

Society For American Baseball Research

Baseball Records Committee

Lyle Spatz, Editor

August 2005

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

---Albert Einstein

OUR COMMITTEE MEETING IN TORONTO

I look forward to seeing you all in Toronto on August 4-7 for the 2005 SABR Convention. The Baseball Records Committee meeting will be on Thursday evening, August 4, from 6 to 7. Our agenda will include, but not necessarily be limited to the following:

1. A presentation by **Dan Levitt** on pitcher Ferdie Schupp's 1916 season. Schupp was recognized at the time and for many years thereafter as the 1916 NL ERA leader. He is no longer recognized as such, but were his title to be restored, as Dan believes it should be, Schupp's ERA of 0.90 would qualify as the major league's single season ERA record.
2. A discussion of the implementation of a Records Committee website. **Trent McCotter** is in the early stages of getting this started on Yahoo, and we would welcome all suggestions.
3. Reports from Publications Director **Jim Charlton** and me concerning the SABR Book of Records and Lists. Jim will discuss publishers and deadlines, and I will give progress report on the lists themselves.

BASEBALL'S HISTORICAL RECORD

As previously mentioned, revelations regarding steroid use by some players have raised the question of how our committee would treat the accomplishments of the accused players. This seasons reduction in those players' power numbers and neck sizes and the impending return to action of Barry Bonds has only exacerbated the issue. I can only repeat what I said in the April newsletter. We are not moralists, and so will treat those accomplishments, tainted or not, as we have other recent baseball developments and innovations. Designated hitters, strikes, shortened seasons, wild cards, interleague play, expansion, realignment, and relocation have all had an impact on attempts to compare the records of players from different eras. Most of us realize the futility of such attempts; nevertheless most of us still love to do it.

Sabrmetricians devise intricate formulas in trying to determine whether Randy Johnson was a better left-handed pitcher than Sandy Koufax, or was either one as good as Rube Waddell, or Warren Spahn, or Lefty Grove. The role of the Records Committee, on the other hand, is simply to make sure that each of those men is credited with the correct amount of wins, losses, innings pitched, walks, strikeouts, etc. that he earned. It is not our job to adjust, for example, Waddell's numbers to take into account that he played in an era when the ball was dead, or that the player pool was limited, or that he drank too much, or that the men who played behind him wore primitive gloves and played on fields that were less than well-manicured.

Therefore, while we may hold our collective noses in doing so, we will continue to recognize Sammy Sosa as the only player to have three 60-home run seasons. And, should Barry Bonds some day hit his 756th home run, we will recognize him as the all-time HR leader.

CORRECTION

The June newsletter listed Steve Carlton as having pitched for the St. Louis Cardinals from 1930 to 1942. That should read from 1965 to 1971

EXTRA-BASE STREAK

Back in May, Bobby Abreu of the Phillies had at least one extra-base hit in 11 consecutive games. According to **Trent McCotter**, only those players listed below have had streaks of equal or greater length. During the course of Abreu's streak he had ten straight games in which he had at least one run scored, at least one RBI, and at least one extra-base hit. Trent believes that the only other person to have done this was Tip O'Neill, who did it over the course of 12 straight games in 1887.

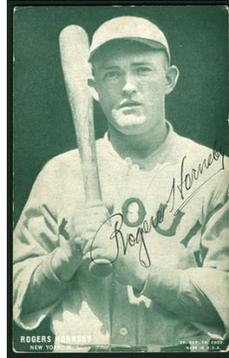
G	PLAYER	TEAM	LG	START DATE	END DATE	2B	3B	HR
14	Paul Waner	PIT	NL	Jun 03, 1927	Jun 19, 1927	12	5	3
12	Tip O'Neill	STL	AA	Aug 24, 1887	Sep 05, 1887	14	3	2
12	Rogers Hornsby	BOS	NL	May 27, 1928(1G)	Jun 09, 1928(1G)	9	0	8
11	Rogers Hornsby	STL	NL	Aug 20, 1924(1G)	Aug 27, 1924	9	1	6
11	Jesse Barfield	TOR	AL	Aug 17, 1985	Aug 27, 1985	8	3	1
11	Bobby Abreu	PHI	NL	May 07, 2005	May 18, 2005	4	0	9



Paul Waner



Tip O'Neill



Rogers Hornsby



Jesse Barfield



Bobby Abreu

THE 1890 PITTSBURGH TEAMS

Pittsburgh was represented in two of the three major leagues in 1890. It had clubs in the National League and the Players league, but did not have a team in the American Association.

