

SUNDAY BASEBALL TIDBITS

APRIL 2020

Four future Hall of Famers were in uniform for the 1986 World Series: Mets: Gary Carter; Red Sox: Wade Boggs, Jim Rice, Tom Seaver

Last email had some highlights of Stan Musial. I love it when you folks send feedback:

You omitted my favorite Musial statistic: He had more doubles than strikeouts during his career. Think about that: he was more likely to hit a DOUBLE than strike out. WTF, unbelievable.

His average for 162 games over his career was 597 AB, 39 DB, 37K--which by the way is about one strikeout every 15 AB.

Another stat I like is Runs+RBI-HR. Musial's average for 162 games is $104+104-25=184$. For comparison, Mike Trout is $122+102-39=185$, but then again Trout has averaged 151Ks per 162 games! That's a lot of guys who are still on base.

You get my point, I'm sure.

Walter Johnson won 417 games. He threw 110 shutouts. In 1916, Johnson pitched 369 innings and gave up zero home runs.

32 players in MLB history have 3000 hits

Closest active player to 3000—Miguel Cabrera 2815

Youngest to reach 3000 hits—Ty Cobb age 34

Eddie Murray, Nap Lajoie, Tris Speaker all got their 3000th hit as Cleveland Indians

Most recent to 3000 hits, Albert Pujols, May 2018

Wade Boggs, ARod and Derek Jeter all hit HRs as their 3000th hit

Only two players to have five hits in a World Series game--Albert Pujols (2011, Game 3) and Paul Molitor (1982, Game 1)

You probably remember Dan Quisenberry, relief pitcher for the KC Royals. Yankees saw a lot of the submariner. A few amazing things about him:

Walked 92 batters in 1,043 innings over his entire career. That is an absurd .79 walks per nine innings.

He threw 4 wild pitches in his career, his catchers had zero passed balls.

He threw 130 double play grounders.

He led the league in saves in 1980, '82, '83, '84, and '85.

Brien Taylor is one of just two overall No. 1 picks the Yankees have had in the June Draft. The other Ron Blomberg (No. 1 in 1967). A few notes on Taylor:

East Carteret High School, Beaufort, North Carolina.

The young hurler was 6-foot-3, 220 pounds, a hard-throwing left-hander and every team's dream.

He pitched a perfect game, struck out every single guy and his last pitch was 98.

In 1991 he racked up more than 200 strikeouts in 84 innings, allowed just 18 hits and walked 24.

He was the first million-dollar signing, a then record \$1.55 million signing bonus.

Taylor posted a 2.57 ERA in his first year in the Yankees organization, playing for Class A Advanced Fort Lauderdale.

The then-20-year-old started 27 games and allowed just three home runs over 161 1/3 innings, walking 66 and striking out 187.

He was tested at Double-A Albany-Colonie the following season and put up a 3.48 mark over 163 innings with 150 strikeouts, helping his Yanks to the postseason.

Taylor's career as he knew it came to an end during the offseason that followed those playoffs. A torn labrum in his throwing shoulder stemming from an off-field altercation derailed him, though he would throw in 46 more Minor League games between the Yankees and Indians organizations. He last threw in a professional game in 2000.

In 1983 as Yankees DH Don Baylor hit .303 with 21 HRs, 85 RBI and 17 SB.

Mel Stottlemyre started 35 or more games 9 straight seasons.

As a Yankee Ricky Henderson stole 301 bases and was caught 39 times – 86% success rate. Yankees all time % leader. He is second in all-time team stolen bases to Derek Jeter who stole 368.

Yankees have played 108 seasons. 10,378-7,840. .570 winning %.

55 playoff appearances, 40 AL pennants, 27 World Series titles.

stay safe my friends.

Lots of cool stuff this week including a couple of longer pieces. Sources include The Athletic, Mlb.com, Baseballreference.com.

Hank Aaron

Hank Aaron and another 44, Willie McCovey, hold the baseball record for most home runs in a season that also matches their uniform number. Aaron hit 44 homers four times.

On April 9, 1974 against Al Downing of the Dodgers, Aaron broke Babe Ruth's career HR record. That same night he also scored the 2,063rd run of his career.

And that broke the National League record set by Willie Mays. To put that in perspective, to score 2,063 runs you have to average 100 runs for more than 20 years.

He led the league in total bases eight times, first as a 22-year-old, last at age 35. Eight times. Nobody — not Ruth, not [Williams](#), not [Hornsby](#), not [Musial](#), not [Cobb](#), not anybody — led the league in total bases as many times.

King of Total Bases. He had 6,856 total bases in his career — 700 more than anyone else.

Musial could have hit 350 more doubles and not had as many total bases as Aaron.

Ruth could have hit 250 more home runs and not has as many total bases as Aaron. (Bonds would have needed 220 more homers just to tie Aaron.)

