

Old baseball writers never die. They just become bloggers.

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The Federal League

Before the turn of the nineteenth century, many so called 'major leagues' came and went by the wayside. Leagues that dotted the baseball landscape bore such names as the American Association, the National Association, the Union Association and the Players' League.

Come 1901, the first league to successfully rise up in competition to the well established National League was known as the American League--the same one that we enjoy today. Still, even after 1901, plans were drawn up for other major leagues; the vast majority never even getting its feet off the ground. Come 1913 there was yet another interloper onto the baseball canvas that was different from all the other abortive efforts that were tried.

What was different? Well, what 'talks' loudest in baseball? Money of course. This new league had substantial capital; enough even to draw off the major stars of the senior and junior circuits and it was: the Federal League.

Rumblings....

In 1912, the magazine 'The Sporting Life' (in its May 11th issue) stated in regard to the infant United States League that:

"... if the league fails it will put to a finish for a time, to thoughts of battling the big fellows (the American and National Leagues)."

That sentiment lasted for just a single year. The United States League died on the vine, yet on March 8th 1913, in the city of Indianapolis, the Federal League was born.

John Power, who earlier had tried to launch another 'major league' -- the

Colombian League -- was elected president of the infant circuit. Unlike the American and National Leagues, the Federal League planned to be no part of the National Commission and its rules. Instead, it wished to be independent. At the time it planned no player raids against the established leagues, but rather it would develop its own players.

Initially, the league hoped, like its compatriots, to have an eight team league. However, due to time constraints, it was only able to launch six [teams] in its maiden season. The six cities represented were: Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Cincinnati. This would put the Federal League into competition with five major league and one minor league market. It also increased the number of major league franchises to three in both Chicago (White Sox and Cubs), and St. Louis (Cardinals and Browns). The Cincinnati club, due to financial difficulties, was relocated to Covington Kentucky, but even that didn't help. Before the league's maiden season had concluded, it would be competing with the American Association's Blues in Kansas City.

As mentioned earlier, the Federal League vowed not to interfere with organized baseball's (From this point on, the term 'organized baseball' will be understood to stand for the National and American Leagues.) player contracts, but, rather, would only sign 'free agents.'

Unfortunately, what organized baseball and the Federal League considered 'free agents' differed due to the infamous 'reserve clause.' This clause was known officially as Rule 10 A which stated:

"On or before January 15 ... the Club may tender to the Player a contract for the term of that year by mailing the same to the Player. If prior to the March 1 next succeeding said January 15, the Player and the Club have not agreed upon the terms of such contract, then on or before 10 days after said March 1, the Club shall have the right ... to renew this contract for the period of one year."

When three players were signed by the Pittsburgh Federal League franchise that organized baseball considered as 'under obligation,' then organized baseball began to raid Federal League rosters. The Chicago Cubs

were the most aggressive offering contracts to a number of the Chicago Whales (or Chifeds--take your pick) players.

The battle is joined

Back then, baseball was not exempt from federal anti trust laws; yet developments within this 'baseball war' would impact significantly on this matter. The first situation that impacted on this was Western Telegraphs refusal to allow Federal League scores to be put on its service. The Federal League dispatched one E. E. Gates to appear before the Interstate Commerce Commission. His bone of contention was that the Federal League had offered to pay for the service, yet was refused. Gates felt that organized baseball was behind this. He later met with a U.S. government representative and encouraged him to introduce a resolution to Congress to investigate whether organized baseball had violated antitrust laws. Gates felt that baseball had acquired certain privileges that other businesses lacked and pointed out that organized baseball was trying to monopolize the baseball marketplace--illegal unless the government says otherwise. If organized baseball was found to have violated antitrust laws, they would be liable to triple damages. (But once again, more on that later.)

On August 2 of that year, a development occurred that would send tremors throughout baseball. Powers was forced to relinquish the league's presidency and Chicago's James Gilmore was elected [president]. One of his first accomplishments was enlisting the support of wealthy restaurateur, Charles Weeghman for the Chicago franchise. He later induced oil magnates Harry Sinclair and Phil Ball to acquire the Newark and St. Louis franchises respectively, thus pouring in a not insignificant amount of capital into the new league. Meanwhile, the Indianapolis entry won the inaugural Federal League pennant.

