



Whether pitching in Wrigley Field or Dodger Stadium, Sandy Koufax almost always got a fight from the Cubs. (Photos courtesy of the Leo Bauby Collection).

## ***Great outing, even greater people in Sandy Koufax perfecto against Chicago Cubs***

*By George Castle, CBM Historian  
Posted Thursday, September 3, 2015*

*(Second of a two-part series on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sandy Koufax's perfect game against the Cubs on Sept. 9, 1965 in what may have been the greatest pitching duel in history with Chicago lefty Bob Hendley.)*

On the surface, the Sandy Koufax perfect game is part of baseball mythology, Koufax's fastball growing ever faster over the decades, the Cubs' swings even more futile, the lone run scored even more fluky, the only hit in the game even more shaky.

Oral history is the main conduit of its memories, and you know how baseball stories get exaggerated as time progresses. It might as well have taken place in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, given how 15 years into the TV era — and with the dramatic expansion of network color telecasts beginning the next week — only three innings of halting home-movie film exists (see accompanying story below). Three network-owned stations and four other independent VHF stations in Los Angeles, all with regular newscasts, declined to film the game despite the Dodgers' position in the pennant race. The radio broadcast recordings were cobbled together.

Statistically, the game was the greatest pitching duel in history. Koufax and Hendley took no-hitters into the seventh inning. The game featured the fewest hits — one — ever in any major-league contest. The hit, Lou Johnson's bloop seventh-inning double, had nothing to do with the sole unearned run.

Koufax himself, come back to earth from the seemingly higher league in his post-baseball years and engaging when encountered one on one — he disdains being mobbed — basically confirmed the perfecto was his best-ever game amid a too-short career of other-worldly highlights.

“It probably was (my best game),” Koufax told ESPNChicago.com's Jesse Rogers in 2014 during a visit to Wrigley Field with the Dodgers. “I think it was a great game because Bob Hendley pitched a one-hitter. It looked like we were going to be there all night. Big thing it was a 1-0 game and we were fighting for a pennant.”

The Cubs would go on to play a major-league record 7,920 games before they would be no-hit again, the victim of Cole Hamels in his final start with the Philadelphia Phillies July 25, 2015 at Wrigley Field. And as if some god of baseball was trying to further conjure up memories and comparisons to the Koufax game, new Cubs ace Jake Arrieta returned the no-hit favor in Dodger Stadium on Aug. 30, 2015.

### **Competitiveness and class by players**

All the facts and the newest no-no's are dutifully down in the books now. In the end, the lasting impact of the Koufax perfecto was the veneer of competitiveness and class exuded by all participants, starting with the great lefty himself. Koufax is like Andre Dawson. He does not use an excess of verbiage. When he does speak, he makes every word count. And his note to Hendley with a 1965-vintage baseball signed with “What a game!” sent to the latter's home some years ago sums it all up:

“We had a moment, a night, and a career. I hope life has been good to you — Sandy.”

With the perfect game and its everlasting aftermath, Koufax proved himself the most classy, gracious

#### *Editor's note:*

The Chicago Baseball Museum had considered doing a 50th anniversary symposium on Koufax' historic perfect game over the Cubs around Sept. 9 similar to our successful event we did in April 2010 with Bob Feller. That year, Feller celebrated the 70th anniversary of his 1940 Opening Day no-hitter over the White Sox, which turned out to be his last Opening Day as he died in Dec. 2010.

Vin Scully's “2 and 2 on Harvey Kuenn...” call remains one of baseball's most indelible moments. CBM Historian George Castle had covered this topic several times on his ground-breaking *Diamond Gems* show in the past with interviews of many of the perfect game's players on both the Dodgers and Cubs, including Chicago starter Bob Hendley. The details of the game would become the stuff of legend as the years wore on.

I began in earnest to work on putting together this seminar with the aim of luring Koufax himself to attend. We had gotten some criticism in 2010 when we celebrated Feller's Opening Day gem because we were celebrating a White Sox loss. I would shrug this off, responding as a not-for-profit educational museum, we were analyzing a vital historical moment in Chicago baseball.

In July 2012, I was attending Ron Santo's Hall of Fame induction and CBM advisor Roland Hemond invited Paul Ladewski and me to attend the post-induction festivities at the Otesaga Hotel, the landmark where all the Hall of Famers stay.

Roland had to sneak us past security, where I am suddenly in the lobby pitching to HOF President Jeff Idelson why William L. Veeck, Sr. belongs in the Hall of Fame. Roland then grabs Paul and I to go out on the famed veranda, which is where

*Continued on page 3*

winner in a game where showboating often crowds out sportsmanship. In such an atmosphere, none of the eighth-place Cubs whom he mastered on that Thursday night in Chavez Ravine ever felt conquered or belittled. They were welcomed by Koufax as able opponents to share in the glory of a game never duplicated, and could proudly pass along their own recollections as those only conduits of an all-time sports achievement.

