ice, but they found it quite difficult to stop without bowling over the infielders.

Baseball diamonds on the ice were also found near Nome, where passengers on vessels waiting for a lead to open sometimes played a few innings on the ice pack to pass the time. The people of Nome also enjoyed winter baseball on the snow. In February 1900 a series of games were held between a team of soldiers and a squad from the Alaska Commercial Company. The game on Washington's Birthday had to be called off after four innings however, "on

account of the icy breezes from the north (which made it decidedly uncomfortable for boys."⁴ It was so uncomfortable that the pitcher for the Alaska Commercial Company, Louis Lane, froze his fingers, and contest was postponed until following Sunday.

Of course Alaskans did not play baseball just on infields of ice and outfields of snow. In the early years at Ketchikan and Juneau ball games were normally played on the tide flats or the beach. Level ground for construction purposes was at a premium in the mountainous terrain of Southeast Alaska, and there was seldom open space on dry land large enough for an outfielder to stop down a fly ball. The beach made a rocky infield, and when the tide came in the bases and the pitcher's mound disappeared. Even when the tide was out, crowds lined the docks along the waterfront in cities like Ketchikan to watch their favorites play.

The people of Nome also had to play baseball on the beach until 1908, when the Nome Baseball Association was formed to promote baseball in Nome and build a "first class diamond and field."⁵ J.C. Gaffney, the owner of a Nome clothing store, and other businessmen in the city who enjoyed watching and playing the national pastime, headed the organization. They built one of the most unique parks in the world on the tundra behind Nome, overlooking Dry Creek. The first step in building the field was to scrape away the soggy vegetation on the surface of the tundra in the shape of a baseball diamond to expose the frozen ground beneath the surface. A company in Nome donated thousands of jute sacks to lay on top of the permafrost to keep the infield from melting. Volunteers dumped tons of beach sand and gravel on the diamond and spread a four-inch-thick layer of Nome River clay on the playing surface of the infield.⁷

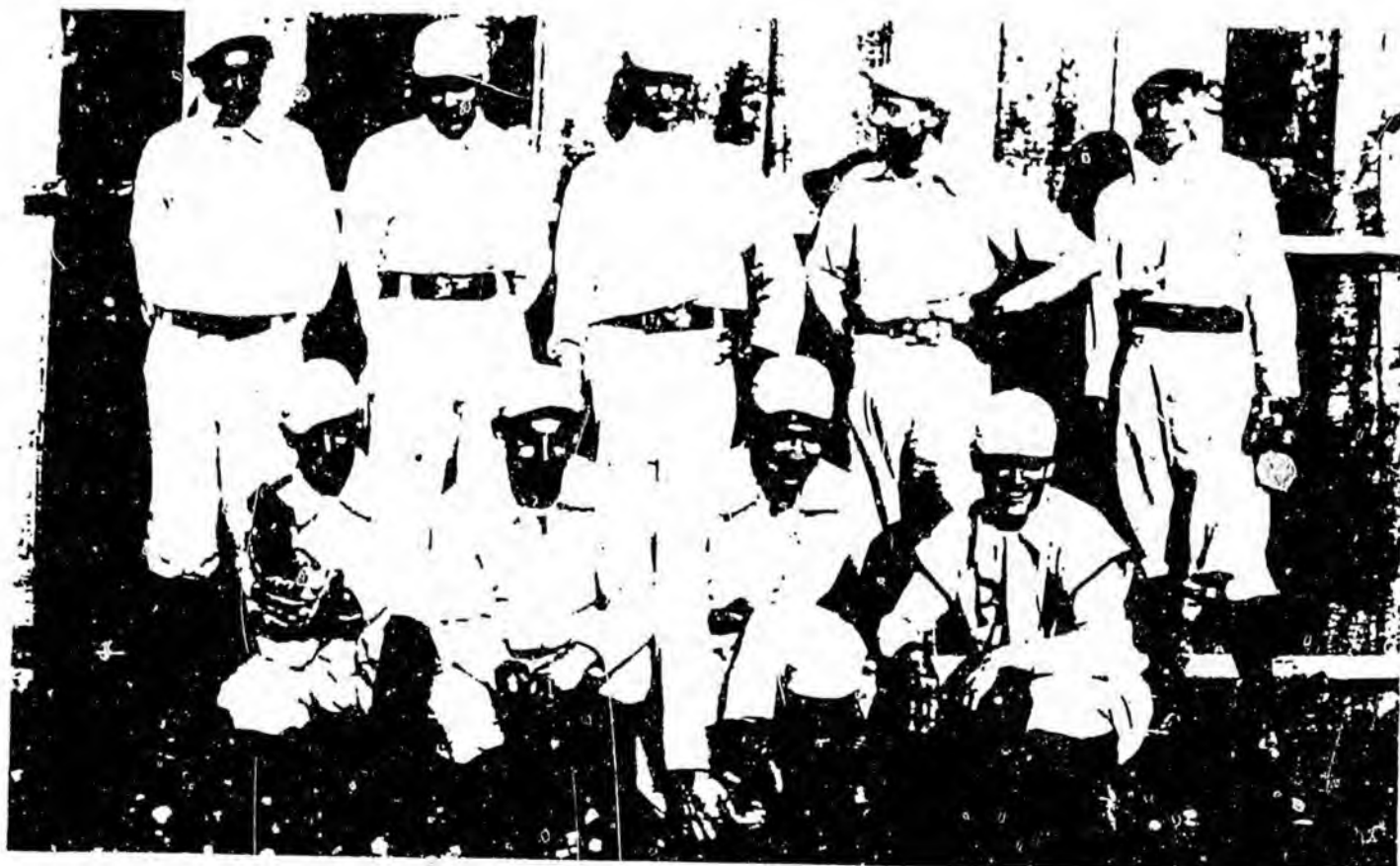
On June 14, 1908, the first games were held on Nome's base-

The Nome Baseball Association built one of the most unusual ball parks in the world on the tundra behind Nome in 1908. (Glenbow Archives, Calgary)



The people of Juneau played tide flat baseball until about 1914, when a fine field was built in Last Chance Basin. This picture was taken on June 8, 1914. The driftwood along Gold Creek provided the cheap seats in center field. (Courtesy of the Bancroft Library)





ball field. "The grounds were a surprise to many," the *Nome Pioneer Press* reported the next day, "as it was not believed that such a good infield could be made in this country." Admittedly the outfield was not in such good condition. The "outer pastures" behind second base were so soft that any ball which hit the ground in the outfield tundra would only roll a few feet before stopping dead. Even so it was alleged that the outfield in the Nome park was "better than the majority of the outer gardens in amateur fields in the states."⁸

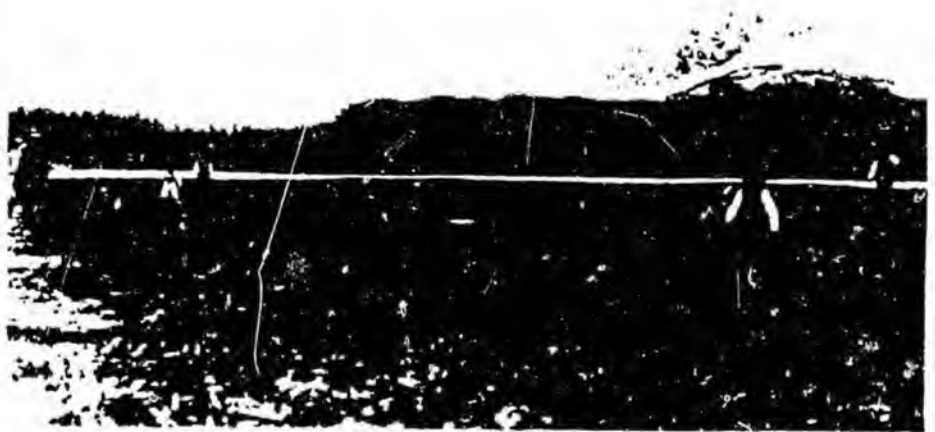
A standing-room-only crowd of about 1,500 people watched the 1908 opening day double-header of the Nome Baseball Association. In the first game the Nome Red Sox beat the Federal Labor Union team by a score of 5 to 3. "The Reds looked very nifty in their white uniforms and red stockings," a reporter explained, "while the Union men also put up a fine appearance in their neat and business like suits of gray."⁹ In the second game the army beat Gaffney's Colts 8 to 7.

