

# Society For American Baseball Research

## Baseball Records Committee

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

**---Albert Einstein**

## THE SABR BASEBALL RECORD BOOK

Planning continues on the committee's efforts to produce a SABR Baseball Record Book. As I mentioned in the August newsletter, the book will be similar to Joe Reichler's *Great All-Time Record Book* published in the early 1980s. We have gone through Reichler's table of contents making a series of additions, subtractions, and combinations. I will be sending this tentative table of contents to all those who receive this newsletter. It remains tentative because I want to leave it open to those of you who have lists of your own that you may want to submit.

When we unveiled our plans at our committee meeting in Cincinnati and in the newsletter, we had quite a few people who verbally offered to work on the lists and/or to help with the fact-checking. I would like if those interested in helping in any way would follow up by contacting me with their plans. For those of you who want to work on the lists, please let me know which ones you want so as to avoid duplication. It would be best if you could produce your lists in Excel, but don't be dismayed if that's not possible. We will be glad to have your work in any format that's available to you.

All lists should be across league lines, rather than separate lists for each league. A list of the top home run hitters would include the total home runs hit by Hank Aaron, Babe Ruth, Mark McGwire, etc. Aaron' AL homers and Ruth and McGwire's NL homers would not disappear in separate league lists. Lists such as those that appear in the examples on page two should also be across league lines.

We will be using the new Barnes & Noble Baseball Encyclopedia as both our final word on statistics (unless you discover a demonstrable error) and as our style guide. All league and city abbreviations will be as they appear there. Most are intuitive, but check there if you are in doubt. (For example, it's FLA, and not FLO, for Florida.) Same with players' names. In all cases we would want the players listed as they are in the encyclopedia. Use their spellings, and more importantly, use their listed "first names." For example, it's Eddie Stanky, not Ed Stanky. In some cases that listed name will be a nickname: Brickyard Kennedy, rather than Bill Kennedy, and King Kelly, rather than Mike Kelly. You may not agree with them all -- I don't -- but this is the only way to assure consistency.

Again, please don't be deterred if you don't have the encyclopedia. Total Baseball VIII uses the same formats and has basically the same yearly and career data. And for many of these data, previous editions of these publications would be sufficient. In any case, please let us know the source of your data.

On dates, please list month, day, and year in separate columns. For the month, use the first three letters (Jun, Aug, Oct). For the day, use the actual date, with no leading zeroes (3, rather than 03). For the year, use the full four digits (1949). Examples (in three separate columns, without commas): Sep 9 1888; Jul 24 1935, and Apr 6 2002. Also, please let us know the date on which this list was last updated, and keep us informed if any additions or other changes are made to it along the way.

## A FEW SAMPLE LISTS

**Joe Dittmar** has designed the following template heading for general use.

Record	Date of Event						1G				
Number(s)	Individual(s)	LG	Team	Mon	Day	Year	Inn	2G	Opponent	Team	Comment

Please follow this format with all submissions. Obviously, not all lists will have entries for all columns. Just leave the non-applicable columns blank. Here, as an example, are a couple of items from selected lists.

### Game-ending Home run in 1-0 Game

Record	Date of Event						1G				
Number(s)	Individual(s)	LG	Team	Mon	Day	Year	Inn	2G	Opponent	Team	Comment
	Charley Radbourn	NL	PRO	Aug	17	1882	18		Stump Weidman	DET	Radbourn played OF
	Mike Tiernan	NL	NY	May	12	1890	13	2G	Kid Nichols	BOS	

### Two Relief Wins in One Day

Record	Date of Event						1G				
Number(s)	Individual(s)	LG	Team	Mon	Day	Year	Inn	2G	Opponent	Team	Comment
	Ted Lyons	AL	CHI	Oct	6	1923			CLE		Lyons' first two ML wins
	Hershell Freeman	NL	CIN	Jul	15	1956			NY		Both 4-3 in extra inn.

