

Baseball tidbits newsletter – interesting and random stuff, fodder for bar bets.

7.3.2022

Good morning baseball fans,

And Happy Independence Day. A shorter but hopefully entertaining issue this week featuring the best World Series players who are not in the Hall of Fame, **Bucky Dent**, lots of miscellaneous stuff and of course, trivia. Enjoy.

THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Who was the last player to hit 50 or more home runs in a season when his team won the World Series?

Hint 1. It was in 2001.

Hint 2. This lefty batter hit 57 HRs in 2001. He had 354 career HRs including 45 in 1999 and 47 in 2000.

(answer at bottom)

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

Thurman Munson hit .373 with 11 runs and 12 RBIs in 16 World Series games. Pretty strong on the biggest stage.

In a 5-1 win over the Padres at Dodger Stadium, Dodgers righthander **Tony Gonsolin** all but secured his spot in the Midsummer Classic, allowing just one run and striking out eight over a career-best 7 2/3 innings. His season ERA is 1.54, leading all qualified starters.

Gonsolin also became the first pitcher in the National League to reach 10 wins this season. He's tied with future Hall of Famer **Justin Verlander** of the Astros for the MLB lead in wins. Gonsolin is also just the seventh pitcher since 1961 to begin a season 10-0 with a sub-2.00 ERA.

Darick Hall of the Phillies finished his third day in the big leagues with more fireworks.

It has been mostly fun and fireworks for the man that teammates and fans in Triple-A Lehigh Valley affectionately and accurately call “Long Ball Hall.” Hall hit a home run to right field in the sixth inning Friday night to give the Phillies a one-run lead in a 5-3 victory over the Cardinals at Citizens Bank Park.

Hall homered twice Thursday for the first two hits of his big league career. Hall’s homer Friday was his third. He is one of only nine players in the expansion era (since 1961) whose first three hits were homers. It last happened last season, when Pittsburgh’s **Rodolfo Castro** homered for each of his first five hits.

Hall is only the second Phillies player in the modern era (since 1900) whose first three hits in the big leagues were homers. **Ed Sanicki** hit three homers for his first three hits with the Phillies in September 1949. Sanicki played 13 more games in 1951, but never played again in the big leagues.

Sanicki still has the highest career slugging percentage (.882) of any player in baseball history with 20 or more career plate appearances.

Only three 3B have hit for the cycle multiple times—**Adrian Beltre** (3), **Nolan Arenado** (2), **Ken Boyer** (2).

The only infielder to ever post a 20+ HR, 20+ SB season in his rookie year--**Nomar Garciaparra** of the Red Sox (30 HR, 22 SB in 1997).

Terry Francona, age 63, is in his 22nd season managing in the majors. He’s 17th all-time in victories, which doesn’t count 40 in the postseason.

The Yankees 57 home runs in June, eclipsing a previous mark (56) shared by the 2016 Orioles and 2019 Braves. The Yankees’ 55th win in 75 games, equaling the 1998 Yanks for the second-best start in franchise history (the ‘28 squad won 56 of its first 75, en route to a World Series crown). Only the 2001 Mariners (56-19) have enjoyed a better start in the last 93 years. The Yankees are 25-6 since May 31.

Shohei Ohtani struck out 24 in two starts this week. Last Angel to whiff 24 in consecutive starts was **Nolan Ryan** in 1979.

Did you happen to notice that (first place) Twins pitching coach **Wes Johnson** quit this week to take the pitching coach job at LSU? At LSU he gets \$750,000 salary. For a college pitching coach. LSU's average ticket is \$41 at its 10,326-seat ballpark.

Looking over the standings, it is funny how 37-39 feels like a disappointment for the White Sox while the same 37-39 feels like a pleasant surprise for the Rangers.

Chad Kuhl's three-hit shutout of the Dodgers on Monday came out of nowhere. The 29-year-old Colorado righthander had not pitched a complete game in his six seasons in the majors, never mind a shutout. The Dodgers also came into the game having averaged 5.13 runs, tops in the majors. The game took 2:19 and was only the 27th individual shutout in the 27 seasons Coors Field has been open.

Yarmouth-Dennis manager **Scott Pickler** set the Cape Cod Baseball League record for wins last weekend when he won his 540th game. Pickler has been the Y-D manager since 1997. The record had belonged to **John Schiffner**, who managed Chatham from 1993-2017.

Total Bases leaders are a great bunch of hitters because you need a bunch of hits and you need a bunch of extra base hits. Career leaders in total bases: **Hank Aaron** leads all time at 6856. That's 722 more than **Stan Musial** in second place, a 10.5% gap.

To give that gap some context--

Pete Rose with 4256 hits leads second place **Ty Cobb** by 67, 2% gap.

Barry Bonds with 762 HRs leads Aaron by 7, less than 1%.

Aaron, 2,297 RBIs leads **Babe Ruth** by 84, a 3.7% gap.

Rickey Henderson, 2295 runs scored, 50 ahead of Cobb, a 2% gap.

Top ten in career Total Bases (because you were trying to think of them)

Aaron	6856
Musial	6134
Pujols	6081
Mays	6080
Bonds	5976
Cobb	5854
ARod	5813
Ruth	5793
Rose	5752
Yastrzemski	5539

Three current big league managers were named Most Outstanding Player at the College World Series. Which of the skippers below did NOT win the award?

- A. **Terry Francona**
- B. **Phil Nevin**
- C. **Mark Kotsay**
- D. **Kevin Cash**

D. Kevin Cash. Cash made the final out by striking out against **Michael Neu** in Florida State's 1999 College World Series championship-game loss to Miami. Francona (1980, Arizona), Nevin (1992, Cal State Fullerton) and Kotsay (1995, Cal State Fullerton) all collected Most Outstanding Player hardware, with Francona and Kotsay also winning national championships.

An unlikely run in the 2022 NCAA Division I Baseball Tournament ended in an unconventional eighth-inning comeback -- and a national championship -- for Ole Miss.

The last team to secure a spot in the tournament, Mississippi lost one game en route to the College World Series before securing a sweep of Oklahoma on Sunday.

The Rebels (50-23) scored a 4-2 win to sweep the Sooners (45-24) in the best-of-three series. Ole Miss erased a 2-1 deficit with a three-run rally in the eighth inning.

Mississippi scored twice on wild pitches in a three-run eighth inning and the Rebels won their first national baseball title, sweeping Oklahoma in the College World Series finals with a 4-2 victory Sunday in Omaha, Neb. The Rebels (50-23) became the eighth national champion since 2009 to come out of the Southeastern Conference, and the trophy will stay in the Magnolia State for a second straight year. Mississippi State won last year. Ole Miss benefited from a runner-interference call that took a run away from Oklahoma (45-24) in the sixth inning. The Rebels also overcame a spectacular pitching performance by **Cade Horton**, who set a CWS finals record with 13 strikeouts. Horton allowed four hits and walked none during a sterling 107-pitch performance.