John Schwartz noticed that the 2005 edition of *The Sporting News Record Book* has an inconsistency regarding those clubs. In the team section, the 1890 Pittsburgh club that went 23-113 is shown correctly as being the **National League** team (p. 327). However, on page 203 there is a listing, by league, of Clubs with 100 losses in a season. On that list, the Pittsburgh club that went 23-113 in 1890 is incorrectly listed as an American Association team and not as the National League team that it was.

GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR RECORDS COMMITTEE RESEARCHERS

For the first time in its history, SABR will be offering monetary grants to baseball researchers to assist them in carrying out their research. Thanks to the generosity of the Anthony A. Yoseloff Foundation, SABR will begin a two-year program in which it will award \$4,000 in baseball research grants each year. While not a pre-requisite, it is hoped that the grants will help younger and/or less-established baseball researchers make their mark. The two main requirements for the grant are that the researcher be a SABR member, and that the end product of the research be published first by SABR. The application deadline for the first year of the grants is August 20, 2005. For more information on how to apply for a Yoseloff-SABR Baseball Research Grant, see <http://tinyurl.com/acgc6> or contact the SABR office.

HIDEKI MATSUI: ROOKIE STATUS AND CONSECUTIVE GAMES PLAYED

In the past decade three players from the Japanese Leagues have won Rookie of the Year honors: Hideo Nomo in 1995, Kazuhiro Sasaki in 2000, and Ichiro Suzuki in 2001. While some have questioned whether players with experience in the Japanese Leagues are truly rookies, I certainly believe they are. So, obviously, does Major League Baseball. To believe otherwise would be to acknowledge that the Japanese Leagues are on a par with the American and National Leagues, and I don't know anybody who thinks that.

I bring this up because of a note I got from **Sean Holtz** wondering why *The Sporting News Record Book* lists the American League record for Most Games Played By a Rookie as 162 (p. 17) when Hideki Matsui played in 163 games as a Yankee rookie in 2003. (The *Elias Book of Baseball Records* does show Matsui as the record-holder).

I checked with TSN Record Book editor **Steve Gietschier** about this, and Steve readily agreed that the record did indeed belong to Matsui and the change would appear in the 2006 edition, assuming no rookie ties or breaks it this year. Incidentally, Matsui's rookie record for games played is not only an American League record, it's also a Major League record.

Not only did Matsui play in every game his rookie season, he's played in every game since. His consecutive games played streak recently passed 400, still a few seasons away from reaching the top ten in that category, but still an impressive number. However, just as Matsui's nine years with the Yomiuri Giants did not disqualify him from being the American League's Rookie of the Year, neither should his consecutive games played streak for that team be added to his major league streak total, no more so than if he'd achieved it with the Columbus Clippers.

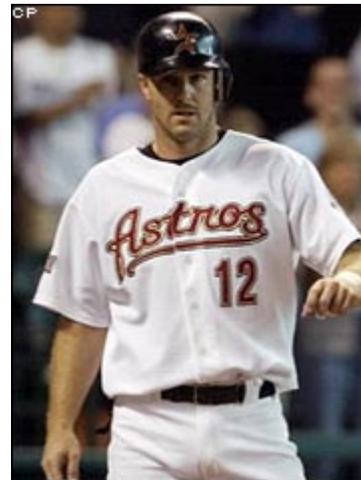
I think most everybody would agree with that, though it seems that whenever you see a media reference to Matsui's streak there is an aside referring to his 1,250 game streak in Japan. That's fine, and informative, as long as they make the distinction. But a few weeks ago I heard someone on a talk show use the total number without making that distinction. My own reaction was to switch stations, but I worried about a young fan hearing that and thinking Matsui now trailed only Lou Gehrig and Cal Ripken.

