

Society for American Baseball Research

Baseball Records Committee

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

HOW LONG WAS CY YOUNG'S HITLESS INNINGS STREAK?

Cy Young holds the major league record for Most consecutive hitless innings in a season. The year was 1904, but there seems to be some disagreement over how many innings he actually had. *The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* for 2003 (p. 87) says 23, from the seventh inning on April 25, through the sixth inning on May 11. *The 2003 Elias Book of Baseball Records* (p. 76) says 24, listing the same dates but without naming the starting or ending inning.

But committee member **Trent McCotter**, who has studied the streak, believes Young's total should actually be 25 1/3 consecutive innings.

The difference, he says, results from the very first inning of the streak--April 25. Young pitched eight innings that day, not allowing a baserunner in the 7th or 8th. However, according to Trent's review of the game, the streak should have started in the sixth inning. In that inning, Young gave up a leadoff double, retired a batter, walked a man, then struck out the last two to end the inning. This, he says, gives him three consecutive hitless innings to end the game. Those three, plus the seven from the next game, April 30, plus all nine from his perfect game on May 5, plus 6 1/3 at the start of his May 11 game gives a new total of 25 1/3 innings.

But, to play devil's advocate here, should that one and a third inning that Trent has added be part of the record. Can we consider any inning in which a hit is allowed in any part of that inning, a "hitless inning"? The question is, what constitutes an inning? Some see an inning as a whole, that is three outs, while others believe it can be divided into its three constituent parts. Some advocate partial innings only when relief appearances are included, or if the opposition didn't score (or get a hit) when a particular pitcher was in the game (even if they did so at another time in the inning).

I first raised this question in a 1992 Records Committee newsletter. Based on responses from such knowledgeable SABRites as **Pete Palmer**, **Bob Tiemann** and **Bill Deane**, there is no general agreement--at least there was none back then.

Tom Ruane (with whom I've discussed this before) wrestled with this metaphysical problem in doing work for *Retrosheet*. Tom used the following guidelines, and while his concern was with *scoreless*-innings streaks, he thought they would also apply to *hitless*-innings streaks:

According to Tom, a pitcher's consecutive scoreless innings are computed as the number of outs before being charged with a run divided by three. In other words, a pitcher who gives up a two-out home run and then retires the side begins the next inning with a scoreless streak of 1/3 of an inning. And a pitcher who gets the first two outs of an inning before allowing a run pads any inherited streak by 2/3 of an inning before it is terminated by the run.

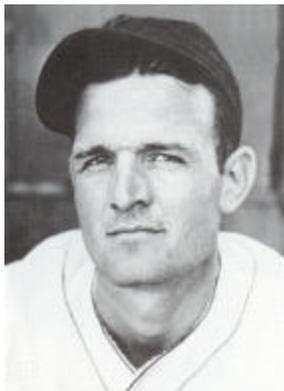
As always, all opinions are welcome.

CLAUDE PASSEAU'S ERRORLESS STREAK

Claude Passeau holds the major league record for Most Consecutive Chances Accepted Without An Error. *The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* for 2003 (p. 120), and *The 2003 Elias Book of Baseball Records* (p. 61), list Passeau's record of errorless chances, set while he pitched for the Chicago Cubs, at 273--from Sept. 21, 1941 (1G) through May 20, 1946.

But **Bob Timmerman** questioned both the beginning and ending games of the streak, wondering if perhaps Passeau's record should be a bit longer. I asked **Dave Smith** of *Retrosheet* and **Ed Hartig**, a Cubs historian, to see if they could find anything in the games immediately preceding and following the streak's beginning and end. Ed found that on September 16, 1941, Passeau had two assists and one error while pitching five innings. He committed the error in the third inning fumbling a tap off the bat of Sibby Sisti. However, there is no mention of when he picked up his two assists. There may be other errorless chances here to be added to the start of the streak, but until we can find a play-by-play account of this game, we won't know.

However, we do know that one should be added at the end. Everyone agrees that Passeau made no errors on May 20, 1946, so we looked at his next game, May 28. Passeau had one assist and one error while pitching 4.1 innings. The error came with one out in the fifth inning. But, according to *Retrosheet's* pbp of this game, his assist came in the fourth inning. Therefore, Passeau's errorless streak should be at least 274.



OH THOSE BASES ON BALLS

Sean Holtz noticed a discrepancy between the record books and other sources for two walks-related records by pitchers. Both the 2003 editions of *The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* (p. 89) and *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* (p. 79) show the NL record for Most Walks In A Season to be held by Amos Rusie of New York with 276 in 1890. However, **David Nemec's** *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth Century Baseball, Total Baseball, Baseball Almanac. com, Baseball Reference. com, and Retrosheet* all show Rusie with 289 walks in 1890.

