



Where have all the ‘Moe’s’ gone in baseball nicknames?

*By George Castle, CBM Historian, and Mark Liptak
Posted Thursday, March 20th, 2014*

Wither “King” and “Big Donkey,” let alone all the guys named “Moe?”

When Paul Konerko and Adam Dunn finish their Sox careers this year, the dying trend for baseball nicknames will pick up speed. “King” Konerko and “Big Donkey” Dunn will further thin the diminishing herd of baseball types known by descriptive names. And if Jeff “Shark” Samardzija is traded, as most pundits predict, the Cubs will be nickname-less. That will leave just Dayan “Tank” Viedro, Alexei “Cuban Missile” Ramirez and Adam “Spanky” Eaton, all Sox, as the remaining bearers of a proud tradition.

Slang terms for players ranging from animals to ethnic derivatives were as much ingrained in baseball as scratchin,’ chewin’ and spittin.’ Alas, in a politically-correct, corporately-controlled era in which players are paid like Hollywood celebrities, the baseball nickname is fast fading. So the Chicago Baseball Museum, with a healthy assist from Sox historian Mark Liptak, is presenting a time-trip (including the present with Konerko and Dunn) through the world of nicknames on both sides of town.

In our research, we’ve discovered a “Moe” act unrelated to the Three Stooges, even though the Cubs played like those Columbia Pictures shorts’ bumbling chaps in the period of time (1956-62) when the team fielded four guys named Moe.

The first “Moe” in Chicago baseball was the famous Morris (Moe) Berg, a good-field, little-hit Sox catcher of the pre-war era who ended up as one of the United States’ most



When Paul "King" Konerko (left) and Adam "Big Donkey" Dunn leave the Sox, and Jeff "Shark" Samardzija is traded from the Cubs, the herd of present-day baseball nicknames will be dramatically thinned. Photo credit: [Keith Allison](#).

famed (after the fact) World War II spies. Berg even was poised, so the stories go, to assassinate Germany's most famous nuclear physicist if the latter gave any hints in a Switzerland lecture that the Nazis had an advanced atomic-bomb program.

No such excitement ruled the four Cubs' Moes. Moe Drabowsky was the first in 1956 as one of a pair of hyped hard throwers with Dick (Hummer) Drott. He'd be followed by catcher Morris (Moe) Thacker, lefty reliever Seth (Moe) Morehead and first baseman Meredith (Moe) Morhardt over the next five years. The Cubs, unfortunately, did not sign any Shemps or Curlys. The next "Larry" was Larry Jackson, a noted pitcher who arrived in 1963.

In 1958 and 1960, occasional Cubs batteries were Moe and Moe – pitcher Drabowsky and catcher Thacker in '58, joined by No. 2 reliever Morehead in '60. The Moes stayed together in another way. On March 31, 1961, Drabowsky and Morehead were packaged in a deal with the Milwaukee Braves that netted the Cubs infielder Andre Rodgers, eventually the starting shortstop from 1962-64. The Cubs then competed with just one Moe – Thacker – until Morhardt was called up in Sept. 1961. He did not last long, though. In his final game on May 19, 1962, Morhardt fittingly pinch-hit for starting catcher Thacker, and walked.

Like in the period's "Naked City" ABC cop drama, there are 8 million stories about baseball nicknames. We won't present nearly all of them, but instead give you a nice representation. We're listing players, coaches, managers, front-office executives, writers and broadcasters. More than a few saw service with both the Cubs and Sox. Where an individual has a second nickname, we've listed that in quotes in between the person's first and last names.

Enjoy:

All-Time Honor

Mr. Cub (Ernie "Bingo" Banks).

Hello, HOF?

Minnie (Orestes Minoso, Sox).

Longevity

Philliabuck (Phil Cavarretta, Cubs-Sox).

Classic Nicknames

Red (Urban Faber, Sox; Charlie Ruffing, Sox; John Corriden, Cubs-Sox; Bill Gleason, Sox-Cubs media; Wesley Rush, Sox media; Martin Mottlow, Cubs-Sox media).

Buddy (Charles Bradford, Sox; David Bell, Sox exec).

Bud (John Clancy, Sox).

Bo (Vincent Jackson, Sox).

Buck (George Weaver, Sox; John O'Neil, Cubs).
Bucky (Russell Dent, Sox).
Bubba (Emory Church, Cubs; John Phillips, Sox).
Chip (Harry Caray III, Cubs media).
Kid (William Gleason, Sox; Billy Pierce, Sox).
Mickey (Michael Doolin, Cubs; Arnold Owen, Cubs).
Mick (Michael Kelleher, Cubs).
Rube (Verlon Walker, Cubs).
Rip (Ray Radcliff, Sox).
Chico (Alberto Carrasquel, Sox).
Junior (Vern Stephens, Sox; Jose Cardenal, Cubs; Alvin Moore, Sox).
Gus (Early Wynn, Sox).
Skip (Lee Pitlock, Sox).
Spud (Virgil Davis, Cubs).
Whitey (Carroll Lockman, Cubs).

