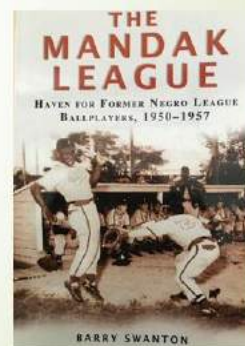




Primary Sources

- *The ManDak League: Haven for Former Negro League Ballplayers, 1950-1957*; by Barry Swanton
- *Black Baseball Players in Canada, A Biographical Dictionary 1881-1960*, by Barry Swanton and Jay-Dell Mah
- *Dominionball: Baseball Above the 49th*, edited by James Finnan Dorward
- *Biographical Encyclopedia of Negro Baseball Leagues*, 2 ed.; by James A. Riley
- *Baseball America's Encyclopedia of Minor League Baseball*, 3rd ed.; edited by Lloyd Johnson and Miles Wolff
- ManDak League statistics compiled by Gary Fink
- Western Canada Baseball Website: <http://www.attheplate.com/wcbl/index.html>
- Baseball Reference.com website: <https://www.baseball-reference.com/>

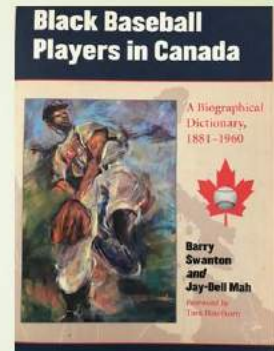


What
was
the
MANDAK?

Manitoba-Dakota League

High-level semi-pro circuit
on the northern plains

Born 1950
Died 1957



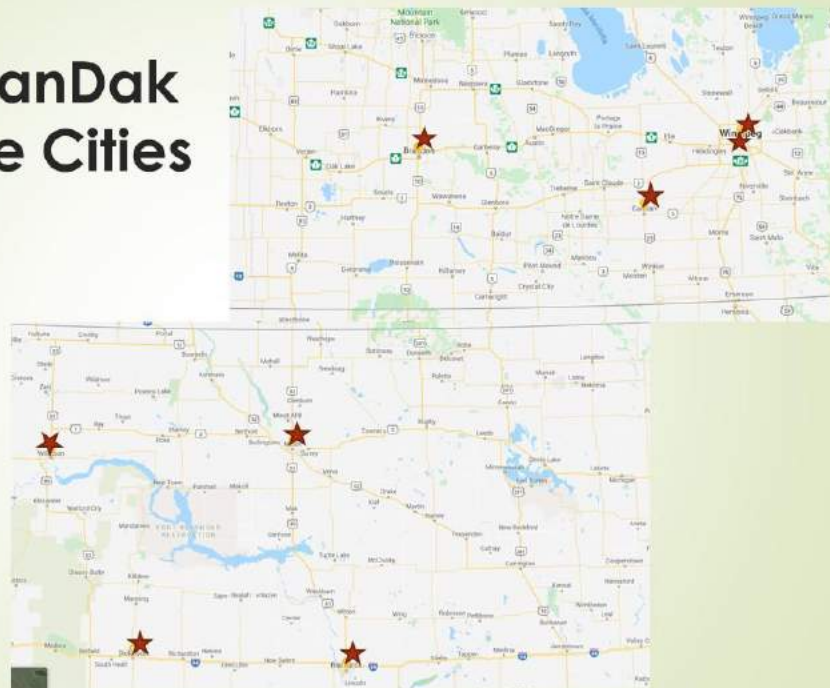
ManDak Basics

- The Manitoba-Dakota League
- Province of Manitoba
- State of North Dakota
- 1955-56 only in US
- Minot, ND, only city to field a team for all 8 seasons

ManDak League Composition

YEAR	No. of Teams	Winnipeg	Elmwood/ Winnipeg	Brandon	Carman	Minot	Williston	Bismarck	Dickinson
1950	5	X	X	X	X	X			
1951	5	X	X	X	X	X			
1952	4		X	X	X	X			
1953	4		X	X	X	X			
1954	4			X	X	X	X		
1955	4					X	X	X	X
1956	4					X	X	X	X
1957	4			X		X	X	X	
Total Years in League		2	4	6	5	8	4	3	2

The ManDak League Cities



Altitude and Population of League Hometowns

Town	Altitude (ft.)	Altitude (m.)	1950 Population
Winnipeg	751	229	235,710
Brandon	1234	376	20,598
Carman	866	264	1,867
Minot	1621	494	22,032
Dickinson	2411	735	7,469
Williston	1877	572	7,378
Bismarck	1686	514	18,640

