THE Baseball Research JOURNAL

THE BASEBALL RESEARCH JOURNAL Volume 42 • Number 1 Spring 2013

Black Ball Championships 1866–1923

Before the major-league World Series existed, black baseball teams competed for their own championships

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20-Game Losers

Has the 20-loss season for pitchers become as unlikely as the Triple Crown?

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Baseball and Tammany Hall

The prevailing influence of New York City's political machine

Spring 2013

Rube Foster, founder of the Negro National League

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CORRECTIONS

In the Fall 2012 issue of the *Baseball Research Journal*, two captions were incorrect.

PAGE 89: The photo of Cleon Jones was mislabeled as Tommie Agee.

PAGE 101: A photo of Ray Lane was accidentally placed where F.C. Lane should have been.

Contents

NAMES GREAT AND SMALL

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I am writing these words in Florida, where I am making my annual pilgrimage to spring training, renewing my spirit after a long winter. By the time you read this, the 2013 baseball season will have begun, but at this moment I get to contemplate it as a mere philosophical concept. A new pope has recently been selected for the Catholic Church and it's hard to resist making a baseball analogy. Major League Baseball as an institution is something like the Church. Although the institution itself is made up of specific people—clergy, nuns, cardinals, players, managers, owners—the institution can't exist without the people in the pews/seats.

And like the church, baseball has its lay folk, too, those of us who aren't employees of the corporation itself, but who are privileged to be something other than simply fans. And make no mistake, it is a privilege to be involved with the game, whether as writer, scholar, analyst, or historian. As a SABR member, I feel I am part of something that is a part of something, if you see what I mean.

Of course, like the scholars and philosophers of religion, we have our fundamental yet divergent beliefs (DH or no DH?) and we have our philosophical exercises (what would have happened if Babe Ruth had faced Sandy Koufax?). Our intellects and our passions can be equally engaged when we pursue these questions. We search for answers, or as John Cronin's article title states, we even search for truth.

This issue of the *Baseball Research Journal* has a number of articles that tackle "what if?" questions, allowing us to revisit moments in history and analyze what happened by investigating alternatives. Lyle Spatz asks what if Burt Shotton had not been manager of the Dodgers in 1947? Paul Hensler asks what would have happened if during Nolan Ryan's incredible 1973 season he had been able to face not the newly-created designated hitters, but his fellow pitchers? Robert Shaefer wonders how the record books might have been different if a home-run-prevention screen had not been installed in Sportsman's Park.

Of course then there are the record books themselves. I feel sometimes what we do in SABR is write new gospel, and recover lost gospels, too. Todd Peterson brings to light a chapter of baseball history that should by all rights be a significant part of the lore and record books of the Negro Leagues, except that those record books are only being written now, as we uncover and compile the stories and facts of events like the east-west championships that were not as well documented as those in Major League Baseball. Of course there is also the fact that sometimes even MLB wasn't as meticulously recorded as we would have liked it to be! In this issue Herm Krabbenhoft continues his painstaking correction of incorrect RBI records, Ron Selter sets a clerical mystery straight, and Frank Vaccaro details why pitcher win-loss records are perhaps not as comparable across eras as they might appear to a casual fan.

And there is much more. I will end my homily here with a practical note, which is a reminder that the *Baseball Research Journal* publishes the work of SABR members. You might note several new names in this issue's table of contents; I encourage more of you who have never published in the journal to give it a try. The *BRJ* is open to all disciplines of research: statistical, historical, physical, psychological, economic, sociological, mathematical, biographical, architectural, biological, *et cetera*. Query with your topic and I will send you the guidelines on how to prepare a paper or article to our specifications. Come out and play.

– Cecilia Tan
Editor

May The Best Man Win

The Black Ball Championships 1866–1923

Todd Peterson

During a playoff game in October 1905, Leland Giants pitcher Walter Ball rushed onto the diamond at Chicago's West Side Park, and threw a punch "with all the force of his arm," at Fred "Pop" Roberts's face. The Chicago Union Giants second baseman wound up with a large lump over his eye and had to leave the contest, while Ball—who was not even playing that Sunday—broke his own hand. Only the interference of umpire George McGurn prevented the other players from "making a general battle royal." The Union Giants went on to win 5–2, but the antagonism between the two squads precluded them from finishing the series.[1]

The brawl between once-and-future teammates Ball and Roberts illustrates the intensity black teams brought to playoff encounters. In 1899 the *Chicago Tribune* speculated that a proposed championship series between the Chicago Unions and Chicago Columbia Giants would be so "fiercely fought" that it would not be surprising "if razors did not take the place of bats before the game was finished." During the penultimate contest of the 1913 New York Lincoln Giants and Chicago American Giants "world series," shortstop John Henry "Pop" Lloyd was spiked so badly by a sliding Jess Barbour that an artery in his leg was severed and the future Hall-of-Famer was rushed to Provident hospital.

African-Americans were prohibited from participation in the major leagues (and their precursor the National Association) from 1871 to 1946 (not counting limited opportunities in 1879 and 1884), longer than they have been allowed to participate. For most of that time, top-flight segregated black baseball teams operated independently without the sanction of an official league. Despite the lack of a league structure, these clubs battled annually for regional and national supremacy.

Far from being a haphazard operation, the anointing of an African American champion was a serious undertaking which, although a more elastic process than its major league counterpart, nevertheless rarely failed to identify the best team. Longtime blackball player and historian Sol White noted in 1906 that such championship contests "occur yearly in colored base ball, East and West, and go far to keep up the interest among colored patrons of the National game."[2]

These playoff games generally drew large crowds and generated a lot of money—legitimate and otherwise. Way back in 1877 a *New Orleans Times* reporter taking in a local black playoff noted, "besides championship honors the clubs always contend for the possession of a money stake," and that "promiscuous betting runs riot among their adherents when a game is on." The result was a "desperately exciting game of baseball," as the host of enthusiastic fans howled "themselves hoarse" and a "perfect pandemonium marked the progress of the game whenever one nine passed its rival's score."[3]

Shortly after the Civil War, several quality African American baseball teams emerged in urban areas with large black populations such as Washington D.C., Philadelphia, and New York. Much like their white counterparts, the black squads grew out of the social clubs of the day, and soon began vying with each other for preeminence. In October 1866 the Bachelor Base Ball Club of Albany, New York journeyed to Philadelphia and handily beat the hometown Pythian and Excelsior nines in match games before large crowds.[4]

The following year saw an explosion in intercity activity as the Bachelors and multiple outfits from Washington, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn competed for top honors. In October the Brooklyn Unique and Philadelphia Excelsior drew a huge crowd to the Satellite grounds in Williamsburg, New York, to witness their tilt for "the colored championship of the United States." The contest was a "remarkably lively" one, with both captains threatening to pull their clubs off the field several times after umpiring decisions went against them. The Excelsior were clinging to a 42–37 lead in the seventh inning when it became too dark to see the ball and the game was called in their favor. As the *New York Herald* reported, "The Philadelphians and their friends reformed in procession and, with the

drums and fifes, marched back to the ferry and crossed to this city, highly delighted with their victory."[5]

When the dust settled a few weeks later, the Philadelphia Pythian and Brooklyn Monitor had established the most valid title claims, although the two squads did not meet on the diamond. However, after demolishing the Washington Alert and Mutual clubs in the nation's capitol that summer, the Pythian were presented "a rich and massive silver ball and a beautiful rosewood bat," by that city's Ladies Croquet Club. The Pythian ultimately settled the question in October 1868 by downing the Monitor 27–9 at Columbia Park in Philadelphia.[6]

Although the Pythian remained the team to beat, the epicenter of eastern blackball briefly shifted to upstate New York, where a number of clubs had picked up the Albany Bachelors mantle. In September 1869 the best of them, the Fearless of Utica, swept a home and home set from the remarkably nicknamed Heavy Hitters of Canajoharie, before challenging, "any colored club that chooses to dispute their claim to the championship."[7]

A year later the Mutual of Washington, led by Charles Douglass, son of the great orator Frederick Douglass, undertook a tour of western New York and demolished seven local outfits by an aggregate score of 345–78. The District nine landed in Utica in late August to take on the Fearless for the "championship of the United States." The two squads played five innings in a "mean" drizzle until the game was called with the Mutual holding an 18–10 advantage. The Washingtonians declared that the contest was halted by agreement of both parties, but the Utica lads, "denied having made such arrangement," and claimed a 9–0 forfeit, boasting they were willing to play, "until the bases pulled anchor and floated off."[8]

Way out west (the Ohio River served as the demarcation point between eastern and western black clubs), the Chicago Blue Stockings, "dusky athletes who are employed as waiters in the various hotels and restaurants," captured the "colored championship of Illinois," during the summer of 1870 by taking two out of three games from the uniquely named Rockford Pink Stockings. The new champs' reign was short lived, as another Windy City squad, the Uniques, poached their slugging catcher "Big" George Brown off their roster the following spring and crushed the Blue Stockings 39–5.[9]

In September of 1871, the Uniques undertook the first continental blackball tour, traveling east to play squads in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Washington D.C., and Troy, New York. The trip climaxed in Philadelphia where the "champion of the west" Uniques split a pair

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

In 1892 Frank Grant played for the Gorhams and then the Cuban Giants on his way to a Hall-of-Fame career.

of contests with the "champion of the east" Pythian, before huge crowds on the grounds of the National Association's Athletics. The series garnered nationwide newspaper coverage as "the fielding of the Unique was very good, as was the batting of the Pythian," in two well played games. There would be no rematch. The Unique returned home just in time for the Great Chicago Fire on October 8 which brought a halt to all local baseball activity for a while. The Pythians dissolved after the brutal assassination of their shortstop and captain Octavius Catto during an October 10 election riot.[10]

The genteel amateurism of the early post-Civil War era gradually gave way to a new breed of elite black players and teams that played predominantly for money. With the growing commercialism, however, came increased competition and controversy. The first three games of the 1875 western showdown between the revitalized Chicago Uniques and the upstart St. Louis Blue Stockings were marred by biased umpiring, walkouts, stalling, and an unfortunate attempt by Chicago backstop Ben Dyson to throw the series for $25.[11]

Needing a win to stay alive in the series, the Uniques were leading 17–14 in the bottom of the ninth inning of the fourth contest at Chicago's White Stockings Park when umpire William Thacker called the game because of "darkness, crowd, and disputes among players." Although the St. Louis club had two men on base with none out at the time, the arbiter declared the contest in favor of the Uniques, and "all bets on the grounds were paid." A few hours later, after learning some of his friends lost money owing to

his decision, Thacker reversed himself and awarded a 9–0 forfeit to the Blue Stockings. This came as small consolation to the Blues' William Pitts and William Mitchell, who were severely injured when the St. Louis squad's omnibus was stoned by the angry mob that invaded the field.[12]

The Blue Stockings got a small measure of revenge the following June when they swept the Uniques in St. Louis. After the second contest, the squads retired to Rueben Armstrong's bar, where "the feeling was of partisan character," and "a row finally occurred." During the ensuing melee, Benjamin Beatty of the Chicago squad fired a pistol at the saloon keeper, resulting in his arrest and no more Uniques/Blue Stockings games.[13]

By the early 1880s, American hotels were regularly employing black baseball clubs to entertain their guests. In September 1882, one such outfit representing the West End Hotel of Long Branch, New Jersey, dropped a 10–8 decision to the Philadelphia Orions before 500 spectators at New York's Polo Grounds for the "colored championship." The West Ends rebounded a year later by crushing the Crescents of Princeton, New Jersey, 20–2 in a "grand colored championship match" at the Polo Grounds.[14]

In September 1885, Philadelphia's Keystone Athletic squad, representing the Argyle Hotel of Babylon, New York, took the Orions "into camp by a score of 6 to 4," before signing three of their number, including pitcher Shep Trusty. With the subsequent backing of Trenton capitalist Walter Cook, the "Babylon boys" became the Cuban Giants, stocking their roster with the best black players in the country, chief among them Clarence Williams, Bill Whyte, and twirler George Stovey. The Giants completed the 1886 season "with a grand record made against National League and leading college teams," while establishing their blackball dominance that August by crushing the fledgling New York Gorhams 25–4 and the more established Brooklyn Alpine 24–0.[15]

The success of the Cuban Giants and the plethora of top flight African American teams throughout the country led to the formation of the first intercity black leagues. In March 1886 the Southern League of Colored Base Ballists was formed by Jacksonville, Florida, politician and newspaperman John Menard. Consisting of teams from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Tennessee, the rather loose federation operated from June until August. The Memphis Appeal-Avalanche anointed their hometown Eclipse, led by pitcher William Renfroe, champions, although they dropped season series to both the New Orleans Unions and the Louisville Falls City.[16]

Less successful was the National Colored Base Ball League, which collapsed after a couple of weeks in May 1887. The Cuban Giants opted not to join the six-team circuit, but won 12 out of 14 games against the Philadelphia Pythians, New York Gorhams, Boston Resolutes, Louisville Falls City, and Pittsburgh Keystones, while outscoring the league squads 159–48.[17]

In August 1888, a tournament "for the colored championship of the world," was held between the top four black clubs in the east. Playing before huge crowds in New York City and Hoboken, New Jersey, the Cuban Giants easily won all five games they played, capturing the silver ball donated by their owner John M. Bright. Sol White's Pittsburgh Keystones were the surprise of the event, also winning five games, with their two defeats coming at the hands of the Giants. The New York Gorhams finished a disappointing third, while one reporter opined that the winless Norfolk Red Stockings "should never leave Virginia to play ball."[18]

Not present at the tourney, but very anxious for a crack at the Giants, were the New Orleans Pinchbacks, the Southwest's premier black club. Originally known as the W.L. Cohens, the Louisiana nine dropped an 1886 championship playoff to the New Orleans Unions before changing their name in honor of politician P.B.S. Pinchback, the first black governor of a US state. The club also swiped three of the Unions' best players, including pitching phenom George Hopkins, who had struck out ten or more batters in each game that season. In August the Pinchbacks traveled to Illinois, along with "five car-loads of gentlemen" supporters to meet a strong semi-pro club called the Chicago Unions.[19]

Over 1,500 fans gleefully watched the Unions edge the Pinchbacks 4–1 in the opener at South Side Park. Joe Campbell struck out 14 batters for the victors, while Hopkins fanned 17 in defeat. The next afternoon, 1,800 cranks turned out to witness an even better game, which the Southerners won 6–5 on the strength of 20 strikeouts by Hopkins and a two-run ninth inning home run by their second baseman A. Defauchard. The Pinchbacks took the rubber match 14–7 a couple of days later, as Hopkins whiffed 14 more, giving him 51 punch-outs in three games.[20]

The Pinchbacks, who conversed in "English and French and always swear at the umpire in French," continued on to St. Louis where they swept a three-game set from the West End club. A strengthened West End squad journeyed to the Crescent City in late October and stunned the Pinchbacks 4–3 at the New Orleans Ball Park despite 13 more strikeouts by George Hopkins. A persistent rain delayed the second contest between the two clubs for a week, and after it ended

in a 3–3 tie, the Missouri outfit decided to stick around a few more days to play it off. The West Ends jumped out to a 7–0 lead after two and a half innings, but the Pinchbacks rallied and tied it with two runs in the bottom of the ninth, before W.J. Turner triumphantly crossed the plate with the winning run in the tenth inning as "the crowd went wild."[21]

George Hopkins moved North in 1890 to join the Chicago Unions, and Walter Cohen's Pinchbacks never got their chance to play the Cuban Giants. According to Sol White, the Cubes' only remaining "full-fledged" rival was the New York Gorhams, although they had a difficult time proving it on the diamond. From August 1886 through 1890, Ambrose Davis's Manhattan-based club played the Giants over 25 times, but managed only four wins and two ties.[22]

The only force able to stop the Cuban Giants was their owner John Bright, whose extreme frugality motivated 11 of his players, including superstar pitcher George Stovey, to jump in 1890 to J. Monroe Kreiter's York, Pennsylvania, franchise in the Eastern Interstate League, where they were renamed the Colored Monarchs. The prodigal players briefly returned to the Giants' fold in 1891, but in mid-May many of them defected again, this time to Davis's Gorhams who were operating out of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for the season. The Big Gorhams, as they were popularly known, claimed a 100–4 record, and crushed the Giants five straight times by an aggregate score of 77–22 to finally lay claim to the "colored championship."[23]

The Gorhams reorganized in the spring of 1892 under the management of one W. Primrose, but John Bright blocked the team from playing games on Long Island and most of their key players, including future Hall-of-Fame infielder Frank Grant, rejoined the Giants. In late September the "Cubes" met the Gorhams, representing the Champlain Hotel of Bluff Point, New York, one final time, demolishing them 18–1 before a huge crowd of 2,500 on the Long Island grounds.[24]

By the summer of 1893, boom had given way to bust, for the nation's economy as well as on the diamond, and Bright's Cuban Giants were the only professional black team left operating east of the Mississippi. In October 1894 the Giants ventured to Chicago to take on the Unions, now the premier team of the west. The Giants found the "amateur" Unions "somewhat easy" and swept a two-game set, including a 14–7 shellacking in the opener at South Side Park.[25]

As the century ran out, two new professional African American clubs rose to challenge the Cuban Giants and Unions. In the fall of 1894 blackball pioneer Bud Fowler and young slugger Grant Johnson organized the Page Fence Giants in Adrian, Michigan. Financed by a woven wire company and a bicycle manufacturer, Fowler's novices barnstormed throughout the Midwest in 1895 racking up a record of 118–36–2, while serving notice to the Unions by clubbing them three times by a combined score of 66–21.[26]

John Bright's penurious ways led most of his 1895 Cuban Giants to abandon the team en masse the following March and form a new club under the co-op plan (wherein a team's expenses were deducted from the gate receipts, and the balance split evenly among the players), christened the Cuban X-Giants. Bookkeeper Edward B. Lamar was recruited to keep track of the financial side of the operation as well as to spar with Bright in the press. Lamar challenged the Cuban Giants to a winner-take-all-the-receipts series on several occasions throughout the season, but Bright ignored the defi's, other than to note that the X-Giants were, "getting most terribly defeated everywhere… thereby injuring the Genuine Cuban Giants' great reputation."[27]

Undaunted, the Cuban X-Giants traveled to Michigan in September to battle the Page Fence Giants for a $1000 stake and the "colored championship of the United States." Playing before appreciative crowds in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana, the young Page Fence squad outscored "the famous sluggers of the East," 172–137, en route to an 11–8 series win. For their efforts the Michigan lads received "beautiful medals from their manager," and perhaps more importantly, "extra compensation." E.B. Lamar claimed that six of the X-Giants had played hurt, but took some solace in the $1000 purse his club earned after convincingly sweeping a two-game set with the Chicago Unions before heading back to the Big Apple.[28]

In 1897 the Cuban Giants and Lamar's X-Giants finally met in an eastern championship series played in New Jersey and Connecticut over the course of an October week. Prior to the playoff, it was unkindly suggested that "both teams will be searched before they enter the grounds to guard against a flourish of razors during the exciting moments of the battle." The Sunday opener at Weehawken was a hard-fought, back-and-forth affair that the X-Giants managed to tie with two runs in the final frame, before the game was called because of darkness. Lamar's squad went on to win the title by walloping Bright's bunch 28–5 in the next two games before dropping the meaningless Sabbath tilt at Weehawken before a crowd of over 3,000 people.[29]

After another year of squabbling over players and guarantees, the two squads met again on three successive Sundays in October 1898. The X-Giants copped a wild and wooly first contest in Hoboken, with James

Robinson leading the way with three hits including a double and a home run. "The Black Rusie" also came on in relief and pitched three scoreless innings to close out the 9–7 win. When the teams returned to Hoboken a week later, "the arguments between the players were more lively," and "hostilities threatened to break out" on several occasions. The hard luck "Genuine" Cuban Giants out-hit and out-fielded their rivals, but fell 7–6 after their two-run ninth-inning rally was snuffed out by a great stop and throw by the X-Giants second baseman Ross Garrison. Lamar's charges also won an anticlimactic third match 17–10 at Newark. That was enough for John Bright: The two clubs never played for the championship again.[30]

The East-West barnstorming playoffs lasted for a few more years, however. A couple of weeks before the X-Giants final tussle with Bright's Cuban Giants, Lamar's squad schooled the Chicago Unions by winning six out of nine games played in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana. The X-Giants returned to the Midwest in June 1899 and their "superior hitting" helped them down the Unions eleven games to seven before several "enormous" crowds.[31]

The Unions and Page Fence Giants generally avoided each other, getting together for only a game or two each year. In 1899 the Michigan team relocated to the Windy City and became the Chicago Columbia Giants. Acquiescing to public demand, the two squads agreed to meet in a winner-take-all-receipts, best-of-five series in September. Playing before crowds in excess of 9,000, the Columbia's big southpaw George Wilson out-dueled fellow lefty Bert Jones in the two first matches, 1–0 and 4–2. In the third game, shortstop Grant "Home Run" Johnson mashed a grand slam off Jones, the object of a bidding war between the clubs that spring, to launch the Giants to a 6–0 victory and net them "a big bunch of money."[32]

The Cuban X-Giants ventured west again in June 1900 and the Unions finally defeated their old nemesis, thrashing Lamar's club 12 games to five. The three-week series culminated with a "brilliant" 6–3 victory in Chicago, as Bert Jones scattered five hits and scored two runs to aid his own cause. According to Sol White, "the western teams won as they pleased this year." The Columbia Giants walloped John Bright's Cuban Giants in another June showdown that began and finished in Chicago. Columbia's George "Rat" Johnson clouted a walk-off home run in the bottom of the ninth inning of the denouement to give George Wilson an "exciting" 10–9 win.[33]

The Unions and Columbia Giants renewed their conflict that October, splitting a pair of games and tying another, leaving the "colored championship of the world" "undecided." In July 1901 the Unions' traveling secretary, Frank Leland, effectively stole most of the team from owner William Peters, and formed a new squad called the Chicago Union Giants. Leland's outfit and the Columbia Giants faced off that fall at South Side Park to settle "the colored championship." The Columbias won a pair of games to nab the title, with Will Horn scattering six hits and Harry Buckner crushing a run-scoring triple in the 3–2 climax.[34]

Unable to find suitable grounds in Chicago, the Columbia Giants relocated to Big Rapids, Michigan, during the 1902 season, and hooked up with the Union Giants one last time to settle scores. Leland's squad took two out of the first three games at Chicago's South Side Park, behind their 23-year-old Texas wunderkind twirler Andrew Foster, who fanned ten batters while vanquishing the Columbias 7–3 in the opener. Foster had left the Union Giants by the time the clubs met up again in Big Rapids in late August. The Chicago nine captured one game, but the Michigan squad's own 19-year-old wonder boy pitcher, Johnny Davis, won two decisions in as many days to deadlock the season series.[35]

In 1903, Davis and many other former Columbia Giants joined an emerging Iowa concern called the Algona Brownies. The Hawkeye club beat Leland's Union Giants ten games to five for the western title. The series culminated in Des Moines in August and a bench-clearing, bat-swinging, donnybrook broke out during the penultimate contest after Union Giants catcher Andrew Campbell slammed into his opposite number, George "Rat" Johnson, at home plate. The rival backstops exchanged punches, touching off a melee that ended only after several policemen stormed the field. Johnson had the last laugh as Algona won 2–0 to capture the crown.[36]

Several other Chicago ballplayers, including Harry Buckner and Bill Monroe, headed east in 1903 to play for a rising powerhouse named the Philadelphia Giants. Sol White, along with sportswriters H. Walter Schlichter and Harry Smith, had organized the Pennsylvania squad the previous summer, recruiting several former Cuban X-Giants along the way. Lamar's squad initially rebuffed offers to play White's new charges, but after "two years of squabbling, challenges, and counter challenges," the clubs agreed to meet in a best-of-nine championship series in the fall of 1903.[37]

The playoff, contested over two weeks in Brooklyn, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, was "fought with the bitterest feeling," with the X-Giants prevailing by winning five of the first seven games. Andrew Foster, who had joined Lamar's unit in June, dominated the

event, winning all four of his starts, fanning 21 batters while allowing only six runs. Foster also banged out six hits, including a double and triple, while X-Giants first baseman Robert Jordan led all batters with a .560 average.[38]

Proving the eternal blackball adage, "If you can't beat them, steal them," Sol White enticed Foster (now called Rube) to join the Philadelphia Giants the next season for $90 a month, and he again proved to be the difference-maker in another fall playoff between the rival clubs. White's squad captured two out of three bitterly fought games before enormous crowds at Atlantic City's Inlet Park. The burly Texan won the first and last contests, striking out 18 batters in the initial go around, and giving up but two hits in the finale. Foster also batted .400, tempering some of the damage caused by X-Giants second baseman John "Pat" Patterson who hit two home runs in the series and stole five bases.[39]

A dispute over Cuban pitcher Jose Muñoz precluded the X-Giants and Philadelphia Giants from playing each other in 1905. The following year both squads joined the International League of Independent Professional Baseball Clubs, an interracial eastern semi-pro circuit. After splitting their first two contests, the teams met in a Labor Day doubleheader at Philadelphia's Columbia Park to resolve the league championship. More than 12,000 fans, the largest blackball crowd ever, looked on as starters Rube Foster and Harry Buckner were each reached for ten safeties. The Phillies got to Buckner "when bingos meant runs" however, while Foster twice retired the X-Giants with the bases full to nab the essential 3–2 victory, earning the beautiful silver cup donated by circuit president William Freihofer. Philadelphia also won the second game 4–1. This was the end of the line for Edward Lamar's nine: The following April it was announced that "the Cuban X-Giants have retired from the field."[40]

While the Philadelphia Giants reigned supreme in the east, the western blackball title still ran through the Windy City. To avoid confusion with William Peters' Chicago Unions, Frank Leland rechristened his squad the Leland Giants in February 1905. To add to the confusion, Peters appropriated the Chicago Union Giants moniker for his club. The two teams met at Auburn Park on four consecutive Sundays in October 1905 to decide matters, with Johnny Davis pitching the Lelands to an 8–2 triumph in the opener. The Union Giants held late leads in the next two contests, but the Lelands rallied to tie them both before darkness fell. George Wilson and George "Rat" Johnson returned from Renville, Minnesota, to lead the Unions over their rivals 5–2 in

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

Harry Buckner's RBI triple cinched the 1901 title for the Columbia Giants.

game four, with Walter Ball's assault of Fred Roberts putting an end to the series. Auburn Park was again the locale the following October when Leland's squad twice shut out the Union Giants by identical 5–0 scores, effectively finishing them as a top-flight unit.[41]

In the fall of 1906 Walter Schlichter and promoter Nat Strong organized the National Association of Colored Baseball Clubs of the United States and Cuba, a rather informal organization consisting of the Philadelphia Giants, Brooklyn Royal Giants, Cuban Giants, and Abel Linares's Cuban Stars. The member clubs agreed to play a minimum of five games against each other in various eastern locales, including Philadelphia, Harlem, and Atlantic City. The title came down to a late September confrontation at Brooklyn's Washington Park. The Philadelphia Giants, with Hall-of Famers Pete Hill and John Henry Lloyd, edged the Royal Giants 4–2, as Dan McClellan scattered six hits to nail down the club's fourth consecutive championship.[42]

Upset with Walter Schlichter's cost-cutting measures, Rube Foster jumped to Chicago in 1907 to join the Leland Giants, bringing along seven other top eastern players. In June 1908 Foster put up a $2,500 purse of his own money and offered to take the Lelands to Philadelphia to play Schlichter's club for either a percentage or winner-take-all. Instead the Phillies traveled to the Windy City in late July for a showdown series. The Chicago squad won three out of the first four contests before Philly twirler Harvey Martin, instructed by Sol White to "just spit on the ball and let it go," downed the Lelands on two consecutive days to even matters, and the locals declined to play off the tie. Quakers shortstop John Henry Lloyd "was a whale at fielding and batting," during the six games, collecting 11 hits (five off of Foster) and scoring 10 runs.[43]

In July 1909 the Leland Giants journeyed 400 miles northwest to play the St. Paul Gophers, a crack unit comprising several former Chicago players as well as infielder Felix Wallace, former Birmingham Giants third baseman "Candy" Jim Taylor, and his pitching sibling, "Steel Arm" Johnny. The Gophers took three out of five thrilling games played at St. Paul's tiny Downtown Park, with John Taylor out-dueling Giants lefty Charles "Pat" Dougherty 3–2 in the finale. Sore loser Rube Foster, who had missed the series with a leg injury, later snarled that "no man who ever saw the Gophers play would think of classing them as world's colored champions."[44]

Frank Leland responded to the defeat by signing five Gophers, including Wallace and the Taylor brothers, to his new squad, the Chicago Giants, during the off season. Foster and Leland parted ways in September

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

Young Andrew Foster was a wunderkind pitcher in 1902 when he broke into the top ranks with the Union Giants. He would go on to become one of the dominant figures in Negro Leagues baseball for more than two decades.

1909, with Rube curiously retaining the Leland Giants designation, and his old boss keeping most of the roster. Foster held on to Pat Dougherty and Pete Hill, and signed several eastern stars for his squad, including John Henry Lloyd. The big Texan claimed to have the "best colored team in the world," but for whatever reason his wrecking crew didn't face a really top flight contender in 1910. Frank Leland took his Chicago Giants back to the Twin Cities in July however, where they easily won four out of five games from the Gophers to nab the "world's colored championship." "Cyclone" Joe Williams, a 24-year-old flame thrower from Texas, fanned 18 batters in winning two contests, while Felix Wallace cracked a couple of homers against his old mates.[45]

The eastern black ball scene was also fragmenting. The Philadelphia Giants disbanded in July 1911 shortly after their 21-year-old hurler "Cannonball" Dick Redding and his battery-mate Louis Santop joined the Lincoln Giants, a new Harlem-based squad assembled by Sol White. The Lincolns, owned by promoter brothers Jess and Eddie McMahon, helped mitigate the collapse of Nat Strong's league when John Connor's Royal Giants met the non-sanctioned club in a playoff. Eastern honors however, came down to a three-game set, each contested for a $1000 purse, between the Lincoln Giants and the Cuban Stars. Hall-of-Famer Jose Mendez started all three games for the Cubans and won twice, fanning 21 batters as the Islanders copped

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John Henry Lloyd, known as Pop, was one of two future Hall of Famers to play for the 1906 Champion Philadelphia Giants.

the series two games to one. Over 20,000 fans turned out to witness the first two contests at the American League Park in New York.[46]

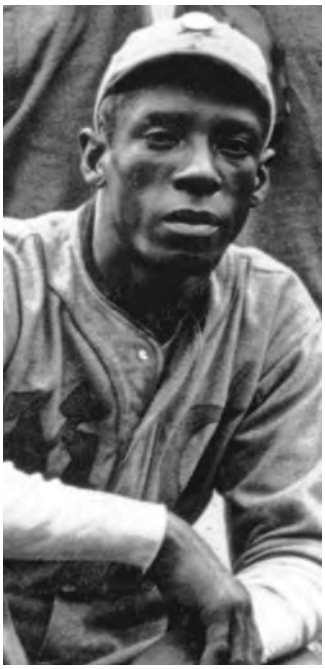
The 1911 western title was decided in July, when Rube Foster's newly minted Chicago American Giants downed Frank Leland's heavily favored Chicago Giants six games to two. Playing before record-breaking crowds at Schorling Park, the American Giants rotation of Bill Lindsay, Pat Dougherty, and Frank Wickware outpitched "Cyclone" Joe Williams, Walter Ball, and "Big" Bill Gatewood to annex the series, while their teammate Pete Hill punched out 14 hits, including three doubles and a homer. The loss cost Leland a $500 side bet with Foster and triggered his club's decline, with most of his top players seeking employment elsewhere the following season.[47]

During the ensuing decade, the leading Eastern black club would often venture west in late summer, usually to play the American Giants for the "Independent" championship of the United States. Although their title claims were rather presumptuous, the Brooklyn Royal Giants invaded Chicago in 1912, but met with little success, being swept in six games by Foster's men. The Royals returned to the Windy City in 1914 under the management of Nat Strong, who had wrested control of the squad from John Connor, but despite the presence of emerging ace William "Dizzy" Dismukes, Brooklyn lost all seven games with the American Giants.[48]

Sol White wrote in 1906 that "when teams travel to a far section of the country to meet for a championship struggle, there is always given to the visitors a most hearty welcome." Things had changed by July 1913, when Rube Foster brought his American Giants to New York. After splitting four contests with the Royal Giants, Foster trotted out Frank Wickware to pitch the opener against the Lincoln Giants at Olympic Field. Problematically, the "Red Ant" had accepted $100 to start for the Lincolns only a few days before, and the managers of the two clubs argued for over an hour as to Wickware's eligibility before the match was called off. In the four games the clubs did play, Joe Williams pitched the Lincolns to two victories; the clubs battered each other to an 11–11 tie; and the American Giants staged a furious ninth-inning rally to pull out the fourth contest 6–5. The teams were to play a fifth time, but Foster protested the Lincoln's substitution of Royal Giants Frank Earle for the ailing Jude Gans, and the game was cancelled, disappointing another large gathering.[49]

Enormous crowds also turned out at Schorling Park when the teams reconvened in Chicago a week later. Foster imported "Steel Arm" Johnny Taylor to start one contest and his Hall-of-Fame brother Ben to play first base, but to no avail as the Lincolns captured six of ten games to decisively win the championship. Joe Williams was the key to the scrap, winning five times, while tossing nearly 65 innings for the pitching-depleted Easterners. John Henry Lloyd batted .319 for the New York squad before being injured, and the ageless wonder Grant "Home Run" Johnson chipped in with a .316 mark. As usual, Pete Hill led the Chicago cause with a .333 average, but he did not register an extra base hit. Even notorious sore loser Foster allowed that the Lincolns' "great playing and wonderful defense was never surpassed, if equaled on any diamond," although he also blamed the Chicago fans for not rooting vociferously enough for his squad.[50]

In late August it was reported that several Lincoln Giants hadn't been paid their full salaries in weeks because of financial reverses the McMahons had incurred from their boxing promotions. After running afoul of Nat Strong, the brothers lost control of their club to New York hustler Charley Harvey. Undeterred, the pair formed a new squad called the Lincoln Stars in the spring of 1914, and eventually signed up several members of their old cast including John Lloyd, Dick Redding, and center fielder Spottswood Poles. The two Lincoln outfits would not play each other, but the McMahon team went to Chicago in the summer of 1915, splitting a classic ten-game set with the American Giants before Foster's club edged them four games to three in a 1916 rematch.[51]



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Jose Mendez started all three games for the Cuban Stars and won twice to capture "Eastern" championship honors in 1911 over the Lincoln Giants.

The season of 1915 also found the American Giants in a bitter regional imbroglio with the Indianapolis A.B.C.'s. The Hoosier club, under the management of cagey South Carolinian Charles Isham Taylor, featured a devastating lineup that included C.I.'s brother Ben, shortstop Elwood "Bingo" DeMoss, and 18-year-old center fielder Oscar Charleston. Foster's club took three out of five June games from the talented Indianapolis squad at Schorling Park, with soft tossing "Dizzy" Dismukes garnering the two A.B.C. wins. A month later at Indianapolis's Federal League Park, the "Taylorites" beat the Giants four straight times to eliminate Chicago from "the colored championship of America," but not before Foster pulled his team from the field in the first contest, complaining of poor playing conditions. Pete Hill was allegedly struck on the nose by a police officer, C.I. Taylor and Chicago second baseman Harry Bauchman got into a shoving match, and another local cop threatened to "blow Rube's brains out." A motivated Pete Hill slammed four home runs in the final two matches, while an incensed Rube Foster declared that C.I. Taylor was "down and dirty," an "ingrate" and a "stool pigeon," after which the A.B.C.'s manager threatened a libel suit.[52]

Foster and Taylor met in Indianapolis in July 1916 to bury the hatchet and schedule another round of games beginning in late August. Any thought that the clubs' behavior might improve was quickly dispelled in the opener in Chicago when the A.B.C.'s Bingo DeMoss took a swing at umpire Harry Goeckel after being called out on a close play at home. C.I. Taylor was tossed out of game two for arguing with the arbiter and the American Giants proceeded to take three out of the first four contests, before the finale ended in a 3–3 tie.[53]

The series resumed in Indianapolis in late October. The Giants copped the first game 5–3, before "Dizzy" Dismukes pitched the A.B.C.'s to three victories and the Indianapolis squad won another contest by forfeit when Rube Foster pulled his club off the field after being ejected for refusing to remove a fielder's mitt while coaching at first base. The championship belonged to Taylor's nine again, although Foster groused that as twelve games had been originally agreed to, it was "impossible" for either side to claim victory.[54]

Unable to beat the A.B.C.'s, Rube swiped one of their best players, Bingo DeMoss, and signed eastern ace "Cannonball" Dick Redding for good measure. Between June and early September 1917, the American Giants and Taylor's outfit faced off 25 times, with Foster's revitalized club taking 19 out of those contests. Dick Redding won eight out of his nine decisions against the Hoosier squad, and put the exclamation mark on the Giants' championship on August 19 by dominating the A's 4–2 before 7,000 unhappy fans at Indianapolis's Washington Park.[55]

The American Giants' next regional challenge came in 1919 from the Detroit Stars, a newly formed club featuring several Foster cast-offs including player-manager Pete Hill. The clubs began their series in June, and the Giants, propelled by the devastating Hall-of-Fame outfield tandem of Oscar Charleston and Cristobal Torriente, captured five of the first six contests. The talented Stars, featuring blackball greats John Donaldson, Jose Mendez, "Candy" Jim Taylor, and emerging slugger Edgar Wesley, rebounded to win the next five games, outscoring the Giants 50–27, before Chicago ace Dick Whitworth stopped the carnage and evened things up with a 9–1 victory.[56]

Due to the terrible Chicago race riots that summer, the Giants were forced to contest most of the playoff in the Motor City. The clubs settled matters during a weekend in early August. Ironman twirler Andrew "Stringbean" Williams allowed but two safeties, outdueling the great Donaldson as Chicago took the opener, 2–1. Veteran Giants third baseman Bill Francis doubled and tripled the next day as the "Fosters" wrapped up another title with a 5–3 triumph.[57]

While the American Giants dominated the west, the Brooklyn Royal Giants and Lincoln Giants battled for eastern supremacy. From 1912 through 1919 the two squads clashed in doubleheaders about every other Sunday and almost always on Memorial Day,

Independence Day, and Labor Day. At stake was the eastern crown which was captured by the Lincolns in 1912, 1913, 1914, and 1917. The Royal Giants finally broke through and annexed the title in 1916, while in 1918 each squad won nine games against each other and ran out of season before playing off their tie.[58]

For several seasons, fireballers Joe Williams and Dick Redding gave the Lincolns a devastating 1–2 punch, before the "Cannonball" departed for other pastures. From 1911 through 1916 (save 1915 when the Royal Giants were on hiatus) Redding posted a 17–7–1 record versus the lads from Brooklyn and on two occasions he started and won both ends of a doubleheader against them. "Cyclone" Joe was victorious in 24 out of 35 decisions against the Royal Giants between 1912 and 1920, including six shutouts.[59]

The two aces "held grievances against each other for some time" however, and Redding matriculated to the Lincoln Stars and the American Giants before hooking up with the Royal Giants in the spring of 1918. Pitching against each other for the first time, Redding posted three straight decisions over Williams before being called up by the US Army. The "Cannonball" briefly returned to Brooklyn the next season, and the Cyclone edged him 1–0 in the series opener, tossing a no-hitter while fanning 12 batters, before the "biggest gathering" in Olympic Field history.[60]

In the spring of 1919, former Brooklyn owner John W. Connor retooled a middling Atlantic City nine called the Bacharach Giants by raiding his old club for Dick Redding, John Henry Lloyd, and catcher Ernest Gatewood, leaving the Royal Giants lineup "practically shot to pieces." A similarly depleted Lincoln squad waxed the Brooklyn squad in nine of their 12 meetings that summer, led by Joe Williams, "without whom there would be no team."[61]

Neither the Lincolns nor Brooklyn would play Connor's renegades, but he discovered a suitable foil from the Philadelphia suburb of Darby. Over the course of the preceding decade, postal employee Ed Bolden had transformed the Hilldale Athletic Club boy team into a powerhouse professional outfit, featuring such up and comers as outfielder George Johnson and spit-balling ace Phil Cockrell. Hilldale won three out of the first five games with the Atlantic City nine in early June, before their veteran center fielder Spottswood Poles jumped to the Bacharachs. When the two squads played again in late August before 15,000 frenzied fans in Atlantic City, Hilldale catcher Yank Deas "said something to Poles in whispered tones," instigating a fight between the two that escalated into a bench-clearing brawl that was finally stopped by the Atlantic City

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By 1911 Foster, now called "Rube," had formed the Chicago American Giants and they downed Frank Leland's Chicago Giants six games to two.

police. The Darbyites pulled out a 1–0, ten-inning victory, but the Bacharachs, due in no small part to 11 base hits by Poles, proceeded to win the next five games to capture the eastern crown.[62]

Both the Detroit Stars and Chicago American Giants ventured east in the summer of 1919 to play Hilldale and the Bacharachs, with the four clubs splitting a handful of games. The emergence of so many financially viable professional teams led to the organization of the Midwestern-based Negro National League in February 1920. Not surprisingly, Foster's American Giants, led by Cristobal Torriente, southpaw twirler Dave Brown, and third baseman Dave Malarcher proved to be the association's dominant force, capturing the first three pennants.[63]

Rube Foster's entreaties to expand the NNL out east were rebuffed by the area moguls, although Connor's Bacharachs joined as an associate member. Various antipathies among club owners left the 1920 eastern title chase in a muddled state. The Bacharach Giants refused to play the Royal Giants or Hilldale because of their "league agreement," although player raids and lawsuits between the squads probably also played a part. Conversely, the New York Age doubted the Lincoln Giants could call themselves champions "and have anyone except their owners recognize their claim unless they play every team in the field to oppose them."[64]

In June Lincoln captain Joe Williams approached John Connor about "crossing bats" and the clubs

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

Dick Redding was one of the former Lincoln Giants who joined the Lincoln Stars in 1914.

scheduled two midsummer doubleheaders at Brooklyn's Ebbets Field. Dick Redding pitched his club to three victories, including a pair of shut outs over Joe Williams as the Bacharachs claimed a share of the eastern championship. A crowd of about 16,000 "clamorous fans" watched the initial clash, while threatening weather and a transit strike kept the crowd down to about 10,000 for the second double-dip.[65]

In August the Bacharachs headed west to take on the American Giants. The Bees captured the first match in Gary, Indiana, by a score of 11–4, but lost all three played at Schorling Park. The Atlantic City outfit's belligerent behavior was also called into question, with third baseman Oliver Marcelle being censured "for making immoral movements with parts of his body that would resemble a hoochy-coochy dancer." In October the two clubs hooked up again and divided a string of games played throughout the eastern seaboard, with Dick Redding downing the Westerners three times, twice by shutout. The series concluded with a Sunday doubleheader at Ebbets Field. A ninth-inning triple by Chicago pinch hitter George "Tubby" Dixon off Redding gave the American Giants a 2–0 win in the opener, and they grabbed the five-frame finale 1–0 as well.[66]

Under the leadership of John Henry Lloyd, the Brooklyn Royal Giants underwent a revival in 1920 and by season's end were also proclaiming themselves "Colored World Champions." In the first half of the season, the Royals copped three out of five games from their old rivals, the Lincoln Giants, with two of their wins coming on ninth-inning rallies. From June through mid-October the Brooklyn squad battled Hilldale in another "championship series." Brooklyn won six games against four defeats and two ties, as John Lloyd collected 14 hits in the series, including a three-run game-winning homer, and turned "many base hits into outs by his flashing fielding." Lloyd left Brooklyn the following year to manage the Columbus Buckeyes and by the end of the decade the Royal Giants had degenerated into "a mediocre bunch without an outstanding player."[67]

Hilldale became an NNL associate member in 1921 and resumed their rivalry with the Bacharach Giants. The two split 18 decisions from June through October, with the Darbyites barely outscoring their rivals 96–92. Connor and Bolden scheduled a doubleheader at New York's Dyckman Oval on October 30 to break the tie. Phil Cockrell scattered five hits while Otto Briggs, Louis Santop, and Chaney White all homered in Hilldale's 7–2 triumph. The Quaker nine was leading 2–1 in the second contest when it was called because of darkness and the title was theirs.[68]

Foster's Giants were also prowling the East that October, playing both contenders. In a series that lasted over three weeks, the American Giants bested the Bacharachs by a single game. Dave Brown shaded Dick Redding 5–4 in the decider, aided by Dave Malarcher's sixth-inning home run. Chicago also took two out of the first three contests against Hilldale, as left fielder Jimmy Lyons ran wild on the bases, stealing home twice. After a hard fought 5–5 tie, Bolden's ace Phil Cockrell downed the Giants for the second time, clubbing three hits on his own behalf including a homer, in a 15–5 rout that evened the series. Former American Giants twirler Dick Whitworth shut down his old mates on three hits in the last game. His new teammates reached curve-baller Bill Holland for 11 safeties, and Hilldale wrested "championship honors" with a 7–1 triumph. The predictably ungracious Rube Foster moaned about the ditch-lined outfield at Hilldale Park and that the Darby club refused to abide by the "playing rules."[69]

John Henry Lloyd displaced Dick Lundy as manager/shortstop of the New York version of the Bacharach Giants the following season. From Memorial Day through the Fourth of July, the Bees and Hilldale played five doubleheaders before crowds averaging in excess of 10,000 fans, to decide the eastern crown. John Connor's club captured six of ten games in a heavy-hitting series, although Bolden's outfit

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At age 18, Oscar Charleston played with the Indianapolis A.B.C.'s in many 1915 grudge matches against Foster's club—and by 1919 would join them.

outscored them 67–61. John Lloyd registered a trio of three-hit games for the Gotham crew, while George Johnson laced over 15 base hits for Hilldale, and mashed four home runs in the Memorial Day twin-bill in Darby.[70]

The Bacharachs had opened the season by beating the American Giants three out of five times in Chicago and they returned in August to renew their struggle with the NNL leaders. The clubs halved the first four games at Schorling Park, with catcher Julio Rojo twice driving home the game-winning run in the Bacharachs final at bat and the American Giants bunting their way to a 7–2 triumph in the fourth match despite managing only four base hits.[71]

Both owners desperately wanted to win the finale, which turned out to be "one of the greatest games played anywhere," replete with "brilliant fielding, eight fast double plays, and catches after long runs." Bacharach twirler Harold Treadwell fanned 12 and scattered eight hits while blanking the American Giants for 19 innings. But his teammates could do nothing with Chicago starter Ed "Huck" Rile or Dave Brown, who came on in relief in the fifth. The jug-eared lefty allowed only six singles for the next 15 frames, and struck out 12 batters, including a bases-loaded punch-out of George Shively in the top of the 18th inning. In the bottom of the 20th, Cristobal Torriente drew a walk off Treadwell, was sacrificed to second, and scored the game's only run on a single by Dave Malarcher, beating weak-armed right fielder Ramiro Ramirez's throw home by five feet.[72]

Three days later, Hilldale followed the Bacharachs into Chicago for another five game set. Spitballer Phil Cockrell did Treadwell and Brown one better, tossing a no-hitter while walking only three batters during the Easterners' 5–0 triumph. The American Giants won the next two contests before Cockrell, who "throws a mean, mean baseball," flummoxed Chicago 5–3 on four hits. It was déjà vu all over again in the bottom of the 12th inning of the deciding game, when Giants first baseman Leroy Grant drew a walk and later beat a throw home by Hilldale's Hall-of-Fame shortstop Judy Johnson to give the Fosterites a 7–6 win.[73]

In 1923 both Hilldale and the Bacharachs severed their association with the NNL and threw in with Nat Strong to form the Eastern Colored League. During the next two years, the ECL raided the western circuit for several players, including Hall-of-Famers Oscar Charleston, Raleigh "Biz" Mackey, and Ben Taylor, thus rendering any regular or postseason activity between the two organizations extremely unpalatable.[74]

In early September 1924, NNL Czar Rube Foster and the ECL owners hammered out their differences in "one of the most peaceful meetings in the history of organized Colored baseball," and agreed to stage a best of nine game "world's series" in October. After nearly 60 years the blackball championship had seemingly hit the big time.[75]

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There should be little dispute that the majority of the blackball playoffs were contested by squads of big-league caliber. Previous research has revealed that the African American teams beat major leaguers in head to head competition nearly 60 percent of the time and defeated minor-league outfits at about the same clip the American and National league clubs did.[76]

While no one is asking the New York Yankees to give back any of the titles they won during the segregated era, it seems obvious that more recognition needs to be given to the black champions and their achievements. In the fall of 1905, Philadelphia Giants owner Walter "Slick" Schlichter challenged the winner of the upcoming World Series to determine, "who can play base ball best—the white or the black American." Schlichter's defy was ignored by the Philadelphia Athletics and New York Giants, prompting Sol White to postulate:

> Of course, there is a possibility of the colored man winning and that would be distasteful to many followers of the white team, but true sport recognizes no color nor clan and it should always be, may the best man win.[77] ■

Black Ball Champions and Championship Games: 1866–1923

KEY

E = East
W = West
S = South
SLCB = Southern League of Colored Baseballists
MSL = Middle States Base Ball League
EISL = Eastern Inter-State League
NYPSL = New York Semi-Professional Baseball League
ILIPBC = International League of Independent Professional Baseball Clubs
NACBC = National Association of Colored Baseball Clubs of the United States and Cuba
ILCBC = International League of Colored Baseball Clubs
NNL = Negro National League
ECL = Eastern Colored League

NOTES

Undisputed champions are depicted in bold type. Teams that won league championships without a playoff are shown in Italics. (Single game contests unless otherwise noted.)