It is Ole Miss baseball's first national championship, despite five previous College World Series appearances.

Lance Lynn is probably the most notable current big leaguer who went to Ole Miss, and it was a big day all around for Rebels alum **Nick Fortes**, who hit a walk-off homer for the Marlins. **Don Kessinger, Gee Walker, Jim Hickman and Jeff Fassero** are among the other successful big leaguers to hail from Ole Miss.

In what felt like a scene out of Groundhog Day, the Astros held the Yankees hitless for six innings a day after throwing a combined no-hitter against them on Saturday, making it 16 straight no-hit innings dating back to the end of Friday's game for their pitching staff. They fell just eight outs shy of baseball history, because no team has ever thrown no-hitters in back-to-back games.

Even still, Houston's pitching staff did something extremely rare in keeping the Bombers' vaunted lineup hitless for 16 consecutive innings, which tied the longest such streak in at least the expansion era (since 1961). The Dodgers did it against the Astros in 1981 and the A's did it against the Rangers and the Twins in 1973, per the Elias Sports Bureau. Both Los Angeles and Oakland won the World Series in those years.

Right-hander **José Urquidy** followed up **Cristian Javier's** brilliant starting effort on Saturday with 6 1/3 no-hit innings on Sunday afternoon before **Giancarlo Stanton** broke up the no-hitter with a home run with one out in the seventh inning. The Yankees would go on to win the game, 6-3, after **Aaron Judge** hit a three-run walk-off homer in the 10th.

Anthony Rizzo is on track to make history in a very painful fashion. The Yankees' first baseman has been hit by pitches 11 times in 73 games this season. He has been hit by a pitch 189 times in his regular-season career and four times in the postseason.

Rizzo is far and away the active leader for hit-by-pitches, with Mets outfielder **Starling Marte** trailing him with 139. **Derek Dietrich**, who is currently in Triple A with the Yankees, is third with 123 career plunkings.

It seems likely that Rizzo will break a number of hit-by-pitch records throughout his career. With 11 plunkings in 73 games this season, he could break the Yankees' single-season, set by **Don Baylor** in 1985 when he was hit 24 times. Rizzo has surpassed that number three times in his career already: He was hit 30 times in 2015, 27 times in 2019 and 24 times in 2017.

According to Statcast, the hardest pitch Rizzo has ever been hit by was a 99.6 mph fastball from **Chris Sale** in 2015. The second-hardest was 98.9 mph from two-time teammate **Aroldis Chapman** in 2017. The slowest pitch he's been hit by was 63.2 mph from **Adam Wainwright** in 2018.

The all-time hit-by-pitch record belongs to a man named **Hughie Jennings**, who made his debut in 1891 and retired in 1912. Jennings was hit 287 times in his career; he also holds the single-season hit-by-pitch record at 51, which Rizzo would have to try very hard to break.

Jennings was, judging by his SABR biography, an absolute maniac on (and off) the field. He was hit in the head by a pitch once, and spent four days unconscious. In 1904, he accidentally dove head-first into an empty swimming pool. Later in life, he accidentally drove a car off an icy bridge and nearly drowned in the Lehigh River. Upon his death in 1928, The New York Times wrote he had "fought a valiant but futile fight against death."

Rizzo hopefully will not share much in common with Jennings beyond the tendency to be hit by pitches, but he could break his all-time record in due time.

Rizzo is 98 away from tying the all-time record. In 2007, **Craig Biggio** retired with 285 hit-by-pitches, just two shy of Jennings' record. If Rizzo averages 20 plunkings per season for the next five years, he will take the honor of having been hit by the most pitches of anyone in baseball history.

Cleveland Guardians have been rained out 10 times this season. The 1923 White Sox hold the record with 17 games lost to weather.

No team in baseball history had ever hit four consecutive four home runs in the first inning until a quartet of St. Louis Cardinals players accomplished the feat in a game against the Philadelphia Phillies on Saturday.

Nolan Arenado, Nolan Gorman, Juan Yezzer and Dylan Carlson were the history-making crew, as each connected for a long ball against Phillies starter **Kyle Gibson**.

The four consecutive blasts also tie the MLB record for most home runs in a row in any inning. Only 10 other teams have achieved the feat.

Why are the New York Yankees throwing gum on the field during the games? The television cameras caught that the Yankee's dugout is throwing bubble gum on the field during every game at home. **Cameron Maybin**, Yankees analyst, said that the players made up a game kind of like golf where they need to put the gum (not chewed, fortunately) in a certain spot and whoever gets it the nearest, wins.

"It's like frisbee golf. They find a little marker on the field and they toss the gum and they act as if they're playing frisbee golf", Maybin said during the New York vs Athletics broadcast.

Juan Soto hit the longest homerun derby HR since stats have been kept—520 feet at Coors Field in 2021.

Astros slugger **Yordan Alvarez** hit an eye-popping .418 in June with nine homers and a 1.346 OPS. Houston went 16-9 last month and now has a 12.5-game lead in the AL West.

Giants veteran **Carlos Rodón** started six games in June, giving up just five earned runs across them. Three of those starts featured eight or more strikeouts and four of them had one or fewer walks, resulting in a 1.25 ERA and 1.88 FIP.

Juan Soto has more walks (65) than hits (62) this season. The last man not named **Barry Bonds** with at least 120 hits in a season and more walks than hits was **Jack Clark** (136 to 120) — in 1987.

BUCKY F-ING DENT.

