

Herold (Muddy) Ruel, Game's Man of Varied Talents, Dies

Herold D. (Muddy) Ruel, who had one of the most diversified and distinguished careers in baseball, died of a heart ailment, November 13, in Palo Alto, Calif. He was 67.

Ruel gained most of his fame as a catcher during a playing career that spanned 19 years. But he also had served as general manager of the Tigers, assistant to A. B. (Happy) Chandler when Chandler was commissioner, farm director of the Tigers and Indians, coach with the Indians and White Sox and manager of the Browns.

Playing in the days when the game was filled with rough and tough characters, Ruel was quickly tabbed as a man with class and character. He was a graduate of the Washington

EDITOR'S NOTE: Oscar Melillo, former American League infielder, died on November 14, as this issue of THE SPORTING NEWS was being locked up. A complete account of his career will be carried in the November 30 issue.

U. (St. Louis) Law School and was admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court.

In a sport where plug tobacco was fashionable, Ruel chewed gum. His tastes ran to books and some of his teammates accused him of smuggling Shakespeare's works up to his room for after-game reading. He wasn't inclined toward profanity, either. Dadgummit and gee whiz were the extent of his expletives.

One of the things that made Ruel stand out as a catcher and competitor was his size. Compared with other backstops, Ruel was a midget. He was 5-9 and weighed only 150 pounds. And sometimes less.

Caught in World Series
In 1924, he caught 156 games for the Senators, including all seven in the World Series with the Giants.

"When he stepped on the scales after the season," a friend once said, "I almost fell over when I saw where the needle stopped. Muddy weighed only 133 pounds."

Much of Ruel's playing career was with the Senators. He broke into O. B. right off the semi-pro fields in his native St. Louis in 1915, playing ten games for the Browns.

Later he was with the Yankees, Senators, Red Sox, Tigers and back with the Browns. He spent only two seasons—1916 and 1917—in the minors, performing for Memphis. His lifetime batting average in the majors was .275.

Muddy was the Yankee catcher during the majors' greatest tragedy, the death of the Indians' Ray Chapman, who was struck by a Carl Mays pitch in 1920.

He joined the Yankees from Memphis and, although he was with New York for three full seasons, he didn't

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Ruel Gained His Nickname in Mudball Sandlot Game

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—When it came to odd names among players, Herold Dominic (Muddy) Ruel had to be high on the list.

The Herold (with the e) was given to him by his Irish paternal grandmother. It's of Anglo-Saxon origin. The Dominic, somewhat alien to the rest of the monicker, was a family name and Ruel was not too pleased with it. For many years, no one knew what the middle initial D represented.

And the Muddy came from his days as a youngster.

He and some neighbor children were playing ball on a St. Louis lot with an old rocket. The rocket fell apart and the kids made a ball from mud. Ruel, as you might imagine, was pretty well splattered by the time the session ended.

A man standing on the sidelines shouted to Ruel: "Hey, muddy, why don't you play with a ball?"

And from then on Muddy stuck to Ruel.

make much of an impression on Manager Miller Huggins.

But Huggins later admitted his mistake in not crediting Ruel with being a first-class catcher. "It was one of the greatest mistakes I ever made in appraising a player," Huggins once said.

Ruel's greatest affection was for the Senators and Walter Johnson, however. He caught many of Johnson's games and there was mutual respect between the two.

"Johnson and I were teammates eight years," Ruel once told an interviewer, "and we became great friends. Old Barney was nearing the end of the line, but he was wonderful. I loved to catch him. He had almost perfect control, was durable and unruffled. On and off the field he was the model of deportment. The feeling of his teammates toward him almost amounted to reverence."

Johnson Liked Muddy
Johnson thought Ruel was something special, too.

"Muddy made a pitcher out of me when I was almost through," Johnson had recalled. "He was the smartest catcher baseball ever had. When I worked with Muddy, it was like sitting in a rocking chair. I never disputed his choice of pitches.

"He didn't have a great arm, as catchers go, but he had an unbelievable knack of thinking one step ahead of the base runners. It took a lot of guts to steal on him."