The four teams in the Nome Baseball Association had numerous veteran ball players on their squads, who had played college or minor league baseball in the States, and had come to Alaska to work in the mines for the summer. An outfielder named Murphy had been a star outfielder in the Pacific Coast League before he was blacklisted from organized baseball for hitting an umpire in a game in San Francisco, and a .300 hitting catcher known as Tubbs had played for Lodi in the California State League.¹⁰ The competition in the Nome Baseball Association however, was not quite as fast as in the California or the Coast leagues.

Above left — The Nome Red Sox were a carefree group of Nome teenagers and high school boys. (Glenbow Archives, Calgary)

Left — Far more serious were the nine soldiers in dark uniforms from the army team at Fort Davis. (Glenbow Archives, Calgary)

Backdrops for Alaskan ball parks were often spectacular. The ballfield at Valdez surrounded by snow-covered mountains. (Archives, History of and in Alaska)



The baseball capital of Alaska, and home of the annual midnight sun game, is Fairbanks, where baseball has flourished since the gold rush. Shown here was a successful Fairbanks team known as the Marc Anthony's, and their trademark, a large cigar. (Erskine Collection, University of Alaska Archives)





The Nome Red Sox were a lively bunch of Nome teenagers and high school players, but they goofed off too much. The directors of the association had to disband the Red Sox after the team committed 14 errors in a game they lost to the Gaffney Colts by a score of 32 to 5.

"It was certainly a miserable exhibition of the national game . . ." the *Nome Gold Digger* reported the next day. The league instituted several new regulations to improve the quality of the play. Umpires were granted the right to fine any player who had a "slovenly manner" of going on or off the field. "Also the captains of the teams have been instructed that their men will have to learn their positions in the batting order, and be on the spot immediately when their turn comes," the league explained to the angry fans who wanted their money back after the Red Sox's disastrous defeat. "From now on the league will be run as nearly under professional rules as possible and no more town lot ball will be tolerated."

The Nome Baseball Association season ended after about five weeks of play when a heavy rainstorm nearly destroyed the field. John B. Wallace, the league's only salaried employee and its scorekeeper, grounds keeper, and sportswriter, said he knew that the season was over as soon as he inspected the field after two days of rain. "The infield consisted of a series of little clay islands," Wallace wrote many years later, "while the outfield was a swamp."¹¹

The Nome Baseball Association apparently never recovered from the soggy season of 1908. But in

Above left — On a holiday on the 4th of July Alaskan miners enjoyed getting together for a game of baseball. These rugged characters were the members of the Long and Ruby miners' team in 1917. (ALASKA SPORTSMAN²)

Left — The tiny ball park at Dawson City in 1903 was in an urban setting, near the center of the city. (Troseth Album, University of Alaska Archives)

other parts of Alaska, especially the Interior, the climate and terrain are more suitable for baseball than they are in Nome. After the gold rush Fairbanks was "baseball mad" as one observer put it, and the community was the hardball capital of Alaska. The highlight of the season, as it still is today, was the annual midnight sun game on June 21. Every year on the longest day of the summer, a baseball game is played in Fairbanks at midnight, without the aid of artificial lights. The midnight sun game is one of the oldest traditions in the city, and it marks the official beginning of summer in Interior Alaska.

With the blistering rays of the Midnight Sun beating down upon them, and their every move followed intently by a crowd of wild fans. . . .

The midnight game of 1908 was vividly described in the *Fairbanks Daily News*. "With the blistering rays of the Midnight Sun beating down upon them," the *News* reported on June 22, 1908, "and their every move followed intently by a crowd of wild fans whose enthusiasm held them in the oven-like bleachers and grandstands, the pick of Alaska's stars of the diamond played faultless ball last night. . . ."

Anyone who has ever watched a baseball game at Growden Field in Fairbanks during the summer, would have to admit that the bleachers are hardly "oven-like" at one o'clock in the morning. Underneath the box score in the paper, a note admitted that the description of the game had been slightly exaggerated.

"This story is probably a little raw for home consumption," the *News* confessed, "but it is pointed out that it is as near the truth as lots of newspapers ever venture. . . . The account of [this]

strange game is annually clipped from the local press by people here and sent to friends in all parts of the world. Therefore, this account . . . is discreetly tinted only because it is for exportation to chechacodom."¹²

The long summer nights still seem ideal for playing, or watching, a ball game, and Alaska has proven to be a training ground for major league ballplayers. This is more true today than in years past — although a man known as Klondike Smith played a few games in left field for the New York Yankees in 1912, and Thomas Sullivan, who was born in Nome in 1906, caught one game for the Cincinnati Reds in 1925.¹³ Today the semi-pro teams of the Alaska League attract the top college stars in the country. In recent years Bob Boone, Floyd Bannister, Tom Seaver, Graig Nettles, and Dave Kingman, are just a few of the big league stars who have played ball under the "blistering rays" of the midnight sun.

Terrence Cole is the editor of *The ALASKA JOURNAL*³, and the author of *E. T. Barnette: The Strange Story of the Man Who Founded Fairbanks*, published by Alaska Northwest Publishing in 1981. He has recently received his Ph.D. in history at the University of Washington.

Notes

- 1 John Bockstoe, *Steam Whaling in the Western Arctic* (New Bedford: Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1977), pp. 34-48.
- 2 Arthur James Allen, *A Whaler and Trader in the Arctic* (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 23-33.
- 3 Bob Karolevitz, "Baseball Below Zero," *ALASKA SPORTSMAN*², March 1963, p. 24.
- 4 *Nome News*, February 24, 1900.
- 5 Bill Roppel to the author, March 4, 1983.
- 6 Bob Armond to the author, February 11, 1982.
- 7 *Nome Pioneer Press*, May 16, 1908.
- 8 *Nome Gold Digger*, June 5, 1908.
- 9 *Nome Gold Digger*, June 20, 1908.
- 10 *Nome Gold Digger*, June 22, 1908.
- 11 John B. Wallace, "Three Strikes was Out," *The ALASKA SPORTSMAN*², November 1939, p. 17.
- 12 Wallace, "Three Strikes Was Out," p. 23.
- 13 *Fairbanks Daily News*, June 22, 1908.
- 14 William Guile, director of public relations, National Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, New York, to the author, February 18, 1983. Kathie Gallagher Perz, director of alumni relations, St. Martin's College, Lacey, Washington, to the author, March 1, 1983.

"My summer in Anchorage (1982) was a turning point in my life. I missed my family, my girlfriend very much. Joe Armstrong became a life-long friend, and Jim Dietz and Ron Vaughan brought me into maturity including the fact that hitting the road is part of baseball life. Vaughn switching me from pitching as a fresher man in college to a hitter has had obvious—and happy—results."



—MARK MCGWIRE,
First Baseman, Oakland A's,
1986. NBC: Anchorage Glacier
Pilot, 1982.

12

Baseball's Last Frontier

Alaska, which makes giant Texas look like a geological hunk and Wichita as busy as midtown Manhattan (New York) as a population center, is advertised as the Last Frontier, Land of the Midnight Sun and the Great Land.

It's all of these and, incredibly, it is—again and often—the Home of the United States' Non-Professional Baseball Champions. And that's the unlikely development since Ray Dumont first coaxed his hometown into building the stadium that now bears his name.