Wild Kingdom

Hawk (Andre Dawson, Cubs; Ken Harrelson, Sox media; Clay Carroll, Sox).
Goose (Rich Gossage, Sox-Cubs).
Road Runner (Ralph Garr, Sox).
Mule (George Haas, Sox).
Kitty (Jim Kaat, Sox; Ron Kittle, Sox).
Big Donkey (Adam Dunn, Sox).
Chick (Charles Gandil, Sox).
Arkansas Hummingbird (Lon Warnecke, Cubs).
Deer (Bob Dernier, Cubs).
Ryno (Ryne Sandberg, Cubs).
Hippo (Jim Vaughn, Cubs).
Fly (Fergie Jenkins, Cubs).

Spider (Lee Elia, Sox-Cubs).
Froggy (Bill Hands, Cubs).
Moose (Walt Moryn, Cubs; Walt Dropo, Sox; Bill Skowron, Sox).
Bear Tracks (Johnny Schmitz, Cubs).
Rabbit (Walter Maranville, Cubs).
Bull (Leon Durham, Cubs; Greg Luzinski, Sox).
The Vulture (Phil Regan, Cubs-Sox).
Mad Dog (Bill Madlock and Greg Maddux, Cubs).
One Dog (Lance Johnson, Sox-Cubs).
Two Dog (Bobby Newsom, Cubs-Sox media).
Reindeer (Bill Killefer).
Kong (Dave Kingman, Cubs).
Hoggy (Ed Herrmann, Sox).
El Caballo (Spanish for “The Horse” – Carlos Lee, Sox).
Old Hoss (Riggs Stephenson, Cubs).
Rainbow (Steve Trout, Sox-Cubs).
Crab (Johnny Evers, Cubs).
Penguin (Ron Cey, Cubs).
Shark (Jeff Samardzija, Cubs).
Billy Goat (William Sianis, 1945 World Series Wrigley Field ticket holder).

Authority or Royal Figures

King (Paul Konerko, Sox).
The Pope (Donn Pall, Sox-Cubs).
The Mayor of Wrigley Field (Hank Sauer, Cubs).
The Mayor of Rush Street (Harry Caray, Sox-Cubs media).
Old Roman (Charles Comiskey, Sox).
The Commander (Carlton “Pudge” Fisk, Sox; Bob Elson, Cubs-Sox media).
The Peerless Leader (Frank Chance, Cubs).

Chief (Charles Bender, Sox; Jack Aker, Cubs).
Senor (Al Lopez, Sox).
Sarge (Gary Matthews, Cubs).
Sheriff (John Blake, Cubs).
Baron (George Mitterwald, Cubs).
Red Baron (Rick Sutcliffe, Cubs).
Rajah (Rogers Hornsby, Cubs).
El Duque (Orlando Hernandez, Sox).
Deacon (James White, Cubs; Grover Jones, Sox; Warren Newsome, Sox).
The Dean (Jerome Holtzman, Cubs-Sox media).
Doc (Guy White, Sox; David Fletcher, Chicago Baseball Museum).
Pop (Adrian “Cap” Anson).

Attitude

The Lip (Leo Durocher, Cubs).
The Brat (Eddie Stanky, Sox).
Rock (Tim Lincecum, Sox).
Black Jack (Jack McDowell, Sox).
Cracker (Ray Schalk, Sox).
Popeye (Don Zimmer, Cubs).
Dizzy (Jay Hanna Dean, Cubs; Paul Trout, Sox community relations).
Dummy (Bill Hoy, Sox).
Gabby (Charles Hartnett, Cubs).
Jolly Cholly (Charlie Grimm, Cubs).
The Bandit (Ken Berry, Sox).
Sparky (Earl Adams, Cubs; Albert Lyle, Sox).
Spanky (Al Spangler, Cubs; Mike Squires, Sox; Adam Eaton, Sox).
Riot (Ryan Theriot, Cubs).
Sleepy (Bill Burns, Sox).

Happy (Oscar Felsch, Sox; Burt Hooton, Cubs).

Old Pete (Grover Cleveland Alexander, Cubs).

Dim Dom (Dom Dallessandro, Cubs).

Wimpy (Tom Paciorek, Sox and Sox media).

Bruno (Glenn Beckert, Cubs).

Smiling Stan (Stan Hack, Cubs).

Spanky (Al Spangler, Cubs).

Handy Andy (Andy “Pruschka” Pafko, Cubs).

Gentleman Jim (Jim Hickman, Cubs).

Good Kid (Lou Boudreau, Cubs media).