Koufax's fourth no-hitter, in which he struck out the final six Cubs with his cap falling off as he tried to throw even harder than his unique physicality permitted, was the statistical cap on his best season. With the five-man rotation established for decades and seven-man bullpens governing manager's decisions, no other pitcher will be able to duplicate this 1965 line of sheer excellence: 26-8 record, 41 games started, 27 complete games, eight shutouts, 335 2/3 innings pitched, 216 hits and 71 walks allowed comprising a miniscule 0.855 WHIP, and a major-league record 382 strikeouts bested by just one whiff by Nolan Ryan in 1973. Somehow, batters were lucky enough to touch Koufax for 26 homers amid all those outs achieved without contact.

But ultimate team man Koufax couldn't afford to slip in any start. The Dodgers always lived on the razor's edge in the mid-1960s, perennially matched with the arch-rival San Francisco Giants in tight races with other teams like the Milwaukee Braves, Cincinnati Reds and Pittsburgh Pirates on the periphery. Koufax knew what was at stake in each start and its ultimate reward: "There is nothing better than being in a winning locker room," he told Rogers in 2014.

Where the Dodgers were an offensive machine sparked by Maury Wills' record 106 steals, Tommy Davis' 153 RBIs and man-mountain Frank Howard's 31 homers in 1962, three years later they had devolved to scuffle for runs. GM Buzzy Bavasi had traded Howard in the 1964-65 off-season to the Washington Senators for lefty Claude Osteen, who supplanted veteran southpaw Johnny Podres as the third starter behind Koufax and Don Drysdale. The lineup was further depleted when Davis, two years removed from winning back-to-back batting titles for the only time in Dodgers history, broke his ankle on a slide on May 1, 1965. He was replaced by minor-league callup Lou Johnson, once a Buck O'Neil Cubs product who had been pushed out of the Chicago organization after only part of one season in 1960.

Without any real power in the lineup, Walter Alston's veteran crew lived on the razor's edge competing with the power-laden Giants. The Dodgers scraped together just enough runs to back their all-world (and more) No. 1 and 2 starters. Wills again stirred

*Continued from page 2*

all the Hall of Famers assemble after the induction ceremonies.

Roland has us sit down on the rocking-chairs as I realize that Paul and I are the only non-Hall of Famers on the famed porch. And, suddenly I turn to the left and two chairs down from me was Sandy Koufax. He exuded pure class. This was my opportunity to ask him myself (with Roland's help) if he would consider coming to Chicago in September 2015 to be part of symposium to honor the 50th anniversary of his perfect game.

Just when I get up to go make my pitch, fellow Hall of Famer Bert Blyleven goes up to Koufax and starts a conversation. I had missed my chance to invite the boy to the school dance.

George's second part presented here is the next-best thing to the symposium we had wanted to do to honor this historic baseball event.

*—Dr. David Fletcher*

the pot with his leadoff speed and thievery, and the Dodgers were forced to play small-ball. Johnson and rookie second baseman Jim Lefebvre tied for the team lead with 12 homers apiece, with Willie Davis the only other Dodger in double figures with 10. Overall, the team slugged just 78 homers. An oft-repeated anecdote was Koufax pleading with his teammates for just one run before many of his starts. On Sept. 9, they would certainly oblige by the thinnest of margins.

### **Cubs hollow team after 3 stars**

The Dodgers would have certainly taken any of the Cubs future Hall of Fame slugging core in Billy Williams, Ron Santo and Ernie Banks. But elsewhere, John Holland performed one of the poorest jobs of roster construction in his mostly mediocre 19-season career as Cubs general manager. Never further away from their TV sets and VHF channel selectors turned to “9” at gametime, fans did not buy the daytime-only product in person. The '65 Cubs drew only two Wrigley Field crowds of more than 30,000, finishing ninth in the NL in season attendance with 641,000 in the nation's second-largest market. The Cubs were fated to be an eighth-place team, which Leo Durocher claimed the franchise was not when named manager later in Oct. 1965. They'd embarrass The Lip by sinking to the bottom, 10<sup>th</sup> place below the hapless Mets, the following year.

For the only time in their 1963-70 history as the Cubs' 3-4-5 hitters, Williams, Santo and Banks each drove in at least 100 runs in the same season in '65. Problem is, they usually drove in each other. No other regular in the lineup hit more than .239 – the finishing number of rookie second baseman Glenn Beckert. The moderate momentum built up by the 82-80 finish of 1963 that improved upon the 103-loss season of 1962 had dissipated, partially due in 1964 to the tragic death of Kenny Hubbs, the disastrous trade of Lou Brock and a downturn in the pitching staff.

