

Hugh S. Fullerton Vividly Describes the Full Details of Great Baseball Scandal

By HUGH S. FULLERTON.
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Baseball disgrace, which was climaxed recently when players of the Chicago White Sox, champions of the American league, were indicted on charges of throwing games in the world's series, has been an open secret for ten months.

Practically every one connected with baseball knew that the series in Cincinnati, the first two and the final game especially, was not played honestly. A score of men connected with the game—owners, managers and reporters—knew or were told all the details of the fixing of the series. So openly and so notoriously was the attempted prostitution of the world series carried out that before the first ball was pitched hundreds believed that the thing was fixed and that the gamblers at last had succeeded in corrupting the sport which had been considered incorruptible.

It was my misfortune to be compelled to reveal the truth concerning the play of the series.

The night that the world's series ended and Claude Williams lost the final game in the first inning I wrote in the New York Evening World: "There are seven of the Chicago White Sox who will not be on the team next spring." My authority was Charles A. Comiskey, owner of the team, who then believed that his team had been corrupted. Later, on advice of friends and his lawyer, and torn by doubts, he allowed all save one to return to the team.

Strange Playing.

The manner in which the series was played was significant. Never before in a world's series (with one exception) had any team been as greatly outclassed as the Reds were in that series. They were a hard-working, hustling team with good pitchers, and their only hope was that Ruether and Eller could stop the heavy hitting club. The odds quoted by the gamblers three days before the series opened were at two and a half to one that Chicago would win. There was little Cincinnati money at any time.

I reached Cincinnati during the early morning of the day preceding the opening game and met Joe Jackson, a Detroit paper man, who said he would look easy and he bit hard. But for the catching of two fierce line drives the Reds would have scored early and often. Yet not a score was registered until the fourth inning. In the first half of that inning with runners on second and third for Chicago, Gandil acted as if he was afraid he might hit the ball safely. He croaked his bat and jabbed at the ball for an easy out.

In the Reds' half of the fourth Williams issued two passes and Rousch slapped a hit past second which Risberg almost reached. Felsch grabbed the ball and hurled it uselessly toward the plate. The Reds got three runs. Only the great fielding of Eddie Collins prevented them from getting more.

Schalk Begins Fighting.

That night there was a clash which killed the last hopes of the White Sox—or the honest ones among them. Ray Schalk, the greatest and gamest little catcher in the business, fighting with every ounce of nerve in his body and desperate over defeat, informed Manager Gleason in detail as to what had happened. He told Gleason that repeatedly, in the opening game of the series, Cicotte had pitched straight balls with "nothing on them" when he had signaled for shiners or curves. He said that in the decisive inning of the second game—the fourth—Williams had "crossed him" four times, pitching straight balls when he ordered curves.

"How many times has he crossed you this season?" Gleason demanded.

"Not once during the year."

Schalk, that evening, in our rooms, told several of us that things looked bad. He told us about what he had told Gleason. He had already accused two ball players of crooked work to their faces, and yet refused to charge them publicly with trying to lose the series.

That night a bunch of gamblers and sports, drunk, walked through the crowded lobby of the Sinton, singing:

"They are always throwing ball games,

Throwing ball games in the air."
Yet Presidents Johnson and Heydler could not learn of anything wrong with the series.

Comiskey, however, had summoned a swarm of detectives. I met Eddie Cicotte the evening of the second game and we chatted for a time.

"You know what they are saying about you?" I asked.

"Nothing to it," he said, laughing. "We'll get 'em yet."

Those players knew the charges, knew they were suspected, yet they did not get mad.

The teams moved to Chicago that night.

Bill Gleason is as honest a man as breathes, and a fighting man. He believed that crooked work was going on. He told his players to get out there and play honestly or answer to him. He threatened to choke or kill some of them. He was fighting hard. He spoiled the plans of the gamblers by sending little Dick Kerr in to pitch. The rumors were still vicious. The gamblers were plunging on the Reds. Odds were offered, but when Kerr was announced to pitch the odds were jumped to 8 to 5 on Chicago, which looked bad. Bill Burns, who had been cleaning up on the first two games, bet his roll on the third game and lost it.

Gamblers Use Rothstein's Name.

It was then that the gamblers seemed to need fresh capital. They were spreading the word almost openly that it was fixed and begging for money to bet. It is probable that it was at that time that they tried to get money by using Arnold Rothstein's name.

