

MLB ALL-STAR GAME

WHEN: 8:05 TONIGHT | WHERE: CHASE FIELD, PHOENIX | TV: FOX | RADIO: WBNS-FM (97.1)

Baseball's first All-Star Game on **July 24, 1911**, was put on by the game's best to raise money for the family of **Addie Joss** after the Cleveland Naps Hall of Fame pitcher died at age 31



ALL-STAR TRIBUTE

By AJ Mazzolini
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

The grandstands at Cleveland's League Park were crowded with fans eager to watch a baseball game that had no effect on the American League standings.

Cy Young was pitching for the Cleveland Naps, tasked with facing many of the greatest hitters of the era, men with names like Tris Speaker and Ty Cobb and Frank "Home Run" Baker.

Yet the fans present on July 24, 1911, weren't interested in the outcome; the score was meaningless. What mattered was that they were there, 15,270 of them, to pay honor to a fallen hero and raise money for his widow and children.

On that day, the greatest arrangement of ball players gathered for a benefit game, and the precursor to today's All-Star Game.

They gathered for Addie Joss.

Adrian "Addie" Joss had pitched nine remarkable seasons for the Naps (who later became the Indians). The tall right-hander had thrown a perfect game, just the second in baseball history, and also a no-hitter, but had died just two days after the start of the 1911 season and his 31st birthday.

Joss had contracted tubercular meningitis, an infection in the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. He died quite

Back row, left to right: Bobby Wallace, Frank Baker, Joe Wood, Walter Johnson, Hal Chase, Clyde Milan, Russell Ford, Eddie Collins
Front row, left to right: Germany Schaefer, Tris Speaker, Sam Crawford, Jimmy McAleer, Ty Cobb, Gabby Street, Paddy Livingston

Addie Joss had a 1.89 ERA in his nine seasons with the Cleveland Naps.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

Benefit game rosters

AMERICAN LEAGUE ALL-STARS

CF | Tris Speaker | Boston Red Sox
1911 stats: .370 batting average, 8 HR, 70 RBI, Hall of Fame class of 1937
2B | Eddie Collins | Phila. Athletics
1911 stats: .365, 3, 73, 1939
RF | Ty Cobb | Detroit Tigers
1911 stats: .420, 8, 127, 1936
3B | Frank Baker | Phila. Athletics
1911 stats: .334, 11, 115, 1955
LF | Sam Crawford | Detroit Tigers
1911 stats: .378, 7, 115, 1957
1B | Hal Chase | N.Y. Yankees
1911 stats: .315, 3, 62
SS | Bobby Wallace | St. Louis Browns
1911 stats: .232, 0, 31, 1953
C | Gabby Street | Washington Senators
1911 stats: .222, 0, 14

Reserves: 2B Germany Schaefer, Washington; C Paddy Livingston, Philadelphia; CF Clyde Milan, Washington; P Russ Ford, New York; P Walter Johnson, Washington

CLEVELAND NAPS

LF | Jack Graney
1911 stats: .269, 1, 45
SS | Ivy Olson
1911 stats: .261, 1, 50
RF | Joe Jackson
1911 stats: .408, 7, 83
1B | George Stovall
1911 stats: .271, 0, 79
CF | Joe Birmingham
1911 stats: .304, 2, 51
2B | Neal Ball
1911 stats: .296, 3, 45
3B | Terry Turner
1911 stats: .252, 0, 28
C | Syd Smith
1911 stats: .299, 1, 21
P | Cy Young
1911 stats: 3-4, 3.88, 1937

Key Reserves: INF Nap Lajole, UTIL Ted Easterly, P Vern Gregg, P Gene Krapp

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suddenly. His passing came as a shock to teammates who had expected him to rejoin the team early in the season after missing his scheduled start on opening day.

Joss had made many friends in the baseball world, both on the field and through guest spots as the Sunday sports editor at the *Toledo News Bee*, his preparation for life after baseball. His teammates nearly caused the first strike in baseball history on the day of Joss' funeral. They forced the postponement of their scheduled game with the Detroit Tigers so the Naps team — and a Tigers player or two — could attend the service in Toledo where Joss lived with his family.

