



Society For American Baseball Research Baseball Records Committee

Trent McCotter, Editor
trent.mccotter@gmail.com

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

ANOTHER COVID ODDITY

Due to travel restrictions imposed during COVID, the **Toronto Blue Jays** have only just recently been allowed to cross the Canadian border and play in their home stadium, the Rogers Centre in Toronto, after playing their “home” games this season at TD Ballpark in Dunedin, Florida, and then at Sahlen Field in Buffalo, New York. They had their 2021 home opener in TD Ballpark, their 2020 home opener in Sahlen Field, and their 2019 home opener in the Rogers Centre.

Bill Arnold and **Rick Wacha** report that the Blue Jays are the first team in over 100 years to have its home opener in three different stadiums over three consecutive years. The last team to do so was the **Boston Braves**, whose home opener in 1914 was in the South End Grounds, in 1915 was in Fenway Park, and in 1916 was in Braves Field.

CONSECUTIVE K’S BETWEEN WALKS—BROKEN, THEN BROKEN AGAIN

For nearly 20 years, **Curt Schilling** has owned the known record for consecutive strikeouts between issuing walks, with 56 K’s in between walks at one point during the 2002 season for the **Arizona Diamondbacks**, beating the prior record of 51 K’s between walks set by **Greg Maddux** in 2001.

Earlier this season, the **Brewers’ Corbin Burnes** bested Schilling’s mark by starting the season with 58 K’s before he issued a walk. But Burnes’s record was short lived. Barely had it ended before the **Yankees’ Gerrit Cole** beat that mark by racking up 61 strikeouts between walks.

CONSECUTIVE K’S—TIED, THEN TIED AGAIN

That wasn’t the only strikeout record in the news. For over 50 years, **Tom Seaver** of the **Mets** has stood alone with the record for consecutive batters struck out during a single game, with 10 punch-outs in a row to end the game on April 22, 1970. On June 25, 2021, however, the **Phillies’ Aaron Nola** struck out 10 consecutive batters (Mets, as it happened) to tie that mark. It took over 50 years to tie the record but only 7 weeks for it to be tied again: **Corbin Burnes**—the same one from the prior entry—came along and also struck out 10 in a row on August 11, 2021.

At this rate, it’ll only be a few weeks before someone bests Burnes by striking out 11 in a row.

HOMERS FROM THE 9-HOLE

On July 31, 2021, the **White Sox's** catcher **Seby Zavala** hit three homers. The noteworthy aspect is that he was batting last in the lineup—the #9 spot. **Bill Arnold** reports that only six other players have ever had a 3-homer game out of the #9 spot:

Jim Tobin, BOS NL, May 13, 1942
Art Shamsky, CIN NL, Aug. 12, 1966
Dale Sveum, MIL AL, July 17, 1987
Trot Nixon, BOS AL, July 24, 1999
Eddie Rosario, MIN AL, June 13, 2017
Kyle Higashioka, NYY AL, Sept. 16, 2020

MORE OHTANI MAGIC

Shohei Ohtani of the **Angels** has already had one of the most unique seasons in history, racking up nearly 40 homers while maintaining a regular spot in the pitching rotation and an ERA under 3.00.

He has had many noteworthy achievements, and this one from the **Elias Sports Bureau** was especially fantastic: on May 11, 2021, Ohtani struck out 10 **Astros** before leaving the mound and taking a spot in right field for the rest of the game, making him just the third pitcher since 1900 to have 10+ strikeouts as a pitcher and play elsewhere in the field in the same game.

The prior instances are **Sam McDowell** of the **Indians** on July 6, 1970, and **Harvey Haddix** of the **Cardinals** on September 28, 1952. McDowell racked up 15 strikeouts in his game: 12 through 7 2/3, before playing second base for one out, then 3 more strikeouts back on the mound to end the game. Haddix walked the first batter he faced, then swapped with **Stan Musial** in right field for one batter, then Haddix returned and pitched the next 8 innings, notching 11 strikeouts.

GUEST AUTHOR: DAN HILL, *SOMETHING FOR NOTHING*

Dan Hill sends along this longer piece, highlighting trades where a team truly got something for nothing: they received a player who ultimately accrued a large WAR for his new team, while giving up players who never even made it to the major leagues.

Getting something for nothing is rare in baseball, especially in the weeks and final frantic days leading up to the trading deadline.

Even the deals that look like a club simply is getting rid of a player usually bring back cash or a player to be named later.

And though the following listed players were traded for organizational depth, a piece for another deal or financial relief, none of them were traded for a player who made an appearance in a Major League Baseball game. Not one batter faced. Not one plate appearance. Not before the trade. Not after the trade. Never.