To suggest that Hawaii came up with baseball reasonably soon would not be difficult to conjure for a couple of practical reasons. For one, the weather would encourage a doubleheader on Christmas Day. For another, the Johnny Appleseed of baseball, Alexander Cartwright, got to the islands and became a merchant prince, long before he died at the turn of the century, then an old man.

No one ever will know for sure when baseball ever was invented

because, truthfully, it just might have evolved from other games played in England. But Cartwright, a New York engineer, did create a pointed square or diamond and adjust to nine men on a side, nine innings, and 90 feet between bases. He played his first game under those conditions at the Elysian Fields, Hoboken, New Jersey in 1845. Then shortly thereafter, in search of his own financial dream he headed for the great unknown.

En route, he dropped off ideas for "base ball," as it was then referred, in two words. Even taught it to the Indians. So maybe you wonder, as I do, whether when George Armstrong Custer's Seventh Cavalry regimental troops played ball outside Fort Lincoln near Bismarck, North Dakota, before traipsing west to the Little Big Horn in the Montana Territory, the Sioux and accompanying Indian nations were learning to hit-and-run in baseball, too? After all, the same warm, windy June 25 in 1876 that they cut down Custer, St. Louis was playing Chicago on the west bank of the Mississippi. It was, you know, the first baseball season of the National League.

But if the Hawaiians got an early start because Cartwright quickly was among them and, as indicated, as far back as 1947 the territory had a hall club good enough to travel all the way to Wichita to challenge in the National, how 'n the cold blue blazes did the warm-weather game even get to Alaska?

Alaska, known as Russian America until Secretary of State William H. Seward purchased it in 1867, was regarded for years as "Seward's folly." In betting parlance, the several-million-dollar price was an overlay, compared with Thomas Jefferson's acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase and Peter Minuit's steal of the Empire State Building and other future Manhattan assets for a few heads and a couple of Hap Dumont's old annual NBC guides.

Alaskan history, as far back as 1741 when a Danish navigator named Vitus Bering sailed east from Siberia under Russian service, began actually because Czar Peter the Great wondered whether Asia and America were joined. Not, of course, when the straits between them were named for discoverer Bering.

Truth is, fur-trading greed in the Kodiak and Aleutian Islands sapped the area and created such cut-throat mayhem among huddled-up brigands that the vast, lonely Alaskan area wasn't safe. That's when they tabbed it "Seward's folly," the purchase for \$7,200,000, which, by the way, was less than two cents an acre.

Gold, the mad metal, was struck in 1880. The fabulous gold lode in the Yukon Territory was located in 1886. Salmon canneries, hunting, fishing, exotic animals, delightful scenery and summer vacationing would turn the timber-tall, mineral-rich vastness into a place to live and visit. Nearing the 1900 census, Alaska already had passed Wyoming in population with more

than 500,000.

But in the vastness of an area as wide as the distance from Maine to the state of Washington, from Anchorage down at the southern tip to the frozen north at Point Barrow, where famed Will Rogers and pilot Wiley Post lost their lives in a plane crash one summer's day in 1935, how and when did baseball ever come?

Opinions vary, emphasizing the possibility of installation of a railroad just before World War I, but I'd bet a Kodiak bear if not a Koolah fig that back there when men mushed madly in the gold rush era, somebody must have used a spare moment to wield a broken axe handle at a frozen snowball or maybe—forgive the crassness—refrigerated dog dung.

Still, Alaska would be expected to be far back in baseball because of the distance between communities, the relatively few people and short summer season. After all, as longtime Fairbanks general manager Don Dennis notes, the Eskimos, Aleuts and Indians, indigenous to Russian America, prefer basketball to baseball. They prove themselves obviously smart. Who wants to spend more time outside than possible in or near the Arctic circle when it's possible to cuddle up in your own igloo, a more spacious Quonset hut or even a modern gym?

But Alaska is No. 1 in non-professional baseball, as witness National Baseball Congress championships for 20 years. Since 1962, a season of instant success when Fairbanks went to the finals before losing to the Wichita Dreamliners, 7-6, Alaska has whirled like a willow through the tournament. The willow, for sake of us hot house lilies, is a wicked wind that whips from the Aleutians down the coast to Patagonia.

A man who came in like a willow is most responsible for Alaska's lofty position in semi-pro baseball. He's flamboyant H. A. (Red) Boucher, so firmly entrenched as the father of Alaska's baseball bride, hailed even by rival Anchorage, which followed his Fairbanks' leadership in upgrading. Although, curiously, Boucher never won an NBC championship, his Goldpanners subsequently won five championships. Anchorage, which beat Boucher to the trophy, won three. Kenai prevailed once, and the Mat-Su Miners prevailed in 1987.

Overall, Boucher would win 337 games and lose only 118, taking his Panners to 30 states and to Japan, but it was Wichita and the national championship that inspired him. "If," he told Richard H. Johnston of *Sports Illustrated* in a delightful magazine piece in June, 1969, "if you're a Trojan, you can eat cement!"

Henry Aristide Boucher, explaining why they call him "Red," was born at New Hampshire in 1921 to a French-Canadian father and an Irish mother named McNally. Pop pronounced the name "Boo-slay," but when Red was deposited in St. Vincent's Orphanage in Fall River, Massachusetts, he Americanized the name in self-defense to rhyme with "voucher,"



GOLDPANNER: Red Boucher, shown with son Johnny in Wichita, is regarded as the father of Alaska's non-pro baseball strides. Anchorage, though a rival to Red's early Fairbank's leadership, salutes Boucher whose Goldpanners have won five NBC championships, even though he himself managed none.

as Johnston noted.

Johnston, traveling to Alaska for "Having a Ball at Midnight," was smitten, understandably, by the fact that Alaskans celebrate the summer solstice with a ballgame played at midnight, often without lights. For the June 21 contest, begun at 10:30 p.m. and lasting often until nearly 2 a.m., lights really are necessary only if a purple fog rolls in.

The *Sports Illustrated* author also was impressed with Boucher personally and, by phone, I can appreciate that. The 60-plus sportsman-politician has some of the charisma of a former friend, then Massachusetts' junior senator from Massachusetts, John F. Kennedy encouraged him to seek fame and fortune in Alaska.

The time was 1958. Red, like Pop, a Navy chief petty officer in World War I, had turned to bell bottoms at age 16 and completed a 20-year tour, serving aboard carrier *Enterprise* during World War II. When he and a

partner shared \$25,000 first prize on a popular television program—"Name That Tune"—the Navy assigned him to a national recruiting tour. That's when he met H.K., who suggested Alaska as a place to get "involved."

Ultimately, beginning as a sporting goods' salesman like that Wichita fella (Dumont) who asked about "Red's Eskimos," Boucher became mayor of Fairbanks, Alaska's lieutenant governor, twice candidate for governor. And proving that even Anchorage had no hard feelings for the political hair shirt who did much for Fairbanks, four times smaller, he unsuccessfully sought the mayoral chair at Anchorage in 1988.

Meanwhile, he retained a state legislative seat from Anchorage and set up a research consultant company. He's as dynamic as when he battled as lieutenant governor for the Trans-Alaska pipeline and also, as Fairbanks' mayor, led to an old Seabee slogan—"Can Do"—after a flood devastated Fairbanks in '67.

That's the way he approached baseball as a competitive challenge and spectator appeal sport for Alaska, which had no professional teams. To his delight, as Johnston phrased it, Boucher discovered "baseball fever burning in the Arctic light."

Undaunted by mountain ranges that walled off Fairbanks from southeastern Alaska, he "audaciously" proposed that Fairbanks help end Alaska's lingering isolation by sending a ball club (the Goldpanners) to the NBC. They thought he was as daft as a sun bather on an ice flow.