1866	(E) Albany (NY) Bachelors defeat Philadelphia Pythian 70–15
	Albany (NY) Bachelors defeat Philadelphia Excelsior 44–28
1867	(E) Philadelphia Pythian defeat Philadelphia Excelsior 35–16
	Philadelphia Pythian and Washington Mutual, Tie 1–1 (series)
	Philadelphia Pythian and Washington Alert, Tie 1–1 (series)
	Albany (NY) Bachelors defeat Brooklyn Unique 50–4
	Philadelphia Pythian defeat Albany (NY) Bachelors.
	Philadelphia Excelsior defeat Albany (NY) Bachelors 57–23
	Philadelphia Excelsior defeat Brooklyn Unique 42–35
	Philadelphia Pythian defeat Boston Resolute 50–6
	Brooklyn Monitors defeat Philadelphia Excelsior
	Philadelphia Pythian defeat Monrovia of Harrisburg (PA) 59–27
	Brooklyn Monitors defeat Brooklyn Unique 49–17
1868	(E) Philadelphia Pythian defeat Washington Mutual 49–33
	Philadelphia Pythian defeat Washington Alert 40–34
	Philadelphia Pythian defeat Brooklyn Monitors 27–9
1869	(E) Utica (NY) Fearless defeat Heavy Hitters of Canajoharie (NY) 2–0 (series)
	Lone Star Club of Harlem (NY) defeat Brooklyn Unique (single game)
1870	(E) Washington Mutual defeat Utica (NY) Fearless 18–10
	(W) Chicago Blue Stockings defeat Rockford (IL) Pink Stockings 2–1 (series)
1871	(E) Philadelphia Pythian defeat Washington Mutual 2–0 (series)
	(W) Chicago Uniques defeat Chicago Blue Stockings 39–5
	Chicago Uniques (W) and Philadelphia Pythian (E), Tie 1–1 (series
1873	(E) Brooklyn Ocean defeat Lone Star Club of Harlem (NY) 18–11 (single game)
	Washington Mutual defeat Washington Alert 3–0 (series)
1874	(E) Brooklyn Ocean defeat Brooklyn Quicksteps 12–9 (single game)
1875	(W) Chicago Uniques and St. Louis Blue Stockings, Tie 2–2
1876	(E) Harrisburg (PA) Olympics defeat Harrisburg (PA) Tyroleans 2–1
	Washington Keystones defeat the Douglass Club 10–9 (single game)
	(W) St. Louis Blue Stockings defeat Chicago Uniques 2–0
1877	(E) Brooklyn Quicksteps defeat Lone Star Club of Jamaica (NY) 15–12 (single game)
	(S) Boston Club and Pickwick Club, Tie 1–1 in New Orleans, LA match play
1878	(E) Uniques defeat Keystones; Manhattans; Mutuals; and Douglass Club in Washington D.C. match play

Black Ball Champions and Championship Games: 1866–1923 *(cont.)*

1879 (E) Mutuals and Uniques, Tie 1–1 in Washington D.C. match play. Mutuals and Douglass Club, Tie 1–1 in Washington D.C. match play

1880 (E) Douglass Club defeats Manhattans; Keystones; Uniques; and Eagles in Washington D.C. Colored League

1881 (S) A.J. Dumonts defeat Aetnas; Bostons; and Pickwicks in New Orleans Colored League
(W) St. Louis Black Stockings defeat St. Louis Blue Stockings 14–10 (single game)

1882 (E) Philadelphia Orions defeat Washingtons of Long Branch, NJ 10–8 (single game)

1883 (E) Philadelphia Orions defeat Douglass Club of Washington 3–1
West Ends of Long Branch, NJ defeat Crescents of Princeton, NJ (single game) 20–2
(W) St. Louis Black Stockings defeat Louisville Mutuals 6–0

1884 (E) Jersey City Orientals defeat Newarks; Brooklyn Alpines; and Brooklyn Remsens in match play
(W) Chicago Gordons defeat Louisville Falls City
St. Louis Eclipse defeat St. Louis Black Stockings 5–0

1885 (E) Brooklyn Alpines defeat Brooklyn Remsens 2–0
Argyle Hotel Athletics (Babylon, NY) defeat Philadelphia Orions 6–4 (single game)
(W) St. Louis Black Stockings defeat St. Louis Eclipse, 2–0
(S) New Orleans Unions and W.L. Cohens, Tie 1–1–1
St. Louis Eclipse (W) defeat New Orleans Unions (S)
St. Louis Eclipse (W) defeat W. L. Cohens (S)

1886 (E) Cuban Giants defeat New York Gorhams 25–4 (single game)
Cuban Giants defeat Brooklyn Alpines 24–0 (single game)
Hudson Club of Jersey City defeats Brooklyn Alpines 2–0
Hudson Club of Jersey City defeats New York Gorhams 2–0
(W) Louisville Falls City defeat Chicago Gordons 2–1
(SLCB) Memphis Eclipse and New Orleans Unions, Tie 3–3–1
Louisville Falls City (W) defeat Memphis Eclipse (SLCB)
(S) New Orleans Unions defeat W.L. Cohens 3–1–1

1887 (E) Cuban Giants defeat New York Gorhams 5–1
Cuban Giants defeat Pittsburgh Keystones 3–1
(W) Chicago Unions defeat Chicago Uniques 2–0
Cuban Giants (E) defeat Louisville Falls City (W) 2–0

1888 (E) Cuban Giants defeat Pittsburgh Keystones; New York Gorhams;
Norfolk Red Stockings in round-robin tournament
New Orleans Pinchbacks (S) defeat Chicago Unions (W) 2–1
New Orleans Pinchbacks (S) defeat St. Louis West Ends (W) 4–1–1

1889 (MSL) Cuban Giants defeat New York Gorhams 3–2–1
New Orleans Pinchbacks (S) defeat Chicago Unions (W); Chicago Resolutes (W) in round-robin tournament
New Orleans Pinchbacks (S) defeat St. Louis Mohawks (W) 2–1
St. Louis West Ends (W) defeat New Orleans Pinchbacks (S) 2–1–1

1890 (EISL) York, Pennsylvania Colored Monarchs
(E) Cuban Giants defeat New York Gorhams 11–2 (single game)

1891 (NYPSL) New York Gorhams defeat Cuban Giants 8–6
(W) Chicago Unions defeat Chicago Uniques 8–0 (single game)

1892 (E) Cuban Giants defeat All-Washingtons 3–0
Cuban Giants defeat Lake Champlain Colored Champions 18–1 (single game)

Black Ball Champions and Championship Games: 1866–1923 *(cont.)*

1893	(W) Chicago Unions defeat Chicago Goodwins
1894	**Cuban Giants (E)** defeat Chicago Unions (W) 2–0
1895	(W) Page Fence Giants defeat Chicago Unions 3–0
1896	(W) Page Fence Giants defeat Chicago Unions 2–0
	Cuban X-Giants (E) defeat Chicago Unions (W) 2–0.
	Page Fence Giants (W) defeat Cuban X-Giants (E) 11–8
1897	(E) Cuban X-Giants defeat Cuban Giants 2–1–1
	(W) Chicago Unions defeat Page Fence Giants 7–6 (single game)
	Cuban X-Giants (E) defeat Louisville Brotherhood (W) 2–0
	Chicago Unions (W) and Cuban X-Giants (E), Tie 2–2
	Chicago Unions (W) defeat Memphis Cliffords (S) 3–0
	Chicago Unions (W) defeat Cuban Giants (E) 3–0
1898	(E) Cuban X-Giants defeat Cuban Giants 3–0
	Cuban X-Giants (E) defeat Chicago Unions (W) 6–2–1
1899	(W) Chicago Columbia Giants defeat Chicago Unions 3–0
	Cuban X-Giants (E) defeat Chicago Unions (W) 11–7
	Cuban X Giants (E) defeat Chicago Columbia Giants (W) 7–4
1900	(W) Chicago Columbia Giants and Chicago Unions, Tie 1–1–1
	Chicago Columbia Giants (W) defeat Cuban Giants (E)
	Chicago Unions (W) defeat Cuban X-Giants (E) 12–5
1901	(W) Chicago Columbia Giants defeat Chicago Union Giants 2–0
1902	(W) Chicago Columbia Giants and Chicago Union Giants, Tie 3–3
1903	(E) Cuban X-Giants defeat Philadelphia Giants 5–2
	(W) Algona (IA) Brownies defeat Chicago Union Giants 11–4
1904	(E) Philadelphia Giants defeat Cuban X-Giants 2–1
	Cuban X-Giants (E) defeat Chicago Union Giants (W)
1905	(E) Philadelphia Giants defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants 3–0
	(W) Chicago Union Giants and Leland Giants, Tie 1–1–2
1906	(ILIPBC) Philadelphia Giants defeat Cuban X-Giants 3–1
	(W) Leland Giants defeat Chicago Union Giants 2–0
	Philadelphia Giants (E) defeat Leland Giants (W) 9–1 (single game)
	Philadelphia Giants (E) defeat Chicago Union Giants (W)
1907	(NACBC) Philadelphia Giants defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants; Cuban Giants; and Cuban Stars
	(S) San Antonio Black Bronchos defeat Birmingham Giants 4–1–1
1908	(NACBC) Brooklyn Royal Giants defeat Philadelphia Giants; Cuban Giants; and Cuban Stars
	(S) San Antonio Black Bronchos defeat Birmingham Giants 4–3
	Leland Giants (W) and Philadelphia Giants (E), Tie 3–3
1909	(ILCBC) Brooklyn Royal Giants defeat Philadelphia Giants
	Cuban Stars defeat Philadelphia Giants
	Brooklyn Royal Giants defeat Cuban Stars 3–1
	(W) St. Paul Gophers defeat Leland Giants 3–2
1910	(ILCBC) Brooklyn Royal Giants defeat Philadelphia Giants
	Cuban Stars defeat Philadelphia Giants
	Brooklyn Royal Giants and Cuban Stars, Tie 2–2
	(W) Chicago Giants defeat St. Paul Gophers 4–1
1911	(E) Cuban Stars defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants

Black Ball Champions and Championship Games: 1866–1923 *(cont.)*

	Lincoln (NY) Giants defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants
	Cuban Stars defeat Lincoln (NY) Giants 2–1
	(W) Chicago American Giants defeat Chicago Giants 11–4
	Lincoln Giants (E) defeat Chicago American Giants (W) 6–4 (single game)
	Chicago American Giants (W) defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants (E) 8–7 (single game)
	Chicago American Giants (W) defeat Cuban Stars (E) 5–4–1
1912	(E) Lincoln (NY) Giants defeat Cuban Stars 4–3–1
	Lincoln (NY) Giants defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants
	(W) Chicago American Giants defeat St. Louis Giants 9–7
	St. Louis Giants (W) and Brooklyn Royal Giants (E), Tie 3–3
	Chicago American Giants (W) defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants (E) 6–0
	Lincoln (NY) Giants (E) defeat St. Louis Giants (W) 7–2
1913	(E) Lincoln Giants defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants
	Brooklyn Royal Giants (E) and Chicago American Giants (W), Tie 2–2
	Lincoln (NY) Giants (E) defeat Chicago American Giants (W) 8–5–1
1914	(E) Lincoln (NY) Giants defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants 10–9
	Chicago American Giants (W) defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants (E) 7–0
1915	(W) Indianapolis A.B.C.s defeat Chicago American Giants 6–3
	Chicago American Giants (W) and Lincoln (NY) Stars (E), Tie 5–5
	Indianapolis A.B.C.s (W) and Lincoln (NY) Stars (E), Tie 5–5–1
1916	(E) Brooklyn Royal Giants defeat Lincoln (NY) Giants 9–8
	(W) Indianapolis A.B.C.s defeat Chicago American Giants 5–4–1
	Indianapolis A.B.C.'s (W) defeat Lincoln (NY) Stars (E) 4–1
	Chicago American Giants (W) defeat Lincoln (NY) Stars (E) 4–3
1917	(E) Lincoln (NY) Giants defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants 8–5–1
	(W) Chicago American defeat Indianapolis A.B.Cs 19–4–2
1918	(E) Brooklyn Royal Giants and Lincoln (NY) Giants, Tie 9–9
1919	(E) Lincoln (NY) Giants defeat Brooklyn Royal Giants 9–3
	Atlantic City Bacharach Giants defeat Hilldale 7–5
	(W) Chicago American Giants defeat Detroit Stars 8–6
	Detroit Stars (W) and Atlantic City Bacharach Giants (E), Tie 1–1
	Detroit Stars (W) and Hilldale (E), Tie 3–3
	Chicago American Giants (W) and Hilldale (E), Tie 1–1
1920	(E) Brooklyn Royal Giants defeat Lincoln (NY) Giants 3–2
	Atlantic City-New York Bacharach Giants defeat Lincoln (NY) Giants 3–1
	Brooklyn Royal Giants defeat Hilldale 6–4–2
	Chicago American Giants (NNL) defeat Atlantic City-New York Bacharach Giants (E) 9–5–2
1921	(E) Hilldale defeats Atlantic City-New York Bacharach Giants 10–9
	Chicago American Giants (NNL) defeat Atlantic City-New York Bacharach Giants (E) 7–5
	Hilldale (E) defeats Chicago American Giants (NNL) 3–2–1
1922	(E) New York Bacharach Giants defeat Hilldale 6–4
	Chicago American Giants (NNL) and New York Bacharach Giants (E), Tie 5–5
	Chicago American Giants (NNL) defeat Hilldale (E) 3–2
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Beer Tanks and Barbed Wire

Bill Barnie and Baltimore

Marty Payne

> The American is gloomy editorially, hopeful reportedly. The *News* speaks its mind as does the *Herald*, while the *Sun* is unconscious of what is going on. The German papers are "swearing in untranslatable Dutch."
>
> —*Baltimore Daily News*, July 12, 1886

Billie Barnie had taken the reins of the Baltimore Club of the major league American Association in March of 1883. He was determined that the fans not suffer through another dismal season like the previous one. That aggregation, led by Henry Myers, had been hammered in local newspapers with headlines like "Bad Game of Ball—Disband or get Better," "They Cannot Play Ball," "Trying to Play Base Ball," and "A Comedy of Errors."[1] To this end, Barnie went to New York City to sign Frank Larkin to play second base.

On his arrival Barnie found his projected infielder just released from custody for the attempted murder of his father. The new Baltimore manager insisted Larkin accompany him immediately back to Baltimore to avoid further trouble, but Larkin convinced Barnie to lend him $200 to settle some legal fees, and gave the promise to follow in a couple of days. Larkin couldn't stay out of trouble that long. New York City police responded to a domestic disturbance call at an apartment. The police were at the door when a shot rang out. They then forced their entry as four slugs blew through the door, narrowly missing the officers. Once they were inside, Larkin pulled a razor from his pocket and slit his wrists. Leaning on a window sill was the wounded Mrs. Larkin, her clothes covered in blood from a wound and feigning death in fear for her life from her deranged husband.[2]

Barnie was out $200 and a second baseman in what would prove to be a perennial problem for the Orioles. In 1886 a scribe acidly pointed out, "What Baltimore needs is a complete system of sewage says the *Herald*. Most people thought what Baltimore needed was a second baseman."[3]

Although probably not the worst in the American Association, Baltimore did have a reputation as a "tough town" to play in. *The Sporting Life* reported in 1885, "The Baltimore newspapers are largely responsible for the poor play of the local club. Constant abuse, fault finding and ridicule would demoralize any team."[4] One opinionated newspaper retorted, "Baltimore getting reputation as a tough town to play in. Management alone cannot be faulted for its poor judgment. Players prefer to play elsewhere for less money than play in Baltimore. Everything is fine as long as he is perfect but one mistake and he is ridiculed and jeered, not only at the park, but on the thoroughfares."[5] Frank Bancroft, manager in Cleveland, publicly wondered why Baltimore had not won more games in 1883. "I don't know what to say." he responded to a reporter's question, "Some have said it was the management: it is said they drink occasionally." Bancroft went on to say he would gladly take Oriole pitchers Bob Emslie and Hardie Henderson, along with outfielder Jimmie Clinton.[6]

In their first season the new Baltimore front office of Alphonse T. Houck and Billie Barnie faced criticism

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Frank C. Bancroft, pictured here as manager of the Cincinnati Reds in 1909, from the Ramly Cigarettes baseball cards distributed by the American Tobacco Company. While managing Cleveland in 1883 he was quoted as saying Baltimore's problem may have been, "it is said they drink occasionally."

for having a "cheap nine." One reporter published the names of the players he thought needed to be released, including John Fox, Bill Gallagher, Dave Eggler, and Kick Kelly.[7] Barnie was quick to defend his squad. "They say my nine is a cheap one; but is it? I am paying nearly as much money as St. Louis, and quite as much as the Athletics. I have not a cheap man with me."[8] Houck and Barnie failed to differentiate between expensive and good. Three years without improvement would elicit a bold declaration: "Some Men Must Go."[9]

Baseball fans were routinely greeted with headlines from the local papers including "Playing Like Old Women" and "Those Poor Orioles." Later, "It Rained and Barnie's Base Ball Club Escaped Defeat."[10] One reporter carped, "The field management of the Baltimore Orioles is scarcely above the level of the Juvenile nines which play ball on the vacant lots of the city." Later he noted, "Price of ham is 9 cents a pound. That would be a high price for some of the hams playing for Baltimore." A day after the reporter had called for the release of several players in 1883, it was pointed out of the catcher, "With Kelly behind the bat the Baltimores can never win a game unless by a miracle… They might as well put a picket fence in to catch."[11]

Hardie Henderson, pictured here on his W.S. Kimball Champions baseball card from 1887 when he was with the Brooklyn Trolley Dodgers. He was fined more than once for drunkenness and trouble in Baltimore.

Matt Kilroy, pictured here on his 1887 D. Buchner & Company Gold Coin baseball card, was supposed to be the savior of the 1886 Orioles squad. He appeared in a league-leading 68 games, but finished 29–34 with the Orioles in the cellar.

BENJAMIN K. EDWARDS COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The national press blamed the local press for the city's bad reputation as a baseball town. The local press pointed the finger at everybody but themselves, while Association opponents pointed to management and player habits. They almost forgot the umpires.

In 1884 the home crowd was rankled by the bad calls of umpire Brennan. At one point hundreds stormed the field, including a man with a "huge revolver" who threatened to shoot the arbiter if he made one more slip-up. It took the police and both teams to clear the mob. After the game Brennan was slugged to the ground by a fan before being spirited to the Oriole club house, and then to Jimmie Clinton's home, where he literally waited for the first train out of town. The individual who punched Brennan was later fined one dollar. There was no report of any charges being filed against the man with the "huge revolver."[12] When an umpire was subsequently threatened, he was said to be "Brennanized." Barnie's reaction to this incident was to install barbed wire around the stands along with signs prohibiting rowdy behavior and abusive language. The sign reduced neither. The barbed wire was still in place in 1887 when a large number of fans worked their way through or over the wire to mingle with the players before the game. The police escorted the unusually good-natured crowd back to their seats without incident.[13]

But it was his players, not the fans, that Barnie had the most discipline problems with. In 1883 a headline ran, "Players Up All Night—One in Station House." There had been a masked ball at Kernan's Theater in Baltimore which attracted a large crowd that lingered into the early morning. Pitcher Hardie Henderson got in a "wrangle" over a girl that ended in three players getting locked up. As a result Rooney Sweeney was fined $100, and Henderson $150 for drunkenness. Bob Emslie and Gid Gardner were each fined $10 for being up late. The fines had little effect.[14]

The *Baltimore American* set the contentious tone for the 1884 campaign before the season began by announcing, "It would be well to remember the position of last year's Baltimore Club in the pennant race, which was largely due to the drunkenness of the men."[15] The Orioles wasted little time in showing nothing had changed. While the team was on a western road trip, Barnie let Gid Gardner sit in jail when arrested for beating a woman. Gardner caught up with the club in Toledo where he begged, and was granted, reinstatement. Barnie thought "the rest behind bars" had done him some good.[16] When the team got to

St. Louis, Gardner, Emslie, and Henderson joined up with Tip O'Neil and Fred Lewis of the Browns for a "jamboree" at a house kept by Maud Abbey. Late in the evening, O'Neil, for no stated reason, hurled a spittoon at the head of their hostess. Police were called in and Emslie and O'Neil were sober enough to make their escape through the yard. Gardner stayed behind to plead with the hostess not to press charges against his "pards," but Henderson and Lewis were arrested, and behaved so badly on the trip to the station house that "extreme measures" had to be taken. Gardner went to Barnie for help but the manager let Henderson sit in jail. Barnie fined Emslie $100 and Henderson $150, plus $35 for bail.[17] Pitchers Emslie and Henderson, the source of many of Barnie's headaches during the 1884 season, would account for 59 of the team's 63 wins that season.

The troubled Baltimore manager tried to improve the team's fortunes with the signing of Matt Kilroy for the 1886 season. Despite Kilroy appearing in a league-leading 68 games and compiling a 29–34 pitching record, Barnie could not keep his team out of the cellar. Late in June it was asserted that one third of the club "consists of cast off beer tanks."[18]] A few days later a 25–1 loss to Brooklyn was attributed to "fire water." It was said the team had been "universally drunk" that day in what was described as a "bold display of contempt for management." A.M. Henderson of the Baltimore front office defended the players saying that they were not drunk that day, nor any other day that Barnie had to come out of the stands to catch. Henderson went on to assert that the players were "gentlemanly and go to bed at 11:00 and rise at 9:00." There weren't many that believed him. A few days later it was observed that players seemed to "degenerate" once they got to Baltimore.[19]

If the players' off-field behavior frustrated the fans, so did their execution on the field. Players certainly did seem to degenerate in Baltimore in every facet. The press often accused players of "playing for their release." This meant that the player involved was playing under his ability in the hopes that the team would cut him, effectively making him a free agent. Often another Association, or a National League club was named to be in collusion with the perpetrator. Sometimes it was said to be done out of loyalty to a friend. When Gardner was sitting out a Barnie suspension, rumors spread that Emslie vowed not to win another game until his "pard" was reinstated.[20]

One of the greatest challenges Barnie faced during his nine-year tenure was a four-game series with the St. Louis Browns in June 1887. The Browns were owned by Chris Van der Ahe and he dominated the Association from boardroom to ballfield. They were led by Charles Comiskey, Arlie Latham, and Tricky Curt Welch. Browns baseball included heavy doses of arguing, bullying, "kicking," and fighting. On this particular road trip their antics had raised the ire in every city they visited, resulting in threats and assaults. By the time the team had reached Baltimore, the newspapers had dubbed their excursion the "Wild West Show." Barnie made public announcements, posted bills, and implored Baltimore fans to be on their best behavior—and presumably stay behind the barbed wire. It didn't work.

BENJAMIN K. EDWARDS COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Blondie Purcell, pictured here on his Old Judge baseball card, published by Goodwin & Company, was on the 1888 team, but the Baltimore American *described his play as "rotten."*

In the ninth inning of an 8–8 tie, Curt Welch of the Browns intentionally bowled over Baltimore's second baseman, Billie Greenwood. Many of the raucous crowd of nine thousand tumbled on to the field. One group from the bleachers was led by the mayor's secretary and Colonel Wm. H. Love. Love made straight for Welch and demanded his arrest. From the mob people called out, "Kill him!" and "Hit him in the head!" Oyster Burns, captain of the Orioles, hobbled out on his crutches to confront Browns captain Charlie Comiskey, and the scuffle nearly turned into a

brawl before the already burdened police intervened. But the contingent of officers could not get the fans back into the stands, so the game was called back to the eighth inning and declared a tie. Welch was ushered to the safety of the visiting clubhouse as a large crowd menacingly lingered outside. Dave Foutz—St. Louis pitcher, Maryland native, and fan favorite—went out and spoke to soothe the unruly throng. This served as enough of a diversion to get Welch out a side door and into a carriage for the nearest magistrate at Waverly Station. But the ruse was spotted and a pack of boys and young men chased the carriage on foot. Waiting at Waverly Station was another mob of inflamed fans who had anticipated the culprit's eventual destination. The Baltimore club posted the security for Welch to appear for a hearing the next day.

Welch thought he was out of the woods when he finally arrived at his lodgings at the Eutaw House that evening. He and a couple of teammates walked into a nearby cigar stor, and on their emergence found yet another menacing crowd milling about and closing in despite there being six uniformed police officers on hand. According to the report Welch tried to act nonchalant, but failed to light his cigar in a dozen attempts. Welch and his teammates left quickly around the corner with their escort, and no further incidents were reported. At the hearing the next day, Col. Love and the mayor's secretary were among the group vehemently pressing charges, but Greenwood testified that Welch had done nothing out of the ordinary, while team owners Van der Ahe of the Browns and Van der Horst of the Orioles wondered why the law was interfering with the events of a simple game of baseball. Welch was wisely held out of that day's game.[21]

Things didn't seem to get better for Barnie and the Orioles. In June 1888 Barnie complained that local reporters were trying to "drown them." Mike Griffin was one of the best center fielders in either league, and Blondie Purcell was a solid player, but the performances of both were described as "rotten." A day later it was declared by the press that the players were "bleeding the bank dry with their indifferent play."[22] Management's frustration seemed to spill over when a seven-year-old boy grabbed a ball hit into the stands and took off with it. The apparently well conditioned Secretary Hiss of the Baltimore front office chased the young lad ten full city blocks before he caught up and wrestled the ball from the exhausted miscreant. Not content with the mere recovery of team property, Hiss immediately dragged the thief before the nearest justice of the peace. Justice Hicks, exercising some modicum of reason, released the boy. It is presumed that Hiss then walked the ten blocks back to Oriole Park with his prized ball.[23]

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Ned Hanlon would be the man who eventually led a National League championship team in Baltimore, after Bill Barnie had departed.

Maybe things were improving for Barnie by 1889. There were no reports of jamborees, sprees, lives being in danger, or huge revolvers. While in Columbus, Ohio on a western road trip, Matt Kilroy and his teammates found a novel way to while away the hours between games. They would dangle a rod and line with food on the end from their hotel window to the alley below. When a rat took the bait, it was "jerked heavenward." Kilroy was not only the ace of the pitching staff, but the rat-catching rotation as well. He landed nineteen in a single afternoon. There was no mention of what they did with their catch.[24]

EPILOGUE

These incidents are but a few of the many that Billie Barnie had to contend with from his players, fans, press, and opponents during his nine-year tenure in Baltimore. He was 30 years old when he took the helm of the Baltimore Orioles and was mostly portrayed in the papers as the managing partner of the club. It was always Barnie that was mentioned as representing Baltimore at Association meetings, and at an early date he served on both the Scheduling and the Rules Committees. Later he would serve on the joint rules committee between the National League and the Association where he made his presence felt.[25]

By 1886 most teams employed "coachers" who would stray from their positions near first and third bases to home plate where they would yell, swear, and motion to catchers and umpires in order to distract them. Another tactic they employed was for the coacher on third to break down the line with the runner, and when the runner stopped, continue down the line in an attempt to decoy a wild throw, or simply rattle the pitcher. Barnie was so annoyed with these ploys that he telegraphed the Association with the suggestion that the coachers be confined to a box 15 feet by 35 feet, set up 75 feet from home plate. The Association rules committee immediately implemented the coaches box in the middle of the 1886 season.[26]

He also became frustrated with his team's unstructured pre-game warm up. Whether an innovation, or copied from another, Barnie insisted on organized batting practice. At first he simply stipulated that each player have his turn, but within a month he specified the number of pitches each was to hit.[27]

Despite never finishing higher than third place, Barnie also had a reputation as a keen eye for talent. While he was saddled with unsuccessful signings like "Whipoorwill" Goetz, "Frog-eyed" Mike Muldoon, and Kick Kelly, he did bring many talented players into the Association's fold. They included Oyster Burns, Matt Kilroy, Mike Griffin, Tommy Tucker, and Bill Shindle. Later he would leave Sadie McMahon, Wilbert Robinson, and John McGraw for Ned Hanlon's National League Champion Orioles.

In 1890 Baltimore attempted to enter the National League and was eventually blocked out of both major leagues. They ended up in the minor Atlantic Association, but when American Association teams began to fail at the box office in competition with the Players and National Leagues, the Orioles were called back to complete the schedule. Barnie was also tasked at that time with running the struggling Athletic franchise, and preserving their star players for the Association. For his contributions, Barnie was named vice president of the Association for the 1891 season.[28] Barnie terminated his association with the Orioles when he announced his resignation effective the end of the season. Baltimore would then be included in the consolidation into the National League with Ned Hanlon at the helm. ■

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1. Headlines are from the *Baltimore American*, June 8 1882, June 11, 1882, July 22, 1882, and July 26, 1882.
2. "Larkin On A Spree; Second Baseman in Trouble," *Baltimore American*, April 26, 1883.
3. *Baltimore Daily News*, April 13, 1886.
4. The quote from *Sporting Life* was reprinted in the *Baltimore Daily News*, July 6, 1885.
5. *Baltimore Daily News*, July 17, 1885.
6. *Baltimore American*, October 8, 1883.
7. On Houck see *Baltimore American* June 23, 1883; The call for release of players is from the *Baltimore American*, June 25, 1883.
8. *Baltimore American*, July 1, 1883 as cited from the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*.
9. *Baltimore Daily News*, July 19, 1886.
10. *Baltimore American*, June 25, 1885 and August 30, 1885. *Baltimore Daily News*, August 21, 1888.
11. On the comparison to Juvenile nines see *Baltimore Daily News*, June 4, 1886. The comparison to ham is from the *Baltimore Daily News*, July 6, 1886. The criticism of Kelly is from the *Baltimore American*, June 26, 1883.
12. Reports are from "Bad Row at Oriole Park," *Baltimore American*, June 13, 1884, and *Baltimore Day*, June 13, 1884. For more detailed account see, Marty Payne, "The Undesirable Position," *Base Ball, A Journal of the Early Game, Fall* (2007): 104–114.
13. For the installation of barbed wire see the *Baltimore Day*, June 16, 1884, and for its continued use the *Baltimore American*, May 3, 1887.
14. *Baltimore American*, September 5, 1883.
15. *Baltimore American*, March 19, 1884.
16. Gardner's travails are reported in the *Baltimore Day*, June 20, 1884, June 25, 1884, and June 28, 1884.
17. See the *Baltimore American*, July 4, 1884, and July 5, 1884.
18. *Baltimore Daily News*, June 21, 1886.
19. For accusations of team's condition during loss see *Baltimore Daily News*, June 25, 1886 and June 26, 1886. Henderson's defense is in the *Baltimore Daily News*, June 28, 1886.
20. *Baltimore American*, July 4 and July 5, 1884.
21. See "Welch in Danger," *Baltimore American*, June 17, 1887 and, "Welch is Fined $1," *Baltimore American*, June 18, 1887.
22. The accusation is in the *Baltimore American*, June 17,1888. Comments on the play are from the *Baltimore American*, July 28, 1888 and July 29, 1888.
23. *Baltimore American*, July 31, 1888.
24. *Baltimore American*, July 28, 1889.
25. See *Baltimore American*, October 1, 1882, and the *Baltimore Day*, March 13, 1883. Van der Horst's does not appear in either newspaper until the mid 1880's. Barnie was always the front man and representative in the media. See *Baltimore American*, November 10, 1889.
26. For a description of the yelling tactics see the *Baltimore American*, September 12, 1885. For the base running ploy see *Baltimore Daily News*, April 15, 1886. Barnie's proposal for the coach's box is in the *Baltimore Daily News*, June 10, 1886.
27. *Baltimore Daily News*, April 30, 1888 and May 22, 1888.
28. *Baltimore American*, December 7, 1890.

Baseball and Tammany Hall

Tony Morante

Baseball and politics are two impassioned national pastimes. In the early days of New York City, they were often intertwined in schemes to ensure huge financial gains. The betterment of the game and the interest of citizenry came second. Highlighted here are some of the personalities and events that played an influential role during these corrupt years and how, rather than permanently tarnishing its image, professional baseball survived and thrived in the city that for over a half century was the only city with three major league teams: New York.

ROOTS OF THE GAME

Early in the 19th century, athletic clubs formed in America to promote leisure and exercise. Two "fraternities" were spawned from these clubs, the "sporting" fraternity and an offshoot called the "base ball" fraternity. During the 1830s, amateur "town ball" clubs were formed, many in the Northeast. A variation on "town ball" was called the "New York game," and the earliest set of published game rules, the Knickerbocker Rules, was written on September 23, 1845, by William R. Wheaton, a member of the Knickerbocker club. An early use of the statistical box-score was during a game between the New York Knickerbockers and the New York Nine. (The New York Nine prevailed by a 23–1 score.) In the years that followed, the "New York game" persisted over other forms of "town" ball, largely due to the influence of the fast-growing New York press during the middle of the 19th century. These early amateur games were often followed by elaborate parties. But in *Baseball: An Encyclopedia of Popular Culture*, Ed Rielly states that "as soon as the New York Knickerbockers organized and started competing against other teams, spectators began betting on the outcome. Betting quickly became a problem, as the chance to win a wager fostered a desire to limit one's risk by predetermining the outcome."[1] Winning and losing took on a different tone as the stakes, literally, went up.

By the early part of the 1850s, baseball had become increasingly organized. In 1856, the game was christened the "national pastime" in the *New York Mercury*, a newspaper of the era. In the year that followed, the amateur baseball clubs banded together to form the National Association of Baseball Players.

THE NEW YORK CITY MUTUALS AND THE BEGINNING OF CORRUPTION

After the Civil War, the good will of the game began to fade as amateur teams focused more and more on winning, and owners sought out the best talent and paid them "under the table." Fixing or "hippodroming" of games fostered predetermined outcomes. In 1865 the first documented report of baseball corruption appeared. Three members of the New York City Mutuals, whose leader at that time was William Magear Tweed, conspired with a gambler to throw a game to the Eckfords of Brooklyn.

William M. "Boss" Tweed exerted unprecedented influence through Tammany Hall and drew the ire of political cartoonist Thomas Nast.

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Henry Chadwick's many contributions to baseball include his attempts to stamp out corruption in the game.

TAMMANY HALL, "BOSS" TWEED, AND CORRUPTION

The Society of St. Tammany was initially a fraternal organization run along the lines of a social club, but in the 1830s the Society grew more political in nature. The "hall" in the name was a reference to the headquarters of the organization. "Boss" Tweed became the head of the Tammany Hall political machine in 1863. As a member of many boards and commissions, he controlled political patronage in New York City and was able to ensure the loyalty of voters through the jobs he could create and dispense on city-related projects.

The powerful cadre that surrounded Tweed was known as the "Tweed Ring," and the extent of the corruption fostered by the Ring had never been seen in New York City. They controlled elections by bribery and the fraudulent counting of votes, filling elective offices with their cronies. Office-seekers could not get elected without Tweed's support. The "Ring" wanted to exercise political power, but they also wanted to enrich themselves at the public expense. One infamous example: in 1858, the city allocated $250,000 to build a new courthouse behind City Hall. Upon completion in 1871, the final tab came to a staggering $12,000,000 with 75 percent of that total used as graft for fraudulently contracted bills. The courthouse stands today—with a recent complete renovation—as a monument to the corruption that Tammany Hall foisted on New York City.

For Tammany, baseball was another avenue for pursuing financial gains. The corruption uncovered in the 1865 Mutuals/Eckfords game was merely the tip of the iceberg.

Henry Chadwick, a journalist whom many consider the "father of baseball," started writing about the game in 1857. Daniel E. Ginsburg in *The Fix Is In* noted that "Chadwick was the unquestioned leader in pushing for an end to corruption in baseball. He risked libel suits constantly as he worked to expose gambling related corruption in the game and clean up the sport he loved."[2]

THE BEGINNING OF PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL

Even the sterling 1869 barnstorming season across the country by the Cincinnati Red Stockings (not beaten in 64 contests) was touched by the fingers of corruption. Tammany affiliate John Morrissey, leader of the Troy Haymakers and a famous pugilist who won the National Boxing Championship in 1853, was said to have placed a wager of over $50,000 on a game between the undefeated Red Stockings and his Haymakers. According to Ginsburg, Morrissey was so concerned with losing his money that he instructed his team to quit the game if they felt they might lose.[3] Sure enough, after Troy had tied the score at 17 in the fifth inning, Troy seized an illegitimate opportunity to walk off the field. Although they forfeited the game, there was no mention of Morrissey having to fork over any cash. A few years later, Morrissey became a member of the anti-Tammany Hall movement.

Steven Riess wrote in *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era*, "amateur and professional baseball always had close links to Tammany Hall. Several prominent politicians got their start in politics through Tammany sponsored baseball teams."[4] The teams provided a means to attract ambitious, athletically inclined young men to politics. By 1869, Tammany was contributing generously to the upkeep of the Mutuals, who were all on salary, making them a truly professional team. When the New York City Council voted the team $1,500 towards a trip to New Orleans in 1869, Tweed countered with $7,500 from his own pocket, another way to secure votes.

Interest in professional baseball grew, and the first professional organization, The National Association of Professional Base Ball Players, a.k.a. the National Association (NA), was formed at a March 17, 1871, meeting held at Collier's Café on Broadway and 13th in New York City. The league was run by the players, an undisciplined group with little business acumen, and it lasted only until 1875. John Thorn in *Baseball in the*

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Did gambling affect the outcome of a game between the Troy Haymakers and the Cincinnati Red Stockings during the Reds' 1869 barnstorming tour?

Garden of Eden writes, "the low state of the National Association (NA) after the 1875 campaign could be chalked up to rampant corruption and drunkenness, as well as to radically unbalanced competition that permitted Boston to win the championship four years running."[5]

The National League was formed at a meeting in the Grand Central Hotel on Broadway, between Bleecker and Bond, on February 2, 1876. William Hulbert, a midwesterner and the self-appointed mastermind behind the transference of the NA to the National League, felt that there was too much corruption in the Eastern teams. Under a ruse to gather representatives from some of the NA clubs, Hulbert claimed that he wanted to discuss some thorny problems that were undermining the game. Ironically, a locked hotel room was the venue for the introduction of the National League.

In 1877 the first major-league scandal took place, involving four ballplayers from the Louisville club. Although two of the players had previous ties with Tammany, there are no hard facts to suggest that Tammany had played a major role. There were more scandals in the ensuing years, but none necessarily perpetrated by Tammany Hall.

THOMAS NAST AND THE FALL OF TWEED AND TAMMANY

Seemingly, Tweed could not be touched. There was one man, however, who felt that Tweed was a detriment to society and had to be stopped. Thomas Nast, cartoonist for Harper's Weekly, was that man. Nast's most notable drawings include his rendition of a fat, jolly Santa Claus, as well as the Republican elephant and the Democratic Party's donkey. But his greatest contribution was his full-bore attack on Tweed and his associates. Thomas Nast was an artist who realized that with his drawings, he could expose Tweed and fight his corrupt politics. "Tweed could not believe that his mighty sword was being taken down by a pen and lamented, 'I don't care what the papers say! A lot of people can't read a single word! But oh, those drawings! Anybody can understand what they mean.'"[6] Tweed did what he knew best and tried to buy Nast out for a reported sum of $500,000, to no avail.

Nast made life miserable for Tweed. His initial attempt to sketch him (in September 1868) ironically coincided with *The New York Times* drawing attention to the corruption of the Tweed Ring and Tammany Hall. Nast would eventually get his sketch and publish his first cartoon focusing on Tweed in April 1870. By June 1871 he would be depicting Governor John Hoffman as a cigar-store "Indian" being pushed by Tweed and his henchmen as a commentary on the fact that Tammny would be backing Hoffman in the 1872 US presidential election. As John Adler reported in *Doomed by Cartoon*, the day after the cigar-store image appeared, *The New York Times* called attention to Nast's latest shot at the Ring. "*Harper's Weekly* should be in everybody's hands. The current number contains one of Nast's best drawings—a drawing which would alone gain a large reputation for its designer."[7]

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William Hulbert, the self-appointed mastermind behind the rise of the National League.

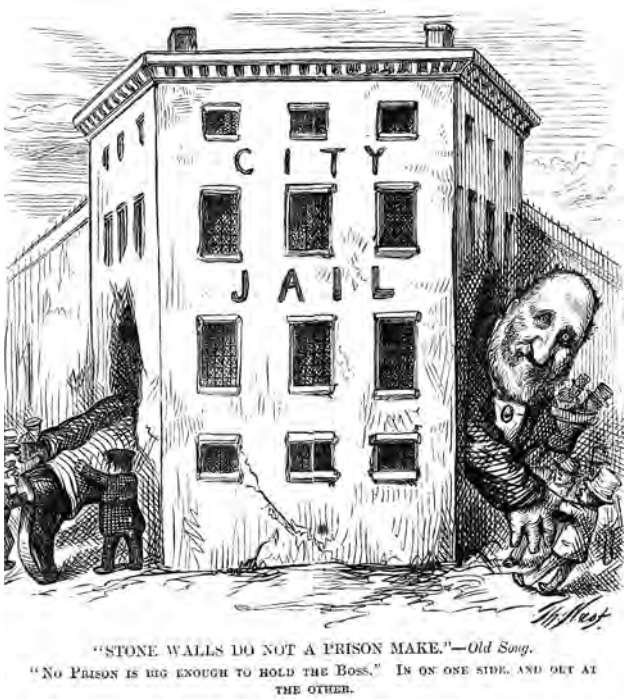
In September 1870, the *Times* began attacking Tammany, and by 1871 was in full swing to expose the depth of corruption that existed in Tammany Hall. Edward Robb Ellis in his book, *The Epic of New York City: A Narrative History*, reported the headline which was the opening salvo against the Tweed Ring and subsequently, Tammany Hall. "The Secret Accounts ....Proofs of Undoubted Frauds Brought to Light.... Warrants Signed by Hall and Connoly Under False Pretenses."[8]

Tweed was finally brought into court in January of 1873, but the trial ended with a hung jury. His second trial later that year was prosecuted much more diligently and Tweed's cronies were kept out of the jury pool. Ultimately, as told by Ellis, Tweed was found guilty of 102 offenses and sentenced to twelve years in prison but served only one—in living quarters fit for a king. On the day that he was released, he was rearrested on a civil charge and sent to the Ludlow Street jail where he lived in a two-room suite that actually belonged to the warden. Minimum security was the order-of-the-day. Tweed lived the life of Riley.

One afternoon in December 1875, accompanied by two security guards, Tweed took a carriage ride to his family's brownstone on Madison Avenue. Then, in an elaborate getaway scheme which cost him $60,000, he walked out the back door to a waiting wagon which spirited him to a rowboat on the Hudson River. He hid out in the Palisades for three months and was then escorted to Staten Island where he hopped a schooner to the Everglades in Florida. He was picked up by a fishing boat that took him to Cuba where he boarded a ship to cross the Atlantic and landed in Vigo, Spain on September 6, 1876. Unfortunately for Mr. Tweed, he was traced to Spain. Although there were no photographs of Tweed that could identify him, the Spanish authorities amazingly recognized Tweed from a Thomas Nast caricature and turned him over to American authorities. Once back in the Ludlow Street jail, the broken Tweed caught a cold and eventually died of bronchial pneumonia on April 12, 1878. The two Tammany bosses who succeeded Tweed, "Honest John" Kelly through 1886 immediately followed by Richard Croker, brought along their own versions of corruption which were different from Tweed's but no less damaging. Rev. Charles Parkhurst was a leader in the temperance movement and a longtime social reformer. Oliver Allen, in *New York, New York*, points out that Parkhurst's observations, after a personal three-week tour of the Tenderloin (an area of New York City where

One of Nast's infamous political cartoons, lambasting the Tammany Hall candidate for presidential election.

PUBLIC DOMAIN



In this 1872 cartoon, Nast predicted that no jail would hold Boss Tweed, and he was right.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Ban Johnson and five American League team owners. Pictured upper row (L to R): Frank Navin, Detroit; Benjamin S. Minor, Washington; Frank Farrell, N.Y. Lower row (L to R) Charles Comiskey, Chicago; Ban Johnson AL President; Joseph Lannin, Boston.

vice and corruption flourished), persuaded the state legislature in 1894 to initiate an inquiry.[9] The Lexow Committee, designed to embarrass Democrats aligned with Tammany, launched a thorough investigation of Tammany's ties to New York vice and corruption.[10] The committee unearthed evidence that the police were engaged in vice operations and were responsible for rigging elections and for police brutality.

Another result of the Lexow Committee findings was the defeat of Tammany Hall in the 1894 municipal election. Sensing that the tides were turning against him, Croker resigned and sailed to England where he stayed for three years.

"BIG BILL" DEVERY

Tammany's grip had been loosened, but the change in regime was not complete, and some of the leaders to rise after Tweed's ouster also had ties to baseball. One was the corrupt police chief, William "Big Bill" Devery, whose motto was "See, hear and say nothing; eat, drink and pay nothing." The reform police commissioner in 1895, Teddy Roosevelt (TR), vowed to nab a few upper-echelon Tammany members, including Devery, but TR even had to fight members of his own party who were corrupted by the Tammany faction of the opposing party. He lasted only one year as commissioner. (Perhaps this was a blessing in disguise as he went on to become the President of the United States.) Devery eventually became instrumental in bringing an American League baseball team to New York. Ban Johnson, American League president, had been denied a New York team for two years, but Devery would change that. Johnson had brought his Western League to major league status on a par with the National League by offering a cleaner brand of baseball. By its second year of existence, the American League fielded teams in Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia and Washington. But Johnson felt that he desperately needed a New York team in order to survive. Tammany Hall, in control of the city's real estate, thwarted every attempt on the part of Ban Johnson to establish a suitable site to erect a ball park.

In 1895, Andrew Freedman—a close friend and business partner of Tammany boss Croker—became owner of the New York Giants. As stated by Frank Graham in his book, *The New York Giants: An Informal History of a Great Baseball Club*, "For eight years Freedman ruled the Giants and almost completely wrecked them. Had he not been restrained he would have wrecked the league as well."[11] Freedman and Croker worked together to block Johnson's efforts to plant an AL team in New York.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS BAIN COLLECTION

Richard Croker was another infamous Tammany boss who tapped New York brewing mganate Jacob Ruppert Jr. to run for Congress.

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After serving four terms in the US House of Representatives, Ruppert returned to the brewing business and looked to buy a baseball team.

But the unpopular Freedman irritated the other team owners when he attempted to syndicate the game into what would be known as the National League Trust. As Graham further reported, "Common stock would be used in payment for the eight clubs with New York to receive 30 percent, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Boston, 12 percent; Philadelphia and Chicago 12 percent, Pittsburg 8 percent and Brooklyn 6 percent."[12] Al Spalding, another "father" of baseball and an integral part of its early development, could not stand by and watch this travesty unfold. By way of an improperly held election in the spring of 1902, Spalding bluffed Freedman into thinking that his bold attempt to refashion baseball to fit his own needs had succeeded only in splitting the league wide open and that further measures on his part were bound to fail. As a result of this, Freedman promised to resign as soon as he could find a suitable buyer.

Meanwhile, another faction existed in Tammany Hall that was able to circumvent the efforts of Freedman to block Johnson and the AL. Devery and "Pool Room King" Frank Farrell were able to locate a rocky site for Johnson on Broadway between 165th St. and 168th St. The ballpark on the site would become known as "American League Park," or more commonly "Hilltop Park." Farrell and Devery became the first owners of the American League New York franchise that we now know as the New York Yankees. They purchased the Baltimore Orioles on January 9, 1903, for $18,000 and moved the team to New York City.

JACOB RUPPERT

George Ehret's Hell Gate Brewery had the top-selling beer 1877–1888, with Jacob Ruppert Sr.'s Knickerbocker beer trailing just behind.[13] After his son Jacob Ruppert Jr. took over the running of the brewery, as reported by Glenn Stout in *Yankees Century*, Knickerbocker needed a little push to grab the top spot in the market. Ruppert the younger joined Tammany, and his membership helped put him where he wanted to be: Number One. Knickerbocker was poured in every Tammany held bar in the city, and Ruppert eventually dominated the market.[14] Tammany recognized Ruppert's rise by giving him a spot on the finance committee alongside Andrew Freedman, the man reviled by National League team owners. Ruppert was then tapped by Boss Croker to run for Congress in order to cultivate the much needed and rising German vote. Ruppert followed the Tammany line while serving four terms 1899–1907.

Upon leaving Congress in 1907, Ruppert immersed himself in his brewery business. Stout claimed that "he

owned yachts, raced horses, bred dogs and collected exotic animals, jade, porcelain, first editions, and mistresses." But he always had an interest in owning a baseball team, preferably the New York Giants. Giants' manager John McGraw introduced Ruppert to civil engineer Captain Tillinghast L'Hommedieu Huston, who made his fortune in the Spanish-American War, and then in Cuba. But the Giants wouldn't be the team that Ruppert and Huston would acquire.

By 1914 the Highlanders/Yankees had fallen lower and lower in the standings, and Devery and Farrell were experiencing growing tensions in both their business and personal relationships. They were bleeding money, basically through a lack of any business acumen. American League president Ban Johnson, not wanting to see his New York franchise go under, set up a meeting with Farrell, Devery, Huston, and Ruppert to discuss the possibility of selling the franchise. A deal was consummated whereby Tammany Hall's Bill Devery and Frank Farrell would sell their interests in the New York Yankees to former Tammany Hall Congressman Jacob Ruppert and Cap Huston for the sum of $465,000—quite a windfall from the $18,000 that they had spent on their charter.

By the late 1930s the influence of Tammany was beginning to wane, and the Society was officially disbanded in the 1960s. Jacob Ruppert, for his contributions to the game of baseball and the New York Yankees, was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2012. ■

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The Accurate RBI Record of Babe Ruth

Herm Krabbenhoft

Babe Ruth was one of the most iconic players in baseball, and Runs Batted In are one of the most revered statistics in baseball. Not surprisingly, Ruth was one of the most prominent RBI men in the history of Major League Baseball. He topped the Junior Circuit in ribbies in several seasons. But how many? Depending on where one looks, The Bambino led the American League in RBIs either four or six times.

The 2012 edition of *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* states that Ruth holds the top AL mark in four seasons: 1920 (136 RBIs); 1921 (171); 1923 (131); and 1926 (151). This venerable record book is edited by long-time SABR member Seymour Siwoff, president of the Elias Sports Bureau, the official statisticians for Major League Baseball. Meanwhile, MLB.com, the official website for Major League Baseball, states that Ruth was first in RBIs in six AL seasons: 1919 (114 RBIs); 1920 (137); 1921 (171); 1923 (131); 1926 (146); and 1928 (142). The statistics presented on MLB.com are the responsibility of SABR member Cory Schwartz, Vice-President of MLB.com.

Something's out of whack here: How can such disparate RBI statistics come from two official entities of Major League Baseball?

To address this situation I decided to ascertain the accurate RBI record of Babe Ruth for his entire major-league career (1914–35). The results of my comprehensive and in-depth research are provided in this article.

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The official records of 16 of Ruth's 22 major-league seasons contain incorrect RBI totals.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the 1920 season, runs batted in were not an official statistic. However, RBIs were tabulated—unofficially—from 1907 through 1919 by baseball writer Ernie Lanigan, whose career included stints with *The Sporting News*, *New York Press*, and *Baseball Magazine*. After that, runs batted in were recorded on baseball's official Day-By-Day (DBD) ledgers. During Ruth's career, the Howe News Bureau was the official statistician for the American League while the Elias Sports Bureau was the official statistician for the National League.

Let's begin with Ruth's major-league RBI statistics as initially recorded by Lanigan (1914–19), Howe (1920–34), and Elias (1935). Table 1 contrasts these numbers with the RBI statistics provided on MLB.com, the most-recently published edition of *The Baseball Encyclopedia* (2008, edited by Gary Gillette and Pete Palmer), the *SABR Encyclopedia* (online at SABR.org), and the 2012 edition of *The Elias Book of Baseball Records*.

