

1957 Baseball Grand Final – Dodgers Vs. Tigers

6th April 2009

The enclosed photos came from the widow of the late Hilton Jones who was a Radio Technician with DCA at Tennant Creek in 1957 and later transferred to Alice Springs. His widow lives in NSW. He obviously had quite a good camera. The film was developed and printed in Adelaide and the photos were still in the original Kodak packet. A TAA pilot was the courier. No films were processed in the NT in those days.

The packet was sent to my friend Allan Ireland who was with the PMG at Tennant Creek from 1952 to 1957. He lives in Adelaide. He told me how the Tigers won the Grand Final the previous year (1956) when Alf Chittock was struck on the head by a ball thrown in from the outfield, knocked unconscious two yards from home plate and dragged across the plate by Len Kittle and Cec Bourne for the winning run. Dodgers were not amused.

Allan said he was there when baseball got started and the main benefactors were Len Kittle and Jack Ford with the expertise coming from Don Barrow and Lou Savieri. Barrow played in Adelaide before the war.

When Tigers had finished celebrating their win in 1956, they looked around for Alfie Chittock. He had disappeared and was found wandering dazed in the mulga scrub a hundred yards away to the north beyond the drums. The umpire should have ruled him out and the run not counted. Not much was known about the rules in those days. I think baseball became popular because it required the least number of players for a team and could be played anywhere.

I have just read the biography of Lloyd Fogarty who managed Auvergne Station for 30 years as did his father before him for about 10 years. The father brought his own book-keeper with him in 1951 and his name was Harry Bennett. Harry left after about a year because there wasn't enough to do. Harry Bennett was a book-keeper at Peko when I arrived in 1957. It is highly likely they were one and the same person. You told me Harry died. He would have been in his mid 80's. He married a sister from the hospital and they had children before I left TC. The Fogartys were from Tambo QLD. The AA Company owned Auvergne. Dolph Schmidt, formerly of Alroy Downs, was general manager of the company and employed the Fogarty family – father and two sons. Dolph (actually Rudolph) grubstaked the miners sinking the shaft which they named Peko after his fox terrier. Dolph's son took over Alroy when Dolph left to take up his post at the headquarters at Goonoo Goonoo station. The headquarters are now in Brisbane. Dolph's son took over Alroy, a Schmidt property, when his father left. AA Co. is the oldest pastoral company in Australia (1840's).

Ron 'Walkie Talkie' Nelson was with DCA at the airport. He was the brother of Peter Nelson, married to Majorie Jackson, the Olympic Gold Medallist at Melbourne. Tony Travers, a good pitcher, was with the ES&A bank. Allan Ireland and Jim Mitchell were at the Post Office. Clyde Gillies would probably know who the aborigine is for Dodgers, his photos are enclosed.

I went to two TC reunions in Brisbane. The first one was good but the second one was poorly attended. I met Basil & Joy Hardy at the first reunion. He had no idea who I was.

Best wishes for now
Russell Wilson.

PS: The photos are probably some of the earliest taken of baseball in the 1950's. Not too many people had cameras in those days. I would be very pleased to see the Dodger & Tiger Teams of 1957 up in the Sporties