

# **Paul Hogenschmidt, 1901-2003**

**by Phillip W. Weiss**

**Paul Hogenschmidt, affectionately known as Hogey, was the greatest player in the history of professional baseball. He played from 1922 to 1945 in the Central European Baseball Conference or CEBC. He played for the Berlin Hofmachers, the Munich Liebenschneiders, and during the war for the Hermann Goering Panzerkofers. During his career Hogey hit 937 home runs, scored 2,458 runs, drove in 2,873 runs, stole 1,435 bases, and was named the CEBC Most Valuable Player 12 times. In addition, Hogey pitched in 398 games, all but three as a starter, compiling a record of 267 wins and 43 losses. He also played in sixteen CEBC World Series, winning fourteen.**

**Due entirely to politics, Hogey's records are now dismissed as invalid despite the lavish praise he received from such illustrious greats as Babe Ruth and Josh Gibson. In a 1937 interview, asked about Hogey, Ruth said, "Hogenschmidt is beyond all doubt the greatest player who ever played the game." In 1939, when asked about Hogey, Josh Gibson, said, "Paul Hogenschmidt is such an outstanding ball player that he would be a welcomed addition to any baseball team in the Negro leagues."**

**In an exhibition game played at the Polo Grounds in 1939, Hogey, playing for the Munich Liebenschneiders, hit five home runs in a 19 to 14 win over the New York Elite Giants. After the game, the owner of the Giants, Montgomery J. Washington, offered a Hogey a five-year no-cut contract at the then unheard-of sum of \$200,000 per year. Hogey thanked Washington for the offer but turned it down due to other unspecified commitments.**

**During World War Two Hogey served in the German Army where he achieved the rank of Colonel General in charge of baseball and other related activities.<sup>1</sup> In that capacity, Hogey, while still playing baseball for the CEBC, organized the East European Baseball Association, the first professional baseball league in Eastern Europe. The EEBA became so popular that even the Russians wanted to join. Some the best players were Russian POWs and German Jews who included the now legendary Hamish Bierenbaum who in 1944 led the EEBA in hitting with a .376 batting average and an OPS of 1.134.<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Hogey also was a member of the Nazi Party, membership number 213457, and held the rank of Obergruppenfuhrer in the SS. However, Hogey's involvement with these organizations was purely of a ceremonial nature. In reality, Hogey used his membership in these organizations as a cover to gather valuable information for the OSS on baseball operations in Europe, including Heinrich Himmler's favorite team (which was the Berlin Liebenschneiders), the batting averages of thirty-four senior SS officers who played in the CEBC (seventeen of whom played in the 1943 All-European Baseball All-Star game played in Lubeck, Germany), the salaries paid to the German baseball players (which was double of that paid to their American counterparts), and the cost of admission to a game (which was half of the price of admission for a baseball game in the United States).

<sup>2</sup> These are not inflated stats. The CEBC compiled statistics in every facet of the game, but after the war MLB declared the CEBC stats null and void on the grounds that their credibility could not be independently verified even though in 1947 8,000 former fans of the CEBC submitted sworn affidavits attesting to the accuracy of the stats, especially Hogey's.

Despite his pioneering efforts that brought baseball to Eastern Europe, after the war the allies charged Hogey with war crimes. Hogey was charged with conspiracy to erode the morale of the American people by setting up a rival baseball league that would drive American baseball out of business and deny the American people their national pastime.

However, the charges were dropped when Hogey revealed that he was a double agent in charge of covert operations for the OSS, operating under the code name Big Bat. Hogey held the rank of brigadier general. His office was located on the 84<sup>th</sup> floor of the Empire State Building in New York City, across the street from a club known as the Mid-Manhattan Social Club, which was the most exclusive bordello in the United States. The club catered to the finest and most refined and exclusive male clientele.

