



# Runs, Hits, and an Era: The Pacific Coast League, 1903-58

*Paul J Zingg, Mark D Medeiros*

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## **Runs, Hits, and an Era: The Pacific Coast League, 1903-58** Paul J Zingg, Mark D Medeiros

For Six Decades the Pacific Coast League reigned supreme for West Coast baseball fans, launching the careers of future luminaries such as Ted Williams, Ernie Lombardi, Minnie Minoso, and Joe DiMaggio. Until the Dodgers and Giants moved west in 1958, the PCL was "the only game in town" for fans from Seattle to San Diego. The PCL offered something for everyone, from tight pennant races and intense rivalries to great ballparks, stable franchises, dazzling pitching, and spectacular hitting. Salt Lake City shortstop Tony Lazzeri set all-time PCL records for home runs (60), RBIs (222), and runs scored (202) in 1925. His 60 homers occurred two years before Babe Ruth did the same in the majors. Oakland Oaks outfielder Roy Carlyle hit one of the longest home runs in professional baseball history on July 4, 1929. The ball traveled over two rooftops and into the gutter of a house 618 feet away from home plate. The PCL also delighted fans with a host of zany characters. A favorite was Lou "The Mad Russian" Novikoff, who won the Triple Crown in 1940 (batting .343, with 171 RBIs and 41 homers) while playing for the league runner-up Los Angeles Angels - thanks in no small part to his wife, Esther, who could be heard from her box seat behind home plate verbally abusing Lou during each of his appearances at the plate. Another was Hollywood Stars player-manager Bobby Bragan, who was tossed from a game in 1953 against the rival San Diego club after slamming his chest protector to the ground to protest what he considered some bad calls by the umpire. Ordered to pick up his equipment, Bragan refused and instead proceeded to remove his shin guards, mask, glove, and cap. Banished to the dugout, he added his uniform top, shoes, socks, and a few towels to the pile. Bragan and the Stars survived the ensuing fine and suspension to win the pennant handily. In *Runs, Hits, and an Era* Paul Zingg's engaging text plays off more than 90 illustrations and Mark Medeiros's anecdotal sidebars. Publ

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