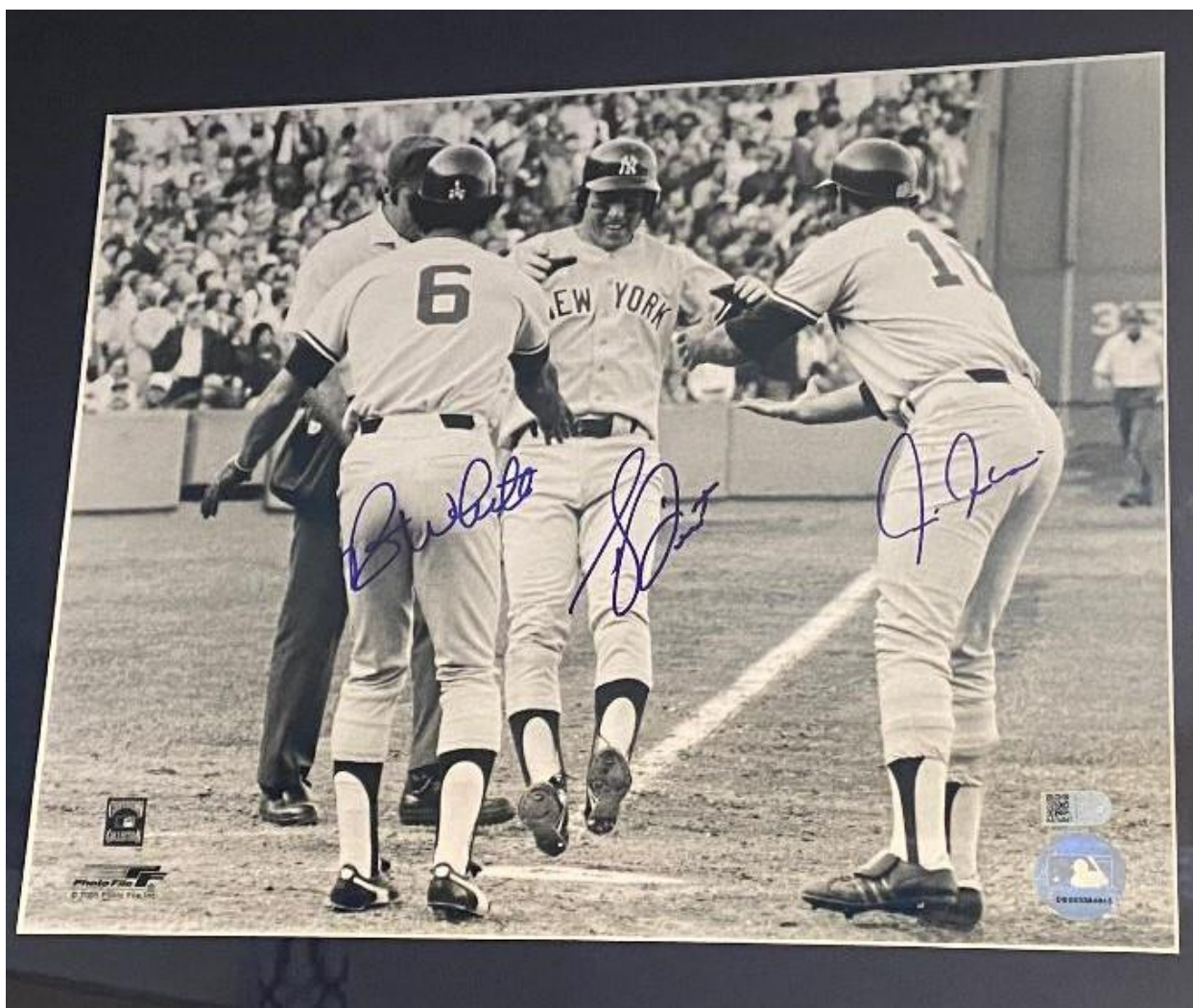
One of the best parts of editing this publication is fielding content contributions from our 120 subscribers. The newsletter is free and commercial free—we just ask if you find something interesting or odd and we all might learn from that you share it. Here is this week's best submission:

Baseball friends,

I am confident that most of you don't wake up every morning and immediately read the Trademark Trial and Appellate Board ("TTAB") blog first thing, so just in case you missed this edition, See full text below, or if you are really interested in a deep dive on this footnote to baseball history, you could find the whole application at www.uspto.gov, then "Search Trademarks" then application No. 97462515 (June 16, 2022) where the long list of goods and services includes, *inter alia*, "dresses, skirts, blouses." Enjoy, or weep at the memory, as the case may be.

Russell Earl "Bucky" Dent was a light-hitting shortstop for the New York Yankees when, in 1978, he hit a three-run homer that gave the Yankees a 3–2 lead in the AL East division tie-breaker game against the Boston Red Sox. The Yankees went on to win that game, and then the World Series over the Los Angeles Dodgers. Boston Red Sox fans still refer to him ruefully as "Bucky Fucking Dent." Apparently seeking to cash in on that celebrity, Mr. Dent has filed applications to register both **BUCKY DENT** and **BUCKY F'ING DENT** for, *inter alia*, entertainment services in the nature of live appearances by a former professional baseball player, and for clothing (Serial Nos. 97462500, 97462515, 97462865, and 97462897, filed June 16, 2022).

Editor Note—here is a photo from my office wall—Dent greeted at home signed by Bucky, **Roy White** and **Chris Chambliss**.



JAYSON STARK LOOKS BACK ON JUNE

We just survived one of the most action-packed Junes in years.

*Three cycles. ... Six three-homer games. ... Two of baseball's most recognizable managers (Joe Girardi and Joe Maddon) getting gonged. ... A wild no-hitter at Yankee Stadium. ... An immaculate-inning daily double in Arlington. ... We had 23 *position players* heading for the mound ... and the arrival of a 6-foot-7 shortstop (Oneil Cruz) ... and more **Aaron Judge** home-run trots (11) than singles by **Giancarlo Stanton** and **Mike Trout** combined (nine).*

The most important buyer at the deadline will be ... the Blue Jays

BLUE JAYS: It's easy to overlook this team because it finds itself farther out of first place (12 1/2 games) than the Tigers. But that's more about the Yankees than the Blue Jays. Through their first 75 games, the Blue Jays had a better record (42-33) than the Cardinals, Twins or Rays. They roll out one of the best offenses in baseball. They're actively looking to balance their lineup with an **Andrew Benintendi**-type left-handed bat. And they're positioned to be one of the most aggressive shoppers in both the starters' and relievers' aisles of the deadline superstore.

"Some teams at the deadline are motivated by just trying to make that last wild-card spot," one exec said. "When the Blue Jays think about making a trade, they're motivated by what they can do to move the World Series odds."

It's a LONG Season. Let's consider how Baseball-Reference's playoff probability projections changed for these five teams since the calendar flipped to June. And how their odds to make the playoffs shifted in one month.

<u>Team</u>	<u>June record</u>	<u>Make playoffs %</u>	<u>6/1</u>	<u>7/1</u>
Braves	21-6		49%	87%
Red Sox	20-6		37%	83%
Phillies	19-8		16%	25%
Angels	10-18		31%	8%
Brewers	12-15		92%	66%

Of course, these odds also depend on which teams you're chasing. Last year's Braves, who went on to win the World Series, played in such a mediocre division they had plenty of time to get their act together. But if one of the AL East teams this year started 36-40, as the Braves did last season, it would already be 20 games behind the Yankees.

So we forget how long the baseball season can be ... until baseball has a way of reminding us.

The entire All-Star team will be on the injured list by Monday

Ready for just a partial list of players who suffered significant injuries in June? You've heard of them.

Mookie Betts
Bryce Harper
Walker Buehler
Hyun Jin Ryu
Anthony Rendon
Ozzie Albies
Yadier Molina
Jazz Chisholm Jr.
Ty France
Jack Flaherty
Liam Hendriks
Daniel Hudson
Jean Segura
Tyler O'Neill

And that's merely the shortlist. All season, we've been hearing GMs vent about the health issues they've braced for since a mini-spring training that felt as if it lasted about 20 minutes. But Derek Rhoads, who monitors injuries for Baseball Prospectus, reports that as grim as it seems, 2022 isn't even keeping up with last year's IL parade.