Canadian census, 1951
US census, 1950

Altitude of Selected MLB Cities

US City	Altitude (ft.)	Altitude (m.)
Denver	5280	1598
Phoenix	1086	331
Atlanta	1050	320
Minneapolis	837	255



Photo credit: Sportsinsights.com

ManDak League's Best

Year	1st place, Regular Season	Playoff Champions	All-Star Game?	Postseason All-Star Team	Notes
1950	Brandon	Winnipeg	Yes	Winnipeg Tribune	Winnipeg finished 2nd, 7GB and only 2G above .500; ASG played before start of season! WINNEPEG HAD AN ALL-BLACK TEAM!
1951	Brandon	Brandon	No	None	
1952	Minot	Minot	No	None	
1953	Minot	Minot	No	None	interlocking schedule w/Western Canada (SK) semi-pro league, w/ManDak teams going 28-4
1954	Minot	Minot	Yes	None	ASG format was best players from 3 other league teams vs. Minot
1955	Bismarck	Minot	No	None	Minot finished 3rd with sub-.500 record; all teams located in ND
1956	Williston	Williston	No	None	interlocking schedule w/Western Canada (SK & AB) semi-pro league, w/ManDak teams again dominating; all teams located in ND
1957	Bismarck	Bismarck	No	Williston Herald	

Conventional Wisdom on Level of Play in ManDak

By most accounts, the quality of play in Canada at this time was roughly equal to the high levels of America's minor leagues. [FROM] "The Secret History of Black Baseball Players in Canada's Great White North" [Narratively.com & Salon.com, 2017]

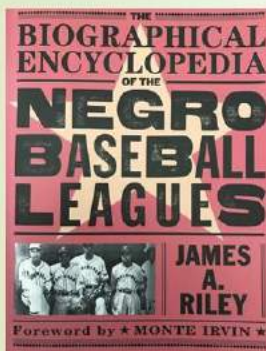
[all below from Dominionball, p. 100, 2005]

- Many knowledgeable baseball people believed the league was somewhere between Class A and Triple A. Viz
- "Equal to Class B ball" Minot manager Lefty Lefebvre, 1950. *Dominionball* points out that, when Lefebvre gave the assessment, he hadn't yet seen the Winnipeg Buffaloes, who featured future Hall of Famers Leon Day and Willie Wells and who would later win the first ManDak championship.
- Class A? Upgrading Lefebvre's evaluation in light of above.
- "Between Class A and Class B"—Minot manager Otto Huber, 1951.
- Quad-A/PCL Open—Al Lyons, 1957.

Synthesis

- In 1950, Organized Baseball was divided into six levels of affiliated minor leagues, from Class AAA at the top to Class D at the bottom.
- In 1952, a new classification was created when the Pacific Coast League moved up to the "Open" Classification, making seven strata of professional ball below the exalted major leagues.
- In 1963, after a decade of disastrous decline, the minor leagues were reorganized and all Class B, C, and D leagues were elevated what is now a three-tiered Class A.
- Discounting Lyon's apparent hyperbole about a league that was on its deathbed, Class A seems like a good synthesis of prevailing views about the quality of play in the early years of the ManDak.
- Today, the phrase "high minors" applies only to Double-A and Triple-A leagues. In the 1950s, it likely was also commonly used to refer to Class A leagues.
- Today, the 1950s "Class A" level would be the equivalent of the "Advanced Class A" level of the California, Carolina, and Florida State Leagues.

Top Ten Teams



Year	Team	Notes
1950	Brandon	
1950	Tribune All-Star Team	All-Star team selected by Tribune after season
1951	Brandon	
1952	Minot	
1953	Minot	
1954	Minot	Minot '54 team considered its best-ever
1955	Bismarck	Bismarck "regarded as one of strongest ever teams in the history of the ManDak League"; however, it was surprisingly upset in playoff semi-finals by last-place Dickinson
1956	Williston	
1957	Bismarck	
1957	Herald Dream Team	"Dream Team" for 1957 picked by Herald after season

Analyzing the ManDak Players

Some context:

- There were 34 team-seasons in the ManDak
- All stats shown on next slides are for single seasons
- A few regular pitchers also met the requirements for regular batters
- Therefore, there were 400 total player-seasons that qualified as "regular"
- Average was 11.8 regulars (position players plus pitchers) per team per season