Over the course of the league's history, the Federal League attempted to formulate a workable post season playoff format. One idea that came forth was challenging the World Series champions to another series. Organized

baseball wanted no part of that idea. (After all, why try to crush the competition on the field when you're too busy trying to crush them out of the marketplace?)

Another idea was brought out of mothballs was to form an all star team from the remaining teams to challenge the Federal League champions to a series. Much as the AL and NL did in its infancy. (Like infants, they couldn't get along with their siblings so they took their toys and went home.)

Trying to prove that they were a major league, the Federal League claimed that they were both losing large amounts of capital *and* wanted to expand. A tradition that endures 'til this day. Teams were added in Brooklyn, which was purchased by the bakery magnate Ward brothers (who had a lot of dough) who promptly christened the team the Tip Tops, in honor of their line of breads. (Possibly feeling that their chances of winning may well have been toast.) This caused such a furor in the New York media that the Wards --showing no lack of a lack of imagination -- renamed their franchise the equally ridiculous Brookfeds. The Wards proposed to Superbas (as the Dodgers were known as then) owner Charlie Ebbets a series between their respective teams which was met with about as much enthusiasm as the Federal League/World Series championship tournament had. Mostly because it was assumed that since neither team could win a championship, why bother?

Two other franchises were added in direct competition to International League teams in both Buffalo and Baltimore. This proved devastating to these teams because baseball fans in these markets considered the Federal League entries to be 'major league baseball,' which hurt these two teams at the gate. This caused the Baltimore franchise to be relocated to Richmond and nearly destroyed the International League. In addition, Cleveland was dropped from the circuit.

Returning Fire

It was in 1914 that the Federal League proclaimed itself a major league with its eight franchises challenging in four major and four minor league cities. The league also led all three circuits in innovations. The Federal League was organized as a single corporation with stock divided up among ownership. There were also incentives for the players as well.

In order to maintain its hold on their players, the Feds (as the Federal League came to be known as) devised a program in which a certain percentage of the profits generated by the league would be set aside to be divvied up among the players at the conclusion of each season. After ten years of Federal League service a player could opt for free agency. The most intriguing concept was the notion that since the Federal League had inflated players' salaries, a salary cap would be brought in. With free agency, salary caps, and revenue sharing, baseball is likely the most environmentally sound business in history, (their hot air notwithstanding) they've been recycling for years. The Bible said it best when it said: 'there was nothing new under the sun (or the retractable dome).'

After the pre-emptive strike from organized baseball, the Federal League felt it was time to strike back and do a little player raiding of its own. This served to put the two leagues under pressure as well as adding legitimacy to its 'major league status.' The biggest prize from that initial foray was the landing of Joe Tinker of the immortal Cubs infield trio of Tinker-to-Evers-to-Chance. Chance had just been sold from the Cincinnati Reds to the Brooklyn Superbas. To use the lingo of the underworld he was 'given an offer he couldn't refuse.' Whereas the Super ... oh what the heck, the Dodgers offered Chance a contract worth \$7500 dollars, the Chifeds, er Whales, oh whatever, offered him a cool twelve grand plus stock in the franchise. Tinker would also skipper the club. Other notables induced to jump the organized baseball ship for managerial posts in the new league were George Stovall (Kansas City), and Mordecai 'Three Finger' Brown who was to pilot the St. Louis Terriers.

Hitting the fan

The Federal League was a godsend to the players of the two leagues, in that it gave them leverage in renegotiating new contracts with their clubs. This sent (sticker) shock waves throughout baseball. It was the Federal League influence that caused the venerable Connie Mack to dismantle his first great dynasty. He sold Hall-of-Fame bound second sacker Eddie Collins to cheapskate Charles Comiskey. He requested waivers on Hall-of-Fame hurlers Chief Bender and Eddie Plank, who then signed with the Feds. Mack sold Hall-of-Fame hot cornerman Frank 'Home Run' Baker to the Yankees and effectively consigned the A's to baseball purgatory for over a decade and a half--heroes to zeroes courtesy of the Feds.

