

SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH BASEBALL RECORDS COMMITTEE

LYLE SPATZ, EDITOR

APRIL 2003

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

FIELDING AVERAGES AND SIGNIFICANT DIGITS

I had a note from Joe MacKay questioning the number of fielding titles awarded to various first basemen. For instance, both the *Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* and *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* credit Charlie Grimm as the National League record holder for Most years leading the league in fielding average, with nine. Included are the years 1922, 1928, and 1932, in which he is credited as being tied for the lead. However, says Joe, if you go beyond three digits, Grimm would finish second in both 1922 and 1932. The 1922 leader should be Jake Daubert, and the 1932 leader should be Don Hurst. In 1922 Daubert had a .99368 average while Grimm's was .99357. And in 1932 Hurst's average was .99307 while Grimm's was .99296. Both *Total Baseball* and *The Baseball Encyclopedia* do indeed show Daubert as the 1922 leader and Hurst as the 1932 leader.

I mentioned this to Pete Palmer, who pointed out that the *Sporting News Baseball Guide* now does break ties, although the extended data isn't shown. They list the fielders alphabetically and indicate the leader by capitalizing his name. I checked, and of course Pete is correct. For instance, although National League catchers Brad Ausmus and Damian Miller are both shown with fielding averages of .997 in 2002, Miller's name is capitalized. His average was actually .99739, while Ausmus's was .99703.

Calculating beyond three digits, if necessary to determine a leader, has always been the case for other baseball percentages that we treat as three digit numbers. In 1931 Chick Hafey and Bill Terry both hit .349. But Hafey's .34889 gave him the NL batting title over Terry's .34861. And in 1949, while George Kell and Ted Williams both batted .343, Kell's .34291 gave him the batting title over Williams's .34276. By retroactively calculating fielding averages beyond three digits, as the encyclopedias have done, we find that Grimm did not lead NL first basemen in fielding average for nine years, but instead is tied with Ed Konetchy with seven years. (Konetchy also led the Federal League one year.)

Also, the *Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* lists Joe Judge and Don Mattingly as the AL record holders for Most years leading the league in fielding average, with six. Joe noticed that they've omitted Mattingly's 1994 title, and that he actually has seven. This is shown correctly in *The Elias Book of Baseball Records*.

Still on the subject of Fielding Average leaders for first basemen, the 2002 *Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* lists the AL record for Highest fielding average in a season as belonging to Stuffie McInnis (1921), Jim Spencer (1973) and Scott Spezio (2001), all with .999. (Wayne McElreavy says they omitted Diego Segui, who in 1998 also had a .999). While all four rounded to .999, McInnis's average of .9994 was the highest. This year's TSN Record Book lists only McInnis in that category, so obviously they are moving in the right direction.

MORE ON FIELDING BY FIRST BASEMEN

Page 102 of the *Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* shows Fred Tenney as the NL leader since 1900 for Most errors in a career by a first baseman, with 252. Wayne McElreavy says that Fred Merkle also had 252 and should be co-holder of the record, and in fact *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* does list Tenney and Merkle as co-holders. But while checking this in both *Retrosheet* and in Sean Forman's *Baseball Reference* site, I noticed that Tenney actually had 253. These are very reliable sources, and so I think Tenney should be the sole holder of this record, but with 253 errors, not 252.

Similarly, the *Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* and *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* show Jack Doyle as holding the NL record since 1900 for Most errors in a season by a first baseman, with 43. Again, both *Retrosheet* and the *Baseball Reference* site disagree, saying Doyle had 41 errors that year. (Incidentally, TSN says he played 130 games in 1900, but *Retrosheet*, *Baseball Reference*, *Total Baseball* and *The Baseball Encyclopedia* all say Doyle played in 133 games.)

CORRECTING 1968 STRIKEOUTS BY YANKEE BATTERS

Retrosheet volunteers have been busy looking at all the games played in 1968, comparing play by play with the official sheets. They have found many discrepancies, including these regarding strikeouts by Yankee batters.