Table 1 is not as straightforward as it seems. First, Ruth's RBI statistics from the 1922 and 1926 DBD ledgers are marred with arithmetic errors. Babe Ruth's official DBD ledger/record for the 1922 season consists of four spread-sheet pages. There is a math error on the second page. Adding up the RBIs for each game (one per line) gives a sum of 24 RBIs. But, the Howe News Bureau in-putter mistakenly came up with a sum of 22, two too few. The math error was carried

through on pages three and four, ultimately showing Ruth with the mathematically incorrect total of 96 RBIs for the season, instead of 98. I inserted the mathematically-correct total of 98 in Table 1.

This math error went undetected and uncorrected for many years. For example, *The Baseball Encyclopedia* (aka "Big Mac," published by Macmillan) showed Ruth with 96 RBIs in both the 1969 and 1974 editions. It was not until the 1976 edition that the sum was updated... to an equally incorrect 99 RBIs (which we will discuss later). Similarly, the *New York Yankees Official Media Guide and Record Book* stuck with 96 RBIs all the way until 2011, when the total was changed to 99 RBIs.

The 1926 error is similar. The official DBD ledger/record for Ruth's 1926 season consists of six spread-sheet pages, this time with two math errors. The first is on page one. Adding up the RBIs for each game gives a sum of 44, but the in-putter mistakenly came up with a sum of 54. Those extra 10 RBIs carry through all the pages, and then on page two comes the second math error. Adding up the RBIs recorded on the second page gives 29 RBIs, but the in-putter mistakenly summed it as 28. These two combined math errors credited Ruth with nine RBIs more than he achieved according to the records, ultimately showing Ruth with a mathematically-incorrect DBD season total of 155 RBIs, when he should have been credited with 146. Table 1 shows the mathematically-correct total of 146 RBIs.

As with the 1922 errors, the incorrect total propagated throughout various publications. Several published by *The Sporting News* company (*The Official Baseball Guide*, *One For The Book*, *The Dope Book*, and *The Complete Baseball Record Book*) show Ruth with 155 RBIs in each edition from 1954 through 1974. For the 1975 through the 2004 editions, *TSN* shows Ruth with 145 RBIs, apparently the consequence of correcting only the math error on page one. Then for the 2005 through the 2008 editions, *TSN* shows Ruth with 146 RBIs, catching up to the math error on page two.

Similarly, *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* (and its precursor, *The Little Red Book of Baseball*) shows Ruth with 155 RBIs in each edition from 1932 through 1976. For the 1977 through the 2006 editions Elias also listed Ruth with 145 RBIs, except for the 1996 edition which lists Ruth with 146. The story does not stop there. For the 2007 through 2011 editions Elias lists Ruth with 150 RBIs, except for the 2008 edition which lists Ruth with 149, and the 2012 edition which shows 151. So, Elias alone changed the 1926 total for Ruth seven times.

Several baseball encyclopedias also carried the incorrect "155 RBIs" for many years:

Table 1. Source Comparison of Ruth's RBI Statistics[1]

Year	Lanigan[2] (TSN)	Howe/Elias (DBD Ledgers)	MLB.com (website)	2008 BB Encyclopedia (Gillette & Palmer)	SABR Encyclopedia (sabr.org website)	2012 BB Record Book (Siwoff/Elias)
1914	0	–	2	2	2	–
1915	20	–	21	21	21	–
1916	16	–	15	15	15	–
1917	10	–	12	12	12	–
1918	64	–	66	66	66	–
1919	112	–	114	114	114	–
1920	–	137	137	137	137	136
1921	–	170	171	171	171	171
1922	–	98*	99	99	99	–
1923	–	130	131	131	131	131
1924	–	121	121	121	121	–
1925	–	66	66	66	66	–
1926	–	146*	146	146	146	151
1927	–	164	164	164	164	–
1928	–	142	142	142	142	–
1929	–	154	154	154	154	–
1930	–	153	153	153	153	–
1931	–	163	163	163	163	–
1932	–	137	137	137	137	–
1933	–	103	103	103	103	–
1934	–	84	84	84	84	–
1935	–	12	12	12	12	–

*As corrected by author, explained below

A) *The Encyclopedia of Baseball* (Turkin and Thompson) lists Ruth as the 1926 AL RBI leader with 155 RBIs in each edition from 1951 through 1976, while for its final two editions (1977 and 1979) Ruth is shown with 145.

B) *The Baseball Encyclopedia* (Macmillan) lists Ruth as the 1926 AL RBI leader with 155 RBIs in its first two editions (1969 and 1974) then switched to 145 for its final eight editions (1976 through 1996).

C) *The Sports Encyclopedia: Baseball* (Neft and Cohen) shows Ruth with 145 RBIs in each edition 1981–94 and with 146 RBIs from 1995–2007.

D) *Total Baseball* (Thorn and Palmer) lists Ruth with 146 RBIs in each of its eight editions (1989 through 2004).

E) *The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia* (Gillette and Palmer) lists Ruth with 146 RBIs in each of its five editions (2004 through 2008).

Curiously, the *New York Yankees Official Media Guide and Record Book* presents the "mathematically-incorrect 155 RBIs" in each annual edition through 1991. Then from 1992 through 2010 Ruth is listed with 145 RBIs, and in the 2011 and 2012 editions Ruth is listed with 150 RBIs. To my knowledge, no explanations have been given for any of the changes mentioned here.

It is no accident that there is complete agreement between MLB.com, the *2008 Baseball Encyclopedia*, and the *SABR Encyclopedia* because Pete Palmer's database of baseball statistics is employed by all three. Palmer's statistical database is also used on Baseball-Reference.com and by Retrosheet.org for Ruth's player profile page (though not Ruth's daily pages, which are derived from Retrosheet's independently-generated Play-By-Play accounts).

The discrepancies go beyond 1922 and 1926, of course. While MLB.com states that Ruth and Lou Gehrig topped the AL RBI list for the 1928 season (each with 142), *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* shows Gehrig as the sole leader with 147, five more than MLB.com, the *2008 Baseball Encyclopedia*, or the *SABR Encyclopedia*. Elias has made several changes in Ruth's RBI statistics for the years he was the AL leader. For 1920, Elias showed 137 RBIs in editions 1932–2007, changing to 136 RBIs starting in 2008. For 1921, Elias moved from 170 RBIs shown through the 1975 edition, to 171. Also changing as of the 1976 edition, Ruth's 1923 total went from 130 RBIs to 131 RBIs. Apparently, none of these changes were accompanied with explanations or justifications. Perhaps that's why none of Elias's changes was adopted by MLB.com, SABR, Baseball-Reference, or others.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

Baseball writer Ernie Lanigan tabulated RBIs unofficially from 1907 through 1919.

That was the complicated state of affairs in early 2012 when I commenced my research into Ruth's RBI statistics.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The most rigorous approach to ascertaining the accurate RBI record for Babe Ruth is to obtain the complete details for each run scored by Ruth's teams in games Ruth played. This is the modus operandi I followed. "Complete details" means the following three items are determined for each run:

1) The identity of the player who scored the run.

2) The run-scoring event. Was it a 2-RBI single, a 1-RBI groundout, a 1-RBI grounder (batter safe on a fielding error), a 0-RBI grounder (batter safe on a fielding error), a 1-RBI bases-loaded walk, a 0-RBI balk, et cetera.

3) The identity of the player who completed his plate appearance during the run-scoring event. [Note that if the run scored on a steal of home, passed ball, or wild pitch, no batter completed his plate appearance during the run-scoring event.]

From 1914 through 1919 The Babe played for the Boston Red Sox. So, for the 1914–19 period of Ruth's

career I relied exclusively on the game accounts and descriptions provided in the three major daily newspapers published in Boston—the *Globe*, *Herald*, and *Post*—and in at least one newspaper from the city of the team that opposed the Red Sox. From these newspaper accounts I assembled a complete game-by-game record for Ruth's RBI performance.

To my knowledge, when I initiated my research effort there was no presentation of Ruth's complete RBI record on a day-by-day (game-by-game) basis for his 1914–19 seasons. Retrosheet's record was incomplete. Upon completion of my research, I provided my comprehensive RBI information to Retrosheet. I worked closely with Dave Smith and Tom Ruane and we resolved a few differences between our two independent efforts such that accurate RBI statistics for Ruth's 1914–19 seasons were achieved. The relevant information for Ruth's 1916–19 seasons was incorporated in Retrosheet's daily record for Ruth (which was released on the Retrosheet website in the summer of 2012). The relevant information for Ruth's 1914 and 1915 seasons was placed on the Retrosheet website as a research paper on September 30, 2012. The research paper, "Babe Ruth's RBI Record with the Boston Red Sox (1914–19)," definitively provides complete details for each and every run scored by the Red Sox in each and every game that Ruth played for Boston.[3]

From 1920 through 1934 Ruth played for the New York Yankees, in 1935 for the Boston Braves. In order to achieve my research objective for the 1920–35 period I was aided by the complete (although unproofed) Retrosheet Play-By-Play (PBP) accounts for many of the 2,112 games that Ruth played during the 1920–35 period. For all of the other games I obtained the complete details from the game accounts in several relevant newspapers.

During the 1920–35 period, there were 22 games for which I was unable to acquire complete details. (See the Appendix at SABR.org for a list.) With the exception of the game of April 25, 1933 (as well as the two games from 1923 and 1924 for which the newspaper box scores did not include RBI information), the newspaper box scores and the official DBD ledger information for these games agree 100%. From this I conclude it is highly likely the official information is accurate for these games. Regardless, in the absence of detailed R/RBI information for these games, the official DBD RBI information must be considered to be correct by default.

Comparison of the unproofed Retrosheet PBP accounts and the various newspaper articles (including box scores) allowed me to identify discrepancies in the RBI statistics given in the official DBD records. I resolved the discrepancies by carefully examining the game descriptions presented in multiple newspaper accounts. I provided those conclusions and the supporting documentation to Retrosheet's Tom Ruane and Dave Smith for their review of the evidence and their assessments of my conclusions. They concurred 100 percent with my findings and incorporated the relevant information in the Retrosheet boxscore file and the derived player daily file for Ruth. The complete supporting documentation provided to and utilized by Retrosheet for the corrections of the RBI-errors in Ruth's record is available for public inspection in the online Appendix to this article on SABR.org.

RESULTS

I have divided Babe Ruth's major-league career into two segments, the unofficial RBI period (1914–19) and the official RBI period (1920–35).

1914–19

Table 2 presents the actual RBI record that Babe Ruth achieved for his 1914–19 seasons according to my research. Also shown for comparison are the corresponding RBI stats reported by Lanigan and presented on MLB.com.[4]

Table 2. Babe Ruth's RBI Record, 1914–19

Year	Lanigan	MLB.com	Actual RBIs
1914	0	2	0
1915	20	21	20
1916	16	15	16
1917	10	12	14
1918	64	66	61
1919	112	114	113
Total	**222**	**230**	**224**

Ruth's actual RBI record differs from that presented on MLB.com for each of the six seasons. This means although MLB.com is correct in showing he led the league in RBIs in 1919, he did it with 113, not 114. Moreover, for the 1914–19 period, Ruth amassed a total of 224 RBIs—not 230.

1920–35

While researching the 1920–34 seasons I discovered a total of 284 games with RBI-errors in the official baseball records involving Yankees players; Babe Ruth was involved in 45 of these RBI-error games.[5] (I found no games with RBI-errors for 28 games that Babe Ruth played for the NL Boston Braves in 1935.)

Table 3 presents the salient details for each of the 45 RBI-errors I discovered in the official records for Babe Ruth.

Overall for the 1920–35 period, Babe Ruth batted in a total of 1,990 runs—not 1,983 RBIs as shown on MLB.com—and combining Charts 2 and 4 together his career grand total is 2,214, not 2,213.

Table 4 shows that Ruth's stats as found on MLB.com are wrong for 10 of 16 years in the 1920–35 period and that he topped the AL in RBIs in four seasons (shown in bold): 1920, 1921, 1923, and 1926. The numbers also show that Ruth did not lead the AL in RBIs in 1928. In actuality, Lou Gehrig was the sole AL leader in runs batted in for 1928 with 147 RBIs (not 142 as shown on MLB.com), while Ruth was a close second with 146. Overall for the 1920–1935 period Ruth had 1,990 RBIs (not the 1,983 shown on MLB.com) and for his entire career he collected a grand total of 2,214 RBIs (not the 2,213 shown on MLB.com).

At the outset of this article we stated that many baseball record books differ as to whether Ruth led the league in RBIs four or six times. Turns out they're both wrong: the correct answer is five.

DISCUSSION

Three topics should be discussed regarding this research:

- The reliability of the RBI information presented here,
- The consequences of effecting the corrections, and
- The implementation of the corrections.

THE RELIABILITY OF THE RBI INFORMATION

The RBI information for Babe Ruth presented in this article is totally reliable. I obtained complete details for each run scored in 2481 of the 2503 games that The Bambino played. I used independent accounts from several newspapers in order to achieve certainty. I also submitted the documentation to Retrosheet's Tom Ruane and Dave Smith for their independent review of the evidence. They concurred with my conclusions. (All researchers are encouraged to examine the supporting documentation available in the online appendix at SABR.org.) There were 22 games for which I was unable to obtain complete run and RBI details. As previously mentioned, with the exception of the game of April 25, 1933 and the two games from 1923 and 1924 for which the newspaper box scores did not include RBI information, stats in the newspaper box scores matched identically to those in the official DBD ledgers. This suggests that the run and RBI information in the official records for these games is correct. In the absence of detailed information for these games, the official DBD RBI information must be considered to be correct by default.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF EFFECTING THE CORRECTIONS OF THE RBI-ERRORS

Tables 2 and 4 present the accurate RBI record for Babe Ruth and demonstrate that MLB.com has incorrect information for 16 of Ruth's 22 major-league seasons, and that many other references and publications are inaccurate, including the 2008 edition of *The Baseball Encyclopedia*, Baseball-Reference.com, and the *SABR Encyclopedia*. Ruth's AL-leading season totals for 1920, 1921, 1923, and 1926 in the 2012 edition of *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* are also wrong.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CORRECTIONS OF THE RBI-ERRORS

As noted above, the corrections of each of the 45 RBI-errors have already been implemented on the Retrosheet website. It remains to be seen when Elias, MLB.com, and others might follow suit. To facilitate the implementation of the corrections, I provided the final draft of this manuscript and all the supporting documentation to Seymour Siwoff (Elias), Cory Schwartz (MLB.com), Pete Palmer, and John Thorn (Official Historian of Major League Baseball).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Befitting his "most-famous player in baseball history" status, the presentation of Babe Ruth's RBI record should be accurate. With the results of my research we now know with certainty the accurate RBI record of Babe Ruth. The Bambino led the American League in RBIs in five seasons—1919 (113 RBIs), 1920 (135), 1921 (168), 1923 (130), and 1926 (153). Not only that, The Sultan of Swat holds the distinguished American League record for Most Runs Batted In, Lifetime (1901–present) with 2,202 RBIs. MLB.com and Baseball-Reference.com both show 2,201 at press time.

Regular readers of the *Baseball Research Journal* will recall that this is not the first time I have undertaken to correct a player's RBI statistics. I previously obtained the complete details of the run-scoring events for the Yankees' 1925–38 seasons (plus the 31 games that Gehrig played in 1923, 1924, and 1939, 13, 10, and 8, respectively). I did the same for the 1931–46 seasons for the Detroit Tigers to ascertain the accurate RBI record for Hank Greenberg. I discovered that baseball's official DBD records with respect to the RBI statistics for the players on the 1920–38 New York Yankees and the players on the 1931–46 Detroit Tigers are plagued with many, many errors. For example, for the

Table 3. RBI Errors in Ruth's Official Records

No	Date	G	OPP	Ruth RBI (off)	Ruth RBI (act)	Other Players w/RBI-errors	RBI (off)	RBI (act)	Supporting Documentation
1	1920, May 05	–	WAS*	3	2	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-NYET-WP
2	1920, Jun 10	–	DET*	4	3	Note (1)			NYT-NYHT-NYET-DFP-DN-DT
3	1920, Jul 02	–	PHI*	0	1	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-NYET-PINQ
4	1920, Aug 26	–	CHI	3	2	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-CHT
5	1921, Apr 16	–	PHI	0	1	Bob Meusel	0	1	NYT-NYHT-NYET-PINQ
6	1921, Jul 17	–	DET*	1	0	Note (2)			NYT-NYHT-NYET-DFP-DN
7	1921, Jul 20	–	CLE*	1	0	Bob Meusel	0	2	NYT-NYHT-NYET-CLPD
8	1921, Sep 26	–	CLE	5	4	Wally Pipp	0	1	NYT-NYET-CLPD
9	1922, May 28	–	WAS*	0	1	Note (3)			NYT-NYHT-NYET-WP
10	1922, Jun 07	–	CHI*	3	2	Frank Baker	2	3	NYT-NYHT-NYET-CHT
11	1922, Jun 19	–	CLE*	0	1	Bob Meusel	0	1	NYT-NYHT-NYET-CLPD
12	1922, Aug 06	–	DET*	3	2	Note (4)			NYT-NYHT-NYET-DFP=DN-DT
13	1922, Aug 18	–	CHI	5	4	Wally Shang	0	1	NYT-NYET-CHT
14	1922, Sep 30	–	BOS*	1	0	Wally Pipp	0	1	NYT-NYHT-BG-BH-BP
15	1923, Apr 30	–	WAS*	0	1	Joe Dugan	2	1	NYT-NYHT-WP
16	1923, May 10	–	CLE*	0	1	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-NYET-CLPD
17	1923, May 17	–	STL*	0	1	Bob Meusel	2	1	NYT-NYHT-NYET-SLGD-SLPD-SLST
18	1923, May 27	–	WAS*	1	0	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-NYET-WP
19	1923, Jul 09	–	STL*	2	3	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-NYET-SLGD-SLPD
20	1923, Jul 16	2	CLE*	1	0	Wally Pipp	1	2	NYT-NYHT-NYET-CLPD
21	1923, Jul 25	–	PHI	1	0	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-NYET-PINQ
22	1923, Sep 27	–	BOS*	2	1	Note (5)			NYT-NYHT-NYET-BG-BH-BP
23	1924, Jul 06	–	WAS*	1	2	Aaron Ward	1	0	NYT-NYHT-WP
24	1924, Jul 10	2	CHI	0	1	Note (6)			NYT-NYHT-NYET-CHT
25	1924, Aug 02	–	STL*	0	1	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-SLGD, SLPD, SLST
26	1925, Jul 01	–	BOS*	3	4	Bob Meusel	2	1	NYT-NYHT-NYET-BG-BH-BP
27	1926, May 15	–	CHI	2	3	Earle Combs	1	0	NYT-NYHT-CHT-
28	1926, May 24	–	BOS*	1	0	Lou Gehrig	1	0	NYT-NYHT-BG-BH-BP
29	1926, Jun 12	–	STL	1	0	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-SLGD-SLPD-
30	1926, Jun 28	–	PHI*	0	1	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-PINQ
31	1926, Jul 20	–	STL	2	3	Lou Gehrig	1	0	NYT-NYHT-SLGD, SLPD, SLST
32	1926, Jul 29	–	STL*	0	2	Note (7)			NYT-NYHT-SLGD, SLPD, SLST
33	1926, Aug 11	1	WAS*	0	1	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-WP
34	1926, Sep 21	–	CHI*	3	2	–	–	–	NYT-NYHT-CHT
35	1926, Sep 25	1	STL*	2	4	Note (8)			NYT-NYHT-SLPD
36	1926, Sep 25	2	STL*	2	4	Note (9)			NYT-NYHT-SLPD
37	1927, Sep 07	–	BOS*	4	5	Lou Gehrig	3	2	NYT-NYHT-NYWT-BG-BH-BP
38	1928, Apr 18	–	BOS*	0	2	Note (10)			NYT-NYHT-NYWT-BG-BH-BP
39	1928, May 26	–	PHI*	0	2	Note (11)			NYT-NYHT-PINQ
40	1928, May 28	–	PHI*	2	3	Leo Durocher	2	1	NYT-NYHT-PINQ
41	1928, Jun 28	–	PHI*	4	3	Lou Gehrig	0	1	NYT-NYHT-PINQ
42	1928, Aug 07	–	CHI*	1	0	Lou Gehrig	1	2	NYT-NYHT-CHT
43	1928, Sep 27	2	DET*	1	2	(Note 12)			NYT-NYHT-DFP-DN-DT
44	1931, Apr 21	–	PHI	1	0	Lou Gehrig	2	3	NYT-NYHT-NYE-PINQ
45	1933, Jun 14	–	BOS*	0	1	(Note 13)			NYT-NYHT-BG-BH-BP

"OPP" identifies the team that opposed the Yankees; an asterisk indicates that the opposing team was the home team.

The relevant text accounts and boxscores were found in these newspapers:
The New York Times (NYT), *New York Herald-Tribune* (NYHT), *New York Evening Telegram* (NYET), *New York World* (NYW), *Boston Globe* (BG), *Boston Herald* (BH), *Boston Post* (BP), *Chicago Tribune* (CHT), *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (CLPD), *Detroit Free Press* (DFP), *Detroit News* (DN), *Detroit Times* (DT), *Philadelphia Inquirer* (PINQ), *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (SLGD), *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (SLPD), *St. Louis Star-Times* (SLST), *Washington Post* (WP).

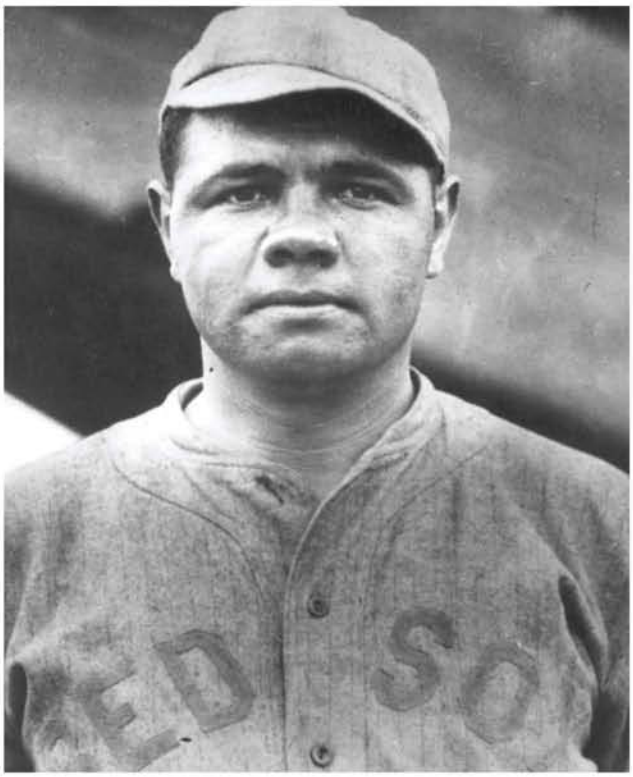
TABLE NOTES

1. Carl Mays had 3 RBIs (not 2) and Ping Bodie had 0 RBIs (not 1).
2. Frank Baker had 2 RBIs (not 1), Chick Fewster had 0 RBIs (not 1), Bob Meusel had 0 RBIs (not 1), and Jack Quinn had 2 RBIs (not 0).
3. Aaron Ward had 0 RBIs (not 1), Sam Jones had 1 RBI (not 0), and Whitey Witt had 1 RBIs (not 2).
4. Wally Pipp had 5 RBIs (not 4) and Wally Schang had 2 RBIs (not 3).
5. Aaron Ward had 2 RBIs (not 1) and Whitey Witt had 0 RBIs (not 1).
6. Wally Pipp had 4 RBIs (not 5) and Joe Dugan had 1 RBI (not 2).
7. Mark Koenig had 0 RBIs (not 2), Lou Gehrig had 4 RBIs (not 3).
8. Earle Combs had 0 RBIs (not 2), Lou Gehrig had 1 RBI (not 0), Mark Koenig had 2 RBIs (not 0), Tony Lazzeri had 1 RBI (not 0), Joe Dugan had 0 RBIs (not 1), Bob Meusel had 1 RBI (not 2), and Hank Severeid had 0 RBIs (not 1).
9. Joe Dugan had 0 RBIs (not 2), Earle Combs had 3 RBIs (not 1), Tony Lazzeri had 2 RBIs (not 0), Bob Meusel had 0 RBIs (not 2), Lou Gehrig had 1 RBI (not 2), and Waite Hoyt had 0 RBIs (not 1).
10. Lou Gehrig had 1 RBI (not 0), Johnny Grabowski had 1 RBI (not 0), Mark Koenig had 2 RBIs (not 0), and Bob Meusel had 2 RBIs (not 0).
11. Bob Meusel had 2 RBIs (not 0), Stan Coveleski had 1 RBI (not 0), and Tony Lazzeri had 1 RBI (not 0).
12. Bob Meusel had 2 RBIs (not 3) and Benny Bengough had 1 RBI (not 0).
13. Tony Lazzeri had 1 RBI (not 0) and Ben Chapman had 1 RBI (not 0).

Table 4. Changes in Ruth's Single-Season RBI statistics

Year	Games Played	RBIs (Off)	RBIs MLB.com	Games with RBI-Errors	RBIs Net Change*	RBIs (ACT)
1920	**142**	**137**	**137**	**4**	**-2**	**135**
1921	**152**	**170**	**171**	**4**	**-2**	**168**
1922	110	98	99	6	-2	96
1923	**152**	**130**	**131**	**8**	**0**	**130**
1924	153	121	121	3	+3	124
1925	98	66	66	1	+1	67
1926	**152**	**146**	**146**	**10**	**+7**	**153**
1927	151	164	164	1	+1	165
1928	154	142	142	6	+4	146
1929	135	154	154	0	–	154
1930	145	153	153	0	–	153
1931	145	163	163	1	-1	162
1932	133	137	137	0	–	137
1933	137	103	103	1	+1	104
1934	125	84	84	0	–	84
1935	28	12	12	0	–	12
Total	**2,112**	**1,980**	**1,983**	**45**	**+10**	**1,990**

*"RBIs Net Change" is relative to "RBIs (Off)."



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Baseball record books differ as to whether Ruth led the league in RBIs four or six times. But the correct answer is five.

1920–26 Yankees, 190 out of the 1,077 games New York played show RBI errors: 17.6 percent of the games are affected. And for the 1931–36 Tigers, 87 out of the 922 games Detroit played—9.4 percent— are compromised with incorrect RBI statistics in the official records.[6, 7,8]

Baseball fans both serious and casual expect baseball's historical statistics to be accurate—especially for the marquee players, the Hall of Famers, MVPs, and league leaders—and especially for the marquee stats—such as runs batted in. But as the RBI-errors discovered for the Yankees and Tigers of the Ruth-Gehrig-Greenberg era indicate, there probably are a significant number of RBI-errors in the official records for the other major-league teams.

Runs batted in is a very important metric in evaluating both the absolute and relative performances of the players on each team and within each league. During the 82 years that the Most Valuable Player Award has been given, the league's leader in RBIs has earned the MVP honor 55 times (29 times in the AL and 26 times in the NL). It is important to have accurate RBI statistics.

At this time—with all the resources currently available—it is both appropriate and feasible to uncover and correct the RBI-errors. SABR's extensive network of researchers coupled with Retrosheet's tremendous database of Play-By-Play accounts make achieving accurate RBI counts for all major-league players readily doable.

I heartily encourage other SABR members to conduct the requisite research to ascertain accurate RBI statistics for the players on their favorite teams. It is my sincere hope that Major League Baseball will embrace such a collaborative enterprise to correct the errors in the official records and that key officials (and fellow SABR members) such as John Thorn, Cory Schwartz, and Seymour Siwoff will champion the effort. ■

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I gratefully thank the following people for their help to me in achieving the correct RBI record for Babe Ruth—Steve Boren, Keith Carlson, Tom Ruane, Dave Smith, Gary Stone, Rich Topp, Dixie Tourangeau, and Walt Wilson. I also wish to express my gratitude to those individuals—the "Retrosheeters"—who volunteer their efforts to create the invaluable PBP database for Retrosheet.

NOTES

1. All numbers in this chart, and throughout the article, sourced from websites or online references date from November 8, 2012.
2. J.G.T. Spink, "Daguerreotypes of Great Stars of Baseball," T*he Sporting News* (1934).
3. Herm Krabbenhoft, "Babe Ruth's RBI Record with the Boston Red Sox (1914–1919)," Retrosheet.org (Features: Research Papers).
4. Herm Krabbenhoft, "Babe Ruth's AL RBI Record," Retrosheet.org (Features: Research Papers).
5. Herm Krabbenhoft, "Lou Gehrig's RBI Record," *The Baseball Research Journal* (Fall, 2011):12.
6. Ibid.
7. Herm Krabbenhoft, "Lou Gehrig's RBI Record: 1923–1939," *The Baseball Research Journal* (Fall, 2012): 10.
8. Herm Krabbenhoft, "Hank Greenberg's American League RBI Record," *The Baseball Research Journal* (Spring, 2012): 20.

Two Home Runs That Never Were

Ron Selter

Four well-known and widely respected baseball reference books provide the information that in the 1906 National League season 126 home runs were hit:

The SABR Home Run Encyclopedia
The 2005 ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia
Total Baseball Encyclopedia, Sixth Ed.
The Macmillan Baseball Encyclopedia, Seventh Ed.

All four of these baseball reference books are in agreement about the number of 1906 National League home runs and all are wrong. The reference books are wrong because, despite what the Official National League statistics show, two of the 126 home runs in that season never happened. The mystery is: How did this error occur and how was it discovered?

The author had been researching home runs in the Deadball Era (1901–1919) to determine how many of the home runs were inside-the-park home runs. The research methodology was very simple: obtain a list of home runs hit in each major league park from the *SABR Home Run Log* and review the box scores and the newspaper game accounts of all games with home runs. The *SABR Home Run Log* listed 14 home runs hit in the 1906 season at the St. Louis NL ballpark (Robison Field), including two in the game of July 16, 1906. These two home runs were (as listed in the *Home Run Log*) by Billy Gilbert of the New York Giants and Mike Grady of the St. Louis Cardinals. According to the log, both homers occurred in the seventh inning with the bases empty.

However, a review of the box score in *The New York Times* showed no home runs. That information in and of itself was not conclusive as box scores in the first decade of the Deadball Era often omitted one or more extra base hits.[5] The line score showed one run for St. Louis in the seventh inning and one for the Giants, also in the seventh inning, and two runs for New York in the ninth inning. That was the totality of the scoring in this game. A review of the game account in the *Times* also did not include any mention of home runs. In addition, all of the scoring in the game was accounted for in the game account without any occurrence of home runs. A closer examination of the box score showed one hit apiece for both Grady and Gilbert—a minimum condition required for each player to have had a home run. However the box score shows Gilbert with one run scored but Grady with no runs scored.

A review of the box score and game account in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* also showed no evidence of any home runs in this game.[6] Another curious item was that both box scores showed both Grady and Gilbert with one sacrifice hit. From a review of the evidence, it was clear that the home runs by Grady and Gilbert never happened. Which brings up the question: How did the Official National League statistics manage to credit both players with home runs?

SABR member Keith Carlson of St. Louis checked the local St. Louis newspapers and proofed the box scores. He found that the number of runners reaching base balanced with the number of hits plus walks plus reached-first-on-error and was consistent with the number of runs scored, double plays, and left-on-base for each of the teams. If the box score was correct, how did the official statistics end up in error? The answer was supplied by SABR member and noted baseball researcher Pete Palmer: the score sheets used by the National League in 1906 had adjacent columns for home runs and for sacrifice hits. What must have happened is the official scorer entered the sacrifice hits for both Grady and Gilbert (as shown in the box scores) in the column for home runs and, when checking all of the categories shown in the box score, also entered one sacrifice hit for both Grady and Gilbert.

As a result of the above listed research, the *SABR Home Run Log*, the *SABR Encyclopedia*, and the home run data on the Baseball-Reference website have all been corrected by the removal of these phantom home runs. ■

Batting Out-of-Turn Results in Great Confusion

Mark Pankin

The batting out-of-turn (BOOT) rule has been a continuing source of confusion to players, managers, and umpires. Even a league president had trouble with it on one occasion after the May 24, 1945, Tigers at Athletics game, which was notable in other respects.[1]

The current BOOT rule (6.07), which has been in place since 1957, clearly specifies what should happen when such a play occurs. The rule covers all of the various possibilities. Even so, there have been times when the current rule, like its predecessor, was not properly understood or enforced. (A page on Retrosheet.org has many examples.[2]) However, in 1945, the applicable rule was Rule 44, which had been specified in the late 19th century. The wording allowed for some confusion and possibly conflicting interpretations. although the general understanding was the same as the current rule.

Rule 44 lists the circumstances when a "batsman" is out. From the 1945 Official Baseball Guide, the parts that apply to a BOOT are as follows:

> If he fail[s] to take his position at the bat in the turn in which his name appears in the batting order.
>
> Only the proper batsman shall be declared out, and no runs shall be scored or bases run because of any act of the improper batsman.
>
> This rule shall not be enforced unless the error be discovered and the out be declared before the ball be delivered to the batman next facing the pitcher.
>
> Should the batsman declared out under this section be the third out and his team thereby put out, the proper batsman in the next inning shall be the player who would have come to bat had the players been put out by ordinary play in the preceding inning.

An explanatory paragraph further points out that a BOOT is an appeal play, and no action is taken if no appeal is made. Unlike the current rule, Rule 44 does not specify who the proper batter is if there is no appeal. However, the general interpretation at the time was what the current rule specifies: if no appeal is made, the proper next batter is the one in the official lineup who follows the player who batted out of turn.

In the 1945 example, the confusion came from a change in the usual batting order for the Athletics. It was common for Irv Hall, the A's second baseman, to be followed in the lineup by future Hall-of-Fame third baseman George Kell. In the May 23 game against the Tigers, Connie Mack reversed the two, hitting Kell fifth and Hall sixth. Apparently, the players thought such would be the case again for the May 24 game. The early edition of the May 24 *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* showed the probable lineups for the game with Kell fifth and Hall sixth. The scoreboard at Shibe Park also showed that batting order. However, Mack's lineup card given to the home plate umpire, Ed Rommel, reverted back to the more usual with Hall fifth and Kell sixth.

Bobby Wilkins led off the A's first with a single and was caught stealing later in the inning. Joe Burns, the number four hitter, started the second inning by striking out. Then Kell came up, batting out of turn. He also fanned, so naturally the Tigers did not point out the BOOT to Rommel. (Had they appealed, the rule says Hall, who had been skipped, should have been called out and Kell would have batted again with his strikeout not counting.)

Correct application of the BOOT rule should be quite simple. Only two batters matter: the previous one and the current one. If a batter hits out of turn and the play is not appealed, the proper next batter is the one following that improper batter in the line-up. In this case, the number-seven hitter, A's first baseman Dick Siebert, would have been next to bat. While this was the understanding under Rule 44, that version of the rule did not explicitly say so.

Following the batting order shown on the scoreboard, Hall came up next and singled. This time the Tigers appealed, and Rommel ruled that three outs had been made and the inning was over. At that point, he

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Connie Mack's Philadelphia A's in 1945.

did not say which batter he called out, but from subsequent events it is likely it was Hall. Which batter he meant was not apparent at the time because it was the third out. Rule 44 is clear that the "proper batsman," namely Siebert, should have been called out.

When the Athletics came to bat in the third, there was a great deal of confusion as to who should bat first. After conferences among the umpires and the two managers, Rommel decided that Kell should lead off the third, presumably because he had (incorrectly) ruled Hall out to end the second and Kell followed Hall in the official batting order. Had the BOOT rule been applied correctly, the number eight hitter, catcher Frankie Hayes, would have led off the third.

Both managers, Connie Mack and the Tigers' Steve O'Neill, entered protests saying that Kell was not the proper batter. Although Kell made an out to start the third, the A's scored a run in the inning and went on to win the game, 7–2, so Mack withdrew his protest.

O'Neill (incorrectly) claimed that Siebert should have batted first in the third, and that was the basis of his protest. He quoted a part of Rule 44 that said "should the batsman declared out under this section [for batting out of order] be the third out and his team thereby be put out, the proper batsman in the next inning shall be the player who would have come to bat had the players been put out by ordinary play in the preceding inning." (That language is not in the current rule.) If "ordinary play" means the batters hit in the proper order and made three outs, then Siebert would have started the third. In other words, if hitters in the 4, 5, and 6 lineup positions batted in the inning and made three outs, the number-seven hitter would be due up next. However, another interpretation of that phrase is that if Hall had made an out, the Tigers would not have appealed, so the lineup would have once again been reset, making Kell the proper lead off hitter in the third.

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George Kell should have batted sixth, not fifth, as he had the day before in the A's lineup.

BOOT and Benton

Some additional confusion is that Kell's strikeout never made it into the official records of the game. However, Tigers starting pitcher Al Benton, who left the game in the fourth is correctly credited with three Ks. The Tigers second reliever, Art Houtteman, struck out one batter, but is not credited with any. Kell has an extra at bat in the official records of the game because he batted in both the second and third innings. Since Kell batted to start the third, in effect only five batters made six outs in the first two innings. After a BOOT, such inconsistencies are possible although not in this case had the rule been properly followed.

Moreover, the Tigers starting pitcher Al Benton faced 14 batters, although the last batter he pitched to was the Athletics number-four hitter the second time through the lineup. Since 9+4 = 13, that is another oddity that resulted from this BOOT. Had the rule been properly applied, a different inconsistency would have resulted in Hall having one fewer plate appearance than the surrounding players in the lineup since he would not have officially hit in the second inning. Also Siebert would have been charged with an at bat, making the last out of the second, although his first time actually hitting would have been the next time through the lineup.

Benton had his leg broken in the fourth inning by a line drive hit by Bobby Estalella. He tried to stay in the game and pitched to Joe Burns. He collapsed trying to field a weak grounder, which may have been a bunt, a nasty play by the cleanup hitter. He was carried off the field. Since he had been Detroit's best pitcher at that point in the season, the stories in the Detroit papers speculated about what his injury would do to the Tigers' chances for the rest of the season. The Tigers won the AL pennant in 1945, so the denied protest and the loss of Benton until July 1 were not critical. Benton was 5–1 (no decision in the BOOT game) with an ERA under 0.50 at the time of his injury. He finished the year 13–5 with a 2.02 ERA.

It is doubtful Rommel used that reasoning. After the game, Rommel said, "now it looks like I may have been wrong" about having Kell lead off the third. Interestingly, no newspaper story reported on which player he thought would be the correct hitter. None of the stories said that Rommel realized his real mistake was not calling Siebert out.

Because of O'Neill's protest, it was then up to American League president Will Harridge to decide if the protest should be upheld and the game replayed, or if the Athletics' win should stand. That decision was expected to take a couple of weeks. The newspaper stories pretty much agreed that the protest would be sustained and the A's would lose their victory.

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Umpire Ed Rommel ruled that Kell should lead off the third, but it should have been the number eight hitter, catcher Frankie Hayes.

The Sporting News had an article about the BOOT and the protest prior to Harridge's ruling. Several "experts" were asked who the proper leadoff hitter should have been in the third. About half of them gave the correct answer of Hayes. The other half said Siebert, agreeing with O'Neill's thinking that the number-six hitter, Kell, should have been the last out of the second inning and the number seven hitter would start the third.

Harridge apparently was even more confused than anyone else, despite the fact he had plenty of time to evaluate the situation and interpret the BOOT rule. He denied the protest, although his letter to O'Neill acknowledged that Rommel's ruling was incorrect. The letter then said, "your protest must be denied, because you failed, as the rules provide, to call the umpire's attention to the batting out of order until Hall had been pitched to and singled. Umpire Rommel called Hall out,

which retired the side. In this he was in error, because the rule plainly states that only the proper batsman should be declared out. Play should have been continued until the third man had been legally retired."

Harridge's interpretation implies that only the first BOOT can be appealed even if it is not in the team's interest to do so. There is nothing in Rule 44 that says that. It makes no sense to deny the protest because what Harridge says should have happened—that the inning continue until a third out is made on the field—did not happen. It appears that he denied the protest because he did not think O'Neill protested it for the right reason.

Connie Mack started the confusion by not paying attention to which hitters were supposed to be up when. He claimed it was the first time in his long career he had ever had a BOOT. Then Rommel, with the aid of the other two umpires in the crew, made a mistake by ruling Hall out and having Kell bat first in the third inning. Tigers manager Steve O'Neill and about half of the "experts" polled by *The Sporting News* incorrectly thought the number-seven hitter in the Philadelphia lineup was the proper batter to start the third. On top of all that, American League president Harridge found a new and incorrect interpretation of the rule, and even used it improperly to deny the Tigers protest. This may have been the most confusing aftermath of a BOOT ever. ■

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American League president Will Harridge may have been the most confused of all concerned.

NOTES

1. The primary sources used were stories in *The Sporting News* and from the two cities' newspapers: *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, *Philadelphia Record*, *Detroit Free Press*, and *Detroit News*.
2. The Retrosheet web site (www.retrosheet.org/outturn.htm) has an extensive—although almost certainly incomplete—list of batting out-of-turn incidents . Quite a few others also featured misunderstandings or incorrect applications of the rules.

Origin of the Modern Pitching Win

Frank Vaccaro

A recurring question among SABR members in recent years involves the first modern win: when was the first win awarded to a starting pitcher incorporating a league-mandated rule requiring the five-inning minimum standard? On the SABR-L email list, historian David Nemec is often quick to reply that the standard appears in the rulebook in time for the 1950 season. That makes Washington pitcher Ray Scarborough's opening day victory on April 18, 1950, the first modern assigned win in baseball history, a game in which Harry Truman, some might say, threw out the "first pitch."

Of course, Scarborough wasn't the first pitcher to win a game after pitching five innings: baseball history is chock full of five-inning wins dating back to the old National Association. But of those, Scarborough was the first pitcher to take a shower knowing full well that the "win" was in his pocket, so to speak, provided the Nationals never lost the lead. The win seems easy to understand and even academic, yet it was the culmination of a long, tortured history since the stat was invented.

On May 9, 1872, Boston's Al Spalding was relieved after four innings in a 20–0 romp over the Brooklyn Eckfords at Brooklyn's Union Grounds. Spalding had a no-hitter and a 17–0 lead when he was relieved, but amazingly still did not receive credit for the win after the game. Was this baseball history's first incidence of a no-decision and a five-inning minimum standard? No. Wins for pitchers had not yet been invented.

Fans and players of 1872, and even Spalding himself, would have likely been bewildered by the proposition that pitchers be credited with wins and losses. Actual wins—or so it would be argued into the twentieth century—could belong to any member of the team: the first baseman who got the game-winning hit or the center fielder who made a game-saving catch. Also, the art of pitching had not yet developed to elevate the pitcher much over the simple cricket feeder. Even Spalding's no-hitter was likely considered merely a coincidence of good fielding. No sophisticated separate stats for pitchers existed. Additionally, with normally one pitcher per team, individual win-loss records deviated little from team records and, at that time, would have been redundant.

The win was invented in 1884 by Henry Chadwick and he published National League individual totals in the 1885 *Spalding Guide*. The practice did not catch on. The loss came later. On July 7, 1888, *The Sporting News* for the first time published win-loss records, and only then after the following disclaimer:

> It seems to place the whole game upon the shoulders of the pitcher and I don't believe it will ever become popular even with so learned a gentleman as Mr. Chadwick to father it. Certain it is that many an execrable pitcher game is won by heavy hitting at the right moment after the pitcher has done his best to lose it.

Free player substitutions were not allowed in baseball until 1889, but even then, only one or two free changes were permitted per game after completed innings. In 1890 our modern player substitution rule was adopted but managers didn't utilize it to its full capacity. Prior to these rules, a pitcher could be removed only by injury or by switching him to another position. In Spalding's 1872 game, he was switched to center field and played the last five innings there. Box scores have him as "cf" only.

So it was relatively easy for Chadwick to assign wins and losses in this period, and if he had any existential difficulties making these assignments, he didn't reveal them in print. In the 1890 Guide he advises, "Where two pitchers took part in a match on one side we credit the victory, or charge the defeat, to the pitcher who pitched in the most innings." That's sort of a five-inning minimum, except that the timing of run support is ignored. That's the same rationale that made Spalding a center fielder in a near no-hitter.

So existential difficulties did arise from the get-go. When *The Sporting News* began listing the win-loss records of their home-town St. Louis pitchers in August 1888, rookie Jimmy Devlin, who made no starts in

August and September, alternated weekly between having a record of 5–3 and 5–2. The only game that he was relieved in came on the Fourth of July, when he was knocked out in the seventh inning with a 2–11 deficit. A clear loss by any measure? Not in 1888.

The slightly senior *Sporting Life* was more distanced from win-loss records. In their November 14, 1896, issue a list of the NL's top winning pitchers came with this disclaimer: "though technically they did not win or lose, as most of the games can be charged to fielders behind the pitchers." That list shows a three-way tie at 30 wins between Frank Killen, Kid Nichols, and Cy Young, yet today's encyclopedias show Young with 28 wins. Any assumption that today's encyclopedias "agree" with the 30 wins of Killen and Nichols highlights one important problem in reconciling pre-1920 pitcher records: agreement in victory or loss totals never guarantees that the same games are counted.

By the late 1890s, Chadwick, editing the *Spalding Guides*, used different formats for his pitcher games won, perhaps because his stat was not catching on. Guides listed "Games" and "Per Cent of Victories"—rather than wins—and this became the standard for a generation, leaving fans the task of fudging and multiplication to figure out actual games won. This was the principal reason Christy Mathewson's 373rd victory went uncounted until 1946—much to the chagrin of the bed-ridden Grover Cleveland Alexander—as recounted by Joe Wayman in the 1995 *Baseball Research Journal*. In the 1900 *Guide*, Chadwick listed the NL's top winners counting only their records against first division teams. It was a nice SABR-like twist.

In 1903 official scorers likely began the practice of placing a "W" or an "L" alongside pitchers' names on score sheets. That's the year new NL president Harry Pulliam hired John Heydler as a personal secretary at the recommendation of Nick Young. The 33-year-old Heydler had impressed Young as a local Washington area semipro umpire who kept his own major league statistics. Young had also used Heydler sometimes as an NL ump for the better part of three seasons up to 1898. Heydler immediately organized NL stat-keeping, and corrected the previous season. Previously the NL was run by a "board of directors" headed by John Brush, a disorganized group said to be too distracted by the NL-AL war to give stats their due consideration.

It's possible official scorers assigned wins and losses in 1901 or 1902, but those original sheets have been misplaced for many years. In any case, after each season, league secretaries summed up each pitcher's win-loss record for the *Spalding* and *Reach* guides. League secretaries and league presidents also, from

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Ray Scarborough holds the first modern assigned win in baseball history, April 18, 1950.

time to time, began stepping in and "correcting" a scorer's awarded decision. Chadwick, for his *Spalding Guides*, continued determining his own winners and losers for each game, even though, shockingly, he was rarely in attendance to see the pitchers perform.

Frank J. Williams's landmark essay "All the Record Books Are Wrong," in SABR's 1982 inaugural issue of *The National Pastime*, catalogues the methods official scorers used to assign decisions during the Deadball Era. Williams reveals 11 methods of assigning wins and losses in this period, and is kind to scorers of the time by referring to them as "eleven scoring practices." It was the Wild West of official scoring and many of these practices are flat-out contradictory. Often, the assignment of wins and losses hinged on an official scorer's informal post-game poll of sportswriters sitting next to him. Bias toward more popular or established pitchers might also have existed.

It is due to Williams's work that today encyclopedias agree on 1901–1920 pitching records, but even he acknowledges that "a couple of more practices may yet emerge." One is the Fielder Jones rule of 1914. With Jones sometimes using four or five pitchers in a game, official scorers required that a pitcher throw at least one pitch to get a win. The Federal League didn't enforce such a rule, so on September 19, 1914, Jim Bluejacket of the Brookfeds got the majors' first no-pitch win.

Changes in baseball were turning Chadwick's art of determining winners and losers into conundrums of logic. On April 26, 1894, it can be argued that

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In 1888 rookie Jimmy Devlin's record alternated weekly between 5–3 and 5–2 in August and September despite making no starts.

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Christy Mathewson's 373rd win went uncounted until 1946.

Baltimore manager Ned Hanlon made the first pitching change "on a hunch" when he replaced the uninjured left-hander Bert Inks with the right-handed Kirtley Baker, in the bottom of the sixth inning hosting Boston, with a 7–5 lead. One can also argue that on June 15, 1907, John McGraw pulled the first double-switch after he had Roger Bresnahan pinch hit for Joe McGinnity in the top of the eighth inning at Pittsburgh. And on May 13, 1909, managers Joe Cantillon and Billy Sullivan, of the Nationals and the White Sox, respectively, engaged in the kind of late-game, lefty-righty pitcher and pinch-hitter matching that would make a 21st century manager proud. Alongside these events, relief pitcher use was perennially on the rise in the major-league arena. Pressures from all these directions came to a head 101 years ago thanks to two pitchers: Rube Marquard and Walter Johnson.

The New York Giants' Marquard was given credit for a 19-game winning streak from season's start on April 11 to July 3, 1912, and the Senators' Walter Johnson was given credit for a 16-game winning streak from July 3 to August 23, 1912. Contradictory and counter-intuitive scoring practices occurring during these streaks created a sense of public outrage that swelled as the pennant races drifted into blowouts. Frank Williams provides the details in his essay, but suffice to say Johnson was credited with his 13th consecutive win in a circumstance similar to Marquard's no-decision when his streak was only two victories long. Marquard's streak hinged on the question of giving a pitcher a no-decision when the score became tied after he exited, and the proper crediting of runs in an offensive inning when the pitcher is pinch-hit for. The big Johnson issue, occurring when his streak was 16 games long, clarified that inherited runners are, in the calculation of earned runs, the responsibility of the pitcher who put them on base. But immediately after the August 26 game, American League president Ban Johnson went against this latter notion, raising the ire of every Washington fan, and saddling modest Walter with a loss that ended his winning streak.

Heavily criticized, Ban Johnson reacted like the kid in the sandbox with all the toys: he removed wins and losses from American League tabulations and released no pitcher win-loss records for the next six years. Fortunately for future generations, official scorers still marked score sheets with W and L. The National League took a more professional tack. League president John Tener was above the minutiae of pitchers' decisions, leaving his competent league secretary John Heydler to issue bulletins to official scorers. These contained guidelines as to how wins and losses would be awarded. The most famous of these bulletins was released to the press April 1, 1916, ten days before the start of that season.

