

by Tom Bartsch

Baseball relatives get their due in book

Growing up, baseball was a family sport. If you had siblings, you most certainly played pitch-and-catch and served up batting practice with the clan. Simply put, it's just what you did as a kid.

So it's no coincidence that there are a lot of relatives who have played in the major leagues over the years — some well-known, others rarely known. Unfortunately, I can't say any of my relation made it professionally between the lines.

However, if you've ever wondered about father-son or sibling combinations that have played baseball, there is a new reference guide available that will have you thumbing through the pages for hours and building a trivia inventory that will have your friends' guessing for weeks.

Richard Cuicchi, an SABR member and contributor to *SCD*, has written the work *Family Ties: A Comprehensive Collection of Facts and Trivia About Baseball's Relatives*. The 363-page book is loaded with information related to, well, relations. And the information is not limited to players, but also includes owners, executives, umpires, managers, coaches and even batboys.

Take your pick of a chapter, and you'll find yourself "working" through your lunch. Examples includes "Twins" who played baseball, "Sons of the Big Red Machine," "Multiple Generations" and "Most Prolific Families." There is a lot of accompanying text, but the bulk of the information is laid out in easy-to-read

boxed charts. And this isn't just limited to players who made the big show. The "Not Even a Cup of Coffee" chapter looks at relatives who didn't quite live up to their Major League Baseball brethren.

And if you think the proliferation of relatives in baseball is relatively few, Richard sent along some tidbits this week of the players involved in this year's playoffs who have relatives involved in the National Pastime. It's a lot more than you might imagine.

All eight teams had players involved in the *Family Ties* theme. For instance, Richard said the Orioles have the following players with relatives in baseball:

- Jim Thome — grandson of Charles Thome, minor league third baseman, 1930-33.
- Endy Chavez — brother of Ender Chavez, minor league outfielder, 2001-08.
- Players not active for playoffs include: Steve Tolleson — son of Wayne Tolleson, major league infielder, 1981-1990; Randy Wolf — brother of Jim Wolf, major league umpire. Steve Johnson — son of Dave Johnson, major league pitcher, 1974-78. Nick Johnson — nephew of Larry Bowa, major league player and coach, 1970-85; Stuart Pomeranz — brother of Drew Pomeranz, major league pitcher, 2011-12.

This is a great example of the type and depth of information you can find in Richard's book. You can imagine reciting some of these facts to your buddy while sitting on the couch during the playoffs.

A book like this wouldn't be easy to compile, so kudos to Richard for putting in print what the rest of us would be guessing at through memory and numerous online searches.

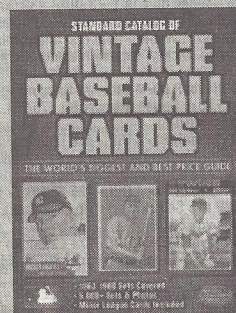
The book is available for \$29.95, or \$8.99 for the ebook version, at www.lulu.com/spotlight/baseballrelatives. It should be in the Amazon, Barnes and Noble and other stores shortly, as well. ♦

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