Boucher, however, had an idea as well as a high regard for Red Dedeaux, long-time college championship coach at the University of Southern California. Red approached Dedeaux about good summer jobs, NCAA approved, that ought to be attractive to college players as well as the allure of an area seldom if any had seen. The work would be hard, but the recreation plenty, including the best trout this side of the rainbow.

Dedeaux liked the idea because he didn't want to lose players prematurely to pro ball—for the kids' future good and his immediate success—and he was aware that if 60 college games were good, 120 would be the virtual equivalent of a minor-league professional season. So potential Hall of Famer Tom Seaver and other future big-league players were recommended to Boucher, including Andy Messersmith, Dave Kingman, Brent Strom and others who will be mentioned in the text or statistical index.

Boucher's wrist-twisting at Fairbanks was recalled merrily by a small corner pharmacist who struck it rich on the oil slopes. By then, hooked, Tom Miklautsch helped found the Goldpanners' booster group, the Nugget Club. But back there he winced when Red wanted \$200 for each player's uniform, a liberal amount that would help the cause, listing only the name of the sponsor on the back of each shirt.

Said Miklautsch, "We weren't just underdogs. We were too far below

even. Just for that. In a field of 32, at Wichita we figured to be 33rd."

But, no, bless the salmon totem pole, the Panners missed by just that one run against the Dreamliners in the '62 finals. They'd caught the fancy of the crowd. Small wonder that when the NBC's executive vice-president and general manager, Larry Davis, flew to Fairbanks several years later to attend the Midnight Sun game and present the NBC's Manager-of-the-Decade award to Fairbanks' Jim Dietz, he hailed the Panners:

"We're always glad to see Fairbanks come to the tournament. In Wichita we've got another name for the Goldpanners—"Money in the Bank."



WILHE'S CAP MIDNIGHT, RED: Hap Dumont, who got along with Red Boucher like seven with eleven, might have been asking that question in one of their warm greetings. Midnight was Fairbanks' sixteenth player—a bear.

Boucher and Dumont, two colorful characters, immediately formed a mutual admiration society, as indicated in Red's tender letter to Ann after Hap's death. Also, in his remembrance of the man he first met that Cinderella season:

"Although he talked about my 'Eskimos' and, I think, thought we'd come in on a dog sled, Hap was great—imaginative and creative—and

Lawrence Stadium hooked mighty large to our players, some of whom had come not only through Deleaux but, also, from Frank Sauget of Arizona University and the editor of *Collegiate Baseball*, Abe Channin."

Two years later when the Panners fell another game short, losing to Live Hubbard's Wichita Glassmen, Boucher enlivened the tournament with Dumont's connivance and blessing. First, Red cleared it with the Alaska governor. Next, he contacted Dumont for approval.

With a straight face, Hap said, no, he couldn't see anything wrong with Fairbank's 16th player on the tournament roster having the name of "Midnight." No, and Dumont couldn't find anything in the NBC rules that prevented that roster spot having been reserved for a black bear. Hap's only regret, probably, was that it wasn't a polar.

Anyway, Boucher flew to Wichita with a tranquilized black bear. The animal's presence created quite a stir—great!—but Red was disappointed that his bench warmers decided to watch from the bullpen when the bear was deposited in the ball club's dugout.

To avoid having his players psyched, Boucher avoided the headquarters' hotel, the Broadview, overlooking the Arkansas River and the stadium. Good thing, he explained. "That damned bear screamed all night all over the place and wound up biting me in the ass," Red remembered descriptively. "I got 'waivers' on him."

As mentioned, though he served as the springboard for college players' domination and Alaska's in the NBC, Boucher couldn't quite get over the championship hurdle at Wichita. And not only did he establish a rivalry by which Anchorage came like an avalanche, but also a relationship with a Colorado man who saw the early wisdom in college-developed teams.

Like Boucher self-made and then some, Bauldie Moschetti, son of a coal miner killed in a cave-in, got out of the mines himself as quickly as possible, suffering chronic asthma. But he became successful in the liquor business and other enterprises. He spent the bulk of his free time and money working with kids in baseball. Ultimately, he had his own ball club, a good one.

The Boulder (Colorado) Baseline Collegians, operated by Moschetti and associates from 1964 through '80, won 796 games and lost only 198. The magic carpet of that lofty .795 percentage carried the Collegians to four NBC championships.

In 1966, only their second season at Wichita, seasoned by a strong state tournament at Grand Junction, Boulder took the title with a 5-1 victory over West Point, Mississippi. Boulder's pitching was brilliant, an ERA of 1.13 for 64 innings. Moschetti's third baseman, Ray Henningsen, was chosen MVP, hitting .458 and stealing four bases. Reliever Frank Carbajal allowed just one hit in four innings.

Watching Dumont load up Boulder's schedule as defending champi-



PENNANT PAISANO: Handworking Bauldie Moschetti, who came up the hard way, won an easier way when he recruited college players he trained to win championships for Boulder, Colorado, and to frustrate friendly foe Red Boucher of Alaska.

ons, Moschetti said he felt that Hap didn't want to see the Collegians repeat. Dumont agreed, honest Injun. "I liked that," recalled Bauldie, now retired. "Hap was an honest man as well as a cunning and smart one."

But Boulder made it, 5-3, over the Hawaii Islanders in a championship game in which Frank Duffy, later a major-league infielder, starred at shortstop. He was MVP, a result of an overall .407, plus two hits, three stolen bases and three runs in the title game. Again, brilliant pitching, an 1.91 earned run average, was a difference. Bauldie recalled:

"But of that series developed a warm friendship with a former Marine, Ed Wain, who ran the Hawaiian team. After our games, his or mine or ours, we'd sit in a Wichita Italian restaurant and over salami, cheese, and Italian bread, we'd replay our games, air our problems and established a friendship that still exists."

Actually, Bauldie had a warm spot for Red Boucher, too. "He was like Dumont, one of a kind," Moschetti remembered. "But I did delight in doing him in one year when he flew in late and Hap held the game for him a few minutes. An extrovert, extremely personable and likable, Red had to say a few words over the field mike. He noted the NBC championship logos on our sleeves and said, 'Boulder better take a good, long look at those

patches because we're going to take them away tonight."

Moschetti chortled. "I think my guys needed a mental lift and Red gave it to them. We beat Fairbanks and I crowded, 'Yeah, Red, and we still got those patches for 365 more days.'"

Although beaten by Fairbanks in a title game in 1974, Boulder won two more NBC titles. The collegians snapped three straight for Alaska in '75, a result of a four-run rally in the eighth inning to beat the Panners, 6-4. Mike Colbern, Boulder right fielder, was MVP and the Collegians' Don Hannah the leading pitcher. Hannah finished what he started in the title game, won on a homer by designated hitter Terry Bogener and shortstop Wayne Krenchicki's tie-breaker.

Moschetti's kids won a fourth time in 1978, again as a result of a late-inning rally, breaking a tie game with two runs in the eighth and three in the ninth. The final, 8-3, made it look as easy as Bob Ferris did with his bat. Moschetti's muscle man hammered a two-run homer, giving him five for the tournament, and 11 RBIs. Keith Creel's seven-inning relief performance yielded just one run.

"Obviously," recalled Bauldie, "I believed in good pitching, but plenty of hustle," too, as those late-inning victories would indicate. When we first went to Wichita, Bob Boyd, as a veteran major leaguer there, was prophetic. "We'll beat you now because you're young and you'll make mistakes, but you're coming."

Young championship teams weren't all from Colorado or from Alaska. For instance, led by Vin Hayes, who would become a hard-hitting outfielder-first baseman for whom the Philadelphia Phillies later gave Cleveland a bundle of talent, Liberal of Kansas won the 1979 title.