Position Players		
306 players w/100 AB or more	Avg. 9.0 per team-season	No walk data!
270 players w/120 AB or more	Avg. 7.9 per team-season	No walk data!
Pitchers		
53 pitchers w/10 GS or more		Not all pitchers have GS data
129 pitchers w/8 DEC or more		
96 pitchers w/10 DEC or more		
103 pitchers w/either 10 GS or 10 DEC	Avg. 3.0 per team-season	
70 pitchers w/75 IP or more		Not all pitchers have IP data
111 pitchers w/either 10 GS or 10 DEC or 75 IP		

ManDak Position Player / Pitcher Analysis

True Local Heroes Long-Lived ManDak Regulars

ManDak Regulars	Seasons as Regular
McLean, Clifton "Zoonie"	8
Cain, M. "Sugar"	7
Bowman, F. "Duke"	6
Gibbons, W. "Dirk"	6
Corcoran, Don	5
Louden, Lou	5
Massaro, Joe	5

Number of ManDak Regulars	Seasons as Regular
8	4
22	3
54	2
152	1



ManDak League Single-Season Records for Triple Crown Statistics

Batting Records

Category	Player	Team	Stat	Year	OBEq
BA	Butch Davis	Winnipeg Buffaloes	.456	1950	AAA
HR	Al Leap	Bismark Barons	23	1956	A
RBI	Bill Raehse	Williston Oilers	88	1957	A

Pitching Records

Category	Player	Team	Stat	Year	OBEq
W	Preston Elkins	Williston Oilers	15	1956	A
SO	Hal Price	Winnipeg	130	1952	C
ERA	Sugar Cain	Minot Mallards	2.29	1956	AA

Selected Negro League Players Who Played In The Mandak

Player	Previous NLB seasons *	M-Debut Age	ManDak 1st Year	Years as Regular	OBEq
Leon Day	12	34	1950	2	AAA
Ray Dandridge	10	42	1955	1	AAA
Willie Wells Sr.	25	42	1950	2	AAA
Willard Brown	14	42	1957	1	AA
Pepper Bassett	13	41	1951	1	AAA
Lyman Bostock	5	32	1950	4	AAA
Gentry Jessup	10	36	1950	3	AAA
Pee Wee Jenkins	6	28	1951	1	AAA
Bubba Hyde	23	43	1950	4	B
Lester Lockett	23	40	1952	3	AA
John Washington	11	36	1951	4	AAA
Herb Souell	18	38	1951	2	B
Sugar Cain	4	37	1951	7	AA
Butch Davis	4	34	1950	3	AAA

* Per James A. Riley . **Bold denotes Hall of Famers.**

Barry Swanton's All-Time ManDak League Team

		Highest OB	Most OB	OBEq
Catcher	Joe Massaro (Minot Mallards, Williston Oilers)	Class A	Class D	A
First Base	<u>Lyman Bostock</u> (Winnipeg Buffaloes, Carman Cardinals)	NONE	NONE	AAA
Second Base	<u>John Kennedy</u> (Winnipeg Buffaloes, Minot Mallards)	MLB	Class B	AA
Shortstop	Zoonie McLean (Minot Mallards)	NONE	NONE	E
Third Base	<u>Ray Dandridge</u> (Bismarck Barons)	Triple A	Triple A	AAA
Outfield	<u>Butch Davis</u> (Winnipeg Buffaloes, Minot Mallards)	Triple A	Triple A	AAA
Outfield	<u>Roy Weatherly</u> (Williston Oilers, Bismarck Barons)	MLB	MLB	AAA
Outfield	<u>Bubba Hyde</u> (Elmwood Giants, Brandon Greys)	Class B	Class C	B
Utility	<u>Leon Day</u> (Winnipeg Buffaloes, Brandon Greys)	Triple A	Triple A	AAA
Pitcher	<u>Sugar Cain</u> (Minot Mallards)	NONE	NONE	AA
Pitcher	<u>Gentry Jessup</u> (Carman Cardinals)	NONE	NONE	AAA
Pitcher	Hal Price (Winnipeg Giants)	Class C	Class C	C