The first three rules in this bulletin, in rapid fire succession, clarify and make modern the three issues raised by the Marquard and Johnson streaks of 1912. The fourth rule is the earliest official hint of a five-inning minimum for starting pitchers, albeit with an exception for pitchers who have a big lead:

> Do not give the first pitcher credit for a game won even if score is in his favor, unless he has pitched at least the first half of a game. A pitcher retired at close of fourth inning, with the score 2–1 in his

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On September 19, 1914, Jim Bluejacket of the Brookfeds got the majors' first no-pitch win.

> favor, has not won a game. If, however, he is taken out because of his team having secured a commanding and winning lead in a few innings, then he is entitled to the win.

This bulletin tightened up National League win-loss decisions in 1916, and spilled over into American League practices the next season. In 1918 win-loss information became more commonly dispensed, and *The Sporting News* box scores begin listing winning and losing pitchers in their May 9 issue. (However, periods do exist, until early in 1925, when *The Sporting News* boxes omit this information.) By 1918, almost everything about awarding wins and losses was modern. Scorers had only to consider "commanding and winning leads" in awarding wins to starting pitchers with fewer than five innings of work. Over the next 32 years two opposing practices evolved to bring us to the 1950 rule. On the one hand, wins awarded in low-inning starts were phased out even when "commanding leads" existed, while on the other brand new excuses came into play allowing wins in low-inning starts.

Between 1918 and 1949, Retrosheet shows 849 games in which a starting pitcher could have gotten a win without pitching five innings. In 205 of these games, 24 percent, the starting pitcher did get the win. The figure might have been 29 percent, but league secretaries overruled official scorers in 39 games, nudging the habits of scorers towards our modernity. In 1918, for example, there were 23 games of this type of which 16 saw starting pitchers get wins, 70 percent. In 1949 there were 30 such games with four of them becoming wins for starting pitchers, 13 percent. We'll call these archaic wins. For a year-by-year graph of the penchant of major league official scorers to award archaic wins, between 1918 and 1949, see Figure 1.

John Heydler ascended from NL secretary to NL president in 1918. By 1923, the National League was honoring the five-inning minimum almost 70 percent of the time. The American League, still coddled by founder Ban Johnson, honored the five-inning minimum only 9 percent of the time. When Ban Johnson retired in 1927, the NL honored the five-inning minimum 100 percent of the time (10 out of 10) over the AL's 37 percent (7 out of 19). In Ernest Barnard's first full year at the AL's helm, 1928, both the NL and the AL awarded modern wins 67 percent of the time (8 out of 12). So no surprise here, besides the fact that the NL regressed on the issue. Ban Johnson didn't approve of the five-inning minimum and worked against it.

Figure 1. Percentage of Archaic Wins Awarded, Three Year Average, 1921–50

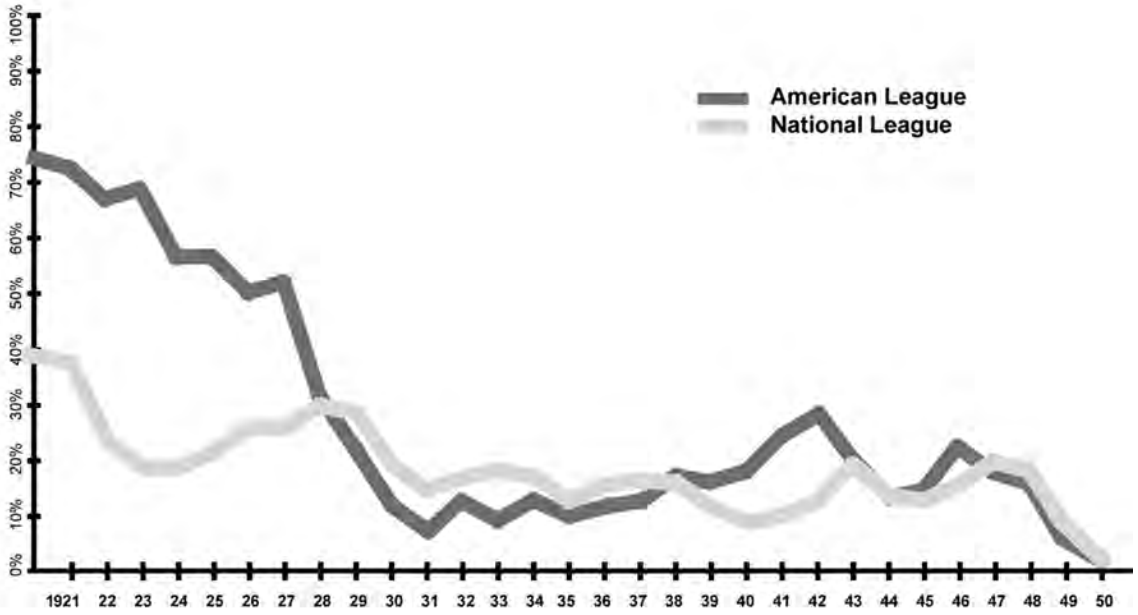


Table 1. Archaic Wins, 1918–49

League	Awarded	Possible	Percentage	0.0 IP	1.0 IP	2.0 IP	3.0 IP	4.0 IP	Leage Actions in Overruling
AL	127	403	31.5	0/8	3/34	11/72	29/116	84/173	Made 24 modern Made 6 archaic
NL	77	446	17.3	0/15	0/39	7/84	11/105	59/203	Made 26 modern Made 3 archaic
MLB	204	849	24.0	0/23	3/73	18/156	40/221	143/376	Made 50 modern Made 9 archaic

Barnard actually took over running the AL mid-July, 1927. Up to that time, the AL honored the five-inning minimum 23 percent of the time. During the second half of the season the AL honored it 50 percent of the time.

One of Barnard's first moves as AL president was to overrule the official scorer who gave George Pipgras a win July 8 for being knocked out in the bottom of the third inning at Detroit with a 6–2 lead. That occurred in the last full day of Johnson's stewardship. Pipgras was so well rested that he pitched the next day—the day Barnard became AL president—and Pipgras received another win despite being knocked out in the bottom of the fourth inning. This second archaic win Barnard let slide. After all, the 19–7 final score was pretty commanding. Barnard established a 4.0 inning minimum in the American League when Heydler's 5.0 inning minimum was being accepted in the National League. These scoring practices came to a head in the Worlds Series where different standards applied to different players in the same game. Good research by SABR's Warren Corbett identified George Earnshaw as a benefactor of this bipartisan scoring truce in game two of the 1929 Fall Classic. Earnshaw pitched four innings and won "under American League rules."

The retirement of Ban Johnson remains the single greatest hurdle cleared towards the acceptance of a five-inning minimum. But as time marched towards Ray Scarborough's first 1950 start, official scorers began invoking any of five different exceptions, when events warranted, for the assignment of low-inning wins. That makes the study of the first modern win an endeavor with a lot of moving parts. Here are the exceptions official scorers used:

THE INJURY EXCEPTION

The principal exception used by official scorers from the Deadball Era all the way to 1949 was the injury. Any pitcher injured was released from any minimum innings requirement—most of the time. Of 58 post-1917 games in which the starting pitcher had the lead but was injured before completing five innings, 34, or 59 percent, went for wins.

Frank Williams identifies this tendency under the fourth of the eleven practices. But after April 28, 1930, this injury exception takes on a life of its own. That day Clarence Mitchell received the first sub-4.0 inning injury exception win since July 31, 1923, when, coincidentally, the very same Mitchell had been carried off the field in the fourth inning after a collision with first baseman Walter Holke. Mitchell's 1923 win seemed to be the last of its kind—until Mitchell's 1930 win rekindled the practice.

Forty-seven potential injury wins exist between 1930 and 1949, and 27 are stamped with major league W's. Injury wins accelerated in use as 1950 approached. During the 1948 and 1949 seasons it was granted a whopping 90 percent of the time, when events warranted. Descriptions of these games run the gamut. Carl Hubbell got one when he slipped and fell on a play (June 10, 1934), Johnny Allen got one when he wrenched his back (September 15, 1936), and Lefty Grove left a one-sided game against Detroit (July 14, 1938) when his hand became numb, a chronic issue from which he suffered. All got wins. Two-time winners in this category include Lefty Gomez and Dutch Leonard. On the flip side, Bob Feller and Sad Sam Jones are two-time non-winners. The difference in these games? Hard to tell.

Consistency, lacking in the awarding of injury wins, was lacking in the awarding of all archaic wins. Some starters in this 32-year period did well, others didn't. Eddie Rommel had the greatest luck in being awarded wins: he won nine against two no-decisions. Ben Cantwell and Rosy Ryan both won six with one no-decision. Firpo Marberry, his relief work so often unrecognized in the 1920s, would have won fifteen extra games had a five-inning minimum come sooner. Instead he won four. Ralph Branca, Ray Starr, and Johnny Vander Meer each had over five no-decisions in low-inning games that could have gone for wins.

Schoolboy Rowe pocketed one on July 19, 1939, when he took a Mickey Vernon line drive on the knee. Earlier that day, Al Munro Elias, the compiler of stats for both leagues and baseball's go-to guru on the art of

Table 2. Injury Wins, 1918–49

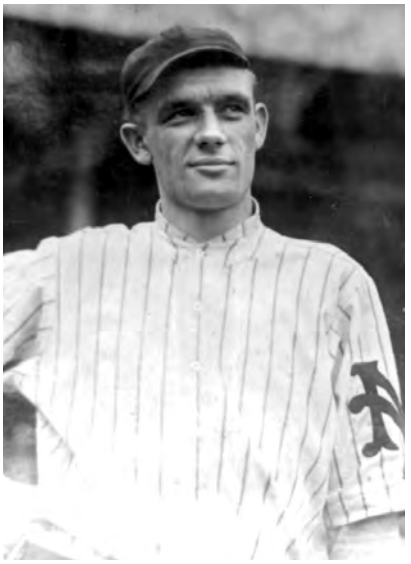
League	Awarded	Possible	Percentage	0.0 IP	1.0 IP	2.0 IP	3.0 IP	4.0 IP	Leage Actions in Overruling
AL	17	31	54.8	0/1	0/2	2/7	5/9	10/12	Made 2 modern Made 1 archaic
NL	17	27	62.9	0/0	0/4	4/8	4/5	9/10	Made 2 modern Made 2 archaic
MLB	34	58	58.6	0/1	0/6	6/15	9/14	19/22	Made 4 modern Made 3 archaic

win assignment, suffered a stroke that removed him from day-to-day tabulations. He passed away a few days later. Gone with Elias was the concept that "If a pitcher couldn't lose, he shouldn't win," one that worked against the vultured wins we see relievers obtain today.

Elias apparently also kept injury wins in check, because after he left things got out of control. Braves starter Al Javery left a game early with chest pains, and got a win (August 9, 1944). Virgil Trucks left early with a one-run lead and indigestion. He got the win (June 5, 1946). Four days later Ken Heintzelman took a Sid Gordon liner on the jaw: alas! He got no win. Any pitcher who exited a game early with a lead simply rubbed his arm and looked up endearingly to the scorer's booth. Blisters, pulled thighs, headaches, sinus trouble, back aches, you name it: pitchers were eager to discuss these sufferings with beat writers. The Pirates' Elmer Singleton had a shot at a win, which went to relief pitcher Tiny Bonham (April 30, 1947). The official scorer, Stan Baumgartner, came into the clubhouse after the game and interviewed players regarding a possible injury. He switched the win to Singleton, but was on the fence and switched again to Bonham when he sent his score sheet to the league. Singleton didn't know that and bought beers for the whole club to celebrate what he thought would be his first win in two years. As far back as 1930, A's starter Rube Walberg lost a win when manager Connie Mack told the official scorer that Walberg hadn't been injured, but instead had been removed on a hunch (July 12, 1930). Sports editorials lambasted the lack of hard and fast rules on the subject.

A record six injury wins were awarded in 1948, including Dutch Leonard receiving the majors' last two-inning injury win (June 30, 1948, as noted above). The Braves' Glenn Elliott received the majors' last three-inning injury win (September 1, 1948) after he collided with brawny Ted Kluszewski: knowledgeable fans might consider this a fair application of the exception. It was Elliott's only appearance of the year, so his season stat line showcases the injury exception. The Reds' Ewell Blackwell received the last four-inning injury win (July 18, 1949), indeed the very last injury win ever awarded. Not too sur-prisingly, Blackwell developed a stomachache after giving up back-to-back hits in the fifth inning. The official scorer gave the win to reliever Eddie Erautt, but the league changed it to Blackwell. It's a rare case of the official scorer being more chic than Frick.

Only three games in this study show ejection as the cause of a starting pitcher departing. In all three cases, wins went to middle relievers. Unlike the Deadball Era, pitchers after WWI were held responsible for actions that led to ejection. For example, in the most recent of these three games, the Cubs' Claude Passeau was ejected for shoving umpire Lee Ballanfant (July 16, 1939). No argument seems to have been put forth that Passeau was the victim of his own Cajun temper.



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Controversy over which pitcher, Walter Johnson or Rube Marquard, had the longer win streak in 1912 exposed contradictory and counterintuitive scoring practices.

THE RULE OF MULTIPLE RELIEVERS

I have not actually seen or heard of this rule, but looking at the data, it's clear: if two pitchers appear in a game where the starting pitcher has not pitched five innings, the starting pitcher got the win 17 percent of the time; if three or more pitchers appear in a game, the starting pitcher got the win 37 percent of the time.

That harkens back to the "bulk of the good pitching," the fifth scorer's practice outlined by Frank Williams. Three innings for a start looks shabby when a reliever has gone six, but looks better when two other relievers each go three innings. These types of wins, not considering injuries or any other excuse, were a popular scorer's option until 1930. From 1918 to 1929 we see 39 such wins, about three a year. From 1930 to 1949 we see 18, less than one a year. This change of behavior in 1930 is abrupt, and follows a pattern of leagues overturning official scorers on this issue which begins in 1924. Game reports for two of these victories reveal fuzzy logic. For a June 5, 1924, win, the *Washington Post* notes that Curly Ogden got the nod "because he left the box with the Nationals on top and the score was never tied after his departure." On May 22, 1940, Mel Harder got the win because he "stayed long enough to get credit." A Brooklyn 9–6 win at Philadelphia, May 2, 1948, seems to be the impetus for the discarding of the multiple reliever rule in awarding wins. Each of three bad pitchers could have won, so NL president Ford Frick stepped in immediately after the game and announced the winner, and, for that matter, the loser. A few weeks later, on June 12, Cleveland's Bob Muncrief benefits from this practice for the last time in big league history.

THE WORLD SERIES WARM-UP

The World Series warm-up involves the use of a starting pitcher after the pennant has been clinched. The pitcher must go a few innings and be removed with the excuse given that he is getting ready for the World Series. No matter how many innings the starter went, it was only required that he leave the game with the winning lead. Of course there have been hundreds of games in which pitchers were warmed up for the postseason, but there were only 13 during this study period in which the starter had the winning lead, and left before the fifth inning. In those 13 instances the starter got the win 12 times.

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While managing Baltimore in 1894, Ned Hanlon may have made the first "hunch" pitching change when he replaced the uninjured left-hander Bert Inks with the right-handed Kirtley Baker, despite a 7–5 lead.

The first World Series warm-up was pitched by the White Sox's Doc White, October 5, 1906, but he was removed after seven innings. In 1910, 1911, and 1912, the Cubs' Orval Overall, the A's Jack Coombs, and the Giants' Jeff Tesreau, respectively, pitched the next three such warm-ups. However all three were removed after pitching the fifth inning, and only Overall had the winning lead. On October 2, 1913, Christy Mathewson was removed after four innings with a 2–1 lead in a meaningless game: history's first official win in this category.

It's a small category of victories, but it's real. On September 30, 1934, Tigers teammates Alvin Crowder and Tommy Bridges picked up warm-up wins in both games of a doubleheader hosting the Browns. Only four warm-up wins follow: the Giants' Hal Schumacher in 1937, the Reds' Bucky Walters in 1940, the Yankees' Tiny Bonham in 1943, and finally the Braves' Nels Potter in 1948. Schumacher hit a game-winning three-RBI home run in his short 1937 win, and Potter's victory was the last two-inning victory in MLB history.

Table 3. Multiple Relief Pitchers, 1918–49 (when starting pitcher < 5.0)

League	Awarded	Possible	Percentage	0.0 IP	1.0 IP	2.0 IP	3.0 IP	4.0 IP	Leage Actions in Overruling
AL	44	117	37.6	0/3	0/12	3/21	11/37	30/44	Made 16 modern Made 3 archaic
NL	29	115	25.2	0/8	0/12	2/17	6/28	21/50	Made 5 modern Made 2 archaic
MLB	73	232	31.5	0/11	0/24	5/38	17/65	51/94	Made 21 modern Made 5 archaic

Table 4. World Series Warmup, 1918–49

League	Awarded	Possible	Percentage	2.0 IP	3.0 IP	4.0 IP	Leage Actions in Overruling
AL	4	5	80.0	0/0	2/3	2/2	No actions
NL	5	5	100.0	1/1	3/3	1/1	No actions
MLB	9	10	90.0	1/1	5/6	3/3	

The Yankees' Lefty Gomez, pitching on October 2, 1938, is the only pitcher in this era to be denied a World Series warm-up victory. Gomez allowed one hit, and left after three innings with a 1–0 lead at Fenway Park. Steve Sundra pitched six relief innings to complete the win, the only time a reliever went that long in this type of win.

A 14th win in this category might include Van Lingle Mungo's September 27, 1936, start. Brooklyn manager Casey Stengel announced before this end-of-season game that Mungo would pitch only two innings. This he did, leaving with a 6–0 lead while padding his season total in strikeouts to 238. He got the win, but Brooklyn finished seventh, so what Mungo would have been warming up for is unclear.

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NL secretary John Heydler issued guidelines to official scorers in 1916 that specified a starter had to pitch "at least the first half of the game" to get a win.

THE SAVE WIN

Impressive work by a relief pitcher, in the general area of what we would today call a save, garnered 21 official wins during this period. Three of these appear in 1948, a record for the "save win," and an indication that the practice was accelerating when the 1950 rule book was released. Almost immediately after the 1950 scoring change, the modern save as we know it was born, becoming an official statistic in 1969.

This is the third scoring practice as outlined by Frank Williams. However, "save wins" could be awarded regardless of how many innings the starting pitcher went, thus shedding little light on the evolution of a five-inning minimum. The 21 "save wins" occured in the 78,286 games played during this study, so it happened about two times every three major-league years, sharing the frequency of a celestial event. Additionally, of those 21 "save wins" only five occurred when the starting pitcher left before the fifth inning, thus only five intersect with the games of this study.

Table 5. Archaic Wins When Save Wins Awarded, 1918–49

League	Awarded	Possible	Percentage	2.0 IP	3.0 IP	4.0 IP	Leage Actions in Overruling
AL	0	2	0.0	0/1	0/1		No actions
NL	0	3	0.0	0/1		0/2	No actions
MLB	0	5	0.0	0/2	0/1	0/2	

The obvious is illustrated in Table 5: in none of the five games did the win go to the starting pitcher.

The three "save wins" in 1948 include Dan Casey's three-inning bailout of starter Rex Barney in Brooklyn's Opening Day victory; a win for Detroit's Virgil Trucks, July 23; and another for a Brooklyn pitcher, Paul Minner, September 16. A fourth "save win" was awarded to Clint Hartung of the Giants, June 13, but rescinded by the NL a few days later. They doled it out instead to middle reliever Larry Jansen.

WEATHER-SHORTENED GAMES

Twelve games in this study saw starting pitchers go two, three, or four innings in a game that went five or six innings. With two exceptions, the starting pitcher got the win per a scoring practice that actually survives to this day. The most recent four-inning victory in a rain-shortened game went to the Phillies' Andrew Carpenter in 2009. Weather- and darkness-shortened games of seven or eight innings have a healthy percentage of archaic wins awarded: 45 percent. However, this pales in comparison to the 83 percent we see in five- and six-inning conquests.

The AL enforced a three-inning minimum while the NL looked for four innings in these ultra-short games and the two starting pitchers who did not gain wins in this category both fell shy of those milestones. The Cardinals' Jim Hearn pitched 3.1 (7/5/1948) and the Browns' Dick Starr pitched 2.2 (9/25/1949).

Wins in this category did not exist between July 10, 1949, and May 12, 1978, a span of nearly 30 years and over 45,000 games. So the 1950 ruling did affect weather-shortened wins for a generation, until Wilbur Wood received official scorer mercy for his 157th career win on that 1978 date. Larry Luebbers' 1999 win was finally awarded late in the evening, October 3, when the game was cancelled.

Three of the last four pitchers to receive these wins never won again, their weather-shortened victory becoming their very last in The Show. Luebbers was the first of this cursed group; the Reds' Chris Michalak also won late in 2006, and the Phillies' Carpenter as mentioned. The fourth pitcher, CC Sabathia, won a 2001 game in this fashion in his tenth career start. He is still active and may yet join this group by bowing out with a rain-shortened win. It would, however, require him to become the first pitcher to gain two wins in this teensy category.

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Van Lingle Mungo was credited with a win on September 27, 1936, in which he left with a 6–0 lead, but pitched only two innings.

Table 6. Weather-Shortened Archaic Wins, 1918–49

League	Awarded	Possible	Percentage	2.0 IP	3.0 IP	4.0 IP	Leage Actions in Overruling
AL	4	5	80.0	0/1	3/3	1/1	No actions
NL	6	7	85.7		0/1	6/6	No actions
MLB	10	12	83.3	0/1	3/4	7/7	

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Firpo Marberry would have won fifteen extra games had a five-inning minimum come sooner.

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Al Munro Elias espoused the concept that "If a pitcher couldn't lose, he shouldn't win."

The post-1950 incarnation of the weather-shortened win is different only in that three-inning wins are disallowed. The last three-inning win in a weather-shortened game went to Washington's David Thompson, September 19, 1948.

COMMANDING LEADS

After filtering out the excuses and exceptions of the study era, one is free to analyze the remaining 766 games for clues to the guidelines official scorers used in awarding archaic victories. Overlap does exist between groups—there may be multiple relievers in a game in which the starting pitcher is injured—so the quantity of starts when adding up all of these groups totals lower than expected.

One trend stands out: NL official scorers honored John Heydler's 1916 bulletin. Remember, Heydler's "commanding lead" guideline said that "a pitcher retired at close of fourth inning, with the score 2–1 in his favor, has not won a game." Sure enough, no NL pitcher since won a game with a 2–1 lead and fewer than five innings of work. In fact, only two out of 139 starters won an archaic victory with a one-run lead. The Cubs' Alex Freeman (September 9, 1921) and the Pirates' Bill Swift (August 23, 1935), both won after leaving with 5–4 leads, but only because multiple relievers followed them. For the thirty-two years in the study period, Heydler's guideline required NL teams to play for one run if the starting pitcher with a one-run lead was to get a win. This is the real reason that, to this day, the NL is known as a one-run league. It wasn't because John McGraw loved to bunt. John McGraw abhorred the bunt.

Even two runs couldn't guarantee you an NL win. Only seven starters out of 99 games received archaic wins with two-run leads, and six of those again took advantage of multiple relievers to win. Only the Phillies' Pretzels Pezzullo, in his first career start (May 27, 1935), managed an archaic win with a two-run lead and one reliever. Pezzullo gave up nine hits in 4⅔, leaving with the bases loaded. Euel Moore gave up three hits in 4⅓ innings of shut-out relief, and left the game with the same 4–2 score he inherited.

Even for leads of three, four, and five, the AL handed out archaic wins by a 39–25 margin over the stingy NL, despite the fact that the NL had more occurrences of these potential archaic wins: 142–123. Only when leads were six or more did NL official scorers grant low-inning victories: the NL awarded 14 in 25 contests, while the AL awarded 9 in 26 contests.

The AL was simply not guided by commanding leads. Ban Johnson actually oversaw two archaic 2–1 victories handed out under his watch. They went to Washington's Harry Harper (May 3, 1919) and the A's Sam Gray (August 19, 1926). Harper went only two innings and the official scorer gave the win to the reliever, Ed Hovlik, but in complete defiance of the NL rule Ban Johnson overruled the official scorer and made sure Harper got the win.

American League archaic win awarding was more an art form. In the Ban Johnson era the AL out-awarded the NL 79-to-27. Once Johnson retired, the AL and the NL were practically on even terms and the AL out-awarded the senior loop, 23-to-22. Barnard's four-inning minimum was ignored only twice in the late 1940s, when multiple relievers muddied the waters for two win assignments. Yankees' pitcher Randy Gumpert's first win after returning from World War II duty was the first of these (April 24, 1946) and the sore-armed Mickey

NEW YORK TIMES

The list of pitchers who scored at least 300 victories:

	Yrs.	W.	L.	PC.
Denton T. (Cy) Young	22	511	315	.617
Walter Johnson	21	414	276	.600
Grover Alexander	20	373	208	.640
Christy Mathewson	17	372	189	.663
Charles A. (Kid) Nichols	15	360	204	.638
Tim Keefe	14	342	*	*
John Clarkson	11	327	*	.618
Eddie Plank	17	324	190	.630
Charles Radbourne	11	310	191	.619
Mickey Welch	13	304	*	*
Anthony Mulane	13	302	*	*
Robert M. Grove	17	300	138	.685

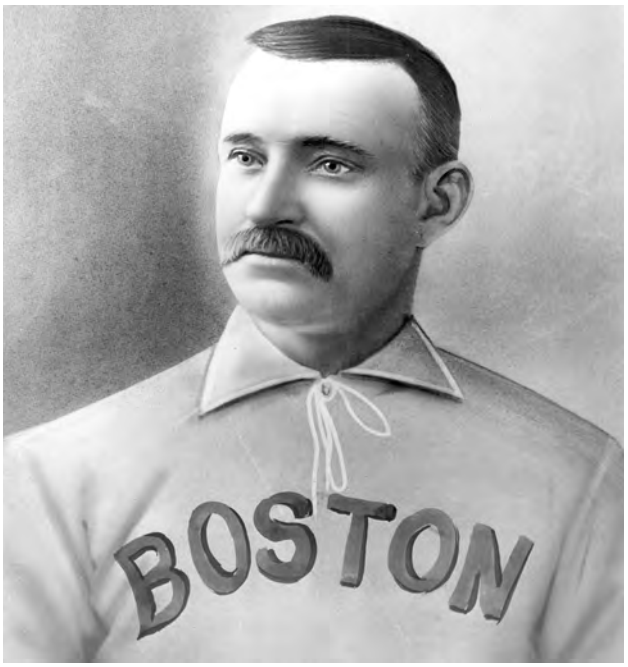
*No record.

A list of the 300-game winners in The New York Times*, July 26, 1941, omits 365-game winner Pud Galvin and includes 284-game winner Tony Mullane. Losses are unknown for four of the pitchers.*

Harris got the last (July 6, 1947). Harris was arguably the best of four Red Sox pitchers that day.

Snowballing exceptions like these threatened to make a mockery of minimums. On June 13, 1948, the Cardinals hosted the Giants in a double-header that was the talk of the offseason. In the first game Clint Hartung got a win for what was effectively a two-out save, later overruled by the league. In the second game Red Munger got a three-inning win after he jammed his finger diving into first base. In July 1949, baseball commissioner Happy Chandler appointed a committee of senior official scorers to solve these winning decision problems. Tom Swope, shortly after being announced as the senior member of that committee, went out and credited a loss to Warren Hacker in a game in which starter Monk Dubiel allowed the go-ahead run (July 6, 1949). Hopes were not high that the group could fix the issue. Nevertheless, in mid-January 1950, Swope, Roscoe McGowen, Dan Daniel, Halsey Hall, and Charles Young agreed on the five-inning minimum and passed along their ruling to Chandler for both leagues. It marked the end of an era of bitterness and bickering and promised a future of fairness and goodwill.

And speaking of Al Spalding, he did, of course, eventually get the win. That came 96 years later when Information Concepts Inc. was given unprecedented access to baseballs' official records for the production of the *1969 Baseball Encyclopedia*. Most other pre-1920 pitchers had to wait until the seventh edition of *Total Baseball*, in 2001, to have proper won-loss records shown. Remarkably, Chadwick himself never retroactively figured won-lost records and never presented a pitcher's career won-lost total. It seems that to Chadwick what a pitcher did in consecutive seasons was irrelevant given the overall changes in teams and leagues. Charles Radbourn likely died without knowing he won sixty—or close to sixty—games in one season.



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Unless he'd seen it in the 1885 Spalding Guide—which was unlikely—Charles Radbourn probably never knew he won 60 games—or close to it—one season.

Career totals begin with Cy Young, whose win milestones from 300 to 400 to 500 in the first decade of the twentieth century proved irresistible for newspapers who guessed as to his actual lifetime won-lost record. George L. Moreland was a Columbus, Ohio railroad baggage master who became a minor league investor, umpire, baseball reporter, and major league scout in the 1890s. Moreland broke both his ankles early in 1898 and reportedly reviewed all of baseball history while convalescing at Pittsburgh's eastern district White Ash post office. In 1905 Moreland's stats began appearing in newspapers. By June 1910, his weekly averages appeared nationally—always "by George L. Moreland" who had made himself a brand. He opened his own sports bureau and published *Moreland's Baseball Records and Percentage Book* in 1909.

Moreland was the first to provide lifetime totals for pitchers in press releases that went national, but his works seem to have been stabs in the dark after Henry Chadwick passed in 1908. In 1911 he credited Cy Young with a 504–317 lifetime mark. In 1914, in his magnum opus encyclopedia, *Balldom*, he presented Young with a 508–311 record. Moreland, Fred Lieb, Ernest Lanigan, and Al Munro Elias all did their own research in secret and nearly every career pitching line published failed to match any other. During this era researchers maintained strict secrecy about their stats lest someone else double-check their totals for accuracy and claim their work.

Moreland had serious stomach trouble during WWI. He lost 100 pounds and ownership of his sports bureau. When he was sick, John Heydler rose to the NL presidency and reportedly asked Al Munro Elias instead for the lifetime hits of Tris Speaker and Cap Anson. Elias pulled an all-nighter counting, presenting Heydler with the totals the next morning. Impressed, Heydler made the very private Elias the NL's official statistician over Moreland. Secrecy came to rule and even 20 years later, when Lefty Grove won his 300th game, no one knew the won-lost records of the 300-win club. Grove didn't take any chances. He pitched a complete game. ■

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Managing the 1947 Dodgers

The "People's Choice"

Lyle Spatz

The genesis for this article dates back to Chuck Chalberg's wonderful one-man show as Branch Rickey at the 2012 SABR convention in Minneapolis. Afterward, Chuck asked for questions from the audience and that we address them as if he were actually Rickey. I asked if he had considered anyone besides Burt Shotton to manage the Dodgers in 1947. "Mr. Rickey" said it was a good question, one that he had never been asked, but he had no answer. So I decided to look at who was available to the real Branch Rickey and see if there might have been a better choice than Shotton.

Burt Shotton led the Dodgers to the 1947 pennant and took the New York Yankees to seven games in the World Series. So why am I even thinking someone else may have been the better choice? The answer does not lie in the win-loss column, but rather on the playing fields and in the dugouts of the seven other National League cities. We all remember, or have read about, the terrible ordeal suffered by Jackie Robinson from various teams and individuals around the league. No manager could have fully prevented that, but I've often thought how different Robinson's ordeal would have been had fiery Leo Durocher been his manager that year.

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Burt Shotton led the Dodgers to the 1947 pennant, so why wonder whether another manager might have been better?

Durocher was the right man at the right time during spring training, recognizing immediately how good a ballplayer Robinson was. He had defended him with a fierce, profanity-laced outburst when some of his players voiced their opposition to playing with a black man. We can be sure he would have been even more fierce in defending Robinson against the opposition. Every beanball, unnecessarily hard slide, or actual spiking, would have propelled Durocher onto the field demanding the umpires throw the perpetrator out of the game. Based on his previous history, we can be certain he would have ordered retaliatory measures by Brooklyn pitchers and baserunners. Shotton, by contrast, was a nonconfrontational man by nature. Moreover, because he managed in street clothes, he was forbidden by rule to even step on the field, much less face up to an umpire or opposing manager or player.

Commissioner Happy Chandler's one-year suspension of Durocher for actions detrimental to baseball came one day before the Dodgers signed Robinson to a major-league contract and six days before the season opener. Dodgers president Branch Rickey's first choice to replace Durocher was Joe McCarthy, the long-time Yankees' manager who had resigned in early 1946. When McCarthy turned him down, Rickey offered the position to coach Clyde Sukeforth, who had recommended Robinson. Sukeforth agreed to manage the club until Rickey could find a permanent manager, saying he preferred to remain a coach. On April 18, the Dodgers announced the hiring of Shotton, Rickey's old friend and frequent employee. We all know how important it was to Branch Rickey for Robinson to succeed, so the question is, did Rickey make the best managerial choice in ensuring Robinson's success?

Shotton appeared as surprised as anyone to find himself managing the Dodgers. He was 62 years old and hadn't been a full-time manager since being fired by the Philadelphia Phillies in 1933, after six unsuccessful seasons. He was completely unfamiliar with his new team, and there were hardly any National League players still around that he had managed or managed against. The only National League manager

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Second baseman Eddie Stanky overcame early doubts and fully accepted Robinson as a teammate.

remaining from 1933 was Charlie Grimm of the Chicago Cubs. So my question is, why did Rickey choose Shotton?

Durocher had told his players they were good enough to win the pennant no matter who Rickey got to replace him, but why Shotton? Did he consider anyone else, someone more familiar with not only Brooklyn's players, but the National League as a whole? Let's look at some of the available possibilities, both in the Dodgers system and elsewhere. Among those already under contract were Ray Blades, Clay Hopper, and Jake Pitler.

Blades, like Shotton, had a long history with Rickey, dating back to their days with the St. Louis Cardinals. He had been hired to replace the departed Charlie Dressen, Durocher's assistant manager, a role we now call a "bench coach." When the suspension was announced, the New York press assumed he would be the new manager. "Durocher Suspended for Season: Blades Likely to Take over Job," was the headline in the *New York Post*.

Hopper, a Mississippian, had managed Robinson at Montreal in 1946, and despite his initial opposition to having a black player, he had come to admire and respect Robinson's talent and character. Under Hopper's leadership, Robinson won the International League batting championship, and the Royals won the Junior World Series.

Pitler had been managing in the Brooklyn farm system since 1939 and been instrumental in the development of future Dodgers Duke Snider, Ralph Branca, and Clem Labine. Additionally, Pitler had looked after Robinson during spring training and was one of the rookie's strongest boosters.

Among those available who were not in Rickey's employ were former managers Frankie Frisch, Luke Sewell, and Freddie Fitzsimmons. Frisch and Sewell were experienced managers, who had won pennants, and in Frisch's case a World Series. Both men had been let go during the 1946 season: Frisch by the Pittsburgh Pirates and Sewell by the St. Louis Browns. Fitzsimmons had been fired by the Philadelphia Phillies a year earlier. All three were younger than Burt Shotton.

Other former big league managers serving as coaches and possibly available were Bill McKechnie and Del Baker. McKechnie had 25 years of major-league managerial experience, including four pennants and two world championships. He had been fired by the Cincinnati Reds at the end of the previous season and had signed on as a coach with the Cleveland Indians. Baker, who'd won a pennant with the 1940 Tigers, was a coach for the Boston Red Sox. McKechnie and Baker were also younger than Burt Shotton.

Supposedly, one of the reasons for McCarthy's lack of interest in the Brooklyn job was that Rickey could not guarantee him more than the one year Durocher would be gone. That might also have been a factor in attempting to sign Frisch, Sewell, and Fitzsimmons; although none had McCarthy's reputation or the comfort of knowing he could have almost any managerial job he wanted. McKechnie and Baker were under contract to other clubs, an obstacle Rickey easily could have overcome. Most organizations allow a coach to move on to an offered managerial job.

We don't know if Rickey even considered any of these former major-league managers, or even any of his own coaches, except for Sukeforth. What is intriguing is whether he ever considered any of the three leaders he had on his own roster, already under contract for as long as he wanted them. Player-managers were no longer as plentiful as they had been in earlier decades, but at the start of the 1947 season Mel Ott and Lou Boudreau were filling that role for the Giants

and Indians, respectively. Joe Cronin was only two years removed from being the Red Sox playing-manager.

Boudreau and Cronin were shortstops, as was Pee Wee Reese, a player who was well-liked and respected by his teammates. Reese had been the least resistant among the Dodgers' Southern contingent to playing with Robinson and had befriended him early on. Rickey thought so highly of Reese's leadership qualities, he would later appoint him as the Dodgers' team captain.

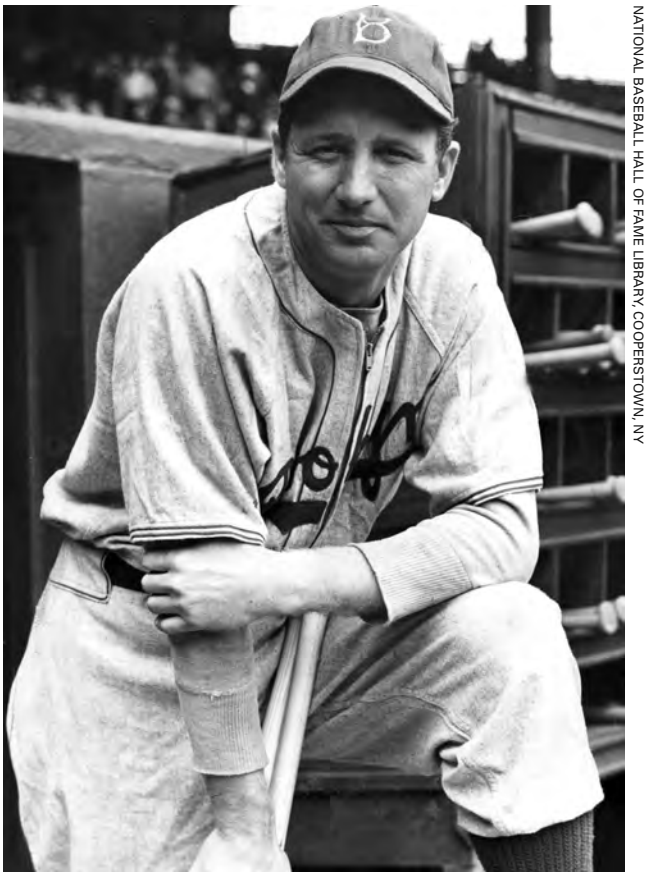
Second baseman Eddie Stanky had overcome some early doubt and fully accepted Robinson as a teammate. He quickly recognized not only Robinson's talent, but that the competitive spirit that burned in him was much like his own. Aware that Robinson could not fight back against his tormentors, Stanky, the man closest to him on the field, would not have let the hard slides and attempted spikings Robinson received go unanswered.

There is no need to go through all the verbal abuse directed at Robinson in 1947. Let's just focus on the first series against Philadelphia, in the second week of the season, to serve as a symbol for all the rest. Robinson later called this series his worst experience of the season. Led by manager Ben Chapman, the Phillies attacked Robinson with a steady stream of vile racial insults. An outraged Stanky called Chapman a coward and dared him to pick on somebody who can fight back. Stanky was clearly managerial material. Five years later he was the player-manager for the St. Louis Cardinals, the start of a successful seven-year managerial career.

Eddie Stanky would have been an excellent choice to manage the 1947 Dodgers; however, I believe Dixie Walker would have been an even better choice. Despite his well-publicized opposition to Robinson joining the Dodgers, Walker was, above all, a professional. Like all the Dodgers, once the season began he accepted Robinson as a teammate. He did so not out of any sense of social conscience, but the quick realization that the rookie's exceptional talent and his strength of character could be a key contributor in helping Brooklyn win the pennant. That meant more money for him and all the other Dodgers.

The 36-year-old Walker, a major leaguer since 1931, was among the most respected players in the game. He was the Dodgers' player representative, and his fellow National Leaguers had chosen him to represent them on a Joint Major League committee organized to deal with issues affecting all the players, such as pensions and benefits.

Dixie Walker was the team's most popular player, perhaps the most beloved Dodger ever, at least to that



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Dixie Walker was the Dodgers' player representative, universally respected by National League players, and perhaps the most beloved Dodger up to that point.

time. He was also the undisputed team leader, His acceptance of Robinson would have sent a message to everyone around the league that this black man was a Dodger and we will not tolerate anyone trying to do him harm. Nor would he have sat on the bench and quietly observed the abuse. Walker, a gentle man off the field, had been in several notable brawls throughout his career, including one with several members of the Cubs a year earlier.

His most notable brawl had come as a member of the Yankees in a 1933 game at Washington, when he rushed to the defense of his teammate and best friend, Ben Chapman; the same Ben Chapman who 14 years later was directing the attacks on Robinson that first week in April. Walker had not been as vehement in his reaction to the attacks as Stanky, simply telling his old friend to "lay off." Had he been the manager, he likely would have had more words for Chapman, and they would have carried more weight.

Walker, who owned a hardware store in Birmingham, Alabama, had been receiving letters from customers warning of a boycott of the store if he played with "that nigger." At a time when players depended on

outside income this was not a threat easily ignored. Yet while Walker never showed any outward signs of friendliness toward his black teammate, he did something more important. Robinson has written of how during an early season slump, Walker corrected his swing and the positioning of his feet. It was valuable advice from a man who later became an outstanding batting coach, and Robinson never forgot it. Walker was never unpleasant to him, Robinson remembered, while describing him as a man of innate fairness.

Becoming a big-league manager was always in Walker's plans. Rickey thought enough of his teaching and leadership skills to offer him the managing job at Triple-A St. Paul for 1948. Walker preferred to continue as a major league player, and spent the next two seasons with the Pirates. Afterward, he managed for ten seasons in the high minors, compiling a .530 winning percentage, but never got a big league chance.

When Walter O'Malley bought out Rickey after the 1950 season, he fired "Rickey's man," Shotton, leading *The Sporting News* and several other newspapers to predict Walker would be managing the Dodgers in 1951. Instead, O'Malley chose Charlie Dressen, a man with an abrasive personality, no communication skills, and an extremely questionable in-game strategy. The 1951–1953 Dodgers were so strong they won two pennants despite Dressen; they lost a third because of him.

In late October 1950, when Walker was still being considered for the job, a reporter asked Robinson his opinion. It was fine with him, Jackie said, adding that he would not mind playing under Walker. Too bad he didn't get the chance in 1947. Had Robinson been managed by Walker, one of the most respected men in baseball, one who would have had no hesitation in confronting his tormentors, Robinson's life would likely have been a lot less burdensome. ■

Double X and His Lost Dingers

Robert H. Schaefer

In the baseball season of 1932, Jimmie Foxx—known then and now as Double X—made a concerted assault on Babe Ruth's home-run record of 60 in a season. The Philadelphia A's strong boy came up two short, ending his season with a total of 58. There is a persistent legend that Foxx would have broken Ruth's record had fate not intervened. The root of this legend is found in Sportsman's Park. Erected in 1909 and opened only days after Philadelphia's Shibe Park, it was the second park in the steel-and-cement stadium era. Sportsman's Park was used by both the National and American League teams in St. Louis from 1920 until the end of the 1953 season, when the Browns' new owners moved the club to Baltimore and changed their name to the Orioles.

The cozy dimensions of Sportsman's Park were a hitter's delight, especially for left-handed power thumpers. The right-field foul line was only 310 feet from home plate and the outfield fence curved gently to an affable distance of 348 feet in straightaway right field. In order for a batted ball to leave the field of play and land in the grandstand for a home run, it had to clear an 11.5-foot high cement wall. During the first week of July 1929, the visiting Tigers hit a total of eight home runs in four games at Sportsman's Park, humiliating the hapless Brownies. No game was scheduled for the following day, July 5.

The next team scheduled to call in St. Louis, the New York Yankees, featured several powerful left-handed hitters who had acquired a reputation for blasting home runs, not the least of whom was The Babe himself. The outlook for the Brownies was grim. Fearing the worst, on the offday Browns team president Philip de Catesby Ball had a screen erected in front of the right-field pavilion. The new screen stretched from the right field foul pole some 156 feet towards center field. The 21.5-foot tall screen was suspended from the pavilion roof and descended to the top of the outfield wall. The screen effectively denied a huge portion of the right-field stands to home-run hitters. A batted ball now had to clear a 33-foot high barrier. This modification was designed to prevent cheap home runs by the opposition. President Ball evidently believed that the anemic Browns would be less affected by the screen than all other American League teams.

Regarding the first game after the screen's installation, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported:

> St. Louis, July 7. The first move to cut down the assault of home run hitting showed its effect in today's game between the Browns and the Yankees when five drives landed against the right field screen ordered in front of the pavilion seats yesterday by President Ball of St. Louis. Ruth lost a homer in the fourth when his liner hit the screen. The Babe showed his disgust and waved gestures toward the outfield screen. Heinie Manush lost three home runs and Fred Schulte one.

The irony of the screen's effect is that it hurt the Brownies more than the Yankees by a 4-to-1 margin. Nonetheless, the screen remained in place until the 1955 season. Because the Cards' line-up that year had a disproportionate number of left-handed hitters, both Manager Eddie Stanky and General Manager Dick Myer thought the screen would hurt the team and they had it removed.[1] The next year, new General Manager Frank Lane restored the screen when it became apparent that the opposition was helped more than the Cards. The screen stayed in place for the remainder of Sportsman's Park's tenure as a major league ball park.

Obviously, when The Babe smashed his record sixty home runs in 1927 the screen wasn't a factor. One source indicates that the Babe hit only four home runs at Sportsman's Park in 1927, but does not indicate to which parts of the field the Babe made his homers.[2] How much the screen would have reduced his 1927 record is an interesting question, but is not relevant to the legend involving Double X. The issue at hand is to determine the number of home runs, if any, that Jimmie Foxx "lost" due to the right-field screen. Let's first survey what other baseball writers have stated:

Glenn Dickey, in his book, *The History of the American League*, reports that Foxx lost three home runs due to the wire netting above the regular fence in St. Louis.[3]

St. Louis sportswriters Bob Broeg and William J. Miller, Jr., in their book, *Baseball From a Different Angle*, report the following information concerning Foxx's encounter with the right-field screen: "By Reidenbaugh's research … Foxx hit the right-field screen 12 times at Sportsman's Park [in 1932] and the ball was in play."[4]

Lowell Reidenbaugh was a senior editor at St. Louis's famous weekly journal of baseball, *The Sporting News*, and conducted this research for his book entitled *Take Me Out to the Ball Park*. Having made the startling claim of twelve lost dingers, Broeg and Miller then tempered this number: "Actually, as Reidenbaugh acknowledged, the research was questionable."

Gene Mack also suggests that Foxx smacked 12 would-be home runs into the netting in 1932. He attributes this number to an unnamed Philadelphia scribe.

Next, Broeg and Miller quote Broeg's own book, *Super Stars of Baseball*, which gives Foxx's number of lost home runs as seven. They additionally report that this is the same number claimed by Foxx himself in a 1964 interview with *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reporter Neal Russo. Broeg and Miller muddied the waters still further by stating that some unnamed researchers determined that Foxx lost "only" four home runs to the screen in 1932.

This survey of published but unconfirmed reports of Foxx's lost home runs ranges from a low of three to a high of twelve, making Foxx's 1932 potential home run total without the intervention of Mr. Ball and his infamous screen a minimum of 61 and a maximum of 70. Either number would have defeated Ruth's record 60 of 1927. If in fact Foxx had not lost these home runs, Roger Maris would not have been able to surpass him in 1961. What is the actual truth? Just how badly was Foxx hurt by the installation of the right-field screen?

The best place to begin this inquiry is to examine the batter-by-batter accounts of the eleven games Foxx played in Sportsman's Park in 1932. The A's arrived in St. Louis for a five game series and played the first game on June 15. Right-hander Irving "Bump" Hadley was the Brownies' starting pitcher. Foxx struck out in both the first and third innings. He then singled to left in the fourth, driving in Bishop and Cramer. Foxx doubled off the right field screen in the sixth. The A's rallied in the seventh and Walter "Lefty" Stewart came in to pitch for the Brownies. In his last time at bat with Stewart pitching, Foxx drove a long fly to center field. Schulte pulled down this drive near the flag pole. Foxx was 2-for-5 in this game, a single and the lone double off the right field screen.

The next day left-handed pitcher Carl Fischer started and completed the game for St. Louis. In the first inning Foxx popped up to shortstop Levey. He then struck out in the third and walked in the fifth. In his last at bat Foxx grounded into a double play, shortstop Levey to second baseman Melillo to first baseman Burns. Foxx was 1-for-4 with a walk and a single on the day.

After an off-day, the series resumed on June 18. Right-hander George Blaeholder started for St. Louis. In the first inning Foxx grounded to third baseman Grimes, who threw him out at first. Blaeholder struck out Foxx in the third. Left-handed Wally Herbert replaced Blaeholder in the fourth inning and Foxx flied out to Campbell in right field to end the inning. Herbert gave way to right-hander Chad Kimsey. Foxx grounded into a double play, Levey to Melillo to Burns, in the seventh for his final at bat. He went 0-for-4.

The A's and Browns played a double header on June 19. Bump Hadley pitched a complete game in the opener for St. Louis, beating the A's, 3–2. Foxx went 1-for-3, a single. He also had two walks.

Stewart started the second game for St. Louis but lasted only 2⅓ innings. James C. Isaminger described the events in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

> In this game Jimmy Foxx drove Lefthander Stewart to the showers in the third inning with a cyclopean round tripper.
>
> In lashing out his 26th homer of the season Foxx gave the spectators a thrill, for he drove the ball out of the park east of the scoreboard for the first time in history.
>
> Only twice has the ball been hit out of the park in this section before and both went over close to the foul line, a shorter wallop. Foxx's record-breaking belt cleared the entire depth of the bleachers sardined with coatless customers and left the park ten feet above the outer wall. Veteran St. Louis baseball writers gasped when they saw the hit and declared that it was the longest homer ever made in St. Louis.
>
> Two were on base when the broadback made this cyclopean crack.

How far did this "record" home run travel on the fly? When queried on the possible length of this home run, ballpark historian and design consultant John Pastier wrote in an e-mail:

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Immediately before a visit by the New York Yankees, who were known for their left-handed power, a screen was erected at Sportsman's Park that stretched from the right-field foul pole 156 feet toward center. At 21.5 tall and extending from the top of the outfield wall to the roof, the screen's intended effect was to deny a huge portion of right field to home-run hitters.

> A diagram I have shows the depth of the bleachers to be about 45', which is generally confirmed by the number of rows (about 20) in a photo in *Take Me Out to the Ballpark*.
>
> If the ball was just to the east of the edge of the scoreboard, it would have to travel at least 440' to reach the rear wall (about 390' at the playing field wall), which I estimate to be about 28' high. This indicates a minimum of about 454' necessary to just clear the wall. Adding the 10' of extra height would make the minimum about 459'. The questions then are whether the ball's arc was flatter than a very high fly (very unlikely for a ball hit that far), and how far east of the scoreboard it was.
>
> By the way, there's no way an observer in the pressbox would be able to tell how high the ball was when it cleared the back fence—that vantage point would be well over 500' away and not permit good depth perception…I'd guess that the ball came to earth about 460' to 475' from home plate, which is still very impressive.

