



Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame

15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701

January 2020

Editor's note: Irving Arnold Noren, a 1985 CSHOF inductee, died November 15. The following article by Richard Goldstein was published in the NEW YORK TIMES.

Irv Noren, a Bridge Between DiMaggio and Mantle, Dies at 94



The Yankees had a problem in the spring of 1952. Joe DiMaggio had retired at the end of the previous season, and Mickey Mantle, proclaimed as a future Hall of Fame center fielder in his own right, was sidelined after undergoing knee surgery.

Manager Casey Stengel shifted several outfielders to center as a bridge between DiMaggio and Mantle, but Stengel and the team's general manager, George Weiss, weren't satisfied with any of them.

So baseball's dominant franchise turned to one of the American League's doormats. The Yankees acquired Irv Noren, the Washington Senators' center fielder, who had driven in 184 runs in his first two seasons, in a multiplayer deal in early May.

Noren held down center field until Mantle returned later that month, then played at all three outfield spots and occasionally at first base for the rest of his career. He played for the Yankee teams that won World Series championships in 1952, 1953 and 1956 and that also captured the 1955 American League pennant, losing to the

Dodgers in their only World Series championship season in Brooklyn.

He died at 94 on Friday at his home in Carlsbad, Calif., his grandson Casey Ayala said.

Noren was best remembered for his All-Star season in 1954, when he led the Yankees in hitting with a .319 average. He tied Nellie Fox of the Chicago White Sox that year for third place in the A.L. batting race, behind Bobby Avila, the pennant-winning Cleveland Indians' second baseman, at .341, and Minnie Minoso of the White Sox at .320.

Noren was awe-struck when he joined the Yankees.

“I said to myself, ‘This is where Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and everybody was, in this clubhouse,’” he told the website Baseball Happenings in 2016. “You had to produce over there. In Washington you could go 0-8, but in New York if you went 0-8, someone else would be there. They had to win.”

Noren played for six teams in his 11 major league seasons, had his share of timely hits and was a solid defensive player. But a string of knee injuries hampered him.

Irving Arnold Noren was born on Nov. 29, 1924, in Jamestown, N.Y., the middle of three children of Perry and Victoria Noren. His father, a native of Sweden, owned a Swedish-style bakery.

The family moved to Pasadena, Calif., when Irv was a boy. At 6-foot-1, he became an outstanding pitcher and basketball player for Pasadena Junior College (now Pasadena City College). After Army service in World War II, he was signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers’ organization in March 1946.

Following one season in the minors, Noren played for an integrated independent pro basketball team, the Los Angeles Red Devils. His teammates most notably included Jackie Robinson, a four-star athlete at U.C.L.A. who would soon break the modern major league color barrier with the Dodgers.

Noren left the Red Devils in December 1946 to join the Chicago American Gears of the National Basketball League, a team that featured George Mikan, who would go on to be an N.B.A. Hall of Fame center with the Minneapolis Lakers. Noren played three games for the Gears, then returned to the Dodger organization.



Having been converted from a pitcher to an outfielder, he was named the Texas League’s player of the year in 1948 with the Fort Worth team and the Pacific Coast League’s most valuable player in 1949 with the Hollywood Stars.

But the Dodgers, whose future stars included center fielder Duke Snider, were selling off surplus talent. They sent Noren to the Senators in September 1949.

Noren achieved his major league career highs in his rookie season, in 1950, with 160 hits, 10 triples, 14 home runs and 98 runs batted in; he hit .295. He drove in 86 runs for Washington in 1951.

Noren remained a Yankee until February 1957, when he was traded to the Kansas City Athletics. He later played for the St. Louis Cardinals, the Chicago Cubs and the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Over his career, he had 65 home runs, 453 runs batted in and a .275 batting average.

Noren was the third-base coach for the Oakland A’s when they became World Series champions in 1972 and 1973. He was also a player-manager in the minor leagues.

After leaving baseball, he owned several businesses and bred thoroughbred horses in Southern California.

He is survived by three daughters, Vicky Scribner, Debby Kubiak and Nancy Burke; a son, Jim; a sister, Janet Johnson; 13 grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren. His wife, Veda (Mewes) Noren, died in 2013.

Two years after experiencing the thrill of becoming a Yankee, and in the wake of his All-Star season, Noren encountered the Yankee front office’s “bad cop, good cop” negotiating strategy.



Casey Stengel, Hank Bauer, Irv Noren, Mickey Mantle

As he told it, Bill DeWitt, the Yankees' assistant general manager and formerly general manager of the usually woeful St. Louis Browns, grudgingly offered him a raise of \$2,000 from his \$19,000 salary (which would have given him the equivalent of about \$200,000 today).

"I called him and said, 'That's no raise after leading the team in hitting,'" Noren recalled in Richard Lally's oral history "Bombers" (2002). "I told him: 'Billy, you're not with the Browns in last place anymore, you're with the Yankees. Act like it.'"

"Oh, did he hang up on me in a hurry," Noren remembered. "Three days later, George Weiss called and asked what it would take to satisfy me. I told him I wanted an \$8,000 raise, and he agreed. Just like that."

2020 Induction Banquet

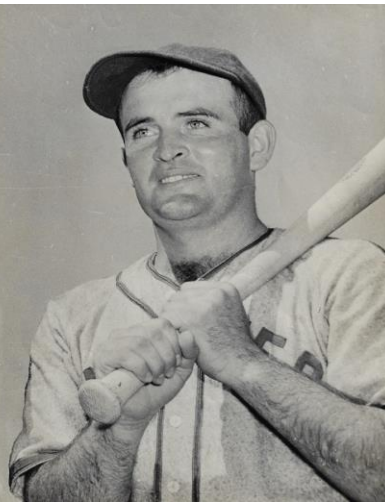
The Board of Directors of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame has announced the inductees who will comprise the Class of 2020. The inductees are **George Bataitis, Bob Bender, Bob Goold, Chris (Carlson) Jenkins, Justin Johnson, Tim Nobles, Elly Norton, Mark Orlando** and **Mike Tramuta**.

These nine individuals will be formally inducted at the CSHOF's 39th Annual Banquet, Monday, February 17, 2020, at the Lakewood Rod and Gun Club. In addition, outstanding local high school, collegiate and community athletes will be recognized and CSHOF Legacy Awards will be presented.

Tickets for the induction dinner are priced at \$50. 2020 banquet reservations can be made by calling chairman Chip Johnson at 716-485-6991.



George Batatis



Bob Bender



Bob Goold



Chris (Carlson) Jenkins



Justin Johnson



Tim Nobles



Elly Norton



Mark Orlando



Mike Tramuta