



Society for American Baseball Research Baseball Records Committee Newsletter

Lyle Spatz, Editor

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

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH JEROME HOLTZMAN HIGHLIGHTS THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BASEBALL RECORDS COMMITTEE

Our meeting began with a brief review of all we had accomplished in the past year. We had two major finds (both by Dixie Tourangeau) an uncredited 1924 walk to Charlie Gehringer and an uncredited 1899 triple by Jimmy Williams, which increased his rookie record for three base hits to 28. Committee members also found errors in the records of more than twenty players and managers. Among the more recognizable names on the list are Hugh Casey, Bobby Cox, Bobby Doerr, Carlton Fisk, Walter Johnson, Charley Radbourn, Warren Spahn, Paul Waner, and Mickey Welch. Additionally, we were able to correct and add to several single game, single season, and career records.

For our entry in the SABR publication highlighting the work of the different committees, we chose the topic of "Baseball's Unbreakable Records." Many members submitted their choices, which committee vice chairman Joe Dittmar evaluated and combined to produce a most informative and entertaining article. Joe gave us a brief description of how he made his selections while whetting our appetites for the finished product.

The vast majority of the meeting was taken up by a brief talk and an extended Q&A session with Major League Baseball's Official Historian, Jerome Holtzman. Unlike Bud Selig, who spoke at the luncheon and gave rather canned answers to questions, Holtzman was frank, opinionated, and thoroughly entertaining and enlightening--whether you agreed with him or not. Some of the highlights:

1. As "father of the save rule," Holtzman talked about its origin, tracing it to the 1959 season and the lack of recognition of Cubs relievers Don Elston and Bill Henry as opposed to Pittsburgh's Roy Face. Holtzman pointed out that it would be very difficult for a relief pitcher like Face to accumulate 18 wins without losing some inherited leads, and he wanted those pitchers that did protect leads to get their due. He did say that he was unhappy at the way the use of relief pitchers vis a vis saves has evolved.
2. The reversion to scoring walks as times at bat in 1876 and as hits in 1887 sparked a lively debate as to the wisdom of this change. Holtzman defended it as "honoring the practices of the day" (a position I endorse), but many remain unconvinced. Several members also questioned changes in the recognition of no-hitters that eliminated those of Andy Hawkins et al.
3. Holtzman talked about his upcoming book, in which he details the uncovering of information that absolutely convinced him of Joe Jackson's guilt. He revealed that after a long search he'd acquired the transcript of the SECOND Black Sox trial, the one in Milwaukee in 1923, in which Happy Felsch, Swede Risberg, and Jackson sued for back pay, and their "lost" signed confessions from the first trial miraculously surfaced.
4. He answered a question about Pete Rose and the Hall of Fame by citing the very clear restrictions on gambling and voicing his opinion that Rose did not deserve admission. In answer to a question about his role as a member of the Hall of Fame Veterans Committee, Holtzman was most candid and forthright in his opinions on why certain players do or do not get selected.
5. Cliff Kachline, as he doggedly has done for many years, called for Holtzman to use his position as MLB historian to form a committee of "records people" whose purpose would be to seek a reconciliation among the different Record Books and encyclopedias. While not overly optimistic about the immediate likelihood of such a committee, Holtzman said he would explore the possibilities.
6. Finally, Holtzman assured us that he had nothing to do with, and in fact regretted, the media's crediting him with the research that went into the uncovering of Hack Wilson's 191st RBI in 1930.

There were other topics discussed and questions asked, and only the need to yield the room forced us to end the session. The invitation to do this again in Boston has already been made.