Foxx added a single to his day's work, giving him 2-for-4. This closed out the A's three-game series in St. Louis.

The A's returned on August 4 for another three-game series. Stewart started the first game and pitched a complete-game victory, winning 6–2. Leading off the second inning, Foxx singled to left field, then walked in the fourth, and grounded out Levey to Burns in the sixth. In the eighth Foxx hit into a double play, Levey to Melillo to Burns. In the ninth he hit a hot liner directly to Goose Goslin in left, who grabbed it for the out. In this game Foxx went 1-for-4 with a walk.

The game played on Friday, August 5, ended after ten innings, with the Browns winning 9–8. Hadley, Sam Gray, and Fischer all pitched for the Browns. Foxx walked in the first and third innings, then hit a single to left field in the fifth inning, scoring Mule Haas and Mickey Cochrane. Foxx went 2-for-3 with a home run and 2 walks.

On Saturday Blaeholder pitched a complete game as the Browns lost, 4–2. Foxx went 0-for-4, grounding out three times—to second base in the second, third base in the third, short in the sixth—and finally struck out in the ninth.

The A's returned to the Mound City on Wednesday, September 14, for their final series. In the first inning Foxx singled past Scharein at third base. In the third he forced Simmons at second base, Levey to Melillo. He walked in the fifth. In his final at bat Foxx popped out to Rick Ferrell in front of the plate in the seventh. Foxx was 2-for-5.

The next day Foxx popped up to Burns at first base in the second inning, fouled out to Burns in the fourth. He singled to center in the sixth, and grounded out to third in the ninth. Foxx was 1-for-4.

Friday, September 16, marked the A's last game at Sportsman's Park in 1932. Foxx walked in the first and third innings, and grounded out to Burns at first base

in the sixth. He ended his 1932 appearance in St. Louis by ignominiously striking out in the eighth inning, 0-for-2 on the day.

A summary of Foxx's 11 games at Sportsman's Park in 1932 produces a batting average of .225, OBP .326, and SLG .300. These statistics are wan in contrast to Foxx's overall batting average of .364 and slugging average of .749. For comparison, the American League posted a batting average of .277 and .404 slugging in 1932. In 1932 Sportsman's Park was not Double X's favorite place to hit a baseball. His overall sub-par performance there is consistent with the fact that Foxx hit only one ball into the right field screen, and that came in the A's first game of the series on June 15.

So there you have it. Without the screen in right field, Foxx would not have broken Ruth's home run record in 1932. But the story of Foxx's 1932 lost dingers doesn't end in St. Louis. Listen to what Foxx told writer Joe Williams on the subject in 1940, not about Sportsman's Park, but Shibe:

> I came close in 1932, you know. As a matter of fact, I actually did break it, but a barbed-wire arrangement set up outside Shibe Park to keep kids from climbing the fence blocked me. I hit three balls that were outside the park; they hit the wire and bounced back on the field. They were just as legitimate as any of the other 58 home runs I hit but they didn't count.[5]

It is unlikely that this information was noted by any local reporters as part of the daily game account to either verify or deny it. But if we take Foxx's tale at face value, we then have to add three home runs "lost" at Shibe Park which increases his actual total to 61. And if we stretch the point a bit further and remove the right-field screen from Sportsman's Park, Double X ends up with a season total of 62. So which record did Roger Maris break in 1961? ■

NOTES

1. Philip J. Lowry, *Green Cathedrals*, (Walker and Company, 2006) 231.
2. Gene Mack, *Hall of Fame Cartoons of Major League Ball Parks*, (The Globe Newspaper Company, 1947).
3. Ibid, 108.
4. Ibid, 46.
5. Jimmie Foxx, quoted on March 15, 1940, during spring training in Sarasota, Florida in a column written by Joe Williams on that date. Peter Williams, Ed. *The Joe Williams Baseball Reader,* (Algonquin Books, 1989) 93.

Revisiting Nolan Ryan in 1973

The Quest for 400 Strikeouts

Paul Hensler

The mission of the California Angels in 1973 was to find a way to wrest the American League West Division title from their in-state neighbors to the north, the World Series champion Oakland Athletics. The Angels were counting on improvements engineered by General Manager Harry Dalton after the 1972 season. Now in his second season as GM, Dalton had traded former 20-game winner Andy Messersmith and third baseman Ken McMullen to the Los Angeles Dodgers for a clutch of players that included future Hall of Famer Frank Robinson and another past 20-game winner, Bill Singer. Joining Singer in the Angels' rotation were holdovers Rudy May, Clyde Wright, and a young Texan named Nolan Ryan.

Ryan had been brought in by Dalton the previous year and had evinced the powerful pitching that became his trademark. He pitched as many innings (284) as he had in his previous two years combined with his former team, the New York Mets, taking the mound for 39 starts and leading the American League in shutouts (9), walks (157), and strikeouts (329). Ryan's role as a workhorse now established, the 26-year-old hurler looked to improve on the 19–16 record he logged in the strike-shortened season of 1972.

For the 1973 season as a whole, the Angels' high point came on June 27 when they briefly held first place atop the AL West on the strength of Singer's 12–3 record. Thereafter, California took a slow, steady descent to fourth place with 79 wins and 83 losses, a full 15 games behind Oakland. But the year had moments of intrigue for Ryan, who lumbered along with a winning pace that was below .500 as September began.

The right-hander spun a pair of no-hit gems, the first coming against the Royals in Kansas City on May 15, the second in Detroit exactly two months later. On August 31 Ryan limited the opposition to one hit. Stellar as these accomplishments were, the number of strikeouts Ryan amassed in each succeeding contest quickly outshone them. Ryan's first start of 1973 set the tone for the season. Already known as "The Express" thanks to his blazing fastball, Ryan fanned 12 Royals in his opening assignment, and over the course of the season fanned an average of 10.57 batters per nine innings pitched. As the season ground on and the strikeouts accumulated, Ryan edged ever closer to Dodgers great Sandy Koufax's 382 strikeouts in 1965.

To be sure, Ryan encountered some missteps along the way, such as his May 11 start at home against the White Sox in which he failed to survive the first inning, and a rare but disastrous relief outing against the Yankees on August 14, when he yielded three straight hits, threw a wild pitch, and walked a batter before at last getting the final out of the eighth inning of a 7–2 loss. But by September 3, Ryan's ascension on the strikeout leader board put him at 326, meaning that in his final five scheduled starts, he would have to fan 57 batters to eclipse Koufax.

At that point, manager Bobby Winkles and his charges were not much of a threat to division-leading Oakland, and with little to play for other than having a look at some new prospects—Frank Tanana among them—the former Arizona State head coach kept Ryan pitching every fourth day, save for one skipped start on September 7. The task before Ryan was not impossible, but the pitcher admitted, "Sandy [Koufax] said the last 100 [strikeouts] are the toughest and I believe it. My arm is getting tired."[1]

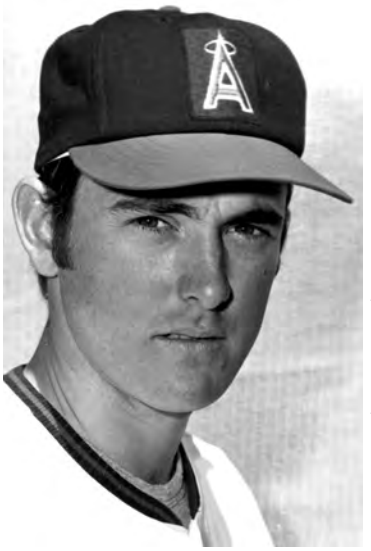
Laboring through September, Ryan set down 12 White Sox on the 11th, 10 Royals on the 15th, seven Rangers four days later, and 12 Twins on the 23rd. An additional 16 strikeout victims were needed to reach 383. In his only remaining start—at home on September 27 versus Minnesota—Ryan produced the desired result. This finale had a great deal of drama, however. Ryan rang up three strikeouts in the 7th, giving him 14 Ks but still one shy of Koufax, and he tied the record in the 8th after fanning Steve Brye. The score was knotted at 4–4, and Ryan retired the Twins in the 9th but without a strikeout. Had the Angels scored in the home half of the 9th, Ryan would have remained even with Koufax at 382, but after a scoreless 10th inning for both teams, Ryan finally whiffed Rich Reese to end the 11th inning and set a modern record. The Angels plated a run in the bottom of that inning for

the victory, and the book was closed on Ryan's season as well as the strikeout record.

Writing in *The Sporting News* to commemorate the new mark, Dick Miller revealed that Ryan also had a bit of luck working in his favor on September 3. Oakland's Deron Johnson hit a pop fly for an out in the 9th inning, but the play was nullified when third base umpire Art Franz insisted that he had called time because a ball had gotten loose from the Angels bullpen. Given a new life at the plate, Johnson then proceeded to strike out on a full count, thus making Ryan work a tad more but providing a propitious chance for him to increase his strikeout total. The final account of Nolan Ryan's season showed 21 wins, 16 losses, one save, an ERA of 2.87 over 326 innings, the single-season mark of 383 strikeouts, and a second-place finish behind Baltimore's Jim Palmer for the American League Cy Young Award. Ryan was also voted the recipient of his team's Owner's Trophy as the Angels' Most Valuable Player.

Putting Ryan's achievement in perspective nearly four decades later, one should note that the next closest whiff total in the intervening years has been Randy Johnson's 372 for the National League's Arizona Diamondbacks in 2001. Johnson's run at the record included strikeouts of poor-hitting National League pitchers, akin to Koufax initially setting the mark with the benefit of facing his own weak-hitting pitching brethren. Had Ryan been afforded the same luxury of facing his mound opponents—rather than the American League's newly-introduced designated hitters in 1973—how many strikeouts might he have totaled? As the 40th anniversary of Nolan Ryan's record-setting feat approaches, an analysis of his games pitched in 1973 is offered here to answer that question. Might Ryan have not only broken Koufax's total but also surpassed the magical figure of 400 strikeouts?

This mythical 400-strikeout barrier that Ryan might have broken falls into the what-if category. The 17 strikeouts that he needed beyond 383 can be found only in theory. Using the array of data now easily available on the Internet, I formulated ground rules for reviewing his 1973 season appearances and assigned strikeouts on a case-by-case basis, predicting how many strikeouts he would have recorded had the designated hitter not been in effect.[2]



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Fireballing young Nolan Ryan evoked comparisons to Sandy Koufax for multiple reasons.

SETTING THE GROUND RULES

Several factors must be taken into account to make this analysis as rational as possible. Simply substituting strikeouts for every plate appearance by designated hitters would not be acceptable, so I established criteria. The pitcher was always assumed to be the ninth-place hitter in the batting order with his number of plate appearances predicated on the actual number of innings he pitched, and accounting for the circumstances of his turn at bat. When a team is either trailing or threatening to score, many skippers pinch-hit for the pitcher, especially in the later innings, and these situations were noted. Of course, this works both ways, as Ryan himself might also have been removed for a pinch-hitter, taking away those strikeouts recorded after he would likely have been out of the game. In all cases, the remainder of the batting order was left intact because there was no way to recreate an entire game while re-adjusting the whole order. Therefore, all results of the other batters stand as they actually occurred.

In instances where a pinch-hitter most likely would have been used in place of the opposing pitcher, the result of the actual designated hitter's first plate appearance was factored in. The reasoning here is that if the DH was deemed by his own manager to be worthy of starting against Ryan, then he was well-qualified to be the first pinch-hitter to come off the bench. Thus, if the designated hitter struck out in his initial plate appearance against Ryan, that strikeout was counted toward Ryan's theoretical total. In keeping true to the spirit of the typical role of the pinch-hitter, this singular trip to the plate was also assumed to be his only appearance in the game, and the results of his other plate appearances have been ignored. Results of other players who pinch-hit are counted as they occurred.

By far, the most effort in this analysis was expended in figuring out what the opposing pitcher would have done during his hypothetical at-bats. This evaluation was also a multi-step process, with fairness paramount in forming an acceptable judgment. Since the 1972 season was the last year in which American

League pitchers batted for themselves, those pitchers' applicable season averages, strikeout-per-at-bat, and results if they had batted against Ryan were reviewed. Also employed in this assessment was Ryan's own performance in a particular inning, so if a poor-hitting opposing pitcher came to bat when Ryan was pitching well, the assumption was made that said pitcher would have fanned.

Some detailed examples illustrate the methods described.

1. April 11, 1973, against Minnesota

Twins actual starting lineup	Twins adjusted lineup without the DH
Larry Hisle, cf	Larry Hisle, cf
Rod Carew, 2b	Rod Carew, 2b
Bobby Darwin, rf	Bobby Darwin, rf
Tony Oliva, dh	Joe Lis, 1b
Joe Lis, 1b	Steve Braun, 3b
Steve Braun, 3b	Danny Thompson, ss
Danny Thompson, ss	Phil Roof, c
Phil Roof, c	Jim Holt, lf
Jim Holt, lf	Bill Hands, p

For the Chicago Cubs in 1972, Hands batted—if that can even be the proper term—a pathetic .018, getting one hit in 57 at-bats while striking out 30 times. In this game, Hands lasted five innings, and the Twins' ninth-place hitter came to bat twice—in the 3rd and 5th innings—during his time on the mound. Pitching a complete game, Ryan had a good outing, striking out a total of 11 Twins while allowing one run on five hits and five walks. With Ryan striking out one batter in the 3rd inning, two in the 4th, and another in the 5th, it is quite likely that a poor batter such as Hands would have fanned both of his hypothetical trips to the plate. As the designated hitter temporarily in absentia, Oliva would have pinch-hit in the 7th inning when the ninth-place batter was due up, but in his first actual time that he faced Ryan in this contest, Oliva lined out, therefore, no strikeout is credited. (In fact, Oliva did not strike out in any of his at-bats this day.) In the 7th inning, Minnesota did use Steve Brye as a pinch-hitter for Roof and struck out, so this strikeout was still credited to Ryan, as was the actual strikeout of George Mitterwald, who replaced Roof and batted in the 9th inning. Ryan's real strikeout total for this game was 11, but with two hypothetical whiffs of Hands and the results of the reserves' at-bats being static, his adjusted total is now 13, a gain of two strikeouts.

2. April 22, 1973, at Oakland

Ryan faced Catfish Hunter in this contest, and in 1972 the Oakland ace batted .219 (23 for 105 with 16 strikeouts) including two hits in three at-bats (and no strikeouts) against Ryan in the game of May 22, 1972. With Hunter showing a general tendency to hold his own at the plate as well as to hit capably against Ryan a year earlier, no theoretical strikeouts were assigned. This game was closely contested—the Athletics won 3–2 in ten innings—so the assumption was also made that Ryan would have batted for himself in the top of the 8th inning when he was scheduled to lead off, even though the Angels trailed 2–1 at that point. By remaining in the game, he still would have struck out two Oakland batters in the bottom of both the 8th and 9th innings. Ryan gains no adjusted strikeouts, so his game total stays at nine.

3. August 2, 1973, against Texas

On this day, Ryan was matched up against Sonny Siebert, who hit very well in 1972 (.236 on 17 for 72 with 21 strikeouts) but was only 1-for-6 with three strikeouts against Ryan that year. Had he batted in the 3rd and 5th innings as did the ninth-place Texas batter, Siebert would probably have struck out at least once and been lifted for a pinch-hitter in the bottom of the 7th when the Rangers were down 3–1. Alex Johnson was the Rangers' DH and theoretical first pinch-hitter, and after deducting his three actual strikeouts since no designated hitter would have been in effect, one whiff is added back because he actually struck out his first time up. In the Rangers' 9th inning and now down 3–2, another pinch-hitter would have been used for the ninth-place batter who was scheduled to hit second. With no left-handed hitters on the Texas bench at the time, perhaps one of their top hitters available—Tom Grieve (.327), Ken Suarez (.285), or Jim Fregosi (.306), the last of which would have been an intriguing matchup of the two principals of the trade that landed Ryan in Anaheim—might have been called upon, but averages of this quality make the assumption of any of them striking out a tentative one. Therefore, for this game, Ryan gains one strikeout of Siebert, loses two of Johnson, and picks up none for any of the trio of potential pinch-hitters in the last inning. All told, Ryan ends with an adjusted total of 10 strikeouts, one less than his actual game total of 11.

Ryan's Season

The above samples should be borne in mind while perusing the summaries of each of Ryan's games in 1973. Ryan initially loses all 29 strikeouts that he recorded

against the designated hitters in 1973, but he recoups a few of these by invocation of the "DH as the first pinch-hitter" rule, and Ryan nets even more as his rival pitchers step into the hypothetical batter's box to face him. What follows is a comprehensive chart of the analysis as well as synopses of Ryan's appearances showing his projected performance.

Game 1—April 6 vs. Kansas City
Opposing pitchers: Steve Busby (4.1 innings), Bruce Dal Canton (2.2), Tom Burgmeier (1)
Opposing DH: Ed Kirkpatrick
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
With the Royals in 1972, Busby hit .200 (3 for 15 with 3 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. Busby would have batted twice (3rd, 5th). Ryan had two other strikeouts in the 3rd and struck out the 9th-place batter in the 5th, so Busby would have fanned at least one of these times. Kirkpatrick would have pinch-hit in the 8th but did not strike out in this game. Gail Hopkins was also used as a pinch-hitter but the ninth-place hitter may not have batted in 9th inning. Assume one strikeout of Busby.

Game 2—April 11 vs. Minnesota
Opposing pitchers: Bill Hands (5.0), Joe Decker (3.0)
Opposing DH: Tony Oliva
Adjusted strikeouts: Add two
With the Cubs in 1972, Hands batted .018 (1 for 57 with 30 strikeouts). Hands would have batted twice (3rd, 5th). Ryan ended the 2nd with a strikeout, had another in the 3rd, two in the 4th, and opened the 5th with a K. Hands likely would have been no match either trip to the plate. Oliva would have pinch-hit in the 7th but did not strikeout. Steve Brye would have pinch-hit in the 9th, and he struck out in his actual pinch-hitting role, so his strikeout stands. Assume two strikeouts of Hands.

Game 3—April 18 at Minnesota
Opposing pitcher: Bert Blyleven (9)
Opposing DH: Tony Oliva
Adjusted strikeouts: None
With the Twins in 1972, Blyleven hit .160 (15 for 94 with 36 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. Pitching 9 innings, he would have batted three times (2nd, 4th, 7th). Ryan was shaky in the 1st inning but ended it with a K, had one strikeout in the 2nd, and had three strikeouts in the 4th and 7th. Blyleven would have struck out his last two times. Oliva would have pinch-hit in the bottom of the 9th if any of the sixth-, seventh-, or eighth-place hitters reached base, but his two strikeouts are removed since he would not have batted. Assume two strikeouts of Blyleven, deduct two strikeouts of Oliva.

Game 4—April 22 at Oakland
Opposing pitchers: Catfish Hunter (7.2), Darold Knowles (0), Horacio Pina (2.1)
Opposing DHs: Jay Johnstone, Angel Mangual
Adjusted strikeouts: None
In 1972, Hunter batted .219 (23 for 105 with 16 strikeouts). He pitched against Ryan on May 22, 1972, and was 2-for-3 against him with no strikeouts. Ryan could have been lifted in the 8th inning, as the Angels were down 2–1 and the ninth-place hitter was scheduled to lead off. Ryan had 2 strikeouts in both the 8th and 9th innings, for a potential loss of 4 strikeouts, but given the closeness of the game, Ryan was likely to have been left in; neither Johnstone nor Mangual struck out in this game. Assume no strikeouts of Hunter.

Game 5—April 27 vs. Cleveland
Opposing pitcher: Milt Wilcox (9)
Opposing DH: Oscar Gamble
Adjusted strikeouts: Add two
In 1972, Wilcox batted .200 (9 for 45 with 12 strikeouts). He pitched against Ryan on June 14, 1972, but never made it out of the 1st inning and didn't bat against Ryan. In a rematch on August 27, 1972, Wilcox was 0–2 with one K. In this game Wilcox would have batted four times (2nd, 4th, 7th, and 9th) and struck out in Cardenas's ninth-place spot in the 2nd and the 4th, as Cardenas struck out both those same times. Gamble would not have batted since Wilcox pitched a complete game. Assume two strikeouts of Wilcox.

Game 6—May 2 at Detroit
Opposing pitchers: Mickey Lolich (11), Lerrin LaGrow (1)
Opposing DH: Gates Brown
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Lolich batted .067 (6 for 89 with 39 strikeouts). He pitched against Ryan on June 18, 1972, and went 0-for-2 with one strikeout against Ryan. He pitched against Ryan again on August 18 and went 0-for-1 with two walks. In this game he would have batted in the 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th, striking out in the 2nd, perhaps in the 6th and 8th innings. Ryan had eight walks in this game versus seven strikeouts, fanning Ed Brinkman three times, but overall it was not an overpowering display by Ryan, who could have been lifted in the 10th when the ninth-place hitter was schedule to lead off. Brown would have pinch-hit in the 12th but did not strikeout in this game. Assume two strikeouts of Lolich; deduct one strikeout of Brinkman.

Nolan Ryan in 1973, Game-By-Game

Game	Date	Opponent	Actual strikeouts	Minus DH strikeouts	Plus Pitcher strikeouts	Plus DH/PH strikeouts	Minus strikeouts after being removed	Adj. strikeouts
1	Apr 6	KC	12	0	1	0	0	13
2	Apr 11	Minn	11	0	2	0	0	13
3	Apr 18	@ Minn	14	2	2	0	0	14
4	Apr 22	@ Oak	9	0	0	0	0	9
5	Apr 27	Cle	8	0	2	0	0	10
6	May 2	@ Det	7	0	2	0	1	8
7	May 6	@ Balt	5	0	1	0	0	6
8	May 11	Chi	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	May 12	Chi	4	0	0	0	0	4
10	May 15	@ KC	12	1	1	0	0	12
11	May 19	Tex	12	3	1	1	0	11
12	May 24	@ Chi	13	1	2	0	0	14
13	May 29	@ Bos	10	1	1	0	0	10
14	Jun 2	@ NY	6	0	1	0	2	5
15	Jun 7	Det	7	0	1	0	0	8
16	Jun 12	Bos	9	0	1	0	0	10
17	Jun 16	NY	10	1	1	2	0	12
18	Jun 20	@ Chi	6	0	1	0	0	7
19	Jun 25	KC	9	0	2	0	0	11
20	Jun 29	Minn	12	0	2	0	1	13
21	Jul 3	@ Oak	10	0	1	0	0	11
22	Jul 7	@ Cle	6	1	1	0	0	6
23	Jul 11	@ Balt	11	0	2	0	0	13
24	Jul 15	@ Det	17	1	2	0	0	18
25	Jul 19	Balt	13	0	2	0	0	15
26	Jul 26	@ Tex	3	0	0	0	0	3
27	Jul 29	@ KC	3	1	1	0	0	3
28	Aug 2	Tex	11	3	1	1	0	10
29	Aug 7	@ Milw	13	1	2	0	1	13
30	Aug 11	@ Bos	12	1	2	-2	0	11
31	Aug 14	@ NY	0	0	0	0	0	0
32	Aug 17	Det	13	1	0	1	0	13
33	Aug 21	Milw	8	1	1	0	0	8
34	Aug 25	Bos	8	1	2	0	0	9
35	Aug 29	NY	10	1	2	1	0	12
36	Sep 3	Oak	12	1	2	0	0	13
37	Sep 11	Chi	12	1	2	0	0	13
38	Sep 15	KC	10	2	1	1	0	10
39	Sep 19	@ Tex	7	3	1	0	0	5
40	Sep 23	@ Minn	12	0	0	1	0	13
41	Sep 27	Minn	16	1	2	0	0	17
TOTALS			**383**	**29**	**51**	**6**	**5**	**406**

Game 7—May 6 at Baltimore
Opposing pitcher: Jim Palmer (9)
Opposing DH: Terry Crowley
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Palmer batted .224 (22 for 98 with 36 strikeouts). He pitched against Ryan on April 28, 1972, and went 0-for-1 with one strikeout against Ryan. in this game, Palmer would have batted in the 2nd, 5th, and 7th before Ryan flagged with two out in the 7th inning. Ryan was in command in the 2nd and 5th, retiring six of the seven batters he faced. Palmer had a good batting average but also a high strikeout ratio. Crowley would not have been used and had no strikeouts. Assume 1 strikeout of Palmer.

Game 8—May 11 vs. Chicago
Opposing pitchers: Stan Bahnsen (8.1), Terry Forster (0.2)
Opposing DH: Mike Andrews
Adjusted strikeouts: None
This game was Ryan's worst outing of the season. He lasted only one-third of an inning and had no strikeouts.

Game 9—May 12 vs. Chicago
Opposing pitchers: Eddie Fisher (3.1), Steve Stone (3.1), Cy Acosta (1.1)
Opposing DH: Rick Reichardt
Adjusted strikeouts: None
This game was the first of Ryan's two relief appearances in 1973. He pitched the last two innings, with four strikeouts. In 1972, Reichardt batted .251 (73 for 291 with 63 strikeouts). He faced Ryan on May 30, 1972, and went 0-for-1 (popup) against Ryan. On September 8, he went 0-for-3 (fielder's choice, strikeout, flyout). On September 16 he was 0-for-3 (2 strikeouts, flyout). Ryan would have faced ninth-place pinch-hitter in the top of the 8th with the White Sox down 6–5, Rechardt would have flied out to lead off that inning. Assume no extra strikeouts.

Game 10—May 15 at Kansas City (Ryan's first no-hitter)
Opposing pitchers: Bruce Dal Canton (5.2), Gene Garber (3.1)
Opposing DH: Ed Kirkpatrick
Adjusted strikeouts: None
In 1972, Dal Canton batted .098 (4 for 41 with 14 strikeouts) and struck out all three times he faced Ryan. Dal Canton would have come to bat in the 3rd inning and would likely have struck out because Ryan fanned two other batters in this inning. Garber was with Pittsburgh in 1972 and did not face Ryan. Kirkpatrick did not strike out until the 8th, so his hypothetical pinch-hitting appearance in the 6th would have been a groundout. Gail Hopkins may have batted for Garber in the 8th but did not strike out. Assume one strikeout of Dal Canton; deduct one strikeout of Kirkpatrick.

Game 11—May 19 vs. Texas
Opposing pitchers: Rich Hand (4), Charlie Hudson (3), Steve Foucault (1)
Opposing DH: Alex Johnson
Adjusted strikeouts: Deduct one
In 1972, Hand batted .154 (8 for 52 with 13 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. Hand would have come to bat in the 3rd and the 5th, and would likely have struck out his first time because Ryan fanned two of the next three batters. Hudson would have been removed in the 7th inning because Texas was down seven runs. Johnson would have pinch-hit and and since he struck out his first time up, this strikeout stands. Rich Stelmaszek also pinch-hit and singled. Assume 1 strikeout of Hand, deduct 2 strikeouts of Johnson.

Game 12—May 24 at Chicago
Opposing pitchers: Wilbur Wood (8.2), Cy Acosta (0.1)
Opposing DHs: Carlos May, Mike Andrews
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Wood batted .136 (17 for 125 with 65 strikeouts). He faced Ryan on August 9, 1972, and went 1-for-3 with two strikeouts. In this game he would have come to bat in the 3rd, 4th, and 7th. The number-nine Angel batter was due to lead off the top of the 6th, but Ryan was scheduled to face the lower half of the White Sox order, so he likely would have stayed in. Ryan was shaky in the 3rd but would have struck out Wood in the 4th (he actually fanned 2 other White Sox) and the 7th (he actually struck out the side). Wood was not relieved until there were two out in the 9th, so no pinch-hitters would have been used. Andrews would not have come to bat to replace May since May would not have played to begin with. Assume two Ks of Wood; deduct one strikeout of Andrews.

Game 13—May 29 at Boston
Opposing pitchers: Bill Lee (7.2), Bobby Bolin (1.1)
Opposing DH: Orlando Cepeda
Adjusted strikeouts: None
In 1972, Lee batted .188 (3 for 16 with 7 strikeouts). Lee and Ryan played in the same game June 11, 1972, but Ryan lasted only 1.2 innings and did not pitch to Lee. In this game Lee would have come to bat in the 3rd, 4th, and 6th, and may have struck out to end the 6th inning as did ninth-place hitter John Kennedy. Cepeda actually homered his first time up, so deduct one strikeout. Assume one strikeout of Lee; deduct one strikeout of Cepeda.

Game 14—June 2 at New York
Opposing pitchers: Fritz Peterson (7), Sparky Lyle (2)
Opposing DH: Jim Ray Hart
Adjusted strikeouts: Deduct one
In 1972, Peterson batted .232 (19 for 82 with 14 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. In this game Peterson would have come to bat in the 3rd, 5th, and 7th, possibly striking out in the 3rd when Ryan fanned two others, or in the 7th when he also fanned two. Ryan might have been lifted with one out and a runner on second base in the 7th and the Angels down 2–0. The Angels did pinch-hit for the 9th-place hitter, so deduct 2 strikeouts. Assume one strikeout of Peterson; deduct strikeouts of Gene Michael and Horace Clarke.

Game 15—June 7 vs. Detroit
Opposing pitchers: Woodie Fryman (5.2), Tom Timmermann (1.1), Fred Scherman (1)
Opposing DH: Gates Brown
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Fryman batted .137 (10-for-73 with 13 strikeouts) for Philadelphia and Detroit. He faced Ryan once on August 31, 1972, and grounded out. In this game Fryman would have come to bat in the 3rd and 6th, probably striking out in the 3rd when Ryan struck out the side. Brown would have hit for Timmermann in the 8th, but the bottom of the order was not reached in the 9th, so Brown would have been the lone pinch-hitter used. Assume one strikeout of Fryman.

Game 16—June 12 vs. Boston
Opposing pitchers: Luis Tiant (6), Bobby Bolin (3)
Opposing DH: Orlando Cepeda
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Tiant batted .107 (6 for 56 with 18 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. In this game Tiant would have come to bat in the 2nd and 4th, possibly striking out in the 2nd after eighth-place hitter Luis Aparicio did likewise. Cepeda would have hit for Tiant in the 7th. In the 9th, Boston may have used Ben Oglivie as a left-handed pinch-hitter (on July 9, 1972, he struck out pinch-hitting vs. Ryan. in 1973, he was hitting .288 through June 9 (on 17 for 59, and was 2 for 10 as PH for the whole year). Oglivie also didn't play in the first two weeks of June, so perhaps he was injured. It is inconclusive that Oglivie would have struck out. Assume 1 strikeout of Tiant, none of Oglivie.


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Angels General Manager Harry Dalton had brought Ryan in as part of an effort to improve the club's pitching in 1972.

Game 17—June 16 vs. New York
Opposing pitcher: Pat Dobson (8)
Opposing DH: Jim Ray Hart
Adjusted strikeouts: Add two
In 1972, Dobson batted .141 (12 for 85 with 39 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. In this game Dobson would have come to bat in the 3rd and 5th, likely to be taken out in the 7th with the Yankees down 3–0. Hart would have batted for Dobson in the 7th and struck out as he actually did, so his strikeout stands. In the 9th, New York may have used Johnny Callison as a left-handed pinch-hitter since he was the only lefty on the bench (in 1972, he hit .258 on 71 for 275 with 34 strikeouts, 4 for 19 for .211 as a pinch-hitter. In 1973, he was hitting .122 through June 14 on 6-for-49, 2-for-7 as a PH for the whole year). Callison faced Ryan on July 22, 1972, and fanned once, going 0-for-2. In this game, Ryan struck out two in the 9th and may have also fanned Callison. Assume one strikeout of Dobson and one strikeout of Callison.

Game 18—June 20 at Chicago
Opposing pitchers: Steve Stone (6.2), Cy Acosta (2.1)
Opposing DH: Tony Muser
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Stone batted .118 (4 for 34 with 15 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. in this game Stone would have come to bat in the 3rd and 5th, likely to be taken out for a pinch-hitter in the 7th with the score tied 2–2 with two on and none out. Muser would have batted for Stone in the 7th but did not strike out. Ryan was not sharp in the beginning of the 3rd inning but had two strikeouts to end that frame. Assume one strikeout of Stone.

Game 19—June 25 vs. Kansas City
Opposing pitchers: Ken Wright (4), Wayne Simpson (2), Doug Bird (2)
Opposing DH: Gail Hopkins
Adjusted strikeouts: Add two
In 1972, Wright batted .000 (0-for-2 with 2 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. In this game Wright would have

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Had Ryan faced pitcher Bert Blyleven instead of DH Tony Oliva, his strikeout total would have been higher.

come to bat in the 2nd and 4th, probably striking out both times as Ryan had two other strikeouts in the 2nd and also struck out the ninth-place batter (Fran Healy) to end the 4th. Simpson would not have come to bat in the 6th, as the Royals were down 4–2, with Hopkins pinch-hitting. Bird would not have batted in the 9th, Steve Hovley pinch-hitting, who did actually fan as a PH. Assume two strikeouts of Wright.

Game 20—June 29 vs. Minnesota
Opposing pitcher: Bert Blyleven (9)
Opposing DH: Tony Oliva
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
With the Twins in 1972, Blyleven hit .160 (15 for 94 with 36 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. Pitching 9 innings, he would have batted four times (3rd, 6th, 8th, and 9th). Blyleven would have fanned in the 6th when Ryan retired the side in order and possibly in the 8th when he had one other strikeout. With the Angels down 4–0 going into the bottom of the 8th, Ryan would have been lifted, eliminating the strikeout of Joe Lis. Assume two strikeouts of Blyleven; deduct one strikeout of Lis.

Game 21—July 3 at Oakland
Opposing pitcher: Ken Holtzman (9)
Opposing DH: Deron Johnson
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
With the Athletics in 1972, Holtzman hit .178 (16 for 90 with 25 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. Pitching 9 innings, he would have batted three times (3rd, 5th, and 7th). Holtzman would have fanned in the 3rd when Ryan had one other strikeout and possibly again in the 5th when Ryan had two other strikeouts. Ryan's 7th inning was shaky, so as the potential fourth hitter in the top of the 8th, he may have been lifted, but because the Angels went down in order, the ninth-place hitter did not come to bat. Assume one strikeout of Holtzman.

Game 22—July 7 at Cleveland
Opposing pitcher: Gaylord Perry (9)
Opposing DH: Charlie Spikes
Adjusted strikeouts: None
With the Indians in 1972, Perry hit .155 (17 for 110 with 43 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. Pitching 9 innings, he would have batted three times (3rd, 5th, and 7th). Perry would have fanned in the 5th when Ryan also fanned the ninth-place hitter to end the inning. Ryan gave up three singles in the 7th, so he may not have struck out Perry again. Perry would have been lifted for a pinch-hitter in the 9th, and Spikes actually flied out his first time up. Assume one strikeout of Perry; deduct one strikeout of Spikes.

Game 23—July 11 at Baltimore
Opposing pitcher: Mike Cuellar (9)
Opposing DH: Tommy Davis
Adjusted strikeouts: Add two
With the Orioles in 1972, Cuellar hit .126 (11 for 87 with 38 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. Pitching 9 innings, he would have batted three times (2nd, 4th, and 5th) against Ryan, who pitched only six innings. Cuellar would have fanned in the 2nd when Ryan also struck out the eighth-place hitter and again in the 5th when Ryan struck out the seventh- and eighth-place hitters. With the Angels trailing 6–1, Ryan would have been lifted as the scheduled number-3 hitter in the top of the 7th. Davis had no strikeouts. Assume two strikeouts of Cuellar.

Game 24—July 15 at Detroit (Ryan's second no-hitter)
Opposing pitchers: Jim Perry (7.1), Fred Scherman (0.1), Bob Miller (0), Ed Farmer (1.1)
Opposing DH: Gates Brown
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
With the Twins in 1972, Perry hit .155 (11 for 71 with 14 strikeouts) and faced Ryan, going 0-for-4 with 2 strikeouts. Pitching 7.1 innings in this game, he would have batted twice (3rd and 5th). Perry would have fanned both times when Ryan recorded two other strikeouts in both innings. Brown would have pinch-hit for Perry in the 8th and walked. Assume two strikeouts of Perry; deduct one strikeout of Brown.

Game 25—July 19 vs. Baltimore
Opposing pitcher: Mike Cuellar
Opposing DH: Tommy Davis
Adjusted strikeouts: Add 2
With the Orioles in 1972, Cuellar hit .126 (11 for 87 with 38 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. Pitching 11 innings, he would have batted four times (3rd, 5th, 8th, and 10th). Cuellar would have fanned in the 3rd when Ryan also fanned the first-place hitter, in the 5th as Ryan fanned the real ninth-place hitter (Mark Belanger), and possibly in the 8th when Ryan fanned the number-1 and number-2 batters. Ryan may have been taken out in the bottom of the ninth with two out and a man on first, but he had no strikeouts after the 9th inning anyway. Cuellar's complete game means Davis would not have come to bat, but Davis had no strikeouts in this game. Assume two strikeouts of Cuellar.

Game 26—July 26 at Texas
Opposing pitcher: Jim Bibby (9)
Opposing DH: Alex Johnson
Adjusted strikeouts: None
With the Cardinals in 1972, Bibby hit .122 (1 for 8 with 3 strikeouts). Pitching 9 innings, he would have batted twice (3rd and 6th) against Ryan, who lasted only 6.1 innings. Ryan had no strikeouts in either of these frames and fanned just three for the entire game. This was Ryan's lowest strikeout total in any of his starts to date. Johnson did not strike out in this game. Assume no strikeouts of Bibby.

Game 27—July 29 at Kansas City
Opposing pitchers: Dick Drago (6), Doug Bird (4.2), Joe Hoerner (0.1)
Opposing DH: Rick Reichardt
Adjusted strikeouts: None
With the Royals in 1972, Drago hit .059 (4 for 68 with 36 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. Pitching 6 innings, he would have batted twice (3rd and 5th) against Ryan, who lasted only 5.2 innings. Ryan did strike out the ninth-place batter in the 5th and Drago likely would have fanned as well. Reichardt's strikeout is removed since he would not have faced Ryan. This was Ryan's second straight start with only 3 strikeouts. Assume one strikeout of Drago; deduct one strikeout for Reichardt.

Game 28—August 2 vs. Texas
Opposing pitchers: Sonny Siebert (6), Don Durham (2)
Opposing DH: Alex Johnson
Adjusted strikeouts: Deduct one
With the Red Sox in 1972, Siebert hit .236 (17 for 72 with 21 strikeouts) and hit .167 (1 for 6 with 3 strikeouts) against Ryan. Pitching 6 innings, he would have batted twice (3rd and 5th) against Ryan. Ryan struck out the seventh- and eighth-place hitters in the 3rd and may have fanned Siebert then as well. With the Rangers down 3–1 in the bottom of the 7th, Johnson would then have pinch-hit, striking out as he did his first actual time up against Ryan. Another pinch-hitter would have been used in the bottom of the 9th, perhaps Jim Fregosi (.306, 19 for 62, but did not face Ryan, 31 strikeouts in 157 at-bats in AL for all of 1973), Tom Grieve (.327, 16 for 49, 0-for-2 against Ryan in 1973, no strikeouts), or Ken Suarez (.285, 53 for 186, 16 strikeouts in 278 at-bats for all of 1973, 0-for-3 with two walks against Ryan). These three batters were all right-handed, as Texas had no lefties on the bench, but it is not possible to know which of them would have been selected to pinch-hit. Assume 1 strikeout of Siebert; deduct 2 strikeouts of Johnson; assume no strikeouts for any choice of Fregosi, Grieve, or Suarez.

Game 29—August 7 at Milwaukee
Opposing pitchers: Jerry Bell (7.1), Chris Short (2), Eduardo Rodriguez (0.2)
Opposing DH: Ellie Rodriguez
Adjusted strikeouts: None
With the Brewers in 1972, Bell hit .071 (1 for 14 with 10 strikeouts) but did not face Ryan. Pitching 7.1 innings, he would have batted three times (1st, 4th, and 6th). Ryan was not sharp in either the 1st or 6th but he struck out the side in the 4th. Bell had such a high strikeout percentage that he likely would have fanned at least twice. Rodriguez actually walked his first time up in the 1st, so his strikeout in the 4th is deducted. With the score 5–5 in the top of the 8th with a man on first and only one out, Ryan would have been lifted, so Bob Coluccio's strikeout in the 9th is deducted. Assume two strikeouts of Bell; deduct one strikeout of Rodriguez; deduct one strikeout of Coluccio.

Game 30—August 11 at Boston
Opposing pitchers: Roger Moret (7.1), Bobby Bolin (0.1), Bob Veale (1.1)
Opposing DH: Orlando Cepeda
Adjusted strikeouts: Deduct one
With the Red Sox in 1972, Moret hit .000 (0-for-1 with one K) but did not face Ryan. Pitching 7.1 innings, he would have batted three times (2nd, 4th, and 7th). The ninth-place hitting Ben Oglivie was Ryan's first out (a strikeout) in the 2nd and Moret may have also fanned. Ryan also struck out two in the 4th, including Oglivie again, so this could be another strikeout of Moret. Ryan would have been lifted in the top of the 8th, when the

ninth-place hitter was due to lead off with the Angels down 2-0, so Rico Petrocelli's and Doug Griffin's strikeouts in the 8th are deducted, as is Cepeda's strikeout because the Red Sox would not have used a pinch-hitter in the 8th. Assume two strikeouts of Moret; deduct one strikeout of Petrocelli; deduct one strikeout of Griffin; deduct one strikeout of Cepeda.

Game 31—August 14 at New York
Adjusted strikeouts: None
This was Ryan's second relief outing, pitching only 0.1 innings with no strikeouts

Game 32—August 17 vs. Detroit
Opposing pitchers: Woodie Fryman (1.1), Mike Strahler (4.2), Fred Scherman (1), Ed Farmer (1)
Opposing DH: Gates Brown
Adjusted strikeouts: None
In 1972, Fryman batted .137 (10-for-73 with 13 strikeouts) for Philadelphia and Detroit. He faced Ryan once on August 31, 1972, and grounded out. In this game Fryman would not have come to bat. Having just entered the game in the 2nd inning for what was a long relief outing, Strahler would have batted for himself in the 3rd inning. In 1972 for the Dodgers, Strahler was 2 for 11 with 6 strikeouts, and as Ryan had no strikeouts and gave up a hit and a walk in the third, he may not have fanned Strahler. Brown would have hit for Strahler in the 5th as the Tigers were now down 7–1. Brown struck out in his first at-bat, so his strikeout stands. Either Dick Sharon or Tom Veryzer could have pinch-hit in the top of the 7th (both came into the game in the bottom of the 7th), so their at-bats stand. Assume no strikeouts of Strahler.

Game 33—August 21 vs. Milwaukee
Opposing pitcher: Jim Colborn (9)
Opposing DH: Bob Coluccio
Adjusted strikeouts: None
In 1972, Colborn batted .081 (3 for 37 with 17 strikeouts) for the Brewers. In this game Colborn would have faced Ryan twice (3rd and 5th) as Ryan pitched only 5.2 innings. Colborn would have struck out in the 3rd when Ryan fanned the side in order. Assume one strikeout of Colborn, deduct one strikeout of Coluccio.

Game 34—August 25 vs. Boston
Opposing pitcher: John Curtis (9)
Opposing DH: Orlando Cepeda
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Curtis batted .094 (5 for 53 with 23 strikeouts) for the Red Sox but did not face Ryan. in this game Curtis would have faced Ryan in the 3rd, 5th, and 7th, striking out in the 5th when Ryan fanned the eighth-place hitter and in the 7th when Ryan retired the side in order with one other K. No pinch-hitter would have been used, so deduct Cepeda's strikeout. Assume two strikeouts for Curtis, deduct one strikeout for Cepeda.

Game 35—August 29 vs. New York
Opposing pitchers: Doc Medich (7), Lindy McDaniel (1)
Opposing DH: Ron Blomberg
Adjusted strikeouts: Add two
In 1972, Medich batted .000 (0-for-1 with no strikeouts) for the Yankees but did not face Ryan. in this game Medich would have faced Ryan in the 3rd and 5th, striking out in the 3rd when Ryan fanned the first-place hitter in a 1-2-3 inning and in the 5th when Ryan also struck out the ninth-place batter. Medich was lifted after 7 innings, so Blomberg would have pinch-hit and struck out his actual first time up, so his strikeout stands. Assume two strikeouts of Medich.

Game 36—September 3 vs. Oakland
Opposing pitchers: Blue Moon Odom (5), Darold Knowles (2), Horacio Pina (1)
Opposing DH: Pat Bourque
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Odom batted .121 (8 for 66 with 29 strikeouts) for the Athletics and was 0-for-3 with one strikeout against Ryan. In this game Odom would have faced Ryan in the 3rd and 5th, striking out in the 3rd when Ryan struck out the side in order and in the 5th when Ryan also struck out the ninth-place batter. Odom was lifted after facing two batters in the 6th, so Bourque would pinch-hit in the 7th and drawn a walk as he did his actual first time up. Assume two strikeouts of Odom; deduct one strikeout of Bourque.

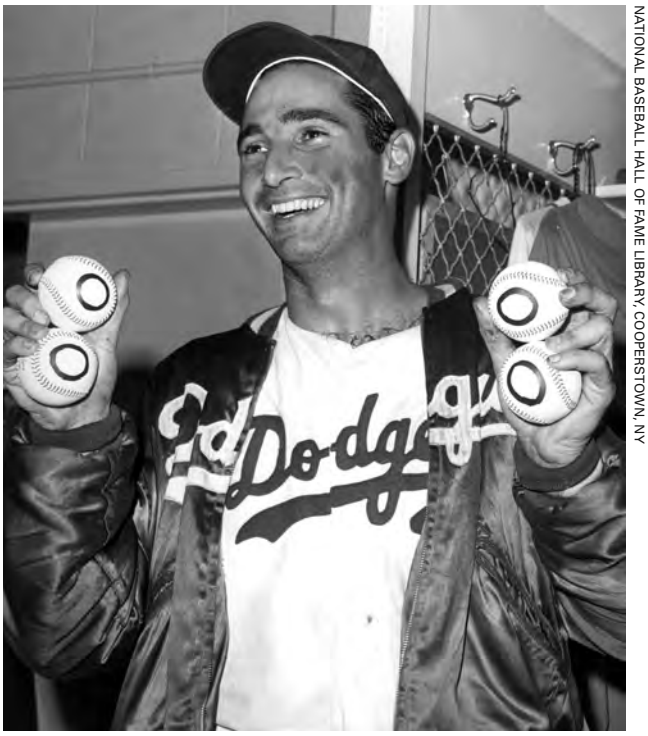
Game 37—September 11 vs. Chicago
Opposing pitcher: Wilbur Wood (8)
Opposing DH: Carlos May
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Wood batted .136 (17 for 125 with 65 strikeouts). He faced Ryan on August 9, 1972, and went 1-for-3 with two strikeouts. In this game he would have come to bat in the 3rd, 5th, and 7th. Wood may not have fanned in the 3rd but possibly in the 5th when Ryan had one other strikeout and also in the 7th. It is doubtful that Wood would have been lifted for a pinch-hitter in the 7th because there were already two out with nobody on and he had retired nine straight Angels, so he would have struck out as did the other

two batters in the 7th. This means that May would not have pinch-hit. Assume two strikeouts of Wood; deduct one strikeout of May.

Game 38—September 15 vs. Kansas City
Opposing pitcher: Gene Garber (8)
Opposing DH: Amos Otis
Adjusted strikeouts: None
In 1972, Garber batted .000 (0-for-1 with no strikeouts) playing for Pittsburgh. In this game he would have come to bat in the 3rd and 5th. Garber may have fanned in the 3rd when Ryan had one other strikeout but not in the 5th when Ryan was not sharp. Garber may have been lifted in the 7th for a pinch-hitter with the Royals down 3–1. Otis would have batted and struck out as he actually did his first time up in the 1st inning so his strikeout stands. Assume one strikeout of Garber; deduct 1 strikeout of Otis.

Game 39—September 19 at Texas
Opposing pitchers: Pete Broberg (2.1), Jackie Brown (1.2), Don Durham (5)
Opposing DH: Bill Sudakis
Adjusted strikeouts: Deduct two
In 1972, Broberg batted .078 (4 for 51 with 24 strikeouts) playing for Texas but did not face Ryan. In this game he would have come to bat in the 2nd and struck out as there were two out with the ninth-place batter up. Brown was lifted in the bottom of the 4th for pinch-hitter Sudakis, who actually walked his first time up. Another pinch-hitter would have batted in the 7th with Texas down 5–1 and another pinch-hitter in the 9th with the Rangers losing 6–2. As with the earlier game against Texas on August 2, assume that any other pinch-hitter would not have struck out as Ryan retired the side in order in both the 7th and 9th innings but with no strikeouts. Assume one strikeout of Broberg; deduct three strikeouts of Sudakis.

Game 40—September 23 at Minnesota
Opposing pitchers: Joe Decker (0.2), Eddie Bane (5.1), Vic Albury (2), Bill Campbell (1)
Opposing DH: Tony Oliva
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Decker batted .000 for the Cubs but would never have come to the plate in this game. Bane, Albury, and Campbell were all rookies who would never become big league regulars. Bane would have been lifted for Oliva in the 3rd with the Twins down 7–0. Pinch-hitters would have been used in the 5th, 7th, and 9th innings with the score being so lopsided, coupled with the fact that rosters were expanded with



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As the 1973 season wore on, eclipsing Koufax's strikeout total came within reach.

extra players who could have been used to pinch-hit. However, it is impossible to guess who these three pinch-hitters would have been, but Ryan had two strikeouts in the 5th and one in the 7th, so he may have picked up one more in either of these frames but not in the 9th when he struggled. Assume one strikeout of one of the pinch-hitters.

Game 41—September 27 vs. Minnesota
Opposing pitchers: Dave Goltz (2), Bill Hands (5), Bill Campbell (3.1)
Opposing DH: Tony Oliva
Adjusted strikeouts: Add one
In 1972, Goltz batted .103 for the Twins (3 for 29 with 17 strikeouts) and was 0-for-1 with one strikeout against Ryan. Goltz would have led off the top of the 2nd inning and may have struck out as Rod Carew and Oliva did later that inning. The score was tied 3–3 at this point. Hands (see stats of April 11) was allowed to remain for a long relief stint and had he batted, he almost surely would have fanned in the 4th when Ryan struck out the side in order. Oliva would have pinch-hit in the 6th (he actually singled his first time up). The ninth-place hitter came up in the 8th and 10th innings but as in Ryan's previous game, there is no way to know who these two pinch-hitters might have been. Assume one strikeout of Goltz; assume one strikeout of Hands; deduct one strikeout of Oliva.