The sermon, according to the April 18, 1911, edition of *The Columbus Evening Dispatch*, had "brought tears to the eyes of strong athletes who formerly shared honors of the ball field" with Joss.

When some of those teammates and team president Charles Somers decided to organize a game to raise money for Joss' wife, Lillian, and the couple's two young children, support came pouring in from players around the league.

They chose a date at midseason, when all but two teams in the league were available.

"I'll do anything they want for Addie Joss' family," wrote Walter Johnson, the Washington Senators pitcher and a future Baseball Hall of Famer.

He wasn't the only one. Seven future Hall of Fame inductees signed on for the game, giving up a rare off-day to play for no pay.

Joining Johnson at the game and in the Hall of Fame years later were Speaker, a Boston Red Sox outfielder, two infielders from the Philadelphia Athletics, Eddie Collins and Baker; Tigers outfielders Cobb and Sam Crawford; and shortstop Bobby Wallace of the St. Louis Browns.

The mismatched team of stars played Cleveland's roster, which included its fair share of legends. Infielder Nap Lajoie — who the Naps were named after — eventually joined Young in the Hall.

A rookie named "Shoeless" Joe Jackson also donned a Cleveland jersey for the game, patrolling right field on his way to batting .408 that season.

"A lot of people felt that loss," said Joss biographer Scott Longert, author of *Addie Joss: King of the Pitchers*. "The benefit game was a testament to him from the players and the fans."

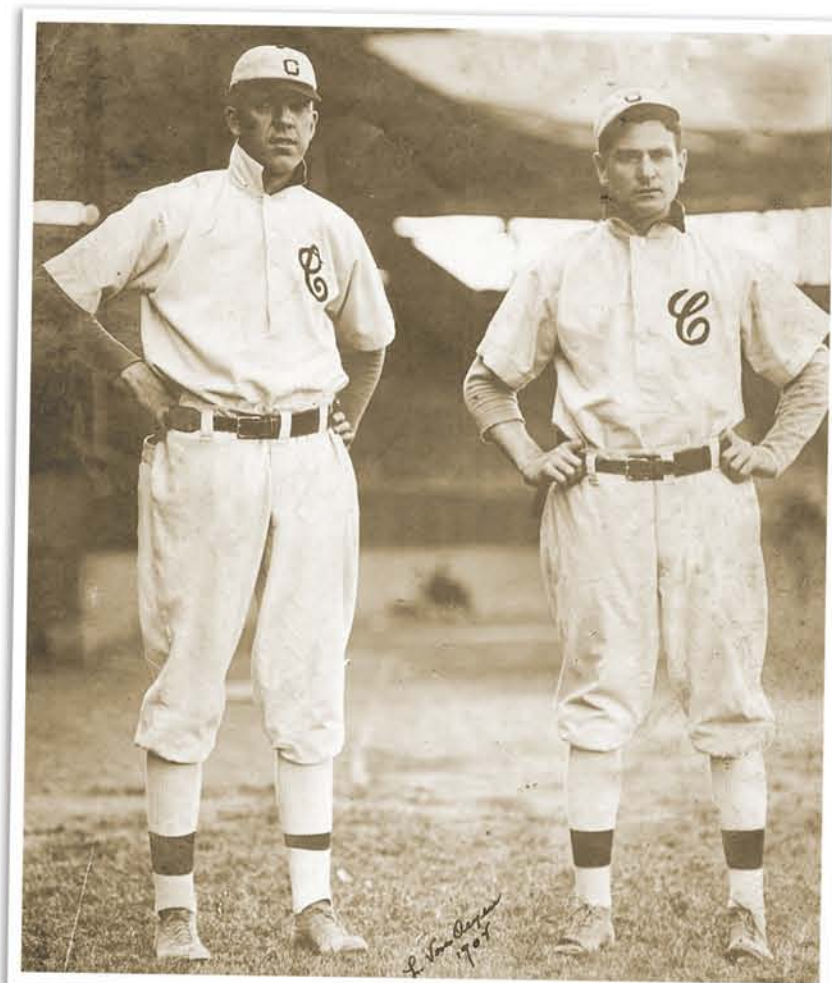
The game was a show of solidarity for one of baseball's own. League Park's employees agreed to work without pay. Players who couldn't attend or play sent donations to the Joss family. Some bought box seats for above-value prices while leaving the seats vacant for fans to use.

