

# Society for American Baseball Research

## Records Committee Newsletter ©

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Lyle Spatz, Editor

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

The Records Committee welcomes two new members:

Jayson Stark; 18 Buttercup Lane; Newtown, PA 18940; 215-579-0530.

Daniel Levitt; 4401 Morningside Road; Minneapolis, MN, 55416; 612-927-1057

Please note these new addresses:

Don Luce; 3666 West Main Road; Batavia, NY 14020; 716-343-4124

Pete Palmer; 396 Pine Cone Strand; Acton, MA 01718; 508-263-3018.

Ted DiTullio; 198 Harding Road #5; Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

Daniel Levitt sent me a copy of a paper that he presented at this year's Halsey Hall Chapter regional meeting in Minnesota. In the paper Dan argues for recognition of Ferdie Schupp as the National League's earned-run-leader in 1916. Schupp, who pitched for the Giants that year, had an ERA of 0.90, with eight complete games and 140 innings-pitched. Dan cites the following sources which support his claim that Schupp not only won the 1916 ERA title, his 0.90 that year is the major-league low for this century:

Spalding's Official Base Ball Book (1917)

Spalding's Official Base Ball Record (1923)

The Sporting News Record Book (1929)

The Sporting News Baseball Guide and Record Book (1943)

A.S. Barnes's Official Baseball (1945)

Turkin-Thompson's The Official Encyclopedia of Baseball (1956).

Because the rule requiring ten complete games to qualify for the ERA title did not come about until 1917, and the one-inning for each game your team plays rule, not until 1950, I think Dan has a legitimate argument. Sometime, over the past forty years, Schupp has been removed as the 1916 NL ERA leader and been replaced in all the record books and encyclopedias by Philadelphia's Grover Alexander, who had a 1.55 ERA that year. Also Schupp's distinction of having the twentieth-century's lowest ERA has now been transferred to Dutch Leonard of the 1914 Red Sox.

I called Ken Samelson of The Baseball Encyclopedia and Pete Palmer of Total Baseball to clarify their method of choosing past ERA leaders. Ken said that he extrapolates the ten complete game rule back from 1917, and Pete said that he extrapolates the one-inning per game rule back to everything pre-1950. Both, however, agreed that there could be exceptions, and that they were open to making adjustments for Schupp or for any other pitcher with a reasonable claim. They agreed that we should solicit opinions on this issue, so if you have one, let's hear it.

Someone asked me which major-league pitcher has appeared in the most career games without ever having a decision. Anyone know?

There was an account in the October newsletter of Dick Thompson's discovery that Ty Cobb played second base for the Tigers in their game against Philadelphia on July 12, 1913. In that game, Cobb he had one assist, one putout, and three errors. I assumed (how often are we warned against doing that) that these statistics were part of Cobb's fielding record as an outfielder and should be subtracted. However, Bill Deane informs me that the statistics from this game were not added into Cobb's official sheet and that his 1913 outfield totals are all correct as published.

By the way, Bill, the former Senior Research Associate at the Hall Of Fame National Library, would like everyone to know that he is willing to do baseball research at the library for anyone who finds it inconvenient to get to Cooperstown. Bill, who lives in nearby Fly Creek, specializes in major and minor league statistical work. You can reach him at P.O. Box 47, Fly Creek, NY 13337; his phone number is 607-547-5786. I know that I can speak for anyone who has worked with Bill in attesting to his knowledge, precision, and reliability.

Greg Beston's report of the record-breaking and record-tying feats from the Cubs 26-7 victory over the Rockies on August 18 inspired Frank Williams to review the June 29, 1897 game in which Chicago beat Louisville 36-7. Frank says that in that game Chicago batters were credited with 28 runs batted in. Now, as we all know, RBI's were not officially collected in 1897, but Frank claims that the ICI sheets, backed by the individual stats in Total Baseball for the players involved verify the 28 RBI's. This is not to dispute The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book (1995 edition) or Elias's The Book of Baseball Records (1995 edition) which lists the National League record at 26 by New York against Brooklyn on April 30, 1944 (1G). Frank just wanted to make researchers aware of this pre "official-stat" record.

I received several responses concerning the "record" for most runs in a game by one team, all of which were scored in one inning. Madison McEntire raised the question following San Diego's 11-3 win over San Francisco on August 3. In that game, the Padres scored all 11 runs in the eighth inning.

One letter was from Clem Comly who thought he recalled a game in 1972 in which the Phillies scored all of their 11 runs in one inning against San Francisco. Dave Smith pulled the game out of his Retrosheet files and confirmed Clem's suspicion. It was July 15, 1972, and the Phillies scored 11 in the seventh in beating the Giants, 11-4. (In doing so, they took Steve Carlton off the hook. Carlton left trailing, 4-0). Clem also points out that the Giants tied the National League record by using five pitchers in that seventh inning, the only five pitchers they used in the game.

