

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BASEBALL IN PENNSYLVANIA

1. Student's Name Brent D. Heitzenrater
2. Subject's Name Pete Poldiak
3. Subject's Background Former #2 Pick of Clev. Indians
 - a. date and place of birth June 8 1949 Johnstown, PA
 - b. Present address [REDACTED]
 - c. Present Occupation Teacher & Head Baseball Coach at United High
4. Date of Interview November 12, 1994
5. General Comments: Mr. Poldiak was a very interesting
Subject
~~interview~~ because of his background and
vast knowledge of the game. However, the interview
itself was brief. I don't believe the tape lived
up to the expectations I had when I first
contacted & spoke with Mr. Poldiak

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

AN INTERVIEW WITH PETE POLDIAK

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Dr. Dixon

Brent Heitzenrater

November 22, 1994

INTRODUCTION

This is a transcription of an interview conducted on November 12, 1994 with Mr. Pete Poldiak of Summerhill, Pennsylvania. Mr. Poldiak is currently a physical education teacher and head baseball coach at United high school. But, in his younger days, he was one of the most dominating pitchers to come out of western Pennsylvania. The purpose of this interview was to highlight his career both as coach and player.

Question: Where did you play your high school ball?

Poldiak: At Triangle Area near Johnstown which is now Forest Hills school district.

Question: What were your options after high school?

Poldiak: I had two choices, either go to Las Vegas and play minor league baseball for the Cleveland Indians or go down south and play college baseball.

Question: Which did you choose?

Poldiak: I chose to play for Gulf Coast Community College in Panama City, Florida.

Question: Is there a reason why you chose college ball over the minor leagues?

Poldiak: I had the opportunity to be the first in my family to go to college, and I thought that was sort of special.

Question: Why a junior college instead of division 1?

Poldiak: At the time the junior colleges had better teams than the division 1 schools. There was better opportunity for recognition and a chance at possibly making it to the major leagues.

Question: What was your best pitch?

Poldiak: Definitely the fastball.

Question: Why?

Poldiak: I was being clocked at speeds of 95 to 96 miles per hour. And, I was able to control the strike zone and overpower batters.

Question: Did you ever through at a batter's head?

Poldiak: Definitely! If the batter dug-in and tried to show me up or even crowded the plate, I didn't hesitate to throw it at his head - sometimes twice in a row.

Question: Where did you go after junior college?

Poldiak: I went to LSU (Louisiana State University).

Question: At what time were you drafted.

Poldiak: It was my second year at Gulf Coast. I was picked #2 overall in the draft and my roommate Wayne Garland was chosen #1 in that year.

Question: I understand that while you were pitching at LSU you became acquainted with another athlete named Pete.

Poldiak: Yes. I became pretty good friends with "Pistol" Pete Maravich who played basketball at the time. But, we lost contact after we parted are ways at LSU.

Question: I understand that you are now the coach of a high school team. Can you tell me a little of what you enjoy about it.

Poldiak: I coach at United high school. I enjoy working with the kids, teaching them the fundamentals of the game, and passing my knowledge and experiences on to them.

Question: Did you ever make it to the big leagues?

Poldiak: No, I never signed a contract with them. I had a rotator cuff injury during my third year, and that kind of hindered me from going on.

Question: Can you name some of the famous people you faced throughout your career.

Poldiak: In college, I faced Steve Garvey.

Question: What was he like?

Poldiak: He was a very good hitter. I was fortunate enough to strike him out twice in one game. I also played against Archie Manning, the former quarterback for the New Orleans Saints. He played third base, but he kind of threw like a girl because he had a funny motion.

Question: You said you had a very good fastball. Did you have any pitches to compliment that?

Poldiak: I had a very good off-speed breaking ball. I threw it very hard - it was clocked at 85 miles per hour. And, I had a fairly good change-up which offset my fastball.

AFTERWARD

Pete Poldiak had a very interesting baseball career. Unfortunately, due to my lack of interviewing skill I feel that there was a lot that did not get revealed. However, all in all I think that the interview was a success. Mr. Poldiak was easy to talk to and he answered the questions in a very laid back manner.