

## **My Dream was to be the Cleveland Indians' Batboy**

When I was about thirteen (1950), I read about the Cleveland Indians' contest to pick a batboy for the season. I was a big Indians' fan and listened to many of the games on my (plastic, external dial) Arvin radio. I knew the names of all of the players and had even ordered/received a set of 10 x12 inch glossy autographed pictures of each team member and affixed them to the wall of my bedroom with thumb tacks, much to the chagrin of my parents because our walls were plastered and each thumb tack caused a small crack in the wall.

It is hard to imagine teams sending out autographed glossy pictures of each team member today (think of the cost), but it must of been affordable because I was a Findlay, Ohio farm boy with no money and no allowance (I got paid for special jobs and all other work was just what family members were expected to do). The contest task was to tell why the writer should be named the Indians' batboy...and I told of my love of baseball and how I was a good student and very reliable.

I told of hoping to see an actual game one day, and if selected, would be prompt, polite and very nice to each player. I probably even mentioned the name of several players to demonstrate how much I already knew about the Tribe. I submitted my letter early, demonstrating how eager and prompt a fellow I was...and settled back to find out I had been named the Cleveland Indians' Batboy. When the

deadline date for entries arrived I started going to mailbox each day after school to look for a letter from the Indians. Our rural delivery mailman delivered our mail each day just before our school bus dropped me off at home so I was always the first person to get to the mailbox.

I even started learning the names and batting averages of opposing players in case they wanted me to be the batboy for visiting teams. I probably checked that mailbox for six weeks before I concluded that I had not been picked as the batboy (duh!). I never did get an answer to from the Indians! It had never entered my mind that I would not be picked just because: I was too young; I lived 125 miles from the stadium; I had no way to get to games; or that I did not have any connections to facilitate my entry.

It was tough to take at first...luckily I had not told anyone in advance of my plans to spend the summer delivering bats to major leaguers. It was just another lesson, like the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus that young boys must learn in route to becoming a man.

Later that year (or around the time as I am now a seventy-five year old man and am not sure of the exact dates), my bother-in-law, Norm, offered to take me to my first Indians' game. I couldn't believe how green the grass was when we emerged from the ramp leading to our seats when I saw the field for the first time. The field behind our school was all dirt and I just couldn't wrap my mind around playing on a field that nice. The Indians won and the game was highlighted by a triple play started by a shoestring catch by Bob Kennedy

which was relayed to second and then first. What a great game and what a great day! (No one ever believes this, but the first Little League game I coached and the first Ponytail game I coached also included triple plays...the latter taking about a minute or two to complete!) At that first Indians' game I even noticed that the batboy was a young man of seventeen or eighteen...and didn't feel so bad I hadn't been selected! I still love, and follow, the Indians.

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