

The exhibit *Runs, Hits and an Era: The Pacific Coast League 1903-1958*. Great Hall Low Boy (April 2-July 31, 1994), Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak Street, Oakland, CA 94607. Telephone information: 510-834-3413 and 510-451-3322. The exhibit will move to the Oregon Historical Society, Portland Oregon (1995), and to the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum, Los Angeles, California (1996).

The concrete bunker-like construction of the Great Hall Low Boy, Oakland Museum creates its own intimate atmosphere. There is the feel of the dugout, the proximity to home plate, and the press of the locker room.

On entering the exhibition, there is a long map of the Pacific Coast above which are black-and-white photographs of the baseball grounds that were homes to the members of the Pacific Coast League, hereafter noted as PCL. The names are indeed out of the past: Lane, Wrigley, Gilmore, Oaks. Seals, Edmond, Vaughan, and Sick. Museum notes remind one that *Pride of the Yankees*, *The Babe Ruth Story* and *Damn Yankees* were all filmed at

Wrigley Field. A large museum sign sets the scene for the exhibition.

Baseball fever quickly spread up and down the Pacific Coast. With the completion of the transcontinental railroad, in 1869, the first professional team, the Cincinnati Red Stockings barnstormed the West Coast, stimulating interest in further organizing the game of baseball. . . The PCL surpassed the earlier leagues in importance and became the focal point of baseball in the region, a position it maintained until the major leagues arrived in 1958.

The collection, a series of tableaux built round particular themes, is, in a sense, a testament to things that cue no more. No longer are there PCL teams with names such as Oaks, Rainiers, Beavers, Solons, Seals, Stars, Missions, Tigers, Angels, and Padres. On a more profound and personal level *Runs, Hits and an Era* lovingly recreates and fleshes out the past, and makes artful links with the present.

There is area devoted to Jimmy Reese. He was an Angels bat boy aged 14 in 1922, is Babe Ruth's last surviving ex-roommate, has a 70-year-old connection with the PCL, and now is a part-time coach of the California Angels.

The Oakland Museum is to be congratulated on a lively and entertaining collection of baseball memorabilia. There are two videos produced by Mark Medeivos. The 12-minute one is a potted history of the PCL done like a Pathe Movietone News clip. There is well selected archival film cutaways to close-up still action photographs, and excellent snippets of oral history from the likes of Dario Lodgiani, Eddie Basinski, Jim Davis, Ad Liska, Jack Graham, Fenton Mole, and African-Americans Bennie Daniels and Artie Wilson. The sound is crisp and clear and the musical sound track evokes both period and place. There is a wonderful piece of real life of comedy when the PCL, post-World War II, decided to spice up players' appearances and made them wear shorts! The other video (called "A Broadcaster's Tale") is an interview of announcer Bob Blackburn who explains, helped by two actors doing a "reconstruction," how baseball broadcasts, at one time, were works of creative imagination and sleight of hand. Announcers like Blackburn (and Koester, Truitt, Lassen) would receive a brief description of a game via telephone or telegraph. They would then improvise and articulate their view of what was going on helped by various sound-effect ploys to replicate bat on ball and the cheering of the crowd.

The PCL was not just a great baseball league in its own right, it was a nursery for some American icons. Joe DiMaggio began his PCL career as an 18-year-old with the San Francisco Seals. And, of course, in that rookie year, "The Yankee Clipper" set the milestone of 61 consecutive game hits. The exhibition shows Ted Williams beginning his PCL career in 1936 as a 17-year-old. Attached to a Williams photograph is a quote from a then-Yankee scout, Joe Devine. Devine affirmed, "There is a big doubt" about this player called Ted Williams.

Runs, Hits and an Era is a feast for the sports historian as the museum curators have squeezed every sort of historical artifact in to their collection. Here are some examples from a wonderfully eclectic variety of historical objects: There is Kathy “Smokey Riser” Turner’s Hollywood Star cheerleader costume (1955); photographs of Chuck Connors who hit .321 with the Los Angeles Angels in 1951 and then went on to be a Hollywood movie star; there is a massive photograph of four children peering through spaces in the surrounds of Portland’s Vaughn Street Ball park in 1948—title. “The Knot-hole Gang”; there are primary source documents such as the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Los Angeles Times*, with the latter showing the record attendance at a PCL game of 23,497 at Wrigley Field; and there is a selection of Lee Susman’s brilliant comic-style cartoons on baseball that appeared in the *Oakland Tribune*.

