

Society for American Baseball Research Baseball Records Committee Newsletter

Lyle Spatz, Editor

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Not everything that counts can be counted; not everything that is counted is worth counting.
—Albert Einstein

SABR 28

Thanks to Barry Mednick and all the people in Northern California for putting on an enjoyable and well-run convention. I don't ever recall seeing a more informative and entertaining set of player panels and guest speakers than the former Giant and Pacific Coast League players and broadcaster Jon Miller. Also, congratulations to committee members John Pardon, who won the *Bob Davids Award*, Joe Dittmar (*Baseball Records Registry*) and Dave Nemecek (*The Great Encyclopedia of 19th Century Baseball*) who shared *The SABR-Sporting News Award* for their outstanding books, and Al Blumkin who won the individual trivia contest.

Hack Wilson's uncredited 191st run-batted-in in 1930 was again the major topic at our committee meeting. The members decided that we now had enough evidence to make our case public, which Cliff Kachline did in a July 15 interview with writer Owen Good of the *Oneonta Daily Star*. The Associated Press picked up the story and portions of that interview ran in many metropolitan papers. We hope our evidence is persuasive enough to convince the encyclopedias and record books to include this change in their next editions. Along with that, we remain committed to seeing "major league baseball" re-establish a Committee on Records similar to the one that existed in the 1970's. Such a group could at least begin to investigate and rule on not only the Wilson case, but all the discrepancies that exist in baseball's "historical record."

John O'Malley's proposal that we, along with the Nineteenth Century Committee, recompile the National League statistics for 1876-1890 was also discussed at the committee meeting. I can best characterize the reaction at both our meeting and at the NCC's meeting as one of caution. At neither gathering did anyone jump up and volunteer to take part, which I took as an indication of lack of interest. But perhaps, as Darryl Brock of the NCC suggested after their meeting, the scope of the proposal was too overwhelming to elicit an immediate response. He thought that maybe we should think of such an immense undertaking in terms of one year increments as John is doing with the 1889 Giants. I welcome comments.

Several times in the past I've suggested that because of things like interleague play, the ever-increasing shift of players between leagues, and the coming realignment of teams across leagues, the concept of American League and National League records and leaders is being gradually replaced by that of "major league" records and "major league" leaders. That Mark McGwire hit more home runs in 1997 than any other major leaguer, but didn't win a "home run crown," emphasizes the need for us to begin to think in that direction. (This year, Randy Johnson could be the major league strikeout leader without leading either league.) And have you noticed that almost no one mentions the likelihood of McGwire breaking Hack Wilson's NL home run record, or Juan Gonzalez breaking Lou Gehrig's AL RBI record.

A CRITICAL LOOK AT NOLAN RYAN

Cappy Gagnon, who was a big fan of Nolan Ryan's, claims that a strong case can be made that he was the most over-rated "great pitcher" ever. Cappy says that despite his allowing fewer hits-per-inning than any other pitcher ever, he finished his career third all-time in losses and had just a .526 winning percentage. While acknowledging that Ryan often played for poor teams, Cappy points out that nevertheless, he seldom had the best winning percentage or even the most wins on those teams. Only three times did he lead his team in both wins and winning percentage. Here is a table comparing Ryan's wins and winning percentage to those of his team and fellow staff-mates.

Year	Team	Ryan	Others	+/- %	Team's Best % Pitcher	Most wins
1966	Mets	0-1	66-94	—	Dennis Ribant (11-9)	Ribant (11)
1968	Mets	6-9	67-80	-.058	Jerry Koosman (19-12)	Koosman (19)
1969	Mets	6-3	94-59	+.053	Tom Seaver (25-7)	Seaver (25)
1970	Mets	7-11	76-68	-.139	Jerry Koosman (12-7)	Seaver (18)
1971	Mets	10-14	73-65	-.112	Tug McGraw (11-4)	Seaver (20)
	Total Mets	29-38	373-366	-.074		
1972	Angels	19-16	56-64	+.077	Clyde Wright (18-11)	Ryan (19)
1973	Angels	21-16	58-67	+.104	Bill Singer (20-14)	Ryan (21)
1974	Angels	22-16	46-78	+.208	Ryan	Ryan (22)
1975	Angels	14-12	58-77	+.109	Frank Tanana (16-9)	Tanana (16)
1976	Angels	17-18	59-68	+.021	Frank Tanana (19-10)	Tanana (19)
1977	Angels	19-16	53-72	+.110	Frank Tanana (15-9)	Ryan (19)
1978	Angels	10-13	77-62	-.119	Chris Knapp (14-8)	Tanana (18)
1979	Angels	16-14	72-60	-.013	Dave Frost (16-10)	Ryan and Frost (16)
	Total Angels	138-121	481-548	+.066		
1980	Astros	11-10	82-60	-.054	Joe Niekro (20-12)	Niekro (20)
1981	Astros	11-5	50-44	+.136	Ryan	Ryan (11)
1982	Astros	16-12	61-73	+.116	Joe Niekro (17-12)	Niekro (17)
1983	Astros	14-9	71-68	+.098	Ryan	Niekro (15)
1984	Astros	12-11	68-71	+.033	Ryan	Niekro (16)
1985	Astros	10-12	73-67	-.066	Mike Scott (18-8)	Scott (18)
1986	Astros	12-8	84-58	+.008	Mike Scott (18-10)	Scott (18)
1987	Astros	8-16	68-70	-.160	Jim Deshaies (11-6)	Scott (16)
1988	Astros	12-11	70-69	+.018	Bob Knepper (14-5)	Knepper (14)
	Total Astros	106-94	627-570	+.006		
1989	Rangers	16-10	67-69	+.122	Ryan	Ryan (16)
1990	Rangers	13-9	70-70	+.091	Bobby Witt (17-10)	Witt (17)
1991	Rangers	12-6	73-71	+.160	Ryan	Jose Guzman (13)
1992	Rangers	5-9	72-76	-.150	Kevin Brown (21-11)	Brown (21)
1993	Rangers	5-5	81-71	-.033	Kenny Rogers (16-10)	Rogers (16)
	Total Rangers	51-39	363-357	+.063		
	TOTAL RYAN	324-292	1850-1841	+.025		