Places and Origins, Real and Imagined

Swede (Charles Risberg, Sox).

Frenchy (Jim Lefebvre, Cubs; Stan Bordagaray, Sox).

Polish Prince (Richie Zisk, Sox; Mike Krukow, Cubs).

Dutch (Ronald Reagan, Cubs media; Heinz Becker, Cubs; Emil Leonard, Cubs; Robert McCall, Cubs).

The Mad Russian (Lou Novikoff, Cubs).

Panamanian Flash (Adolfo Phillips, Cubs).

Blue Moon (John Odom).

Dixie (Millard Howell, Sox).

Jungle (Jim Rivera, Sox).

Rebel (Randy Hundley, Cubs).

Whistler (Billy “Sweet Swinger” Williams, Cubs).

Turk (Omar Lown, Cubs-Sox; Steven Wendell, Cubs).

Tex (Rich Wortham, Sox).

Baylor Bearcat (Ted Lyons, Sox).

The Cuban Missile (Alexei Ramirez, Sox).

The Fordham Flash (Frankie Frisch, Cubs).

The Staten Island Scot (Bobby Thomson, Cubs).

Paw Paw (Charlie Maxwell, Sox).

Cave (Art Kusnyer, Sox).

Moe Without Larry and Curly

Moe (Morris Berg, Sox; Myron Drabowsky, Cubs-Sox; Seth Morehead, Cubs; Morris Thacker, Cubs; Meredith Morhardt, Cubs).



Moe Berg (left) was the first Moe in Chicago baseball with the Sox. Then, between 1956 and 1962, the Cubs fielded four Moe's, including: (starting second from left) starting pitcher Moe Drabowsky, catcher Moe Thacker and lefty reliever Seth (Moe) Morehead.

Just For Emphasis

Big Hurt (Frank Thomas, Sox).

Kid K (Kerry Wood, Cubs).

Hummer (Dick Drott, Cubs).

The Hammer (Dan Pasqua, Sox).

Hack (Laurence Miller, Cubs; Lewis Wilson, Cubs).

Ripper (James Collins, Cubs).

Beltin' (Bill Melton, Sox).

Swish (Bill Nicholson, Cubs).

Scooter (Scott Fletcher, Cubs-Sox).

Booter (Marc Hill, Sox).

Boots (Lenny Merullo, Cubs).
The Blotter (Floyd Baker, Sox).
Bango (Gene Baker, Cubs).
Bee Bee (Lee Richard, Sox).
Bump (Irving Hadley, Sox; Elliott Wills, Cubs).
Zonk (Keith Moreland, Cubs).
Pea Shooter (Lee Smith, Cubs).
Hard Luck (Joel Horlen, Sox).
Trader (Frank Lane, Sox).

Appearances Are Everything

Tank (Dayan Viciedo, Sox).
Handsome Ransom (Randy Jackson, Cubs).
Dirt (Dick Tidrow, Cubs-Sox).
Sloppy (Hollis Thurston, Sox).
Muddy (Herold Ruel, Sox).
Burrhead (Ferris Fain).
No Neck (Walter Williams, Sox).
Three-Finger (Mordecai Brown).
Shoeless (Joe Jackson).
Fat Pat (Pat Seerey, Sox).
Round Ron (Ron Northey, Cubs-Sox).
Pants (Clarence Rowland, Sox-Cubs).
Blondy (John Ryan, Sox).

Taste, Touch and Smell

Smoky (Forrest Burgess, Cubs-Sox).
Salty (E. R. Saltwell, Cubs).
Sweet Lou (Lou Johnson, Cubs; Lou Piniella, Cubs; Lou Carlozo, “Diamond Gems” and

CBM podcast producer).

Peanuts (Harry Lowrey, Cubs).

Juice (Julio Cruz, Sox; Jerome Walton, Cubs).

Honey (John Romano, Sox).

Cotton (Francis Nash, Sox).

Milkman (Herbert Perry, Sox).

Taffy (Taft Wright, Sox).

Size Does Matter

Big Ed (Ed Walsh, Sox).

Big Bill (Bill Lee, Cubs).

Big Klu (Ted Kluszewski, Sox).

Big George (George Altman, Cubs).

Big D (Don Drysdale, Sox media).

Big Z (Carlos Zambrano, Cubs).

Big Daddy (Rick Reuschel, Cubs).

Little Looie (Luis Aparacio, Sox).

Southpaw

Lefty (Claude Williams, Sox; Steve Carlton, Sox).

Day in the Sun

Tuffy (Karl Rhodes, Cubs).

Class By Itself

Kiki (Hazen Cuyler, Cubs).

Jack Brickhouse Specials

Ab and Ag Show (Ab – Ted Abernathy, Cubs; Ag – Hank Aguirre, Cubs).

Rally Specialist (Len Johnson, Cubs media).