The uniform players' contracts were called into question because the contract basically stipulated that a player was the property of the franchise for life, yet the team could release a player on ten days notice. This went to court in the case of pitcher-of-no particular-renown Chief Johnson, the 1910's version of Andy Messersmith. Like Messersmith, Johnson won out. This prompted star first baseman Hal Chase -- who could smell money as well as any owner -- to give his club ten days notice and jump to the Feds. The court ruled that the contract lacked mutuality. This was already known to organized baseball. They didn't say it in so many words, yet their actions spoke volumes. Here is an excerpt from the Sporting Life magazine from the May 30, 1914 edition:

"Safe in proceeding at once against the majors for the players they illegally claim. Indeed, some of our club presidents are so anxious to recruit from the big leagues that I may not be able to hold them in leash. Organized ball has gotten away with a lot of hot air about having all the best men sign contracts from which the ten days' clause has been eliminated. Ty Cobb is a pretty good ballplayer isn't he? Well, the ten days clause is in his contract. He can have a good many thousands of dollars from Frank Navin (Detroit Tiger owner) any time he consents to scratch out this feature of inequity. Detroit

has tried in vain repeatedly to purchase Cobb's consent to the change. If organized ball believed in the validity of this clause do you think it would be trying now to bribe its players to submit to the subtraction of this objectionable phrase from the contract? The Chicago Nationals (Cubs) paid Jimmy Lavender \$3000 to strike out the clause from his document. I could name a dozen other big leaguers."

The organized baseball magnates -- never ones to take defeat lying down -- struck back. The National Commission rules were amended to specify a three-year suspension for reserve rule jumpers and five-year suspension for contract breakers. The May 4, 1914 Boston Herald reported that American League boss Ban Johnson (who led the league in hot air proclamations) stated:

"No player of the Federal League can ever play in the American League ... a man may be reinstated by the National Commission, but can never hope to get into the American League. The National and other leagues may accept him, but as for the American League, never."

The Herald of June 21st of that same year reported that organized baseball was considering launching a third major league of their own within the National Commission to combat the Feds. The discussions went so far as to discuss how to handle the World Series with three participants, even to the point of perhaps holding a World Series round robin tournament.

Believe it or not, throughout all the action in the board rooms and in the press the Feds pressed on to their second campaign with Indianapolis again winning the pennant. Players were beginning to develop reputations and fan recognition. Benny Kauff of the pennant winning Hoofeds (Hoosiers+Federalers....get it?) 'The Ty Cobb of the Federal League' won the batting title with a sparkling .370 average.

Yankee defector Russ Ford had a superlative season on the mound going 21-6 with a minuscule ERA of 1.82. Sadly this was the last hurrah for a one time promising hurler. In his first two seasons with the

Highlanders/Yankees he posted won-loss marks of 26-6 and 22-11; yet in 1915 he went 5-9 (4.52 ERA) in his second campaign with the Buffeds. (Buffalo+ Federal....I'm not making this stuff up.) Claude Hendrix of the Chifeds led all hurlers with a stunning 29-10 ledger to go along with a minute earned run mark of 1.69. He logged 362 frames walking only 77. Gene Packard -- the only Federal League moundsman to have a pair of 20 win seasons -- finished 20-14 despite an earned run mark of almost three (remember this is the 'dead ball era'). Like Hendrix, Packard too logged 300+ innings. Another beneficiary of run support was Brooklyn Tip Top pitcher Tom Seaton, who despite a high-for-that-era earned run mark of 3.03, still managed a won loss mark of 25-14. He joined Hendrix and Packard in logging over 300 frames. George Suggs also entered the 20 win circle, weighing in at 24-14 with a 2.90 ERA. He accomplished this despite allowing more hits than innings pitched (319 IP to 322 hits surrendered). The secret to his success? The same formula that holds true today: don't beat yourself and others will have a tough time beating you. In 319 frames, he only issued 57 free passes or about 1.5 walks per start.