### Players With 40 home runs and 200 hits in a season

Record	Date of Event						1G				
Number(s)	Individual(s)	LG	Team	Mon	Day	Year	Inn	2G	Opponent	Team	Comment
59-204	Babe Ruth	AL	NY								
42-250	Rogers Hornsby	NL	STL								

### Players With 40 home runs and 200 hits in a season

Record	Date of Event						1G				
Number(s)	Individual(s)	LG	Team	Mon	Day	Year	Inn	2G	Opponent	Team	Comment
24		NL	CLE			1899					Aug 26 to Sep 16
23		NL	PIT			1890					Aug 12 to Sep 2

## BABE RUTH

It would be a gigantic conceit on our part to think we will ever reach perfection in our pursuit of a perfect "historic record" for major league baseball. But from its inception, the goal of the Records Committee has been to make that record ever more accurate and ever more consistent. And unlike Sisyphus, who was condemned to persevere with no expectation or possibility of success, the findings of committee members have contributed toward that goal.

In his wonderful new book, The Numbers Game, **Alan Schwarz** writes about differing philosophies in researchers' approaches to making corrections. One of the disagreements Alan discusses is over whether we should change each error as we find it, or wait until every possibility for potential error has been explored and then change them all at once. This latter approach is especially true in the cases of iconic players. And while a good case can be made for either approach, I have always been strongly in favor of changing each error as we find it.

This is a longwinded way of saying we believe we have found an extra run scored for Babe Ruth. **Trent McCotter** found the error, one of simple addition, while inputting data from Ruth's 1923 official sheet. The final sheet starts at September 1 with a correct subtotal of 122 runs scored. The individual game totals between September 2 and the end of the season (October 4) add to 30. Therefore, says trent, Ruth's runs scored total for 1923 should be 152, not 151, and that would make his lifetime total runs scored 2,175, not 2,174.

So does this finally close the book on the Babe? Probably not. **Pete Palmer**, who knows as much, if not more, about the official sheets and ICI sheets than anyone, estimates that there are still five to 10 errors in Ruth's numbers waiting to be found. And when they are, we will make them known.

## MIKE MATHENY

Cardinals catcher Mike Matheny's long errorless streak came to an end on August 4, 2004, two years to the day after it began. **Trent McCotter**, who has been tracking the streak, sent me these records he believes now belong to Matheny.

### Most consecutive errorless games, season

N.L.-138-Mike Matheny, St. Louis, March 31 through September 28, 2003.

### Most consecutive errorless games, career

N.L.-252-Mike Matheny, St. Louis, August 2, 2002, through August 2, 2004.

### Most consecutive chances accepted without an error, career

N.L.-1,555-Mike Matheny, August 1, 2002, through August 3, 2004.

### Highest fielding average, season, catcher (100 or more games)

N.L.-1.000-Mike Matheny, St. Louis, 138 games, 2003.

That last record is a bit tricky. More than one catcher has caught 100 or more errorless games, but *The Sporting News Record Book* (p. 108) credits this record to Charles Johnson, with 123 errorless games caught in 1997. So if the basis of choosing the record-holder is no errors with the most games caught, then Matheny must now be the choice. However, the *Elias Book of Baseball Records* (p. 54), which also lists Johnson as the record-holder, does so on the basis of total chances. Johnson had 973 in 1997, more than Matheny's 823 in 2003, and so on that basis he would remain the record-holder. (One more conundrum for **Steve Gietschier** to wrestle with as he works toward the standardization of fielding records.)

## WALT LERIAN

In researching the life and career of Walt Lorian, a catcher for the 1928-29 Phillies, **T. Scott Brandon** found what he believes is an error in his statistical record. The "official" record shows that Lorian collected his only career Stolen Base in the first game of a September 22, 1928 doubleheader against Pittsburgh, a game in which the Pirates' Burleigh Grimes won his 25th game of the season. However, Scott reviewed eight different newspaper box scores of the game and found no mention of that stolen base. Moreover, in compiling Lorian's statistics for the season, he discovered his "official" RBI total of 25 should actually be 26, with an RBI in that September 22 game not being listed on his record.