Walt Wilson, William Ruiz and Jim Smith, all mentioned Cleveland's 12-0 shutout win over the Yankees on July 2, 1943--Allie Reynolds's first major league shutout--when the Indians scored all 12 runs in the fourth inning. However, Jim also uncovered a game where Atlanta scored all 13 of their runs in one inning (the second) in a 13-6 win over Houston on September 20, 1972.

When Pat Rapp one-hit Colorado in the Marlins 17-0 victory on September 17, 1995, it was the third 17-0 one-hitter in major league history. The other two, according to William Ruiz, were by Ted Lyons of the White Sox against Washington on September 19, 1925, and by Bruce Kison of the Angels against Minnesota on April 23, 1980. Lyons and Kison just missed having no-hitters; Bobby Veach broke up Lyons's bid with two out in the ninth, and Ken Landreaux spoiled Kison's attempt with one out in the ninth. Colorado's only hit against Rapp was an early-inning bloop single by Dante Bichette.

Speaking of Bichette, here is Dave Vincent's list of Most Home Runs In A Season, All At Home.

Fred Pfeffer	CHI (N)	1884	25	Herman Long	BOS (N)	1900	12
Gavvy Cravath	PHI (N)	1914	19	Joe Sewall	NY (A)	1932	11
Mel Ott	NY (N)	1943	18	Ted Uhlaender	CLE (A)	1970	11
Cliff Lee	PHI (N)	1922	17	Babe Young	NY (N)	1942	11
Hainie Manush	STL (A)	1928	13	Dave Brain	BOS (N)	1907	10
Johnny Vergez	NY (N)	1931	13	Greg Goossen	SEA (A)	1969	10
Jerry Denny	IND (N)	1888	12	Tilly Walker	PHI (A)	1919	10

This is a similar list, also from Dave Vincent. It's for Most Homers In A Season, All Off Right-or-Left-Handed Pitchers. All of these were against right-handers, even for the right-handed batters.

Duke Snider	(BL)	BKL	(N)	1957	40	Lee Thomas	(BL)	BOS	(A)	1965	22
Ned Williamson	(BR)	CHI	(N)	1884	27	Wayne Gross	(BL)	BAL	(A)	1984	22
Bill Nicholson	(BL)	CHI	(N)	1940	25	Darrell Evans	(BL)	DET	(A)	1988	22
John Lowenstein	(BL)	BAL	(A)	1982	24	Duke Snider	(BL)	BKL	(N)	1952	21
*Ken Phelps	(BL)	***	(A)	1988	24	Willie Kirkland	(BL)	CLE	(A)	1962	21
Bob Hamelin	(BL)	KC	(A)	1994	24	Jeff Kent	(BR)	NY	(N)	1993	21
Duke Snider	(BL)	LA	(N)	1959	23						

\* Phelps hit 14 with Seattle and 10 with the Yankees.

Duke Snider hit only 33 of his 407 home runs against left-handers. His best season against lefties was 1951, when he hit eight of his 29 home runs against them. After homering off left-hander Dick Littlefield on August 16, 1956 he hit his next 97 home runs off right-handers. His next home run against a lefty didn't come until July 7, 1960 against Seth Morehead. There is no doubt that Snider was fortunate in not seeing a lot of left-handers, especially when the Dodgers were in Brooklyn. However, if someone (wrongly I think) chooses to denigrate Snider's career because of that, I ask them to then also re-evaluate the batting abilities of Pee Wee Reese, Jackie Robinson, Gil Hodges, Carl Furillo and Roy Campanella; all right-handed batters who faced right-handers almost exclusively.

The following paragraph is for newer members of the Records Committee; those of you who have been here a while have heard it many times before.

In a few months, Seymour Siwoff and Craig Carter will signal that the "back-and-forth-games" will soon be over by releasing the 1996 editions of Elias's Book of Baseball Records and The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book. Those publications, along with The Baseball Encyclopedia, Total Baseball and The Neft-Cohen Baseball Encyclopedia are indispensable to any baseball researcher. For those of us who love baseball, and spend time examining and investigating the game's history, we depend on them and eagerly await each one's latest release. However, because all of them are produced by humans and depend on data (some of which is more than a century old) compiled by humans, all have occasional errors and omissions. Over the years Records Committee members have discovered many of these errors, which we then share with an ever-growing number of researchers through this newsletter. We do this in a spirit of collegiality and cooperation; our only purpose being to improve baseball's "historic record." This is an ongoing process, and the editors of each of the record books and encyclopedias have been most cooperative.

With that in mind, we offer the following items from Ed Brown from the 1995 editions of Elias's Book of Baseball Records and The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book that need additions or corrections.

