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# Fans, Players Remember Satchel Paige's Stop In Yankton



### BY JEREMY HOECK

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There was nothing extraordinary about June 14, 1959.

It was a muggy Sunday afternoon along the Missouri River. Boats dotted the water. Families camped along the lakes. Grills were fired up in Riverside Park.

A typical weekend day in Yankton.

Except, of course, for the appearance of one of the greatest pitchers the game of baseball has ever seen. Satchel Paige was in town.

"He was slower than hell by then," recalls Tom Fejfar, a Yankton resident who was at the game as a young fan. "Those (Yankton) boys creamed him.

"He was one of the best, and we all knew it, but he was black."

That was not what made Paige's brief stop in Yankton unique, though. He was in town with the Cuban All-Stars, also called the "Havana Stars," to play an exhibition game against the Yankton Terrys — a semipro group of mostly college-aged players.

Leroy "Satchel" Paige, far removed from his days as the top Negro League pitcher, and his all-star teammates were handed a 16-15 loss that day in front over 1,000 fans at Riverside Field.

Save some old accounts in the *Press & Dakotan* and the memories of those in attendance that day, Paige's appearance has mostly been forgotten.

No photos are displayed at Riverside. No game-worn uniforms or autographed balls fill the trophy case.

Make no mistake, though, the game stands historic in the annals of Yankton baseball. Not to mention in the minds of those involved. Just ask Gene Orf, who spent one season with the Terrys — in 1959.

What does he remember about facing Paige?

"He got mad at me," Orf said from his home in St. Louis, Mo. "I hit a line drive up the middle that hit the pitching rubber and went into centerfield.

"He had to do a little dance to get out of the way," Orf added. "He had some

June 1959. The Yankton Terrys had just begun their semipro baseball season when a scheduled exhibition with the Cuban All-Stars (also known as the "Havana Stars") rolled around. It wasn't just another Basin League game for the hometown Terrys. It was a date with legendary Negro Leagues and Major League pitcher Satchel Paige. The 52-year-old hurler arrived at Riverside Field with significant fanfare, as these Press & Dakotan accounts prove.

ABOVE: This preview story from the P&D not only provides a photo of the 1959 Terrys roster that would face Paige, but a lengthy biography on the famous pitcher. The story said Paige "may well classify as America's greatest pitcher of any time."

RIGHT: The day following the game, the P&D estimated that "over 1,000 fans" watched Paige pitch three innings in an eventual loss to the Terrys. Paige allowed 10 runs in his appearance, and afterward was seated in a rocking chair along the right field foul line.



BELOW LEFT: Perry McGriff was a young first baseman for the Yankton Terrys in the summer of 1959. The left-handed throwing and hitting McGriff eventually went on to play football at the University of Florida and later served in the Florida State House of Representatives. (Submitted Photo)

BELOW RIGHT: Like McGriff, Jerry Nicholson spent the 1959 season living in the basement of Robert and Sylvia Fejfar of Yankton. Nicholson was a pitcher and was also a member of the University of Florida roster. (Submitted Photo)



words for me."

Then a standout player for the University of Missouri, Orf was especially pesky that day for the visitors. His line: Four singles and a double.

Orf, like many of his teammates, were not exactly blown away by the 52-yearold Paige that day. Bob Clem hit a 3-run home run, while Jack Dull and Vail Williams both added three hits.

Far from a one-sided affair, there was understandably a sense that when Paige was on the mound, he was but a shell. Nowhere near the hardthrowing barnstormer that became the stuff of legends, witnesses say.

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## **Braun Suspended For Drug Violations**

NEW YORK (AP) — The first star to fall in baseball's latest drug investigation is one of its biggest: Ryan Braun.

The 2011 National League MVP was suspended without pay for the rest of the season and the postseason Monday, the start of sanctions involving players reportedly tied to a Florida clinic accused of distributing performance-enhancing drugs.

The Milwaukee Brewers star accepted the 65-game ban, 15 games more than the one he avoided last year when an arbitrator overturned his positive test for elevated testosterone because the urine sample had been improperly handled.



ize Braun

"I am not perfect. I realize now that I have made some

mistakes. I am willing to accept the consequences of those actions," he said in a statement.

Braun, injured Yankees star Alex Rodriguez and more than a dozen players were targeted by MLB following a report by Miami New Times in January that they had been connected with Biogenesis of America, a now-closed anti-aging clinic.

"For these guys still to be involved with this stuff just baffles me," Miami Marlins manager Mike Redmond said. "The education's there and everybody knows what you can and can't take. It baffles me that this continues to be a black cloud over the game. I know Major League Baseball's done a great job of cleaning up the game and the testing policy and all that. And it's working. But at

the same time, too, it seems like we'll go through a lull and then, bam, here comes another guy that gets suspended. It's got to stop."

stop." MLB Commissioner Bud Selig announced Braun's penalty Monday, citing the outfielder for multiple unspecified "violations" of baseball's drug program and labor contract. Braun will miss the Milwaukee Brewers' final 65 games without pay, costing him about \$3 million of his \$8.5 million salary.

"I wish to apologize to anyone I may have disappointed," Braun said. "I am glad to have this matter behind me once and for all, and I cannot wait to get back to the game I love."

Under the agreement reached by MLB and the players' association the specifics of Braun's admission won't be made public. The sides also wouldn't say whether this counted as a single violation or more under baseball's drug agreement.

"We commend Ryan Braun for taking responsibility for his past actions," said Rob Manfred, MLB's executive vice president for economics and league affairs. "We all agree that it is in the best interests of the game to resolve this matter. When Ryan returns, we look forward to him making positive contributions to Major League Baseball, both on and off the field."

Union head Michael Weiner said last week that arbitration hearings for players contesting suspensions likely would not start until September, which would delay any penalty until next season. But he also indicated the union would urge players to make a deal and get a suspension over with if there was strong evidence of guilt.

## **Baseball: Tappers Top Red Sox**

Jake Broscha threw seven scoreless innings as the Yankton Tappers upended the Vermillion Red Sox in a Class A non-league amateur baseball showdown Monday night at Riverside Field.

Broscha struck out five batters before giving way to Mike Janish for the final two innings.

Derrik Nelson and Jared Miller each had two hits for the Tappers, who closed regular season action. Dave Schmidt and Heath Arens had the other hits.

For the Red Sox, Derek Appley struck out four batters over six innings. Colby Lessman, Jon Merrigan and Aaron Fischer all had two hits, while Dan Hanson and Reese Steckler both had one hit.

Yankton will host its Class A regional tournament next week at Riverside Field. Dates and matchups will be determined later.

### Irene 11, Menno 10

IRENE — The Irene Cardinals pounded five home runs and scored a run in the bottom of the ninth inning to beat Menno 11-10 in South Central League action Sunday night in Irene.



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Yankton Tappers shortstop Derrik Nelson, left, steps on the bag to force out Vermillion Red Sox runner A.J. Stairet for a double player in their amateur game Monday night at Riverside Field.

Mike King went 4-5 with a 3-run homer and a solo homer, while Wes Robertson was 4-4 with a pair of solo home runs. Simon Healy added two hits and a solo homer.

Irene led 10-5 after seven innings, but Menno rallied with four runs in the top of the ninth to tie the game at 10.

George Sees chipped in with a double and single. Matt Sees picked up the win

3-run in relief of Josh Homme. Wes Macon Oplinger, Josh Berndt and Will

Massey all doubled and singled for the Mad Frogs. Jay Thayler took the loss in relief of Tom Sattler. Both teams begin District 6B Tourna-

ment action later this week in Scotland.