JEFF KENT AND MARCUS GILES

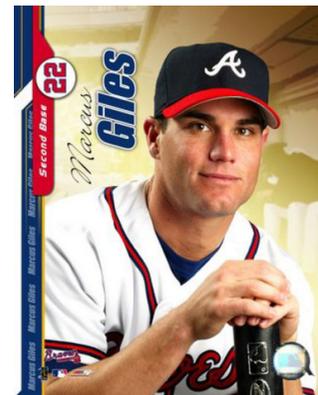
Steve Kanehl says that the TSN Record Book (p. 369) lists Jeff Kent as the National League's Division Series career leader for putouts as a second baseman with 29. But, says Steve, Marcus Giles has 33 career putouts (playing in 12 games) and should be listed as the record holder.



Hideki Matsui



Jeff Kent



Marcus Giles

CATCHING DENNIS ECKERSLEY AND BOB GIBSON

Walt Wilson's list of battery mates for Hall of Fame pitchers during their starts and shutouts continues with two righthanders: Dennis Eckersley, who pitched for many teams, and Bob Gibson, who pitched for only one.

CATCHING DENNIS ECKERSLEY

Dennis Eckersley pitched for Cleveland (AL) 1975-77; Boston (AL) 1978-84, 1998; Chicago (NL) 1984-86; Oakland (AL) 1987-95, and St. Louis (NL) 1996-97. He made 361 starts (none after 1987) and pitched 20 shutouts.

	<u>Starts</u>	<u>Shutouts</u>
Jody Davis	73	1
Gary Allenson	66	2
Carlton Fisk	62	4
Rich Gedman	37	4
Alan Ashby	30	5
Ray Fosse	24	1
Fred Kendall	24	2
John Ellis	10	0
Jeff Newman	9	0
Bob Montgomery	5	0
Dave Rader	5	0
Steve Lake	3	1
Mike O'Berry	3	0
Ron Hassey	2	0
Keith Moreland	2	0
Mickey Tettleton	2	0
Rick Cerone	1	0
Mike Martin	1	0
Ron Pruitt	1	0
Dave Schmidt	1	0
Total	361	20

All of Eckersley's shutouts were with one catcher.

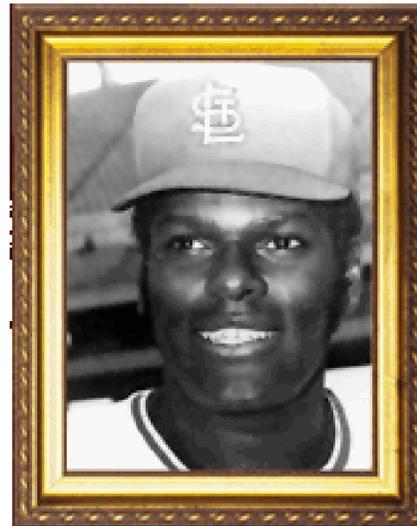


CATCHING BOB GIBSON

Bob Gibson pitched for St. Louis (NL) 1959-75. He made 482 starts and pitched 56 shutouts.

	<u>Starts</u>	<u>Shutouts</u>
Tim McCarver	197	29
Ted Simmons	135	13
Gene Oliver	25	4
Joe Torre	22	0
Carl Sawatski	21	0
Hal R. Smith	21	2
Bob Uecker	16	2
Jimmie Schaffer	12	1
Johnny Edwards	10	3
Pat Corrales	7	1
Jerry McNertney	6	0
J. W. Porter	3	0
Dave Ricketts	3	0
Ken Rudolph	2	0
Johnny Romano	1	0
Moe Thacker	1	0
Total	482	56

One of Gibson's shutouts was with more than one catcher.



THE 1904 WORLD SERIES BETWEEN THE BOSTON RED SOX AND NEW YORK GIANTS

Thanks to the obstructionism of Giants owner John T. Brush and their manager, John McGraw, there was, of course, no World Series (or World's Series as it was then called) played in 1904. But wondered **John Schwartz**, what if that series had been played. Well, if New York had won, says John, then their WS win over Cleveland in 1954 would have made them the first franchise to win the World Series fifty years after its initial triumph. And if Boston had won, their win over St. Louis in 2004 would have made them the first franchise to have won the World Series 100 years apart.