Retrosheet agrees that the Yanks struck out 958 times that year, but have found a few errors in awarding those strikeouts. According to Tom Ruane, in the first game of the September 7 doubleheader against Washington, *Retrosheet* has Mickey Mantle with one strikeout (in the fifth inning) while officially he has none. However, the game does not balance on the official sheets, as the strikeouts by Washington pitchers do not match those of New York's batters. The Senators pitcher in the fifth inning (Jim Miles) is officially credited with a strikeout despite the fact that none of the three batters he retired (Bill Robinson, Jake Gibbs, and Mantle) are charged with a strikeout. It should, in fact, be charged to Mantle.

Tom believes that the error was probably not corrected when yearly team totals were balanced because it was offset by an error to Jake Gibbs' record, (which occurred in that same game). Gibbs was caught stealing in the third inning, but the official scorer apparently put the '1' in the wrong column on the sheet. Instead of Gibbs being charged with a caught stealing, he was charged with a strikeout. (Tom says this type of error is unfortunately all too common.)

The same type error was made on Bill Robinson's sheet in the September 17 game, which now gives us one strikeout too MANY for Yankee hitters. But there was a fourth error, balancing the team totals, when Andy Kosco was incorrectly given a strikeout in the June 4 game. Here too, *Retrosheet* does not have Kosco with a strikeout and officially the game does not balance, as Yankee batters have one more strikeout than do Twins pitchers.



Mickey Mantle



Jake Gibbs



Bill Robinson



Andy Kosco

BABE RUTH'S HOME RUN DOMINANCE

In this current home run-happy era, we sometimes forget why after all these years we still associate the four bagger with Babe Ruth. Below are two examples of why, with all due respect to Barry Bonds, Mark McGwire, and Sammy Sosa, Ruth remains the most dominant home run hitter ever. The first list, from Father Gabe Costa, lists the times Ruth outperformed the combined total of TWO other teams in one of the leagues. If you combined teams across leagues, the list would be even greater. The second list, from home run maven Dave Vincent, is a list of batters who have hit the most consecutive home runs for their team without a teammate hitting one. Dave adds that in 1919, Ruth hit 29 of Boston's 33 home runs. Only two other Red Sox batters connected for a circuit smash that season.

YEAR	RUTH'S HR	
1918	11	(AL) STL (5) + WAS (4) = 9
1920	54	(AL) BOS (22) + DET (30) = 52 (NL) CHI (34) + CIN (18) = 52 (NL) BOS (23) + BRK (28) = 51 (NL) PIT (16) + STL (32) = 50 (NL) CHI (34) + PIT (16) = 50 (NL) CIN (18) + STL (32) = 50 (NL) BRK (28) + CIN (18) = 46 (NL) BRK (28) + PIT (16) = 44 (NL) BOS (23) + CIN (18) = 41 (NL) BOS (23) + PIT (16) = 39 (NL) CIN (18) + PIT (16) = 34
1921	59	(AL) BOS (17) + CHI (35) = 52 (NL) BOS (37) + CIN (20) = 57 (NL) CHI (37) + CIN (20) = 57
1927	60	(AL) BOS (28) + WAS (29) = 57 (AL) CLE (26) + WAS (29) = 55 (AL) BOS (28) + CLE (26) = 54

Most Consecutive Homers for Team by One Batter

Babe Ruth	BOS	06/24/1919	14
Goose Goslin	WAS	08/19/1928	10
Vic Wertz	DET	07/27/1950	9
Harry Stovey	PHI	05/11/1883	8
Vern Stephens	SLA	04/26/1945	8
Jimmie Foxx	BOS	06/04/1938	7
Wally Berger	BSN	08/05/1931	7
Max West	BSN	05/28/1942	7
Sammy Sosa	CHN	08/11/2000	7
Frank McCormick	CIN	08/01/1944	7
Ed Morgan	CLE	05/13/1930	7
Babe Ruth	NYA	07/29/1924	7
Babe Ruth	NYA	09/06/1927	7
Lou Gehrig	NYA	08/21/1935	7
Mike Schmidt	PHI	05/03/1979	7
Ralph Kiner	PIT	09/03/1949	7
Ralph Kiner	PIT	06/25/1950	7
Chet Laabs	SLA	07/11/1942	7
Roy Sievers	WAS	07/27/1957	7

The date refers to when the home run string began.

