Sports Outlook

Looking back on the World Series

STAT SHEET

John Grabowski

The "closeness" of a World Series can be defined in several ways.

One is by the number of games played. Theoretically, a Series that goes the full seven games should be an evenly fought competition.

But try telling that to members of the 1960 New York Yankees. The Bronx Bombers scored 28 more runs than their National League opponents, the Pittsburgh Pirates. Yet the Yanks wound up losing the seven-game Series.

To make matters even worse, the 28-run difference between the two teams in the 1960 World Series is the largest in the history of the Fall Classic.

A better yardstick for measuring how evenly matched two clubs were is to find the average difference in runs scored per game for the entire Series.

A best-of-seven competition in which each game is decided by one run would thus give a differential of 1.0.

Using this standard, the 1960 confrontation becomes the most one-sided in history, with games decided by an average margin of six runs.

The closest World Series becomes the 1915 match-up between the American League's Boston Red Sox and the National League's Philadelphia Phillies.

The Red Sox won the '15 Series in just five games, but only one of those contests was decided by as many as two runs. Thus, the average run differential was 1.2, the lowest in World Series history.

In 1915, the Red Sox (101-50, .669) featured a great defensive outfield of Harry Hooper, Tris Speaker and Duffy Lewis. The Phillies (90-62, .592) had 31-game winner Grover Cleveland Alexander and home run champ Gavvy Cravath, who had set a modern record with 24 round-trippers.

Game 1 at Philadelphia proved to be the only "laugher." Alexander started for the Phillies and waltzed to a 3-1 victory. After Boston tied the score in the top half of the eighth, Philadelphia scored two runs in the bottom of the inning and went on to win.

That was to be the only Phillies victory in the 1915 Series.

The start of the second game was highlighted by President Woodrow Wilson throwing out the first ball — it was the first Series game ever attended by a U.S. chief executive.

Boston scored a run in the first inning, and the Phils tied the game in the fifth. Red Sox pitcher Rube Foster took matters into his own hands in the top of the ninth, driving in the winning run with a single. Boston triumphed 2-1.

With the Series moving to Boston, the Red Sox took Games 3 and 4 by identical 2-1 margins.

Lewis' RBI hit in the ninth defeated Alexander the Great in Game 3, with Dutch Leonard getting credit for Boston's victory. The next day, Ernie Shore of the Red Sox triumphed after losing his bid for a shutout in the eighth inning.

The Series returned to Philadelphia for Game 5.

Boston won the highest-scoring game of that Fall Classic, 5-4. Down 4-2, the Red Sox came up with two runs in the eighth to tie the contest. They won in the ninth on Hooper's second home run of the day.

When all was said and done, the deciding run had scored in the winning team's final time at bat four times in the five games in the 1915 Series.

How's that for close?

• The Boston Red Sox managed to take the '15 Series with no help at all from their slugging rookie pitcher, 20-year-old Babe Ruth.

Ruth compiled an 18-6 mark as a hurler during the regular season while batting .315 (with four home runs). But he was limited to one pinch-hit appearance in his first taste of action in the Fall Classic.

In the opening game, Ruth grounded out in his lone time up. But the Babe more than made up for it in nine future World Series before his career with the New York Yankees ended.

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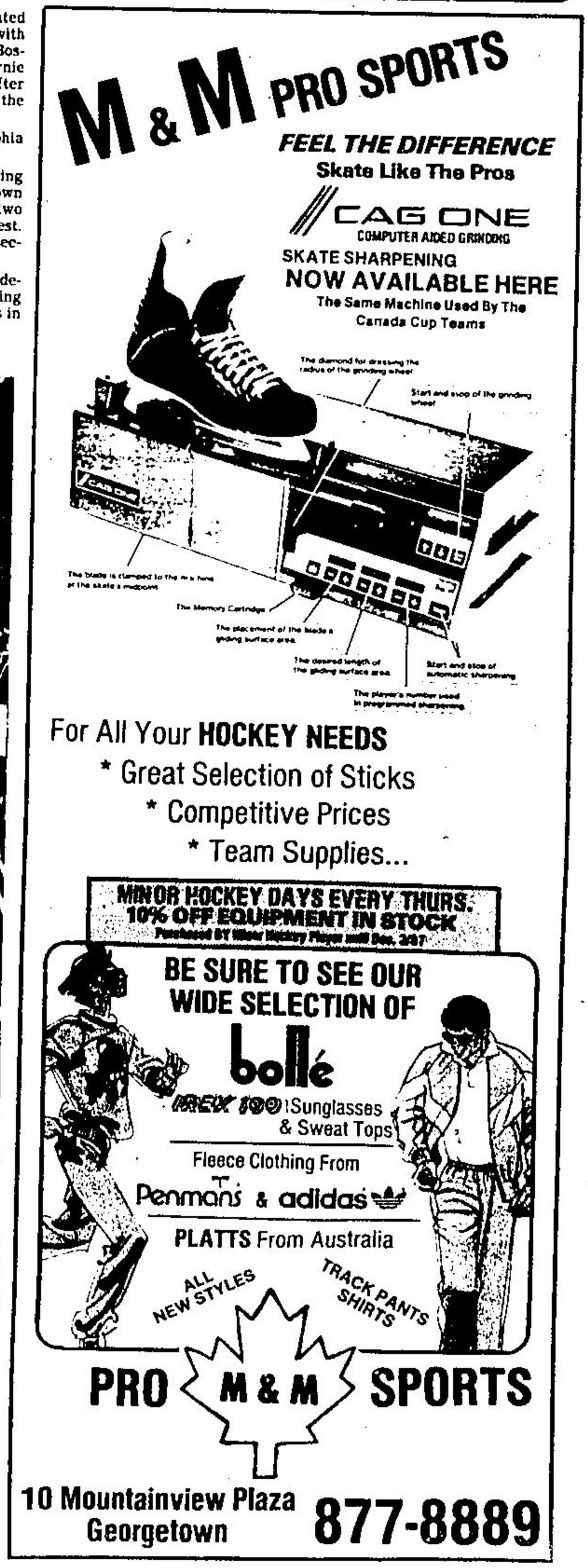
A Look Back

QUESTION

Ontario Hockey Association representative Jack King came to Georgetown to present a pennant to the Raiders for winning the Intermediate A championships. In what year did the Raiders win the pennant?

ANSWER

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