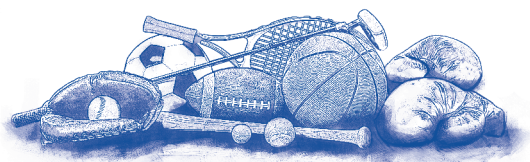


UP FRONT



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SPORTS MUSEUM

By Anne Madarasz,
Director, Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum

For All Seasons

As the seasons change from winter to spring, and from football to baseball, it's an apt time to consider those athletes able to compete successfully across seasons and sports. In this age of increasing specialization, it is still possible to find multi-sport athletes in high school, though it becomes less common in college, especially in Division 1-A where training is a focused, year-around endeavor. It is more rare still in the big leagues. Certain names leap immediately to mind: Bo Jackson, Deion Sanders, even Babe Didrikson. But are there professional athletes with a connection

to this region who have earned the moniker "men for all seasons"?

In the late 19th century, several athletes known best for their achievements on the baseball diamond also played football in the off-season. Christy Mathewson, the great baseball pitcher and member of the first Hall of Fame class, appears in the 1902 team photo for the Pittsburgh Stars, an early football team that capitalized on his success in college football as a kicker at Bucknell. Likewise, Ed Abbaticchio, recognized as the first Italian American to play professional baseball (for the Pittsburgh Pirates) also played professional football in the 1890s. Both these men sought the opportunity

to earn some extra money and to play some of the best non-college competitive football available at the time.

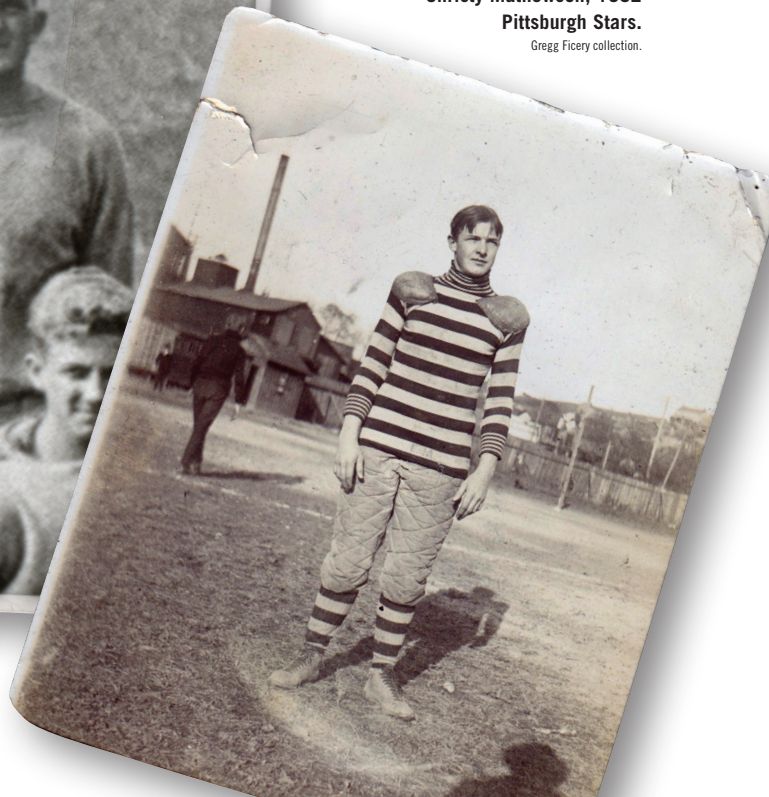
A few decades later, Cal Hubbard made his mark in sports. Born in Missouri, he played college football at Geneva College in 1926. With great speed and size, he defined the position of tackle and end. Snapped up by the New York Giants, he helped that team to a league championship his rookie year, then moved on to Green Bay where he won three NFL titles under the legendary Curly Lambeau. Hubbard finished out his career with the Pittsburgh Pirates (now Steelers) and was named to the first class of pro football Hall

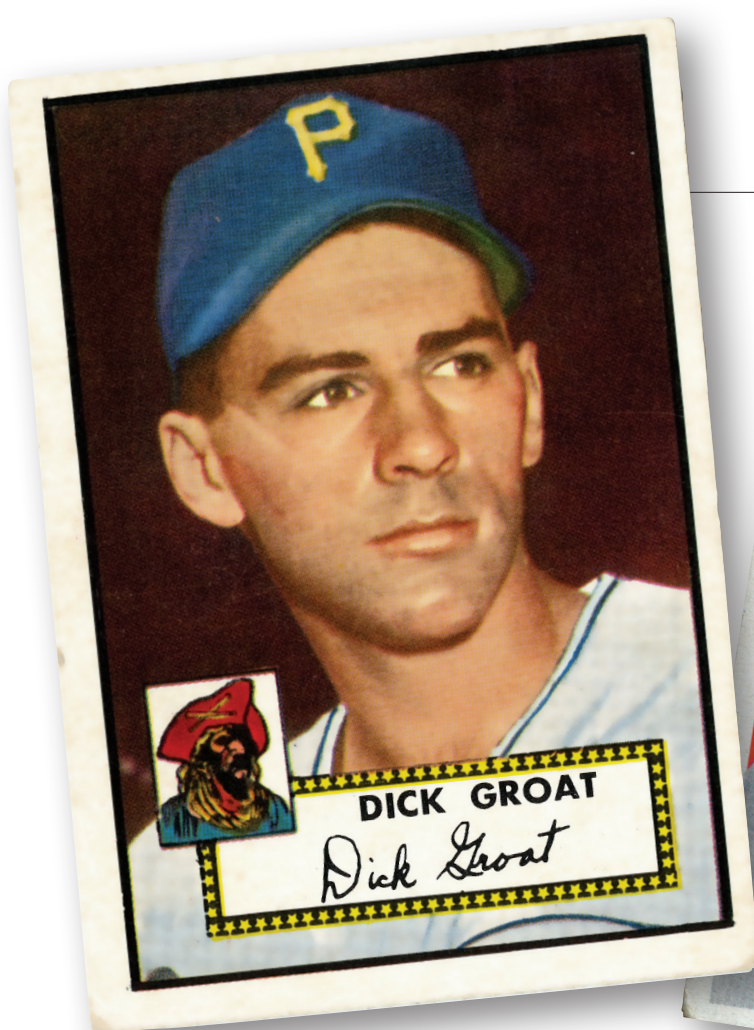
Ed Abbaticchio.
1909-1911 T206
Tobacco Card.
Gift of John Butch.