Making matters worse was the after-effects of yet another of owner Phil Wrigley's wacky decisions of the era that complemented the College of Coaches and athletic director Col. Robert Whitlow. In 1962, Wrigley banned his scouts from signing new amateur players due to a huge amount of perceived wasted bonus money. The decision took its toll. Holland had little talent to call up from the minors with the talent flow crimped from the signing ban. Eventually, Wrigley was talked out of his organizationally suicidal philosophy and the scouts signed all six new players in '62. But the Cubs had to draft first-year player Beckert from the Red Sox organization in 1963. A veteran minor-league infielder named Bobby Cox landed a job filling out the Triple-A Salt Lake City roster in 1965. Holland eventually had a roster full of his three hitting stars, raw rookies that mostly were minor-league draftees from other organizations, and veteran ne'er-do-wells.

The Cubs' first Dominican player, Robert Pena, a Pirates' castoff obtained for three-year regular Andre Rodgers, started the season as the latter's replacement at shortstop with a bang, but soon flamed out due to a bushel-ful of errors. Light-hitting rookie Don Kessinger (.201) took over only a year after signing with the Cubs out of the University of Mississippi interestingly to start a nine-season run with Beckert as the double-play combination. But that pairing's best days were four years in the future. The lineup eventually would be stocked by journeymen center fielder Don Landrum (.234) and left



fielder Doug Clemens (.221), who had come over in the Lou Brock deal. Occasionally, 165-pound switch hitter Jimmy Stewart (.223), a 1961 Cubs signee, moved over from the middle infield for left-field duties.

Holland made middling trades in a desperate attempt to fill holes. Before the '65 season, he re-acquired George Altman, who after two All-Star seasons as the Cubs' first regular black outfielder in 1961-62, was traded to St. Louis for pitcher Larry Jackson. But Altman was not the same run-producing player after a series of injuries and a mandate from a near-senile Branch Rickey in 1963 to change his swing to pull-oriented to take advantage of the first Busch Stadium's short right-field fence. Altman began the season in left field, forcing another ill-advised decision to switch Williams to center. The outfield alignment lasted into May. Altman got hurt again, Williams moved to right, and the other lesser lights began widening the lineup holes.

Another deal came in May 29, 1965, when 1961-64 regular catcher Dick Bertell and outfielder Len Gabrielson were dealt to the San Francisco Giants for Hendley, former American League batting champ Harvey Kuenn, and aging left-handed-hitting catcher Ed Bailey. Little did Hendley and Kuenn know their profiles would dramatically increase in baseball history more than three months later.

The inferior roster led to the same tiresome Cubs results that had sunk the franchise since 1947. By June 13, 1965, the Cubs had sunk to 24-32. The College of Coaches system had been basically abandoned by this point, but the team's skipper was still called a "head coach," not a manager. He'd suffer the same fate, though. Before their second-ever trip to the Astrodome, head coach Bob Kennedy was eased out of the job into the front office. Kennedy was replaced by lackluster Cubs organizational lifer Lou Klein. The team played .500 ball the next two months, but their fate was sealed – another second division finish. And with six lineup slots manned by below-average or terrible hitters, it seemed just a matter of time before they'd carve out some ignominious team history.

### **No-hitter against Cubs inevitable?**

That eventuality took place in the first game of a Thursday afternoon doubleheader on Aug. 19, 1965 at Wrigley Field. Cincinnati Reds fireballer Jim Maloney dueled right-hander Jackson to a standstill going into the late innings. Maloney was the epitome of "effectively wild." He kept putting Cubs on base via walks and running up his pitch count far over 100. One stark fact remained as he completed nine innings – he had allowed no hits. The outing hardly seemed like a no-no. Maloney had allowed nine walks and hit a batter.

Jackson continued pitching into the 10<sup>th</sup>, having blanked the Reds on seven hits. Short-stop Leo Cardenas broke up the shutout with a one-out homer off the left-field foul pole. Maloney came back out for the bottom of the inning. He issued a leadoff walk to left fielder Clemens, his 10<sup>th</sup> of the afternoon. After Williams flew out to left, Banks ground into a game-inning double play, Cardenas to Pete Rose at second to Marty Keough on first. There was no sign of the Reds radio announcer, but WGN's Lloyd Pettit and Lou Boudreau quickly descended on Maloney near the mound for a post-game

TV-radio interview. Maloney hardly seemed exhausted after throwing 187 pitches and issuing a record number of walks for a no-hitter, a mark that still stands.

With the second game soon to start, the Cubs hardly had time to lick their wounds. Interestingly, Landrum slugged a two-out, two-run walk-off homer off Billy McCool to win the nitecap 5-4 in the bottom of the ninth. Then they had to play another double-header – part of the barbaric scheduling of the pre-Marvin Miller Players Association era – the next day against the Astros.

Jackson then continued his Jekyll-Hyde Cubs career to season's end. After coming over for Altman in 1963, he was 14-18 (after starting 14-11) despite a 2.56 ERA. Then he led the majors in wins with a 24-11 record in 1964. But being on the 1-0 losing end of a no-hitter was typical for a '65 campaign that concluded with a 14-21 mark. Fellow top Cubs starter Dick Ellsworth also endured a stock-market-style wild ride. After a peak 22-10 season with a 2.11 ERA in 1963, Ellsworth started out 1964 10-6, but finished 14-18 due to worsening tendinitis in his left arm. His '65 campaign was similar. Ellsworth began 12-6, yet finished 14-15. He bottomed out at 8-22 in 1966.

