

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.
Albert Einstein

THE ROLE OF THE RECORDS COMMITTEE IN THE AGE OF "ARENA BASEBALL"

George Will quoted Washington Senators owner Clark Griffith as once saying, "Fans like home runs, and we have assembled a pitching staff to please our fans." Nowadays, it appears that with very few exceptions all teams have constructed their pitching staffs to please their fans. Whether or not pitching is to blame, and I think most of us would agree it's just one of the reasons, we all know that home runs are being hit at a ridiculous rate and by some fairly ridiculous batters. And it's not only home runs, teams are scoring runs in droves with hardly a day passing when there's not at least one game where both teams score in double digits. For the first time since 1930, when an average game produced 11.11 runs, teams are scoring above 11 runs per game. This offensive orgy has disturbed many of us, including *Washington Post* columnist Thomas Boswell. Boswell believes that what he called "this long ball lunacy" is on the verge of "twisting baseball into a new shape that may be too extreme even for such a malleable and resilient game." Along with this assault on the games' basic structure, of course, is its assault on the integrity of baseball "records." To again quote Boswell, "the wrong people break the wrong records. Crazy numbers go in the book for generations."

For us, the question becomes what role, if any, does the Baseball Records Committee have in all this. When the committee was created in 1975, its charge was to reconcile differences and pursue a greater degree of accuracy in baseball's "historical record." Thanks to our members we have had great success in doing that, but I'm wondering if we should be doing more. And if we should be doing more, what exactly should that "more" be. For while SABR has grown in stature over the years, neither it nor our committee has any kind of official position in baseball administration. Still, this latest development---on top of strikes, shortened seasons, wild cards, interleague play, expansion, and realignment---has placed a special burden on those of us who not only research the games numbers, but also treasure the history that accompanies those numbers. While we can't affect policy, we can at least guard against the media's general mangling of baseball records. For example, when your local newspaper or tv/radio station says things like such-and-such is a record for April, remind them that beginning the season in early April is a relatively recent phenomenon. We can be educators.

RECORD BOOK CORRECTIONS

John Schwartz found these year 2000 record book entries that need changing.

The Sporting News Fact Book (page 475) lists Fred Clarke as having managed five pennant winners. Clarke actually managed only four: the Pittsburgh Pirates of 1901, 1902, 1903, and 1909.

The Stats Major League Handbook (page 363) lists the active career leaders in sacrifice hits, but it omits pitchers. Tom Glavine (124), Greg Maddux (106), Orel Hershiser (101), and John Smoltz (90) all belong in the top ten.

The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book (page 209) lists Pittsburgh of the American Association with a record of 23-113. Pittsburgh was in the National League in 1890, not the American Association.

Incidentally, both John and Wayne McElreavy believe the record books should use the spelling PITTSBURG (no H) in the years when that was the city's official spelling.

The annual meeting of the Baseball Records Committee will be held at the SABR convention in West Palm Beach on Thursday June 22 at two p.m. Whether or not you plan to attend, if you have a relevant topic that you think we should discuss, please let me know as soon as possible.

THE ONLY FIRST-INNING PINCH-HIT HR

I was surprised to learn, courtesy of Dave Vincent, that in the long history of baseball, there has been only one pinch-hit home run in the first inning. It was hit by Brooklyn's Carl Furillo against the Phillies on May 24, 1947, and because those post-war Dodgers were my first love, and Furillo a particular favorite, I decided to investigate further. Here is what happened.

Phils manager Ben Chapman (still trying to adjust to the sight of a Black man in the Dodger dugout) started righty Al Jurisch, with the intent to use him to pitch only to Brooklyn's first two hitters: the righthanded batting Pee Wee Reese and Jackie Robinson. After Jurisch fanned Reese and walked Robinson, Chapman brought in lefthander Oscar Judd, whom he'd had warming up from the start, as the next three hitters: Pete Reiser, Dixie Walker, and Gene Hermanski all were lefthanded. Reiser drew a wal and Walker popped out, leaving Brooklyn with two on and two out and Hermanski due up. It was then that Dodger manager Burt Shotton sent Furillo up to bat for Hermanski, whereupon Furillo responded with a three-run homer. They were the only runs Brooklyn would get, losing the game, 4-3, in ten innings. (Incidentally, as so often was done back then, because he took over in left field, Furillo is not shown in the boxscore as a pinchhitter.)

FIRST HOME RUN BY COUNTRY

When the Mets and Cubs opened the 2000 season in Tokyo, it brought the number of countries where major league baseball has been played to four. Here, from Dave Vincent, are the players who hit the first home run in each of those countries.