The Bee Jays walloped Santa Maria, California, in the championship game, 9-2. Liberal's Craig McMurtry coasted with a one-hitter for six innings. The Kansas team's star pitcher, Mike Moore, was Most Valuable in the tournament, but the final game star was the light-hitting shortstop, Gary D'Onofrio. The ninth batter in the Liberal line-up, he hit .580 overall and had three title-game hits.

"And he made all of the plays," wrote the *Eagle's* Bob Lutz, mindful he had seen another great one on the way up a couple of years earlier. Ozzie Smith, a Gold Glove acrobat at shortstop for the St. Louis Cardinals as a \$2,300,000 superstar, was a skinny kid who came in from college on the west coast to play the summer of 1976 for Clarinda, Iowa.

Years later, like many a town team star put up by folks in the 5,600 population hamlet with which he played, Smith remembered the summer fondly. He also remembers what could happen in the NBC if, as will be explained further about Ray Dumont in the next chapter, a team lost an early game.

"We had to be out there at 8 in the morning, dew on the grass."

recalled The Wizard of Oz, "but, you know, it was so early, it was quiet and peaceful, kind of nice."

Clarinda couldn't make it Smith's summer there. The A's second loss, dropping them to third place, came from eventual champion Fairbanks. But the small Iowa town persisted to win the NBC in 1981, a salute to the old-fashioned concept Dumont favored. The A's, as they were called, scored in the last of the 11th to beat heavily favored Liberal, 8-7.

The exciting finish resulted from an overthrow to first base. Rusty Peltus scored from second, climaxing an unbeaten tournament record. Clarinda's third baseman, Keith Mucha, hit .550 to be MVP. Teammate Chuck Mathews nailed down outstanding-pitcher recognition by working seven-inning of one-run relief.

Another team, like Clarinda, that had knocked at the door and found no one home, achieved its first championship the next year, 1982. Santa Maria, California, almost blew it early, routed by Anchorage in the semifinals, 11-1, but the loss merely set up the extra game that always made Dumont purr.

Santa Maria not only won handily, 11-4, but first baseman Mike Aldrete, headed for the San Francisco Giants, hit as if he were . . . uh . . . Willie McCovey or Orlando Cepeda or Willie Mays. He drove in five runs. But, wait, right fielder Dave Hangle was even better.

Hangle, headed for the Seattle Mariners, had one of the most fabulous games in tournament history. He went for "5 for 5," belting two homers and driving in four runs. The University of California-Berkeley athlete had a record-tying six home runs and, in addition, batted .563 with 19 RBIs. As Lutz noted, Hangle won the NBC's Triple Crown—average, homers, RBIs—and had an astonishing 38 total bases and 1.188 slugging percentage.

The tournament's leading pitching effort, by marked contrast with Hangle's hitting, was a two-hitter by Anchorage's John Hower in the first game between the two finalists. So even in defeat, Alaska, like Colorado, was prevalent. Yep, even when co-conspirators.

Moschetti remembered it. "One year when neither of us—none of us when you consider the two Alaska teams—was winning, our side got into a late-inning fight with Anchorage. Here I was, an old guy, trying to break it up, when, suddenly, I heard someone giggle. Darn if my club and Anchorage hadn't faked the fight for the fun of it. I'll bet Dumont liked that."

One Dumont might not have liked—and certainly Bauldie didn't—was a trick play that, Moschetti insisted, cost his team \$12,000 and, more important, the NBC championship.

In a key game with Anchorage in 1980, Bobby Meechem, later an infielder with the New York Yankees, lifted what would have been a game-winning home run over the right-field fence. Trouble was, as Moschetti

remembered it, with only two umpires working the game rather than three, the Alaskan right fielder had a trick up his sleeve or, rather, another ball in his hip pocket. As he raced back to the wall, he grabbed the hidden ball, wheeled and threw to the infield.

Another time, Boulder lost a game at Wichita when a trapped line drive was ruled a legal catch, setting up an inning ending triple play. "The ump insisted the other shortstop had caught the ball, but we knew he'd scooped it," Moschetti shrugged off history.

Bauldie lost another tough one, but, at least, he prompted Hap Dumont to change tournament rules. First, hopeful of keeping a promising schedule, the promoter began a program with a soggy field and dubious weather prospects. Boulder took a one-run lead into the sixth inning, but the other side scored two before rain washed out the game.

The short-order defeat, 2-1, cost Boulder a 15 game winning streak at Wichita. Moschetti protested. Dumont couldn't and wouldn't change a legal-length decision, but he did change his own tournament rules for the future so that no game could be cut short by weather. "That's the way it will be," said Larry Davis.

"I miss Hap, but I also miss Larry Davis, Wichita and my kids," said Moschetti, who also is missed. A chunky man, he wore a buttoned up black jacket, no matter the heat, and always scribbled his line-up on an old cigarette package.

The players, most of them recruited by Moschetti and able to work profitably in the Rockies' beautiful summer recreation areas, miss the "old man," too. Among them are present or former big leaguers such as Hubie Brooks, Bob Horner, Rich Dauer, Roy Smalley, Burt Hooton and Dick Ruthven.

The memories gush out of Moschetti. Like Pat Moriarity's great outfield catch, greater throw and catcher Bob Anderson's rock-ribbed tag that saved one championship game. "The next day the kid who tried to bowl over Anderson wound up with his arm in a sling."

Anderson was a great quarterback and running back on the University of Colorado football team. "I had a pretty good football team, too," said Bauldie, "with three All-Americans at one time—Anderson, Jim Street of Texas and Mark Marcus of Stanford."

Moschetti detested long hair, a youthful rebellion of the 1960s. He ragged resisting first baseman Clay Westlake. Finally it became either or. Next day Westlake showed up skin-headed. Big league scouts ribbed Moschetti as a martinet. When Bauldie sympathized with a black player over an abrasive thigh injured, suffered sliding, the player corrected him. "That's not a 'strawberry,' Coach, it's a 'black' berry." Bauldie still likes the courageous kid's crack.

A Colorado player who kept the Collegians loose with his sense of

humor, Frank Carbajal, had a chance after a game with a lightly regarded team from Slater, Iowa. Slater's pitcher was a young left hander who warm ups indicated he was what the trade calls a "junk" pitcher, i.e., of with little velocity. With control and change-ups, the Slater pitcher shut out the overconfident Collegians.

Afterward, Carbajal sympathized with an unpraised Moschetti. "I'm sorry, Coach, but you ought to know we'd be beat—seven or Slater!"

Moschetti found solace in a sign even more than his team's pixy. Litt Water hoisted a billboard at its village limits, according to Bauldie. The sign read:

"THIS IS THE TEAM THAT BEAT THE BOULDER (COLO) COLLEGIANS, THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONS."

Overall, from the time the flaming redhead, Boucher, came to Alaska with ants in his pants and baseball as his idea of a recreation and spectator sport, the Last Frontier has been No. 1 in the NBC, as reflected by those 11 titles and 10 runners-up in the last 20 national tournaments. But, curiously enough it was Boucher and the interior team, Fairbanks, that broke the ice with a surprising second place in 1962, it was Anchorage, the port metropolis, that brought the first title to Alaska.

The title of Anchorage would be shared by many, most certainly by enough talking, long-time former general manager, Joe Armstrong. Anchorage's nickname, Glacier Pilots, is as adventurous as the man for whom it was named, Bob Reeve. Reeve, later forming an Alaska airline, flew the vast north as a courageous pioneer indeed when others were in need. His wife, Tilly, is a sponsor and director of the ball club.

But front and center in the fight for braggin' rights in Alaska against friendly rival Boucher was Armstrong. He succeeded John Stepp as anchor man for Anchorage. At 72, battling a heart problem, Joe was most helpful with this book. He's a native of Everett, Washington, a former national guardsman. For years, he was a journeyman lineman and line foreman in the U.S.'s upper Northwest.