The Cubs continued their trail of tears to the season's end in '65 while the Dodgers resumed their fight – literally – with the Giants. On Sunday, Aug. 22, Juan Marichal uncharacteristically displayed abject thuggery by conking Dodgers catcher John Roseboro on the head with his bat in a duel against Koufax at Candlestick Park. Fortunately, Roseboro was not seriously injured. Marichal and Roseboro eventually patched things up and became friends.

After the Giants won two games in Los Angeles on Sept. 5-6 following a weekend series at Wrigley Field, the Dodgers were ½ game behind going into the Sept. 9 matchup with the Cubs. The game was a strange “orphan” contest – a one-game series – after the two teams had played a pair of four-game series in the Cubs' previous two trips through Los Angeles. In fact, the Cubs had two consecutive off-days since playing a similar one-game series on Sept. 6 (Labor Day) in Houston.

The Dodgers had won six of the eight previous 1965 Dodger Stadium games, with the Cubs tallying just 15 runs in the big ballpark, a common occurrence going on the West Coast. So they had no great expectations going up against Koufax.

### **Raw rookies thrown to the sharks vs. Koufax**

With a thin roster and lacking right-handed hitters (usual suspects Landrum and Clemens were southpaw swingers) to fill out the lineup in the outfielder against Koufax, Klein elected to start the right-handed minor-league callups Don Young in center and leading off, and Byron Browne in left and batting sixth behind Banks in their first big-league games. Young had been a first-year waiver choice from the Cardinals farm system in 1964, while Browne was a first-year minor-league draftee from the Pirates' chain in 1963.

The decision by company-man Klein with likely Holland input sounded at face value like yet another nonsensical Cubs management decision of the era. But flying into Los Angeles that afternoon from Triple-A, Browne did not feel put upon in being thrown to

the sharks right off the bat. In fact, from the vantage point of a half-century later, Browne appreciated the challenge.

“They wanted to find out how good we were,” Browne said from his Des Moines home, where he splits time with an Arizona domicile. “They put you under the gun right away. As player, I’m glad they thought of me that way. I don’t care if it was (Bob) Gibson, Drysdale.”



**The Cubs were so strapped for right-handed hitters to face Sandy Koufax they called up raw rookies Don Young (left) and Byron Browne (right) to make their major league debuts against the great lefty on Sept. 9, 1965. Photo [Baseball-Reference.com](http://Baseball-Reference.com).**

Another newcomer was asked to help the Cubs hitters better prep for Koufax. Three months off the University of Illinois campus, fourth-round 1965 amateur draft pick Ken Holtzman, just 19, had made his big-league debut five days earlier with an inning of relief against the Giants. Holtzman was asked to throw batting practice to simulate a hard-throwing southpaw.

Browne also sought the counsel of Billy Williams, who like Cubs starter Hendley had been competitive against Koufax, such as it was.

“Billy was the one who advised me to lay off the fastball,” he said. “It looks like it’s at the letters and then it’s at your neck. He had two curveballs, a big sweeping one and a quick-acting one.

“One of the greatest pitchers on the planet. I was a little nervous. I was looking at an icon. All you say is, ‘Hey man, this is what you gotta do.’”

Later in the game, Cubs catcher Chris Krug couldn’t believe his eyes when a Koufax fastball seemed to rise as it zoomed past while batting. He asked counterpart Jeff Torborg to explain. Torborg told him Koufax’s ball was rising, if that could be believed in physics.

The narrative of the game by now has been consigned to legend. Koufax, Torborg and the Cubs did not think the pitcher was particularly sharp at the start – but by whose standards? Koufax caught both Beckert and Williams looking at strike three in the first. He then fanned Banks in the second.

Hendley was just as effectively via a craftsmanlike style. He retired the first 12 Dodgers without a strikeout.

### **The ultimate manufactured run**

Then came the *Twilight Zone* twist for Krug and Johnson. Sweet Lou became the game’s first baserunner, drawing a walk leading off the fifth. Ron Fairly sacrificed Johnson to second. Realizing Koufax’s long-standing admonition for just one run might just be enough, Johnson then took off for third. Krug hurried his throw and it sailed past third baseman Santo into left field. All done without a hit.

“He threw it right to me,” joked Browne.

Krug couldn't hang crepe over the error catching Hendley. The Cubs were still in the game, and Krug had his hands full batting against Koufax, who had a somewhat pedestrian six strikeouts in the first five innings.

"It was the first time I had seen him (in person)," Krug said. "Left-handed pitching never intimidated me, including him. I went to the plate with great expectations."

In his first two at-bats, Krug flew out and grounded out. Similarly, Browne is still proud he made contact with a similar outcome as Krug's.

"I hit a liner to Willie Davis in center and Maury (Wills) played me up the middle and picked me," he said.