USA (Avenue Grounds, Cincinnati)

May 2, 1876 Ross Barnes CHI off Cherokee Fisher CIN

CANADA (Parc Jarry, Montreal)

April 14, 1969 Mack Jones MON off Nelson Briles STL

MEXICO (Estadio de Beisbol, Monterrey)

Aug. 16, 1996 Steve Finley SD off Robert Person NY

JAPAN (Tokyo Dome)

Mar. 29, 2000 Shane Andrews CHI off Dennis Cook NY

JOHNNY SAIN'S 1951 HOME RUN

This correction, furnished by Greg Beston, concerns Boston Braves pitcher Johnny Sain, but as a batter, not a pitcher. *The Home Run Encyclopedia* lists Sain's only 1951 home run, off Pittsburgh's Bill Werle on June 12, as a two-run shot. However, Greg found that the home run was actually a solo, which came as Sain was leading off the sixth inning.

A COMPLETE BATTERY

Bob Davids furnished this list of post-1900 players who have both caught and pitched in the same game.

Frank Bowerman	NY (N)	Sept.23, 1904
Roger Bresnahan	STL(N)	Aug. 3, 1910
Bert Campaneris	KC (A)	Sept. 8, 1965
Cesar Tovar	MIN(A)	Sept. 22, 1968
Rick Cerone	NY (A)	July 19, 1987
Rick Cerone	NY (A)	Aug. 9, 1987
Rick Dempsey	MIL(A)	July 2, 1991

Moreover, according to Tom Ruane, since Dempsey did it only three other players have pitched and caught in a game in the same *season*. They are Greg Litton SF on 7/4//91); Jeff Tackett BAL on 8/11/93; and Keith Osik PIT on 5/11/99. (The dates are the dates they pitched.)

With the exception of infielders Tovar and Campaneris, all the above are catchers. Contrast this to onetime Cardinals and Red Sox pitcher Mike Ryba who went behind the plate ten times in his career. In fact, Jim Charlton found that in a July 19, 1942 doubleheader against the Indians at Fenway Park, Ryba caught in both games. He was the 3rd backstop in the opener, and the starter (0-for-2) in the nitecap before Bobby Doerr pinch hit for him in the 7th. Does anyone know of other pitchers who have also caught while they were active pitchers; and has anyone besides Ryba done it in both ends of a doubleheader?



JIMMY WILLIAMS'S ROOKIE RECORD OF 27 (OR 28) TRIPLES IN 1899

The encyclopedias show that Pittsburgh rookie Jimmy Williams hit 27 triples in 1899. The records books also show Williams with 27 and list it because it's the record for most triples by a rookie. However, there is reason to believe that Williams might have hit 28 triples in 1899, not 27, and that one was lost when the ICI put his record together for the first edition of the *Macmillan Encyclopedia*.

Dixie Tourangeau first noticed this when he counted Williams's triples from game accounts as reported in the 1899 *Boston Globe*. Obviously, a Boston newspaper is not the best source for Pittsburgh games, but when I went through the games in the *Pittsburgh Post*, I came up with the same number—28. We then asked Bill Deane to check Williams's ICI sheet for 1899. Both the *Globe* and the *Post* had shown Williams hitting his first triple against Cincinnati on April 17, but Bill reported that according to ICI, Williams's only hit that day was a single. He went 1-for-2 with two walks and an RBI.

I went back to re-check the *Pittsburgh Post's* report of that April 17 game, an 8-7 Cincinnati win. This is what it said about Williams's third inning at bat against Reds pitcher Bill Damman.

"Elmer Smith gave an awful exhibition trying to field Williams's easy fly; both men scored and Williams landed on third."

I then checked the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (Cincinnati was the home team) and their description was about the same. However, while the *Post* boxscore has Williams with a triple, the *Enquirer's* doesn't. Neither paper's boxscore shows an error for Smith and both show Williams (as does ICI) as going one for two. The "triple" appears to be his only hit of the day.

Dixie, citing other errors that we've found in the ICI compilations, believes this is another one. "A muffed fly can go for a hit but HOW does he get to third unless there is an error somewhere and there is none," he asks. As further "proof," Dixie points to an article that appeared about Williams twenty-eight years later, in the February 20, 1927 edition of the *Post*. In referring to the April 17, 1899 game against Cincinnati, it says, "Jimmy cracked out a three-bagger for his first safe hit in the big leagues."

Considering the evidence we have, the question now is whether we can conclude, as Dixie has, that the ICI sheet missed one of Williams's triples and that he did indeed have 28 in 1899. It's tempting to do so, but here is a caution from Bill that I tend to agree with. Bill, who served on Macmillan's *Historical Accuracy Committee*, says that while the ICIs are not official, and certainly not infallible, they are the best information we have on nineteenth-century players' day-by-day performances. Therefore, he would not recommend changing their findings based on any one contradictory source. Someone challenging ICI data would have to document the challenge with multiple, credible sources, before he would recommend a change. I'm not sure we have that yet. As our policy on changes has always been a conservative, we will let Williams's mark sit at 27, while keeping on the alert for further evidence otherwise.