This June vs. last June — June 2021 non-COVID IL placements: 146 ... June 2022: 123

Pitchers on the IL — June 2021: 80 ... June 2022: 69

Position players on the IL — June 2021: 66 ... June 2022: 54

Stars on the IL — You've seen the 2022 All-Injured Team. But 2021 could match it: **Max Scherzer, Shane Bieber, Alex Bregman, Cody Bellinger, Byron Buxton, Max Fried, Tyler Glasnow** and many, many more.

So as awful as it is for the sport to have so many star attractions hanging out in the trainers' room, can we stop blaming the short spring for this?

The Yankees' magic number is actually ... 1998

The Yankees still have more games left to play than an entire NBA season. Yet Baseball Prospectus and Baseball-Reference tell us their playoff probability is 99.9 percent. Which actually seems kind of low!

So when I notice people on Yankees Twitter calculating their magic number, it makes me chuckle. The odds of the Yankees not playing postseason baseball aren't even a relevant talk-show topic anymore, are they? You want a relevant talk-show topic? Here's one:

The 2022 Yankees *are going to outwin the storied 1939 Yankees* (106 wins). And also the 1961 Yankees (109 wins). And the 1927 Yankees (110). And yes, even the 1998 Yankees (114). You heard it here first (unless I'm wrong).

Yeah, yeah, it'll be hard. But why the heck not? Check out what these '22 Yankees have been up to so far:

They started 56-20. They were also riding a plus-151 run differential after 76 games. So how many Yankees teams in history had a winning percentage and run differential that ridiculous after 76 games? That would be none! Only previous Yankees juggernauts in the argument: the 1998 team (56-20, plus-150) and 1928 monsters (56-20, plus-145).

They've scored the most runs and allowed the fewest. I bet you think this is something the Yankees of the 1940s, '50s and '90s did every year, right? Nope! In the last 100 years — during which the Yankees have done slightly more winning than, say, the Detroit Lions — exactly *two* Yankees teams have led the major leagues in both runs scored *and* runs allowed over a full season. They're pretty legendary, as in ... 1939 ... and 1927.

They never allow an unearned run. All right, so “never” wouldn't be 100 percent accurate. But it's close. Since May 2, the Yankees have allowed an unearned run in precisely *two* games: May 24 (only because of the extra-inning Zombie Runner) and Tuesday night (because of a catcher's interference call with two outs in the ninth).

So that means they went an incredible 52 games in a row without letting in a single unearned run because of a fielding error. And how many teams have ever matched that within a single season, according to Baseball-Reference/Stathead? That would be none!

They have a better record than the Super Bowl, Stanley Cup and NBA champions. How mind-blowing is this? Current Yankees winning percentage: .727. Best winning percentage among the Rams, Avalanche and Warriors: .706 (Rams). I know the Yankees haven't won anything yet, but if they finish with a better record than the most recent NFL, NHL and NBA champions *and* win the World Series, guess how many teams in their sport have ever done that? That would be zero, according to STATS Perform.

But also ... This is a team that miraculously has a winning record (24-21) even in games in which it trails at any point. Record of the other five first-place teams in those games: 74-154. And Baseball-Reference's Katie Sharp reports that only six teams in the modern era have ever had a winning record in this category over a full season, including just one in the last 68 years: 1998 Yankees, 1954 Indians, 1953 Dodgers, 1929 and '31 A's and 1927 Yankees. ... In a related development, these Yankees actually have a better OPS when they're *trailing* (.837) than when they're *leading* (.757). The average team hits almost 50 points worse when trailing than leading. ... Finally, the Yankees haven't lost a series to *any* team that currently sits at .500 or better. They've played 10 series against teams that fit that profile. Their record: 8 wins, 2 splits, 24-11 overall. Scary.

So they're well on their way to legendary status. But as this recent study by MLB.com's Mike Petriello shows, basically every team that gets off to a start this scorching eventually gets worn down by the season and doesn't sustain it. So that's one challenge.

The other challenge? It ain't easy to go down as a legendary *Yankees* team. To do that, it takes more than a historic ride from April to September. There's also the not-insignificant part about dominating October.

"Hey, I get it," one exec said. "They've won 70 percent of their games and they're dominating a great division. So maybe they will be one of those teams. But to say they'll be one of the legendary Yankees teams, they've got a lot of work to do."

The ball flies differently every darned month

Funny how certain topics seem to work their way into this What We Learned column every month. But none keep roaring back into the conversation more than the ongoing mysteries of How the Baseball Flies (Or Not). Here's the good news:

At least it isn't April anymore.

HR/Fly ball percentage by month

APRIL: 10.0 percent

MAY: 11.5 percent

JUNE: 12.2 percent

(SOURCE: FanGraphs)

So we've seen a definite uptick in the liveliness of the ball as this season has worn on. And that's exactly what MLB told teams would happen as the warm-weather humidifier effect kicked in. Nevertheless ...

We're still headed for a massive downturn in home runs. At this rate, we would see 800 fewer than last season — and a whopping 1,600 fewer than in 2019. But that isn't even the No. 1 complaint in the *The Ball Is Killing Us* gripe rankings!

The question that comes up over and over is why so many people in the sport are willing to accept the idea that it's OK to have a baseball that behaves so inconsistently in different months/years/climates/ballparks/time zones. Try to imagine what would happen if all the long passes in the NFL were underthrown in Green Bay but not Tampa Bay. Or if all the jump shots in the NBA hit the rim in Milwaukee but not Phoenix. It would be the biggest scandal in sports.

So how come, in this sport, it's just another exercise in the quirkiness of baseball?

AN AL EXEC: "The ball should be the same every year. I don't know why we keep experimenting with the balls. There should be a standard ball, year in and year out. It affects the history of the game. And it messes with players' careers."

AN NL EXEC: "I know it's tricky. Every climate is different, and that's always been true. But we're all just crying out for consistency. Ideally, you wouldn't have a ball that travels wildly differently in June than in May, and in May than in April. That's just logic."

ANOTHER AL EXEC: "We just have too many variances. We have to find a way to centralize, standardize and normalize the ball. I feel like they attempted to do that with the humidors — but it seems like the effect was just the opposite."

Aaron Judge vs. Roger Maris will be the best story in baseball

What about Judge chasing Maris? Wouldn't America get totally swept up in a September in which Judge had Maris' 61 home runs on his radar screen? Hey, you know what? I agree!

We're always searching in this sport, not simply for "records" but for great stories. And Judge chasing Maris — yep, that qualifies. For lots of reasons.

One reason, for people who dismiss all the PED-era records, is that Maris' 61-homer magical mystery tour in 1961 feels like the "real" record. Two, as my friend Chris Isidore pointed out, is that Maris still holds an actual record — the AL single-season record. And No. 3 is basic stuff: They're both connected by pinstripes. So it's too perfect.

"It would be huge," one AL exec said. "It would be massive. It's Aaron Judge. It's the Yankees. It's history. I think if it was someone else, even if it was Mike Trout, it wouldn't be as big a deal. But because he's a Yankee chasing a Yankee, it would be incredible. And the fact that he's also chasing a contract makes it such a fun story."