During Ruel's stay with the Senators, he and Johnson were principals in one of the weirdest World Series finishes on record.

It was 1924. The Giants and the Senators were even in victories, 3-3, and it was the twelfth inning of the payoff game. The score was tied, 3-3, when Ruel came to the plate. There was one out, nobody on and Jack Bentley pitching for the Giants.

Ruel hit a pop foul and Catcher Hank Gowdy tossed his mask and went after the ball. But Gowdy got his foot caught in the mask a couple of times and the ball dropped in front of him. Ruel got another chance and promptly doubled. He reached third on Travis Jackson's error on John-



Muddy Ruel

son's grounder and scored the winning run when Earl McNeely's grounder struck a stone and bounced over Freddie Lindstrom's head.

Probably the least rewarding experience of his life was as manager of the Browns in 1947. He quit Chandler's office to take the position.

Ruel was given a two-year contract, but was fired after one when the team finished last, not an uncommon practice for the Browns.

Ruel and Bill DeWitt, the Brownie general manager, didn't see eye-to-eye on the operation of the team. And Ruel wasn't on speaking terms with Traveling Secretary Charley DeWitt, Bill's brother. It was hardly one, big happy family.

Didn't Want All the Blame
Ruel didn't think he should have shouldered all the blame for the Brownie flop.

"I'd like to know how the front office figures I failed," said Ruel after his dismissal. "I took the job with a definite rebuilding policy in mind. I explained my plans and all seemed to agree. But that's the way it goes. Now I'm out."

Ruel, who had been in retirement in the past four years, suffered a heart attack two years ago.

Survivors include his widow, Dorothea; four children, Herold, Dennis, Dorothea and Nancy, and a sister, Mrs. Helen Brookman of St. Louis.

Edward J. Connolly

Edward J. Connolly, a catcher for the Red Sox from 1929 to 1932, died suddenly in Pittsfield, Mass., November 12, while working for the Massachusetts Natural Resources Department. He was 55.

Connolly, a native of Brooklyn, began his playing career with Pittsfield (Eastern) in 1928 and joined the Red Sox late in the '29 season.

After leaving the Red Sox, he was with Jersey City (International), Kansas City (American Association), Galveston (Texas) and Reading (NYP) before retiring in 1934.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Dorothea Connolly, and two sons, Edward, Jr., a pitcher in the Red Sox organization, and Eugene.

Richard C. Lee, a former minor league pitcher, died of a cerebral vascular ailment at Fremont, O., November 10, at the age of 30.

He pitched for Wellsville (PONY), San Antonio (Texas) and Valdosta and Cordele (Georgia-Florida) from 1952 to 1954.

Mrs. Maxine McGowen, wife of Roscoe McGowen, retired sports writer for the New York Times and a former correspondent of THE SPORTING NEWS, died at her home in North Woodstock, Conn., November 12.

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Kids' Program Salutes Stan; Names Division in His Honor

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—The latest tribute to Stan Musial is from the sandlot level. The retired Cardinal star, who during his long playing career always found time to accommodate a youngster who sought his autograph, was given a prominent role in a nationwide baseball program for kids when the American Amateur Baseball Congress announced that it was changing the name of its Major Division to the Stan Musial Division.

"It is our hope," said C. O. Brown, president of the AABC, "that Musial's name may provide inspiration to many youngsters to overcome personal handicaps, as he did, and that he will contribute suggestions for the welfare and advancement of the program which will carry his name with distinction.

"We are happy that Musial allowed us the use of his name in our program, not only because of his baseball ability, but because of the kind of a man he is—the kind of a person we should like to have our players pattern themselves after."

Musial Linked With Babe Ruth, Connie Mack

The Musial Division, like the former Major Division, will be for boys 19 years of age and older. The AABC also operates the Connie Mack Division, known until 1955 as the Minor Division, for boys 16, 17 and 18. Thus, Musial will join two other diamond luminaries who are honored in sandlot circles. The Babe Ruth League, an international organization for boys 13, 14 and 15, is closely co-ordinated with the AABC.