Lots of imagination went into this exhibition. I watched groups of captivated senior citizens and of school children as they toured. There is something for everyone. There is a model of the PCL ground in the early 1900s. One area was known as “Booze Caze.” For the price of admission came a shot of whiskey, two bottles of beer or a ham-and-cheese sandwich. You can also peer through your own knothole and see a Seattle Rainiers’ fielder in mid air during a 1940 game at Sick Stadium.

In every respect, *Runs, Hits and an Era* is brilliant. The excellent source book should be required reading for all sports historians: *Runs, Hits and an Era: The Pacific Coast League, 1903-1958*. Paul J. Zingy and Mark D. Medeiros. University of Illinois Press. Urbana, 1994. Cost for paperback: \$19.95; hardcover: \$44.95.

University Art Museum—Pacific Film Archive. University of California at Berkeley, 2625 Durant Avenue. Berkeley, CA 94720. Contact research person, Nancy Goldman/Lee Amazonas. Telephone: 415-642-1437. Hours: 1-5 p.m. (PST), Monday–Friday.

The PFA Library Collection has over 5,000 books on film history, theory, criticism and reference. It also houses 150 international film journals and newsletters. There are collections of published and unpublished screenplays and teleplays. A major attraction of the collection is the over 60,000 trade papers and daily newspapers. I decided to try out this source with three randomly selected movies —*Chariots of Fire* (track and field, 1981). *Pride of the Yankees* (baseball, 1942) and *Geordie* (hammer throwing, 1955). I selected the latter because, while it is a lightweight comedy British film of the 1950s it seemed to suggest some interesting angles on a Scottish

Highlander attending the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Plus, *Geordie* is a movie that, despite strenuous efforts, I have not been able to locate in a video format. The results of a look at the clipping files was mixed. *Chariots of Fire* was the best of the three. A rich package of over 20 international reviews plus a most useful official Warner Brothers publicity/press kit. *Geordie* as expected, revealed little. There is only one short 1956 review from the *New York Daily News*, but it notes that in the movie “are interesting and amusing sidelights” on international sport. *Pride of the Yankees* was no better—there was only one film studio flyer.

Under a subject index of “Sport films” there was a PFA dossier but the materials were insubstantial. Nevertheless, there were some rare sources; for example, an excellent July-August 1981 publication on sports films by the American Film Institute and a 1978 curriculum for a course at San Francisco State University entitled, “The Manly Art: A History and Analysis of Boxing Films.” Other strengths of the PFA are: a collection of international film festival programs (very, very few devote sections to the sports film); 20,000 still photographs (fascinating to see how action-oriented actors such as Douglas Fairbanks, Errol Flynn, James Cagney, Kirk Douglas, Burt Lancaster, etc. were physically portrayed and displayed); 6,000 international film posters (a worthwhile research subject would be to develop a gender/body culture paradigm following an analysis of the manner in which female actresses have been depicted over time).

All PFA materials are non-circulating but copier facilities are available. The film collection numbers 6,000 titles with particular strengths in what was the USSR, the avant-garde in American cinema, and Japanese. Research screenings of films and tapes in the PFA can be scheduled for a fee of \$15 per feature or for one hour of shorts (one or two people) and \$15 per person additional. There is a telephone reference service that is free. In-depth film research consultation (to compile, for example, a filmography on narrative materials with a central theme of game, play, sport and recreation) is available at \$40 per hour for non-members. Annual membership fees for individuals is \$35.

A very real disappointment is that the PFA in-house master list of all titles —*PFA Film and Video Collection Title List* (December 1992)—merely follows an alphabetical sequence. There is neither a thematic nor topical classification. In essence, this means that attempting to identify sports films in the PFA collection is laborious and time consuming.

With the publication of Judith Davidson’s NASSH-sponsored annotated filmography there is a very real need to identify appropriate research centers where study can take place on sports films.