

Spalding...Did You Know?

From the beginning it was all about being first, being the best... being what others could only aspire to become. Established by Boston Red Stockings pitcher A.G. Spalding in 1876, Spalding has long been a leader of innovation and quality in the sporting goods category.

Albert Goodwill Spalding begins his professional baseball career with the Boston Red Stockings. Over his career, he achieved a .323 batting average, an earned run average of 2.14 and an overall winning percentage of .796, a record that still stands today. He also became baseball's first 200 game winner.

From 1871 to 1875, A.G. Spalding won an outstanding 241 of 301 games he pitched for the Boston Red Stockings and the Chicago White Stockings. He pitched every game with a baseball he had developed himself. In 1876 this future Hall of Famer retired and entered the sporting goods business full-time. For the next 100 years, his baseball would remain as the official ball of the Major Leagues.

The first A.G. Spalding & Brothers sporting goods store opened in 1876 in Chicago. Combining his baseball experience with his business skills, A.G. Spalding & Bros. emerged as a dominant company in the sporting goods industry. Spalding made the First Major League Baseball and it became the official ball of the National League for the first 100 years (1876-1976) and of the American League (1889-1973).

In 1877, Spalding made the First Major League Baseball Glove. Throughout its history, dozens of Hall of Fame players have worn Spalding fielding gloves.

In 1878, Spalding published first "Official Rules Guide for Baseball". In 1882, A.G. Spalding became President of the Chicago White Stockings, leading the team to 5 pennants in 10 years.

In 1887, another first! Spalding developed and manufactured the very first American football. In the following two years, Spalding promoted Baseball around the world, taking the top pro ball players around the globe playing exhibition games to introduce the sport of baseball to the world.

When Dr. James Naismith invented the game of basketball in 1891, players had to use a soccer ball. In 1894, Naismith asked A.G. Spalding to develop the very first basketball, and it wasn't long before the official rules of the game read, "the ball made by A.G. Spalding & Bros. shall be the official ball."

In 1895, the game of volleyball was invented in Holyoke, MA. Spalding was asked to develop a ball and manufactured the very first American volleyball. By 1900, Spalding was the largest manufacturer of baseball bats in the United States. Spalding had factories across the nation and was producing 1 million bats per year, and unheard of number at that time. In 1930, Spalding developed and introduced the first wound balata golf ball with liquid center, the Kros-Flite. This construction represented a major technological advancement in golf ball engineering and raised the bar for distance and control.

In 1939, A.G. Spalding was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, the year it opened.