Negro Leaguers underscored

Major Leaguers *italicized*

WINNIPEG BUFFALOES, 1950

All-Black Team

First ManDak
Champions

Player	Pos	OBEq
Taylor Smith	P	AA
Jim Newberry	P	B
Andy Porter	P	C
Frazier Robinson	C	A
Lyman Bostock	1B	AAA
John Kennedy	2B	AA
John Britton	3B	AA
Willie Wells Jr.	SS	AAA
Butch Davis	LF	AAA
Sam Hill	CF	AAA
Joe Taylor	RF	AA
Leon Day	UT/P	AAA
Willie Wells Sr.	MGR/IF	AAA

MINOT MALLARDS, 1954

Considered to be the
best of the four
consecutive ManDak
championships won by
the Mallards

Player	Pos	OBEq
Sugar Cain	P	AA
Neal Lettau	P	A
Warren Martin	P	A
Fred Parker	P	B
Bill Washburn	P	B
Rollie Merrill	P	C
Joe Massaro	C	A
Dean Scarborough	1B	A
Ed Bowman	2B	D
Zoonie McLean	MGR/SS	E
Connie Juelke	LF	AA
Don Corcoran	CF	B
Yogi Giammarco	RF	AA
Willie Greene	UT	E
Othello Renfro	UT	AA



BISMARCK BARONS, 1955

Rated by some as the
best ManDak team ever

(cont. on next slide)

Player	Pos	OBEq
John Fitzgerald	P	A
Jonas Gaines	P	A
Roger Higgins	P	A
Mike Lotz	P	A
Bill Cash	C	AAA
Sam Scarpone	C	D



BISMARCK BARONS, 1955

(cont. from previous slide)


Player	Pos	OBEq
Bob Easterbrook	1B	B
Bill Jankowski	1B	A
Art Pennington	1B	AAA
Fred Vaughan	2B	A
Al Cihocki	2B/MGR	AAA
Ray Dandridge	3B	AAA
Bill Hockenbury	3B	A
Preston Gomez	SS	AA
Al Leap	SS	A
Lloyd Gearhart	OF	AA
Dennis Healy	UT	C
Pius Wolf	UT	E



A Telling Indicator: Average Ages of ManDak Players

Weighted by number of seasons as regular

Group	Average Age
ALL Regular Players	30.3
Negro League Regular Players	33.6
Other Regular Players	28.0



The Key Indicator: Weighted Average OBEq of ManDak Players

ManDak OBEq = 3.94

A tad below the 1950s Class A minor leagues

Remember, this calculation does *not* include those players who had no pro experience before or after playing in the ManDak.

The large majority of those players would have been worse than Class A.

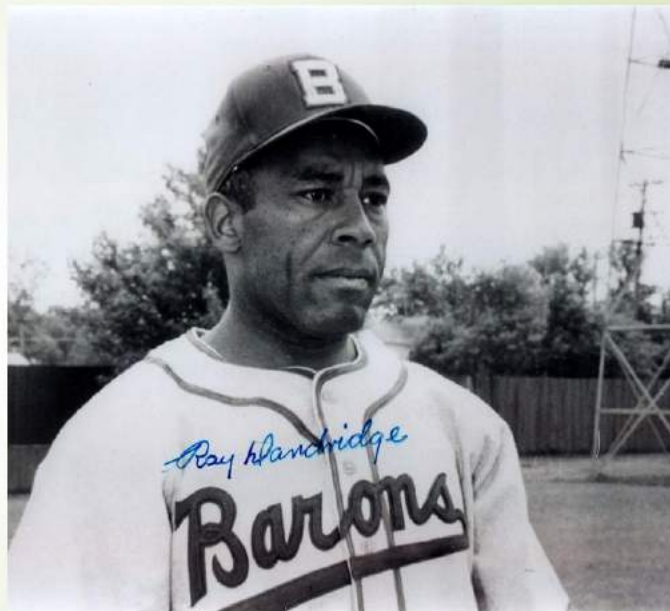


But What About Adair and Weatherly?

Name	Yr	YOB	ASA	Team	Pos.	OB pre	OB post	OB most	MLB prev	MLB post	Notes
Weatherly, Roy	54	15	39	Williston	OF	AAA	AA	AAA	10		ManDak batting champ in '54 & '55 at ages 39-40
Weatherly, Roy	55	15	40	Williston	OF						811g/2781ab/.286 MLB but only 98 OPS+
Weatherly, Roy	56	15	41	Williston & Bismarck	OF						hit .324 in ManDak at age 41!
Adair, Jerry	57	36	21	Williston	SS					13	ManDak at age 20 while in college; never played in minors

**R.I.P.
ManDak:**

You Had a
Hellava Run



Gary Gillette
November 2019