Jeopardy Category: Baseball Personas

1. This short, left-handed relief pitcher spoke so little English that he called all his teammates “Poppy” (true to the baseball habit of shortening names so that they “end in a vowel or a spittable consonant”).

2. Of the Oakland A’s three starting pitchers, only this guy had no obvious flaws to plant the seeds of doubt in the minds of conventional scouts.

3. This high school baseball coach at Central Hinds Academy also served as a Baptist minister.

4. This Australian-born baseball scout followed Chad Bradford’s progress through Hinds Community College and Southern Mississippi University to make the case that the White Sox should recruit him.

5. In a conversation with author Michael Lewis during historic game 20 of the A’s winning streak, Billy Beane favorably compares this player, age 24 at the time, to the 24-year-old versions of Jason Giambi, Barry Bonds, and Alex Rodriguez.

6. This pitching coach for the Oakland A’s helps Chad Bradford overcome a crisis of faith by pointing out the incongruity of believing in Jesus, for whom there was no video evidence, but not believing in his own strikeout record, for which there was ample video evidence.
Short Answer

1. Name three of Chad Bradford’s influences in developing his distinctive pitching style.

2. In which Canadian city was Chad Bradford assigned to play for the White Sox Triple-A team? What feature of the geography there rewarded his deceptive pitches with more strikeouts than other pitchers were getting?

3. In which industry did Voros McCracken find his work so boring that he needed to pursue another intellectual hobby on the Internet? Name the hobby and explain how it led him to ask some tough questions about Chad Bradford.

4. What insights did Voros McCracken have on the pitcher’s role in defense?

5. In your own words, explain what Bill James called the “law of competitive balance.” Compare this law with some you’ve studied in physical sciences, such as LeChatlier’s principle (chemical equilibria), the second law of thermodynamics, or Lenz’s law (electromagnetic fields).