Hogey had a lifetime membership in the club which entitled him to unlimited visits, a benefit that Hogey took full advantage of whenever he was in New York. Between 1942 and 1946 Hogey visited the club 267 times, enjoying the company of 146 different ladies. Of the 146 ladies, 17 were men dressed in drag and 32 were Soviet spies posing as actresses and dancers to gain information about Hogey's baseball operations.<sup>3</sup>

Hogey's success as a double agent culminated in August 1943 when he smuggled Hermann Goering into New York City as Hogey's special guest at the club. During his three-week stay, Goering reportedly developed an insatiable obsession for the New York Yankees and attended 11 games at Yankee Stadium under the alias Josiah Levine, a Jewish haberdasher from Jersey City.

Unlike other baseball players who were large men with powerful physiques, Hogey was 5 feet 7 inches tall and weighed 135 pounds. However, Hogey was equipped with the most powerful set of wrists known to human science. This allowed Hogey to swing a baseball bat at more than 300 miles per hour which enabled Hogey to hit a baseball leaving the bat at speeds of more than 700 miles per hour.

During an interview in 1991, Hogey attributed his success as a baseball player to the encouragement and support he received from his wife of sixty-eight years, Lena Waldenfeffer, arguably the greatest female box ball player in history. Lena, whose father was a Jewish cobbler from Minsk before joining the czar's army where he attained the rank of Field Marshal, the first Jew to ever serve the czar in that capacity, developed for Hogey a set of exercises designed to strengthen the wrists and thumbs. Through this rigorous regimen, Hogey developed the wrist strength and iron grip that enabled him to become the greatest baseball player in history.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Hogey's attraction to cross-dressers was no personal quirk but rather was part of a plan to recruit double agents who could embed themselves in the highest echelons of the Nazi party where cross-dressing was a common practice. Indeed, Reich Marshal Hermann Goering was known for his tastes in female underwear and often bragged about his collection of bras and other undergarments pilfered from clothing stores confiscated from the Jews who dominated the women's retail clothing trade in Germany and Eastern Europe.

<sup>4</sup> Lena Waldenfeffer was also known for her ability to sing the National Anthems of twenty-seven different countries and contort herself into the shape of the New York Yankees logo which endeared Hogey who, despite his accomplishments in Europe, had a fanatical obsession with the New York Yankees logo to which he attributed magical qualities.

Often Lena would accompany Hogey to the club where they would spend time together socializing with the ladies under the supervision of the club's manager, the legendary Mildred du Burgoyne, whose original name was Edith Gabstein, the daughter of the Jewish songwriter, Maxie Gabstein who wrote such popular songs as Minnie You're Mine, When We First Met in Toledo, and the song that was Joseph Stalin's personal favorite, My Mommy, My Mommy, sung by the noted Russian singer, Natasha Bertelski-Gomez.

At the club, Hogey's two most favorite ladies were Millie O'Brien, a beautiful Asian seductress who was rumored to be the illegitimate daughter of the Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and Roxie Rosenhaft, who was rumored to be the niece of the legendary football coach Knut Rockne. Both ladies were known for their zany wit and an ability to converse on a wide range of subjects, a talent which they put to good use to transfix their guests and make them feel at home.

After the war, Stalin declared baseball to be an instrument of bourgeois decadence that posed a direct threat to the survival of the Soviet state. Anything associated with baseball was banned. In Eastern Europe all Hogey's work was abolished. Teams such as the Cracow Tiger Cats, the Warsaw Zeppelins, the Slovakian Slinkers, the Bucharest Bandits, and the legendary Koenigsberg Cookie Eaters, who won the East European baseball championship a record four straight times (1942 to 1945), were dismantled, their equipment confiscated, and their records declared seditious. Great players such as Leonard Tzwelkewicz, Vladimir Korpotski, Igor Lebenstein, and Hans-George Heinseker were declared enemies of the state and sentenced to long prison sentences in gulags where they labored under the watchful eyes of Soviet prison guards who had been conditioned to hate anything that even remotely reminded them of that abhorrent American past time.