Well, that might not be the fun part for whoever would have to enter the payments on Judge's next \$800 gazillion contract into the Yankees' QuickBooks program, assuming he stays. But just imagine Judge joining Maris and Babe Ruth in the Yankees Who Hit 60 Club ... and then the Yankees telling him he doesn't fit into their budget. Wow.

What it means to be in 1st place entering July

Sarah Langs, mlb.com

It's July, its All-Star month, and it certainly isn't too early to start trying to project what the October postseason field will look like. Are our current division leaders for real? Let's take a look at those current leaders and what the playoff field could look like. Note, all stats below exclude the shortened 2020 season and instead look at full seasons for the impact and postseason implications.

What it means to be in first place

Since 1996, the first full season with at least one Wild Card, 100 of 150 eventual division champions held at least a share of that division lead entering July 1. That's 67 percent of division winners.

Take note, Yankees, Twins, Astros, Mets, Brewers and Dodgers fans – those are the teams that currently lead their divisions.

Last season, four of the six division leaders on July 1 went on to win their divisions. In the American League, the White Sox and Astros each won their divisions, while the Red Sox, who led the AL East entering July, ended up defeating the Yankees in the Wild Card Game. In the NL, the Brewers and Giants each won their divisions, but the Mets, who led the East entering July, missed the playoffs.

Since 1996, 16 of the 25 World Series winners, excluding 2020, led their divisions entering July. But neither of the last two winners in full seasons – the '21 Braves and '19 Nationals – did. The Braves first took sole possession of the NL East in mid-August, while the Nationals were a Wild Card team.

New York, New York and that large lead in the Bronx

One thing that stands out quickly on the standings page is that the two New York teams each lead their respective divisions. This is the first time since divisions began in 1969 that the Mets and Yankees each had at least a share of their division's leads entering July.

The Yankees lead the AL East by 12 1/2 games, the largest lead of any team entering July this season. That's tied for the third-largest division lead entering July since divisions began in 1969.

Largest division leads entering July, divisional era (1969)

2001 Mariners: 20

2017 Astros: 13.5

2022 Yankees: 12.5

1999 Cleveland: 12.5

Each of the three previous teams with that large a lead entering July won its division.

The mighty AL East

For the first time aside from the 2020 season, there is a mathematical chance of four postseason teams from a single division with the new playoff format. Keep an eye on the AL East for that feat.

The 2022 AL East has a .570 winning percentage and +227 run differential this season. Each of those is the best for a division entering July in a season (divisional era, since 1969).

That combined prowess was on display in a big way in June, in part due to the Orioles posting their first winning calendar month (min 5 games) since they went 17-12 in August 2017. The Rays, at 12-14, were the only AL East club under .500 in June this year.

The division's .619 winning percentage in June was the third-highest by a division in a month (min 25 games), behind only the 2001 AL West in July (.648) and the 2002 AL West in August (.625).

AL East teams combined for a +168 run differential in June, the highest for a division in a calendar month.

This year's leaders overall

Of this year's current division leaders entering July, each has had at least a share of that lead entering July at least once since 2019. Each of the six current leaders has won its division at least once since 2019 – except the Mets. The Mets last won the NL East in '15, when they lost in the World Series.

What's next

Even three months in, there's still plenty of baseball left to be played. But fans of the six division leaders can take some comfort in knowing that historically, more than half of those teams have gone on to win their divisions. And for fans of teams that aren't in playoff position, there's still plenty of hope -- while 67% of these teams go on to win their divisions, that means 33% do not, too. Only time will tell.

What is Bobby Bonilla Day? Explaining why the former Met gets paid \$1.19M every July 1

Dan Mullen ESPN

The calendar has turned to July 1, and that means one thing: It's time for Mets fans everywhere to wish each other a Happy **Bobby Bonilla** Day! Why? On Friday, 59-year-old Bobby Bonilla will collect a check for \$1,193,248.20 from the New York Mets, as he has and will every July 1 from 2011 through 2035.

Because of baseball's salary structure, Bonilla's annual payday is often more than some of the game's current young stars will make in a given year -- and this season that even includes the salary of one of the sport's biggest sluggers and some potential 2022 All-Stars.

But the Mets are not alone in the practice of handing out deferred payments to star players long after they last suited up for the team, with former MVPs and Cy Young winners among the notable names still collecting annual paychecks from their previous employers.

Here is everything you need to know about Bonilla's payday, deferred money in MLB and the current players making less for the 2022 season than Bobby Bo will receive from the Mets on Friday.

So why does Bonilla get this payday?

In 2000, the Mets agreed to buy out the remaining \$5.9 million on Bonilla's contract.

However, instead of paying Bonilla the \$5.9 million at the time, the Mets agreed to make annual payments of nearly \$1.2 million for 25 years starting July 1, 2011, including a negotiated 8% interest.

At the time, Mets ownership was invested in a Bernie Madoff account that promised double-digit returns, and the Mets were poised to make a significant profit if the Madoff account delivered -- but that did not work out.

Under new owner **Steve Cohen**, who mentioned the possibility of celebrating Bonilla at Citi Field annually soon after taking over the team, the Mets are embracing Bonilla's day.

How rare is this arrangement?

Bonilla last played for the Mets in 1999 and last played in the majors for the Cardinals in 2001, but he will be paid through 2035 (when he'll be 72).

Here are some other notable deferred-money contracts, courtesy of ESPN Stats & Information's Ryan Milowicki:

- **Bobby Bonilla** (again): A second deferred-contract plan with the Mets and Orioles pays him \$500,000 a year for 25 years. Those payments began in 2004.
- **Bret Saberhagen**: Will receive \$250,000 a year from the Mets for 25 years (payments also began in 2004; this was the inspiration for Bonilla's deal).
- **Max Scherzer**: Will receive \$105 million total from the Nationals that will be paid out through 2028.

- **Manny Ramírez:** Will collect \$24.2 million total from the Red Sox through 2026.
- **Ken Griffey Jr.:** Will receive \$3.59 million from the Reds every year through 2024 as the deferral from his nine-year, \$116 million deal signed in 2000.
- **Todd Helton:** Will get \$1.3 million from the Rockies every year through 2023 as the result of \$13 million deferred when he signed a two-year extension in 2010.