Armstrong moved to Alaska in 1956 and became business manager for electrical programs for the new Alaskan state. Fact is, you might say he cowbooped the apprenticeship of the ball players he helped lure to Alaska with good summer jobs, good competition and the chance to enjoy the giant open forest and streams at their summer's best.

"We've never had too much trouble with our young men," observed Armstrong with his deep-toned chuckle, "because after you've had a kid behind a jackhammer all day and then on a ball field, he's too tired for mischief."

Besides, the fishing is fetching, particularly the trout, and only the

most stubborn or determined or stony-eyed will spend spare time trying to pan gold in the area about which Jack London wrote. Also the Bard of the Yukon, Robert W. Service, author of "The Shooting of Dan McGrew," and, as *Sports Illustrated's* Richard W. Johnston noted, the man who wrote:

"There are strange things done in the midnight sun that would make your blood run cold."

Including the unlikely, i.e., baseball as Alaska's prominence, reflected first when Boucher fast-talked folks in 5,000 population Fairbanks for the first Alaska trip to Wichita, 1962.

There, you'll recall, Fairbanks came home only a run short behind champion Wichita (Dreamliners). Again, in 1964 when Tim Seaver was a 19-year-old California kid, bound for USC and a future Hall of Fame career in big league baseball, the Panners couldn't win over Wichita's Service Glass.

So it was Anchorage that won it all, remarkable, in the Glacier Pilots' first season in existence, 1969, though Wichita's Larry Davis recalled that



HUSKIES FROM THE FAR NORTH: Two Fairbanks players, Fredkie Horn (left) and Bob Maxwell, pose with the real canine McCoe—an Alaskan husky.

a team from the 200,000 population tip had tried previously. Anchorage and Armstrong copied Fairbanks and Boucher's method of collecting summer bats. They had built a new park a few years earlier, named for a champion of local progress, William F. Mulcahy. A manager obtained from Chapman College, Paul Deese, put together the team that beat Fairbanks for the Alaska state NBC title, then, at Wichita, the Glacier Pilots whipped Liberal for the big title, 5-1.

Anchorage's leading hitter, Chris Chaunbliss, a first base husky who went on to hit the long ball for Cleveland, the Yankees and Atlanta, was the batting and base running star, as previously noted. Also, Jack Brushert, who followed coach Deese from Chapman, hit a decisive three-run homer in the eighth inning. Later, Brushert would succeed Deese in the Anchorage organization.

In 1970 Anchorage had a team so good that the Pilots lost only 10 games all summer, but in Wichita, facing another NBC trophy champion, state Bob Sullivan of Grand Rapids, they lost twice in succession to the Michigan champs, 5-4 and 4-0. Anchorage out-hit Grand Rapids, but couldn't solve a dandy left handed reliever, Rusty Gerhardt. Working five appearances and winning three out of the bullpen, Gerhardt allowed only eight hits in 17 innings, struck out 22—and did not yield an earned run.

Suddenly there was a phenomenon almost as colorful as the midnight sun game—hmm, wonder how come Hap Dumont never tried that in Wichita with the lights?—and it reflected all of Alaska's respect for what Fairbanks' Red Boucher did for baseball there. For example, after Fairbanks' first NBC tournament, persuading champion Wichita Dreamliners to come up for the annual summer oddity.

Ever since, visiting teams have come then and at other times, varying the baseball diet for teams run with the front-office efficiency of many professional teams and better than some.

The longest-day-of-the-year game at the summer solstice offers a full 24 hours of daylight in the vast Tanana Valley. The high-noon-at-midnight game, apparently begun as far back as 1906. Over the years with more than 5,000 shoe-horning into Growden Park—considering the small population the Yankees, for example, would have to field 1,000,000 to match the endurance impact—the game never has required artificial lights. Fairbanks is a mere 160 miles south of the Arctic circle, so the sun is just beginning to set in the north as the game begins at 10:45 p.m. and some three hours later beginning to rise again. You're right—in the north.

If "big" Anchorage, 361 miles south as the crow or eagle flies, envies attention Fairbanks gets, it's not nearly so much as a result of phenomenon mentioned when the Hatfields and McCoys, the Glacier Pilots and the Panners suddenly met not for the state title, but for the national.

For the first time, Anchorage and Fairbanks crossed bats at Wichita in

a title game in 1971. For one, Joe Armstrong was excited as when he hustled down to San Diego a few years later (1976) as one of the Pilots' brightest graduates, Ruddy Jones, capped a 22 victory season with presentation of the Cy Young award. The frizzled hair blond, who still talks glowingly about his Alaskan experience, tied legendary Christy Mathewson's record with 66 plus consecutive innings without yielding a walk.

The Jones boy pioneered the big name futures of Alaska baseball, manifest in '71 when Anchorage right fielder Bruce Blochle, headed for the bigs, put on a powerful show as MVP hitting .536. Curiously, gifted Dave Winfield, the University of Minnesota's three sport super-star, performed admirably for Fairbanks as a relief pitcher.

But in that first title game confrontation of the Alaska rivals, the clutch player was Iowa State's Larry Corrigan. Corrigan, who would return to Anchorage as an assistant coach, drove in a ninth inning run as the Pilots capped an unbeaten tournament by nipping Fairbanks, 5-4.

A year later Fairbanks won its first NIBC title, managed by Jim Dietz, who deserves a special bow. A former college infielder from Oregon and successful head coach at San Diego State, Dietz came aboard for seven summers at Fairbanks and compiled a brilliant 348-151 record, including seven successive trips to Wichita and four national titles.

Dietz, a company man in the finest sense of the word, not only had enough hobbies of his own—gardening, carpentry, electrician, painter and a kids' counselor—but, he'd marshal time to collect empty aluminum cans. Why? Because the aluminum had resale value, and the summer Alaskan programs needed all the financial help possible.

Dietz, honored by the NIBC as Manager of the Decade honor, was so good that when he'd left the Panners after panning championship gold for Fairbanks, Anchorage asked him to come aboard in 1981.

By then, as noted, Fairbanks began a string of three straight championships that gladdened the competitive heart of Red Boucher, no longer active. They won over Anchorage in '72, a result of a tie-breaking homer by Steve Swisher, 3-2. Swisher also would play big-league ball as a catcher.

The Most Valuable Player was San Diego's Kerry Dineen, Fairbanks center fielder, who hit 480 and stole five bases. But reflecting the versatility of Winfield, who could have signed out of Minnesota in pro basketball and football, too, the future New York Yankee slugger hit two homers as Fairbanks' left fielder.

Years later, reminiscing for Bob Lutz, Winfield recalled, "I don't remember a lot about Wichita except for those bugs in the trees—those locusts—but I know I had a pretty good tournament. When I went back to Fairbanks later to speak, I wondered why a city man stayed in that small town for an entire summer, but then I looked again at the majestic beauty of the town. Playing there allowed me to really mature. It's the best place in

the country to play ball."

The best at winning, too, at least for the moment, Fairbanks became only the sixth team to win back-to-back titles with a 16-6 victory over Liberal, Kansas, in the 1973 final. Fairbanks' Gene Delyon had three hits in the final, but teammate Lee Iorg was voted most outstanding when he batted an even .500.

A Liberal outfielder that season, a Southern Cal rookie from San Angelo, Texas, was Steve Kemp. Kemp played so well for the Bee Jays that he not only got a full scholarship at USC—see, the colleges scouted Wichita as well as the pros!—he was invited to Fairbanks the following summer.

In 1974 when Fairbanks became the only team to win three straight NIBC titles, other than Fort Wayne with four in the late '40s and a four-year Wichita reign in the early '60s, Kemp was the MVP. The Goldpanners beat Boulder, 7-5, a result of a grand-slam crusher by second baseman Jeff Ellison in the fourth inning. Fairbanks lefty Floyd Hannister, with a date in the majors like Kemp, pitched four innings of protective one-hit relief.

