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SPORTTRAITS... By AL WOLF

The recent death of George (Buck) Weaver brought the Black Sox scandal of 1919 back from limbo. Because he was one of the eight Chicago players permanently barred from baseball for allegedly conspiring to throw the World Series that year.

Probably no man knew Weaver, Shoeless Joe Jackson, Hap Felsch, Chick Gandil, Swede Risberg, Eddie Cicotte, Claude Williams and Fred McMullin better than Clarence Rowland.

Rowland, now executive vice-president of the Chicago Cubs, managed them during his four-year term (1915-18) with the White Sox. All eight were members of the team he piloted to the world's championship in 1917.

Heretofore, Rowland had been loath to discuss the subject.

"Why dig it up?" he'd say. "It's best forgotten. Baseball has come a long way since then, with never a breath of suspicion about anything. No purpose can

Weaver from shortstop to third.

"He was the perfect third baseman in every respect," Rowland recalled. "For one thing, Buck was so short-legged he could put the palms of both hands flat on the ground without bending his knees. So he had no trouble digging 'em out of the dirt.

"I've read where he and Ty Cobb had a standing bet on bunts and just about broke even. Say, Cobb was too cagey for that; he seldom ever dumped one down the third-base line against us.

"But Weaver used to outsmart him in another department. Cobb loved to steal home, you know. Now and then, instead of holding Ty to the bag, Weaver would drift away and let

be served in rehashing that business."

The passing of Weaver, though, unsealed Rowland's lips.

"He was the greatest third baseman of all time," Rowland told us t'other day. "And it's always been my belief that Buck not only made no attempt to throw that Series to Cincinnati but even tried to stop whichever others actually were so scheming.

"However, he apparently had knowledge of what was going on but kept it to himself. So he was guilty as an accessory. I'm not saying he shouldn't have been punished, but squealing in those days was considered almost a crime in itself. And Buck, who never got beyond the third or fourth grade, simply didn't know how to cope with such a situation or the slick operators.

"I saw all eight from time to time afterward, but Weaver was the only one who stepped right up and protested his innocence.

"Skip," he'd add, "even murderers serve their time and go free. But I got a life sentence with no parole. I'm the same as dead."

It was Rowland, seeking a place in the line-up for Risberg, who shifted

him take a big lead. That was usually all Cobb needed. But Buck had a word signal with the pitchers and they'd whip the ball in as Ty broke for the plate. And usually nailed him.

"Incidentally, they were great friends."

We asked Rowland if he ever had any trouble with the subsequent Black Sox.

"None at all," he answered. "I think that 1917 team was the greatest ever to take the field, and they were a big part of that team.

"I don't recall fining, suspending or benching any of them. Weaver, who didn't drink at all and only chewed on dry cigars, was a swell team man and a fiery competitor.

"One day I overheard him bawling the heck out of one of our pitchers, who had got knocked out of the box.

"If you'd get more sleep nights that wouldn't happen," Buck told him. "If you don't want to play ball, why don't you get into something else?"

In conclusion, we might point out that Weaver, a .296 hitter during the regular 1919 season, averaged .324 in the World Series and made but one error in 34 chances.