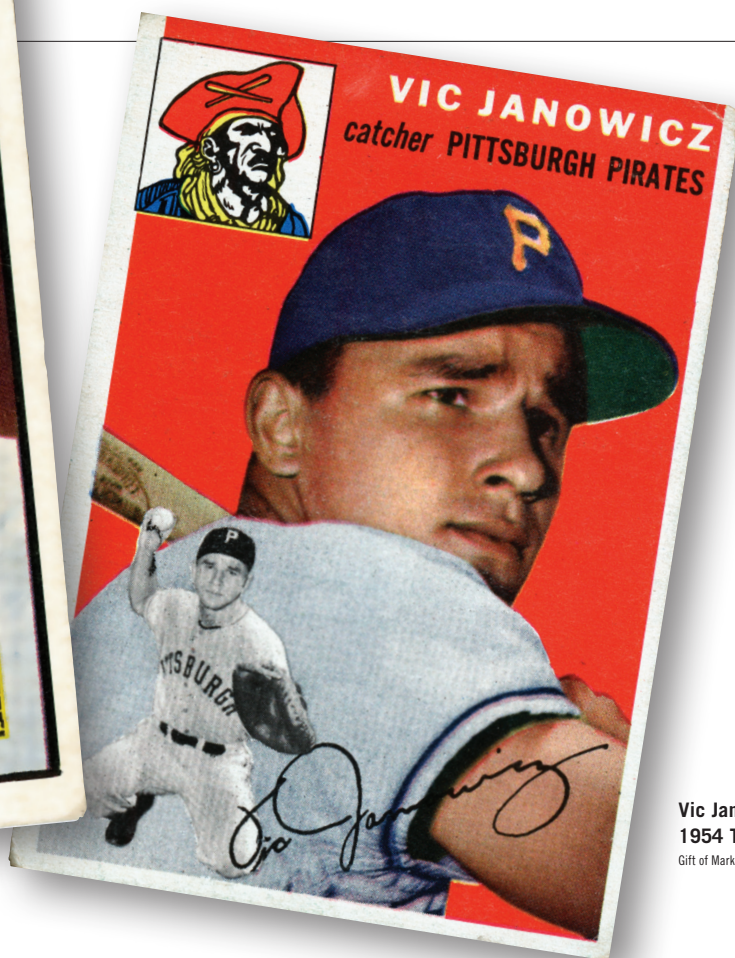
Cal Hubbard.
Courtesy Geneva College.

Christy Mathewson, 1902
Pittsburgh Stars.
Gregg Ficery collection.





Dick Groat. 1952 Topps Rookie Card.
Gift of Gregg Ficery.



Vic Janowicz.
1954 Topps.
Gift of Mark Vatuvuk.

of Fame inductees in 1963. In the off-season, Hubbard umpired minor league baseball. With his football career behind him, he began to work the major leagues, quickly rising to the top ranks and working his first World Series in 1938. Hubbard devised the modern positioning strategy for umpires, still in use today. This work led to his induction into Cooperstown in 1976, which, coupled with his 1962 induction into the College Football Hall of Fame, made him the first man named to three national sports halls of fame.

In 1950, a triple-threat back from Ohio State, Vic Janowicz, became the runaway winner of the Heisman Trophy. After college, Janowicz did a stint in the service, then played for the Pittsburgh Pirates for two years, signing as a catcher for the 1953 and '54 seasons. He returned to football in 1954, playing defensive back for the Redskins. Janowicz led the NFL

in scoring in 1955 until the final day of the season. An automobile accident ended his playing career in 1956.

A contemporary of Janowicz, native son Dick Groat, built a reputation as a two-sport star in the 1950s. Born in Wilksburg, Groat attended Duke University where he put together stellar numbers on the basketball court and the baseball diamond. Twice named an All American in baseball, in basketball he set an all-time NCAA record for points in a season his junior year with 831 and was named the 1951 College Player of the Year. A two-time All American, Groat became the first Duke player to have his number, 10, retired. After college, Groat played in 1952 both for the Pittsburgh Pirates, where he hit .284 his rookie year, and for the Fort Wayne Pistons of the NBL, averaging almost 12 points a game. He spent two years in the U.S. Army,

then concentrated on baseball, playing for the Pirates through 1962.

Along with teammates Roberto Clemente and Bill Mazeroski, Groat formed the nucleus that led the Pirates from the cellar to success, winning a World Series championship in 1960—with Groat named the National League MVP. Along the way, Groat posted his first 300-plus season, hitting .315 in 1957. In '59, he was named to the All Star team, the first of five appearances. Traded in 1962, Groat led the league in doubles, hitting .319 for St. Louis in 1963. He retired from baseball after the 1967 season but maintained his association with sports, running his golf course, Champion Lakes of Ligonier, and taking to the airwaves. Groat became one of the few to master sport across seasons. 