

Beat: Miscellaneous

Thrill seekers heres your chance for a shot of adrenaline: vintage baseball.

Providence Grays play Brooklyn Atlantics

Lincoln, 27.07.2015, 22:18 Time

USPA NEWS - Thrill seekers here's your chance for a shot of adrenaline. Catch a blazing ball, with your bare hands, hit by the slugger on your opposing team. Be the pitcher with no glove that receives and catches a line drive drilled at him by the batter.

America's Pastime Then and Now

Thrill seekers, here's your chance for a shot of adrenaline. Catch a blazing ball with your bare hands hit by the slugger on your opposing team. Field a pop-up fly ball going into the sun with those same bare hands as you pray it does not hit you in the face. Excited yet? Be the pitcher with no glove that receives and catches a line drive drilled at him by the batter. Be the catcher that has limited protective gear who simultaneously tries catching fastballs, foul-tips and tries not to get hit by the batter. Vintage baseball players do this all summer long.

We watched the Providence Grays play the Brooklyn Atlantics in a doubleheader on July 12th at Chase Farms field in Lincoln, RI. These teams were invited to play as part of a replay of the 1904 World's Fair production that the Friends of Hearthside House were putting on for the public. It was a great day. The sun was out with not a cloud to speak of. People were flocking in to witness antiques, innovative technology that shaped our present, participate in the food, fun and games, and experience performances and live animals presentations. As if that were not enough, you could have ventured a short distance over to Chase Field, chosen your favorite vintage baseball team and cheered away.

Each of these men leads lives outside of baseball. However, when they step out on the field it becomes an entirely new ballgame of thinking. A sense of character emerges. There is nothing like the pureness of untainted olden days. If a man gave you his word it was truth you could count on. That's what these guys have when they recant days of old in each vintage game they play. They are holding fast to the integrity and sportsmanship that formed our national pastime.

You expect your own teammates to encourage and cheer you on, but these guys encourage and praise the other teams members too. When the Brooklyn teams pitcher went down like a shot after throwing a pitch (his hip may have displaced), both teams members rallied around him and carried him off the field to asses the seriousness of his injury. That is awesome! They are not paid millions to play. They care about each other and play for the love of the game.

The history of this great game will astonish you. Did you know that in the eighteen hundreds players were unpaid, played with no gloves, no steroids, no protection, wore wool uniforms from head to toe, and that the rules of the game were very different. We learned a little about the 1884 rules and style of play. Batters could call for their choice of high or low pitches. It took six balls to draw a walk.

The pitcher threw from only fifty feet away. For a complete list of rules for that era visit; <http://www.19cbaseball.com/rules-22.html> If you would like a more personal perspective just ask our home team Providence Grays league Vice President Charlie Dryer and team captain Brian Travers as we did. Later we also spoke with Brooklyn's team member Frank "Shakespeare" Van Zant who shared his passion for vintage play and additional historical baseball facts regarding his team.

For more information about these two teams visit the Providence Grays at http://www.providencegrays.org/grays/Providence_Grays_Vintage_Base_Ball_Club.html The Brooklyn Atlantics at <http://www.brooklynatlantics.org> or if you would like to locate a vintage team near you visit <http://vbba.org/>

Now is the time. Grab your picnic basket, lawn chairs, cooler and head to a vintage baseball game. Admission, family fun and fame are free so come see a vintage baseball game for yourself. Hey, we may see you there.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-4616/thrill-seekers-heres-your-chance-for-a-shot-of-adrenaline-vintage-baseball.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Lester Cote

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