Here are the players who have produced the most wins above replacement (WAR), according to Baseball-Reference.com, for the acquiring teams before changing clubs or filing for free agency. For example, Hall of Fame pitcher Dennis Eckersley's 16.1 WAR for Oakland doesn't count his 1995 season because he filed for free agency after the 1994 campaign and re-signed for one more year with the A's.

With Baseball-Reference.com supplying all unreferenced statistical and biographical information, the top 20 (through August 9, 2021):

No.	Player/Position	Trader	Receiver	Date	WAR/Seasons
1	Johan Santana (P)	Marlins	Twins	12/13/99	35.8 ('00-'07)

Something more: The Cy Young Award winner in 2004 and 2006 who also pitched in four postseasons for Minnesota was acquired after Florida made the left-hander 1999's first selection in the annual Rule 5 draft¹, which allows clubs without a full 40-man roster to select certain non-40-man roster players from other clubs². The Twins selected 24-year-old Jared Camp with the second pick and, in a prearranged deal³, traded him for Santana, then 20, and \$50,000.

2	Mike Caldwell (P)	Reds	Brewers	6/15/77	17.3 ('77-'84)
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Something more: The two-time defending World Series champion Reds dealt away the 28-year-old left-hander who completed the 1978 season with a 22-9 record, 2.36 earned run average (ERA) and runner-up finish in the Cy Young voting after Milwaukee's starting staff was decimated by injuries to Bill Travers and Moose Haas⁴. Caldwell went on to win 102 regular-season games and two games in the 1982 World Series for the Brewers.

3	Dennis Eckersley (P)	Cubs	Athletics	4/3/87	16.1 ('87-'94)
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Something more: An injury to Oakland closer Jay Howell⁵ midway through 1987 opened the proverbial door for the right-hander with 361 major-league starts to reinvent himself as a Hall of Fame closer, saving 320 games, compiling a 7.15-to-1 strikeout-to-walk ratio and pitching on three consecutive pennant-winners for Oakland. Eckersley was the American League's Cy Young winner and Most Valuable Player (MVP) in 1992.

4	Dave Dravecky (P)	Pirates	Padres	4/5/81	12.3 ('82-'87)
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Something more: The left-hander earned an All-Star berth in 1983 and helped San Diego reach the 1984 World Series before a midseason trade in 1987 to San Francisco, for which he gave up one earned run in 15 innings of that season's National League Championship Series. A cancer survivor who had a tumor removed from his pitching arm in 1988⁶, Dravecky broke it in what turned out to be the final game of his career on Aug. 15, 1989.

5	Marwin Gonzalez (UT)	Red Sox	Astros	12/08/11	12.2 ('12-'18)
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Something more: A former Rule 5 draft choice and former Houston general manager Jeff Luhnow's first acquisition with the club⁷, the versatile switch hitter enjoyed arguably his best season in 2017 when he batted .303 with 23 home runs (HR) and 90 runs batted in (RBI) and helped the Astros win the World Series. Gonzalez started at least 14 games in left field and at all four infield positions that season.

No.	Player/Position	Trader	Receiver	Date	WAR/Seasons
6	Joe Randa (3B)	Mets	Royals	12/10/98	11.5 ('99-'03)

Something more: His second stint in Kansas City was defined by durability, as the right-handed batter contributed four consecutive seasons of at least 150 games played and 80 RBI.

7	Randy Milligan (1B)	Pirates	Orioles	11/9/88	11.1 ('89-'92)
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Something more: The patient right-handed batter emerged from a 1989 platoon with Jim Traber⁸ to average 92 walks per season from 1990-92, helping him to a .388 on-base percentage (OBP) in 2,048 plate appearances (PA) with Baltimore. The Orioles enjoyed a 33-game increase in victories (54 to 87) when Milligan joined the team in 1989.

8	Angel Pagan (CF)	Cubs	Mets	1/5/08	10.8 ('08-'11)
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Something more: A top-10 finisher in defensive WAR among National League players in 2009 and 2010, the switch hitter became an everyday player in New York before helping San Francisco win the 2012 World Series.

9	Jose Mesa (P)	Orioles	Indians	7/14/92	10.4 ('92-'98)
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Something more: Shortly after losing his spot in Baltimore's starting rotation, the right-hander was "really excited to have the chance to pitch every four days" in Cleveland⁹ for a last-place team. His transition to dominant closer mirrored the Indians' emergence, saving 46 games with a 1.13 ERA for the 1995 American League champions. Mesa went on to pitch in seven postseason series for Cleveland.

