

The First Valenzuela and the Rise of Baseball in Mexico

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In November, 1903, Valenzuela (no first names nor initials were reported) led his Mexico team to victory over the rival capital city Cafes. He became the first baseball hero in Mexico and his popularity indicated the widespread acceptance of a game introduced from the United States in the early 1880s. Rumors that Abner Doubleday introduced baseball during the United States occupation of Mexico City aside, North American workmen for the Mexican National and Mexican Central Railroads organized baseball teams in the capital city in 1882. Sporadic play resulted in permanent organization of the Base Ball Association in 1887, with three teams one of which comprised only Mexican players. The game continued to grow in popularity among the Mexican aristocracy. and after the turn of the century regular competition for a silver cup matched the Mexico, Cafe', Gris, and Azul teams. A further boost to the game's popularity occurred when the Chicago White Sox visited the Mexico capital for spring training in 1907 and met the local champions, El Record, in an exhibition. The visitors won 12-2. By the outbreak of the revolution in November, 1910. baseball had become a widely accepted sport in Mexico.