The AABC, which has headquarters in Battle Creek, Mich., was organized in 1935 with the help of J. G. Taylor Spink, the late publisher of THE SPORTING NEWS. Two of the players in the first national tournament that year, held at Dayton, O., were Bob Feller and Ken Keltner. The title series shifted to Louisville in 1936 and has been held in Battle Creek since '37.

About 1,200 teams are expected to compete in both the Connie Mack and the Musial divisions next year.

In addition to Feller and Keltner, many other future major leaguers trace their careers to the AABC. They include Jim Bouton, Dean Chance, Alex Grammas, Harvey Kuenn, Frank Lary, Art Mahaffey, Billy Pierce, Vada Pinson, Robin Roberts, Norm Siebern and Bill Virdon.

Nicaragua Banner Gates, Slick Pitching Mark Openers

By HORACIO RUIZ

MANAGUA, Nicaragua

Banner crowds, tight pitching and a stumbling start by defening champion Boer marked the opening of the Nicaraguan League's eighth championship season.

A capacity turnout of 22,306 paid jammed National Stadium here for the inaugural, November 7. The following evening 11,720 more showed up for the secondary opener, bringing the two-night total to better than 34,000.

While pitchers dominated the early action, the big surprise was the disappointing getaway of the Boer Indians. Because of their many State-side performers, they were rated a heavy favorite to repeat their flag success.

However, the Indians, piloted by former New York Met outfielder Joe Hicks, lost four of their first five games to slip into the cellar.

Howden Hurls Four-Hitter
A native hurler, Huey Howden (Grand Forks), was the hero in the season lidlifter. Tossing a four-hitter, he led Cinco Estrellas to a 2-1 victory in a duel with Leon's player-manager, Julio Moreno (Puebla). Errors by Lorenzo Fernandez (Lynchburg) and Duncan Campbell (Asheville) helped Estrellas score its two runs in the third inning. Harry Simpson (Mexico Reds) singled across Leon's lone tally.

After winning its season opener, 8-6,

Nicaraguan League

(Including games of November 13)

| Club | W. | L. | Pct.G.B. |
|-----------------|----|----|----------|
| Cinco Estrellas | 5 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Leon | 2 | 3 | .400 |
| Oriental | 1 | 2 | .333 |
| Boer | 1 | 4 | .200 |

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KNOTTY PROBLEMS

Answer to Quiz on Page 30

The policeman was authorized to be on the field. Since he did not intentionally interfere, the ball remained in play. All three runs scored and the batter was credited with a triple. (See Rule 3.15.)

If you want a lot of enjoyment from tricky baseball plays and the complete official playing rules, by all means get a copy of the revised edition of "KNOTTY PROBLEMS OF BASEBALL," published by THE SPORTING NEWS. One hundred and ninety-two pages of entertaining problems and rules that will delight every baseball fan. Two dollars—and the best two bucks you'll ever spend for a baseball book. Send your order today to THE SPORTING NEWS, 2018 Washington Ave., St. Louis, Mo., 63166.

from Oriental with Lou Jackson (Toronto) rapping three hits, Boer dropped a 14-inning battle to Cinco Estrellas, 2-1, the next night. Dick Scott (Spokane) pitched the first 11 frames for the Indians, but Willie Hooker (Portsmouth) was charged with the defeat. A single by Manuel Diaz (Poza Rica) decided the long contest. Hal Griggs (Hawaii) was the winner in relief of Evelio Hernandez (Monterrey).

The defending champions ran into another fine pitching effort, November 10, when they were blanked, 3-0, on a seven-hitter by Mudel Mathews.

Nicaraguan Nuggets: Fans at Managua broke down the general admission gates on opening night and before the game was over an estimated 26,500 were in the park. . . . President Rene Schick tossed out the first ball at the inaugural game. . . . League officials announced that attendance for the opener was 800 under the total for the 1962 inaugurals. . . . Sales of television sets, controlled by the government, have been booming at a fast rate for months and the fans are now able to view five games a week over Television de Nicaragua.

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