MORE CORRECTIONS TO GAMES STARTED DATA

The 1882 correction is from Joe Wayman; the others are from Walt Wilson

1882 PROVIDENCE: Hoss Radbourn had 51 starts, not 52; John Ward had 33 starts, not 32

1935 PITTSBURGH: Cy Blanton had 30 starts, not 31; Bill Swift had 22 starts, not 21

1935 ST. LOUIS: Jesse Haines had 11 starts, not 12; Phil Collins had 9 starts not 8

1936 BOSTON: Danny MacFayden had 32 starts, not 31; Ben Cantwell had 11 starts, not 12

1936 BROOKLYN: Van Lingle Mungo had 38 starts, not 37; Max Butcher had 14 starts, not 15.

1936 CHICAGO: Roy Henshaw had 16 starts, not 14; Curt Davis had 19 starts, not 20; Charlie Root had 3, not 4

1936 CINCINNATI: Gene Schott had 23 starts, not 22; Lee Stine had 12, starts not 13

1940 NEW YORK: Carl Hubbell had 28 starts, not 27; Bill Lohrman had 27 starts, not 28

NEW-FOUND WINNING STREAKS OF AT LEAST TEN GAMES AGAINST ONE TEAM

Frank Williams responded to my call for additional streaks by digging out the 28 listed below. According to Frank, who as most of you know is an expert on pre-1920 pitching records, these streaks have never before appeared anywhere. The streaks are heavily weighted with Boston teams (Frank's particular favorites), but he and I agree that there are many more, both from Boston and from other teams, waiting to be discovered. Thanks also to Frank and to Jim Smith for supplying some of the missing starting and ending dates for various streaks.

American League

- 16 Jack Chesbro NY vs WAS---4/25/1903 to 9/5/1905
- 16 Walter Johnson WAS vs CHI---6/6/1912 to 5/12/1914
- 15 Joe Wood BOS vs STL---5/25/1911 to 6/15/1914
- 15 Walter Johnson WAS vs STL---5/19/1910 to 8/11/1912
- 13 Cy Young BOS/CLE vs WAS---7/2/1906 to 5/19/1909
- 13 Ed Walsh CHI vs BOS---5/28/1908 to 6/6/1910
- 12 Walter Johnson WAS vs DET---6/12/1912 to 5/25/1914
- 12 Walter Johnson WAS vs NY---5/28/1912 to 6/30/1914
- 12 Babe Ruth BOS vs STL---5/24/1917 to 8/17/1919
- 11 Jack Chesbro NY vs DET---8/18/1903 to 7/10/1905
- 11 Cy Young BOS vs CHI---6/14/1902 to 9/19/1903
- 11 Hub Leonard BOS/DET vs PHI---4/24/1916 to 5/27/1919
- 10 Joe Wood BOS vs CHI---5/20/1912 to 7/12/1913

National League

- 15 Kid Nichols BOS vs NY---6/5/1890 to 5/15/1893
- 15 Kid Nichols BOS vs LOU---7/7/1892 to 6/3/1896
- 15 Kid Nichols BOS vs STL---5/6/1895 to 7/19/1899
- 15 Charles Buffinton BOS vs PHI---5/4/1883 to 8/6/1884
- 12 Kid Nichols BOS vs PIT---5/30/1890 to 8/10/1891
- 11 Cy Young CLE vs CHI---5/22/1893 to 6/29/1896
- 11 Jack Stivetts BOS vs LOU---9/16/1893 to 6/11/1897
- 11 Tommy Bond BOS vs CIN---5/17/1877 to 6/20/1878
- 11 Tommy Bond BOS vs TRO---7/30/1879 to 8/29/1879
- 11 Jim Whitney BOS vs PHI---5/7/1883 to 6/2/1886
- 10 Al Spalding CHI vs CIN---4/29/1876 to 8/12/1876
- 10 Tommy Bond BOS vs MIL---6/4/1878 to 8/21/1878
- 10 Charles Buffinton BOS vs CLE---6/6/1883 to 10/1/1884
- 10 Jim Whitney BOS vs CLE---7/31/1883 to 9/13/1884
- 10 John Clarkson BOS vs PIT---6/5/1888 to 10/3/1889



WALTER JOHNSON: Four new winning streaks discovered.

SIX ADDITIONAL WIN STREAKS

John O'Malley found two long streaks compiled by 19th century National Leaguers. Mickey Welch of Troy had one of 16 games against Buffalo (5/29/1880 to 7/4/1881) and Tim Keefe of New York had a 15-gamer against Indianapolis (5/16/1887 to 9/7/1888).

Dick Thompson informed me that when Wes Ferrell beat Lefty Gomez, 1-0, on Opening Day 1935 it ended a long streak that Gomez had against the Red Sox. In checking, I discovered that it was an 11-game streak and that it dated from the beginning of Gomez's career.

Jim Charlton found that when Brooklyn's Whit Wyatt beat Boston on May 31, 1942 it was his tenth straight win against the Braves. His record against Boston in '42 was 4-1, with the loss coming on August 10, so this streak could be a bit longer. Jim also found a 14-gamer that Cleveland's Jim Grant had against Washington. It was from the start of Grant's career in 1958 and ended when he lost to the Senators in the first game of a doubleheader on July 17, 1960.

I found a 15-game streak that Detroit's Hal Newhouser had against the Browns. Not sure when it began, but win number 15 came on June 27, 1947.