



Society For American Baseball Research Baseball Records Committee

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July 2019

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

RECORDS COMMITTEE MEETING AT SABR49 IN SAN DIEGO: A SUCCESS

SABR49 was held in San Diego this year. Long-time member **Herm Krabbenhoft** graciously served as Chair *pro tem* for the Records Committee meeting on Thursday June 27.

Herm gave a presentation on **Ty Cobb's** career RBI total. As with his other heroic research efforts, Herm has undertaken to make Cobb's RBI total as accurate as possible by going game-by-game and run-by-run to find errors in the official scoring sheets--and to determine RBIs from the years before RBI became an official stat in 1920.

Herm reports that he fielded several good questions about his research and followed up afterwards with several other members interested in his findings. Herm is awaiting independent confirmation of his findings by an independent group of researchers, but once that is finished, we look forward to publishing his findings.

We look forward to seeing Committee members at SABR50 in Baltimore in 2020. Start thinking of research presentation topics now!

YANKEES LONGEST STRETCH OF BATTING .500

Current New York Yankee **D.J. LeMahieu** recently finished a stretch of hitting .500 over 60 at-bats (30-for-60). Although quite impressive, it is not even 20% of the way to the all-time record of 306 at-bats (153-for-306) by **Hugh Duffy** in 1894.

In fact, LeMahieu's streak is a mere fraction of the American League record of 176 at-bats (88-for-176), held by **Ty Cobb** in 1912. **Ichiro Suzuki** has the longest streak in recent memory--a stretch of 79-for-158 in 2004.

LeMahieu is not the only Yankee with an impressive streak of .500. **Dave Winfield** owns the longest Yankee stretch over the last 45 years, thanks to a 51-for-102 stretch in 1984.

MOST CONSECUTIVE BATTERS RETIRED--BY A RELIEVER

Member **Tom Van Hying** recently e-mailed asking whether pitcher **Dick Hall's** 28 consecutive batters retired in 1963 is a record for a relief pitcher.

After consulting with member **Brian Rash**--who has done extensive research into pitching streaks--we can confirm that the answer is....no! But determining who does hold the record, however, is more difficult than it seems, as several of the longest streaks of consecutive batters retired were performed by pitchers who were neither exclusively starters nor exclusively relievers. Not only does that make it harder to find streaks, but it also raises the question of whether we should completely ignore those pitchers' games started and focus just on their relief appearances.

For example, **Yusmeiro Petit** holds the MLB record with 46 consecutive batters retired in 2014, but he mixed starts with relief appearances during that streak. "Only" 37 of those 46 batters came during relief--still longer than Hall's streak, but not necessarily the longest streak ever by a reliever, as **Koji Uehara** of the Red Sox retired 37 in a row in relief in 2013. Even if we ignore Petit's starts altogether (his streak of 46 batters in a row began and ended during games started) and look only at his relief appearances, his longest streak was 39 batters retired in a row, *in relief*.

The all-time record appears to be held by **Bobby Jenks**, who retired 41 consecutive batters in relief in 2007 in the White Sox. Jenks was used exclusively as a reliever during that stretch, so there are no debates about how to count his streak. It is possible, however, that if we ignore all games started and look only at relief appearances, there is some other pitcher who compiled a longer streak. It is unlikely, however.

DOC WHITE'S 1904 SHUTOUT STREAK REVISITED

In 1904, **Doc White** threw 5 consecutive shutouts--a record that stood until **Don Drysdale** threw 6 in a row in 1968. Member **Tom Ruane** noticed an interesting fact about White's last 4 shutouts: he "threw for the cycle" by having a 1-hitter, a 2-hitter, a 3-hitter, and a 4-hitter:

Sept. 16, 1904: 9IP, 0R, 1H

Sept. 19, 1904: 9IP, 0R, 2H

Sept. 25, 1904: 9IP, 0R, 4H

Sept. 30, 1904: 9IP, 0R, 3H

Using Baseball-Reference.com's **Play Index**, I examined every other pitcher since 1908 who has thrown at least 4 consecutive shutouts (it's been accomplished 13 times in the last 112 years), and none of them came close to matching White's mark, either in allowing so few hits over 4 shutouts (just 10 total hits) or having the "cycle" of a 1-hitter, 2-hitter, 3-hitter, and 4-hitter. The closest in fewest hits allowed over 4 shutouts was **Luis Tiant** (1968) and **Pete Alexander** (1911), who each allowed 14 hits over 4 shutouts. For those curious, White allowed 7 hits in the other shutout of his streak.

ENDING WITH A BANG: LONGEST HITTING STREAKS TO END CAREER

Two Hall of Famers ended their careers with lengthy hitting streaks: **Jesse Burkett** ended his career with 13-game hitting streak in 1905, and **Ed Delahanty** ended with a 16-game streak in 1903.

But neither of those are the all-time record. In fact, we need only go back a few years to find the record: **Magglio Ordonez** of the Tigers ended his career in 2011 with an 18-game hitting streak.

One wonders why these players would retire when they still had the skills for such a streak (although Delahanty, of course, didn't retire voluntarily).

Here is the list of longest hitting streaks to end a career:

18: Magglio Ordonez, DET AL, 2011.

16: Ed Delahanty, WAS AL, 1903.

15: Alex McKinnon, PIT NL, 1887

14: Bill Sweeney, BOS AL, 1931.

13: Jesse Burkett, BOS AL, 1905.

13: Les Bell, CHI NL, 1931.

13: John Castino, MIN AL, 1983-1984.

13: Glenn Williams, MIN AL, 2005.

Glenn Williams deserves special recognition, as he is T-5th for longest hit streak to *end* a career--and is T-4th for longest hit streak to *begin* a career. And it was the same streak: he played 13 MLB games and had a hit in each one, ending his MLB career with a .425 average.

The second-longest such streak of getting a hit in every MLB game is barely half the length of Williams's streak (7 games by **Gale Staley**, 1925).

NOTICE ANY INTERESTING STATS OR ACHIEVEMENTS?

If you notice or unearth interesting trivia or stats--historical or current--please send them to the editor at trentmccotter@gmail.com for potential inclusion in a future newsletter.