A STREAK OF TEN STRAIGHT HITS FOUND FOR NAP LAJOIE

Trent McCotter recently discovered a streak of ten consecutive hits by Nap Lajoie of the Philadelphia A's in 1901, the American League's first season. The streak began on April 26, opening day for Philadelphia. Lajoie grounded out in his first AB of the year and then had ten consecutive hits.

April 26 vs. Washington: Groundout, 5-3; Double; Single; Single (Ends with three consecutive hits)

April 27 vs. Washington: Single; Single; Single (Ends with 6 consecutive hits)

April 29, vs. Boston: Single; Single; Triple; Triple (Ends with 10 consecutive hits)

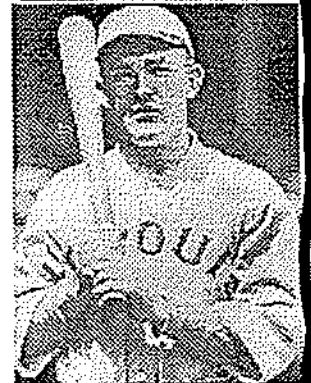
April 30, vs. Boston: Grounded out, 4-3 (Ends streak of 10 consecutive hits.)

We now know that Lajoie, not Tris Speaker, was the first American Leaguer to get ten hits in a row. His record stood until Speaker had 11 straight in 1920.



TED KLUSZEWSKI "TIES" ROGERS HORNSBY'S NATIONAL LEAGUE RECORD FOR CONSECUTIVE GAMES WITH A RUN SCORED

For nearly a half century, the National League's post-1900 record for Most consecutive games scoring one or more runs in a season belonged to Cincinnati's Ted Kluszewski. From August 27 through September 13, 1954, Kluszewski scored in 17 straight games, a total of 24 runs. Now, thanks to Trent McCotter, we find that Kluszewski actually only tied the record that Rogers Hornsby of the Cardinals established back in 1921. In going over Hornsby's game logs, Trent found a 17-game runs-scored streak that went from July 3 through July 20, 1921, a total of 21 runs. (The 2003 *Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book*, does include this discovery.)



WHO WAS PITTSBURGH'S LEADING HITTER IN THE 1909 WORLD SERIES?

Wayne McElreavy noticed a discrepancy in regard to Pittsburgh's leading batter in the 1909 World Series. Both the *Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* and *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* list Honus Wagner as the Pirates' leader at .333 (8-for-24). But *Neft/Cohen's Baseball Encyclopedia*, the seventh edition of *Total Baseball*, and *Retrosheet* all show Tommy Leach with nine hits in 25 at-bats, which would give him a team-leading .360 average. The difference appears to be in Game 6. *Retrosheet* shows Leach singling in the first inning and they, *Neft/Cohen*, and *TB* have him going 1-4. *TSN*, and evidently *Elias* too, have him at 0-4, thus only 8-for-25 for the Series, and a .320 average.

OSCAR AND RAY GRIMES

Mike Attiyeh spotted an error on page 43 of the 2003 *Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book*. The National League record for Most consecutive games with one or more runs batted in, season is shown as 17 (in 1922), and as held by Chicago's Oscar Grimes. The record is correct, but the record-holder should not be Oscar Grimes; it should be his father, Ray Grimes.

BARRY BONDS IS NEW NATIONAL LEAGUE CAREER WALK LEADER

On page 44 of the 2003 *Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book*, Joe Morgan is shown as the National League's record-holder for Most bases on balls, career, with 1,799. However, Lee Sinins says that the record 198 bases on balls that Barry Bonds drew last season now makes him the NL leader with a career total of 1,922.