Similarly, TSN lists the AL record for Fewest Bases on Balls in a Season (250 or more innings) as being held by Boston's Cy Young, with 28 in 1904. Again, the above listed sources disagree. They agree that Young should have the record, but it should be for his

YANKEES 1927 SLUGGING AVERAGE

TSN, Elias and just about every other standard source credit the 1927 Yankees with the major league's best-ever slugging average (.489 - based on 2,615 total bases in 5,347 at-bats). As I write this, in late September, the Boston Red Sox have an excellent chance of breaking that record. However, even if they don't, the record should be changed.

When **Mitch Soivenski** added the individual at bats, he came up with 5,354, not 5,347. The guess is that the seven at bats by pitcher Joe Giard were not included. The Yanks' slugging average goes down a point, to .488 (actually, from .489059 to .488420) when the new at-bat total is used. The team batting average and on base percentage do not change when using the seven additional at bats, at least not at the three-digit level.

SAM THOMPSON IN 1894

The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book for 2003 (p. 20) lists Fred Clarke as holding the NL record for Highest Batting Average for a non-leader in a season (100 or more games). Clarke batted .406 for Louisville in 1897. However, **Trent McCotter** claims that the record rightfully belongs to Sam Thompson, who Trent says batted .415 for the 1894 Phillies.

If you look in Total Baseball, you will see that Thompson played 102 games in 1894, with 187 hits in 451 at bats. However, if you look at **David Nemeč's** *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth Century Baseball, Retrosheet*, **Sean Forman's** *Baseball Reference* site, or **Sean Holtz's** *Baseball Almanac* site, you will find that Thompson played in only 99 games, with 178 hits in 437 at-bats (.407).

The difference is in three protested games that weren't counted originally, and now are, games in which Thompson went 9-for-14. Thompson also had six RBI in those three games, raising his total to a league-leading 147. Thompson's passing Hugh Duffy in RBI, means that Duffy is no longer credited

DOMINATING PITCHERS

As someone who believes Lefty Grove was the greatest pitcher ever, I found this list from **John Schwartz** further evidence of Grove's dominance. Of course, Grove was pitching for some very good teams in this era, as our friend **Dick Thompson** will be sure to remind us. John's list is of those pitchers who had at least four twenty-win seasons in which their winning percentage was above .700.

- 6 Lefty Grove PHI (A) 1927-32
- 5 Cy Young CLE (N) BOS (A) 1892, 95, 1901-03
- 5 Christy Mathewson NY (N) 1904-05, 08-10
- 5 Roger Clemens BOS, TOR, NY 1986,90,97-98, 01
- 4 Kid Nichols BOS (N) 1893-94, 97-98
- 4 Mordecai Brown CHI (N) 1906-09
- 4 Walter Johnson WAS 1912-13, 24-25
- 4 Juan Marichal SF 1963-64, 66, 68 *
- 4 Tom Glavine ATL 1992-94, 98

Al Spalding also accomplished the feat five times while pitching for Boston of the National Association in 1872-75, and Chicago of the NL in 1876.

MOST GAMES AT SHORTSTOP

This season, Barry Larkin of the Cincinnati Reds became the 14th major-leaguer to play 2,000 at shortstop. The all-time leader for games played at the position is Luis Aparicio who saw duty there in 2,583 games. Courtesy of **Bill Arnold**, here are the fourteen big-leaguers who played 2,000 games at shortstop.

<u>Shortstop</u>	<u>Games</u>
Luis Aparicio	2,581
Ozzie Smith	2,511
Cal Ripken	2,302
Larry Bowa	2,222
Luke Appling	2,218
Dave Concepcion	2,178
Rabbit Maranville	2,153
Alan Trammell	2,139
Bill Dahlen	2,132
Bert Campaneris	2,097
Tommy Corcoran	2,073
Roy McMillan	2,028
Pee Wee Reese	2,014
Barry Larkin	2,002



Lefty Grove



Cy Young



Christy Mathewson



Roger Clemens

CATCHING JOHN CLARKSON

Walt Wilson's listing of batterymates for Hall of Fame pitchers during their starts and shutouts continues with Nineteenth Century star, John Clarkson. Clarkson pitched for Worcester (NL) 1882; Chicago (NL) 1884-87, Boston (NL) 1888-92; and Cleveland (NL) 1892-94. He made 518 starts and pitched 37 shutouts.

	<u>Starts</u>	<u>Shutouts</u>
Silver Flint	148	9
Charlie Bennett	119	7
King Kelly	73	9
Chief Zimmer	57	1
Charlie Ganzel	43	5
Jack O'Connor	18	1
Tom Daly	11	1
Sy Sutcliffe	11	0
Lou Hardie	9	1
Pop Tate	7	1
Joe Gunson	5	0
Dell Darling	4	1
Tom O'Rourke	4	0
Ned Williamson	3	0
Doc Bushong	2	0
Buck Ewing	1	0
Jackie Hayes	1	0
Art Schellhase	1	0