How this compares to 2022 salaries

Because baseball's salary structure has young players start their careers by earning just over half of Bonilla's annual \$1.19 million, here are some notable players who will be making less than Bonilla this season, listed by their 2022 WAR total:

- **Tommy Edman** (4.3 WAR): \$722K
- **Yordan Alvarez** (3.7 WAR): \$764K
- **Kyle Tucker** (3.7 WAR): \$764K
- **Alejandro Kirk** (3.3 WAR): \$714K
- **Tony Gonsolin** (3.2 WAR): \$720K
- **Alek Manoah** (3.1 WAR): \$730K
- **Ty France** (3.0 WAR): \$734K
- **Andres Gimenez** (3.0 WAR): \$706K
- **Jeremy Pena** (2.9 WAR): \$700K
- **Julio Rodriguez** (2.9 WAR): \$700K

JOE POSNANSKI ON THE PITCH CLOCK AND THE SHIFT (FROM A AAA GAME HE RECENTLY ATTENDED) AND THE NON-HOF ALL TIME BEST WORLD SERIES TEAM

The pitch clock. The clock has had an ENORMOUS impact on minor league baseball. Games that were averaging roughly three hours in length are now coming in closer to two and a half hours. It's just a staggering difference.

So I wanted to go out and see just how different it looks.

But let's get into a few specifics. This Charlotte-Durham game was an absurdity. The Knights ended up winning the game 9-8 by scoring two runs in each of the final four innings. There were a total of 11 pitchers and basically no clean innings. There were a couple of goofy errors, a moment when a baserunner forgot how many outs there were, a weird balk, 30 total baserunners and so on. In the major leagues, that's a four-hour game, no question about it.

In Charlotte, it was a two-hour, 51-minute game.

But, it isn't the time that matters. As we've talked about pretty often here, TIME of game is not the problem. Sometimes games go long; that's what you get when a game is timed by outs rather than minutes.

No, the real issue is the PACE of the game. A game that lasts four hours because the final score is 18-13 or because the game went 15 innings is just part of the intricate clockwork of baseball.

But a nine-inning 7-2 game in chilly weather between the Dodgers and Twins with 12 total hits should absolutely NEVER last four hours. But it did just a couple months ago.

That's pace of play. And it is truly stunning how effectively a pitch clock quickens baseball's pace of play. Stunning. Hey, I was a skeptic. I was a baseball romantic who moaned about how baseball is supposed to be a game without a clock.

But I was so totally wrong. In fact, I had it completely backward. If you are a baseball romantic, you should be fighting for MLB to put in a pitch clock *yesterday*. Why? Because the clock pushes pitchers and hitters to PLAY THE GAME THE WAY IT WAS MEANT TO BE PLAYED. The pitcher gets the ball. The hitter stands in the box. The pitch comes. Ball or strike or foul, the pitcher gets the ball again. The hitter stands in the box. The pitch comes.

This was how baseball was played in the 1950s. This was how baseball was played in the 1960s. This is how baseball was played when I was a kid, then when I was in college, then when I got

my first job. The pace was leisurely, unhurried, but there was a purpose behind it, a pulsating energy pushing the game forward. We didn't ASK baseball players to stop playing that way. We didn't ASK players to start taking forever between pitches, to step in and out of the box repeatedly, to stand on the mound as if unwilling to let the ball go. They just did.

BRADY: "Why is it, my old friend, that you have moved so far away from me?"

DRUMMOND: "Well, all motion is relative. Perhaps it is you who have moved away by standing still."

That's one of my favorite exchanges from "Inherit the Wind" and I think about it all the time when thinking about baseball. It has long seemed that baseball powers hoped by not changing rules, by not keeping an eye on new technologies and medical advances, by not experimenting and trying new things, that the game would simply stay the same.

But that's not how motion works. Instead, the game changed radically and reproductively BECAUSE baseball stood still.

And the clock — I'm going to use this word, "magically" — brings baseball closer to that game I grew up watching.

At first, I admit, I was vividly aware of the clock. The pitch clock is 14 seconds when no one is on base and 19 seconds when runners are on. Pitchers are limited to only two pickoff attempts or step-offs per plate appearance, any more is a balk (and there was such a balk in this game). At first, I found myself thinking a lot about these rules and watching the clock count down, etc.

But after an inning or two, I stopped thinking about any of it. The clock worked. And once I realized that, I relaxed and just watched baseball played at the crisp pace that has been missing for so long. It was spectacular. No more waiting around. No more hitters standing outside the batter's box adjusting and readjusting themselves. No more pitchers staring down hitters forever and then stepping off to start the process all over again.

No, it was just baseball. I used the word "magically" above for a reason — whenever a major rule change happens in any sport, even an obvious rule change, there is a downside. Like, I don't want them to go back to having the pitcher throwing the four balls for an intentional

walk, but I am still jolted a little bit when I see the manager simply point to first base and see the batter go there without a pitch.

But there's simply no downside to the pitch clock on the field. OK, well, I'm sure there *are* downsides that are not easily apparent. For example, a 2016 study that found a pitch clock could increase pitcher injuries. There are probably other complications that we haven't thought about yet.

As a fan, though, the clock was 100% effective. It did EXACTLY what it was supposed to do: cleanly cut dead time out of baseball. Having now seen baseball with the clock, I never want to go back.

I'm all for banning the shift now.

Yes, I'm aware that banning the shift will not solve baseball's low-batting average problems. Joe Sheehan, among others, believes that banning the shift will actually exacerbate the problem because it will incentivize the sort of pull-hitting that leads to strikeouts and fewer balls in play. And that might be right.

But there's just something so comforting about seeing a team play conventional infield defense. For me, it's like having my bearings again. You know exactly where the hits are. You know exactly where the potentially great plays are. The holes in the infield — between third and short, up the middle, between second and first — are like old friends.

Is that the most effective and analytically sound way to play defense? No. And I totally get the philosophical question: If it's the job of the defense to make outs, why **SHOULDN'T** you be allowed to put fielders where you expect the ball to be hit?

I'll tell you why: In hockey, in the mid-1990s, the New Jersey Devils began implementing the neutral zone trap, a defensive strategy that I would explain to you if I knew hockey. Many other teams followed, and it cut scoring and made the game intensely boring. The NHL put in a bunch of new rules (eliminating the two-line pass rule, creating a goalkeeper-restricted zone, and so on) to stop the effectiveness of the neutral zone trap.

Philosophically, there was nothing wrong with the neutral zone trap.

But it made the game kind of stink for fans, so they got rid of it.

In the 1990s, the Pat Riley Knicks began playing this bruising physical style of basketball. It was effective, so other teams followed suit. The league scoring average dropped from 101.4 points per game in 1994-95 (after 37 consecutive seasons of teams averaging 100 points per game) all the way down to 91.6 points per game in 1997-98. The NBA legalized zone defenses, got rid of hand checks, and did anything they could to balance the scales of the sport.

Philosophically, there was nothing wrong with playing physical defense.

But it made the game kind of stink for fans, so they got rid of it.

In the late 1970s, NFL teams barely ever passed the ball. Defensive backs were allowed to do pretty much whatever they wanted to receivers, so passing games were nullified. Teams were running 55%, 60%, 65% of the time. Points were way down. The NFL wrote up rules that limited defensive backs to one bump of the receiver within five yards of the line of scrimmage, they gave offensive linemen freedom to use their hands, and the whole game changed.

Philosophically, there was nothing wrong with the old defensive style of football.