NOTE FOR RESEARCHERS

Records Committee member Bill Deane is a veteran researcher living near the National Baseball Library. Bill wants everyone to know that he is available to do research there (records or otherwise) for those not able to come to Cooperstown. I know I speak for everyone who has worked with Bill in attesting to his knowledge, precision, and reliability. Contact him for details at PO Box 47, Fly Creek, NY 13337; Phone number (607) 547-5786; email address is DizDeane@USAdatanet.net

CATCHING NOLAN RYAN AND DON SUTTON

Walt Wilson's listing of battery mates for Hall of Fame pitchers during their starts and shutouts continues with two recent additions, Nolan Ryan and Don Sutton. Both began their careers in 1966, pitched in both leagues, and were even teammates on the 1981-82 Houston Astros.

CATCHING NOLAN RYAN

Nolan Ryan pitched for New York (NL) 1966, 1968-71; California (AL) 1972-79; Houston (NL) 1980-88; and Texas (AL) 1989-93. He made 773 starts and pitched 61 shutouts.

	Starts	Shutouts
Alan Ashby	136	6
Terry Humphrey	65	11
Mark Bailey	62	2
Jerry Grote	57	2
Elly Rodriguez	47	4
Brian Downing	44	3
Ivan Rodriguez	44	0
Gino Petralli	40	1
Jeff Torborg	36	6
Luis Pujols	35	3
Andy Etchebarren	27	3
John Stephenson	24	4
Art Kusnyer	18	3
Chad Kreuter	17	2
Tom Egan	13	3
John Mizerock	12	0
Mike Stanley	12	1
Duffy Dyer	11	0
Alex Trevino	10	0
Craig Biggio	9	1
John Russell	8	1
Ronn Reynolds	7	0
J.C. Martin	6	0
Jim Sundberg	6	0
George Bjorkman	5	1
Ike Hampton	5	0
Tom Donohue	4	1
Ed Herrmann	3	0
Tom Wieghaus	2	0
Robbie Wine	2	0
Troy Afenir	1	0
Bob Allietta	1	1
Adrian Garrett	1	0
Alan Knicely	1	0
Russ McGinnis	1	0
Ray Stephens	1	0
Totals:	773	61

CATCHING DON SUTTON

Don Sutton pitched for Los Angeles (NL) 1966-80, 1988; Houston (NL) 1981-82; Milwaukee (AL) 1982-84; Oakland (AL) 1985; and California (AL) 1985-87. He made 756 starts and pitched 58 shutouts.

	Starts	Shutouts
Steve Yeager	157	16
Joe Ferguson	92	7
Tom Haller	86	7
Bob Boone	57	1
Johnny Roseboro	47	4
Jeff Torborg	44	4
Alan Ashby	32	1
Duke Sims	29	3
Ted Simmons	26	1
Jim Sundberg	22	0
Johnny Oates	17	2
Luis Pujols	17	2
Mickey Tettleton	15	1
Mike Heath	14	0
Chris Cannizzaro	13	2
Bill Schroeder	13	0
Mike Scioscia	13	1
Rick Dempsey	9	0
Darrell Miller	9	0
Ned Yost	9	0
Bill Sudakis	8	1
Jerry Grote	5	0
Jerry Narron	5	0
Jim Campanis	4	0
Kevin Pasley	4	1
Elly Rodriguez	2	0
Butch Wynegar	2	0
Dick Dietz	1	1
Alan Knicely	1	0
Charlie Moore	1	0
Bob Stinson	1	0
Derrel Thomas	1	0
Totals	756	58

Three of Sutton's shutouts were caught by more than one catcher.

Two of Ryan's shutouts were caught by more than one catcher. Late in his career, Ryan pitched fewer shutouts, because of the prevalent use of relief pitchers. Note his total of 84 starts with Petralli and Ivan Rodriguez, with the Rangers, with only one shutout.