SUMMARY

Even if the kudos are as imaginary as the fictitious whiffs, Nolan Ryan's projected 1973 strikeout total would have gone beyond 400. An adjusted total of 406 strikeouts against lineups void of the designated hitter is certainly debatable, given the assumptions made in this study. But this exploration of the possible outcomes of each of Ryan's games and their potential impact on his extant record runs a course similar to other hypothetical baseball studies.

Using the game summaries and accompanying statistics as a guide, several points should be noted. At the onset of the season, it is doubtful Ryan set a goal to best Koufax, but as the months passed and the strikeout total grew, the chance of establishing a record came within reach. As formidable as Ryan was throughout most of the year, he did endure several slumps that stalled his quest for the strikeout crown. In three starting assignments from May 2 to May 11, Ryan collected only a dozen whiffs before righting himself in his first relief appearance on May 12 when he fanned four batters in two innings of work. He followed his brief emergence from the bullpen with his first no-hitter on May 15, striking out 12 Royals in the process.

Ryan continued through June and early July by approaching double-digit totals in most of his starts, but as was reported in *The Sporting News*, he also was experiencing some discomfort in his back.[3] While that pain was not evident on July 15 in his second no-hitter in Detroit, Ryan admitted that he wished he could have fanned 20 Tigers instead of settling for the 17 who did strike out that day. *The Sporting News* later presciently noted that based on his mid-season total, Ryan was on a pace to edge Koufax's record by two strikeouts.[4] Meanwhile, after following up the command performance in Detroit with a 13-strikeout appearance in Baltimore four days later, Ryan again slumped with a pair of starts in late July in which only three batters in each game fell victim.

From August through mid-September, Ryan hit his stride, fanning 10 or more batters in eight of ten starts. Winkles arranged the pitching rotation to accommodate Ryan. Ryan fanned 12 at Minnesota on September 23 and then four days later pitched 11 innings in Anaheim in a successful, all-out effort to fan 16 Twins for the standing record of 383 strikeouts.

In the Angels' 1974 media guide, the organization praised its star pitcher and devoted much space to recapping Ryan's 14 club and major league records tied or set in 1973. But while Ryan would have lost the 29 strikeouts of those DHs he faced plus some in games where he would have been removed for a pinch-hitter, by facing opposing pitchers he would have more than recovered those whiffs. ■

NOTES

1. *The Sporting News*, September 22, 1973, 20.
2. I gratefully acknowledge the Web sites Baseball Almanac and Baseball-Reference.com for their respective troves of information.
3. *The Sporting News*, July 21, 1973, 20.
4. *The Sporting News*, August 4, 1973, 22.

"Recorded Games of Frustration"

Win Expectancy and the Boston Red Sox

Michael Mitchell

On October 26, 1986, the day after the Boston Red Sox lost Game Six of the World Series, Leigh Montville of the *Boston Globe* wrote: "Never have the Red Sox come this close and failed. Never in the Bucky Dent game or the Enos Slaughter game or the Jim Burton game or all the recorded games of frustration had the finish been this close to a championship. Never. Not since 1918. Never."[1] In the years since that article was published, baseball fans would undoubtedly add what could be called "the Aaron Boone game" and the last day of the 2011 season to that ignominious list of games in which the Red Sox snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

Writing immediately after the 1986 loss, Montville asserts that the Red Sox had never been closer to the world title. With the help of Baseball-Reference.com's detailed Win Probability charts, I aim to test the accuracy of the claim, adding the 2003 ALCS loss ("the Boone game") and the last day of the 2011 season ("Game 162") to the inventory of frustrating moments Montville provides.

While examining the Win Probability charts, I will also address another question: the culpability of Bill Buckner in the 1986 World Series loss, and the relative importance of the other signature moments in Montville's list.

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Though it was devastating when Enos Slaughter scored from first on a Harry Walker double, the Sox were never as close to winning the championship as they were in 1986.

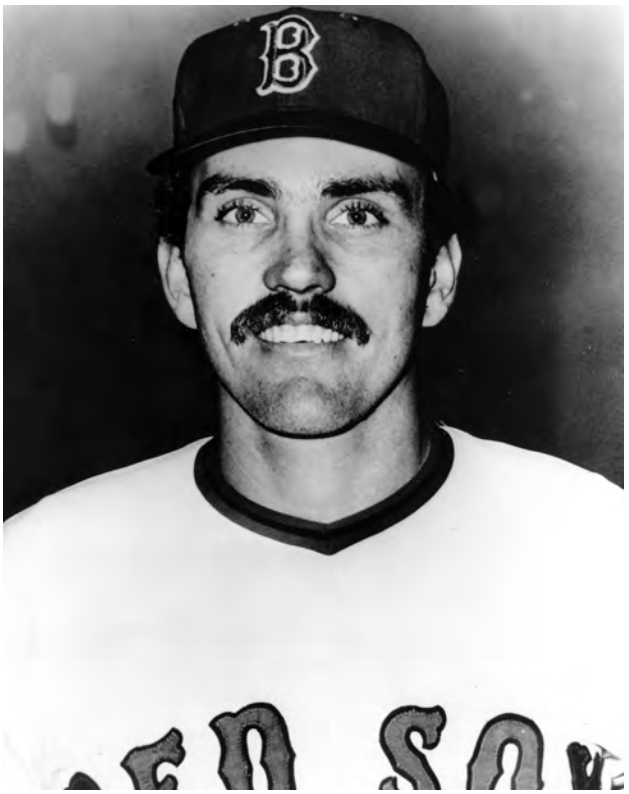
METHODOLOGY

Retrosheet has compiled and made freely available to the public every Major League Baseball box score from 1918 to the present. For every game considered in this study, the respective Baseball-Reference box score pages also contain a play-by-play chart and the calculated change in Win Probability resulting from each play. The probability is measured in terms of each team's Win Expectancy (WE), or the likelihood of each team winning, expressed as a percentage.[2]

An individual play, therefore, has a Winning Team Win Probability Added (wWPA), which could also be considered the change in WE that results from the play. In order to measure how "close" the Red Sox were to winning the games that Montville listed, I have looked at the peak WE recorded for the Red Sox in those games to determine which game brought the Red Sox closest to a 100 percent WE. I have also assessed the wWPA for each of the infamous plays by which the games are known.

RESULTS

Moving game by game through Montville's list in the order he arranged them, one would begin with the Bucky Dent game, which was the 1978 AL East division tiebreaker game of October 2, 1978.[3] That afternoon, the Red Sox recorded an intra-game high WE of 85 percent in the top of the seventh inning. Dent's three-run home run three batters later boosted the Yankees' odds from a WE 18 percent to 64 percent, good for 46 percent wWPA, which is the second biggest wWPA on



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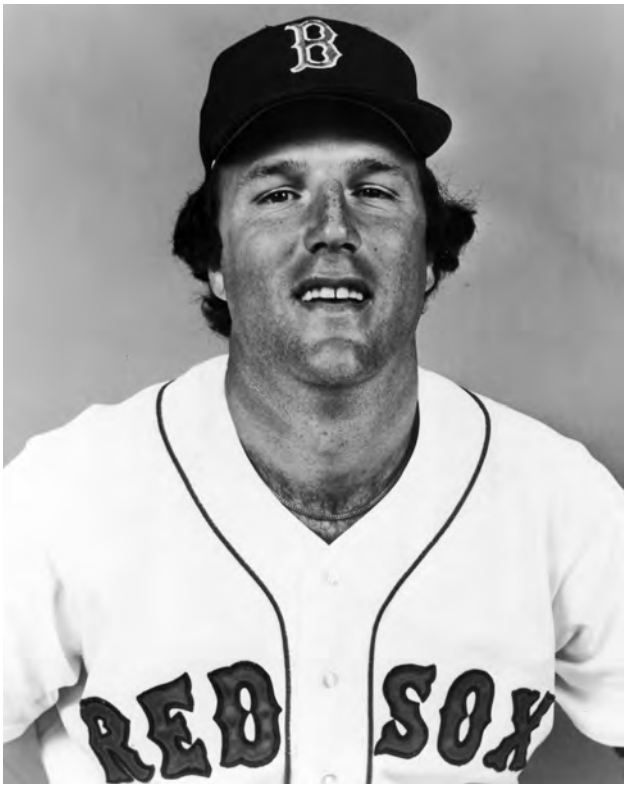
Jim Burton pitched in Game Seven of the 1975 World Series against the Reds, and improved the Reds' Win Expectancy.



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When pitcher Bob Stanley uncorked a wild pitch while facing Mookie Wilson in Game Six of the 1986 World Series, the Mets jumped from a 19 percent Win Expectancy to 60 percent, a swing of 41 points.

this list—bigger than the Buckner error that allowed Ray Knight to score in 1986.

Next on Montville's list was the Enos Slaughter game, which was Game Seven of the 1946 World Series.[4] The Red Sox were never as close to winning this game as they were in the Dent game: 67 percent was the highest WE recorded for the Red Sox that day. The Slaughter play—in the bottom of the eighth with two outs, Slaughter scored from first on a Harry Walker double—moved the Cardinals from a 55 percent WE to 87 percent WE, or 32 percent wWPA.

The Jim Burton game is a World Series Game Seven, too.[5] The final game of the 1975 Reds-Red Sox Series saw Burton pitch for the Red Sox in the top of the ninth inning, giving up a two-out RBI single to Joe Morgan that moved the game from a 50 percent WE to an 84 percent WE for the Reds. Morgan's hit added 34 percent to the winning team's Win Probability. Earlier in the game, the Red Sox had a high probability of winning; in the bottom of the fifth inning, their WE reached 90 percent.

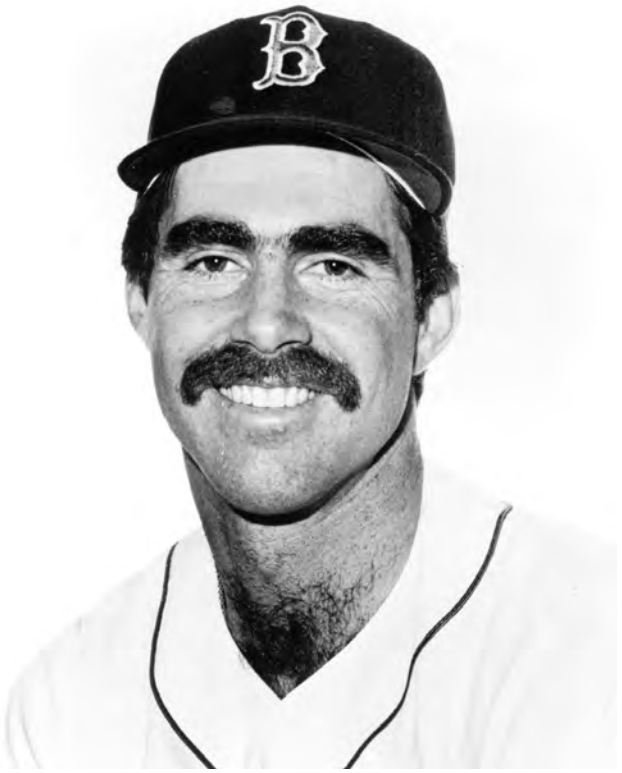
Looking next at the Boone game, the Red Sox reached a heretofore unseen level of proximity to a 100 percent WE.[6] In the eighth inning of Game Seven of the 2003 ALCS, Nick Johnson hit a pop fly to the shortstop, pushing Boston's WE to 94 percent. Boone's walk-off homer in the 11th brought New York from a WE of 64 percent to 100 percent, or a 36 percent wWPA.

The other game I added to the original Montville list was Game 162 of the 2011 season.[7] In the bottom of the ninth with two outs, Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon was pitching to the Orioles' Nolan Reimold. Pinch runner Kyle Hudson was on second base when Reimold hit a ground-rule double, tying the game at 3–3, moving the WE for the Orioles from 14 percent to 61 percent, or a wWPA of 47 percent. Of all the plays on the list, this was the one with the largest impact. The Orioles went on to win on a walk-off single that drove Reimold in from second. The Red Sox' peak WE in Game 162 was 95 percent.

Finally, there's the Bill Buckner game, which actually did bring the Red Sox closer to a 100 percent WE than any game on this list.[8] Keith Hernandez hit a fly ball to center field with one out in the 10th inning. It was on this play, with the second out recorded and a 5–3 lead over the Mets, that the Red Sox recorded their intra-game peak WE: 99 percent. They would see that WE fall to 81 percent by the time Mookie Wilson stepped to the plate to face pitcher Bob Stanley with two men on and two outs later that inning.

Another article in the *Boston Globe* on October 26, written by Jackie MacMullan, focused on the costliness

of Bill Buckner's error at first base. The article was called "Ball Bounced in a Bad Way," and centered on the final play of the game.[9] Indeed, much of the criticism resulting from the Boston's failure to win the 1986 World Series would focus on the final play, in which Buckner let a ball get by. The fact is, however, that according to Baseball-Reference's Win Probability Chart, the play with the biggest impact on the outcome of the game was not that infamous ground ball—it was Bob Stanley's wild pitch to Mookie Wilson. With a count of 2–2, Stanley threw a wild pitch that allowed Kevin Mitchell to score from third and Ray Knight advance from first to second base. The Mets went from a WE of 19 percent before that wild pitch to 60 percent after, or a movement of 41 percent wWPA for the Mets. The error at first base later in the same at-bat, which brought the winning run across home plate, carried the Mets from a 60 percent WE to 100 percent, or 40 percent wWPA.



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Bill Buckner's error caused the unfortunate swing in Win Expectancy of 40 points for the Mets, from 60 to 100 percent.

CONCLUSIONS

With an intra-game high Win Expectancy of 99 percent, the 1986 World Series Game Six was the closest the Red Sox came to winning a World Series without securing a victory. Measured against the Montville list and the similarly close Aaron Boone game of 2003 and 2011's Game 162, the 1986 Game Six wins out as the highest peak WE for Boston. Ordered from greatest to least in terms of Boston's peak intra-game WE, the games would be listed as follows: the Buckner game (99 percent WE), Game 162 (95), the Boone game (94), the Burton game (90), the Dent game (85), and the Slaughter game (67) (See table 1; chart 1).

Interestingly, the Bob Stanley wild pitch to Mookie Wilson had a greater impact than the Bill Buckner error for which the game is typically remembered, if only by a single percent of wWPA. And a look at wWPA shows that the single biggest play in any of the six games was Nelson Reimold's ground-rule double off Jonathan Papelbon, which added 47 percent to the Orioles' WE. If the games were ordered in terms of the impact of their big moments, the list would be as follows: Game 162 (47 percent wWPA), the Dent game (46), the Buckner game (41 and 40), the Boone game (36), the Burton game (35), and the Slaughter game (32) (See table 2; chart 2). At the time Montville was writing, the Bucky Dent home run was already a bigger play than either Stanley's wild pitch or Buckner's error, though he was correct in his assertion that Game Six of the 1986 World Series was the "closest" the Red Sox came, at least if measured by the Red Sox's WE.

Two other factors are worth noting: the first is that of all the games on the list, the Buckner game is the only one that did not result in Boston's immediate elimination; that loss merely forced a Game Seven, which the Mets also won. It is also worth mentioning that Game 162 alone did not end Boston's season in 2011: only the combination of a loss by Boston and a win by Tampa Bay on the last day of the season would have prevented the Red Sox from making the postseason. So while Reimold's ground-rule double caused a 47 percent swing in the WE of the Boston game, it was that outcome combined with Tampa Bay's own unlikely win that secured Boston's fate. How improbable was Tampa Bay's win that day? The Yankees, their opponent, carried a WE of 99 percent or better from the bottom of the fifth inning through the first batter of the bottom of the eighth before the tide turned Tampa Bay's way.[10] The fact that New York was favored so late in the game only compounds how close the Red Sox came to the postseason in 2011.

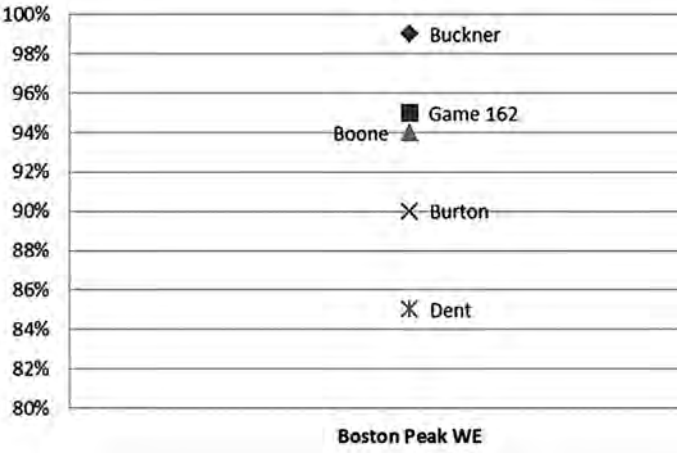
Baseball fans will look back on these plays and attribute certain levels of significance to their outcomes. One's age, one's level of commitment to the team, and countless other factors will make a particular loss more painful or a given event more crushing. And in the immediate aftermath of the "Buckner game," the attention became focused on the first baseman's error

and has been there ever since. Thanks to the availability of Win Expectancy from Baseball-Reference, one can find a measure by which to compare what Montville called "recorded games of frustration," and appreciate that it was with keen insight that he wrote, "Never have the Red Sox come this close and failed" after Game Six of the 1986 World Series.[11] Just don't chalk the entire loss up to Bill Buckner's error. ■

Table 1. Boston Peak Win Expectancy (WE)

Game date	Game nickname	Boston peak WE
Oct 25, 1986	Buckner	99%
Sep 28, 2011	Game 162	95%
Oct 16, 2003	Boone	94%
Oct 22, 1975	Burton	90%
Oct 2, 1978	Dent	85%
Oct 15, 1946	Slaughter	67%

Chart 1. Boston Peak WE

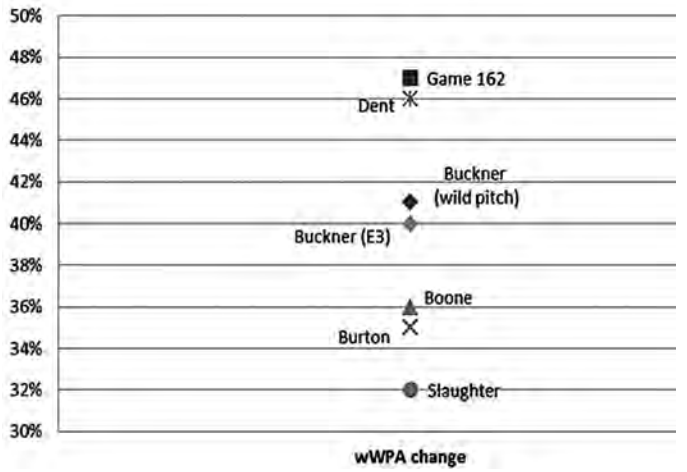


Note: the Slaughter game (67% WE) is out of the randge of this graph's axis

Table 2. Winning Team Win Probability Added (wWPA) change

Game date	Game nickname	Play	wWPA change
Sep 28, 2011	Game 162	Reimold GRD	47%
Oct 2, 1978	Dent	Dent HR	46%
Oct 25, 1986	Buckner	Stanley wild pitch	41%
Oct 25, 1986	Buckner	Buckner E3	40%
Oct 16, 2003	Boone	Boone HR	36%
Oct 22, 1975	Burton	Morgan 1B	35%
Oct 15, 1946	Slaughter	Walker 2B	32%

Chart 2. wWPA Change



NOTES

1. Leigh Montville, "They Were Just One Pitch Away," *Boston Globe*, October 26, 1986.
2. "Win Expectancy (WE) and Run Expectancy (RE) Stats," Baseball-Reference, accessed October 20, 2012, www.baseball-reference.com/about/ wpa.shtml.
3. "October 2, 1978 New York Yankees at Boston Red Sox Box Score and Play by Play," Baseball-Reference, accessed October 20, 2012, www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/BOS/BOS197810020.shtml.
4. "October 15, 1946 World Series Game 7, Red Sox at Cardinals," Baseball-Reference, accessed October 20, 2012, www.baseball -reference.com/boxes/SLN/SLN194610150.shtml.
5. "October 22, 1975 World Series Game 7, Reds at Red Sox," Baseball-Reference, accessed October 20, 2012, www.baseball-reference.com/ boxes/BOS/BOS197510220.shtml.
6. "October 16, 2003 American League Championship Series (ALCS) Game 7, Red Sox at Yankees," Baseball-Reference, accessed October 20, 2012, www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/NYA/ NYA200310160.shtml.
7. "September 28, 2011 Boston Red Sox at Baltimore Orioles Box Score and Play by Play," Baseball-Reference, accessed October 20, 2012, www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/BAL/BAL201109280.shtml.
8. "October 25, 1986 World Series Game 6, Red Sox at Mets," Baseball-Reference, accessed October 20, 2012, www.baseball-reference.com/ boxes/NYN/NYN198610250.shtml.
9. Jackie MacMullan, "Ball Bounced in a Bad Way," *Boston Globe*, October 26, 1986.
10. "September 28, 2011 New York Yankees at Tampa Bay Rays Box Score and Play by Play," Baseball-Reference, accessed October 20, 2012, www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/TBA/TBA201109280.shtml.
11. *Montville, Globe*.

Truth in the Minor League Class Structure

The Case for the Reclassification of the Minors

John Cronin

The current minor league class structure was established with the 1963 baseball season. Since then, the practice of grouping the minor leagues into four classes has become confusing to say the least. The four classes are a fallacy; there are really eight classes in existence.

The highest minor league class is currently AAA, consisting of the International, Mexican, and Pacific Coast Leagues. Players on the rosters of the teams in these leagues are typically waiting for a call to the major leagues for the first time or a return call to The Show. This classification requires no change at the present time. The International League with 14 teams and the Pacific Coast League with 16 teams serve as the top farm clubs for the 30 major-league teams. The Mexican League's 16 teams operate in a quasi-independent manner. While a member of Organized Baseball, the Mexican League's teams are not major-league affiliates. This has been the case for most years since its establishment in 1925 as an independent league. It joined Organized Baseball as a Class AA minor league in 1955 and was elevated to Class AAA for the 1967 season.

The next level is Class AA, encompassing 30 teams each with a major-league affiliation and divided into three leagues: Eastern (12), Southern (10), and Texas (8). Most players in these leagues have been playing ball professionally for several years, moving up from the lower classes. This classification also requires no change at the present time.

The confusion and the blurring of the minor league classifications occurs at levels below AA. From 1946 to the end of the 1962 season when the current minor league structure was adopted, there were six distinct classes of minor leagues: AAA, AA, A, B, C and D.

Major league teams developed vast farm systems during the 1930s and 1940s. It was common for teams to have several farm teams at each classification, and dozens of teams dotted the country. Minor leaguers could be promoted, demoted, or moved laterally during their career in the bushes. Then there was the Pacific Coast League, which held a different designation. In 1946 the classification structure was changed to eliminate Class A1 and establish Class AAA and the PCL was reclassified from AAA to a newly created Open Class in 1952. This was done because there was a possibility that the PCL might become the third major league. The league kept the Open Classification through the 1957 season. It returned to Class AAA for the 1958 season. As a result of the relocation of two major league franchises to the West Coast—the Dodgers and Giants—the idea of the PCL becoming a major league was shelved.

As a result of several factors, notably the rise of television in American homes, the minor leagues went into a period of decline beginning around 1950. The decline continued during the 1950s and into the early 1960s. As a result of the contraction in the number of minor league teams and leagues, Major League Baseball intervened with a plan to rescue the minors. As a part of this plan, with the start of the 1963 season the minors were reclassified and reduced to four classes: AAA, AA, A, and Rookie.

Class AAA was reduced from three leagues to two when the American Association was disbanded. The four surviving teams of the defunct league were absorbed into the International and Pacific Coast leagues.

The two 1962 Class A leagues, the Eastern and the South Atlantic ("Sally"), were elevated in 1963 to Class AA where they joined the two existing AA leagues, the Texas and Mexican. The South Atlantic League changed its name in 1964 to its current name, the Southern League.

The restructuring at the next level included the two Class B, the four Class C, and five of the seven Class D leagues (one folded). They were all upgraded to the new Class A. The one remaining Class D league, the Appalachian, was given a new classification, Rookie.

This structure was in effect until 1966 when the A class needed to be expanded. The previous year, the Northern League had gone from playing a full season to playing from the end of June to Labor Day, and in '66 the Northwest league adopted the shortened season, also. (In previous years, the only leagues that had played an abbreviated schedule were the ones at the

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The Mexican League is considered Class AAA, but the league's 16 teams operate quasi-independently and are not affiliated with major-league franchises the way teams in the US-based minor leagues are.

Rookie level.) Class A was thus divided into two subclasses, Class A and Short-Season Class A. The new system must have been too restrictive since it was in effect for only three seasons, whereas the previous structure had been in effect for seventeen seasons with relatively little change.

After the change in 1966, minor league classifications stayed the same until the start of the 1990 season. That year, Class A baseball was further subdivided with the creation of a third subclass, Advanced A. Three leagues, California, Carolina, and the Florida State League, were placed in this Class A subclass.[1]

The structure introduced for the 1990 season has been in effect through the 2012 season. This structure may cause confusion to the novice and/or casual baseball fan. Even avid fans that are only "major-league conscious" could be easily confused by this classification system. They could hear about a very good prospect that has spent the last three seasons in Class A ball and question why that player has not advanced to Class AA or Class AAA. In reality, the player could be making steady progress in the minor leagues. To illustrate, Joe Baseball, an imaginary minor league player, graduates from college and is selected in the 2010 First Year Draft. He signs a contract with the major league team that drafted him and is assigned to that team's Class A Short-Season farm club. Joe has a decent rookie season and is promoted and assigned to the club's Class A affiliate for 2011. Again, he has a good first full season as a professional baseball player and his team rewards him with a promotion to its Advanced A team for the 2012 season.

However, unless the fan understands the current minor league class structure, they will be confused. The minor leagues need a new classification structure to reflect the true reality of the minor league system at the lower levels. Class A is three different classes that need to be clearly delineated. Players in Advanced A, A, and Short-Season A are really at three different stages of their careers, but are not presented as such. As had been previously discussed, a minor league player back in the "old days" could be moved laterally in the team's voluminous farm system. This is not the case in today's baseball economics. Each major league team has only one team at each level. (This does not hold true for the Dominican Summer League where several major league teams have two separate farm teams in that league.) Today, every time a minor leaguer changes teams in the farm system, he is getting promoted or demoted.

I propose a new minor league class structure to eliminate confusion and to more accurately reflect the different levels currently present in the minor leagues. My recommendation is to revive the nomenclature in

existence from 1946 to 1962 with two minor modifications. The system would have the following classes: AAA, AA, A, B, C, D and two additions to that old system, Rookie and Pre-Rookie.

Using the leagues in existence for the 2012 baseball season, the new Minor League Classification Structure would be as follows:

AAA – would remain the same as presently classified. The International, Mexican and Pacific Coast Leagues would remain as Class AAA leagues.

AA – would also remain as presently classified. The Eastern, Southern and Texas Leagues would remain as Class AA leagues.

A – current Advanced A leagues would now be classified as Class A leagues. The California, Carolina and Florida State Leagues would be in this class.

B – current A leagues would now be classified as Class B leagues. The Midwest and South Atlantic Leagues would be in this class.

C – current Short Season A leagues would now be classified as Class C leagues. The New York-Pennsylvania and Northwest Leagues would be in this class.

D – the two current "non-complex based" rookie leagues in the United States would now be classified as Class D leagues. The Appalachian and Pioneer Leagues would be in this class.

Rookie – the two current "complex-based" rookie leagues in the United States would now be classified as Rookie leagues. The Arizona and Gulf Coast Leagues would be in this class.

Pre-Rookie – current foreign rookie leagues would now be classified as Pre- Rookie leagues. The Dominican Summer and Venezuelan Summer leagues would be in this class.

A distinction between the "complex-based" rookie leagues in the United States and the foreign rookie leagues is necessary. Many players spend one or two seasons in the foreign leagues and then leave those leagues for "complex-based" teams in the Arizona or Gulf Coast League. Since in the current baseball economics, duplications are not practical, it is entirely appropriate to declare that these players are "being promoted" from the foreign rookie league to the United States "complex based" rookie leagues. These four leagues represent two different player classes.

Some might argue that differences between the subclasses of Class A ball are subtle and not distinct enough to require three separate classes. If that were so, players would be assigned and reassigned to the three subclasses interchangeably. This is not what is in effect. Players are assigned based upon their experience and current skill level. In Table 1, I demonstrate the correlation between players' ages and subclass of A in which they play, using Batters' Average Age from Baseball-Reference.com for all 2012 minor leagues. To put it simply, the older, more experienced player usually plays ball at a higher level.

Table 1. Proposed League Classification

League	Current Level	Proposed Level	Batters' Average Age
Mexican	AAA	AAA	29.7
International	AAA	AAA	27.5
Pacific Coast	AAA	AAA	26.8
Eastern	AA	AA	24.4
Southern	AA	AA	24.3
Texas	AA	AA	24.1
Florida State	Advanced A	A	22.8
California	Advanced A	A	22.6
Carolina	Advanced A	A	22.6
South Atlantic	A	B	21.7
Midwest	A	B	21.6
New York-Pennsylvania	Short-Season A	C	21.1
Northwest	Short-Season A	C	21.1
Pioneer	Rookie	D	20.9
Appalachian	Rookie	D	20.2
Gulf Coast	Rookie	Rookie	19.7
Arizona	Rookie	Rookie	19.4
Dominican Summer	Foreign Rookie	Pre-Rookie	18.6
Venezuelan Summer	Foreign Rookie	Pre-Rookie	18.3

It is not surprising that the Mexican League had the average age of 29.7 for AAA, two and three years older than the International and Pacific Coast Leagues, respectively. Since the Mexican League does not have major league team affiliations, most players in that league make it their career and stay there. There are few Mexican League alumni playing in the major leagues. The ages of the players in each league give a clue as to skill level in that league. As the Table shows, there are age breaks of one year or more, which suggest that is where the class divisions do indeed exist.

The only real anomaly in Table 1 is in the proposed Classes C and D. The reason for the lower classification for the Arizona and Gulf Coast League is that the players are in a complex-based set-up that suggests younger, less experienced, and raw rather than refined talent.

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The Pacific Coast League was almost elevated to major-league status, but the relocation of the Giants to San Francisco and the Dodgers to Los Angeles scuttled that plan.

I believe that these two leagues are a notch below the Pioneer and Appalachian Leagues, which are more traditional minor leagues.

Beyond this workable classification structure within MLB's affiliated farm systems, this structure could be adopted by the independent minor leagues in the United States and Canada, and the foreign professional leagues around the world.

Since the early 1990s, there has been a resurgence in independent minor leagues in the United States and Canada. Table 2 shows the six independent leagues that played ball during the 2012 season. One of these leagues, the North American, has since folded.

Table 2. Independent Minor Leagues

League	Teams	First Season	Batter's Age
Atlantic	8	1998	29.8
North American	10	2011	28.2
American Association	13	2006	27.1
Canadian-American Association	5	2005	26.1
Frontier	14	1993	24.2
Pecos	6	2011	24.1

The problem with these independent leagues is that there is no benchmark for the quality of play in these leagues. What minor league class should each league be in? In order to more fully promote consistency in minor league classification, I believe that these leagues need to be assigned the appropriate classification. The question is how to accomplish this and who is going to do it? Do we allow the leagues to classify themselves? Independent baseball executives definitely have an opinion as to the level of play in their leagues. Miles Wolff, Commissioner of the American Association and the Canadian-American League, stated that he would classify the Atlantic League as AAA, the American Association and the Can-Am as AA, the Frontier as A and the Pecos as the old Class D. He is quick to point out the quality of player within a given league is not necessarily consistent. He relayed an interesting comment made by Hal Lanier, the former major league player and manager who was a longtime independent league manager. Lanier stated that when his number one pitcher in the rotation starts, then the play is Class AAA, but when the fifth starter goes, then it is lower Class A.[2]

The opinions of league officials could serve as a good starting point in the process. However, an independent evaluation would need to be conducted for accuracy. Each league and its teams could be observed, examined, and reviewed by knowledgeable baseball people such as scouts, minor league managers, and coaches for a reasonable time period. These individuals would then present a report with a recommended

classification. Since these leagues are independent—and as with all minor league teams have rosters that are very transient—the leagues would be subject to re-evaluation after a certain number of years, say three to five years, in order to protect the integrity and consistency of the ratings.

This proposal for the independent leagues would be similar to the way that the Mexican League, previously discussed, fits into Organized Baseball. In fact, the independent leagues approached Organized Baseball back in 1993 about membership in the National Association with a set-up similar to the Mexican League. This would bring all professional leagues in North America under one governing body and create a uniform class structure necessary for the proper evaluation of all minor league players. However, Organized Baseball indicated that the independents could apply for membership but that it would not result in gaining membership.[3]

Maybe now is the time to revisit this possibility. The independent leagues now serve as an additional talent source, supplementing the affiliated minor leagues. The major leagues honor independent minor league contracts and purchase the players. Major league organizations pay independent teams $3,000 in-season and $1,000 off-season to purchase player contracts. If the independents were to gain membership in the National Association, then it might make it easier for these teams to conduct business, trading and/or selling their players to major league organizations. These independent clubs could also opt in to the Rule 5 Draft that occurs every December. This would result in increased revenues for the independents—how much would depend on the league's classification. If an independent league team was to be classified as AAA, then the team would receive $50,000 for each drafted player. At Class AA, they would receive $12,000, and at Class A, $4,000. Even the lowest amount is still more than they currently receive.

However, I would propose that the independent teams not be allowed to draft players because transferring a player from a major league organization to an independent team would be counterproductive for the drafted players. Miles Wolff, the commissioner of two independent leagues, indicated that he would favor such a policy.[4]

The foreign professional leagues also need to be included in this new classification structure. Table 3 lists five of the foreign professional leagues that were in existence during the 2012 season.

Table 3. Foreign Leagues

League	Teams	First season of play
Japan Central	6	1950
Japan Pacific	6	1950
Korean Baseball Organization	8	1982
Australian Baseball	6	1989
Dutch Major	8	1999

The same evaluation process that would be employed for the independent minor leagues would also be used for the foreign leagues. However, these foreign leagues could be given the option to be placed in an Open class. The classification used for the PCL from 1952 to 1957 would fit perfectly for these leagues. These countries view their leagues as major league baseball (the Dutch league even has it in its title) and it might be difficult to accept anything less than that. This I believe would be especially true for the two Japanese leagues that have had a long history dating back over sixty years. These league officials might still balk at the prospect of being classified by the United States major leagues. However, with more players coming from these foreign countries, Major League Baseball (MLB) considers them sources of talent. Baseball Prospectus is already utilizing the Japanese Leagues' data in its PECOTA projection system for their players coming to play in the United States. Since the data from the Korean Baseball Organization lack reliability, they have not been used yet, but stat analysts at BP hope to incorporate them for talent evaluation purposes in the future.[5]

Other foreign leagues may soon become talent sources for MLB, as well, including the Chinese Professional Baseball League and the Italian Baseball Leagues. It is my belief that these leagues could become true major leagues. The World Series could then truly be a World Series.

If these proposed changes were enacted, in my opinion, there would be clarity and transparency in the minor league classification system. This would then reflect the reality of the actual situation and there would finally be "Truth in the Minor League Class Structure." ■

NOTES

1. For a clear concise recap of minor league classification history back to 1902, see http://minorleaguesource.com/class.html.
2. Telephone interview with Miles Wolff on February 12 and 14, 2013.
3. Telephone interview with Miles Wolff on February 12 and 14, 2013.
4. Telephone interview with Miles Wolff on February 12 and 14, 2013.
5. Cecilia Tan, personal communication, via email correspondence, February 13, 2013.

Society and Baseball Face Rising Income Inequality

Barry Krissoff

Data clearly show that the United States has been experiencing rising income inequality for over two decades. The most comprehensive source of income inequality data is published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Census Bureau. Their annual *Current Population Survey* publication reports income separated into quintiles (fifths) as well as income earned by the top 5 percent. The roughly 6 million households in the top 5 percent command just over 22 percent of total US income, numbers that have been generally rising since the mid-1970s. This growing inequality has become a contentious issue in our society, from its premise for the Occupy Wall Street movement to its discussion in the presidential campaign. There is a double whammy to this inequality: not only are the top 5 percent relatively more well off than their neighbors with an average income of $311,400 but the middle quintile—$49,800 average income—are absolutely less well off as their real income has declined.

Who are in the top 5 percent? They include chief executives, financiers, physicians, entertainers, and, yes, athletes. Professional athletes at the top level of their profession are among the highest paid Americans with Major League Baseball, National Football League, and National Basketball Association players' salaries averaging approximately $3.4 million (2012 season), $1.9 million (2009–10 season), and $4.6 million (2009–10 season), respectively.[1] The top-paid players in each of the leagues, such as Alex Rodriquez, Tom Brady, and LeBron James, each earned roughly $30 to nearly $55 million per year in salaries and endorsements.[2]

What proportion of MLB salaries are in the top 5 percent? All of them. With a base salary in the major leagues of $480,000 in 2012, all players would exceed the top 5 percent. Despite their very high incomes relative to other households in the United States, there is also substantial income inequality within Major League Baseball (MLB). In fact, income inequality within baseball closely mirrors income inequality across US households, albeit at much higher income levels. Remarkably, the share of income that is attributed to the top 5 percent of ballplayers compared to all major league players is even more pronounced than the top 5 percent of income among all US households.

First we will examine whether baseball players' salaries have always been in the top 5 percent and the extent of income inequality within the sport. Does baseball's income structure mirror society's growing inequality? Secondly, we explore whether income inequality has affected performance. Do teams with greater income inequality have less success on the baseball field?

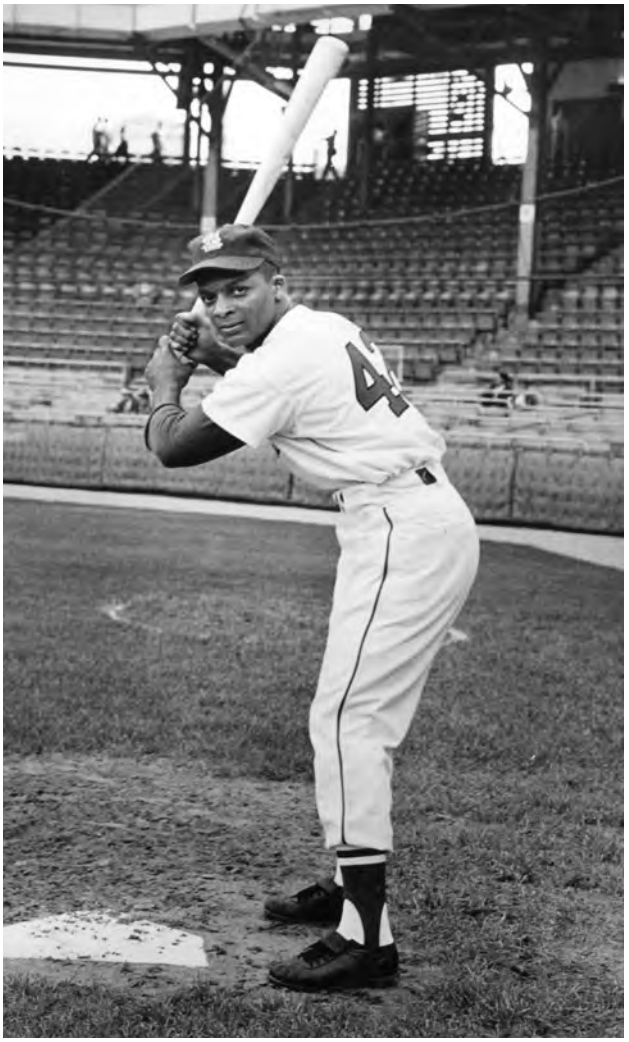
THE BACKGROUND: BASEBALL SALARIES OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS

Have baseball players' incomes always been in the top percent of US household income? The short answer is no. It took protracted labor negotiations and the emergence of new sources of revenue to thrust baseball players into the upper echelons of America's income structure. In 1887 professional baseball owners added the reserve clause to contracts restricting their players from signing contracts with new teams to limit players' options to negotiate salaries in an open market. In essence, players had to accept their team's salary offer or not play. To counterbalance the strength of team ownership, players formed associations throughout the late 1880s and early to mid-1900s. They had minimal success until the formation of the Major League Baseball Players' Association (MLBPA) in 1954 and the negotiation of the first Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) in 1968.[3] Among other provisions, the CBA increased the minimum salary for a major-league player.

During the 1970s, the reserve clause was extensively altered. A landmark decision by the Supreme Court in 1972 ruled against Curt Flood in his bid to become a free agent, a critical moment in the contentious history between MLB owners and MLBPA. Relations were often characterized by distrust, lack of accommodation, and name calling.[4] In December 1975 a ruling by arbitrator Peter Seitz and subsequently upheld by the courts, created the opportunity for players to move from one team to another for the first time.

As Michael Haupert explains in his article on the economic history of baseball, Curt Flood may have lost his case for free agency in the 1972 Supreme Court case, but the players ultimately won the war with the transformation in the reserve clause.[5]

Eight strikes and lock-outs occurred 1972–95, culminating with the costly 232-day strike for both owners and players in the 1994–95 season. After the 1994–95 strike, major league owners and the MLBPA recognized the high cost of canceling games and the importance of a more harmonious relationship. Four CBAs have been successfully negotiated since the strike with the most recent in 2012. Under the collective bargaining agreement negotiated in 1996, the 1997 minimum baseball salary increased to $150,000, a 38 percent boost. The jump coincided with a turning point for baseball revenue. Driven by new national television contracts from Fox, NBC, and ESPN, television revenue increased to more than $2 billion in 1997 and continued to grow under subsequent contracts with Fox, ESPN, and TBS.[6]



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Curt Flood may have lost his case for free agency in the 1972 Supreme Court case, but the players ultimately won the war.

Other television revenue expanded as well. Individual teams formed regional sports cable networks or received a rights fee from a local sports cable network (for example: MASN and YES) accruing substantial revenue. The Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim's *Fox TV Sports* contract is ostensibly worth $3 billion over 20 years, an agreement that facilitated the signing of Albert Pujols and C.J. Wilson to multiyear accords for a combined $331.5 million.[7] Similarly, a mega-TV contract with Fox has enabled the Los Angeles Dodgers to enter the 2013 season with a payroll that may be over $220 million. Some small team markets have also succeeded in forming regional sports networks. The Cleveland Indians, for example, started *SportsTime-Ohio* in 2006, receiving $30 million annually in rights fees.[8] In the era of television recording devices and the ability for viewers to fast-forward or skip commercials, the broadcasts of live sporting events command premium dollars.

Forbes estimated dramatic increases in the value of MLB franchises, led by the New York Yankees valuation of over $1.85 billion.[9] This was surpassed in May 2012 when the sale of the Los Angeles Dodgers was completed at $2.15 billion. Industry revenue rose to $6.35 billion in 2011.[10] The increase in valuation and revenue of franchises provides greater incentive for owners and the MLBPA to reach successful bargaining agreements.

THE DATA: A LOOK AT THE CHANGES IN BASEBALL SALARIES

Figure 1 graphs the minimum baseball salary and minimum level of household income required in order to qualify for the top 5 percent between 1972 and 2012.[11] For the first 25 years on the graph, the two series closely mirror each other with minimum baseball salaries fluctuating closely around the top 5 percent household income level, roughly a one-to-one ratio. Afterwards, when the 1997 collective bargaining agreement went into effect, the gap widens nearly continuously. The ratio of the two series shows the minimum baseball salary rising to 2.6 times the top 5 percent minimum of US household income by 2012. It now exceeds the cutoff of the top 1 percentile of US household income.

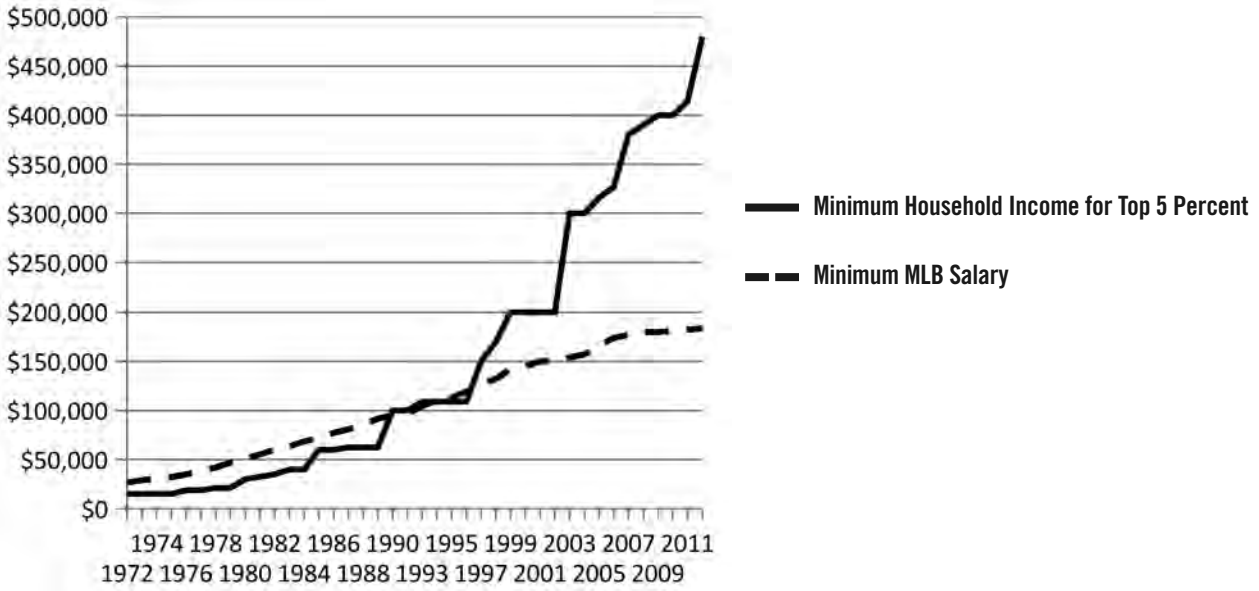
While the minimum baseball salary substantially rose relative to US household income in the post-1994–95 strike period, middle and top earners experienced an even more dramatic salary boost. The average salary nearly tripled between 1987 and 1997, rising from a $400,000 range to over $1.2 million and

nearly tripled again between 1997 and 2012 to over $3.3 million. The top 5 percent of earners brought in four times more salary in 1997 relative to 1987 and nearly three times more between 1997 and 2012, reaching an average salary of $18.5 million in 2012.

Figure 2 illustrates the cumulative distribution of salaries by percentages for 2012. The diagonal line indicates salary equality; that is, 20 percent of the players earn 20 percent of the salaries, 40 percent of the players earn 40 percent, and so forth. The Lorenz curve shows that the distribution of MLB players' salaries follows a largely unequal path; the first 20 percent of the players earn about 3 percent of the salaries, the first 40 percent of the players earn about 6 percent of the salaries, and the first 60 percent of the players earn about 13 percent of the salaries. In contrast, the top 20 percent of the players (reading the graph starting from the right side) command over 65 percent of the salaries.

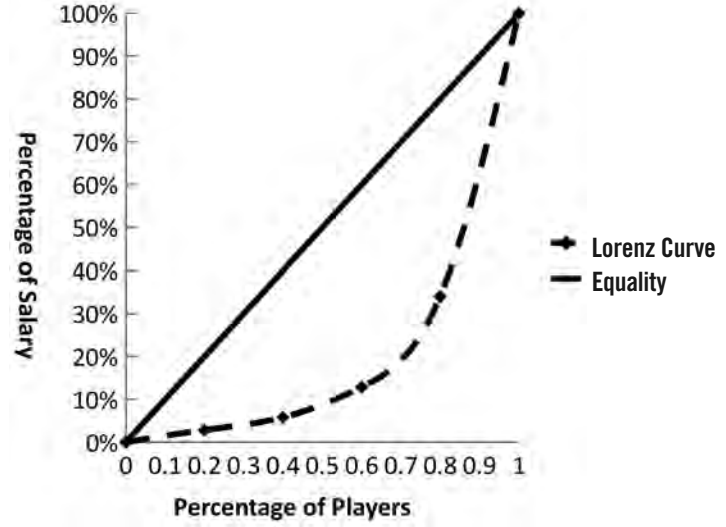
Tables 1 and 2 provide more detail by exemplifying the dynamic changes over the 1987 to 2012 period. Table 1 shows the average salary by quintile and by the top 40, 5, and 1 percent. In all the categories, the

Figure 1. Minimum Baseball Salaries and Top 5 Percent of US Household Income



Sources: US Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements;" 2011 and 2012 are projected based on the annual increases over 2006–10; Baseball salaries from Michael Haupert, "The Economic History of Baseball," 1972–1985, http://eh.net/encylopedia/article/haupert.mlb; Sean Latham's Database, 1986–2010 http://www.seanlahman.com/baseball–archive/statistics/; Baseball Prospectus, Cots Baseball Contracts, 2011 and 2012, http://www.baseballprospectus.com/compensation/cots.

Figure 2. Major League Baseball Salary Distribution, 2012



Source: Baseball Prospectus, Cots Baseball Contracts, 2012, http://www.baseballprospectus.com/compensation/cots.

Table 1. Average Baseball Salaries by Income Quintiles, 1987–2012 (in dollars)

	1987	1997	2007	2012
Bottom 20%	64,435	150,241	381,658	481,593
2nd 20%	107,942	184,076	416,212	505,109
3rd 20%	276,133	351,511	1,077,825	1,195,785
4th 20%	593,218	1,197,538	3,389,292	3,606,888
Top 20%	1,133,266	4,210,071	9,454,556	11,164,616
Top 5%	1,671,496	6,569,930	14,468,595	18,363,670
Top 1%	2,062,134	8,231,078	18,632,178	23,791,667
Top 40%	862,166	2,703,805	6,412,925	7,396,518

Sources: Sean Latham's Database, 1987, 1997, and 2007, www.seanlahman.com/baseball-archive/statistics/; Baseball Prospectus, Cots Baseball Contracts, 2012 http://www.baseballprospectus.com/compensation/cots.