In all, \$12,914.60 was collected to help the Joss family. The sum is about \$300,000 in today's market when comparing consumer price indexes.

Baseball's first all-star game ended 5-3 in favor of the league's best. "The All-Stars were more consistent in their hitting than the locals," *The Dispatch* wrote.

Honoring Joss' historic career

Joss was born in Woodland, Wis., on April 12, 1880, and grew to phenom status during his brief stay in the majors. The 6-foot-3 right-hander dazzled hitters with his unusual side-armed delivery, hiding the ball from



NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

In 1911, baseball's best players came together to raise money for Addie Joss' (left) family after he died from tubercular meningitis.

view just long enough to give hitters headaches.

Joss was tall and lean with long arms, which led to nicknames like the "Human Slat."

The *Philadelphia North American* newspaper went as far to joke that Cleveland didn't need infielders because Joss' "right hand reached almost to third base and his left was capable of scooping up balls along the first base line."

Despite his friendly demeanor and unimposing physique, Joss developed into one of the most fearsome pitchers of the dead-ball era.

In 1909, Cobb, a lifetime .367 hitter, called Joss the hardest pitcher to face in the American League. Over 73 career meetings, Cobb hit for a pedestrian .233 average against Joss.

Respect for Joss the competitor and compassion for his widow played equal roles in Cobb's presence at the Joss benefit game.

"(Joss) was the guy," Longert said. "He was the best pitcher in the American League. If you needed a win, he was your guy."

In his nine seasons, Joss won 160 games, pitched seven one-hitters and totaled 45 shutouts. His career 1.89 ERA ranks second in history and his walks plus hits allowed per inning pitched (WHIP), 0.97, is the lowest ever.

Joss' WHIP, a measurement first devised around 1980, makes him the most difficult pitcher to reach base against in baseball's existence.

Despite the gaudy numbers, Joss' enshrinement in the Hall of Fame remained out of reach for more than 60 years after his death. A rule had required hitters or pitchers to play in at least 10 seasons to be eligible.

He died the day of the Naps' third game of the 1911 season. If he had taken the mound for one game that season, he would have fulfilled the 10 years of service requirement.

In 1975, a descendant of Joss' petitioned Hall of Fame officials for the

pitcher's inclusion.

"The records would seem to indicate that only the ten year rule has precluded Addie Joss' election to the Hall," William Swartz Sr. wrote to the commissioner's office. "In any event, Joss' credentials must be considered by this committee."

A rules committee voted on the issue in 1977 and ruled in Joss' favor. Swartz, a first cousin once removed to the pitcher who was living in Bozeman, Mont., attended the ceremony to represent the Joss family.

With both of Joss' children deceased — daughter Ruth died in 1957 and son Norman in 1977 — and no grandchildren, Swartz accepted the plaque at the induction on Aug. 7, 1978.

The closest remaining descendant today is Bill Swartz Jr., a 60-year-old college professor in Havre, Mont., who inherited many Joss memorabilia after his father's 2009 death at age 89.

Among them are worn pictures of Joss' close family, century-old baseball cards that came in old tobacco boxes and newspaper clippings from around the country detailing the elder Swartz's Hall of Fame campaign for the pitcher. The framed Hall of Fame plaque is displayed on a table in the Swartz home. A panoramic photo of all the players from the Joss benefit game hangs on a wall in the family room. The framed photo is a limited reprint of the original and shows the Naps and all-stars lined down the third base line with thousands of fans watching.

"I've saved all of this memorabilia that my dad accumulated," Swartz Jr. said. "I do like the idea of it all sitting in here. I'd never sell any of it."

The mementos serve as a tangible tribute, not only to Joss' legacy on the field and character, Swartz Jr. said, but to the nearly 40 ballplayers who gathered for him during that summer 100 years ago.

Men who, too, wanted to honor the memory of Addie Joss.

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