SABR 31 IN MILWAUKEE

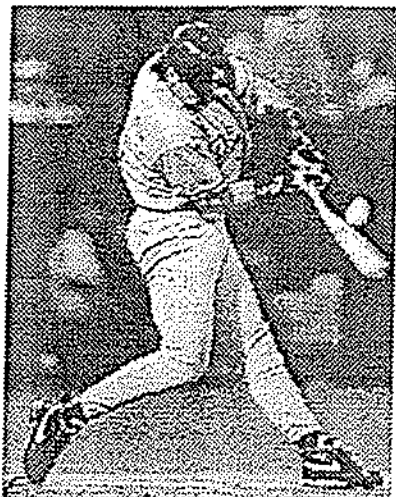
Thanks to the efforts of Bob Buege and all the people that assisted him---Neal Pease and Jim Nitz come to mind but there were many others---SABR 31 was a huge success.

Congratulations to Larry Gerlach, winner of SABR's highest honor, the *Bob Davids Award*, and to all those who won for their writings and/or presentations. We are especially pleased that two of the winners were Records Committee members: Dave Smith won The USA Today Baseball Weekly Award for the Best Research Presentation with his *Play by Play Analysis of the 1951 National League Pennant Race*, and Bob Schaefer won the The McFarland - SABR Baseball Research Award for his National Pastime article, *The Lost Art of Fair Foul Hitting*.

The committee was also well-represented in the Trivia battles, with the invincible Scott Flatow, returning after a five-year absence, winning the individual contest, and David Nernec anchoring the team winner. Also hats off to Triviameister Ed Luteran, who year after year leavens with just the right amount of humor a fun-filled event that I'm afraid some take much too seriously

A SLIGHT OMISSION IN A MIKE PIAZZA RECORD

Scott Flatow noticed that *The 2001 Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book* (p.23) shows the Mets Mike Piazza tying Sammy Sosa's record of Most major league ballparks, one or more home runs, season with 18 in 2000. TSN's breakdown of the 18 is 14 in the NL, two in the AL, and one in Japan. That, of course, adds to only 17. Missing is an AL ballpark. Piazza homered in three AL parks, not two: Fenway Park, Yankee Stadium, and SkyDome.



Mike Piazza

GOOD HIT, NO FIELD

That label gets applied to many players, but Walt Wilson reports on one who may be the most deserving. Ray Jansen's big league career consisted of one game for the 1910 St. Louis Browns. Playing at home against Chicago on September 30, Jansen had four hits (all singles) in five at bats against Sox pitcher Fred Olmstead, who went the distance and won, 9-1.

In the field, however, third baseman Jansen was less impressive. Although he had two putouts and five assists, he also committed three errors.

Therefore, Jansen's career Batting Average of .800 is one hundred points higher than his career Fielding Average of .700.

BACK-TO-BACK ONE-HITTERS

The back-to back one-hitters by Jon Lieber and Kerry Wood this past May were the tenth pair in major league history. Here is the complete list, furnished by Lee Sinins, with an assist from Steve Boren.

Charles Sweeney, Charley Radbourn; Providence (NL); June 17, 18, 1894
Jerry Nops, Frank Kitson; Brooklyn (NL); July 5, 6, 1900
Addie Joss, Heinie Berger; Cleveland (AL); September 25, 26, 1907
Ferdie Schupp, Rube Benton; New York (NL); September 28, 30, 1916
Waiter Johnson, Jim Shaw*; Washington (AL); August 10, 11, 1917
Wade Blasingame#, Tony Cloninger; Milwaukee (NL); Sept. 10, 11, 1965
Gary Gentry, Tom Seaver; New York (NL); May 13, 15, 1970
Jerry Reuss, Larry Dierker; Houston (NL); June 18, 19, 1972
Ken Hill, Roger Pavlik; Texas (AL); May 3, 4, 1996
Jon Lieber, Kerry Wood; Chicago (NL); May 24, 25, 2001

* Jim Shaw combined with Doc Ayres and George Dumont.

Wade Blasingame combined with Billy O'Dell and Phil Niekro.

A PAIR OF INTERLEAGUE ODDITIES

One of the many reasons I dislike interleague play is because of the way it twists the language of the Record Book into a kind of Orwellian Newspeak; two recent examples from this season's first round of interleague play, courtesy of Jayson Stark.