Most Sacrifice Hits, Game (includes sacrifice flies)--AL-8. Elias's Book of Baseball Records (page 114) should also include, Texas (Chi), August 1, 1977. The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book (page 61) does include this game.

Most Sacrifice Hits, Inning (no sacrifice flies)--AL-3. The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book (page 61) should also include, Oakland vs. Kansas City, June 26, 1977 (1G), fifth inning, and Seattle vs. California, April 29, 1984, sixth inning. Elias's Book of Baseball Records (page 114) does include these two games.

Most Players, 6+ Runs, Game--AL-1. Elias's Book of Baseball Records (page 108) should also include Boston (Cleveland) August 21, 1986. Spike Owen scored the six runs in a 24-5 win. The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book (page 45) includes this game.

Hitting Home Runs From Both Sides of Plate, Game. The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book NL list (page 30) omits Bobby Bonilla, New York, April 6, 1992. On page 29, under Most Games Hitting Home Runs From Both Sides of Plate, Career. Bonilla's NL record should read 6. Elias's Book of Baseball Records does not list the individual games, but on page 22 correctly shows Bonilla with six, including the April 6, 1992 game.

Most Home Runs, Consecutive Games--Elias's Book of Baseball Records (page 111) shows the AL record to be 40 by New York June 1-29, 1941. The Yanks did this when they set the record by homering in 25 consecutive games. But in 1994 (May 25-June 18) the Tigers tied the record and in that stretch hit 46 home runs, as Elias correctly states on the same page.

Most Runs Scored By Two Players, Game--NL since 1900-11. This happened in the Giants victory against Brooklyn on April 30, 1944 (1G). On page 45 The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book correctly shows that Mel Ott scored six runs and Joe Medwick scored five. However, Phil Weintraub of the Giants also scored five runs that day, so he and Ott should share the record with Medwick and Ott.

Most Strikeouts, Two Consecutive Games. Nolan Ryan, then with the Angels, shares the AL record with Luis Tiant at 32. Ryan struck 13 on August 7, 1974 and 19 on August 12. Both record books agree. However, The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book (page 85) says Ryan pitched 17 innings in the two games, and Elias's Book of Baseball Records (page 111) says he pitched 18 innings. When I checked these games I found that Ryan pitched a nine-inning complete game on August 12, but on the 7th, the White Sox scored two runs with two out in the last of the ninth to beat him, 2-1. Thus, for the two games he pitched a combined total of 17 2/3 innings. Is this a case where partial innings should be used, a difference in rounding philosophy, or is somebody just off by an inning?

Clem Comly found a "date error" in The Sporting News Complete Baseball Record Book. Under Most Wild Pitches, Game (page 86), Atlanta's Phil Niekro, with six, is listed as sharing the NL record. He does. But it is shown as happening on August 14, 1979 (2G) when it actually happened on August 4, 1979 (2G). Elias's Book of Baseball Records (page 97) has the correct date.

Speaking of Atlanta, Clem also noticed that The Baseball Encyclopedia's listing of Gold Glover's for 1965, on page 22, shows catcher Joe Torre playing for Atlanta when of course the Braves were still in Milwaukee in '65.

If you look at Hal Finney's record in the encyclopedia you will see that in 1936, playing for Pittsburgh, Finney went 0-for-35. Not surprisingly this was his last major-league season. Most of us when noticing this just shake our heads and go on; but not Joe Dittmar. Entranced by Finney's season-long futility, Joe checked to see just how many consecutive at-bats he had had without a hit. Well, Finney was in the minor leagues in 1935, and though he got into five games in 1934, he had no at-bats. So Joe went back to 1933. On September 9, 1933, Finney went two-for-five, but in his four final games that season he went hitless in six at-bats. That means he went at least 41 at-bats without a hit, and depending on when he got his two hits in the September 9 game, he may have gone 0-for-44. Has any non-pitcher ever gone longer?

Walt Wilson has been painstakingly reviewing major league pitching statistics, especially Games Started. He has discovered numerous errors, which have been double-checked and verified by Pete Palmer. Some of Walt's corrections have gotten into the latest versions of each of the three encyclopedias, but most have not.

I will be printing Walt's discoveries, such as the one below, in future newsletters.

*This one concerns Games Started by St. Louis Cardinal pitchers in 1925. The encyclopedias show Flint Rhem with 23, Leo Dickerman with 20, Allen Sothoron with 23, and Duster Mails with 14. (Neft-Cohen) has a typo on Mails; they show him with 24 GS.*

The correct number of 1925 Games Started for these four Cardinal pitchers should be: Flint Rhem 24, Leo Dickerman 18, Allen Sothoron 22; and Duster Mails 16.