After Johnson scored, Hendley retired seven more in a row until that pest – Johnson – came up with two out in the seventh. By now, Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley's attention was piqued. He decided to stay, realizing both pitchers still had no-hitters going. But Johnson made contact and sent what Hawk Harrelson now calls a "Kansas City Special" blooping out of Banks' reach in short right field for a double.

"If he had played a little deeper, Ernie might have gotten it," said Browne.

The business part of Koufax's game now began, given the pennant-race situation. But his teammates knew what happened when Koufax shifted into a higher gear. Getting a rubdown in the trainer's room in the sixth inning, Drysdale – the next game's Dodgers starter – told Osteen on the next table to get dressed quickly. They were going to witness something special.

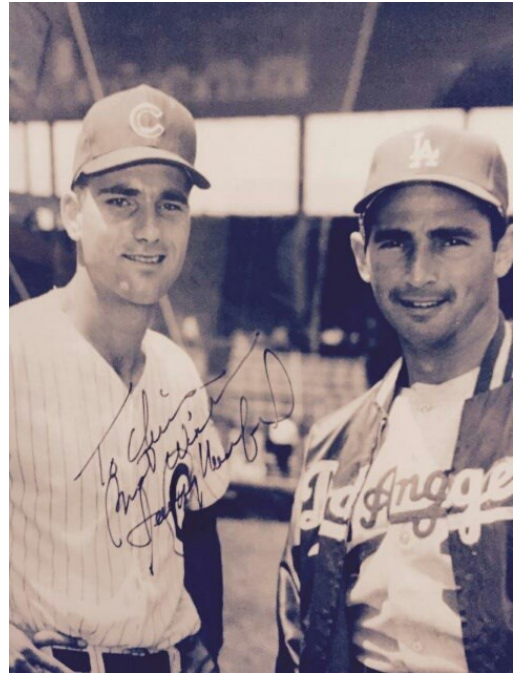
Koufax caught Santo looking to start the eighth, for his eighth K. He then mowed down Banks and Browne swinging. He threw 11 pitches in the inning.

Undeterred, Hendley retired the side businesslike-style in the eighth.

Then history was made on Koufax's final 15 pitches. The confident Krug went down swinging. If a radar gun had been available, it might have registered nearly 100 mph. "He threw just as hard and effective in the ninth as in the first," said Krug.

### **'2 and 2 on Harvey Kuenn, 1 strike away...'**

Klein tapped his only two available right-handed pinch hitters. Joey Amalfitano came up first. He went down swinging. Then the unforgettable at-bat for Kuenn. Vin Scully's radio call has reverberated throughout the ages as one of the game's ever describing Kuenn striking out swinging. [Listen to it on YouTube...](#)



**Chris Krug (left) and Sandy Koufax at Wrigley Field the week after the latter's perfect game. Koufax consoled Krug that the Cubs' loss was not his fault due to his throwing error that let in the lone run.**



Perfection. And the only game in major-league history with just one hit by both teams.

Koufax, 22-7 with the victory, was briefly mobbed by his teammates, then posed with four baseballs, each signifying one of his no-hitters, after his post-game radio interview with Jerry Doggett. The Cubs did not have much time for analysis. They had to catch a charter flight to San Francisco. Final editions of Chicago's morning papers squeezed in a play-by-play account of the gem. But the *Today* show or any other TV news program would only offer black and white photographs, if that, of the feat.

Hendley knew he did not have to hang his head, a feeling amplified through the decades.

"Although it hurts to know you lost, I still had a good feeling about it," Hendley said of waking up the next morning in another city. "You knew you were part of something special. The hurt was probably a little lessened."

Baseball has plenty of room for payback, so the Cubs and Koufax were not through with each other. Five days later, on Sept. 14, 1965 before 6,220 – double the typical late-season weekday crowd at that time at Wrigley Field – Hendley and Koufax dueled again. This time, Williams gave Hendley a Dodgers-type ration of offense with a two-run homer to left in the sixth off Koufax. Hendley held off the Dodgers with just four hits and seven strikeouts in a complete-game 2-1 victory. The lone LA tally came on a single by Drysdale, also the Dodgers' leading pinch hitter in '65, batting for Koufax in the seventh.

"I don't think as a player you look at (revenge) as a personal thing," said Hendley. "When you face Sandy Koufax again, you've got to be at your best to compete. As a player, you have a job to do. You concentrate and put your effort into the job you have to do not what you're facing at the other end."

Krug, though, was thrilled to team up with Hendley as batterymate again to get the better of Koufax.

"It was very satisfying," he said. "We as a team wanted to beat Koufax. It was something you didn't want to live with the rest of your life. A good word was revenge, and we got it."

The perfect game was not forgotten by its mainstays going into the fall. Krug met Koufax at a golf tourney in Palm Springs. Koufax showed his magnanimity when he came up to Krug to advise, "Chris, that (loss) wasn't your fault."

