Guide to the COLORADO SILVER BULLETS

National Baseball Hall of Fame Library
25 Main Street
Cooperstown, NY 13326

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This collection was prepared by Russell Wolinsky, in September 2003, and reviewed with further edits by Anne McFarland, in December 2005. The second donation was added by Claudette Scrafford, with edits in January 2014.
Collection Number
BA MSS 23
BL-832.2003, BL-626.2013

Title
Colorado Silver Bullets

Inclusive Dates
1993-1998

Extent
1.2 linear feet (3 manuscript boxes)

Abstract
The collection is comprised of press kits, newspaper and magazine clippings, detailed statistics, post-season media guides, programs, and correspondence.

Acquisition Information
The collection was donated in 2003 by Bob Hope, founder of the Silver Bullets. A second donation was made in 2013 by Bill Connell, executive with the Whittle Communications, the corporate parent of the team.

Preferred Citation
Colorado Silver Bullets, BA MSS 23, National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, NY

Separation
Separated to the Audio/Video Archives:
- Colorado Silver Bullets promotional tape, VHS 1311
- Silver Bullets vs. Greensboro Gold Bats, 5/31/1995, VHS 1312, VHS 1313

Access
By appointment during regular business hours, e-mail research@baseballhall.org.

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History
The history of women in baseball dates to 1866 when the women of Vassar College allegedly played the game. From the 1890s to the 1930s, various Bloomer Girls teams barnstormed across the United States playing baseball, mostly against male competition. In 1942, Chicago Cubs owner Philip Wrigley founded the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL), a group of women’s teams that competed against each other. The AAGPBL functioned between 1943 and 1954. After the league folded, Allington’s All-
Americans were formed by former AAGPBL players to barnstorm, again opposing mostly male teams.

The idea of reviving an all-women baseball team was the brainchild of Bob Hope, former vice president and PR/marketing director of both the Atlanta Braves and the Atlanta Hawks (NBA). In 1993, Hope was the president of Whittle Communications, LP, a marketing and promotional company. Whittle was hired by Coors Brewing Company President W. Leo Kiely to develop and implement a unique sports idea that would ultimately, if successful, be imitated by competing breweries. Ten years earlier, Hope tried unsuccessfully to start a women’s minor league team in Florida. Now, buoyed by the success of the motion picture *A League of Their Own* (1992), Hope was able to bring his idea to fruition.

Coors agreed to finance and sponsor a women’s barnstorming team in the fall of 1993. They would fund the team in the amount of $2.6 million annually. Coors nicknamed the team the Silver Bullets, a blatant advertisement for a particular brand of their product. On December 10, the team was officially recognized by the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues. It was Hope’s dream that the team would eventually serve as a Class A minor league club, feeding its best players to AA, AAA, and eventually, the major leagues.

During the spring of 1994, an estimated 1,300 to 2,000 women showed up at locations around the country to try out for the new team. From these applicants, 24 would be selected as Colorado Silver Bullets. Former major league pitcher Phil Niekro was named manager. Each player would receive $20,000 for four months of work. This figure was considerably higher than a first-year minor leaguer would earn, but several of the women were older than their male counterparts, and in some cases had left lucrative-paying positions in order to join the Silver Bullets.

On April 23, 1994, the team played its first exhibition game, a three-inning, 2-0 loss to the Memphis Chicks. After the game, all paying customers of legal drinking age received a free six-pack of Coors Light beer. The first regular-season game was scheduled for Mothers’ Day, May 8, at Charlotte, NC vs. a team of Northern League All-Stars which included former major league players Leon “Bull” Durham and Dennis “Oil Can” Boyd. A crowd of 8,179 saw the Bullets suffer a 19-0 defeat. The game was televised live on ESPN2.

After a 1-21 start, the Silver Bullets reduced the level of competition, playing only local, semipro men’s all-star squads. The Bullets ended the 1994 campaign with a 6-38 record. They improved to 11-33 in 1995, 18-34 in 1996 and 23-22 in 1997. In November 1996, the team played a series of exhibition games in Taiwan, posting a 0-5 record with one game rained out.

At the conclusion of the 1997 season, Coors withdrew its sponsorship of the team. Unable to find another sponsor, the club announced they would not field a team in 1998. Sagging attendance, lack of media interest, no home field, and stiff competition from other women’s sports made it impossible for the Silver Bullets to continue.