9	Mark Canha (OF)	Rockies	Athletics	12/11/14	10.4 ('15-'21)
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Something more: The right-handed batter, playing this season at age 32, has an opportunity to move up this list with continued production, as he is coming off two consecutive seasons of at least a .380 OBP. Canha, acquired in a pre-Rule 5 draft deal with Colorado¹⁰, has helped the A's make three straight postseason appearances.

11	Mark Portugal (P)	Twins	Astros	12/4/88	10.1 ('89-'93)
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Something more: A 91-win Minnesota team decided the right-hander was expendable after 1988, and Houston acquired a stalwart in its starting rotation who finished 52-30 with a 3.34 ERA in five seasons. Portugal led the National League in winning percentage and finished sixth in Cy Young voting in 1993.

12	Chris Singleton (CF)	Yankees	White Sox	12/8/98	8.2 ('99-'01)
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Something more: After New York general manager Brian Cashman designated him for assignment¹¹, the left-handed batter took advantage of his newfound opportunity in 1999 by finishing fourth in defensive WAR and sixth in Rookie of the Year voting in the American League.

13	Mike Easler (LF)	Red Sox	Pirates	3/15/79	7.6 ('79-'83)
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Something more: The first three seasons of his second stint in Pittsburgh brought a World Series title, 20th-place finish in MVP voting and berth in the All-Star game, respectively. In 1984, the left-handed batter was back in Boston and clubbed 27 HR with 91 RBI.

No.	Player/Position	Trader	Receiver	Date	WAR/Seasons
14	Mike Yastrzemski (RF)	Orioles	Giants	3/23/19	7.2 ('19-'21)

Something more: The then-28-year-old in his rookie season was told July 14, 2019, that he likely wouldn't be traveling with the big club the next day¹² after a 0-for-5 dropped his OBP to .279 after 40 games. San Francisco reconsidered, and the left-handed batter responded by finishing the campaign with 21 homers and then posting an eighth-place MVP finish in 2020. Yastrzemski helped the Giants become the first team to 70 wins this season.

14	Jed Lowrie (IF)	Astros	Athletics	11/25/15	7.2 ('16-'18)
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Something more: An April 2015 injury to the switch-hitting shortstop allowed for the emergence of Carlos Correa¹³ and the eventual end of Lowrie's time in Houston. He bounced back in Oakland as a second baseman, lifting it to a 2018 playoff spot with 23 HR and 99 RBI.

16	Rod Beck (P)	Athletics	Giants	3/23/88	7.1 ('91-'97)
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Something more: The right-handed closer led the National League in games finished three times and averaged 36.2 saves per year from 1993-97. Beck pitched in consecutive postseasons with the 1997 Giants, 1998 Cubs and 1999 Red Sox.

17	Rob Deer (RF)	Giants	Brewers	12/18/85	6.9 ('86-'90)
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Something more: After San Francisco's futile attempts to help the right-handed batter make more consistent contact¹⁴, he averaged 27.4 HR and 164.6 strikeouts in five seasons for Milwaukee. Deer led the American League in HR per at-bat in 1986.

18	John Wockenfuss (C)	Cardinals	Tigers	12/3/73	6.8 ('74-'83)
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Something more: Filling in at first base in 1979 and 1980, he enjoyed his two most productive offensive seasons by hitting a combined 31 HR. The right-handed batter's 10-year run in Detroit ended as he was traded in March 1984 to the Phillies for Dave Bergman and Willie Hernandez, who won MVP and Cy Young awards that year to help the Tigers win the World Series.

19	Frank Tanana (P)	Rangers	Tigers	6/20/85	6.6 ('85-'87)
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Something more: A one-time fireballer who recorded three 200-strikeout seasons and an ERA title through his age-23 season, the left-hander took a while to remake his arsenal in the late 1970s¹⁵. Tanana was effectively crafty by 1987, when he shut out Toronto on the final day of the season to clinch the American League East for Detroit.

20	Brad Brach (P)	Padres	Orioles	11/25/13	6.0 ('14-'18)
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Something more: Baltimore's playoff berths in 2014 and 2016 featured arguably the finest stretch of work for the right-handed setup man, as he was a combined 22-8 while surrendering just 162 hits in 220.2 innings of work from 2014-2016.

20	Rey Sanchez (SS/2B)	Rangers	Cubs	1/3/90	6.0 ('90-'97)
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Something more: The middle infielder played for Chicago during the first two of his six career seasons among his league's top 10 in defensive WAR. The right-handed batter accomplished this despite playing in just 105 games in 1993 and 95 contests in 1996.

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