But it made the game kind of stink for fans, so they got rid of it.

You can see the trend. Baseball has rarely changed the on-field rules in an attempt to make the game more entertaining for fans. Yes, they have done it — they lowered the mound in 1969, and they added the DH shortly after that, and they've probably tinkered with the baseball now and again — but for the most part, baseball has a laissez-faire approach to the game. That's how we got here. I don't know if banning the shift will make the game better, but I also do not know many people who LIKE the shift. Most people I know think it makes the game, yes, kind of stink.

So get rid of it. Maybe banning the shift will have a positive impact on batting averages and give us more hits and balls in play. Maybe it won't. No idea. But, either way, seriously, who is going to miss it?

The other day, my friend and Brilliant Reader Dan challenged me to find:

1. The all-time best World Series lineup.

2. That does not include any Hall of Famers.

This made me think — I should probably accept a few reader challenges. That could be a lot of fun. So, if you want to challenge me to write a special post about anything at all — doesn't have to be a baseball trivia thing, though of course it can be — just leave your challenge in the comments. My editor, Larry, and I will sort through and try to do a few of these over the summer, when free moments arise.

For now, let's take on Dan's dare.

The all-time World Series team with zero Hall of Famers:

Catcher: Thurman Munson

The obvious answer here is Oakland's **Gene Tenace**, who won the 1972 World Series MVP by hitting four homers and driving in nine runs against the Reds. Unfortunately, he played in three more World Series and went five for 34 with no home runs in those games.

So I'm going with Munson instead. In the 1976 World Series, the Reds obliterated the Yankees in four straight, outscoring New York 22-8. **Johnny Bench** was MVP of that Series, hitting .533 with a couple of home runs.

But Munson was just about as good, hitting .529 with a couple of runs and couple of RBIs. True, all nine of his hits were singles, but it was still one heck of a performance. The next year, he hit .320 with a couple of doubles and a homer against the Dodgers. And the year after that, he AGAIN hit .320, this time with three doubles and seven RBIs.

In all, Munson hit .373 with 11 runs and 12 RBIs in 16 World Series games.

Special mention goes to **Ivey Wingo** of the 1919 Cincinnati Reds. I've always thought those Reds got a raw deal. Everyone seems so sure that the 1919 White Sox were so much better than that Reds team ... but those Reds went 96-44 that season and had some really good players, like Hall of Famer Ed Roush and Heinie Groh and Sherry Magee (though it was Magee's last season).

Wingo was an excellent catcher, too, a beloved player who caught more games than any player before him. He appeared in only three Series games, but got four hits in seven at-bats and walked three more times. His slash numbers: .571/.700/.571.

First base: Willie Mays Aikens

You might know that there's a movie about Willie Mays Aikens coming out (in July, I think) called "The Royal." I got to see it while in Cooperstown; the movie is not really about Aikens the ballplayer. It's more about him trying to put his life back together after he spent more than 14 years in prison for dealing crack. It was a hyped-up charge in that hyped-up time when crack crimes were punished at, quite literally, 100 times the punishments for cocaine crimes. Aikens was no dealer. He was an addict. But an undercover police officer got him to sell her 2.2 ounces of crack, a gun was later found near the scene, and Aikens was given the maximum sentence.

So the movie deals with that — unfair sentencing practices, redemption, families breaking apart and coming together — and doesn't quite get at just how good a hitter Aikens was. The guy could swat. Willie Mays Aikens was born on Oct. 14, 1954 — barely two weeks after **Willie Mays** made his catch for the ages in Game 1 of the World Series. His mother did not have a name in mind. It was the doctor in Seneca, S.C., who suggested that she name him "Willie Mays."

And 26 years later, Willie Mays Aikens played in Game 1 of the 1980 World Series against Philadelphia. He hit two two-run home runs off Bob Walk. In Game 4, with the Royals down two games to one, he hit two more home runs and led the Royals to victory.

In all, Aikens played in six World Series games and hit .400/.538/1.100 — a 1.638 OPS — with a triple and four home runs. That triple might be even more impressive than the homers; Aikens was notoriously slow and hit just two regular-season triples in 774 games.

Aikens never really stopped hitting. When his drug problem grew untenable and his big-league career was over, he went to play in Mexico, where one year he hit .454 with 46 home runs and 154 RBIs.

Special mention goes to The Mayor, **Sean Casey**, who hit .529 with a couple of home runs in his one World Series appearance, back in 2006 for the Tigers. Unfortunately for him, he was just about the only guy on the Tigers who did hit in that Series; Detroit batted .199 as a team.

And one more special mention to poor **Vic Wertz**. In the 1954 World Series, he hit .500 with two doubles, a triple and a home run. And yet all anyone really remembers about him is that he hit the ball that Willie Mays caught, the one that led to a baby in Seneca, S.C., being named Willie Mays.

Second base: Al Weis

I thought this was going to be Atlanta's **Mark Lemke**, who was pretty famous for his World Series performances. In 1991, he hit .417 in the World Series with three triples, which is still tied for the record in a seven-game Series. But, alas, Lemke played in three more World Series and was never quite able to recapture the magic.

Al Weis probably would not have repeated the magic, either ... he was a fielding-first player who .219 and slugged .275 in his 10-year big-league career. He unhesitatingly called himself a "journeyman ballplayer." But 1969 was, as we know, a miracle year for the Miracle Mets, and perhaps the greatest miracle of all was that in that World Series, the Orioles simply could not get Al Weis out.

In Game 2 of that Series, with the Orioles having won the opener, Weis cracked a ninth-inning single to score **Ed Charles** and give the Mets a 2-1 victory.

Weis didn't get an at-bat in Game 3 — he came in as a defensive replacement — but in Game 4, he went two-for-three with a walk and the Mets again won 2-1.

Then in Game 5 — the impossible dream. Al Weis faced Baltimore's star lefty **Dave McNally** in the seventh inning with the Orioles up by a run. In his entire career, Weis hit seven home runs. But he homered off McNally anyway, a shocking blow that tied the score and basically drained all of the Orioles' hope. The Mets scored two more in the eighth and clinched the World Series.

In all, .455 in the Series with four walks, three RBIs and that rare home run.*

A quick word about **Chase Utley. He hit seven World Series home runs — five in 2009 against the Yankees. But he hit only .200 in his three World Series, thanks in part to his 0-for-7 in 2017 while playing for the Dodgers.*

Shortstop: Edgar Renteria

In all, Renteria played in three World Series. At age 21, he hit the walk-off single in Game 7 of the 1997 World Series against Cleveland. He hit .333 in the 2004 World Series, even as the Cardinals got swept by Boston (he also made the last out of that Series). And he was the MVP of the 2010 World Series after hitting .412 with two home runs, the second of which was the clincher as the Giants beat the Rangers in Game 5.

That's a pretty good record. In all, Renteria hit .333/.391/.508 in the World Series.