### **Holtzman vs. Koufax gets hyped**

And the duels were still not over. Hendley and Browne, that day's left fielder and No. 7 hitter, were witnesses on Sept. 25, 1966 at Wrigley Field when Holtzman, often compared to Koufax because he was a hard-throwing Jewish lefty, linked up with the master for their only head-to-head matchup at Wrigley Field. Holtzman vs. Koufax was prompted by Yom Kippur, the holiest Jewish High Holiday, taking place on Sept. 24, thus pushing back the pitchers' starts. Despite the Cubs' 99 losses, a Sunday crowd of 21,659 showed up for the home finale featuring the hyped duel.

They were not disappointed in the least. Holtzman turned the tables on Koufax, taking his own no-hitter and a 2-0 lead into the ninth. Dodgers third baseman Dick Schofield broke up the budding no-no with a single to center leading off the ninth. The Dodgers went on to score a run. Holtzman escaped with the win by getting Willie Davis to line into a game-ending double play to Beckert.

“Ken was one of my best friends, my roommate in minors at Wenatchee (Wash.),” Browne recalled. “That game was a thrill a minute. It’s always a treat when you’re involved in something historical. One pitcher was a super superstar, one an upcoming star. It gets you on your toes. Ken was a Missourian, from St. Louis. I’m from St. Joseph. We had that little Missouri attitude.”

Participants on both sides of the perfecto went on to forge strong Chicago connections. Three managers came from the playing ranks. Amalfitano went on to pilot the Cubs in the last days of the 1979 season, then again in 1980-81. Lefebvre managed the Cubs in 1992-93. Torborg helped forge a memorable White Sox contender as manager from 1989-91.

Johnson, popular in Los Angeles, found he could not go home again. He returned to the Cubs, his original organization, ostensibly to fill the right-field hole for the 1968 season. But after enduring several personality conflicts, he was traded via waivers nearly three months into the '68 season to the Indians for eventual Opening Day 1969 hero Willie Smith.

After spinning out of the Cubs organization for a short while, Young talked his way back in with Holland. He’d play a key role in the '69 drama, misplaying two key ninth-inning fly balls in center in Shea Stadium to help lose a game for Fergie Jenkins. But Santo aggravated the situation by calling out Young to the media for the fielding miscues after the game, a breach of baseball etiquette. Young was emotionally crushed and boos began to dog Santo at Wrigley Field.

### **Krug runs afoul of Durocher**

Krug’s Cubs career ended prior to the Holtzman-Koufax matchup. Leo Durocher, no moral beacon himself, heard wrongly in mid-1966 that Krug asked for the phone number of Allison Wrigley, first wife of Cubs owner-in-waiting Bill Wrigley, while chatting with her by the box seats as he warmed up a pitcher. The Lip launched into a profane clubhouse tirade denouncing Krug, although the latter claimed he was not in attendance. After the '66 season, Krug was traded to the Angels. He finished his big-league career on the expansion Padres in 1969.



**Ken Holtzman talks to reporters in the Cubs clubhouse after his first no-hitters on Aug. 19, 1969. On Sept. 25, 1966, in his only head-to-head matchup against Sandy Koufax, in Chicago, Holtzman took a no-hitter into the ninth inning before hanging on to win 2-1.**



**Sandy Koufax made friends of so many people around Wrigley Field. After he retired, Koufax worked as an NBC baseball analyst. In this role, he met Cubs coach Verlon "Rube" Walker (center) before a Saturday telecast.**

Koufax's post-season consoling of Krug, who again got to experience the concept of redemption 23 years later. Developing his niche building baseball fields with Wildomar, Calif.-based company Athletic Turfs, Krug landed the plum job of constructing the diamond out of the Dyersville, Iowa cornfield in 1988 for *Field of Dreams*. So his handiwork is preserved for all-time hosting the spiritual comebacks of Shoeless Joe Jackson, played by a right-handed-hitting Ray Liotta and Kevin Costner character's father.

Now retired at 75 and recovering from health issues, Krug met Koufax again, on the field a few years ago at Dodger Stadium in connection with then LA-manager Joe Torre's Safe At Home program on do-

mestic violence. Torre did not immediately remember Krug by sight, but Koufax did. He may have been the greatest pitcher in history, but he was a great one-on-one people person. And in keeping with the sketchy recording of the perfectos, the photos Krug took that day were lost to history when his cell phone died.

As usual, Koufax has the last word on the glorious game, and they were directed at the man he regarded as his most-worthy opponent.

After Jane Leavy's seminal Koufax biography *A Lefty's Legacy* came out in 2002, Hendley heard Koufax said good things about him. Leavy said she'd have Koufax call him. A week later, Koufax came through.

"We talked about what we were doing, for about 20 to 25 minutes," said Hendley. "The conversation was like he and I had known each other for years. It says volumes about the person."

And in the end, after all the Cooperstown-worthy performances and out-of-this-world perfectos are put in the books, all their on-field authors have remaining are their good names. Koufax and all around him at Dodger Stadium on Sept. 9, 1965 are in their own special Hall of Fame for how they conducted themselves before, during and afterward.