Although Kauff was the headliner with the lumber, others gave notice as well. Ennis 'Rebel' Oakes -- a player of no import in organized baseball -- batted .312 for Pittsburgh drove in 75 runs. Edward Zwilling, whose claim to fame is currently being the last entry in the 'Baseball Encyclopedia,' was unique in that he played out his four year baseball career with all three major league teams in Chicago. While in organized baseball he was a nobody, but with the Chifeds he was a star slugger. In the midst of the dead-ball era he slugged a mighty .485 in 1914. He batted .313 smacking 38 doubles, ripping 8 triples, and blasting a mighty (back then it was mighty) 16 home runs and driving in 95. He wasn't a hulking slugger in anybody's book being about the size of Phil Rizzuto.

At the conclusion of all three leagues' respective seasons, they secretly entered into negotiations to try and bring an end to the baseball 'war.' Although new money had come into the league when Sinclair, Weeghman, Ball, and the Ward brothers acquired franchises, the Federal League was losing money. While the financial losses were not as great within organized

baseball, there were still losses. On top of that the question: 'whether to jump or not' was causing dissension within many clubs. The National and American Leagues were also tired of losing marquee names to the Feds. Nothing came to fruition from these talks because the Federal League wanted to be recognized as a major league by the other two bodies, a condition unacceptable to the monopoly-minded National and American Leagues.

Since peace was unachievable, the 'war' continued. On January 5th, the Feds filed a suit against organized baseball charging that they had broken antitrust laws. Gilmore contended that the defacto monopoly status enjoyed by the other two leagues resulted in such 'illegal acts' of farming out players -- thereby allowing the various organized baseball franchises to maintain control of the players, thus preventing them from joining the Feds -- was a restraint of free trade. (Which was likely the only time organized baseball ever worried about freeing up the player marketplace.) Organized baseball had considerable reason for alarm in that the case landed in the court of a notorious 'trust buster' who had recently ruled that Standard Oil had been guilty of anti trust violations (later overturned). The judge's name?

Kenesaw Mountain Landis.

In what appeared to be another devastating blow inflicted by the Feds occurred when 'The Big Train' Walter Johnson rejected Washington Senator's owner Clark Griffith's contract offer in order to sign with the Chicago Whales, er, Chifeds. (whatever) Initially, Johnson had no real intention of signing with the Feds but was rather using it as leverage to get a better contract from Griffith. Johnson had asked for either a one year deal for \$15,000, a three year deal for \$36,000, or a five year offer of \$50,000. When Griffith curtly told Johnson that he didn't want to 'purchase the whole state of Kansas,' (Johnson hailed from Kansas) Johnson signed to play in Chicago for Joe Tinker earning \$20,000 a year for two years. Griffith wasn't going to along with this, he stated as much in a newspaper interview:

“There was a provision in the 1914 contract whereby I obtained an option on Johnson's services for the 1915 season. Twenty five hundred dollars of the \$12000 salary which he has received was given for the specific purpose of reserving an option in 1915 upon Johnson. I am convinced he has violated the agreement, and I will sue him to the end of the earth before I acknowledge his right to sign with the Federals.”

However, Griffith, upon reflection, thought that litigation might not be the most prudent thing to do under the circumstances. He decided to try a little diplomacy instead. He traveled down to Kansas City to visit vis-à-vis with Johnson and convinced him that he had always acted in good faith toward his storied hurler and deserved better. Johnson agreed, but felt that it would hurt the Chifeds if he were to jump back. Griffith again reminded him that he would hurt Washington if he stayed in Chicago. Griffith went on to argue that because of Johnson's defection he would ultimately hurt either Washington or Chicago and he'd have to choose which.

Swayed, Johnson returned his signing bonus to Weeghman's club and returned to the Senators, and receiving a healthy raise for his troubles. Johnson never threw a single pitch in the Federal League. In an interview with the Washington Post (Sunday May 14, 1915) he candidly admitted:

“... I deserve the blame for what I have done, and I admit in the light of experience, that I did not act wisely, I make no excuses and ask no consideration. I am willing to accept whatever blame is due me.”

