

Homage to Mike Schmidt

At one time, people said that night baseball would ruin the game. Then the Philadelphia Phillies installed lights at Crosley Field, and on May 24, 1935 they lost to the Cincinnati Reds, 2 to 1 in the first major league night game. Everyone had a good time, and night baseball was here to stay.

They have always said that baseball couldn't be played indoors, too. But then Judge Roy Hofheinz of Houston, Texas, followed his dream and talked everyone into building the Astrodome, and baseball was an indoor game for the first time.

The Astrodome also hosted football and basketball games. There were no problems with that. Baseball, however, is a game of chances and impossibilities. On June 10, 1974, third-baseman Mike Schmidt of the Philadelphia Phillies hit a ball that struck a speaker hanging from the roof of the Astrodome. There were two men on base, and like everyone else in the park, and Schmidt, the runners thought that the ball was an easy home run and they didn't run very hard. After it hit the speaker and fell into shallow center field, Schmidt ended up with a single.

Schmidt started a sports meme on the play. While standing on first, he pointed his right index finger upward and said, "I hit the ceiling!" Soon, other players were doing the same thing on extraordinary plays. Now players in football, soccer, basketball, hockey, golf and other sports point a finger up when they accomplish a great feat, like scoring a goal, or even when they accomplish something ordinary. Very probably, none of them know how and why the gesture began to be used.