

20 QUESTIONS

As it has turned out, Povich Field has been just about the perfect size for the crowds we have attracted. With the exception of one crazy weekend in 2001 when 1,326 fans flocked to Povich Field on Friday July 20 after an extraordinarily favorable article in the weekend edition of *The Washington Post*, we have seldom had crowds significantly in excess of 1,000 fans at a game. Povich Field with a standing room only crowd of 1,000, as we often had in the heyday of the rivalry between the Big Train and Youse's Orioles in the early years of the Ripken League, is a terrific sports environment. With crowds averaging between 500 and 750 over the years, Povich Field almost always looks full or nearly so. Averaging about 13,000 fans per season, nearly 260,000 people have watched Big Train baseball at Shirley Povich Field since 1999. We didn't pick 750 seats because we were clairvoyant. Truth be told, we picked 750 seats because that was what we could afford.

13. How far is it to center field at Povich Field?

361 feet.

Field #1 was not built to accommodate some of the best players in Division 1 college baseball. Likely, the planners of county parks in the middle of the 20th century did not imagine many future major leaguers playing in their parks. The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1927 and soon began discussing plans for Rock Creek, Sligo, and Cabin John parks. Passage of the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930 provided federal funds to protect stream valleys in the national capital region. Montgomery County's population in 1940 was 84,000. The national trend of rapid suburban growth took off, and by 1970 the census reported 522,809 Montgomery residents. As a magnet for talented people from across the nation reacting to a call to serve in the federal government, Montgomery County attracted residents who demanded quality educational and recreational opportunities. Reacting to that demand, County officials stepped up their planning for parks and purchase of land in the 1950s. M-NCPPC bought the land for Cabin John Regional Park for \$1.9 million. Commission officials used local funds as well as federal Housing and Urban Development open space funds and Capper-Cramton dollars. There was also a land swap to support a "Save Our Scotland" campaign to redevelop an adjacent historically African American community that had a demonstration grant from the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency. Officials dedicated the Cabin John Regional Park on August 26, 1966 with a miniature train and a Noah's Ark. There were four ballfields, two of them lighted for night play.

For some reason, many of the original 90' diamonds in Montgomery County Parks were laid out with the fences relatively flat across the outfield. Field #1 has always been 330' down the left and right field lines. Major league ballparks average 333 feet to left and 328 feet to right. But center field in Field #1 was a paltry 345 feet. Major league ballparks average 404 feet to center. I was so embarrassed, I asked the Parks department to remove the 345' sign in center field for the groundbreaking ceremony on December 18, 1998. But there wasn't much we could do. A maintenance road runs directly behind the field from the left field foul pole past center field. Miller & Long built a berm along the road to allow us to push the fence from 345 to 361 feet in center field. Our only other option was to build a tall fence in the deepest part of center field. The fences down the lines are eight feet tall. The top of the train on our scoreboard is 20



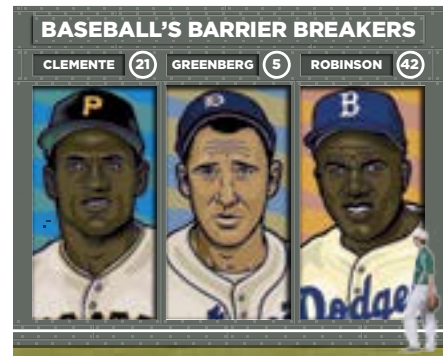
Gelberg Signs crew hanging Hunter Renfro's retired #11 on July 26, 2012

feet high. The fences on each side of the scoreboard are 16 feet high. The batter's eye — the hitting background in the batter's direct line of sight — is 20 feet tall. The fence in a typical major league ballpark is eight feet tall. Bill Hickman, the official Big Train statistician, calculates that a ball hit over the 20 foot fence that sits 361 feet from home plate will likely land 377 feet from home plate. To our surprise, very few home runs have been hit directly over the center field fence in the two decades of summer wooden bat baseball at Povich Field. The short fences do, however, pose a significant problem for the Georgetown Hoya games in the Big East Conference that are played with aluminum bats.







Look carefully high up on the light pole in left-center field where you will see a sign for the retired #11. Hunter Renfro (Mississippi State) hit quite a few bombs high into and some beyond those beautiful evergreens when he played for the Big Train in 2011 and 2012.

14. What are those numbers on the fence in right field?

Bethesda Big Train baseball and BCC Baseball are dedicated to showcasing the great history of baseball and sharing this history with new generations of baseball fans. We named our team the Big Train after baseball's greatest pitcher, Walter Johnson. We named our ballpark after Shirley Povich, the Hall of Fame sportswriter with *The Washington Post*.



The numbers on the right field fence have been retired by Bethesda Big Train baseball to honor baseball's most important barrier breakers — Roberto Clemente, Hank Greenberg, and Jackie Robinson. Clemente, Greenberg, and Robinson taught us that baseball (and life) is a better game when everyone gets to play. We have also honored Cal Ripken, Senior, after whom the league we play in — Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League — is named. In addition, we have honored two of the most significant players in Big Train history — Hugh Adams and Hunter Renfro.

 <p>Hank Greenberg A Hall of Famer who suffered physical and verbal abuse throughout his career because of his religion. Greenberg helped break stereotypes and change the opinion many Americans had about Jews. A two-time World Champion with the Detroit Tigers with a lifetime batting average of .313. Greenberg was American League MVP in 1935 and 1940. To honor one of baseball's most significant barrier breakers, the Big Train retired #5 in 2016.</p>	 <p>Cal Ripken, Senior One of the major architects of The Oriole Way. "Perfect practice makes perfect," according to the Maryland native who began managing his way up the minor league system of the Baltimore Orioles at the age of 25. He left a legacy of excellence admired by all who love the game. In 2005, the Big Train joined with other teams to establish the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League to honor Ripken Senior. The Big Train retired #7 in 2015.</p>	 <p>Hunter Renfro Helped lead the Big Train to the National Championship of all of summer college baseball in 2011. Hunter holds most of the Big Train's slugging records, including 16 home runs and 53 RBI in 2012. An All American at Mississippi State in 2013, the power hitter was drafted in first round of the MLB Draft by San Diego Padres. The Big Train retired #11 in 2012. Hunter made his major league debut with the Padres on September 21, 2016.</p>
 <p>Roberto Clemente The first Latin American and Caribbean player enshrined in the Hall of Fame. The Puerto Rican native was a 12-time All Star for the Pittsburgh Pirates and National League MVP in 1966. The two-time World Champion died in a plane crash in 1972 attempting to deliver emergency supplies to earthquake victims in Nicaragua. He got his 3,000th major league hit just three months before his death. To honor one of baseball's most significant barrier breakers, the Big Train retired #21 in 2009.</p>	 <p>Hugh Adams The Bethesda native and product of BCC Baseball is the longest serving Big Train player (2006-2012). Hugh, who began his Big Train career as the batboy in the inaugural 1999 season, posted a career ERA of 1.72 over seven seasons. With 18 saves for Florida Atlantic University in 2013, he was named a third team All American. Hugh played professionally for the Saint Paul Saints. The Big Train retired #40 in 2012.</p>	 <p>Jackie Robinson Broke baseball's color line and became the first black elected to the Hall of Fame. A World Champion with the Brooklyn Dodgers, Robinson was Rookie of the Year in 1947 and National League MVP in 1949. According to Martin Luther King Jr.: "Jackie Robinson made my success possible. Without him, I would never have been able to do what I did." To honor baseball's most significant barrier breaker, the Big Train retired #42 following the lead of Major League Baseball.</p>