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Interview with HOF pitcher Mr. Bob Feller

Hall of Fame pitcher Bob Feller will be ninety-two years old in a few months, but he is extremely sharp and remembers everything. We spent four hours together and we talked about everything from his service in the Navy, to his museum in Iowa, and his playing days growing up in Iowa and then with the Cleveland Indians.

Mr. Feller still lives in Ohio and attends every home game that the Indians play; unless he is on the road which is virtually every week. He loves to travel with his wife and has seen the world. During the Summer, he is very busy with public signings, the All-Star game, and the HOF inductions at Cooperstown.

Q: I asked “Bob” what he thinks about the trading deadline and if it helps teams or not?

A: Mr. Feller thinks the trade deadline is “like swapping gum”. I won’t elaborate. You get the picture.

Q: What are some of your most memorable strikeouts?

A: I remember striking out Joe Dimaggio, Mickey Mantle, and Lou Gehrig. Dimaggio was a recluse, but also a great player. People always ask me to sign with that inscription, but I will only sign that inscription for my museum in Van Meter, Iowa.

www.bobfellermuseum.org I visit the museum as much as possible and the people that run the museum are terrific. We have special guests that come to the museum and sign for the fans.

Q: Do you think that Joe Dimaggio’s consecutive game hit streak record at 56 games will ever be broken?

A: No I do not think it will be broken. Here is another record that will not be broken. Bob Feller is the only pitcher in MLB history to pitch an opening day no hitter.

Q: Did you ever strike out Babe Ruth?

A: No, but I saw him pitch. My wife and I would go on double dates with “Babe” and his wife Claire. We would go to the theatre and had a great time with the Ruth’s over the years.

Q: You missed four years of baseball to the U.S. Navy. Did you ever get the itch to come back and play ball?

A: We had no choice, but to fight for the country. If we lost, I wouldn't be here today talking to you and you certainly would not be here. I was the "gunner" on the ship, USS Alabama. I was recently in Mobile, Alabama to visit the memorial battleship park. They have the bunk that I used when I was on the ship. If somebody today gets injured or killed in the line of duty, they get flown back to the U.S. When I was the gun captain, we didn't have the technology or the airplanes to fly people back and give them a proper burial. We just buried them at sea. I remember seeing massive battleships sink to the bottom of the ocean. It takes just a few hours and the thing is gone.

Q: How old were you when you threw seventeen strikeouts against the Philadelphia A's?

A: I was seventeen years old (1936) and I threw seventeen strikeouts. I was not the youngest player to appear in a major league baseball game, but I WAS the youngest to win and lose a game.

Q: You threw a baseball at 107.9 MPH. Was this in a baseball game?

A: No, it was not in a baseball game. This was 1946 at Griffith Stadium with a radar gun.

Q: Minimum wage salary for MLB players is \$400,000. How has money affected the way the game is played?

A: Actually, minimum wage is close to \$700,000 in 2010. There are so many athletes that have big egos. Everything was different when I played. I stopped and signed an autograph for everybody. I have literally signed millions of autographs over my lifetime. Now guys make ten million dollars per year and want \$150 for their autograph. You will never see a brinks truck follow a hearse. You can't leave with all the money.

Q: What words of encouragement/advice for young people who want to play baseball?

A: Have common sense. So many people do not have common sense. Common sense takes you far in life.

Q: Thank you for your time today Mr. Feller. Do you have a joke you can share?

A: What do you call a politician that never lies? A loser.