Table 2. Baseball Salaries by Income Quintiles, 1987–2012 (in percent)

	1987	1997	2007	2012
Bottom 20%	3.0	2.5	2.6	2.8
2nd 20%	5.0	3.0	2.8	3.0
3rd 20%	12.7	5.8	7.3	7.1
4th 20%	27.4	19.7	23.1	21.2
Top 20%	52.0	69.1	64.1	65.9
Top 5%	19.0	26.8	24.5	27.1
Top 1%	4.5	6.6	6.0	7.2
Top 40%	79.4	88.7	87.3	87.1

Sources: Sean Latham's Database, 1987, 1997, and 2007, www.seanlahman.com/baseball-archive/statistics/; Baseball Prospectus, Cots Baseball Contracts, 2012 http://www.baseballprospectus.com/compensation/cots.

average salary has substantially increased. Similar to the Lorenz curve, Table 2 shows the share (but not cumulative) of baseball salaries by quintile and by the top 40, 5, and 1 percent. The top 5 and 1 percent command 27.1 and 7.2 percent share of all MLB player salaries in 2012 compared to 19.0 and 4.5 percent 25 years earlier. The top 5 percent of baseball salaries earn 100 times more than the minimum amount required to qualify for the top 5 percent of US household income and 38 times more than the minimum MLB salary. Succinctly put, the wealthier baseball players are becoming more affluent not only compared to household incomes but also to many of their peers.

PERFORMANCE AND SALARY INEQUALITY

Our next focus is to examine the relationship between team performance and salary inequality. With salary inequality on the rise in MLB, is team performance affected? Much research has been done examining the relationship between players' and teams' performances and their salaries. In a competitive environment, we would expect the high performing players to gravitate to teams willing to pay commensurate compensation, thereby leading to successful teams. Larger market teams would have an advantage since they have the ability to generate more revenue. However, several links may not hold to assure this outcome. First, as discussed earlier, the labor market for players is restrained by the collective bargaining agreement; most significantly, free agency is limited to players after their sixth year in the major leagues and players' eligibility for arbitration occurs only in their third year.[12] Second, there is a level of uncertainty regarding player performance; a player who has had success may sign a large contract with a new team but the team is not assured of continued high caliber accomplishments.

Third, measuring players' or teams' performances is not necessarily straightforward. What metrics are most important? For a batter it might be runs batted in, runs scored, or more recently developed measures like on base percent plus slugging (OPS) or batting average on balls in play (BABIP). Similarly, for a pitcher the criteria might be wins, earned run average, or fielding independent pitching (FIP). An alternative approach would be to directly look at the bottom line. Does the star attract larger attendance or more TV viewers than the average player or bring in more revenue from jersey sales? When we look at a team's performance the focus can be on the same metrics as a player, using aggregate team statistics, or can be measured more simply in wins or winning percentage.

Baseball analysts and economists have addressed these issues for many years. Scully, Bradbury, and Gennaro have written well cited books and articles examining batters' and pitchers' performances and salaries.[13] Other books have focused on team performance and salaries.[14] The consensus is that baseball teams with higher salaries are more successful at winning games and championships, but higher salaries do not ensure victories. Morrissey finds that about half the time the World Series winner had average players' salaries that exceeded the MLB average by at least 25 percent and only once were both World Series teams below the average salary between 1985 and 2006.[15] We calculated the average salaries for 2007–11 and found that all of the World Series winning teams exceeded the league average salaries and the salaries of their World Series opponents.

While salary levels and performance have been examined, the issue of salary inequality and performance has not. Why should salary inequality matter for MLB players who are clearly among the top wage earners in the country? The relative income hypothesis, first developed by James Duesenberry, suggests that individuals are concerned not only with absolute income but with how their income compares to others and in what

income percentile they are in. An underlying premise of the Occupy Wall Street movement and the popular concern about the top 1 percent of society's income earners is at least partially explained by the relative income hypothesis. But baseball players are professionals, with even the lowest paid among them earning salaries that place them among the wealthiest individuals in the country, so would we expect income inequality within a team to be an issue affecting performance?

We compared a team's performance and income inequality measures for the thirty major league teams in 2010. For team performance, we used winning percentage. For income inequality we used two statistics, the top three players' share of team salary and the Gini coefficient, the latter of which can measure income inequality with one indicating maximum inequality—one person having all the salary—and zero indicating salaries are equal among all players.

A scatter diagram comparing winning percentages and the share of the top 3 players' salaries for each team illustrates that there is only a very slight negative relationship (Figure 3). The correlation coefficient equals –0.18.[16] This negative relationship holds at the extremes—the Cleveland Indians had the highest income inequality with Travis Hafner, Jake Westbrook, and Kerry Wood accounting for over 50 percent of the team's salary, but won only 69 games, while the Boston Red Sox had the lowest income inequality with 21 players earning over $1 million and won 89 games. For other teams, though, like the Cincinnati Reds, the top 3 players earned around 50 percent of the team's salary yet they won their division with 91 wins. Moreover, there was no clear pattern for low salary teams; some had high income inequality like Cleveland but others had more equal distribution like the San Diego Padres.

The Gini coefficient provides a more comprehensive measure than the top 3 salaries since it includes salaries for all players on a team. Similar to the top 3 measure, the Gini coefficient metric also showed a slightly negative relationship between salary inequality and performance (Figure 4). The correlation coefficient is again –0.18 but this time only if we exclude Baltimore and Pittsburgh. These two teams had losing records and relative salary equality. They finished last in their respective divisions with Pittsburgh winning only 57 games, the fewest wins in major league baseball. Pittsburgh also had the lowest team salary and no player earned more than $5 million. Baltimore was 18th in the major leagues in team salary with more than half the team earning at least $1.2 million.

Income inequality does not seem to be a strong factor affecting a major league baseball team's performance. It does not seem to create tension among players as it does for society at large. There are a few explanations of why this appears to be the case. First, a team consists of a small number of players, generally in the range of 25 to 30 individuals, who spend a large amount of time with each other over the course of a season. Together these factors create a bond that could be called "mateship"—sharing of personal information, camaraderie, and friendship. It is a bond strengthened by an "us against them" mentality found in any competitive team environment. The story of Carlos Beltran's imminent departure from his New York Mets' teammates after eight years on the team in the middle of the 2011 season to join the San Francisco Giants is a worthwhile example. Beltran, one of the highest paid players on the Mets team, took his teammates to a Cincinnati steakhouse as a parting gesture. The event recognized all they had shared during their time together as Mets, but also signified that the bond was now over. He would henceforth be a member of a new team and his allegiances would be toward the Giants. Second, if Duesenberry's hypothesis exists in

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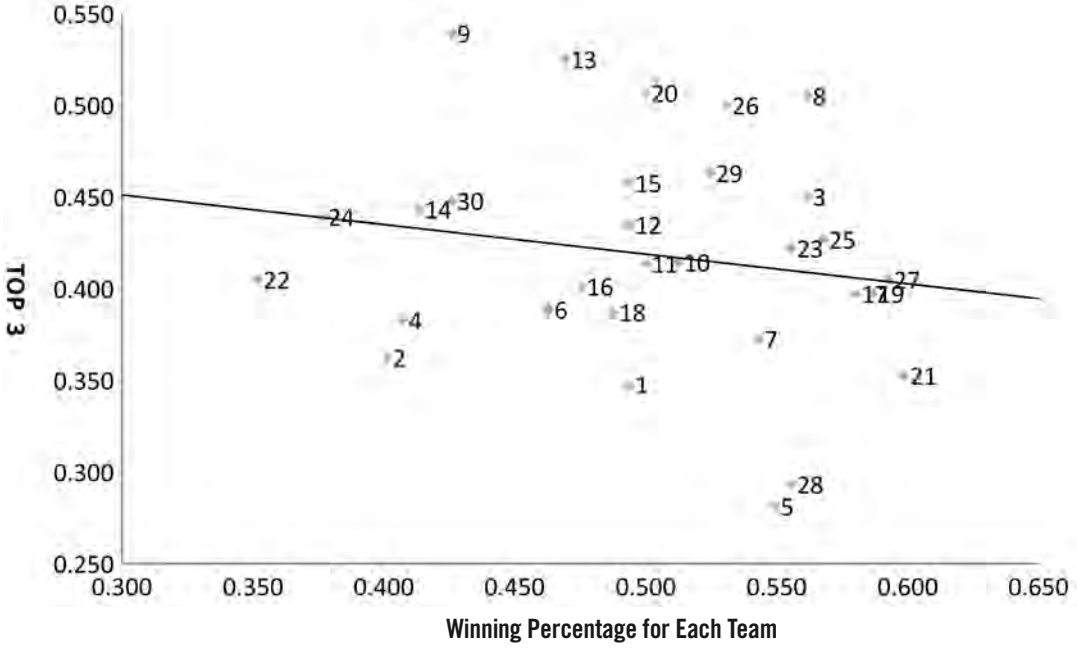
In December 2011 Albert Pujols and C.J. Wilson were signed to multiyear accords by the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim for a combined $331.5 million.

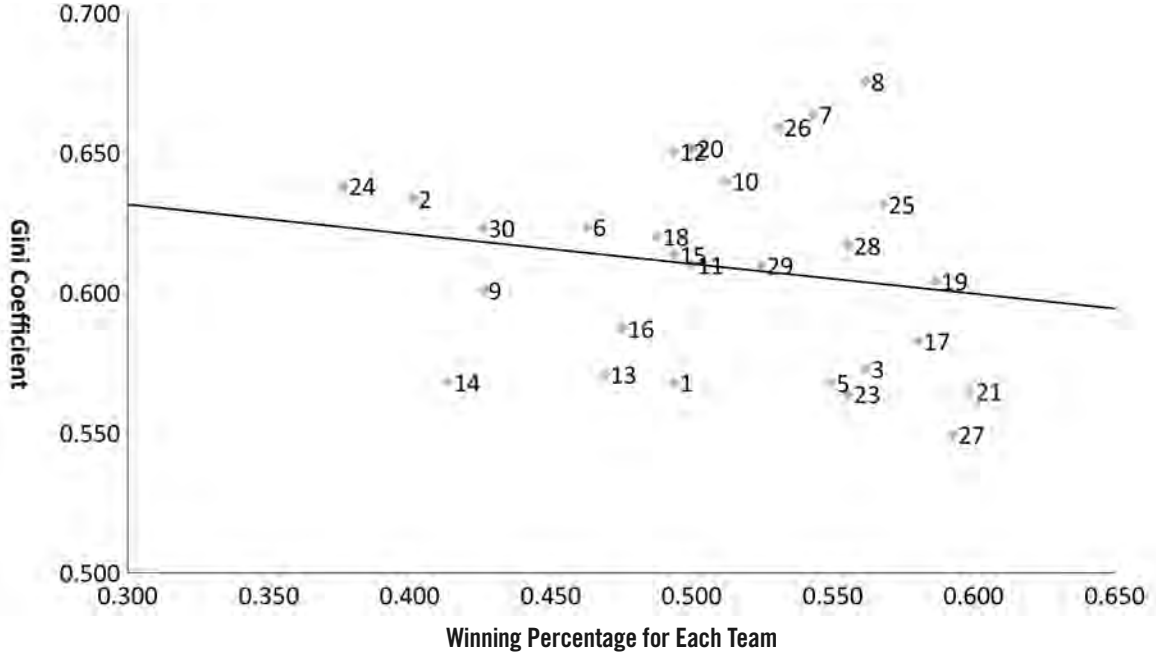
baseball, it seems more likely that players would be comparing their salaries to peers playing the same position as them, rather than to their teammates. A second baseman would compare his salary to other second basemen with similar statistics, rather than comparing it to his own team's center fielder's salary. Third, many of the currently low income young players have reasonable expectations of much higher salaries once they become arbitration eligible and free agents, a luxury that most working people in society will never have. Finally, all MLB players are earning salaries that are high enough that they may feel their relative wealth within their individual teams is not very important.

Figure 3. Performance and Income Inequality



Source: Sean Latham's Database 2010, www.seanlahman.com/baseball-archive/statistics.

Figure 4. Performance and Income Inequality



Source: Sean Latham's Database 2010, www.seanlahman.com/baseball-archive/statistics.

CONCLUSION

Income inequality has grown in society and in baseball. Top players can earn 40 to 50 times more than their teammates. This mirrors the changes that we have witnessed in some corporate executive board rooms relative to rank and file workers. However, there are key differences. Like any group sport, a team of baseball players has a common goal—to win games and ultimately be victorious in the World Series. Add this relatively straightforward focus to the fact that all major league players are earning high salaries, often considerably more than the "bottom 99 percent" of the US population, and therefore it is not surprising that income inequality is not an important factor in determining performance.

In contrast, societies' objectives are considerably more complex. In our mixed capitalist economic system, individuals follow their own self-interest and aspire to find gainful employment optimizing their income and satisfaction. The government sectors and charitable organizations aim to provide safety and security by establishing laws and to make available education, affordable food and nutrition, and other redistributive transfers so that all residents can attain a minimum standard of living. The recession years have placed greater stress on achieving minimum standards, let alone middle income levels, and greater income inequality than in more prosperous years. Occupy Wall Street exemplified and brought attention to these pressures. Could society achieve its goals like a group of major leaguers on a baseball field, if we played as a team by improving communication and reaching common ground? ■

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Felipe Alou

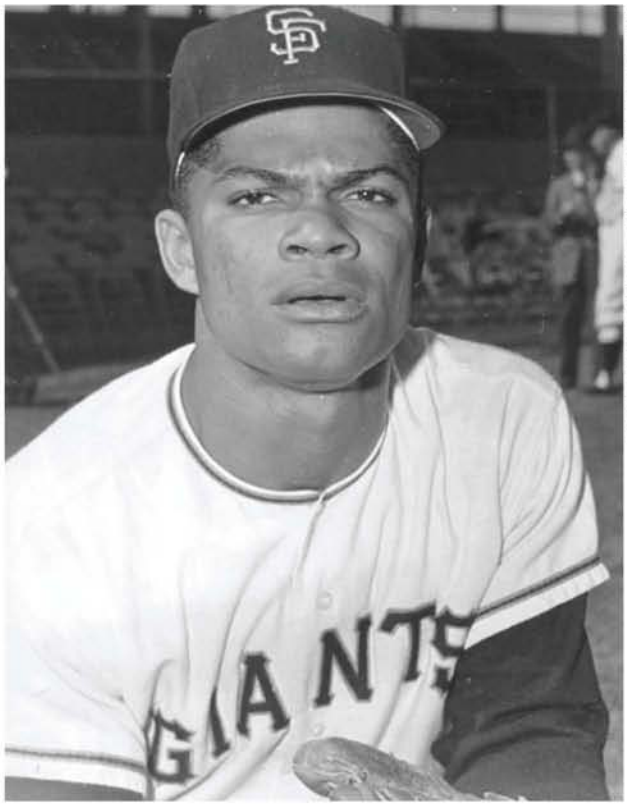
Mark Armour

Upon arriving in the United States in the spring of 1956, without knowing a single person, ignorant of the native language, customs, and food, and unaware of racism, Felipe Alou was armed with nothing but his mind, courage, determination, and talent. No Dominican had ever played in the major leagues, and there were as yet only a handful of dark-skinned Latinos playing in the US. Over the course of the next five decades, Alou would become and remain one of the most respected figures in baseball, an All-Star player, a team leader, and a successful manager. While he was admired throughout baseball, among his fellow Dominican players—who would soon be plentiful—he was a revered hero.

"Felipe was really the first," remembered Manny Mota, "the guy who cleared the way. He was an inspiration to everybody [in the Dominican Republic]. He was a good example."[1] Juan Marichal, like Mota a fellow Dominican, agreed. "Everybody respects Felipe Alou," he recalled. "He was the leader of most of the Latin players."[2] Willie Mays, a teammate of all of these players, remembered, "It was like a family when they came over."[3] These men helped define the baseball of their time, and Alou was both a leader and a friend to many of them.

Felipe Rojas Alou was born on May 12, 1935 in Bajos de Haina, San Cristóbal, on the southern coast of the Dominican Republic, a few miles from Santo Domingo. (His nickname at home is El Panqué [Sweet Bread] de Haina.) The first child born to José Rojas and Virginia Alou, he was followed by María, Mateo, Jesús, Juan, and Virginia. José also had two children with a previous wife who had died young. Though José was dark-skinned and Virginia (descending from Spaniards) was white, Felipe did not give this much thought—race was not a big issue in his country.

José Rojas was a carpenter and blacksmith who built their small four-room house and many of the other houses in the vicinity. The Rojas family had very little money, so they were often at the mercy of their neighbors' ability to pay their bills. World War II brought further hardship, causing José to turn to fishing to feed his family. Although they did not always have food, their well-built home afforded them shelter that not everyone in their neighborhood had.[4] Felipe swam in the nearby ocean, and was an avid fisherman—a hobby he kept up the rest of his life.



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Alou had to fight for a slot in the Giants' outfield, but eventually took the right-field job, and even appeared in an all-Alou outfield a few times with brothers Mateo (Matty) and Jesus.

In keeping with the Latin custom, this man is known in full as Felipe Rojas Alou, with each parent contributing half of the double surname. The paternal half is normally used in everyday life, and in the Dominican people know Felipe, Mateo, and Jesús as the Rojas brothers. During Felipe's time in the American minor leagues he began to be called (incorrectly) Felipe Alou, rhyming (again incorrectly) with "lew" rather than "low." However, he did not feel empowered enough to correct the error. Two of his brothers,

Mateo and Jesús, followed him to American baseball and also, because of the error with Felipe, assumed the surname Alou during their Stateside careers. Similarly, three of Felipe's sons played professionally, one becoming a star, and all of them used the name Alou even though it was not a part of their name at all (it being their grandmother's maiden name, not their mother's). For convenience, this biography will refer to the subject by the name most readers are familiar with: Felipe Alou.

Alou spent six years in local schools and went to high school in Santo Domingo, a 12-mile trip he often made on foot. He also worked on his uncle's farm and helped his father with his carpentry business. An excellent student, he became a member of the Dominican national track team, running sprints and throwing the discus and javelin. As a senior in high school, he participated in the 1954 Central American Games in Mexico City. Though track kept him from playing high school baseball, he did play and star for local amateur teams.[5]

In 1954 Alou entered the University of Santo Domingo in its pre-med program, part of his parents' dream that he become a doctor. Alou batted cleanup for the team that won the 1955 collegiate championship. He returned to Mexico City for the Pan-American Games, intending to run sprints and throw the javelin, but at the last minute was removed from the track team and placed on the baseball team. He got four hits in the final game against the United States as the Dominican Republic won the gold medal.[6]

After the tournament Alou received many offers from the major leagues, which at first he had no intention of taking. His resolution lasted until his father and uncle both lost their jobs. As it happened, his university coach, Horacio Martínez, doubled as a bird dog scout for the New York Giants. "Rabbit" Martínez had played shortstop for Alex Pómpez, owner of the New York Cubans, and later a Giants scout. Alou signed in November 1955 for $200, which paid off his parents' grocery bill. More importantly, he had a job. Despite his parents' mixed feelings, "we needed somebody to start contributing some earnings to the house."[7]

Alou began his professional career in Lake Charles, Louisiana, helping to integrate the Evangeline League. Soon after he arrived, the league voted to expel Lake Charles and Lafayette (the two clubs that had black players).[8] Instead, the blacks were shifted to other teams in other leagues; Alou, having just arrived in the United States, rode a bus to Cocoa, Florida, to play in the Florida State League. Desperately homesick, and stung by racism for the first time in his life, he pulled it together enough to hit a league-leading .380 with 21 home runs. On September 23, far away in New York, Ozzie Virgil made his debut with the Giants, becoming the first Dominican native to play in the major leagues. (Because Virgil had gone to high school in New York City, his path to the majors was different from Alou's.)

Alou began 1957 at Triple-A Minneapolis, but his .211 average in 24 games led to a demotion to Springfield, Massachusetts, where he recovered with a .306 average and 12 home runs. It could have been better—Alou was hitting over .380 in mid-season before injuring his right leg on a slide into home plate; he hobbled the rest of the year. Nonetheless, his season earned him an invitation to major league camp in 1958 and a raise to $750 a month. Alou spent very little of it—he kept enough to live on and sent the rest home to his family. During the offseason, the New York Giants moved to San Francisco, and their top minor league affiliate was now in Phoenix, where Alou was ultimately assigned. Batting leadoff for the first time, he hit .319 with 13 home runs in just 55 games before the Giants brought him to the big leagues.

On June 8 Alou became the second Dominican major leaguer, playing right field and leading off at San Francisco's Seals Stadium. He singled and doubled off Cincinnati's Brooks Lawrence in his first two at bats, and, three days later, got his first home run off Pittsburgh's Vernon Law. After a hot start that kept him over .300 for a month, he cooled down in July and finished at .253 with 4 home runs in 182 at bats.

In his first few years Alou could never quite establish himself as a regular player, hampered mostly by the competition on his own team. Beginning in about 1958, a large wave of young players, mostly African-Americans and Latinos, arrived with the Giants. In just this single season, the Giants debuted Alou, Orlando Cepeda, Willie Kirkland, and Leon Wagner. Bill White had a fine rookie year in 1956, went into the Army, came back in late 1958 and had no place to play. Felipe Alou competed with all these guys, along with several others on their way; Willie McCovey and José Pagán joined the club in 1959.

Most of these players were outfielders and first basemen. Alou had the advantage of being athletic enough to play center field, but with the peerless Willie Mays on hand, that skill did not help Alou get on the field. He played as a fourth outfielder in 1959, but with Willie McCovey hitting .372 with 29 home runs for Phoenix in late July, the Giants wanted to bring McCovey up and send Alou back down. With just a year's seniority under his belt, the 24-year-old told the Giants he would not go back to the minors.

His wife was going through a difficult pregnancy, and Alou did not believe the move to Phoenix and the return to San Francisco in September would help. Instead, he told Giants manager Bill Rigney that they would go home. The Alous checked out of their apartment and booked flights to Santo Domingo. The Giants backed down, and instead made room for McCovey by making Hank Sauer a coach.[9]

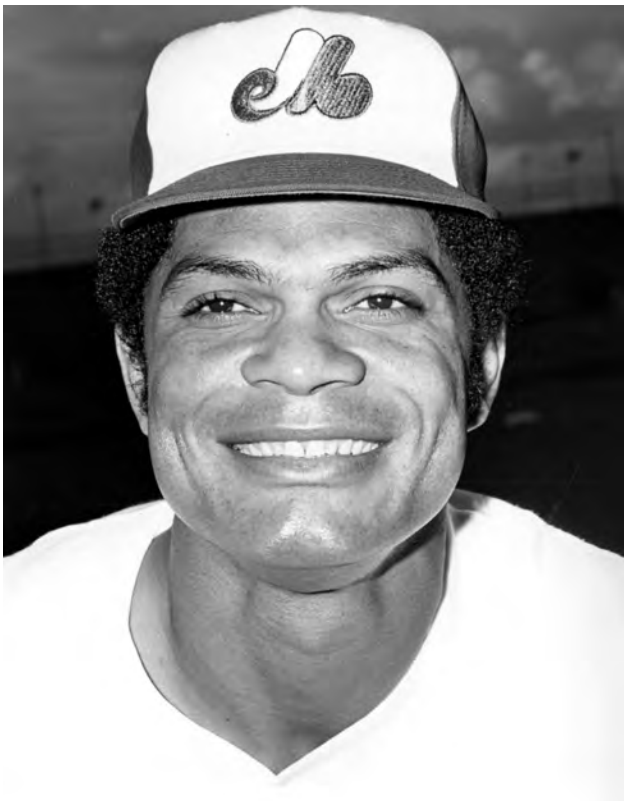
Still, the addition of McCovey meant that either he or Orlando Cepeda had to play the outfield, and, with Willie Mays out there already, that left just one spot for Alou and several other qualified players to fight for. Over the 1959 and 1960 seasons combined, Alou hit .269 with 18 home runs in 569 at bats. In 1961, under new manager Alvin Dark, Alou played most of the time, got 447 at bats, and responded with 18 home runs and a .289 average.

While Alou's star was rising in his profession, something else became even more central to his life. "The day I joined the Giants in San Francisco was one of the most important days of my life," recalled Alou. "That was the day my new teammate Al Worthington introduced me to Jesús Christ." Alou had often read the Bible in the minor leagues because he had a Spanish-language version and it became his only reading material. But because of Worthington, and later Lindy McDaniel ("who baptized me into the new faith"), Alou became one of the more devout Christians in baseball. His devotion caused some discomfort within his own family, but they remained very close.[10]

Felipe's brother Mateo, generally called Matty in the States, signed with the Giants before the 1957 season and began to work his way up through the minors. He debuted in late 1960, and reached the majors full time in 1961, hitting .310 in 200 at bats. Although his presence was great for Felipe personally, Matty also was another outfielder—by September, Dark was platooning the two Alous in right field. Meanwhile, 19-year-old brother Jesús, yet another outfielder, was hitting .336 for a Giants affiliate in the Northwest League.

Felipe finally broke through as a full-time player in 1962, winning the right field job outright and keeping it all season. In 605 at bats, Alou hit .316 with 25 home runs. He was selected to the NL All-Star team in July, coming in for Roberto Clemente and hitting a sacrifice fly in his only plate appearance. More importantly, the Giants won the NL pennant, overcoming a four-game deficit with seven games to go to tie the Dodgers, then winning a three-game pennant playoff. In the playoff series, Alou was 4-for-12 with two doubles.

The 1962 World Series was a classic seven-game affair pitting the Giants and the New York Yankees.



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Beginning in 1976, Alou began 25 years as a coach and manager in the Expos organization, piloting West Palm Beach, Memphis, Denver, Wichita, and Indianapolis as well as spending time as a big-league coach.

Alou played every inning in right field, and managed 7 hits in 29 at bats. But he has never forgotten his last chance, in the ninth inning of the final game, with the Giants trailing 1-0. Matty led off with a bunt single, and Felipe tried to sacrifice him to second base. "I was asked to bunt, and I bunted poorly and the ball went foul. Then, with the infield charging for the bunt, I swung at a bad pitch and fouled it off for strike two. Then I struck out."

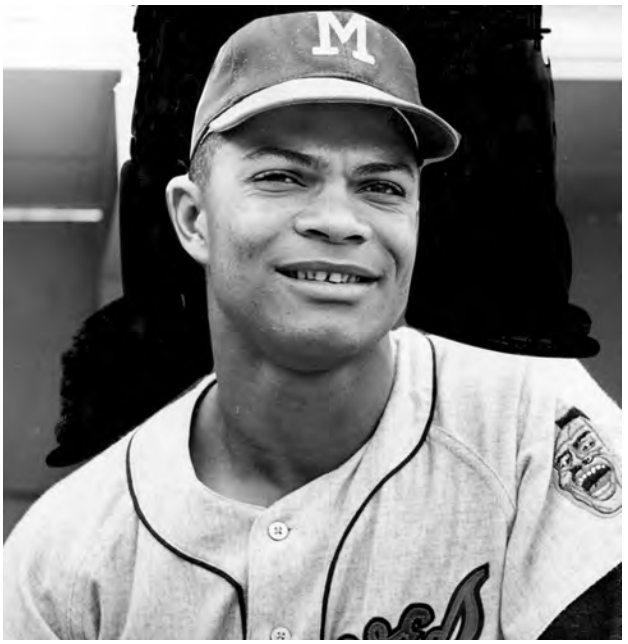
"That was the lowest point of my career. This is something I am going to die with because I failed in that situation." Alou was not often asked to bunt, but he did not blame Dark. He believed, then and later, that he should have been practicing bunting in case he was asked. Years later, as a manager, he obsessed over his clubs being capable of bunting.[11] After another out, Willie Mays doubled Matty to third, but they were both stranded when McCovey lined out to second base, ending the game and Series.

The Giants fell back to third place in 1963, though Alou had another fine season—20 home runs and a .281 batting average. The highlight of the year came in September when his brother Jesús was recalled from Triple-A Tacoma to join Felipe and Matty. Late in the

game on September 15, Jesús and Matty replaced Mays and McCovey, creating an all-Alou outfield. The brothers repeated this two more times that month, and appeared in the box score together a few other times. This feat has never been repeated in the regular season, and Felipe has a theory as to why. "Because people don't want to have children," he reasoned. The odds of three boys, all ballplayers, all on the same team, are quite remote.[12]

Meanwhile, in 1963 Alou found himself embroiled in some politics with the baseball establishment. Throughout his professional career, Felipe returned home every October and played baseball in the Dominican Winter League. On his way up to the majors, he won back-to-back batting titles in 1958–59 and 1959–60. A growing list of fellow major leaguers joined Alou, including his brothers, Manny Mota, Juan Marichal and more. The Alous and Marichal usually played for Leones del Escogido in Santo Domingo, which won five of six championships beginning with the 1955–56 season. In 1956, Escogido club president Paco Martínez Alba—brother-in-law of Rafael Trujillo, the long-time Dominican strongman—formed a working agreement with the Giants.

Trujillo was assassinated in 1961, leaving the country in the hands of the military. The Winter League season was shortened in 1961–62, and cancelled outright in 1962–63. The Dominican government arranged a series of games with a touring team of Cuban players who were living in the US (exiled from their own country, and their own winter league). Among those who participated were Felipe Alou and Juan Marichal. Baseball commissioner Ford Frick, deeming these games "unauthorized," fined the players $250 each.



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Alou was traded to the Milwaukee Braves after speaking out in Sport *magazine about the treatment of Latin players in MLB.*

Many of the Dominican players were upset, but it was Alou who went public. In the spring of 1963, Alou suggested that Latin players have a representative in the commissioner's office, someone who understood Latin culture and politics, and could explain their unique set of problems. "They do not understand," Alou said, "that these are our people and we owe it to them to play for them."[13] In December 1965, Commissioner William Eckert hired Bobby Maduro to fill exactly this position.

Alou expanded on his people's grievances in a courageous first-person account in *Sport* (as told to Arnold Hano) that fall. "When the military junta 'asked' you to do something, you did it. If I had not played, I would have been called a Communist." Most Latin players came from very impoverished circumstances, and earning the extra money in the offseason (there were no other jobs available) helped feed huge extended families. In the US, the players were often isolated from their teammates by language, and often criticized or even disciplined for speaking Spanish amongst themselves. Alou was very complimentary of the United States, calling it a "wonderful country," but left no doubt where his heart lay. "I am a Dominican. It is my country. And I love it."[14] Alou pulled no punches, criticizing Frick and also Alvin Dark, his own manager. In the words of writer Rob Ruck, "Nobody had ever spoken so eloquently or forcefully about Latin ballplayers, much less prescribed how baseball could and should address their unique concerns."[15]

In early December, not long after the article in *Sport* appeared, the Giants traded Alou to the Milwaukee Braves as part of a seven-player trade. Whether the deal was related to Alou's outspokenness is unclear, but his Latino teammates, including Cepeda, Marichal, and Pagán, were devastated. "I think that was one of the biggest mistakes the Giants ever made," said Marichal decades later.[16] The Giants did have a surplus of outfielders, and needed the pitching they acquired. Jesús Alou, who many thought would surpass both his brothers, was anointed as the new Giant right fielder.

Alou spent the next six years with the Braves. Before reporting in 1964 he had injured his knee playing in the Dominican Winter League. He played through it, knowing that the Braves needed him to play center field, but he got off to a slow start hitting and fielding. In June manager Bobby Bragan (faced with an outfield surplus with the sudden emergence

of Rico Carty, a rookie Dominican) asked Alou to play first base, and a few games later he tore cartilage in his knee reaching for a ground ball. He missed a month of action, and hit just .253 with nine home runs on the season. In 1965 he recovered nicely, alternating between first base and the outfield, hitting .297 with 23 home runs.

In 1966 the Braves moved to Atlanta, and Alou responded to the hot climate with his best season. Again playing first base and all three outfield positions, Alou hit .327 with 31 home runs, leading the NL with 218 hits, 122 runs scored, and 355 total bases. He lost out on the league batting title to his brother Matty (.342), who had been traded to Pittsburgh and was capitalizing on his first chance at regular playing time. Felipe returned to the All-Star game, though he did not see any action.

The Atlanta writers named Alou the team MVP, and some of his teammates were in awe. "I've never seen anyone stand out head and shoulders the way Felipe did," said catcher Joe Torre. "I've never seen anyone hit so consistently well all season long," added Henry Aaron. Alou parried such talk: "If a team isn't going right, what can one man do to help? I think this stuff about leading a team, I wonder if that is really possible." But it was not just his ballplaying. Gene Oliver, a white teammate who lost his first base job to Alou, said, "He is the kind of man you hope your kid will grow up to be."[17]

Alou struggled in 1967, suffering from bone chips in his elbow and falling to .274 with just 15 home runs. He recovered to hit .317 in 1968 (a year that saw league averages plummet to .243), playing in the All-Star game again. His batting average was third highest in the league, and he tied Pete Rose for the lead with 210 hits. After three years of moving around the diamond, Alou played 156 times in center field under new manager Lum Harris.

Alou got off to a great start in 1969, hitting well over .300 through May. On June 2 he broke a finger and missed two weeks after he was hit by a pitch thrown by the Cardinals' Chuck Taylor. During his absence the Braves acquired Tony González from San Diego, and when Alou returned the two platooned in center field. During the Braves' successful drive for the division title, and the subsequent playoff loss to the Mets, Alou got little playing time. For the season he hit just .282 with five home runs. With an outfield surplus, Atlanta dealt the 34-year-old to Oakland for pitcher Jim Nash over the winter.

No longer a star player, in 1970 Alou was the elder statesman on a young A's team filled with up and coming stars. He hit .271 in 154 games. Just a few days into the 1971 season, Oakland dealt Alou to the Yankees for two young pitchers, making room for Joe Rudi in left field. Alou played most of the next three years in New York, hitting .289, .278 and finally .236, moving between the outfield and first base all three seasons. He played 19 games for Montreal in September 1973, and got three at bats for Milwaukee the next April before drawing his final release. Felipe was sad, saying he would "have to get used to the life of a man who can't play baseball."[18]

Alou joined the Montreal Expos organization as an instructor in 1976, but suffered the tragedy of his life in 1976 when his oldest boy, Felipe Jr., an aspiring ballplayer, jumped into a shallow pool and drowned. Alou was so broken up he did not work at all that season, and could not talk about the tragedy for many years. He rejoined the Expos the next year, and spent the next seventeen years as a minor league manager (with a few stints as a major league coach). In the minors, he piloted West Palm Beach, Memphis, Denver, Wichita, and Indianapolis, earning a reputation as a serious and respected teacher of young players. He apparently was offered the job in 1985 to manage the San Francisco Giants but turned it down out of loyalty to the Expos.

In the winter months, Felipe transitioned from player to manager of his longtime team, the Leones del Escogido in the Dominican Republic. Alou managed the club to four league championships (1980–81, 1981–82; 1989–90, 1991–92). Previously, he had also won two Venezuelan titles as skipper of the Caracas Leones (1977–78, 1979–80). In the mid-1980s, he managed Caguas in the Puerto Rican Winter League as well.

The genuinely devoted Alou, who did not drink or smoke or socialize much, has been married four times and has fathered eleven children. As a young man he married María Beltré, from his hometown, and the couple had four children: Felipe Jr., María, José, and Moisés. He and Beverley Martin, from Atlanta, had three girls: Christia, Cheri, and Jennifer. His third wife was Elsa Brens, from the Dominican, and the couple had Felipe José and Luis Emilio. In 1985, he married Lucie Gagnon, a French-Canadian, and had two more children, Valerie and Felipe Jr.

"People ask how a man who likes to be home with his family gets married four times," Alou said in 1995. "All the evils that go on in life, the evils of the life of a traveling ballplayer, I wasn't immune to that. But I loved all my wives and children. … I've been a lucky man. I had two children in my fifties, and God gave us other Felipes."[19] Among his children, José and Felipe José

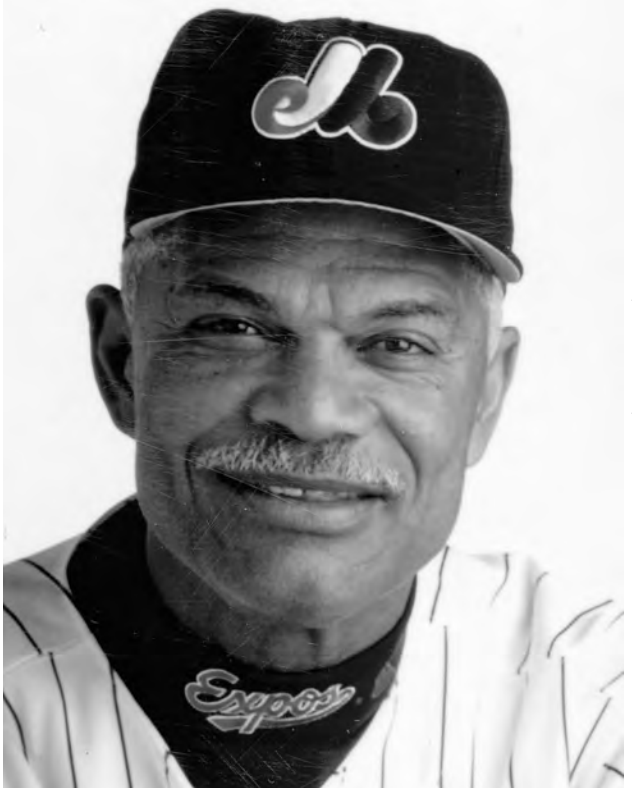
became minor league players, and Moisés made it to the Majors.

In 1986 Alou returned to manage at Single-A West Palm Beach, and remained there for six years, an eternity for a minor-league manager. In 1992 he returned to the major leagues as the bench coach for Montreal manager Tom Runnells. After a sluggish start (17–20), general manager Dan Duquette fired Runnells and hired Alou to finish the season. The young Expos responded with a 70–55 record to finish a strong second to the Pittsburgh Pirates. The 57-year-old Alou's job was secure. "The biggest mistake I've made in my career," said Duquette, "was not recognizing his ability then to be a terrific major league manager. He's one of the best in the game."[20] He was the first of his countrymen to manage a big-league team.

Alou took over a Montreal club filled with young talent, including Larry Walker, Marquis Grissom, Delino DeShields, and Wil Cordero. One of the team's best relief pitchers was Mel Rojas, who was Felipe's nephew (the son of his half-brother). The team's left fielder was 25-year-old Moisés Alou, Felipe's son. Moisés had not grown up with Felipe (his parents had divorced when Moisés was two), but they talked frequently and saw each other occasionally over the winter months. "I was the happiest kid in the world," Moisés recalled. "He was the most famous player, maybe the most famous person, on the island, and he was my father."[21] Alou was a good young player who developed rapidly under his father's tutelage, turning into a six-time All-Star and one of the better hitters in the National League.

The Expos finished 94–68 in 1993, just three games behind the first-place Phillies. Over the offseason, Duquette traded second baseman DeShields to Los Angeles for 21-year-old pitcher Pedro Martínez, a Dominican who joined Ken Hill and Jeff Fassero to give Alou one of the league's best starting staffs. The fortified club soared to the best record in baseball in 1994, a great team that could hit, field, run, and pitch. Unfortunately for Alou and his team, the season was ended in early August by a players' strike, and the club was not able to continue its quest for a championship. The club's 74–40 pace, if maintained over the full schedule, would have yielded 105 wins, the most since the 1986 Mets. Alou was named the National League Manager of the Year.

Compounding the tragedy, the team's ownership was not willing to spend the necessary money to keep the team intact. Before the 1995 season got underway, the Expos had lost Walker, Grissom, Hill and John Wetteland. Alou's club fell all the way to last place in 1995, before clawing their way back to 88 wins and



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Alou was named National League Manager of the Year in 1994.

second place in 1996. But soon Cordero and Fassero departed, followed by Moisés Alou and Pedro Martínez. As the club continued to develop good players (Vladimir Guerrero, Rondell White, Orlando Cabrera and Javier Vázquez arrived in the late 1990s), the club's five straight fourth-place finishes did not harm Alou's reputation as a manager. It was understood that Alou was doing a fine job with his youngsters, but that the team was not willing to keep them once they attained the seniority that allowed them to earn big money. After another mediocre start in 1991 (21–32), Alou finally was released as manager after nine years.

He spent 2002 as the bench coach for the Tigers (working under Luis Pujols, who had been Alou's bench coach in Montreal). After the 2002 season Alou returned to San Francisco to manage the Giants. Under Dusty Baker, the club had reached the World Series in 2002, but after the season Baker left the club in a contract dispute, joining the Chicago Cubs. The 67-year-old Alou took over.

The Giants' team and personality was dominated by the late-career Barry Bonds, who had set the single-season home record in 2001 and whose days were now filled with home runs, bases on balls, and (ever increasingly) steroid allegations. Alou's first club won 100 games, an improvement on the World Series team that had won 95 and the NL wild card. Unfortunately,

the 2003 club was upset in the playoffs by the young Florida Marlins. Bonds missed 30 games but managed to hit .341 with 45 home runs and 148 walks. The next season Bonds walked a record 232 times and won the batting title, but the club fell to 91 wins, and then to 75 wins in 2005 with Bonds hurt. Moisés Alou rejoined his father in 2005, and had two pretty good seasons with the Giants. After the 2006 season, the 71-year-old Felipe Alou was released from his job as manager.

Alou remained a beloved figure in San Francisco, and was offered a job as a special assistant to general manager Brian Sabean. "I am truly overjoyed to have Felipe remain with the Giants organization," said Sabean. "As he was during his four years as our manager, Felipe will continue to be a huge asset to the ballclub going forward."[22] Alou has worked as a Major League scout, and minor league instructor, helping Sabean on player evaluation. In 2010 Alou received his first championship ring after the Giants defeated the Rangers in the World Series.

In 2012 he was beginning his sixth season in this position, 57 years after signing his first contract with the Giants. He had begun his career as a stranger in a strange land, but had become one of baseball's most respected men. A three-time All-Star turned into an award-winning manager, who helped many of the game's greatest stars as they began their careers. But he remains most famous as the eldest in one of baseball's greatest families, the brother and father to fellow All-Stars. Very few men have left a greater mark on baseball than Felipe Rojas Alou. ■

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Thanks to Rory Costello for his help, especially for his straightening out my understanding of Felipe Rojas Alou's name. (This article appeared on February 28, 2012 on the SABR Bio Project website.)

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Yankees Catchers During the Huggins Era

Cort Vitty

Yankees owners Jacob Ruppert and Til Huston realized early in their partnership that New York wouldn't tolerate anything less than a championship team. Ruppert had a championship in mind when he hired Miller Huggins to manage the club in 1918. According to Ruppert: "Huggins had vision. Getting him was the first and most important step we took toward making the Yankees champions. Huggins had constructive ideas and far-seeing judgment. He planned on a big scale."[1] Huggins understood the importance of fielding a high-quality team and recommended improving the talent pool via key acquisitions and signings.

Upon assuming the managerial reins, Huggins inherited two starting receivers, Les Nunamaker, who was traded to St. Louis before spring training began, and James Harrison Hannah (1889–1982). Although "Truck" certainly fit Hannah's 6-foot-1, 190-pound bulk, the nickname was actually derived from his off-season job as a deliveryman. The North Dakota native came to New York from the Pacific Coast League, where he had established himself as a fine defensive catcher. Adept at the art of chatter, Truck's booming voice, laced with sarcasm, both distracted opposing hitters and entertained fans. A light bat (.235 overall with the Yankees) shortened his stay in New York and ultimately hastened his return to the West Coast after the 1920 season. Hannah's minor-league career, encompassing over 2,275 games in more than 20 seasons, earned him PCL Hall of Fame honors.[1] As a somewhat spry 51-year-old minor-league manager, he'd again don "the tools" with the Memphis Chicks in 1940, catching both ends of a doubleheader after injuries sidelined his regular receivers.[2]

St. Louis native Herold "Muddy" Ruel was purchased in 1918 to back up Nunamaker, but he spent most of the year in the army. The polar opposite of "Truck" in size, 24-year-old Muddy packed a strong arm, good defensive skills, and a decent bat into his 5-foot-9, 150-pound frame. To Huggins, "a good catcher [is] the carburetor, the lead dog, the pulse taker, the traffic cop and sometimes a lot of unprintable things, but no team gets very far without one."[3] Huggins liked Ruel's potential and considered him a candidate to ultimately become the regular backstop. But the skipper knew a more experienced backstop would be needed to pursue that initial pennant. On December 15, 1920, Ruel was shuttled to the Boston Red Sox as part of a larger deal that brought veteran Wally Schang to the Yankees. Ruel (1896–1963) would later move from Boston to Washington, and admirably handle the catching duties for the Nats' 1924–25 pennant-winning seasons. Along the way, he earned a well-deserved reputation as one of the smartest catchers in the league.

Schang (1889–1965) may have been a farm boy from New York State, but he was a city slicker behind the plate. His acquisition placed a premier catcher onto the Yankees roster, with a resume that included World Championships on the 1913 Philadelphia Athletics and 1918 Boston Red Sox. At 5-foot-10 and 180 pounds, the strong-armed Schang was one of the finest defensive catchers in the game. A formidable switch-hitter, he was instrumental in helping the Yankees win their first American League flag in 1921. Schang more than adequately filled the starting role when the Yanks repeated as league champs in 1922 and ultimately won their first World Series in 1923. "The catcher is the jockey," Schang remarked. "The pitcher is the horse. ... A good horse will lose with a bad rider. The catcher must not let the pitcher lose his courage, confidence or control."[4]

The team fell to second place in 1924—then spiraled out of control to a dismal seventh place in 1925. Huggins thought rebuilding was in order and started housecleaning on a wholesale level. By then Schang was 36 years old and Huggins felt age, injuries, and possibly diminished eyesight had caught up with Wally. On the same day (June 2) that Lou Gehrig famously replaced Wally Pipp at first base, Benny Bengough replaced Wally Schang as the regular catcher.

Bernard Oliver Bengough was born on July 27, 1898, in Niagara Falls. He stood 5-foot-7 and went from studying for the priesthood to warming the pines for the Buffalo Bisons of the International League. His mother proactively contacted manager Patsy Donovan and belittled the skipper for not playing her son. Taking

the advice of Mrs. Bengough, Donovan penciled Benny in, and the young backstop hit well enough to secure the regular spot. Promoted to the Yankees in 1923, Benny quickly demonstrated a strong throwing arm and fine defensive skills. He further impressed Huggins with aggressive leadership, skillfully taking charge and directing veteran pitchers Herb Pennock, Waite Hoyt, and Joe Bush.

Benny hit a workmanlike .258 in 1925 as the regular receiver. Schang assumed the back-up role and subsequently was dealt to the St. Louis Browns prior to the 1926 season. Regrettably, the move proved to be a rare mistake on the part of Huggins. Schang would outhit his Yankees replacements in each of the next three seasons, posting averages of .330, .318 and .286.[5]

The Yankees supplemented their receiving corps with 5-foot-9, 178-pound Pat Collins from the St. Louis Browns. Tharon Patrick Collins was born in Sweet Springs, Missouri, on September 13, 1896. He debuted professionally in 1917 with the Joplin Miners of the Western League, later earning a promotion to the major league St. Louis Browns, where he primarily served as a backup to Hank Severeid. The Browns waived Collins to the AA St. Paul Saints in 1925, where he hit .316 in 132 games. He was traded to the Yankees on August 30, 1925 in exchange for $25,000 and player Pee Wee Wanninger. Had the Yankees noticed and claimed Collins off the waiver list, he would've been available at the bargain price of $4,000.[6] Once in the fold, Collins was considered a suitable backup for Bengough, who by now was one of the finest defensive catchers in the league.

The 1926 club sported a rebuilt look, including talented rookies Tony Lazzeri and Mark Koenig. During spring training, Bengough's playing time was limited by a sore arm, providing Collins the opportunity to take on more duties. The increased workload eventually took its toll on Pat, who developed a sore elbow during the season. Bengough improved, but with essentially two lame-arm catchers—and the club surprisingly in the thick of a pennant race—Huggins scurried to find experienced help. Learning from his earlier mistake, Huggins studied the waiver list and found durable veteran Hank Severeid (1891–1968) available from Washington. An Iowa native, the six-foot, 175-pound Severeid had been one of the top offensive and defensive catchers in the American League during his tenure with the St. Louis Browns. An "old-school" style catcher, Hank was adept at guiding pitchers through difficult situations. Plucked off the waiver list on July 22, 1926, Severeid immediately shouldered the majority of the catching duties, making every start until August 11. After that Bengough returned to the lineup on August 29 and Severied, Bengough, and Collins split the catching duties.

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Herold "Muddy" Ruel was purchased in 1917, but was shuttled to the Red Sox by 1920 in the deal that brought Wally Schang to the Bronx.

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The acquisition of Wally Schang placed a premier catcher onto the Yankees roster, with a resume that included World Championships on the 1913 Philadelphia Athletics and 1918 Boston Red Sox.

The plan worked until disaster struck on September 18, via a pitch served up by Cleveland right-hander George Uhle. Uhle developed a trick pitch seldom seen in the 1920s—today it's called a slider. This unorthodox offering resulted in a league-leading 13 hit batsmen in 1926. The pitch broke Benny's right wrist. Bengough described the incident: "I put my arm up to protect myself. [The ball] hit my arm and poked the bone right through and hit my forehead."[7] Benny was lost for the balance of the season; he was hitting .381

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Bernard Oliver Bengough was born on July 27, 1898, in Niagara Falls and was acquired from the Buffalo Bisons farm team by the Yankees in 1923.

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A sore arm for Bengough gave Pat Collins the opportunity for more playing time, only to end up with a sore elbow himself.

at the time and would never be the same ballplayer. For the balance of the season, Severeid shared catching duties with a still-not-100-percent Collins. Although going 25–29 down the stretch, the Yankees hung on to capture the 1926 flag. New York ultimately lost the World Series to the St. Louis Cardinals, with Severeid catching all seven games.

As the fall of 1926 turned to winter, Huggins knew he had a major problem behind the plate. An exhaustive search for help culminated on January 13, 1927, when the Yankees acquired John Grabowski and left-handed hitting utility infielder Ray Morehart from the Chicago White Sox for second baseman Aaron Ward. To make room for Grabowski, the Yanks released Severeid, ending his major league career. Hank's lifetime .289 mark ranks him high among catchers of the era.

Speculation about the 1927 season started before spring training. Even though the Yankees were defending American League champs, scribes seriously doubted the club had enough depth to repeat. Although the team would be led by six future Hall of Famers (Ruth, Gehrig, Lazzeri, Combs, Hoyt, and Pennock), the Yankees weren't considered shoo-in contenders. Early predictions had Philadelphia, Washington, and Cleveland vying for the flag. "In a preseason poll of 42 baseball experts, only nine picked the Yankees to repeat as American League Champions."[8]

Some cited the team's "lack of depth" as the weakness. As Harvey Frommer writes, "A chess master, Huggins always found depth."[9] In light of Bengough's sore arm, Huggins decided that he would have to catch Pat Collins one day and Grabowski the next, rotating them as much as possible throughout the season. Neither ever worked two days in a row except for illness, injury, or doubleheaders. The three right-handed hitters deftly handled the catching chores and combined to hit a respectable .271, with 7 home runs and 71 runs batted in.

