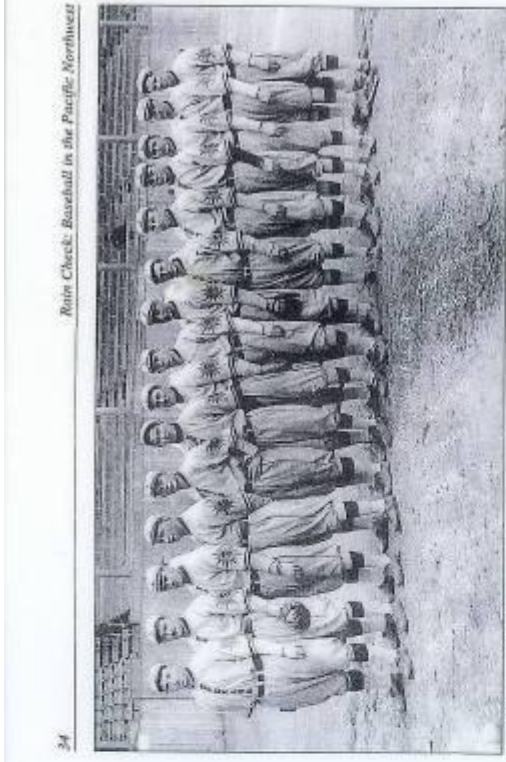


Cover of Steve's article in Rain Check, Spitballing

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Rain Check: Baseball in the Pacific Northwest



The 1913 Spokane Indians had many major league veterans, but pitchers Stan Coveleski (third from left) and Augie (Pete) Dowling (not pictured) proved to be the only good big league players. Other notable, longtime Northwest League shortstop-catcher Dutch Albrecht (left), Manager Harry Ostrik (left) and a future member of the infamous Black Sox of 1919, "Swack" Beckley (far right).

Reviewers of the Pacific Coast League (PCL). Little did Stan Coveleski know that his journey so far from the eastern epicenter of baseball would put him very much in the middle of larger baseball trends, conflicts, and competitions. Following his western road helped make him an emerging star in the heart of baseball's Deadball Era.

It was a hard life for the youngster at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was born Stanislaw Kowalewski in 1889, but he went by Coveleski as a pro, and dropped the "s" at the end of his name after his baseball career had ended. "There was nothing strange in those days about a twelve-year-old Polish kid in the minors for 72 hours a week as a muck as soon as he had a chance to get out of there."

In four seasons in the Big State League, playing with Leavenworth and Atlantic City from 1909 to 1912, Coveleski won 73 games and caught the eye of one of Chicago's major league scouts. Coveleski made his major league debut in September, 1912 for the Athletics and built a strident in his first year. With a surplus of talented pitchers, Mack chose not to offer Coveleski a contract for 1913. Mack felt he was not yet ready for the big leagues. Instead, he went to the minor leagues to play for the Spokane Indians, who would combine to win 29 games between them for the 1913 Athletics.

In this era, major league teams often had informal relationships with the owners of minor league clubs. Mack had such an understanding with Joe Cullen, president and part owner of the Spokane Indians. Cullen had just pitcher Hank to Mack a year earlier, and the pitcher had now eight

## Spitballing to the Hall of Fame

### Colorful contemporaries paved Stan Coveleski's way to majors

"The brand of craft which Coveleski was passing on the ball today being applied here here since (Big) Bill James used to fan 'em out two years ago. The Portland pitcher simply had the heart along out of his hand, and he looked like he could keep on doing it all day."

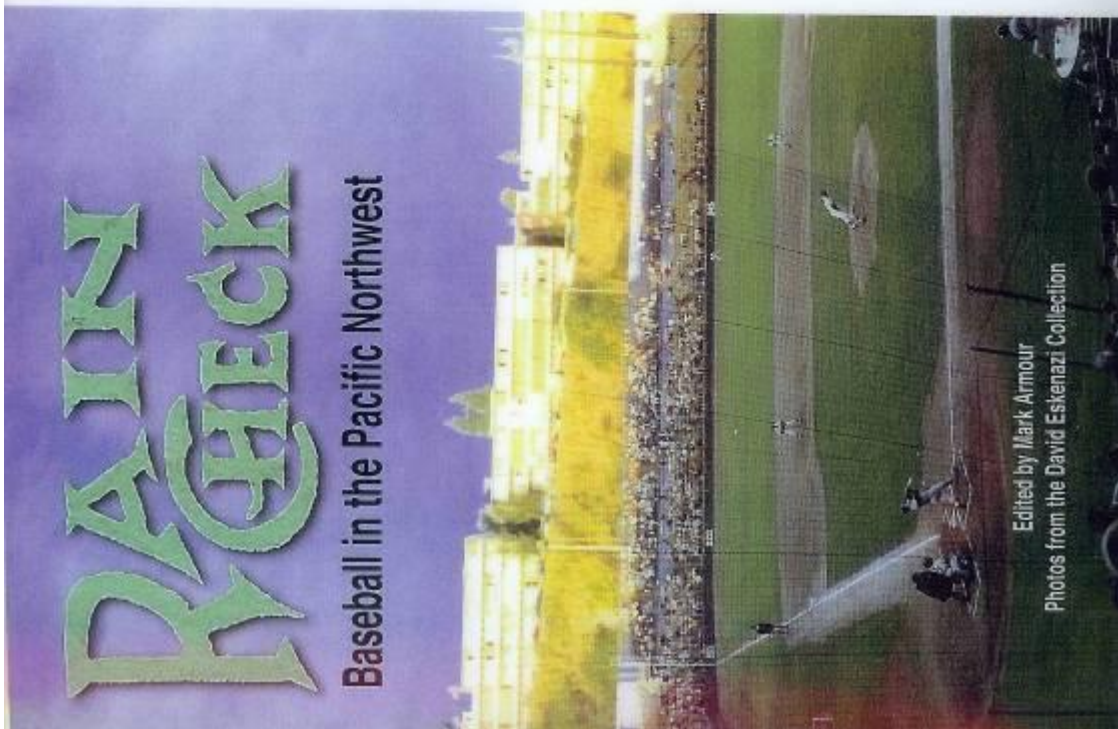
— Sports sportswriter Royal Brogthorn, quoted in *The Oregonian*, Sept. 21, 1915

By STEVE STEINBERG

He came from the mining town of Sharnedin, Pennsylvania, the youngest of five brothers who worked in the mines and played baseball. On his way to a Hall-of-Fame career, he spent three formative years in the Pacific Northwest: 1913-14 with the Spokane Indians of the Northwest League (NWL) and 1915 with the Portland

# RAIN CHECK

## Baseball in the Pacific Northwest



Edited by Mark Armour  
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