As for Hogey, he became a special consultant to baseball operations for the commissioner of baseball in the United States. He also retained his military rank and later was promoted to four-star general and in 1963 delivered a speech before Congress in which he urged the Congress to create a new medal that honors all those valiant baseball players who place their lives on the line every time a pitcher tries to throw a hardball past them at the plate.

Hogey also authored seventeen books, including such best sellers as *My Life as a Central European Super Star*, *The Role of Transgender Women in Professional Baseball*, *A Short History of the Central Europe Baseball Conference*, *Germany and Baseball: the Untold Story*, *The Fuhrer and the Growth of German Baseball*, *The Future of Baseball in Poland*, *A Short History of the Eastern Europe Baseball Association*, and *Hogey and The Negro Leagues: A Story of Mutual Respect*.

In 2002, just a few weeks before his death, Hogey announced plans to try to resurrect baseball in Eastern Europe. His plans included a whirlwind visit to every major city in eastern Europe and Russia to extol the virtues of baseball and to jumpstart baseball operations in places where baseball had thrived during the war. When told that at age 101 he was too old to embark on such an ambitious project, Hogey laughed and said, "For me, life begins at 101." Hogey booked his flight and was looking forward to returning to the place where he had starred so many years earlier, but alas fate intervened and Hogey died. His funeral was

attended by some of the greatest figures in the history of baseball. In the United States, President George W. Bush declared a National Day of Mourning and flags were ordered flown at half-mast. The USPS issued a first-class stamp in Hogey's honor, and in Warsaw, the President of Poland declared Paul Hogenschmidt a national hero.<sup>5</sup>

While married to Lena, Hogey had several extra-marital affairs and fathered fourteen children, eight of whom became personal injury lawyers and the other six racehorse jockeys. Hogey also had a lifelong interest in thoroughbred horse racing, and at one point owned 97 horses, which included such champions as Silky Sheets, Wrong Way Sally, Can't Lose Louise, Halitosis Hal, Pip the Pooper, GetOutofMyWay or Else, Know Can Win, Jackie the Jokester, and arguably the greatest racehorse in history, Two-Bit Harry. Hogey's horses won a combined total of 294 stakes races earning over \$597 million. This made Hogey the most successful racehorse owner in history.<sup>6</sup>

Today, the name Paul Hogenschmidt lives on in the minds and hearts of all those sports fans who study the history of sports and of the people of Eastern Europe for whom Hogey labored so mightily so that they could play baseball, the greatest game in the world.

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<sup>5</sup> Hogey often bragged that he would live forever, so for him, his ambitious plans at such an advanced age seemed completely logical, including his plan to father more children. Hogey claimed that the older he became the greater was his need to have sex. Hogey believed that sex was the key to a long life, and that the more he had sex, the longer he would live. At age 100, Hogey had sex with 27 different ladies, all of whom lavished praise on Hogey for the gentlemanly way he treated all his female companions, especially his favorite, Senorita Estella Rivera Santiago y Blanco, known for her skills both in and out of the bedroom, which included the uncanny ability to juggle eighteen golf balls with her feet while smoking a pack of Chesterfield cigarettes, play a bugle while changing an automobile tire, recite Shakespeare in the Etruscan language, bend her body into the shape of a square, and mimic the sounds of a female gibbon in a state of sexual arousal. Hogey's other favorite ladies included Fraulein Henrietta von Heninski und Karpstein, who could lift the front end of an automobile with her teeth, consume twenty-seven Porterhouse steaks in two minutes, climb Mount Whitney in ten minutes, and yodel Yankee Doodle Dandy in forty-three languages.

<sup>6</sup> Hogey's infatuation with horses began at age six when his parents, Konrad and Monica Hogenschmidt gave Hogey a birthday present: a palomino pony named Leroy. Hogey and Leroy immediately bonded and had a relationship that lasted nineteen years until Leroy's untimely death at the age of twenty-two. The two of them were inseparable. Sometimes, Hogey and Leroy could be seen looking into each other's eyes, oblivious to the world, madly in love.

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PWW 12/5/2024

The contents contained herein are a work of fiction.