Third base: Pablo Sandoval

Kung Fu Panda played in all three of the Giants' World Series victories of the decade, though he only played in one game in 2010. He was MVP of the 2012 World Series, when he hit .500 with three homers. And though Madison Bumgarner was the only choice for MVP of the 2014 World Series, Panda did hit .429 with six runs and four RBIs.

In all, Sandoval hit .426/.460/.702 in his World Series career.

Special attention must be paid to third baseman **Chris Sabo**, one of the most popular players in recent Cincinnati Reds history. The town just loved Sabo because he drove a Ford Escort* and he wore goggles and in his one World Series, he delivered. Sabo hit .563 with two homers and five RBIs in the Reds' stunning 1990 sweep of Oakland. Sabo is now the head baseball coach at the University of Akron, which just feels perfect to me.

**Sabo's exact quote was: "Some guys go out and spend \$70,000 for a new car. For \$70,000, I could have a lifetime supply of Ford Escorts."*

Leftfield: Barry Bonds

Well, hey, he's not in the Hall of Fame.

When Bonds played in his one and only World Series, in 2002, he had a reputation as a player who struggled in the postseason. He wasn't in love with that reputation. In seven games against the Angels, he hit .471 with four home runs and had an absurd .700 on-base percentage. He was walked THIRTEEN times (a record) and SEVEN of those were intentional (a record). It is, surely, the most one player has ever dominated a series. It was basically Barry Bonds against the Angels. It was basically ridiculous.

Most intentional walks in a single World Series:

1. **Barry Bonds** (2002), 7
2. **Albert Pujols** (2011), 5
3. **Steve O'Neill** (1920), **David Ortiz** (2013), **Kirby Puckett** (1991), 4

And hey, let's give it up for **Deion Sanders**. I've written this before: Deion was absolutely one of my favorite-ever baseball players to cover. As a football player, he was somewhat less appealing — that's when he really took on the whole Neon Deion persona, which was fun but exhausting. But Deion the baseball player was a hard-working player who showed up early for batting practice and was always aware of how quickly this game can humble you.

In the 1992 World Series between Atlanta and Toronto, Sanders played in four games and hit .533 with a couple of doubles, four runs and five stolen bases. I know **Bo Jackson** got the hype, and he deserved the hype, but I do think that if Deion had focused entirely on baseball (and I know this is controversial) I think he had at least as high a baseball ceiling as Bo Jackson did. That year, during the season, Deion hit .304/.346/.495 with a league-leading 14 triples and 26 steals, all in just 97 games. He was also a very good outfielder. I think he could have been a baseball superstar.

Instead, he became the best pure cover corner in NFL history. We all have to make choices in life, I guess.

Centerfield: George Springer

It's hard to pick anyone but **Billy Hatcher** here. In four games in the 1990 World Series, Hatcher hit .750/.800/1.250 against Oakland. He was a one-man wrecking machine*. Incredibly, he was not named the MVP (nor was the aforementioned Chris Sabo). The award went instead to pitcher Jose Rijo, who won two of the four games and gave up just one run in 15 1/3 innings.

**Great song but I don't think it's about Hatcher.*

I also wanted to go with **Amos Otis**, a truly great player who hit .478 with three home runs in the 1980 World Series against Philadelphia. Otis spent a career in Kansas City quietly doing everything well — three Gold Gloves, twice led the league in doubles, brilliant base stealer, drew a fair share of walks, generally gave you between 15 and 25 homers — and pretty much nobody outside of Kansas City noticed. Finally, in 1980, he was in the World Series and he showed the world just how great he was.

And the Royals lost that Series, which sort of fits into Amos Otis' career track.

But it's hard to look away from George Springer, who smashed five home runs en route to winning the 2017 World Series MVP. Yes, I know all about that 2017 Houston team. But still, In 2020, he hit four doubles and two more homers in the World Series against the Nationals.

In all, Springer hit .339/.446/.839 with seven World Series homers. Here's a fun fact for you: Every player with more than eight World Series homers is in the Hall of Fame!

Most World Series Home Runs

1. **Mickey Mantle**, 18
2. **Babe Ruth**, 15
3. **Duke Snider**, 11
4. **Lou Gehrig and Reggie Jackson**, 10
5. **Frank Robinson**, 8

Rightfield: Jorge Soler

You have to give it up for Jorge Soler — the guy's a survivor. It seemed many times like he would swing and miss his way out of baseball. But he keeps finding new life. He played in only two games in the 2016 World Series, but he did all right, getting a couple of hits, including a triple.

Then he went to Kansas City and set the team record with 48 home runs.

Then he went to Atlanta, changed the whole dynamic there, and in the World Series hit three home runs and was named Series MVP.

And then he signed a big deal with the Marlins that he can option out of at any time.

In his World Series career, he has hit .320/.414/.800 with those three home runs.

Designated hitter/Pinch-hitter: Dane Iorg

How can you not love the Iorg family? Garth was probably the better player overall — he was an every-day player at times — but Dane was the World Series hero. In the 1982 World Series for St. Louis, Dane hit .529 with four doubles and a triple. And in the 1985 World Series for Kansas City, he got only two at-bats, but in one of them he knocked what is probably the biggest hit in Kansas City Royals history, driving in the game-winning run in Game 6.

In all, Dane Iorg hit .526/.526/.842 in his two World Series.

Special mention goes to **Hideki Matsui**, who played in only one World Series but made the most of it — he hit .615 with three home runs in the 2009 World Series against Philadelphia. He was named the Series MVP.

Pitcher: Madison Bumgarner

There are so many good choices. **Lew Burdette. Monte Pearson. Jim Bouton. Mickey Lolich. Ron Guidry. Jack Billingham.** Yes, **Curt Schilling.**

But it's gotta be Maddy Bumgarner, right? He started four World Series games, and rather famously pitched in relief one time, Game 7 of the 2014 World Series. In those five games, he gave up one run. That's an 0.25 ERA if you're scoring at home, which you certainly are. He allowed 14 hits and 5 walks in 36 innings. That's an 0.528 WHIP.

As of 2016 — after all of his World Series heroics, Bumgarner seemed to still be a more than viable Hall of Fame candidate. He was 100-67 with a 2.99 ERA and he was only just turning 27. But in the years since, because of injuries and inconsistency, he has basically written off his Hall of Fame chances. It's a shame. But still, if given the option of any pitcher to throw Game 7 for you, the young Maddy Bumgarner wouldn't be a bad choice.

THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE ANSWERS

Who was the last player to hit 50 or more home runs in a season when his team won the World Series?

Hint 1. It was in 2001. (So that makes it Diamondbacks over the Yankees).

Hint 2. This lefty batter hit 57 HRs in 2001. He had 354 career HRs including 45 in 1999 and 47 in 2000. (he came from the Diamondbacks since the questions says he came from the winning team).

ANSWER:

The D-backs' **Luis Gonzalez** (57 home runs in 2001)

HOUSEKEEPING

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