

# Tiger Trivia

## Smith and Harwell tell the Tiger tales

By SHIRLEE IDEN

What current Tiger drove in baseball's millionth run?

How many Tigers got over 3000 hits in their careers?

What oldtime Tiger executed an unassisted triple play?

The man who has the answers to these questions and many more is Fred T. Smith, co-author of "Tiger Trivia," a treasury of Tiger lore.

Along with Tiger broadcaster Ernie Harwell, Smith compiled the booklet of questions and answers. The pair plan to team up for another in the near future.

A native Detroit, Smith has been a baseball fan just about all his life. "I had this idea for a trivia book for a while and Ernie Harwell had another idea, so we got together," he said. "If you can't get together with Ernie Harwell, you can't get together with God. He's a beautiful person, just the nicest man."

Harwell, who lives in Florida, checks with Smith regularly on how the booklet is selling. "If I tell him we only got ten orders today, he'll say 'Well, that's better than nine.'"

SMITH SAID the first Tiger baseball



FRED T. SMITH

game he ever attended was on May 20, 1927.

"A guy named Lindberg landed a plane in Paris and they came around with megaphones and announced it," he explained. "They didn't have a public address system then."

"Last year when the Detroit News ran the edition that marked 50 years after Lindberg's landing, they said the crowd at Navin Field watching the Boston Red Sox play the Tigers applauded Lindberg's feat," he said.

"I wrote the News a letter and told them the Tigers played Washington that day and the News answered and said, after 50 years they were glad to correct it."

Smith has an extensive library on baseball in his home in Southfield. Fortunately, he also has a wife, Virginia, and two daughters who like baseball. Maybe not as much as he does, but they like it.

"I went to the World Series every year for many years," he said. "But now that I work for the Tigers I don't have the time."

He said the beauty of baseball to him is that "We're always being amazed."

"Oakland leading the west? Impossible!"

*'Confirming the accuracy of each question is what's tough. You have to check and check and check.'*

— Fred T. Smith

When young Tiger pitcher Dave Rozema pitched seven innings of no-hit baseball last week and then let the no-hitter on a bad hop in the infield, Smith was sitting next to the scorer.

"THE CALL was good," Smith said. "And it took guts to make it. I congratulated him on it."

If you refer to baseball as "a game of inches" Smith will respond "Oh, you grew up listening to Harry Heilmann on the radio, didn't you?"

For more than two decades Smith earned a living selling insurance for American Automobile Association, 12 of those years in Lathrup Village. Three years ago he retired from AAA and went with the Tigers as a group salesman.

Smith's job with the Tigers in group sales means that he sells season tickets in the off-season and makes arrangements for large groups to get blocks of tickets and transportation to games in season.

Although he played ball, mostly the outfield on the streets of Highland Park as a youngster and at Central High, his poor eyesight precluded a professional ball playing career for Smith.

Instead, he became a Tiger booster. Working for the team is like a dream come true. "I just love the atmosphere and the people," he said.

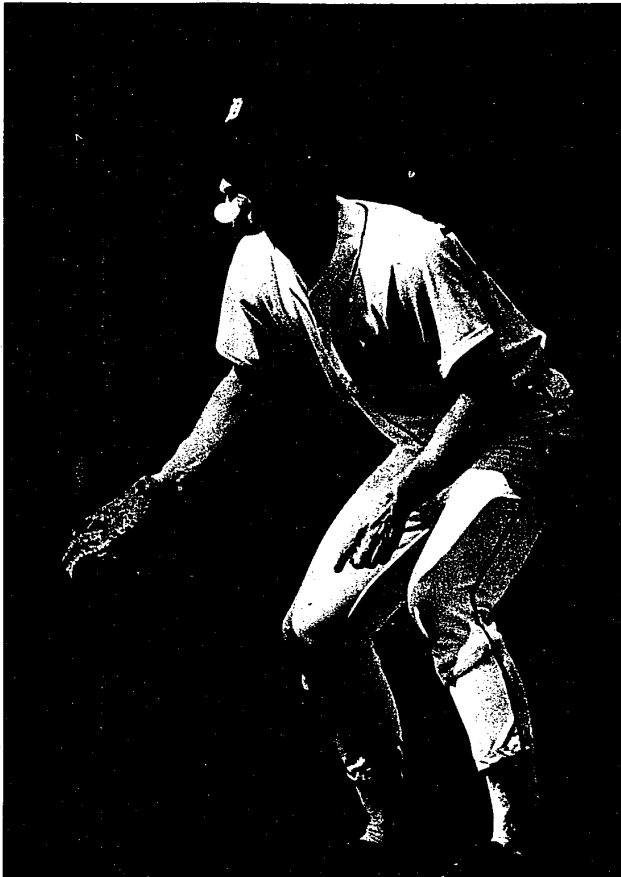
"Tiger Trivia" is not a book you'd spend hours poring over, but it is fun to have around. Smith and Harwell published it themselves and it can be found on newsstands.