**If Sandy Koufax's absolution for his 1965 throwing error wasn't enough, Chris Krug (left) got even more of the concept when his baseball-field company carved the "Field of Dreams" out of a cornfield in Dyersville, Iowa in 1988, while meeting star Kevin Costner.**



## ***Ring brothers play key part in preserving Koufax broadcast history***

Baseball-lovin' John and Steve Ring could sit back and calmly watch Jake Arrieta exact a nearly half-century-delayed payback for Sandy Koufax's perfecto against the Cubs via his own no-hitter at Dodger Stadium Aug. 30, 2015.

The Ring brothers did not have to improvise in preserving baseball broadcast history as they did in the mid-1960s – including part of the Koufax game.

No shortage existed of live coverage or means to record Arrieta's masterpiece, probably just one cut below Koufax's intimidating dominance. The game was set up for maximum exposure. The Cubs-Dodgers contest was ESPN's national game played on the heaviest viewing audience of the week, in prime time in the Eastern, Midwest and Mountain time zones.

Assorted social-media and on-line outlets flashed pitch-by-pitch updates all the way through the final futile swing by Chase Utley. Copious replays on the late news commenced minutes after the final out. YouTube likely will be the next destination for the tape of Arrieta. The visuals will exist theoretically as long as there is storage of the tape and an internet.

Such a bountiful record of a pitcher's best-ever game was so radically different than the coverage of Koufax's perfect game on Sept. 9, 1965. Visual and audio records of the memorable night literally were pieced together, with the Ring siblings acting as ninth-inning closers.

The only live broadcast coverage for the 10 p.m. Central Thursday contest at Dodger Stadium were the team radio broadcasts helmed by Vin Scully on Los Angeles' KFI and Vince Lloyd on Chicago's WGN. Neither station's 50,000-watt signal typically could be heard in each other's home city at night.

Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley, always with an eye and lit cigar out for pay-TV possibilities, imposed a blanket ban on regular-season home telecasts that would outlive him. The Koufax game was not telecast back to Chicago. Then carrying both the Cubs and White Sox, WGN-TV typically aired just a handful of Cubs road games each season. Certainly a late weeknight game in September with expensive line charges from the West Coast was at the bottom of the list for consideration. Even when WGN began televising more than 60 road games in 1968 after the Sox had fled



**John Ring (right) with longtime WGIL broadcast partner Ray Smith was part of a family effort to preserve baseball broadcast history in the 1960s.**



to UHF's WFLD-TV, weeknight games from Los Angeles, San Francisco and later San Diego were not immediately included. The first weeknight West Coast WGN telecast took place from Los Angeles in 1974.

### **Koufax film, audio pieced together**

Dodgers trainer Bill Buhler had a low-tech way of preserving Koufax's home performances for the personal review off the pitcher. He'd set up a home movie camera in a walkway behind home plate, stopping the camera in between pitches to preserve film. However, on Sept. 9, 1965, Buhler ran afoul of first a Dodger Stadium usher, then a team vice president, who asked him to pack up and move after the third inning because the camera was blocking an aisle.

Keeping a record of the broadcasts was another matter. Neither KFI or WGN typically taped the game. By the late 1960s, WGN would cull game highlights for Lloyd's post-game *Scoreboard* shows.

For his idol Koufax's outings, Escondido, Calif. teen-ager Dave Smith, later a University of Delaware professor and godfather of the Retrosheet baseball research organization, recorded the game via reel to reel tape. If a no-hitter involving the Dodgers was in progress going into the ninth inning, Scully instructed KFI engineers to roll tape as a keepsake for the pitcher. The recording was an annual task for KFI as the perfecto was Koufax's fourth career no-hitter.

Scully's sterling, poetic account of the ninth inning, accessed at [here on YouTube](#) was sold at Dodger Stadium as a souvenir for several seasons to come, and fortunately has been duplicated countless times for posterity. Scully specifically took care to call out the time, date and location for posterity in the ninth inning of a budding no-no.

Dave Smith's father Hugh Smith had to bail out his son on Sept. 9. The younger Smith ran out on a date that night, forgetting to flip on the recorder at game's start. Hugh Smith caught the oversight and started the reel going into the third inning, adding to the pieced-together legend of how the game was recorded.

The entire process of Buhler's truncated filming, Smith's delayed recording and Scully's climactic play-by-play was beautifully recalled in Jane Leavy's 2002 Koufax biography, *A Lefty's Legacy*, structured inning-by-inning around the perfect game.

But there was still another part of the broadcast for which Leavy did not account. That was the post-game show in which Scully sidekick Jerry Doggett interviewed Koufax. The preservationist in this case was 1,800 miles away in Galesburg, Ill., via the reel-to-reel machine operated by Steve Ring, with assistance from John.