1. On June 16, John Olerud of Seattle hit for the cycle against San Diego and was hailed by the media as just the second player to hit for the cycle in both the AL and the NL. (Bob Watson was the first.) Olerud's first cycle came against the Expos back in 1997 when he was with Mets. Yet while the Mets are in the National League and the Mariners are in the American League, both victims, the Expos and the Padres, are in the NL. Olerud has never hit for the cycle in an American League game or against an American League pitcher.

Incidentally, overlooked in all this was John Reilly, who was the first to hit for the cycle in two major leagues. Reilly did it for Cincinnati of the American Association in 1883 (twice) and for Cincinnati of the NL in 1890.

2. Before the beginning of interleague play, Pittsburgh pitcher Todd Ritchie had an 0-8 record and a 5.15 ERA against National League opponents. Then, on June 12, he went eight innings to beat Detroit, 13-3, and followed on June 17 with a complete game 1-0 victory over Cleveland. For those two performances Ritchie was voted the National League Player of the Week. Now they were two impressive performances, but Ritchie didn't face a National League batter that week. Incidentally, in the second round of interleague play, Ritchie pitched the game of his life with a July 13 one-hitter against the Kansas City Royals.

RECOGNIZING ROBERTO ALOMAR

Steve Kanehl, using play-by-play from *The Midsummer Classic* and from *The Sporting News Guide*, discovered an error in TSN's companion volume, *The Complete Book of Baseball Records*.

On page 552 of the record book, Billy Herman and Bill Mazerowski are listed as the second basemen with the most career All-Star game double plays with four. However, Steve found that Alomar has participated in five All-Star game double plays: two in 1991 (1st and 5th innings); one in 1998 (2nd inning); and two in 1999 (2nd and 6th innings).

MOST HOME RUNS FOR PLAYERS WHO MISSED THE FOLLOWING SEASON

Below is a list furnished by Lee Sinins of those players who hit the most home runs in one season and because of injury, retirement, military service, etc., did not play the following season.

44	Andres Galarraga	ATL (NL)	1998
38	Moises Alou	HOU (NL)	1998
36	Ted Williams	BOS (AL)	1942
36	Ron Gant	ATL (NL)	1993
35	Dave Kingman	OAK (AL)	1986
31	Charlie Keller	NY (AL)	1943
30	Kevin Mitchell	CIN (NL)	1994
29	Ted Williams	BOS (AL)	1960
28	Jackie Jensen	BOS (AL)	1959
27	Joe Hauser	PHI (AL)	1924
27	Bob Horner	ATL (NL)	1986
26	Johnny Mize	NY (NL)	1942
26	Andre Thornton	CLE (AL)	1979
25	Sam Chapman	PHI (AL)	1941
25	Hank Greenberg	PIT (NL)	1947
25	Rico Carty	ATL (NL)	1970
25	Dave Winfield	NY (AL)	1988
24	Roy Cullenbine	DET (AL)	1947
24	Jack Graham	STL (AL)	1949

Lee adds that if Mo Vaughn, who hit 36 for Anaheim in 2000, doesn't play this season, he will tie Williams and Gant for third place on the list.

GOOD EYE

According to Walt Wilson, of the 114 players in 1,000 or more games who were active at the end of the 2000 season, only 15 had more career walks than strikeouts.

	<u>Walks</u>	<u>Strikeouts</u>
Barry Bonds	1,547	1,189
Mark Grace	946	561
Tony Gwynn	780	425
Rickey Henderson	2,060	1,547
Wally Joyner	820	807
Chuck Knoblauch	718	625
Barry Larkin	812	664
Dave Magadan	706	526
Edgar Martinez	973	841
John Olerud	922	732
Tim Lincecum	1,290	938
Gary Sheffield	858	621
Frank Thomas	1,188	835
Omar Vizquel	582	576
Eric Young	447	278

Darryl Hamilton had 474 walks and 474 strikeouts.