**Cliff Kachline** did some further checking on this game at the Hall of Fame library, and concurs that the game scorer or official NL statistician appears to have accidentally placed Lorian's RBI tally for this game in the Stolen Base column. According to Cliff, there also appear to be other discrepancies from this game, mostly minor. Here is Cliff's note to Scott: "In checking the data of the 17 Phillies who played in the first game of the Sept. 22, 1928 DH, I've found numerous discrepancies. While Lorian shows one SB, the Phil team total is zero. The "officials" have 2 RBIs each for (Fresco) Thompson, (Chuck) Klein and (Freddy) Leach plus one by (Pinky) Whitney (which totals 7), yet the team total shows only 6 RBIs--and a newspaper boxscore in HOF files has Thompson with 2 RBIs, but Klein and Leach with only one each and gives Lorian one for a total of 6. There are also several differences (between "officials" and the newspaper boxscore) in individual PO and A figures. If Lorian actually had an RBI, it appears the official statistician (or maybe the official scorer) entered the 1 in the SB column instead of the RBI column (they are next to each other)."

We now know that the "official record" is littered with such minor discrepancies. And while finding an RBI for Walt Lorian is not as eye-catching as finding a run scored for Babe Ruth, they are equal in making that "official record" just a little bit more accurate.

## AN ADDITIONAL GAME FOR DAVY JONES

**Dan Holmes**, who serves as the Web Manager at the Hall of Fame, has discovered an extra game played by outfielder Davy Jones, whose career lasted from 1901 to 1915, mostly with the Detroit Tigers. The game was the second of a doubleheader played on September 2, 1918 between the Tigers and Chicago White Sox at Navin Field in Detroit. It was the final day of the season, which was ended prematurely due to the World War.

Jones, who had settled in Detroit, was in the stands that afternoon. Between games, he and Bill Donovan, a former pitcher for the Tigers, visited with players from both teams. Tigers manager Hughie Jennings suggested that Donovan start the second game of the doubleheader, which "Wild Bill" agreed to do as long as his old teammate Jones could also play. Jones borrowed a uniform and both men appeared in that game. Donovan started and won the game, for which he got credit. Jennings also played, and the record shows this. But due to confusion between the official scorer and the American League office, Jones was never credited with his game played, his two putouts, and his two hitless at-bats.

Dan surmises that the league assumed that the "D.Jones" in the boxscore referred to Carroll "Deacon" Jones, a Tiger pitcher who, according to newspaper accounts, never appeared in that game. Those same newspaper accounts clearly state that Davy Jones did play, and that he had two hitless at-bats, and two putouts. In fact, Jones caught the final out of the game (and the last out before the players went off to War). That ball is in the Hall of Fame collection and it has a description of the play. The ball was hit by Chicago's John "Shano" Collins.

This season finale, played by two teams out of the race, and under the cloud of War, was played almost like an exhibition. Ty Cobb and Bobby Veach both pitched for the Tigers. Cobb also played third base, and Bobby Jones, the Tiger third baseman, played center field. The *Detroit Free Press* account of the game says, "when Ty abandoned the garden to exercise his talents against the opposing batters, Davy Jones, who used to play left field for the Tigers in the pennant-winning days, assumed the duties in the middle pasture." The *Detroit News account* confirms these events.

Dan adds that **Steve Hirdt** of the *Elias Sports Bureau* has agreed that Davy Jones, rather than Deacon Jones, should be credited with a game played for September 2, 1918 and that Elias will make all the necessary adjustments in the two players' records. I expect all the other Encyclopedias and Record Books will do the same.

## 100 RBI SEASONS FOR BARRY BONDS

In the category Most seasons with 100 or more runs batted in, *The 2004 Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* (p. 40) shows Barry Bonds as the leader with 12. But **Sean Holtz** notes that through the 2003 season, Bonds had knocked in 100 runs only 11 times, and thus is tied for the lead with Hank Aaron. TSN says Bonds had 100-rbi seasons in all the years between 1990 and 2003, except for 1994 and 1999. This is incorrect, as Bonds had only 90 RBI in 2003. However, he has reached 100 for a 12th time this season, and so Bonds is now truly the sole holder of the record, with 12.

## PINK HAWLEY

*The 2004 Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* (p. 87) shows Pink Hawley as the pre-1900 National League record holder for Most hit batsmen, career with 195. But according to **Sean Holtz** both *Total Baseball VIII* and *The Baseball Encyclopedia* show Hawley with 201, and Sean believes that TSN should revise their number to reflect this additional new data. Incidentally, TSN lists Walter Johnson's American League record in this category as 206, while *Total Baseball VIII* and *The Baseball Encyclopedia* now show him with 205.