I was informed that night that in the morning a meeting of ball players had been held in a room at the La Salle hotel, that there were nine persons in the room—seven ball players and Abe Attell and one other. Comiskey had at that time detectives watching the players. I never was able to verify the report of the meeting. I was told that at the meeting Buck Weaver raved and swore and declared he had nothing to do with the losing of the games and that he would not touch the dirty money. I was also informed that Williams and Cicotte refused to go any further with it and that there was a stormy time. The gamblers were said to have insisted that the players go through with the program.

Crude Work.

Cicotte threw away the fourth game in laughable style. He did not attempt in this game to pitch straight balls, probably because

Schalk would not stand for it and Gleason had declared himself. He pitched great ball and seemed to toy with the Reds. In the fifth inning he grabbed an easy boundary and threw the ball wild past Gandil, then ran in, interfered with a throw from the outfield and permitted the Reds to have two runs. He says he did this purposely, and I find in my score book two notes saying that the plays looked suspicious because of the manner in which they were made.

Schalk meantime was batting the team to try to make it win. He and Gleason were threatening the players under suspicion and Schalk had a fist fight.

By that time the White Sox were so broken that there was no hope of rallying them. Rain spoiled the next day and during that day there was a desperate effort to rally the White Sox. The threats of Gleason and others of the honest ones may have scared the Sox. At any rate there was no reason to throw the next game—no team on earth could have beaten Eller, pitching as he was. Williams went along well until the sixth inning when he commenced grooving the ball and the Reds hammered out four runs, aided by miserable fielding by Lelsch and Risberg. Then they moved to Cincinnati and the White Sox won again with Kerr pitching and they returned to Chicago.

The gamblers were alarmed. Charges of double-crossing were hurled around. The Reds had broken badly and it seemed a game of give away.

Kid Gleason Desperate.

In the last game Gleason made his final effort. He first proposed to take out of the game every man under suspicion and sent out a team of makeshifts upon whose honesty he could rely. He was told that the act would make a farce of the series. He then declared himself. He stated that if he saw any evidences of crookedness that day he would use an "iron" on the guilty player, meaning a gun. The Kid was desperate.

I had become disgusted. The thing was getting flagrant, yet it was impossible for me to get legal proof against the players. Perhaps Gleason believed he had his crooked players too well frightened to attempt any crooked work.

Just before that game started I was standing back of the press box in the upper tier when a gambler came past, and we stopped and talked.

"Better get a bet on the Reds," he said.

"Not today."

"You'll see the biggest first inning you ever saw in your life," he remarked and walked away.

It was. Williams pitched about seven balls and the game, as far as results went, was over. He was taken out and later the White Sox rallied fiercely and came near catching up again.

That night Comiskey, in his bitterness, said: "There are seven who never will play on this team again."

I did not want to quote him, but, believing him, I printed the prediction. Later Comiskey and I discussed the matter, and he said he had been unable to get legal proof, but was still trying.

Gleason Goes to St. Louis.

The night the series ended Gleason went to St. Louis with the avowed intention of "getting" the man who was accused of bribing the players. He cornered that man and is said to have choked him and tried to force a confession from him, besides offering him \$5,000 for the names of those implicated. The man said he was afraid to squeal for fear he would meet the fate that another St. Louis gambler who had been killed, had met. This was told to me by one of Gleason's close friends. I never asked Bill about it. But it shows the honesty of the Sox manager and his desperate efforts to force his team to play.

The day after the series the players were in their club rooms when Comiskey sent for Eddie Cicotte to come to his office. He held Cicotte's world's series money and his final pay check of the season.

"Tell him I want to give him his checks and talk to him," Comiskey said.

Cicotte dressed and left the park without going to the office. Comiskey then held the pay checks of seven players, perhaps eight. He sent word to them that their money was there and to come and get it. He held it for weeks and then upon advice of his attorney, sent it to them.

After the series I announced that I had retired from baseball until such time as the owners and magnates cleaned up the game. I went fishing. When I returned I discovered that the entire scandal was being whitewashed. The Evening World asked me to write some baseball for them and I told the managing editor that I could not because of the condition into which the sport was falling. He was surprised and had not heard the story. He told me to write the details of the scandal and, early last December, I wrote the entire story.

Immediately I was assailed from all sides. The chief attacks came from publications connected with organized baseball. I was informed that I would be driven out of the game.

The way of cleaning the sport seems to have been to banish reporters who dared write the truth. However, the house cleaning has started in earnest. Not all the guilty have been caught. Nothing but a thorough house cleaning, a change of the heads of organized baseball and wholesale expulsion of players can save the game.