AWESOME stories

PAYING DUES

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Jimmy Morris knew he wanted to be a major league baseball star when he was a child. But sometimes knowing exactly what you want to accomplish in life is harder than not having a clue.

For twenty years Morris thought of little else. He wanted to play ball in the majors. He could pitch. He could even hit - a rare talent for a pitcher. But self-doubts can plague even the most optimistic, dedicated person when it seems like achieving the objective is an unrealistic goal.

It's a rare person who gets to play professional baseball. It's an even rarer person who goes straight to the big league without spending time in the "farm club," a system created by Branch Rickey in the 1920s. Even Mark McGuire started in the farm club.

Since he graduated from a high school that didn't have a baseball program, Jimmy was behind - despite his innate talent. He possessed far less experience than he needed. A major league season has 162 games. Morris had played in a 12-game summer league. What realistic chance did he have to play pro ball?

Turns out, Coach Jack Allen from Ranger Junior College provided a way for Morris to get both experience and exposure. He offered Jimmy a full-ride scholarship. But ... those junior college days were short-lived.

After a scout for the Milwaukee Brewers saw him pitch, Morris was that team's fourth pick in the supplemental draft. With a $35,000 signing bonus, Jimmy *thought* his dream was finally coming true.

It was just the start of his professional dues-paying days.

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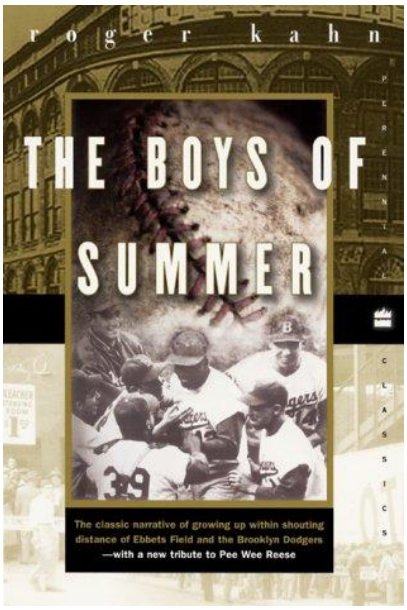
Media Stream



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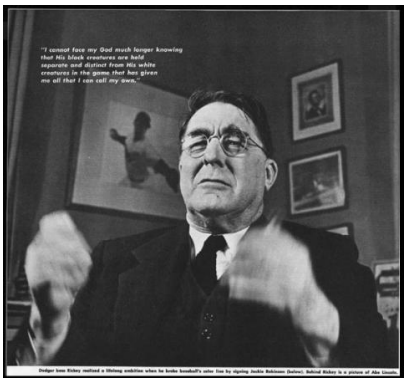

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