

Re: This Week In Baseball
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TWB #920

Act One -- "Take Me Out to The Ball Game": TWIB celebrated the 100th anniversary of baseball's unofficial anthem, which is an amazing length of time for a song to exist at such a popular level. Honored as this year's Towering Song by the Songwriters Hall of Fame, "*Take Me Out to The Ball Game*," written by composer Albert von Tilzer and lyricist Jack Norworth, is known as the "other" national anthem at baseball stadiums across America. It is the third most sung song in the United States, behind only "*Happy Birthday*" and "*The Star Spangled Banner*."

Everybody knows the words because it is one of those songs you remember forever. The song takes us back to our childhood for it is a symbol of freedom and exuberance. Several MLB players were shown singing their version of the song. Finally, Hall of Fame member, Stan Musial of the St. Louis Cardinals, played the song on his harmonica.

Educational theme: Anthems are hymns of praise, devotion and loyalty to honor an institution, such as baseball.

Educational theme: Childhood memories are often lifelong mental impressions ignite emotions, change behaviors, and determine attitudes. If the memories are positive, the child learns how to best solve problems, develop self-confidence and learns to love.

Educational theme: Recognition is earned through superior performance, service, merit or longevity. This formal acknowledgement is meant to show appreciation by reward of public honor.

Act Two -- "Take Me Out to The Ball Game": The classic song is traditionally sung during the seventh inning stretch, but its storied history dates back to 1908. The well-known portion of the song is only the chorus. The song is about Katie Casey's plea for her boyfriend to take her to the ball game. Interestingly, the musical group *Widespread Panic* performed the complete song, while vintage film of baseball crowds was shown.

Legend has it that the lyricist, Jack Norworth, was riding on an elevated subway train when he saw a large sign promoting a baseball game at the Polo Grounds in New York City. With that inspiration, he wrote the song that baseball needed. At first it was most often played at the intermissions for reel changes in movie theaters, and it also gained popularity because the 1908 pennant races in both leagues were exciting. It took another quarter century before the song made it to the ball park at the 1934 World Series. It was during that Series that a group of Cardinals known as "*The Gas House Gang*" played music on the field before the start of the game – and "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" was one of them. The song has since been performed by countless groups and appeared in musicals and films.

Educational theme: Music, just like baseball skill, is an aesthetically pleasing talent. Both require master instruction and perfect practice for ultimate achievement; but, at a less demanding level of expectation both can simply be fun.

Educational theme: Inspiration is a critical step in creative action. It is the productive component of motivation that leads to originality and expressiveness.

Educational theme: Major league baseball is a carefully choreographed entertainment vehicle, called "The Show." It is far more than the incredible demonstration of athletic skills needed to play the game. It is an atmosphere filled with music, carefully manicured landscapes, and a wide variety of local and traditional cuisine.

Act Three -- "Harry Caray Sings": The answer to the TWIBIA question is Ed Walsh of the Chicago White Sox, who in 1908 had the most wins with 40. Walsh is the last MLB pitcher to win 40 games in one year.

The late great Chicago Cubs broadcast announcer Harry Caray would invite Cubs fans to sing "*Take Me Out to The Ball Game*," during the seventh inning stretch. Fans would stand, turn toward the announcer's booth and look for Harry's unabashed signal to sing. Caray's version always finished with the words -- "Let's get some runs!" But the tradition actually began when Harry was broadcasting Chicago White Sox games at Commiskey Park, where Caray first sang the song over the loud speaker system. Harry passed away in 1998, but the Cubs retained the custom by turning to celebrities to sing the classic anthem, including Will Ferrell, Bill Murray, and Jim Belushi.

One of the best versions of the song is an impromptu classic by the Philadelphia Phillies back-to-back MVPs Ryan Howard and Jimmie Rollins.

Educational theme: Trivia is a seemingly superfluous and insignificant event; but it is an important component of baseball legend, lore and tradition. For both fans and players, trivia is a source of fun and interest in the American institution called baseball.

Educational theme: Customs are practices or common traditions that are long established by the force of use. Often it is a group pattern of habitual activity that is passed on from generation to generation.

Educational theme: Poetic license is the liberty by an artist, musician or author in deviating from convention form or rule to achieve a desired effect.

Act Four -- "Baseball is...": This week, baseball is all about "*Take Me Out to The Ball Game*." Actor/ comedian and life-long Cubs fan Tom Arnold showed what it is like to conduct a seventh inning stretch at Wrigley Field. For Arnold, leading the Chicago crowd in the song was a dream come true. As a child, Tom saw Wrigley as a mythical place, partly because of the way Caray and the fans would perform the song. Tom's strategy was simple, i.e., to lead the crowd by singing straight and humbly. He knew that he would not be among the worst to lead the fans at Wrigley Field. As TWIB showed, some of the celebrities who attempt the song are not familiar with the words, the song, or even the ball park.

It would be perfect symmetry for the Cubs to win the World Series, since it would coincide with the last Cubs World Series championship and the year the classic baseball anthem was written in 1908.

In the *Big League Blast* segment, TWIB reported the Boston Red Sox victory in a 36 run game. Kevin Youkilis hit a 3 run home run for a 19 to 17 win.

Educational theme: In this case, conducting and leading means to direct a chorus of sport aficionados as a musical group.

Educational theme: Dreams are often goals, aims or aspirations. One may find pleasure in these voluntary visions of ambition a source of pleasure and solitude. With proper planning, dreams do come true.

Act Five -- "How 'bout that!": TWIB continued the birthday celebration for "*Take Me Out to the Ball Game*" with a special rendition of the song composed and played by Justin Joyner. TWIB then featured the best plays of the week set to the music of Justin Joyner from his album *Colorful Conversations*. This is the typical collection of outstanding baseball plays. Many outstanding leaping and diving defensive catches were shown. Several long home runs and game winning home runs were featured.

Educational theme: The artistic value of sport can be found in the beauty, grace, and rhythmic movements of elite athletes. The aesthetic quality of a well-executed play enhances the appreciation of baseball.

Educational theme: Once the student-learner has carefully observed the required effort and the bio-mechanics of the premier athletes, then the movements can be more easily duplicated and performed by the learner. The student is then physically educated.