At Baseball Research Parley

By JOHN THORN

TOKORO—The major league stadiums have been silent for an eternity, or so it seems. The long, dormant strike has weakened the faith of many in baseball's ability to reach an agreement. But there is a glimmer of hope for the minds of the men who love it, and at the 16th annual convention of the Society for American Baseball Research, baseball was vibrant and flourishing.

The 125 SABR members who gathered at the University of Texas July 24-26 are no ordinary baseball fans. They are scholars of the game, and large efforts to preserve the histories of the sport are being made.

Marchildon, recognizing his playing career, pointed out that in 1947 he had won 19 games for the fifth place club. "But that's all that kept me, the A's," he said. "At first I was surprised, but I really enjoyed it."

As the talk turned to Connie Mack in his late, dozed years, Bertoia told a tale he had heard about Earl Mack, "The man who knew everything." A former pitcher, LeRoy "Scat" Redland called it a fine story about how Mack would run his third baseman around.

"What the hell are you doing here?" the Earl Mack's reply, "D-D-D-D-D-D-D, thank you, that's all that's the trouble with that.

Committee reports illustrated the range of SABR concern. The Negro league committee is nearly finished with its grueling project of compiling a statistical record of Negro baseball in the 1920s. The minor league league committee continues its Statistical Reports on the minor leagues box scores and player identifications. The biographical research committee has discovered a new major league player—Charles Ruhman, a pinch-hitter with the 1955 New York Highlanders who appears in none of the "official" records. The statistical analysis committee took on the project, so readily interrupted, of chronicling the 1951 season pitch by pitch. And SABR reaffirmed its support for awarding the 1951 batting championship of the American League to Nap Lajoie rather than Ty Cobb, a controversial issue revealed by the Sporting News earlier this year.

Some members' research topics are so esoteric, and their questions so intense, that no one knows the answer. Should every aspect of baseball be counted? Is all of baseball worth knowing about? Is, as Mark West once said, too much of a good thing wonderful? A member's likely reply: yes, yes, yes.

Vern, a sports writer who is not reading the old newspapers for his 19th century minor league project, had a story to tell. "While I was in Yugoslavia, I saw a map of the railroad network. It looked like a baseball field."

JULY

San Francisco—The baseball strike has grounded the San Francisco Giants and the Oakland A's in more ways than one.

Due to budgeting to at least one month of the season, the two clubs no longer have the services of the San Francisco Giants and the Oakland A's more than once.

The Giants and A's had been planning a major league game for July 24.

Said Smith: "We had a good season, and we were looking forward to the game."

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JOHNNY MIZE

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Johnny Mize, the "fourth estate" of baseball, told us what things you could do when you went up there to hit, "Mize says, "You were either going to hit the ball and get on base, or you were going to hit the ball and make a hit."

Mize, at 62 and 215 pounds, had the physical stature of a professional baseball player, but he was also a serious student of baseball. No college product, Mize nevertheless approached the science of hitting with more than a casual interest.

"There was a lot of talk about hitting," he said. "I'd look in the book to see what was going on. I'd look at the game, and I'd listen to the announcers."

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