Once again, organized baseball decided to renew hostilities with the Federal League by signing away from Brooklyn (he had been 'transferred' there from Indianapolis) 'The Ty Cobb of the Federal League'--Benny Kauff. This served to create more difficulties within the Senior Circuit. He was signed by the New York Giants, but the Giants' manager John McGraw didn't want him. The Boston Braves -- who had initially lost Kauff to the Federal League -- claimed that he was blacklisted because he had jumped his contract there.

Kauff, however, stated that: “he was through with the Federal League” and

applied to the National Commission for re-instatement stating: "if I can't play with the Giants I'll quit the game for good." The National Commission refused his reinstatement and Kauff was forced to eat his words (and no doubt some more Tip Top bread) and return to the Brookfeds.

Despite all the off-field fireworks, the Federal League enjoyed one of its finest pennant races (not difficult when you consider that they only had three) going down to the final few games of the season when Chicago split a double header with Pittsburgh to finish ahead of St. Louis by percentage points. Chicago finished at 86-66; with St. Louis at 87-67; and Pittsburgh at 86-67; marking the first time that the team with the most wins didn't win the pennant. The other time of course was the players' strike year of 1981 when the Cincinnati Reds won a division high 66 games and yet did not qualify for the post season under the split-season format.

Benny Kauff won his second straight batting title, hitting .342. At the conclusion of the 1915 campaign several developments brought peace to the game.

Truce or consequences

Just as the appearance of one man gave the Federal League new life, it was the exit of one man that spelled doom for the infant circuit. When Robert Ward, wealthy owner of the Brooklyn Tip Tops passed away in the fall of 1915, much of the fight, spunk and vision died with him. Despite a thrilling pennant race in the waning days of 1915, attendance was dismal because of the effects of the first world war. The war also worked hardship on organized baseball, but they were in better shape to handle the stormy days still ahead. Even the reduction of ticket prices in several Federal League cities couldn't bolster attendance. That, coupled with the hefty contracts that the league handed out, spelled doom for the league. Here is a short list of what the Feds were paying compared with organized baseball:

Player	AL/NL	Federals
Tinker	\$5 500	\$12 000
Campbell	\$3 200	\$8 500
Cooper	\$2 500	\$7 500
Falkenberg	\$4 000	\$8 500
Kauff	\$2 000	\$7 500
Seaton	\$2 600	\$8 200
Chase	\$6 000	\$9 000

To top it all off, World War I was imminent and Federal League president Jim Gilmore felt that the league couldn't survive this perilous time. But what to do? The league had lost considerable money and Gilmore (as well as the other team magnates) wanted to recoup some lost capital. What followed was the greatest bluff in the history of gambling. A superbly orchestrated and executed plan that bought an extremely generous settlement from organized baseball. It went like this....

Initially, the Feds wanted to move their Newark franchise to New York City yet was prevented by Newark interests from doing so. They had already placed a team in Brooklyn to challenge the Sup, er ... sorry, the Dodgers, now they wanted to challenge the big boys--the Giants and Yankees. For those of you who are sketchy on baseball history, the Giants were the toast of New York City and the Yankees had yet to launch any portion of their dynasty.

To begin with, Jim Gilmore and Harry Sinclair had planned to place a franchise in New York. However, with the league trying to survive, Gilmore thought that it could be an excellent bargaining chip to use against organized baseball. The league had already purchased property at the corner of 145th street and Lenox avenue for the magnificent sum of \$1.25 million. Gilmore figured that he could build the stadium itself for about \$475,000. He had a blueprint made which called for a stadium that could ultimately hold 55,000 patrons and determined it could be completed in just a few short months. (Yes, there was a time teams paid for their own stadiums.)

It was to be designed similar to Shibe Park in Philadelphia with a two tier cantilevered grandstand that would offer an unimpeded view of the field (meaning you weren't stuck behind a post)--not unlike recent stadium architecture. All this was going on at the same time that the New York Yankees were looking to build a stadium of their own, having been told by the Giants that they wished to occupy the Polo Grounds alone. This panicked the National League who now wanted to negotiate with the Feds.