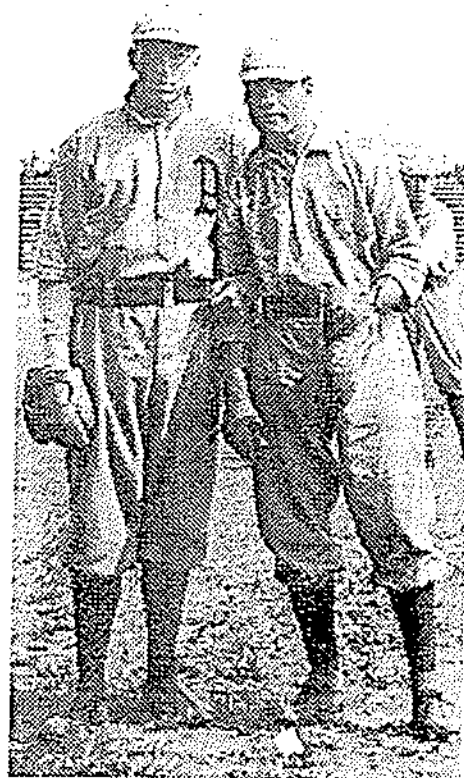
EDDIE AND DOC

Walt Wilson's listing of battery mates for Hall of Fame pitchers during their starts and shutouts continues with Eddie Plank. In his 17-year career (1901-14 with the Philadelphia A's; 1915-16 with St. Louis of the Federal League; and 1917 with the St. Louis Browns), Plank made 529 starts and pitched 69 shutouts.

Plank's dearest friend, Mike "Doc" Powers, caught 206 of his first 282 starts. The last one was in the opener against Boston at Shibe Park on April 12, 1909, two weeks before Powers' untimely death.

	Starts	Shutouts
Mike Powers	206	27
Ira Thomas	71	10
Jack Lapp	57	8
Ossee Schreckengost	51	6
Grover Hartley	29	2
Hank Severeid	21	3
Wally Schang	17	4
Harry Chapman	15	5
Ben Egan	14	1
Paddy Livingston	12	1

Thirty-six additional games were caught by 14 other catchers, and two shutouts came in games with more than one catcher.



Eddie Plank and Doc Powers

MORE ON EDDIE PLANK: HOW MANY GAMES DID HE WIN?

Earlier, I mentioned Cliff Kachline's call for a committee to reconcile record book and encyclopedia differences. Plank is an example of why that would be such a worthwhile occurrence. Plank is a Hall of Famer, yet there is no consensus as to how many big league games he actually won. *Neff-Cohen* has him with 325; *Total Baseball* and Macmillan's *The Baseball Encyclopedia* say 326; *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* says 327; and *The Sporting News*, which doesn't recognize the Federal League and Plank's 21 wins there in 1915, says 305. On a recent visit to Cooperstown, I checked Plank's HOF plaque. It wasn't very edifying, saying only that he won more than 300 games.

GIVE SNAKE THE CREDIT

Scott Flatow found an error on page 30 of *The 2001 Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book*, where the record for Most total bases by pitcher, nine-inning game (as a batter) is listed. The American League record is shown to be ten, which TSN credits to George "Hooks" Wiltse, playing for the Philadelphia A's on August 10, 1901 (second game).

All the facts are correct except for the record-setter. It was not Hooks, but his brother Lewis "Snake" Wiltse that set this record by hitting two doubles and two triples in that game. In fact, Hooks didn't make his big league debut until 1904, and he never pitched for the A's or any other American League team. Curiously, TSN had this record, Most total bases by pitcher, nine-inning game, credited to the right Wiltse as recently as 1984.

On page 31, TSN does correctly credit Snake with the record for Most long hits by pitcher, nine-inning game, which he did in this same game.



HOOKS WILTSE

PERSONAL NOTE: I have a new telephone number. It's 410-956-1310. My address, 331 Colony Point Place, Edgewater, MD 21037, and email address, LSpatz@att.net, remain the same.