Kemp voted for Liberal over Fairbanks as a summer visitor, scoring one for Kansas. He voted for Wichita, too. "Every summer I played in Wichita was good for me. I don't know if I'd made the majors except for those summers. As for Liberal, it was neat because it was first summer away from home. I was the youngest guy on the team and played with guys like Steve Barikowski (pro football quarterback.)

"My job at Liberal was cutting grass, but the better I played ball, the less grass I cut."

With a long-distance pow-wow that included legendary Jack O'Toole, a scout for the Montreal Expos who had coached for Anchorage since 1969, and a magic voice on Alaskan radio, Dick Lobdell, Armstrong set up a chain recollections. One most interesting, I thought, was Lobdell's.

That is, recalling the 1976 Wichita showdown between Anchorage and Fairbanks as the best ever. After running back a tape, I think he might be right. For one thing, over the course of that season's play, Fairbanks had been unable to handle Anchorage back home, losing 14 of 18 games. In the seasonal tournament each team beat the other by a run in extra innings, setting up a classic final.

The final game was scoreless into the 10 innings when Fairbanks second baseman Jim Armstrong and first baseman Chick Valley drove in runs. Finishing magnificently as the outstanding player, giving Fairbanks a sixth straight appearance in the championship game and fourth NIBC title in five years, Greg Harris pitched a two-hitter, 2-0.

Over the years as Boucher's replacement as Fairbanks' general manager, Don Dennis became the architect of the Alaskan league. After all, Fairbanks and Anchorage couldn't play each other constantly. Dennis, a

native of Pueblo, Colorado, and a graduate of South Colorado State, became a sports writer who discovered the wonders of the NBC when covering for the *Grand Junction Eagle*.

Boucher, impressed with Dennis as business manager at Grand Junction, lured him to Fairbanks with a combination newspaper baseball job. Ultimately, Dennis became managing editor there and then general manager of the *Goldpanners*. His success with Fairbanks and, as commissioner of Alaska for the National Baseball Congress, is no greater than in persuading Kenai, Palmer, North Pole and Mat-su to field teams. Not hummers, either.

To illustrate, Kenai's Peninsula Oilers won the national championship in 1977, topping Fairbanks in the title game, 6-3. Fairbanks forced the tournament to a seventh game by beating Kenai earlier on title night, but the Oilers won the title in the 11th inning of the showdown. Mike Bodziker, a World Series pitching hero for Baltimore in 1983, was the winning pitcher. The decisive run, forced in, came on a base on balls to Kenai's Howie Shapiro, who had done enough to make opposing pitching timid. He homered and drove in four runs.

Fairbanks, back in the big one, ripped Liberal pitching ace Mike Moore early in the championship game, 1980, and won by an 8-4 score. Moore hadn't suffered a tournament loss in seven decisions. Center fielder Kevin McReynolds of Liberal, driving in two runs and tournament MVP, was another big-league of the future.

Anchorage and Fairbanks were runners-up in 1982 and 1983, to Santa Maria, California, and to Grand Rapids, Michigan. As mentioned, Mike Hangel was 'the poor man's Babe Ruth' for Santa Maria in the first instance, 11-4. In the second the Sullivans of Grand Rapids hit as hard as boss man Bob could roar, belting at a team average of .370, romping over Fairbanks in the finale, 11-1.

Only once was Grand Rapids reduced to tepid tap water in that one, a tournament in which designated hitter-outfielder Curt Morgan drove in 17 runs and won the MVP award. The Sullivans were shut out by Hutchinson, Kansas, early in the tournament. They call it "Sully Ball," the close-the-gates-mercy-nauling administration by Grand Rapids, beginning again with an opening 19-1 walloping of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, in 1984 and climaxed with an 8-2 title-game triumph over Liberal.

Before losing one game to Anchorage, 10-7, Grand Rapids had a 28-game winning streak and, gaining their fourth title and second straight, had never finished lower than fifth in eight tournament seasons. Commented sponsor field-fireman Sullivan, "All we do is play like a team—to win."

A coveted third straight was denied Sullivan, however, as Liberal came back for manager Mike Boulanger in '85, beating the North Pole Nicks of Alaska in the last game, 6-2. Earlier in the tournament, the Nicks handed

the Bee Jays their only loss, 8-4. When Liberal's Kerry Richardson drouned and homered, driving in three runs, he summed up Liberal's third NRC title:

"We *owd* them that one."

The NRC tournament finals in 1986 and '87 were by the same score, 11-8. In the first instance, Anchorage came back to the winner's circle over Grand Rapids. In the second, the Mat-Su Miners of Alaska won over the Wichita Bronco.

Reflecting the intensity of NBC competition, Anchorage's siling old-guard guy, Joe Armstrong, chortled in recollection of his greatest thrill. "Watching Sullivan walk out of the park with his head down," old Joe needed the man from Michigan.

Those guys from Alaska are a hardy breed, which you'd expect if you spent much of the time *now* deep in Lower Slohovia, but they laugh more than they swear and, obviously, win more than they lose.

They chuckled amusedly over a story written by a reporter fascinated either with his own imagination or Mickey Hatcher's. He wrote that the former University of Oklahoma football-baseball player leaped onto an ice-flue in Cook Inlet back in 1976 and wrestled a polar bear. Still, they acknowledge, he *did* want to pet a wild black bear cub on a return from Palmer to Anchorage.

As Red Boucher could have told Hatcher from that trip with "Midnight" to Wichita, where the bear left its print on the town and on Boucher's posterior, a bear is a thing to fool about, especially if, as likely, a cub's momma is likely to be a quick trundle around. Mickey, they figure, wouldn't have been able to flop entertainingly around the bases on a muddy day, like a trained seal, much less become an NRC graduate who reached the majors.

At the time this book was prepared, Anchorage had 21 graduates in the majors. Fairbanks had sent 99 over the years into the big leagues. At the moment, Joe Armstrong was keeping up a pen-pal relationship with Mark McGwire, the pink-cheeked Oakland slugger who set a rookie record for homers in the majors, 39, in 1987.

They tell tall tales about home runs, just as they do their fishing and game in Alaska. They remember three hit in one game by rangy Dave Kingman, a colorful major-league character. With Fairbanks, as Don Dennis remembered, Kingman, a hermit in the majors, lived on the river and caught and cooked his own breakfast.

One game the all-or-nothing-at-all punster hit two home runs before the opposition, far behind, brought in a new pitcher, Dick Baldwin, who was teased to "lay one in there" in a desire to see how far Kingman could hit it.

They still talk about the third one. "Over the fence and over house



MARK HIS WORDS: Joe Armstrong, a driving force in Anchorage, Alaska's, tournament success, had a warm spot from Day One for the power of Mark McGwire. As a rookie, McGwire set a major league home run record at Oakland with 39 homers.



A SHOCKING SHOCKER: Joe Carter, who belted the long ball for Wichita State University, proved he could do it in the bigs at Cleveland.

across the street," they say.

I'd liked to see that one. I guess Larry Davis would, too. Saluting Joe Carter as the former Wichita State University star became an NBC star with Boulder at a big-league power hitter at Cleveland, the tournament executive recalled the longest ball he'd ever seen hit at Wichita:

"Over the left-center field fence and against the Metropolitan Baptist church on one bounce, rolled across McLean boulevard and ended up in the river."

Davis admired it. Hap Dumont would have measured it—and added a few feet.

Yeah, and Hap would have gurgled with joy around his cigar when the 1988 tournament not only ended perhaps more dramatically than any previously, but also gave the NBC its first northwest champion since the Drain (Oregon) Red Sox topped the field in 1958. Dumont would have liked that.