However, American League boss Ban Johnson was not fooled one bit. Johnson himself had made inquiries about that selfsame plot of land for his new league in 1903. What Johnson knew was that there was nothing he could do if the city ever decided to put a street right through the heart of the property, so he rejected the land since an inside the streetcar home run works best in stickball--not baseball. Johnson tried in vain to convince the Senior Circuit to stand strong, that Sinclair and Gilmore were only bluffing -- but due to the suspicion in which each regarded the other -- they wouldn't budge. When critics maintained that Sinclair didn't have the revenue to launch such a project Sinclair issued a challenge:

“I'll meet you people (the A.L and N.L. magnates) on the waterfront and we'll toss dollar for dollar into the Hudson River. Then we'll see who runs out of money first.”

This challenge shook up the Junior Circuit sufficiently to wish to settle as well.

Thus the Feds received an excellent settlement from organized baseball. In effect, organized baseball bought out the Feds. Terms of the agreement allowed Charles Weeghman to buy the National League Cubs, which he promptly did. This is how the Cubs ended up in Wrigley Field. Wrigley was initially constructed for the Chifeds, the Cubs occupying South Side Park. Phil Ball owner of the St. Louis Terriers was permitted to by the A.L. St. Louis Browns. Weeghman and Ball then merged their two clubs, taking the best from the organized baseball and Federal League clubs. The Ward estate was awarded \$400,000, the Pittsburgh franchise was given \$50,000, and the right to make bids on major league franchises that would

become available. Sinclair probably received the best settlement when he was paid \$100,000, and was given the rights to all the players from the Newark, Kansas City, and Buffalo teams. He was also given the rights to Lee Magee, Benny Kauff, and George Anderson (this is not Sparky Anderson, he's old but not that old), which he sold to organized baseball teams. Baltimore was offered \$50,000 but rejected it and pursued the matter until 1922 when baseball was granted antitrust exemption by the Supreme Court.

The antitrust suit that was before Judge Landis was to be dropped, which it was by seven of the eight teams. Baltimore chose to fight it out instead. This was considered by organized baseball to be a breach of contract and went to court to have the settlement declared null and void. National League president John Tener contended that:

“Each league understood that each of its clubs would carry out the terms of the agreement. The Baltimore club was at that time one of the eight parts of the Federal League. In making the peace agreement the Federal League spoke for it and undertook to see to it that Baltimore should comply with the terms of the peace agreement. As is well known the Baltimore Federal League club has not only refused to carry out the peace agreement, but has gone further and brought an action in the United States courts charging that the Federal League, by signing the peace agreement, conspired with organized ball to injure and destroy the Federal Baltimore club. It is apparent that the Federal League has not carried out the obligation it took in the peace agreement.”

“The National and American Leagues naturally declines to pay for something that they have not received. Until the Federal League keeps its promises and secures from its constituent clubs an acceptance of the peace agreement, no payment will be made under the agreement.”

The court rejected his argument. Other provisions of the agreement was that all the Federal League players were to be granted amnesty and have

the remaining parts of their Federal League contracts to be paid in full. The International League refused any part of the agreement due to the damage the Feds brought to their league. The Baltimore club wanted to be transferred to the International League. However Jack Dunn of the Richmond club was adamantly against this. They had to transfer his franchise from Baltimore to Richmond because of the Federal League's incursion in that market.

Dunn was backed up by International League president Ed Barrow who rightly contended that the Feds had no right to drive them out of Baltimore and then reap the benefits of their actions after their league failed to make good. Initially, the Baltimore club had offered to sell Dunn their franchise for \$100,000. This too was rejected because Dunn felt that he would be paying for something that was already his--the rights to Baltimore.

A similar scenario unfolded in Buffalo, although the Buffalo International League franchise had remained there. As to the remaining Federal League franchises, they received little or no compensation.

