

1919 to the fixing of the 1919 world

Finance



1919 was full of gambling, prohibition, speakeasies, and much more.

These however do not compare to the fixing of the 1919 World Series.

Arguably the most prestigious event in sports history - the World Series - ended in what is now known as the Black Sox Scandal. Arnold Rothstein lived a life of crime from an early age. Rothstein was born in 1882 in New York City. At age sixteen he dropped out of school and worked as a traveling salesperson for a small chunk of his life. Hanging out in the neighborhood pool halls lured him into a life of crime. Rothstein now worked in low level crime such as gambling and was a loan shark to the locals. He soon became friends with high-level crime figures (Moore 2).

His troubled early life foreshadowed his involvement in upper level crimes.

Later in his life Arnold Rothstein was involved in bigger schemes. He opened up Manhattan casinos and was a millionaire at age thirty. Rothstein then got into the "booze and narcotics business." Arguably his biggest scheme in his lifetime was the fixing of the 1919 World Series.

Rothstein helped with the organizing of the fix and was asked to finance the bribery of the players. Despite being the top suspect of the crime he wasn't charged and kept his innocence throughout his lifetime (Moore 2). Even though Rothstein wasn't the only gambler involved in the scandal it was smart to get him involved. Throwing the 1919 World Series was a partnership between gamblers and baseball players. The first talk about throwing the World Series was between White Sox player, Arnold Gandil, and gambler, Joseph Sullivan. Soon Eddie Cicotte, Claude Williams, Charles Risberg, and

Oscar Felsch joined in on the plan. Buck Weaver had previously agreed to throw the series, but pulled out for unknown reasons.

Fred McMullin and Joe Jackson later joined after hearing some of the guys talk about it in the locker room (Andrews 1-2). The involvement of the seven players in fix almost guaranteed that rigging the World Series would be successful. Uncharacteristic performances from the Chicago White Sox led to the Cincinnati Reds first World Series Championship. The White Sox lost game one 9-1 apparently signalling that the fix was on. The White Sox bad play continued in game two losing 4-2 after pitcher Lefty Williams walked three batters in a row. On October 6 the best of nine series sat at 4-1 in favor of the Reds. It is said that White Sox players did not receive full payment after each of the first five games. This supposedly led to the Sox stepping up their game and winning the next two games 5-4 and 4-1 putting the series at 4-3.

Game eight of the World Series ended 10-5 giving the Cincinnati Reds their first championship. After the series White Sox owner, Charles Comiskey said, " I believe my boys fought the battles of the recent World Series on level"(Andrews 2-4). With rumors lingering everywhere many people asked for reason to why the players would throw the World Series. There were a few motives as to why the Sox's threw the World Series. The main reason for the original interest in throwing the World Series was the abundant amount of money able to be made. Supposedly the players lost the series for a payout of \$100, 000. Abe Attell went on to say, " They not only sold the series, but they sold it wherever they could get a buck." Another motive to

the Sox players throwing the series is the supposed threats against their families (Andrews 2-3).

The payout the players received were not worth the consequences they would soon face. The consequences the participants of the Black Sox Scandal varied from the court to Commissioner of baseball. The 1919 World Series was not looked at until August 31, 1920 when they found out a previous game in the 1919 season had been thrown.

On August 2, 1921 a twelve man jury declared that the eight baseball players were not guilty on all counts (Mitchell 2). Vindication did not last long for the baseball players. Kenesaw Mountain Landis, baseball's new commissioner, banned the eight baseball players from baseball forever.

These players were Joe Jackson, Eddie Cicotte, Chick Gandil, Swede Risberg, Buck Weaver, Claude Williams, Happy Felsch, and Fred McMullen (" Sports Center Flashback" 2). Landis went on to say, " Regardless of the verdict of juries, no player who throws a ballgame, no player that undertakes or promises to throw a ballgame, no player that sits in a conference with a bunch of crooked players and gamblers where the ways and means of throwing a game are discussed and does not promptly tell his club about it, will ever play professional baseball." Buck Weaver who pulled out of the fix tried to win reinstatement but was declined by the commissioner (Andrews 4-5). Many of the punishments were fair for the players, but in Buck Weaver's case it was too harsh. Being forced to leave the game of baseball was not worth the pay the received for many of the players.

The name the “ Black Sox Scandal” was coined after the fixing or arguably the most prestigious event in sports history. This was a big event in the year of prohibition and gambling.