LARRY DOBY'S FIRST I-T-P HOME RUN

The Home Run Encyclopedia credits Larry Doby with three inside-the-park home runs in his career, one in 1949 and two in 1952. **Walt Wilson** has found another one. It came on May 8, 1949 as part of a five-run Cleveland eight-inning against Sid Hudson at Washington's Griffith Stadium. According to the AP report, "the ball hit loudspeakers atop the fence and fell back into the park, continuing in play. Doby had to make the base circuit and slid home in a cloud of dust."

Bob McConnell and **Dave Vincent**, authors of the HR Encyclopedia, agree that this was an inside-the-park home run and that Doby should be credited with **four** for his career. Incidentally, the winning pitcher in Cleveland's 6-1 victory was Gene Bearden, in his first major league start.

TRIPLE PLAYS

Jim Smith sent along the following list of triple plays committed by and against each current major league team. (All incarnations of a franchise are accounted for, so, for instance, the A's total also includes Philadelphia and Kansas City.) They are through the 1997 season, but include the one by the Giants against the Cubs on May 8, 1998 and the one by the Dodgers against the Rockies on June 13, 1998.

<u>American League</u>			<u>National League</u>				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>		<u>Total</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>
Orioles	68	35	33	Cubs	74	40	34
Red Sox	61	29	32	Braves	73	36	37
Twins	60	30	30	Pirates	70	35	35
Tigers	56	32	24	Giants	68	40	28
Indians	54	28	26	Reds	65	29	36
Athletics	51	19	32	Cardinals	62	35	27
Yankees	48	24	24	Phillies	58	28	30
White Sox	47	27	20	Dodgers	55	21	34
Mariners	14	9	5	Astros	15	8	7
Angels	14	6	8	Padres	15	7	8
Rangers	12	4	8	Mets	14	7	7
Royals	10	5	5	Expos	10	9	1
Blue Jays	7	3	4	Marlins	2	0	2
Brewers*	6	3	3	Rockies	1	0	1

* Now in the National League

The defunct National League teams that existed between 1876 and 1899 combined for 74 triple plays, 33 for and 41 against.

ROY CORHAN

The encyclopedias show Roy Corhan as having played all his 43 games for the 1911 Chicago White Sox at shortstop. However, a *Retrosheet*er found a game on July 31 against New York at Hilltop Park in which Corhan pinch hit for third baseman Harry Lord in the eighth inning, and then took over for Lord at third. So give Corhan 42 games at short and one at third in 1911, and 126 at short and one at third lifetime.

For those who don't yet have it, my new address is 331 Colony Point Place, Edgewater, MD 21037. My new phone number is 410-269-4043, and my new e-mail address is spatz@annapolis.net

SACRIFICE HITS

John Schwartz has used data published in the new *Stats Handbook* to compile a list of all-time leaders in sacrifice hits by their primary positions played.

<u>Pitchers</u>		<u>Second Basemen</u>		<u>Left Fielders</u>	
Joe Niekro	147	Eddie Collins	511	Jimmy Sheppard	287
Don Sutton	136	Bill Wambsgans	323	Bobby Veach	271
Rick Reuschel	135	George Cutshaw	266	Duffy Lewis	263
Phil Niekro	129	Otto Knabe	265	Howard Shanks	262
Tom Seaver	121	Johnny Evers	256	Sherry Magee	260
Bob Friend	120	Bucky Harris	249	Fred Clarke	222
<u>Catchers</u>		<u>Third Basemen</u>		<u>Center Fielders</u>	
Ray Schalk	213	Larry Gardner	311	Tris Speaker	310
Wally Schang	160	Jimmy Austin	277	Ty Cobb	296
Mickey Cochrane	151	Ossie Vitt	259	Max Carey	290
Luke Sewell	145	Bill Bradley	253	Edd Roush	256
Muddy Ruel	143	Harry Steinfieldt	248	Fielder Jones	251
Bob Boone	142	Willie Kamm	238	Tommy Leach	240
<u>First Basemen</u>		<u>Shortstops</u>		<u>Right Fielders</u>	
Jake Daubert	392	Ray Chapman	340	Willie Keeler	340
Staffy McInnis	383	Donie Bush	337	Frank Schulte	279
Fred Tenney	277	Roger Peckinpaugh	314	Harry Heilmann	277
Wally Pipp	271	Rabbit Maranville	300	Shano Collins	258
Joe Judge	257	Joe Tinker	285	Harry Hooper	248
Ed Konetchy	253	Jack Barry	284	Sam Crawford	242



Keeler, Daubert, and Collins lead their respective positions

Notes

1. John points out that for all those listed, with the exception of post-1954 players such as Bob Boone and the pitchers, the sacrifice totals include bunts and flies.
2. The only living player with more than 200 sacrifice hits is Ozzie Smith (214). Bert Campaneris had 199.
3. The only player ever with more than 200 sacrifice hits (216) and more than 300 home runs (301) is Rogers Hornsby.
4. Robin Roberts has the most sacrifice hits by a switch hitting pitcher with 108, but entering the 1998 season, Tom Glavine and Lefty Grove were tied for the most by a left handed pitcher with 103. Now Glavine is the all-time leader.