Stoery Of Baseball Essay, Research Paper

Baseball

Baseball has been providing us with fun and

excitement for more than a hundred and fifty years. The

first game resembling baseball as we know it today was

played in Hoboken ,New Jersey, on June 19, 1846. The

New York Nine beat the New York Knickerbokers that day, 23-1.

The game was played according to rules drawn up by

Alexander J. Cartwright. A surveyer and amateur athlete.

It is a myth that Abner Doubleday1 invented baseball. It

was Alexander Cartwright, not Abner Doubleday, who

first laid out the present dimensions of the playing field

and established the basic rules of the game.

The first Professional baseball team was the Cincinnati

Red Stockings, who toured the country in 1869 and didn’t

lose a game all year. Baseball began to attract so many

fans that in 1876 the National league was organized-the

same National league that still exists today.

Although the game was played in 1876 it was

recognizable as baseball-nobody would confuse it with

football or basketball-it was quite a bit different from

baseball as we know it now. For example, pitchers had to

throw underhand, the way they still do in softball;the

batter could request the pitcher to throw a “high” or “low”

pitch; it took nine balls, rather than four, for a batter to

get a base on balls; and the pitching distance was olny 45

feet to home plate.

The rules were gradually changed over the following 20

years, until by about 1900 the game was more or less the

same as it is today. In 1884, the pitchers were permitted

to throw overhand; in 1887, the batter was no longer

allowed to request a “high”or “low” pitch; by 1889,it took

only four balls to get a batter to a base on balls;

the pitching distance was legthened to sixty-

feet, six inches.

And since that day in 1846 There have been

many greats to make up the game baseball such as Ty

Cobb who was born in a small town in Georgia in 1886. He

threw right-handed but batted left-handed . He held his

hands a few inches apart on the bat and learned to bunt

or slap line-drive hits precisely where he wanted them. He

made place hitting an art.

In the summer of 1905, Cobb joined a major league

baseball taem, the Detroit Tigers .On August 9, Ty Cobb

registered his first base hit as a member of the Tigers.

In the many years to follow he added over four thousand

more hits. Along with them would come a national rep-

utation.

Another player who some have said “changed the

game”, is John Roosevelt(”Jackie”) Robinson2.On April

15, 1947 at two o’clock that tuesday afternoon when nine

Brooklyn Dodgers sprang out thier dugout to take the feild

to start the 1947 baseball season. It was a memorable

event in basebaall history, indeed in American history.

Undoubtedly Robinson was a great ballplayer. He

was National league’s Rookie of the year in 1947 and its

Most valuable player (MVP) in 1949. He won the election

in 1962 to the Bseball Hall of Fame, the first African-

American ever chosen for that honor.

And perhaps the greatest ballplayer of all time was

Goerge Herman (Babe Ruth). During the 1920, Ruth’s first

season as a New York Yankee, he hit .376, not enough to

win the American league batting championship but a figure

far beyond what today is registered by major leagues

leaders. He also hit safely in 26 consecutive games,

clubbed 9 triples and 36 doubles, and batted in 137 runs.

Despite his weight of over 215, he stole 14 bases.

Most remarkably, however, Ruth slugged 54 home

runs for the season. Closest to him in the American League

was Goerge Sisler, with 19 homers, while the National

League leader recorded a total of only 15. Almost every

team in both leagues registered a total number far below

the 54 of Babe Ruth alone.

There have been many more talented and great ball-

players in the game such as (Ted Williams,Leo Durocher,

Hank Aaron,Mickey Mantle,Roger Maris,Willie Mays,Joe

DiMaggio,Bob Feller).

Ted Williams Brought with him a supurb batting

eye and a striving for absolute perfection thateventually

produced a .344 lifetime batting average. Bob feller

possessed afastball that rivaled Walter Johnson’s. Joe

DiMaggio hadstyle, courage and leadership qualities that

many say havenever been equaled.

These and other ballplayers have all done thier part to

shape the game of baseball.

And today, we now have a new generation of ball-

players like Mark McGwire3 who in the 1998 season hit an

unpresedented 76 home runs and was closely followed by

Sammie Sosa3 with 70 homers which in the 1920 and 30’s

was un-thought of un-imagnable, to even hit 15 home runs

now playes can hit 15 home runs by May 15th.

Another astonashing differance is players today are

earning countless millions of dollars, unlike days of

yesteryear whaen players only made if they were lucky

125,000 dollars.

Also the equipment has changed some ,for instents

the glove players didn’t start wearing gloves on the feild

until the 1880’s. At first , they wore only a thin peice of

leather over the palm of their hand, with five holes cut out

for the fingers to go through. By the 1890’s ,however,

the gloves began to look like today’s baseball gloves.

Nowadays, the glove is much larger than it used to be,

and the ball is not caught in the palm of the hand but

be trapped in the “pocket”, between the thumb and fore-

finger. Since the mid 1950’s, the glove has become more

of a net with which to snare the ball rather than just a

protective covering for hand.

So you may ask why has baseball remained so popular

for all these years? Since Alexander Cartwright first laid

out the dimentions of the playing field and drew up the

rules of the game, it has furnished enjoyment and excite-

ment for countless millions of people, young and old alike.

Foot-notes:

1- Abner Doubleday was a young West Point cadet. He was

suposed to in the summer of 1839, in the village of cooper-

stown, New York.Start the game of baseball. Because of

the numerous types of baseball, or rather games similar to

it, some belived Doubleday startedn the game of baseball.

2- Jackie Robinson was the first African-American to play

the game.

3- For pitchers in this day and age, the most threatening

figure to stride toward the batter’s box with a piece of

lumber in his massive fists is six-foot-five, 250 pound, red-

head Mark McGwire. Right-handed at the plate and in the

field, the amidable freckle-faced first baseman is the

leading power-hitter of his generation.

4- Sammy Sosa signed his first proffessional baseball

contract ay age of sixteen.

Right-handed at bat and in the outfeild, he is tremed-

ously poplular in Chicago and in all Latin-America. Six-feet

and two hundred pounds, he was the smallest of the three

challenger for the home-run record. A regular with the Cubs

starting in 1993, Sosa is no newcomer to home runs he

averaged thirty-six a season over the three-year span from

1995-1997.

Ritter, Lawrence S. Story of baseball . New York:

Beech Tree Paperback Book, 1999

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Jacobs,William Jay .They Shaped The Game .

New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Kahn, Roger . Memories of Summer. New York:

Hook Slide, Inc., 1997

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Internet: AOL, 2000