The Yankees won on Opening Day, with the 5-foot-10, 185-pound Johnny Grabowski behind the plate. John was born in Ware, Massachusetts, on January 7, 1900. He started his professional career in the Western League with the St. Joseph Saints in 1922, hitting .289 in 100 games. Switching to the Minneapolis Millers of the American Association, the strong-armed Grabowski hit .316 in 1923 and .319 in 1924. Obtained by the Chicago White Sox, he settled in as Ray Schalk's backup before the trade to New York. Huggins commented that Grabowski, "has been a lifesaver to this team, what with Benny Bengough's arm not being so good and Pat Collins continuing to harbor the delusion he can't throw to second. He handles his pitchers well. He has a good arm and an accurate throw. The Yankees got something valuable when they got him."[10]

The 1927 Yankees went on to dominate the league, finishing a full 19 games ahead of the second-place Philadelphia A's, before sweeping the Pirates in the Series. Using the same formula that proved successful during the season, Huggins opened the World Series with Collins, used Bengough in the second game, switched to Grabowski in the third, and repeated Collins in the fourth and final contest. All three catchers wore

the collar in the first three games; Collins went 3-for-3 in the final, providing the only offense from the receiving corps.

A mere two days after New York swept the Pirates to win the 1927 World Series, speculation started: "For any number of good reasons the Yankees of 1927 should be ranked with the great teams of all time."[11] After all, the club jumped into first place on Opening Day and held the lead all season—finishing 110-44, a .714 winning percentage—to secure the AL flag by 19 games.

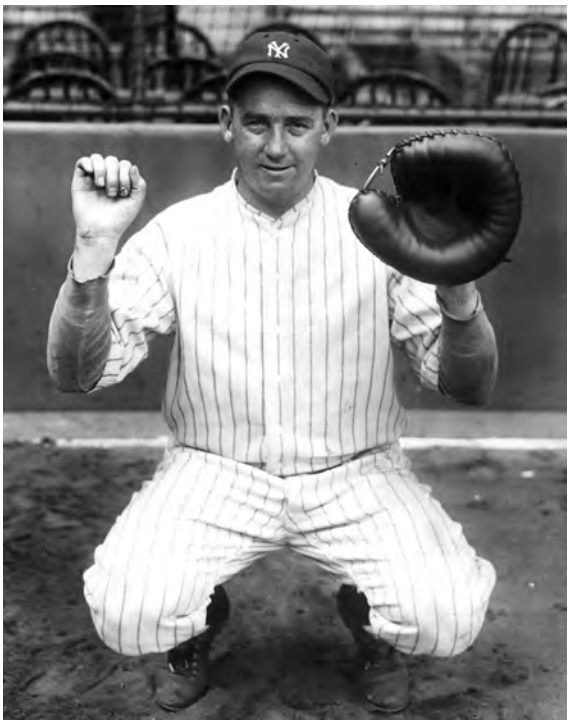
The 1927 trio of catchers were retained for 1928. This time, Grabowski saw most of the action, followed by Bengough and Collins. As reported in the *New York American*: "Grabowski thrives on more work behind the plate. Collins works better when not asked to do all the work." Collins had a strong but erratic throwing arm; he also had difficulty fielding pop-ups behind the plate.[12] His hitting tailed off significantly, posting a season average of only .221. The Yankees again capped the flag, finishing two and a half games ahead of the hard-charging Philadelphia A's. Bengough caught all four games as the Yankees swept the St.Louis Cardinals in the World Series.

Collins was the first of the 1927–28 triumvirate to depart New York. Pat became expendable when the highly touted Bill Dickey moved up to the parent club late in 1928, allowing the sale of Pat to the Boston Braves. Ultimately, Collins would drift back to the minor leagues before retiring in 1932. He succumbed to heart failure in Kansas City, Missouri, on May 20, 1960, at the age of 63.

In the case of Louisiana native Bill Dickey (1907–1993), luck was better than hard work when it came to making him a Yankee. Playing for Jackson in the Cotton States League, it was generally assumed he was the property of the White Sox, since Chicago had a working agreement with the club. After a little detective work, the Yankees discovered the Jackson Senators owned Dickey's contract outright; the team waived their rights and he was quickly purchased by New York.

In 1929 the highly-touted Dickey stepped right into the starting slot, catching 127 games and hitting a solid .324. Early on, Huggins influenced the talented youngster by advising Dickey to "stop unbuttoning your shirt on every pitch." He told him, "We pay a player here for hitting home runs and that's Babe Ruth, so choke up and drill the ball, that way you'll be around here longer."[13] Huggins knew talent and in Dickey he saw the makings of a first-rate receiver to complement the star-studded lineup that had won three consecutive pennants and two World Series.

Huggins desperately wanted to win a fourth consecutive American League flag, but despite the addition of Dickey, the 1929 club didn't have the spark. Although he tried hard to motivate the team, the Bombers were in a tailspin and motivation by Huggins failed to ignite the club. The mounting stress took its toll on the diminutive manager. Huggins was rundown, didn't eat properly, or get sufficient rest. A growing sore on his left cheek caused concern. His deteriorating condition led to a hospital stay, where it was determined he was suffering from Erysipelas Sepsis, a form of blood poisoning.[14] On September 25, 1929, the players were at Fenway Park in the midst of a game against the Red Sox when they received the news about the untimely passing of their manager. Though they rallied for a win in extra innings that day, the disheartened club would ultimately finish in second place, a full 18 games behind an extremely talented Philadelphia Athletics team.



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In 1927 John Grabowski saw more action than the other two members of the catching corps, Bengough and Collins.

Dickey's emergence made Johnny Grabowski expendable; he was shipped to the American Association St. Paul Saints in 1930.[15] He returned to the AL as a backup with the Detroit Tigers in 1931 before being sent to the IL Montreal Royals for 1932 and 1933. Upon retiring as an active player, Grabowski became a minor league umpire in the Canadian-American League in 1936, Eastern League 1938–39, and the IL 1940–41. After baseball, Johnny worked as a toolmaker in Schenectady. Sadly, he passed away on May 23, 1946,

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In 1929, Bill Dickey stepped right into the starting slot, catching 127 games and hitting a solid .324.

at the age of 46, after suffering burns in a fire that destroyed his family residence.[16]

Benny Bengough was relegated to backing up Bill Dickey until he left the Yankees after the 1930 season. Moving on to the St. Louis Browns, he eventually became a minor-league player-manager, before embarking on a long coaching career with the Browns, Nationals, Red Sox, and Phillies. Benny left the Washington coaching staff in 1943, picking up offseason work at a war plant in Indiana and ironically being replaced by George Uhle.

As a member of the Philadelphia Phillies public relations staff, Benny addressed a B'nai B'rith chapter in suburban Philadelphia on Sunday morning December 22, 1968. After the presentation, he walked across the street and attended Mass at Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church. After Mass, Benny collapsed on the church steps and died of a heart attack; he was 70 years old.[17]

Bill Dickey bridged the end of the Huggins era to become an integral part of the 1932 championship team. He continued as the mainstay behind the plate during the 1936–39 dynasty managed by Joe McCarthy. Offensively and defensively, Dickey would prove to be the most dominant catcher in the league right up until WWII. A big man at 6-foot-1, Dickey led league catchers four years in fielding average, while guiding pitchers with his extensive knowledge of opposing hitters. Dickey would also help build a future Yankees dynasty by assuming the responsibility of teaching a young Lawrence Peter Berra the necessary skills to become a formidable major-league catcher. A lifetime .313 hitter, Dickey was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1954.

Under the leadership of Huggins, the Yankees blossomed into a championship team. As a testament to his memory, a monument honoring the late Yankees skipper was placed in center field and dedicated on May 30, 1932. Miller Huggins became the first in a long line of Yankees greats honored in what became Monument Park.[18]

Throughout the Huggins era, Col. Ruppert kept his word and provided his manager with high caliber players at nearly every position. The notable exception was staffing behind the plate, where Huggins deftly utilized a patchwork of mostly journeyman catchers on very successful teams. His accomplishments ultimately earned him Hall of Fame honors in 1964. ■

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20-Game Losers

Profiles of the 20-Loss Seasons, 1920 to Present

David E. Skelton

It has become almost as rare as the major-league Triple Crown, and even more so than its statistical opposite of a pitcher winning 20 games in a single season. Since 1980, there has been only one pitcher who lost 20 games in a single season—21 to be exact—and there is no reason to think baseball will see another such season in the foreseeable future. It has become baseball's equivalent of Bigfoot: seemingly rumored to exist, but impossible to see.

Historically, it didn't used to be this way. Prior to 1980, baseball saw a fairly regular sprinkling of pitchers with at least 20 losses per season.The roster of said pitchers was remarkably diverse: from the pitcher who approached the mound with the expectation of sinister, scary music, to the later Hall-of-Fame inductee.

As opposed to delving into the reasons for this paucity (of which there are many), the research herein has instead focused on the unique circumstances surrounding many of these past 20-game losers. This research has been limited to the period from 1920 to the present—a time when the 20-loss season was not rare, but not as pervasive as the preceding period when, for example, from 1900-20, there was an average of five or more pitchers logging 20 losses per season (with a high of 14 such pitchers in 1905). Therefore, unless otherwise cited, the statistical "leaders" noted in the 20-loss/season category are limited to the last 92 years. Barring an unlikely rash of any future 20-loss seasons, these statistics will likely stand for many years to come.

For purposes of capturing the 20-loss "achievement", the following categories have been established: The Deserved, The Repeat Offenders, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, The Unjustified, Miscellaneous, and The Teammates.

As described below, these categories are not intended as "hard" boundaries. A pitcher slotted in "The Repeat Offenders" column could easily slide two categories later (Phil Niekro, for instance), or justifiably be listed under two separate columns (Dick Ellsworth: The Deserved and The Repeat Offenders). The intention herein is not to pursue a thorough analysis of the 20-loss season as much as establish a sorting for purposes of relating the rather interesting events, statistical anomalies and, in some instances, ironies that helped lead these pitchers into such an exclusive club.

Furthermore, at no point in these brief statistical summaries should the reader perceive intent to belittle or denigrate the pitchers cited. In fact, it is often to the contrary, as any hurler who accumulated as many as 20 losses had to have had a certain level of confidence from his manager to have taken the mound so regularly. As will be seen, these same 20-loss "victims" were often the staff aces hurling for some rather pathetic teams.

Staff ace or not, the pitchers and their stories tell an interesting tale.

THE DESERVED

In deference to the above-referenced "cue the sinister scary music" there are certainly some pitchers whose particular season appears to beg 20 losses. Notwithstanding the success achieved in other years, they include (in no particular order):

Mike Maroth, Detroit Tigers (2003)

Mike drew the Opening Day assignment for the Tigers to start the 2003 season, and the 3–1 loss to the visiting Minnesota Twins would seemingly portend the ominous season ahead for both Maroth and the Tigers. The team went on to establish an American League record for losses in a season—one shy of the post-1900 low mark set by the expansion New York Mets in 1962—while Maroth would go on to etch his name in the long list of pitchers with 20 losses.

The Tigers were in the midst of a 12-year drought of consecutive losing seasons, and in 2003 management moved to reverse this trend with a full scale youth movement (every starting pitcher was less than 27 years old). Still, the team flailed considerably, evidenced by A.L. season lows in categories such as team batting average and runs scored (one of the few categories in which they did lead the league was with errors—138—33 more than the league average). Maroth's scant nine wins led the Tigers staff, but he

might have avoided the sizable number of losses if he had garnered more offensive support—in 14 of the 21 losses, the team scored three or fewer runs.

Conversely, a 5.73 ERA—more than a run higher than the league average—did little to further his cause. Adding insult to injury, Maroth led the league in earned runs allowed, and shared the dubious distinction of most home runs allowed with two other hurlers. Amongst his 20-loss brethren in the entire history of baseball (including the years before 1920), Maroth has the fewest number of complete games pitched (1), and the highest total of home runs allowed per nine innings (1.6). With such homely numbers, the determination is that Maroth "deserved" the 20-loss season, and is therefore "inducted" herein.

Pedro Ramos, Minnesota Twins (1961)

San Luis Pinar del Rio saw its share of heavy fighting during the rebellion that ousted Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista.[1] Although he never participated in the fighting, native son Pedro Ramos may have felt he'd had his own experience with combat "shell shock," for over the course of three seasons, he would lead the American League in home runs allowed—and it was during one of these years that he also joined the ranks of the 20-loss season.

Pedro Ramos flirted with a 20-loss season often before reaching the inglorious threshold. While pitching for the lowly Washington Senators 1958–60, Ramos managed to twirl 18, 19, and 18 losses respectively. It apparently took the team's relocation to Minnesota in 1961 for him to finally achieve 20 losses. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Ramos led the American League in losses over each of the referenced four seasons.

In joining his 20-loss brethren, Ramos shares two distinctions with Mike Maroth: he was the Opening Day starter for his team in 1961 and he led the league in home runs allowed. Unlike Maroth, he set a pace for gopher balls that far outdistanced the second-place finisher, Gene Conley (39–33).

Ironically, two potential scenarios that did not come to fruition might have prevented Ramos from reaching 20-losses in 1961.

The 18-loss season that Ramos endured in the preceding season could be blamed in large part on the lack of offensive support he received from his teammates. Ramos produced a nice 3.45 ERA in 1960 (league average: 3.87), while his team could only muster an average of less than 1.5 runs per game in 15 of his 18 losses. Frustration finally boiled over, and he "demanded to be traded to another club, preferably the Yankees."[2] One can only surmise that had such a trade occurred, and Ramos found himself pitching for the power-laden offense that included Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris, he would not have attained the 20-loss threshold the following season (no matter how many gopher balls he served up).

On a completely separate front, Ramos and his fellow native Cubans nearly sat out the entire 1961 season. After the Cuban rebellion, the International League withdrew its Havana franchise, and in the latter part of 1960 there was much speculation that, in retaliation, "Fidel Castro won't let Cuban players come to the United States [in 1961]."[3] Obviously, had Castro delivered on this perceived threat and prevented the Cuban players from playing in 1961, Ramos would not have been around to twirl his 20 losses.

But play he did, and not for the Yankees. His ERA would increase by an additional one-half run, and he would lead the league in base hits allowed, while serving up the aforementioned league-leading 39 home runs. Such ugly numbers "award" Ramos the distinction of joining Mike Maroth in induction to the "deserving" category.

"Honorable" Mention: Don Larsen, Baltimore Orioles (1954)

Far more famous for being the only pitcher to ever twirl a perfect game in World Series competition, two years earlier Larsen was a part of the humble franchise that relocated from St. Louis to Baltimore in 1954. A team in the midst of 14 consecutive non-winning campaigns (they would manage to secure a .500 season in 1957), the move to Maryland did little to turn their fate around, as the team would lose 100 games for the second straight season.

An anemic offense contributed to the malaise, as the club garnered only 52 home runs team-wide through the 1954 season (a mere three more than the N.L. champion Ted Kluszewski's 49 dingers the same year). Larsen could arguably be slotted in the "Unjustified" category due to this lack of offensive support. Fairly or not, he is slotted here for the unique record he holds among the roster of 20-loss pitchers: Larsen's .125 winning percentage (3–21) is the lowest mark registered for the period researched from 1920 forward, and eighth lowest all-time.

Unlike the fate that befell Pedro Ramos, Larsen would be traded to the New York Yankees at the conclusion of the 1954 season, and attain a certain level of success over five seasons that included the aforementioned perfect game. Then, on December 11, 1959, Larsen would be traded once more, to the Kansas City Athletics, where he would again post an

incredibly low winning percentage during the 1960 season: .091 (1–10).

Thus, for attaining the lowest winning percentage in modern major league history—with a sizable assist from his teammates' feeble offensive skills—Larsen's 20-loss season places him in the "deserved" category.

There are certainly many other pitchers who could conceivably belong in this problematic grouping with Messrs. Maroth, Ramos, and Larsen, but some of these have carved out a category all to themselves.

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These two knuckleballers each notched two 20-loss seasons in the 1970s, Phil Niekro (L) with the Braves (1977, 1979) and Wilbur Wood (R) with the White Sox (1973, 1975).

THE REPEAT OFFENDERS

The all-time list is extensive, and includes such notables as Cy Young and Walter Johnson, as well as Pud Galvin, Tim Keefe, and Old Hoss Radbourne (each a HOF inductee). The period from 1920 forward includes its own share of HOF notables, such as Phil Niekro, Ted Lyons, Red Ruffing, and Eppa Rixey. The category that captures such worthy hurlers is that of "The Repeat Offenders," defined as those who have, on more than one occasion, lost 20 or more games in a single season. There are 17 such pitchers since 1920 (three of whom actually span the period from 1917–25), not all of whom stand out as prominently as the HOF inductees above, but many of these have an interesting back-story all the same.

Phil Niekro, Atlanta Braves (1977, 1979)
Wilbur Wood, Chicago White Sox (1973, 1975)

Excluding the remarkable season that lefty Mickey Lolich had with the Detroit Tigers in 1971—45 games started, while completing 29 of those—it is not surprising that Phil Niekro and Wilbur Wood are the only pitchers since 1923 to take the mound in a starting role 43 or more times in a single season (in large part due to the lack of arm strain sustained by a knuckleball hurler). In so doing, both former 20-game winners (on numerous occasions) also posted two 20-game losing seasons while pitching for their respective sub-.500 clubs. In fact, during a four-year stretch in each of their careers (Niekro, 1976–79; Wood, 1971–74), each would personally account for over 27 percent of his team's total victories. With these similar characteristics, Niekro and Wood are consigned together in the "Repeat Offenders" category.

Much as a knuckleball is baffling to a hitter, the two 20-loss campaigns that Niekro posted appear just as mystifying. Niekro accumulated these two seasons while pitching for a dreadful Braves team that finished last in the N.L.'s Western Division four years in a row. One such season was accompanied by 21 wins, truly an amazing win total considering the fact that he led or tied the league lead in some rather dubious categories—41 home runs allowed, 113 walks allowed, 311 hits allowed, and 11 hit batsmen (Niekro would also rank second to Vida Blue in earned runs allowed). Conversely, the other, more "deserving" 20-loss season (an ERA that rose to a non-career-like 4.03) saw Niekro lead the league in some of the same dubious categories—although yielding a much lower (26) home run total—while winning five fewer games. Taken all together, it appears that a combination of pitching for a poor-performing team, and a tendency toward yielding the gopher ball (Niekro is fourth all-time in career home runs allowed) provide the ingredients necessary for this Hall of Fame inductee to also find entry into the "Repeat Offenders."

Unlike Niekro, fellow knuckler Wilbur Wood did not pitch for a last-place team during his 20 loss seasons—though it was often very close. In the two 20-loss campaigns (Wood was one 1974 loss shy of three consecutive 20-loss seasons) the White Sox finished fifth in a six-team division. Like his fellow knuckler, pitching for a poor-performing cast contributed mightily to one of the two 20-loss seasons, as his teammates could muster a total of only 18 runs in 15 of those 20 losses. Still further evidence that these two should be forever linked in the "Repeat Offender" category is their remarkably similar statistical lines during each of their 20-loss seasons:

	W-L	ERA		W-L	ERA
Wilbur Wood	24–20	3.46	and	16–20	4.11
Phil Niekro	21–20	3.39	and	16–20	4.03

Still, these two do not stand alone in common pairing, as evidenced by the following:

Paul Derringer, St. Louis Cardinals and Cincinnati Reds (1933); Cincinnati Reds (1934)
Red Ruffing, Boston Red Sox (1928, 1929)
Bump Hadley, Chicago White Sox and St. Louis Browns (1932); St. Louis Browns (1933)
Roger Craig, New York Mets (1962–63)

It is remarkable to lose 20 games in each of two separate seasons. What may be even more noteworthy is to have done so in consecutive years, for that is exactly what Messrs. Derringer, Ruffing, Hadley, and Craig achieved. Even more extraordinary is the fact that two of these four pitchers would, at an early stage in their careers, lose at least 47 games over the course of two campaigns and still go on to earn Hall of Fame consideration (and, in one instance, induction).

Few players have launched their major-league careers as successfully as Paul Derringer did in 1931—leading the N.L. with a .692 winning percentage (18–8) while helping the St. Louis Cardinals to a World Championship. Unfortunately, the team would plummet to a second division finish the following season, and Derringer's sophomore year followed suit (11–14, 4.05 ERA). A rocky start in 1933 precipitated a multi-player trade that sent Derringer to the Cincinnati Reds, a fate that foretold the two consecutive 20-loss seasons, as the Reds were in the midst of a nine-year drought that included five last-place finishes.

Arriving in Cincinnati with an 0–2 mark, Derringer went on to lose an additional 25 games—one has to go back to 1905 to find a pitcher with more than 27 losses in a single season—followed by 21 losses in 1934. Amazingly, Derringer accumulated these losses with ERAs of 3.30 and 3.59 in 1933 and 1934, respectively (while allowing an incredibly low four home runs in 1933). The anemic Cincinnati offense tells the entire picture, as it managed only 25 runs in 30 of the 48 total losses Derringer sustained over that two-year period. Fortunately, Derringer's (and the Reds' fate overall) would take a more positive turn, and he would go on to garner MVP consideration in five of the next six seasons. Derringer's later success notwithstanding, the 1933–34 campaigns serve to earn him consideration in the "Repeat Offenders" category.

Derringer's counterpart in regard to receiving Hall of Fame consideration (and, in this instance, induction) is Red Ruffing. A 39–93 career mark at the age of 24 would hardly seem conducive to such a later honor. Ruffing accumulated 25 and 22 losses in 1928 and 1929 seasons, respectively. Similarities to Derringer do not end with HOF consideration though, for much as Derringer struggled with some very bad Cincinnati clubs, Ruffing would pitched for some incredibly horrible Boston Red Sox teams.

The angst of January 3, 1920, is considerably lessened by the 2004 and 2007 championship seasons, but it is still capable of invoking the wrath of Red Sox' fans worldwide. That was the day Babe Ruth was sold to the New York Yankees, and the sale contributed largely to the franchise's tailspin over the following 14 seasons. Ruffing joined the Sox in the teeth of this long descent, and a league-low team batting average for nine consecutive seasons (1922–30) contributed to the lack of offensive support that garnered Ruffing 25 and 22 losses. Not discounting the fact that 20 losses for any pitcher is often the result of a certain team-wide ineptitude, Ruffing did not help his cause when leading the league in earned runs surrendered during both the 1928 and 1929 campaigns.

While the Red Sox would continue a slow crawl out of perpetual second-division league occupancy (including last-place finishes in nine of 11 consecutive seasons), Ruffing would be spared a portion of this fate when traded to the New York Yankees early in the 1930 season. The trade would contribute largely to the resurrection of Ruffing's career, as he would go on to win an average of more than 16 games over the course of 13 seasons, including four consecutive 20-win campaigns. Still, just as Ruffing's latter success mirrors Derringer's as far as helping to turn his career around, the two 20-loss campaigns of Ruffing serve as induction as a "Repeat Offender" as well.

Roger Craig never attained the success that Messrs. Derringer and Ruffing achieved, ending his career with only a .430 winning percentage. Nearly 50 percent of his career 98 losses was accumulated while pitching two seasons for the hapless expansion New York Mets, and perhaps one name more than any other illustrates the frustration Craig experienced in two consecutive 20-loss seasons: Roy Sievers!

On July 19, 1963, Craig took the mound in Connie Mack Stadium against the Philadelphia Phillies sporting a 2–15 record. Having lost 24 games in the Mets' inaugural season the year before, Craig was well on his way to two consecutive 20-loss seasons. But the 15 losses did not tell the whole story of Craig's valiant efforts coming into this game, as seven of those losses were games where he gave up only eight earned runs

combined! On this night, the 33-year-old righty was working on a masterful three-hit shutout when, with one out into the ninth, Phillies' left fielder Tony Gonzalez hit a triple to right, followed promptly by a Roy Sievers home run that resulted in a heartbreaking 2–1 loss for Craig.

Sadly, Craig's demise at the hands of Sievers was not limited to this game alone. A month and a day later, Craig took the very same mound and again threw goose eggs into the ninth. With two outs, Sievers stepped to the plate and deposited the fourth pitch he saw into the stands to tie the game (from which the Phillies prevailed in extra innings).

These two games seem to capture the essence of what it was like to play for the Mets during Craig's two-year stretch: not enough offense (last in team batting average), a porous defense (most unearned runs allowed), and an unreliable pitching staff (last in team earned run average). "Can't anybody here play this game?" lamented Manager Casey Stengel, but as evidenced by the games cited above, another Stengelese quotation seems more appropriate to Roger Craig: "You make your own luck. Some people have bad luck all their lives."

Yet if bad luck can be defined as being unfortunate enough to be traded from a contending team to a near-perennial cellar-dweller, then Bump Hadley is as unlucky a pitcher as Casey Stengel might have ever encountered. Hadley began his major-league career with the then-successful Washington Senators—a unique phrase if ever there was one—and posted a respectable 58–56 record over the course of five seasons. A sequence of two trades in less than five months would place Hadley into the starting rotation for the lowly St. Louis Browns, where a far less successful 38–56 mark would be sustained over three long campaigns—including consecutive 20-loss seasons, 1932–33.

Not that Hadley seemed to be helping his own cause, as over the course of these two consecutive 20-loss endeavors, he would uncharacteristically lead the American League in both earned runs and walks allowed (marks that would surely make Hadley eligible for the "Deserved" category). Yet, unlike "Deserved" Pedro Ramos, who unsuccessfully sought to be traded to the power-laden Yankees, Hadley found himself with the Bronx Bombers toward the end of his career. During this five-year stint, Hadley would again post respectable numbers (49–31) to complement his earlier success with the Senators.

Ironically, Hadley would post two of the four consecutive 20-loss seasons sustained by Browns' pitchers between the years 1931–34. The mantle of continuity would be raised by a pitcher who, since 1920, stands alone in the "Repeat Offender" category.

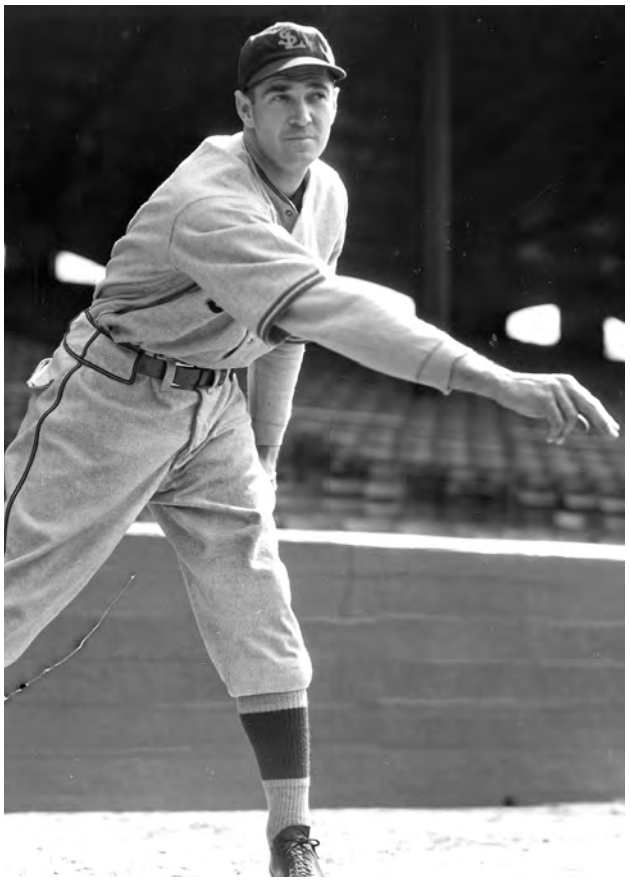
Bobo Newsom, St. Louis Browns (1934); Detroit Tigers (1941); Philadelphia Athletics (1945)

A tall righty from Hartsville, South Carolina, Bobo Newsom pitched 20 years in major-league ball while logging time with nine different franchises. Jumping into the big leagues permanently in 1934 (after posting a 30-win season the year before with Los Angeles of the Pacific Coast League), Newsom would experience three 20-loss seasons, while coming remarkably close to losing 20 games in at least two additional years. Thrice a 20-game winner (and a four-time American League All-Star), the combined 60 losses over three seasons accounted for over 27 percent of Newsom's career total of 222 losses.

Newsom didn't waste any time accumulating his first 20-loss season. St. Louis Browns' manager Rogers Hornsby inserted Newsom into the starting rotation in his first full season—he'd made six appearances with two teams over the course of four years prior to his rookie campaign with the Browns—and he responded favorably, leading the team in wins, ERA, complete games, saves, strikeouts, and innings pitched. Unfortunately, twirling for a pitiful Browns' club, he also led the entire American League in losses with his first 20-loss campaign. Subsequent 20-loss seasons would mirror Newsom's rookie endeavor, as he would be among the team leaders in some of the very same categories while pitching for the Detroit Tigers and Philadelphia A's in 1941 and 1945, respectively.

The most remarkable aspect herein is how close Newsom came to two additional 20-loss seasons. In his sophomore endeavor, Newsom opened the season with an 0–6 mark when he was sold by the Browns to the similarly inept Washington Senators. Newsom would go on to post a respectable 11–12 mark with the Senators, for an accumulation of 18 losses for the entire season. Yet, that does not tell the whole story: Newsom missed the entire month of June, resulting in an estimated eight fewer opportunities to have lost two additional games, enough to have attained a fourth 20-loss endeavor.

Then, in 1942, Newsom found himself back with the Senators after a 20-loss campaign with the Detroit Tigers the year before. By August 23, Newsom stood at 17 losses with more than a month to go to attain 20. A week later, Newsom would be sold to the pennant contending Brooklyn Dodgers where he would fall one loss short of the "coveted" 20-loss campaign. One is left to speculate that had Newsom remained with the second division Senators through the month of



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Bobo Newsom would post three 20-loss seasons as well as three 20-win campaigns.

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Eppa Rixey was one of 13 Philadelphia Phillies who reached the 20-loss nadir. He did it twice (1917 and 1920) but was elected in 1963 into the National Baseball Hall of Fame by the Veterans Committee.

September, he might have accumulated the three additional losses necessary to attain a fourth 20-loss season.

For purposes of bringing closure to the "Repeat Offenders" category, the 10 remaining pitchers who posted at least two 20-loss campaigns since 1920 are below. Of distinct note are three pitchers who inexplicably garnered MVP consideration during these particular seasons:

Eppa Rixey	Philadelphia Phillies	1917, 1920
Jesse Barnes	Boston Braves	1917, 1924

NOTE: Barnes holds a unique distinction among his 20-loss brethren—losing 20 games for the same team twice, while hurling for another club in between.

Sad Sam Jones	Boston Red Sox	1919
	New York Yankees	1925
Jack Scott	Boston Braves	1920
	Philadelphia Phillies	1927
Slim Harriss	Philadelphia A's	1922
	Boston Red Sox	1927*
Ted Lyons	Chicago White Sox	1929, 1933
Hugh Mulcahy	Philadelphia Phillies	1938*, 1940*
Murry Dickson	Pittsburgh Pirates	1952*
	Philadelphia Phillies	1954

NOTE: Dickson's removal from the starting rotation after August 25 likely spared him a third 20-loss campaign in 1953. Had he done so, it would have qualified him as the only pitcher since 1907 with three consecutive such seasons, when Irv Young last accomplished this feat while pitching for the Boston Beaneaters/Doves (Kaiser Wilhelm posted a major-league career three-peat in 1908, but his streak was interrupted by two minor-league campaigns in 1906–07). Overall, there have been 34 pitchers who have posted a 20-loss three-peat, most of whom did so in the 19th century—including 10 consecutive 20-loss seasons posted by Hall of Fame inductee Pud Galvin.

Al Jackson	New York Mets	1962, 1965
Dick Ellsworth	Chicago Cubs	1962, 1966

*garnered MVP consideration; BOLD indicates a Hall of Fame inductee.

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

This category is reserved for those pitchers who, for one reason or another, managed to win 20 games in a particular season, only to turn around and lose 20 in the following campaign (or vice versa). Evidence provided of this about-face is symptomatic of such a Jekyll-and-Hyde performance, thereby capturing this unique designation.

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Luis Tiant went 21–9 in the "Year of the Pitcher" (1968), then fell to 9–20 in 1969 after the mound was lowered.

Luis Tiant, Cleveland Indians (1968: 21–9, 1969: 9–20)

The year 1968 would be a watershed year for pitching, the dominance of which would result in a mere six major-league batters managing to achieve a meager .297 average, while seven hurlers posted an ERA of less than 2.00. Tiant was among that select few, capturing his first of two career American League ERA titles with a minuscule 1.60 (barely edging out teammate Sam McDowell's 1.81), while also pacing the league in shutouts with nine. Tiant posted a deceptive 21–9 record which could easily have been enhanced with a little more offensive support, as he did not reckon in three decisions where he pitched a total of 19 innings while giving up a collective eight hits and two runs. With such sterling numbers, it is remarkable to realize that, although Tiant secured Cy Young Award consideration three separate times throughout his career, 1968 was not one of those occasions. Denny McLain's 31-victory year had much to do with that.

The anemic offensive output in the major leagues overall ushered in a number of rule changes for the following 1969 season—a smaller strike zone and a reduced mound height. These new rules brought about the desired effect, as the major leagues witnessed a spike of nearly 20 percent more runs scored per game. Tiant's numbers suffered accordingly, as he would lead the major leagues in such dubious categories as home runs and walks allowed, while tying the major-league mark for losses with 20. Although it is easy to blame this about-face on the newly implemented rule changes, no other pitcher suffered such a dramatic turnaround, thereby granting the anointment of Tiant as an inductee to the Jekyll-and-Hyde category.

Dick Ellsworth, Chicago Cubs (1962: 9–20, 1963: 22–10)

On September 2, 1963, a ground-ball out induced by Chicago Cubs closer Lindy McDaniel resulted in the final out of a 7–5 victory for the visiting team, insuring McDaniel's teammate Dick Ellsworth a 20th win (the first such season for a Cubs hurler since 1945). Ellsworth would go on to post a career-high 22 victories and a second-place finish in pursuit of the ERA crown (2.11), while pacing the Cubs to their first winning season in 17 years—an 82–80 mark that still resulted in a poor seventh-place finish. This overall success—meager as it was—was largely attributable to the efforts emanating from the mound, as the pitching rotation witnessed a dramatic turnaround from the prior season. Spared a last place ranking for team ERA by the expansion New York Mets in 1962, the Cubs would post a second-best team ERA of 3.08 during the following season.

Yet pitching was not often a source of pride for this Windy City bunch, and the team could again be thankful for the existence of the newly inducted New York Mets in sparing them a last place finish in 1962 while chalking up 103 losses (Mets: 120 losses). Again, Ellsworth would pace the team, though this time in a losing effort with a team-high 20 losses (incidentally, Ellsworth and teammate Don Cardwell joined the roster of top nine pitchers for the most losses in the National League in 1962, while the remaining seven came from the two expansion teams—the Mets and the Houston Colt .45s). Furthermore, if Ellsworth name appears familiar, he was included in the roll call of "Repeat Offenders" when he added a 22 loss season to his Cubs resume during the 1966 campaign. Still, the 20 loss/22 win seasons of 1962–63 respectively earn Ellsworth induction into the category of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

Steve Carlton (1972: 27–10, 1973: 13–20)

When one examines Carlton's 27 wins in 1972 vs. his 20 losses in 1973, one question arises: how could he possibly win 27 games? Carlton toiled for the last place Philadelphia Phillies during this Jekyll-and-Hyde phase of his career, producing a herculean effort from the slab. Incredibly, the 27 wins tell only part of the story, as his teammates could marshal only seven runs in eight outings where he did not figure in the win—a smattering of runs in even half of those eight games might have ushered Carlton into the select company of pitchers who've reached the 30-win threshold. A sterling 1.97 ERA was accompanied by 310 strikeouts—a figure reached by only five other pitchers since 1972—and a major-league leading 30 complete games.

The 27 victories made up an astonishing 46 percent of the club's total of 59 wins. Such numbers resulted in the first of four career Cy Young Awards, while also garnering Carlton MVP consideration.

The 1973 season saw Carlton return to mere mortal status as his ERA rose to 3.90 (not far removed from the major-league average of 3.75) while leading the staff in games started (40), complete games (18), and strikeouts (223). Although Carlton's overall stats were decidedly different, the Phillies' offensive malaise remained intact (even though the lineup featured major components of the 1980 Championship team—specifically Mike Schmidt, Greg Luzinski, Bob Boone and Larry Bowa), exemplified by the fact that in 14 of Carlton's 20 losses, the Phils were only capable of mustering a total of 12 runs! Arguably, this lack of offensive support could easily qualify "Lefty" for the "Unjustified" category, but other qualified candidates have relegated this Hall of Famer to "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" instead.

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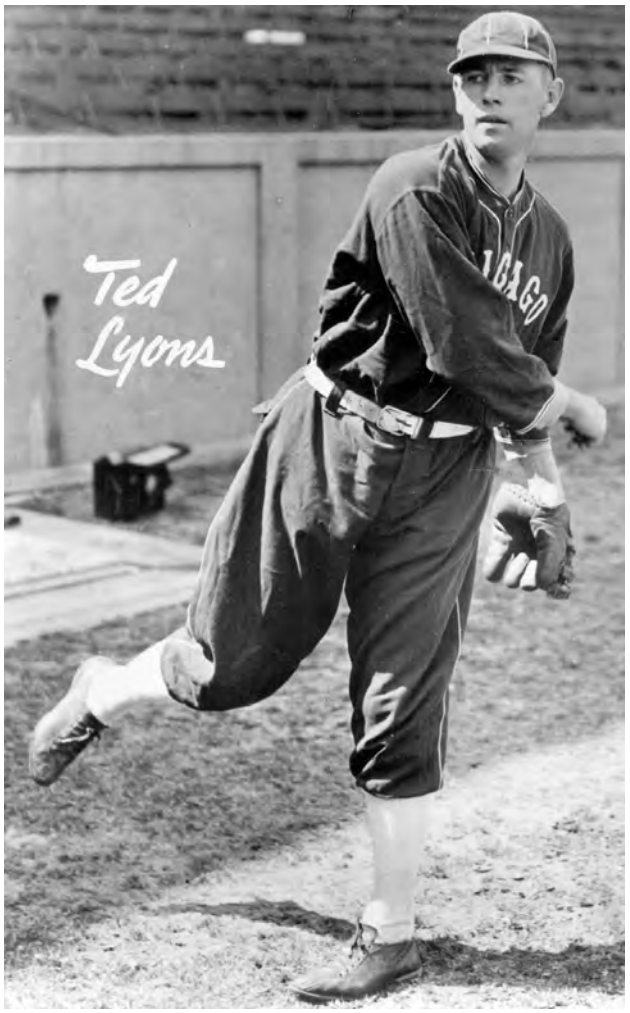

Ted Lyons lost 20 games in 1929 but went 22–15 in 1930 for the Chicago White Sox.

Before considering the next group, the following reflects all other pitchers who have had a 20-win/20-loss season (or vice versa) in consecutive years. Some we've seen already, others who will be seen again:

20 WIN / 20 LOSS SEASONS

Joe Oeschger	Boston Braves	1921	20–14
		1922	6–21
Bobo Newsom	Detroit Tigers	1940	21–5
		1941	12–20
Alex Kellner	Philadelphia Athletics	1949	20–12
		1950	8–20

NOTE: Kellner's 20-win performance was posted during his rookie year, but he fell short of the Rookie of the Year Award when placing second to Roy Sievers (he of the aforementioned Roger Craig infamy). Although his career would stretch another nine seasons, Kellner would never repeat the success of his debut outing.

Murry Dickson	Pittsburgh Pirates	1951	20–16
		1952	14–21
Larry Jackson	Chicago Cubs	1964	24–11
		1965	14–21
Mel Stottlemyre	New York Yankees	1965	20–9
		1966	12–20
Stan Bahnsen	Chicago White Sox	1972	21–16
		1973	18–21
Wilbur Wood	Chicago White Sox	1972	24–17
		1973	24–20
		1974	20–19
		1975	16–20
Jerry Koosman	New York Mets	1976	21–10
		1977	8–20

20 LOSS / 20 WIN SEASONS

Eddie Rommel	Philadelphia Athletics	1921	16–23
		1922	27–13
Dolf Luque	Cincinnati Reds	1922	13–23
		1923	27–8
Ted Lyons	Chicago White Sox	1929	14–20
		1930	22–15
Paul Derringer	Cincinnati Reds	1933	7–27
		(Total—StL and CIN)	
		1934	15–21
		1935	22–13

NOTE: Derringer is the only pitcher since 1920 to have a 20-win season preceded by two consecutive 20-loss campaigns.

Randy Jones	San Diego Padres	1974	8–22
		1975	20–12
		1976	22–14

NOTE: Jones is the only pitcher since 1920 to have two consecutive 20-win campaigns on the heels of a 20-loss season.
BOLD indicates a Hall of Fame inductee

THE UNJUSTIFIED

Of the 97 20-loss campaigns since 1920, nearly one-third (31) were hurled by a pitcher whose earned run average was less than either the circuit or major-league average (and often both) for a particular season—going a long way toward explaining why a team would trot their pitcher out so frequently while the losses continued to accumulate. As the term implies, this category attempts to capture the stories of those pitchers who, while posting better-than-average numbers, unjustly accumulated 20 losses. Much like Carlton, Niekro, and others aforementioned, these pitchers were all victims of anemic run support, making it seemingly impossible to avoid the debit ledger. For example:

Jerry Koosman, New York Mets
(1977: 8–20, 3.49 NL/MLB avg: 3.91/4.00)

Deservedly, the 1962 expansion New York Mets are held up as one of the most inept teams in the history of the game, but they can claim at least one positive distinction: a slightly greater offensive output than their 1977 counterpart:

Category	1962 Mets	1977 Mets
Batting Average	.240	.244
Home Runs	139	88
Runs Scored	617	587

It was in the midst of such offensive malaise that Jerry Koosman took the mound 32 times, giving up more than four earned runs on only four of those occasions. His meager eight wins would, sadly for the team as a whole, be among the team's top three season leaders. Adding insult to injury, the Mets offense would muster only 19 runs scored in 16 of the 20 losses. Little did he know that this production would appear like an offensive avalanche to the next pitcher on our list.

Nate Andrews, Boston Braves
(1943: 14–20, 2.57 NL/MLB avg: 3.38 / 3.33)

In 1943, few players epitomized the opportunity to play in the major leagues more so than Nate Andrews. A nine-year minor-league hurler whose brief appearances in the "bigs" (four seasons: 1–3, 6.18 ERA) did not reflect any expected change, but that is exactly what rolled up to Andrews' door.

A military commitment on behalf of expected mound stalwarts such as Warren Spahn and Johnny Sain led to Andrews being scouted by and ultimately traded to the Braves to fill that void. The Braves' offense seemingly disappeared during the 1943 campaign: .233 BA, 39 HRs, 465 runs scored.

Andrews holds a unique record: his 2.57 ERA is the lowest mark—since 1920—among those who have sustained a 20-loss season, and by that mark alone establishes him firmly among the "Unjustified."

Incidentally, Andrews would continue to thrive for a season or two thereafter, but when teams met at full capacity—post WWII—in the spring of 1946, it appeared that Andrews was back on his way to the minor leagues, from which he would retire permanently in 1948.

As referenced, there were 29 other hurlers who were unjustly burdened with a 20-loss ledger, and time alone prevents a detailed accounting of each of these. Still, it would be amiss to leave the "Unjustified" category without identifying a unique niche carved out by four of these 20-loss brethren. Without question, the tendency to serve up the gopher ball led to many a 20-loss season, and for some a quick exit out of the major leagues. Yet, since 1920, four pitchers stand alone in having led the major leagues in home runs allowed during a 20-loss campaign while also posting an ERA less than both the circuit and major league average. Those pitchers are as follows:

Phil Niekro, Atlanta Braves 1979
21–20, 3.39 NL/MLB avg: 3.73/4.00 HR allowed: 41

Pedro Ramos, Minnesota Twins 1961
11–20, 3.95 AL/MLB avg: 4.02/4.03 HR allowed: 39

NOTE: he of the aforementioned "Deserved" category is included here amongst this unique niche.

Murry Dickson, Pittsburgh Pirates 1952
14–21, 3.57 NL/MLB avg: 3.73/3.70 HR allowed: 26

Eddie Rommel, Philadelphia Athletics 1921
16–23, 3.94 AL/MLB avg: 4.28/4.03 HR allowed: 21

As unique as this niche may be, there were other pitchers (or groups of same) who carved their own indelible mark.

MISCELLANEOUS

Perhaps no 20-loss profile would be complete without identifying the two pitchers who lost 20 in a season and never wore a major-league uniform again.

Dick Barrett	Philadelphia Phillies	1945	8–20
Gordon Rhodes	Philadelphia A's	1936	9–20

Relegated to the minors in 1946 and 1937 respectively, neither Barrett nor Rhodes (with a combined total of 13 years in the major leagues) would ever see another opportunity to return.

They nearly were joined in this unique group by Roy Wilkinson (4–20; Chicago White Sox, 1921), but a mere four appearances in 1922 separates him from this pair. Still, Wilkinson, along with Joe Oeschger (6–21; Boston Braves, 1922) managed to carve their own special place in the archives: as the only pitchers to lose 20 while starting so few games—23! [Spoiler alert: they both sustained many of the losses coming out of the bullpen.]

In a complete reversal to the fortunes of Barrett and Rhodes are the two pitchers who accompany Bobo Newsom by entering the major leagues with a 20-loss campaign:

Clay Kirby	San Diego Padres	1969	7–20
Bill Wight	Chicago White Sox	1948	9–20

Then there is the 20-loss campaign disguised as the sophomore jinx. In a case eerily similar to that which befell Alex Kellner a mere three years earlier, Harry Byrd did secure Rookie of the Year honors after the 1952 campaign, only to fall to 11–20, 5.51 ERA in his follow-up endeavor. Ultimately he bounced between five different clubs in hopes of regaining his debut success, but was relegated to the minor leagues in 1957 from which he never returned.

Lastly is the statistical blurb of Pat Caraway (10–24; Chicago White Sox, 1931). Accompanied by a 6.22 ERA, Caraway holds the dubious distinction of maintaining the highest earned run average in the 20th Century among his 20-loss brethren.

THE TEAMMATES (and other additional TEAM-WIDE analyses)

There have been only 97 20-loss campaigns since 1920. What is of particular note is that, in more than 15 percent of those instances, that pitcher had a teammate putting up similar numbers in the loss column. (See Table 1.)

To even the casual observer between 1920 and 1945, Philadelphia could often be a brutal city in which to follow baseball (particularly when owner/manager Connie Mack was in the midst of one of his many iterations of "house-cleaning" associated with the Athletics). This seemed doubly so when it came to the 20-loss campaign, as the Phillies or their other-league counterpart would make it a semi-regular practice.

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After going 9–20 in his eighth big-league season, Gordon Rhodes never pitched another major league game.

For example, when Perry and Naylor posted their 20-loss efforts jointly, Phillies pitcher Eppa Rixey posted his own 11–22 mark. A year later, in 1921, Eddie Rommel would lose 23 games for the Athletics, and the Phillies George Smith matched him with a 4–20 record.

When in 1936 teammates Walters and Bowman accounted for 41 losses between them, the A's were able to counter with their own Gordon Rhodes (whom we visited earlier). Then in 1945, in lieu of actual teammates, these two franchises that shared the same Shibe Park (later named Connie Mack Stadium) would each have a pitcher who shared the same 8–20 mark—Bobo Newsom, A's; Dick Barrett, Phillies.

Table 1. 20-Loss Teammates

1973	Chicago White Sox	Wilbur Wood	24–20	Stan Bahnsen	18–21
1965	New York Mets	Jack Fisher	8–24	Al Jackson	8–20
1962	New York Mets	Roger Craig	10–24	Al Jackson	8–20
1936	Philadelphia Phillies	Bucky Walters	11–21	Joe Bowman	9–20
1934	Cincinnati Reds	Si Johnson	7–22	Paul Derringer	15–21
1930	Boston Red Sox	Milt Gaston	13–20	Jack Russell	9–20
1920	Boston Braves	Jack Scott	10–21	Dana Fillingim	12–21
1920	Philadelphia Athletics	Scott Perry	11–25	Rollie Naylor	10–23

It almost goes without saying, but since 1920 these two franchises—one of which residing in Oakland these many years—outpace all others in the number of 20-loss campaigns by one of their hurlers to this day:

PHI/KC/OAK Athletics	14
Philadelphia Phillies	13
BOS/MIL/ATL Braves	10
Chicago White Sox	9

CONCLUSION

The 20-loss season has been visited upon a vast gamut of pitchers—from the youngster ushered thereafter out of baseball, to the eventual Hall of Fame inductee. Besides just "getting there," many of these hurlers had an interesting sidebar in reaching that dubious threshold, a sidebar worth the telling.

It bears repeating that at no point herein was there intent to denigrate or belittle the accomplishments of the pitchers cited. In fact, just the opposite, as the author found a whole new appreciation of many of these pitchers—Wilbur Wood or Bobo Newsom, for example—while researching this material.

Still, if this extensive profile accomplishes nothing else, it is the desire that these 20-loss campaigns, seemingly forgotten in the midst of other (sexier?) statistical endeavors, are not consigned to the waste bin of time. ■

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CONTRIBUTORS

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DAVID E. SKELTON developed a passion for baseball early on when the lights from Philadelphia's Connie Mack Stadium would shine through his bedroom window. Long since removed from Philly, he now resides with his family in central Texas but remains passionate about the sport that evokes many of his earliest childhood memories. Employed for over 30 years in the oil and gas industry, he became a SABR member in early 2012 after a chance—and most fortunate—holiday encounter with a Rogers Hornsby Chapter member. Researching Dick Ellsworth for SABR's BioProject led to the peculiar findings that occasioned the article herein.

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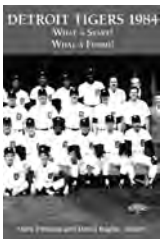

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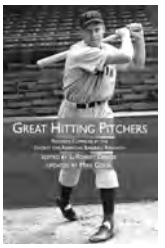

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by Paul Hensler

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20-Game Losers

Profiles of the 20-Loss Seasons, 1920 to Present

by David E. Skelton

It has become almost as rare as the major-league Triple Crown. Since 1980, there has been only one pitcher who lost 20 games in a single season—21 to be exact—and there is no reason to think baseball will see another such season in the foreseeable future. The 20-loss season has become baseball's equivalent of Bigfoot: seemingly rumored to exist, but impossible to see. Historically, it didn't used to be this way.

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