Some of the more illustrious members of the Silver Bullets team include pitchers Gina Satriano, daughter of former major league catcher Tom Satriano, who took a leave of absence
from her position as a deputy district attorney; Lisa Martinez, a underhand-tossing knuckleball pitcher, formerly a high school science teacher; Pam Davis, who hurled one inning of scoreless relief for the AA Jacksonville Suns (Southern League) in an exhibition against the Australian Olympic baseball team. Outfielder Tammy Holmes hit the first Silver Bullets home run (an inside-the-park grand slam); first baseman Julie Croteau, a stunt double in A League of Their Own, was the first woman to play on a men’s NCAA college baseball team, and later served as the first known woman to coach a college baseball team.

**Source**

**Scope and Content Notes**
The collection of materials of the Colorado Silver Bullets is divided into two series:
Series II – items donated in 2014. Items include clippings, programs, press kits, spring training guides, marketing packages, agreements, and correspondence.

**Controlled Access Terms**
These records are indexed under the following terms in the National Baseball Hall of Fame’s Library catalog. Researchers wishing to find related materials may wish to search under these terms.

**Subjects**
- Women baseball players
- Statistics
- Programs
- Guides
- Minor league baseball
- Correspondence
- Agreements

**Corporate Names**
- Colorado Silver Bullets (Baseball team)
- Coors Brewing Company
- Whittle Communications
- Integer Group
- Women’s Sports Foundation

**Personal Names**
- Niekro, Phil
- Hope, Bob
- Connell, William
- Clinton, Hillary Rodham
## Content List

### Series I

**Box 1**  
Newspaper Articles  
*Folder 1*  
Inaugural Season, Apr – May 11, 1994  
*Folder 2*  
May 13 – Jun 1994  
*Folder 3*  
Jan - Apr 1996  
*Folder 4*  
May - Jun 1996  
*Folder 5*  
Jul - Dec 1996  
*Folder 6*  
Taiwan Trip, Nov 1996  
*Folder 7*  
Player Profiles, Apr 1997 – Feb 1998  
*Folder 8*  
Feb - Apr 1997  

**Box 2**  
Newspaper Articles  
*Folder 1*  
May - Jun 1997  
*Folder 2*  
Jun 11, 1997, brawl vs. Americus American Legion, Albany, GA  
*Folder 3*  
Phil Neikro – Baseball Hall of Fame Induction, 1997  
*Folder 4*  
July 1997  
*Folder 5*  
Aug 1997  
*Folder 6*  
Sept - Dec 1997  
*Folder 7*  
1998  
*Folder 8*  
Post-Season Media Guide 1996  
*Folder 9*  
Post-Season Media Guide 1997, 2 copies  
*Folder 10*  
Statistics, 1994  
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Statistics, 1995  
*Folder 12*  
Certificate, “I was there” Jun 14, 1996, Ripken, Jr. 2216 consecutive game  
Magazine photo of the 1996 team, 2 copies  

### SERIES II

**Box 3**  
Press kit, Fact sheets, tryouts, advisory board members, Dec 10, 1993  
- First female minor league team press release  
- Team management biographies  
*Folder 2*  
Press kit, Spring training press release, advisory board members, Feb 23, 1994  
- Phil Niekro, manager  
*Folder 3*  
Spring training media guides, 1994, 1996  
*Folder 4*  
Newspaper articles, Inaugural season, Apr – July 1994  
*Folder 5*  
Souvenir program 1994 with 2 game tickets, 5/08/1994, 1st game  
Souvenir program 1995  
*Folder 6*  
TV marketing packet 1995  
“Marketing Friendly” packet 1995
Folder 7  Correspondence, planning, sponsorship, Jun – Oct 1993
- Whittle Communications and Adolph Coors Co.

Folder 8  Correspondence, planning, sponsorship, Nov – Dec 1993
- Whittle Communications and Adolph Coors Co.
- Sponsorship agreement with edits
- Phil Niekro and Shereen Samonds terms of agreement

Folder 9  Adolph Coors Co. corporate information
Silver Bullets schedule, 1994
Correspondence, Bill Connell and Leo Kiely, Mar 22, 1994

Folder 10 Correspondence, marketing of team, Dec 1993
- Newspaper articles, Atlanta Journal Dec 11, 1993

Folder 11 Correspondence Dec 1993 – Jan 1994
- Silver Bullets agreement, draft
- Sponsorship agreement, draft

Folder 12 Correspondence, marketing of team, Jan – Apr 1994
- Integer Group, promotion services
- Mar 28, 1994 note from Geena Davis
- Apr 4, 1994 note from Hillary Rodham Clinton