It can also be ordered for \$2 by writing to PO Box 5038, Southfield 48037. And by the way—

Tiger catcher Milt May drove in the major league's millionth run on May 4, 1975.

Twelve men have hit over 3000 hits including two Tigers, Ty Cobb with 4191 and Al Kaline with 3007.

Johnny Neun, playing first base for the Tigers on May 31, 1927 executed an unassisted triple play.



Jason Thompson is the first Tiger to hit more than 30 home runs since Norm Cash did it by hitting 32 in 1971. The first baseman hit 31 roundtrippers last year. (Staff photo by Gary A. Friedman)

Farmington Observer

## Sports

Thursday, May 18, 1978

### Games back up

## Teams lose to rain

Who wins in cloudy, rainy, dreary weather?

Coaches throughout the district were asked this question after a week of rain prompted washouts in every sport. Answers varied from coach to coach, but the consensus seemed to be that, while rainouts helped no one, they hurt some more than others.

"Our games are all backed up," Farmington baseball coach Richard Roy commented. "We've got a shortage of pitching, and with all these games in such a short period of time, it's going to hurt us. These kids are full of surprises and anything can happen, but I'm afraid the delays are going to take their toll."

North Farmington baseball coach Jerry Maxwell sees the situation similarly, although his team is unaffected by the recent wet weather.

"We've got a lot of good pitching, so I don't think it will affect us as much as other teams," he stated. "Of course, we were playing real well, and I hate to lose the momentum we had going for us. But I still think it will present more of a problem for other teams because our pitching is deeper than most."

The inclement weather hasn't been a big problem for John Harrington, Harrison baseball coach.

"We won't make up the doubleheader against Walled Lake Central because it was non-league. There's a bit of a logjam next week, but all the other teams have the same problems. I don't think it will bother us too much," he said.

Area tennis teams were also affected by the

rained out dates. But again, it hurt some more than others.

"It hurt us," Dale Freeman, Southfield High tennis coach, said. "We're more inexperienced than a lot of the other squads in the area. We need all the playing time we can get, but it's not going to help having everything stacked up into one week."

Southfield Lathrup tennis coach Ed Waits wasn't sure how the bad weather would effect his squad. "I think it will bother some others more than us," he said. "We have an experienced team; still, it's not going to help us any."

Vestus Spindler, the girls softball coach at Farmington High, was worried about the psychological effects the weather would have on his team.

"These girls have never played a doubleheader before, and now they have two this week," Spindler said. "We haven't even had a decent practice, with all this bad weather. And with all the games we're playing this week, we won't get much of one in. We'll just have to do our best."

Lack of practice time was Southfield Lathrup track coach Jerry Mineweaver's concern as well.

"When we're unable to practice, we're going to get flat," Mineweaver stated. "Everybody gets down a little. There's no doubt it will hurt us."

So, while the rainouts will be more of a problem for the thinner and inexperienced teams, no coach is in favor of them. They all agree, that while it hurts some more than others, bad weather helps no one.

## Tennis regionals slated

The stage is now set for a championship play-off in the Metro Tennis League's adult division.

Court House Tennis & Racquets Club holds first place after 12 regular season games. This is the third consecutive first place finish for Court House.

Oak Park Racquet Club fell short in a bid to overtake Court House. The Oak Park squad needed a 71-point winning margin in its final match to vault into first place.

Although Oak Park did defeat Centaur Racquet Club last Saturday, the winning margin was only 49 points, 252-203.

Court House and Oak Park have beaten each other once during the regular season. The championship match has not been scheduled yet.

As the first place team, Court House may choose the home court advantage.

OAK PARK 52-CENTAU 182

| ADULT DIVISION STANDINGS |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Team                     | Score Matches |
| Court House              | 2,745 12      |
| Oak Park                 | 2,747 12      |
| Spokane Lake             | 2,118 12      |
| Farmington               | 2,101 12      |
| Rochester Hills          | 1,881 12      |
| Centaur                  | 2,029 11      |
| Franklin                 | 1,839 11      |

| OPEN DIVISION STANDINGS |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Team                    | Score Matches |
| The Racquet Club        | 548 6         |
| Court House             | 548 5         |
| Oak Park                | 458 5         |
| Rochester               | 322 4         |



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