The clip was nearly lost via an oxidizing, deteriorating tape that was under water at one point, then sent to this writer in the late 1990s. An old reel-to-reel recorder was commandeered and the rickety tape was dubbed onto cassettes. Eventually, Steve Leventhal, then producer of my syndicated *Diamond Gems* weekly baseball radio

show, cleaned up the staticky version via digital gerrymandering as best as he could. The boosted version of Doggett-Koufax appeared on *Diamond Gems*.



**The Rings' tape of the Doggett-Koufax interview confirms WGN ran it when Cubs announcers Vince Lloyd and Lou Boudreau introduced the segment on the station.**

The post-game interview, originated by KFI, also appeared on WGN, from where the Rings taped the clip after recording the game portion of the Koufax perfecto. Unlike Smith's, it's lost to history. The WGN version of the interview is confirmed via the introduction of Doggett by Lloyd and partner Lou Boudreau, and the famed WGN hourly "time tone" at midnight Central time as Doggett and Koufax spoke. The game itself ended close to 11:50 p.m. Central time.

"Steve didn't get off work 'till 10 p.m. that night," said John Ring, two years older than his brother at 72. "He was a cook at the Holiday Inn. While I was coming to his house, I started listening to the game in the car. Anytime Koufax pitched, there always was chance something spectacular would happen. I was a Koufax fan. We got part of the game taped.

"I'm pretty proud there are those of us still alive who appreciate it. It's very hard to believe (they had the only surviving copy of the post-game interview)."

The Doggett-Koufax encounter was part of a treasure trove of baseball tapes the Rings made after Steve received the recorder as a Christmas gift in 1963. Three days previously, on Sept. 6, 1965, the brothers may have saved the only tape of Jackie Robinson breaking his second color line – that of network baseball announcer. Robinson worked for sports-TV impresario Roone Arledge and ABC-TV's Game of the Week in 1965. The Rings saved two minutes of Robinson interacting with Leo Durocher and Chris Schenkel at Dodger Stadium on a special Labor Day telecast of the Dodgers and Giants in the first match between the two teams since Juan Marichal attacked Dodgers catcher John Roseboro with a bat two weeks earlier.

### **Robinson tape belongs with wife**

The Robinson clip also was played on *Diamond Gems*. At the request of Robinson's daughter, Sharon Robinson, the Chicago Baseball Museum sent a copy of the clip to her mother, Rachel Robinson, in the late summer of 2013.

"Rachel Robinson to me epitomizes the wife who stuck beside her man," said John Ring. "The tape belongs where it was sent."

The Labor Day game featured another confluence of big names recorded by the Rings. In the pre-game ABC show, Howard Cosell interviewed Koufax and Willie

Mays together in a kind of détente conference in the wake of the Marichal-Roseboro incident.

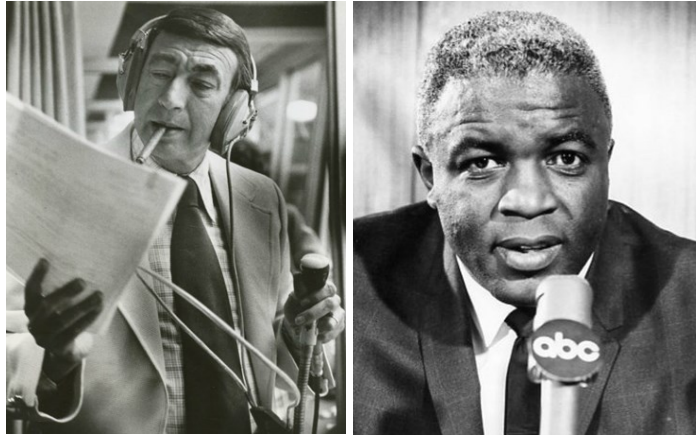
“We wanted to tape that because it was the only time got Koufax and Mays got together at the same time,” said John Ring.

The Rings were busy recording baseball highlights off WGN and Cardinals affiliate WGIL — for whom John Ring worked as a part-time announcer — in Galesburg in the first season after Steve received his tape machine.

“We experimented with different ways of recording the games,” said Ring, who recalled initial attempts to plug the recorder directly into the radio. “We found it was better to just line it up with the radio in a very quiet place (and put the microphone up against the speaker).”

Included in the collection is Lou Brock’s initial return to Wrigley Field as a Cardinal from July 28-30, 1964 after his trade from the Cubs on June 15. Jack Buck is heard describing Brock tormenting his old teammates with seven hits and a stolen base in the three-game Cardinals sweep. Another key grab was Lloyd and Boudreau’s version of Jim Maloney’s no-hitter over the Cubs on Aug. 19, 1965. WGN-TV had the video version of the Maloney feat from the eighth inning on, complete with commercials, all along, but somehow did not rerun it on the air until around 2008.

— George Castle



**Steve and John Ring also were busy taping ABC-TV's Labor Day game from Dodger Stadium in 1965. They recorded Howard Cosell (left) interviewing Willie Mays and Sandy Koufax together, then preserved perhaps the only clip of Jackie Robinson (right) breaking his second color line as ABC baseball analyst.**