This one gave the state of Washington its first championship and put an always trying Midlothian, Illinois, into a state of shock. The game with the Everett Merchants teetered like the scales of justice.

Everett, using the strong-armed relief work of Dave Wong, labeled the tournament's Most Valuable Player, went into the ninth with a one-run lead, but the weary Wong faltered and yielded a two-out homer to Mid-Sox right fielder Joe Lorenz. Midlothian, which had vaulted to a whopping six-run lead in the first inning, was on top because Lorenz, probably the most effective slugger never to get the headlines, walloped his first home run, a grand slam.

Everett tied it in the home ninth. A Thai named O. Sobotta, a University of Washington student who had 12 hits in 26 trips, doubled down the right field line to send the game into extra innings, 9-9.

Midlothian threatened to win again in the 11th. The irrepressible Lorenz tried once more with a two-out single to right field, attempting to score Paul Stevens from second. However, on a bang-bang play at the plate, Bob Lutz put it, Ryan Davis's strong throw enabled catcher Troy Rusk to make a diving tag. Plate umpire Scott Griffith's "out" call cost Midlothian a run and put manager Howie Minas into a rage. Griffith gave the heave-ho to the White Sox skipper.

In the 12th, however, Midlothian made the call seem academic when the Sox scored twice. Again, Everett was within an out of a long ride home, but the Merchants tied the score and then Rusk hit a pitch high into left field and over the wall. The three-run homer gave Everett a remarkable 14-11 victory and the title.

Wait! There's a typical NBC encore. Losing manager Minas, who had tried to pinch off the plate ump's head, was called from the concourse, where he had seethed in mounting anger, and was given the annual Hap

Dumont Award

The trophy is given annually to "a person who has made a significant contribution to amateur baseball." Howie wasn't happy, but, Hap, he was a gracious sportsman. After all, he didn't suggest the NBC make an impossible disposition of the bauble that must have seemed like a boxy prize.

"I miss the real good jukebox in a place near the ballpark in Wichita. Seriously, what sticks out in my mind about the NBC is that like playing there was like playing in a college all-star tournament. You got a chance to see guys about whom you'd heard from other schools. They were good. So were their teams."



—ROY SMALLEY, Jr.,
Infielder, Texas Rangers, Minnesota Twins, New York Yankees, Chicago White Sox, 1975; NBC: Boulder (Colorado) Collegians, 1971-73; Alaska Glacier Pilots, 1972.

13

Smiles of Recollection

FROM a Pied Piper of poodles, followed by dogs on his appointed two-mile rounds as a newsboy, to a prematurely aged, arthritic man who still hadn't owned a dog, yet loved them, Hap Dumont was a man of character and a character. People loved him, too, even though he was cursed to drooling over his cheap cigars, a slob.

Probably only one man ever put Hap and his habit into his place, but that wasn't had because, as Larry Davis remembered, it took the President to do it. Or the ex-President, anyway.

Back in 1953, shortly after leaving the White House, Harry S. Truman agreed to fly in from Kansas City to be honored by the NBC in Wichita. En route in a car from the airport to a hotel downtown, the blunt former chief executive watched Dumont suck on a cigar.

"Throw that damn thing out the window," Mr. Truman commanded Dumont did.

Curiously, though he smoked or downed eight to 10 cigars a day, dropping them in ashtrays spread around his office or on corners of desks or even in his desk, Dumont rarely smoked at home. For one, I'd be inclined to credit the intimidation of spit and polish Ann Dumont, his neat and nice wife. After all, as mentioned, "Annie" would make him take off his slacks like a Japanese when entering the home.

Herself, Mrs. Dumont, still spry and fashionable and looking younger than her years, whatever they are, had a different view of Hap and his cigar. In effect, she felt, a carryover from a childhood pacifier.

"I think he needed a cigar only to calm him in mixed company," she recalled. "At home, the only time he'd ever light up would be if company came."

Ann might be wrong. For instance, Hap's daughter, Nancy Gouvert, made an amusing point when talking affectionately about her father. Nancy, youngest of the three raised by Ann and Hap, is a registered nurse married to a farmer, Julius Gouvert, living outside of Kingman. The town is 65 miles west of Wichita, her husband's farm about 15 miles from St. Joseph's Hospital, where she works.

"Although Daddy wasn't around a lot of times, he was affectionate," she recalled. "He'd romp on the floor with us and, especially, he liked to play games with us, particularly poker."

Ann questioned poker, but I didn't, certainly not when Nancy had added, "Daddy tried to show us how to bluff."

Son Ray Wesley, a service veteran and former Texas sports editor who lives in Wichita, and stepson Ray Eden probably would agree. Ann's son, 57, is deputy insurance investigator for the state of Oregon at Salem. Like Nancy, Ray Eden also has two children.

Traditionally, the senior Dumonts would visit the Gouverts on Christmas Eve. Hap liked to see the kids open presents. "But I think," Nancy recalled, smiling, "he liked most to get out to play with the dogs and to feed them. Even though dogs followed him constantly when he was a boy, he had none of his own."

Raymond H. Dumont was the only child of a family with limited means. His father, Charles Belmont Dumont, who sold building steel, died relatively young. As a breadwinner early, an honor student who rarely cracked a book as a valedictorian, Hap indulged himself only in movies and, from early school days, with double-dipped ice cream from an old Wichita landmark, Cim's—for breakfast. Later, still sweet-toothed, he favored chocolate milk poured over ice cubes.

Eating with Dumont—briefly, as a young man he gave it the high-tem spelling of "DuMont"—was a topsy-turvy experience, as indicated earlier

and mentioned often in interviews by close friends and relative strangers. Yet, even battling out of turn in meal courses, Hap had his likes more than dislikes.

As Ann recalls, he wanted virtually only beef served at home, preferably ground beef and wilted lettuce. Nancy noted he liked side dishes of spaghetti and meatballs. I can vouch that, as they indicate, he preferred Chinese food. Truth is, though, eating was only a necessity, not a compulsion with the dreamy, absent-minded professor of promotion.

As mentioned, Dumont seldom traveled, although he did like to go to Chicago for the annual sporting goods convention. Charles Cookson found raring with him and sleeping in the same room on these junkets a frustration.

"It wasn't that Hap was cheap, but he was financially conservative," Cookson said. "So we'd double up and I had a terrible time sleeping in the way bed because he snored so loudly, sawing wood contentedly."

Eating?

"I had a hard time keeping him from eating dinner at a drugstore counter," said Cookson. "For him, a bowl of soup, a cheese sandwich and a bit of conversation were enough."

Cookson, like all others who worked closely with Dumont, was awed by the weight of the man's correspondence, the rapidity of his dictation and unwillingness to use the telephone long-distance long after the telegram had been outdated as the best form for rapid communication.

A telegram figured in one of the better—and amusing—episodes that reflect on the far-out flaw of the man who could concentrate so deeply on a problem or promotional scheme. At a time Western Union had dispensed with its uniformed delivery boy in favor of whichever guy might be available, Dumont awaited a wire courier and an out-of-state NBC commissioner he was eager to meet.

They arrived virtually in a doorway dead heat, the Western Union guy and the NBC subsidiary. Dumont rushed forward quickly and—

"Yeah," said Cookson, "shook the hands of the Western Union man and handed the outgoing message to the startled baseball visitor."

Larry Davis can match examples of the mental intensity that picked Hap off base. Either Hap or an assistant beat a path to the downtown post office in Wichita. One day when Davis drove him, Dumont decided he'd go and get the mail himself.

Larry watched Hap shuffle out of the post office, taking mincing steps, cheeks bulged out around the dripping cigar, eyes down as he rifled the mail to figure from envelopes what treasures might be enclosed. Head down, Hap got into the car parked ahead of Davis's.

The amused friend decided to watch. Dumont began to open the mail. Davis waited. More envelopes were opened. Larry honked the horn. No