Epilogue

The Federal League disbanded eighty years ago yet we shouldn't dismiss it as simple history. What the Federal League did had seismic implications that are felt to this day. Baseball's unique antitrust exemption sprang directly from the suit that was launched by the Baltimore Federal League club against organized baseball. The suit that was presented before the court of Kenesaw Mountain Landis between 1914 and 1915 was never decided. The Federal League dropped the suit as part of the 'peace agreement.' Landis, for his part deliberately delayed ruling on the matter anyway. Landis was a baseball fan himself, in the trial transcripts, Landis said to the Federal League attorneys:

“Do you realize that a decision in this case may tear down the very foundations of this game so loved by thousands?”

He realized that baseball was in violation of antitrust laws but was loathe to issue a ruling on the matter. This was surprising and a huge break for organized baseball in view of Landis' reputation as a 'trust buster.' Baseball remembered the favor that Landis did for them and repaid it by making Judge Landis baseball's first commissioner. Still, make no mistake, the owners took a gamble on Landis, in that they felt that since he sided with ownership in the matter involving the Federal League, that he would likely be an "owners' commissioner" siding with ownership whenever a controversy arose with the players (which he was originally--see the Black Sox vs. Charles Comiskey) or the courts. History reveals that they were very much mistaken in assuming that.

As to the player raids, in retrospect, it was 'much ado about nothing,' most of the marquee names that jumped were for the most part at the end of their careers. Their only real value was as gate attractions/name recognition. (The Baltimore Orioles and New York Mets have used this as a model for roster assembly in recent years.) Philadelphia A's and Hall-of-Fame pitcher Eddie Plank enjoyed his final quality season with the Feds when he went 21-11. Chief Bender's first campaign with the Feds went 4-16. Mordecai 'Three Finger' Brown went 31-19 in his two years with the Feds, but he too, was at the end of the line. Jack Quinn, who won 247 games over his career went from hero to zero with the Feds. While pitching with Baltimore in 1914, he won 26 and lost 14, yet the following campaign he lost 22 games.

Benny Kauff later signed with the Giants and enjoyed a handful of solid, though unspectacular seasons before being banished from the game. (He was charged with auto theft, acquitted by the court and was banished anyway because Landis figured that he was probably guilty.)

Promising hurler Russ Ford never played in another major league game after the Feds closed up shop. Chief pitcher Claude Hendrix who led the league in wins in 1914 with 29 victories won 20 with the Cubs in 1918, yet despite that, his post Federal League ledger read 57-61. Gene Packard who won twenty in both his Federal league seasons won only 37 more while pitching in the N.L. Tom Seaton who in his first two National League and

one Federal League campaign was a fine 68-38, went 25-27 thereafter before he too was blacklisted. George Suggs who won twenty games in 1910 with the Reds, and 24 in 1914 with the Baltimore Feds won 11 the following year, again with Baltimore and never threw a pitch in the majors again.

Federal League slugger Edward Zwilling played in only 35 games with the Cubs following a superlative Federal League career, batting an anemic .113.

For the most part, the majority failed to make any real contribution back in organized baseball, but there were exceptions. Jack Tobin, who began his major league career with the Federals went on to play through 1927 accumulating a lifetime batting mark of .309. Tobin topped 200 hits in four consecutive seasons (1920-1923) garnering 236 hits in 1921. If you never heard of him it is probably because he spent the large part of his career with the moribund St. Louis Browns.

The real jewel of the Feds was unquestionably Edd Roush. He, like Tobin, debuted in the Federal League, however unlike Tobin, you will find Roush's visage gracing the Hall-of-Fame.

And the beat goes on.

I've been negligent in recent months about adding links to my blog. So, I'm going to add a trio of sites: [The Hardball Times](#), which has some of my favourite amateur baseball writers including Lee Sinins: "Around the Majors" reports. The second is Larry Mahnken's [Replacement Level Yankee Weblog](#) which touches on all things pinstriped. Finally, for a good laugh, check out [Batgirl](#), you'll never look at the Minnesota Twins (or Legos for that matter) the same way again. As her slogan states, it's "Less Stats, More Sass."

- John Brattain