

Five Alumni Seek Professional Baseball Glory

BY
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For five former University of Missouri students, the road to the major leagues has been paved with the glory of winning the World Series, pitching no hitters, playing on pennant contenders and sharing the nostalgia of the New York Mets and the legendary Casey Stengel.

The road for Mike Shannon has been smooth. With the St. Louis Cardinals for six years, he's one of the rising stars of the National League.

Sports Illustrated says of Shannon, "There were those who thought, with all due deference to superstars Gibson, Flood and Brock, that the most valuable Cardinal last year was Mike Shannon, who hit conspicuously well in the clutch and was inspired at third base."

Shannon was an outstanding freshman quarterback at the University of Missouri in 1957 and as one coach remarked, "could throw the ball a country mile." Bill Callahan, sports publicity director at Mizzou remembers Mike best, "as a real strong runner who could really execute the option play." Shannon didn't play freshman baseball at Missouri, but impressed coach Dan Devine during spring football practice.

"I had Mike during spring practice of 1958," said Devine. "I didn't think too much of him at the first of practice, but he developed tremendously at the close of spring ball. Mike was potentially as great a football player as I've ever had at Missouri. He really developed."

Later that spring Shannon signed a \$40,000 bonus contract with the Cardinals and played with Albany in the Georgia-Florida league where he batted .322. He spent the next four years climbing up the Cardinal chain and first arrived in the major leagues in 1962. He played ten games that year as an outfielder.



Mike Shannon

Since then, Shannon has been steadily improving both as a fielder and a rising star. Last year, Shannon slammed out 15 home runs and drove in 79 runs for the pennant winning Cardinals.

For Sonny Siebert, former Mizzou basketball and baseball star, big-league life has consisted of five seasons with the Cleveland Indians. Siebert has thrilled at pitching a no-hitter in the major leagues and at appearing in the All-Star classic.

"I just hope one of these days we can get to the World Series," he said, "and if I ever get into the World

Series that would be my biggest thrill."

Now with the Boston Red Sox, the chances loom brighter. Boston won the pennant in 1967 and has a tremendous hitting team—something that Siebert never had at Cleveland.



Sonny Siebert

Siebert has been bothered by a sore shoulder in recent years. "I never set any goals at the first of the season," he said, "but if I have any, I'm hoping I can play the whole season without getting hurt. In the past, I've had a lot of arm trouble. I'd just like to pitch as many innings as possible and take my chances."

Even with his arm trouble, Sonny's major league record has been impressive. Last season he won 12 games and lost 10 with an outstanding ERA of 2.97. He has a career record of 61 wins against 47 losses with an earned run average of 2.75, one of the best ERA averages in the major leagues. In both 1965 and 1966 he won 16 games while losing only 8. In 1966 he missed most of the last month of the season after injuring his back in a one-inning, 1-0 loss to the Washington Senators.

Siebert was an all-around star at Bayless High in St. Louis and went on to become an outstanding basketball player at the University of Missouri before signing with the Indians as an infielder-outfielder. Sonny's father, Wilfred, was a promising semipro pitcher until he hurt his arm on the eve of a tryout with the old St. Louis Browns. That experience caused Sonny's father to ban him from pitching and the ban stuck until Sonny was at Mizzou.

At Missouri Sonny was outstanding both as a basketball and baseball player. In 1958 he played first base and hit .368 and helped carry the Tigers to a second place finish in the College World Series, losing only to Southern California and Ron Fairly, now of the Los Angeles Dodgers, in 12 innings.

One of the young pitchers of that brilliant 1958 Missouri baseball team is now the veteran major league pitcher . . . John O'Donoghue of the Baltimore Orioles.

O'Donoghue was an outstanding hurler for the Tigers that year, even as a sophomore. And it was he who suffered the heart-breaking loss to Southern California in the College World Series. He pitched two years at Mizzou and in his senior year signed with the old Kansas City Athletics. In O'Donoghue's major league career, he has pitched for the Kansas City A's the Cleveland

Indians, and now with the Baltimore Orioles. At Cleveland, O'Donoghue's roommate was his Mizzou teammate, Sonny Siebert. Baltimore assigned O'Donoghue to their triple A farm club, Rochester, at the beginning of the current season, but baseball experts are looking for O'Donoghue to be back in the major leagues soon.

O'Donoghue's biggest baseball thrill was in 1967. "I pitched a one-hitter against the Detroit Tigers and retired the last 25 men in a row. I gave up a hit in the second inning."

For Dennis Musgraves, former Mizzou pitching star who once heard the cheers at Shea Stadium in New York, the road back has been filled with long bus rides from minor league towns, two arm operations, pitching in relief, and learning a new style of pitching. Once, Dennis Musgraves was called a blazer, a man with a tremendous fast ball, but that is gone now and Dennis must resort to cunning and slow curves.

Musgraves signed a baseball contract with the New York Mets in 1964 after the College World Series. His bonus was reported to be \$100,000, still the largest ever paid to an athlete by the Mets.

At Missouri that year he posted a 6-1 record during the 1964 season, including a no-hitter against Kansas State and a pair of 2-hitters. His earned run average was a sensational 0.36.



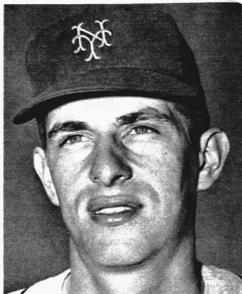
John O'Donoghue

Musgraves hurt his arm in 1965, his first year with the Mets, pitching against the Chicago Cubs. Since then, he has tried to climb back up the minor league ladder to the major leagues. He has been a relief pitcher with the Memphis Blues, a double A farm club of the Mets. With the Blues last year, he pitched in over 50 games in relief.

The future doesn't look gloomy for this former Mizzou star. He is still young and is scheduled to pitch this year for the Tidewater, Va. Tides, the triple A farm club of the Mets, one short step from the major leagues.

Musgraves said he has learned more about pitching since he injured his arm, but doesn't think he throws as well as he did in college. "But now, I guess I'm a little smarter," he said, "and try to move the ball around more and work on the hitters a little more. I think I do that better now."

Musgraves pitched one full year in the major leagues with the Mets and hurled in 17 innings without a won-



Dennis Musgraves

loss record. He injured his arm pitching against the Chicago Cubs late in August, followed by two painful arm operations.

The battery mate of Musgraves and captain of the Missouri Tigers in 1964, John Sevcik, has also found the road of professional baseball one of glory and some frustration. He played on the American League pennant winners, the Minnesota Twins, but had to face the frustration of playing with a major league team loaded with outstanding catchers.

For John, who spent the 1965 season with the Twins, the steps back have been slowed by an outstanding crop of catchers in the Twins organization. John has been climbing from class A to triple A, one step from the major leagues. This year, he has been assigned to the triple A farm club of the Twins, Denver. Last year, Sevcik hit a respectable .260 at Charlotte, the class A farm club of the Twins and caught in almost 100 games.

John and his identical twin, Jim, lettered three years in baseball, leading the Tigers to three Big Eight baseball championships and carried Mizzou to a second place finish in the 1964 College World Series. These remarkable twins also won three letters each in football, both playing end. Both John and Jim signed baseball contracts with the Minnesota Twins following graduation. Jim has since retired from baseball, and is now living in Chicago working in the marketing division of a trucking firm.

Last fall John began work on his master's degree in advertising at the University and helped coach the freshman football team.



John Sevcik