[Pete Rose](#) could have cracked another 1,100 singles and not had as many total bases as Aaron.

Aaron, for the record, won two batting titles, four home run titles and four RBI titles. But, alas, he never put the three together in one season.

In 1957, he led the league in homers and RBIs, but his .322 average was fourth behind three of the greatest hitters who ever lived — Musial, Mays and [Frank Robinson](#).

In 1959, he led the league in hitting at .355 but his 39 homers and 123 RBIs fell short. He finished seven homers behind his Hall of Fame teammate Mathews, and finished 20 RBIs shy of Hall of Famer [Ernie Banks](#).

In 1963, he led the league in homers and RBIs, but his .319 average was seven points behind the Dodgers' Tommy Davis.

Since the deadball era, the two pitchers who had the most shutouts by age 25: Bert Blyleven (30); Fernando Valenzuela (26).

Speaking of Fernando

1981, and every step of it seemed fictional. During spring training, every other pitcher got hurt. Bob Welch and Dave Goltz hurt their arms. Burt Hooton had an ingrown toenail. Jerry Reuss was scheduled to pitch Opening Day, but then he strained a muscle in his left calf the day before the game.

That left only Fernando Valenzuela.

And so he became the first Dodgers rookie to start on Opening Day and the first pitcher since Lefty Grove to make his first big-league start on Opening Day. He threw a five-hit, 106-pitch shutout against the Astros. And he did it with the biggest smile on his face.

"It's not like John McGraw would ever pick Fernando Valenzuela for his opening-day pitcher," Jim Murray wrote. "You see, Fernando not only had never started a big-league game in his life before, he doesn't even look like a major-league pitcher. He is, how shall we say it — he is — well, he's fat, is what he is."

If that seems unduly harsh, well, Fernando's body type was a perpetual part of the conversation. He just didn't *look* the way people expect a pitcher to look. In his second start, he did give up a run — his first in almost 70 innings counting the minors — but he still threw a complete game and struck out 10. This was quite remarkable considering it was a cold, windy, miserable day in San Francisco, which does not suit a man who grew up in Mexico's Sonoran desert. How did he deal with the conditions? "Fernando," the Times wrote, "is well insulated."

People didn't just talk about his bulk. They also talked about his age. He was 20 years old in 1981, and nobody believed it because of the control and command he displayed. "They're trying to tell me that guy's 20," Angels manager Jim Fregosi said. "He was 20 when I started playing."

His next time out, on only three days' rest, he shut out the Padres and struck out 10. He also cracked two hits. "Is he really 20?" Padres pitching coach Chuck Estrada asked. When Valenzuela was asked whether he was a streaky pitcher, he replied in Spanish, "I have always pitched like this."

The next time out was in Houston. He went on three days' rest again. He threw another shutout and struck out 11. He got two more hits and an RBI. "He's the Mexican Babe Ruth," Dodgers vice president Fred Claire said.

"I hope he comes back to earth," Astros pitcher Don Sutton said. "Or they find a higher league for him."

And they didn't just talk about his bulk and his age, they also talked about the wild way he pitched. He had this big, bold, beautiful windup and about halfway through it, he would look to the sky, as if saying to God, "Hey, you're watching, right?"

"Haven't you ever noticed," Annie Savoy says to Nuke LaLoosh in "Bull Durham," "how Fernando Valenzuela, he just doesn't even look when he pitches?"

Then he would unleash one of his five pitches, but most likely one of his two screwballs — the fast screwball or the slow one. Hitters simply had never seen a pitch like that. And it didn't hurt that he had exquisite control with every one of his pitches. "Does he ever throw a ball?" Joe Morgan said after one game against the Giants.

The mania was now kicking into high gear. Fans were bringing Fernando signs to the ballpark. People were hoarding his Topps and Fleer rookie cards. People began to predict when his next start would be and buy tickets. He returned home to Los Angeles for his next start against the Giants, and even though he didn't have his best stuff he threw *another* shutout, but this time he got three hits at the plate, leading to the Times headline "Valenzuela Has a 3-Hitter (at Bat)." The three hits gave him a .438 batting average. The four shutouts in his first five starts gave him a record of some sort.

"He's the most poised of anyone I ever saw 20 years old," San Francisco's Jerry Martin said. "But first of all, I don't know if he's 20 or not."

When somebody asked Martin whether it would change his mind that the Dodgers had produced Valenzuela's birth certificate, Martin smiled. "Not really," he said.

He gave up one run in nine innings in Montreal, threw a shutout at Shea Stadium against the Mets (he needed a whole team of security and artist Leroy Neiman painted a portrait of him during batting practice) and then he came back again to Los Angeles, where he was *everything*. The letters to the editor section was entirely his as people fought over whether he was overhyped or underappreciated or being treated shabbily.

“He created so many new fans, it was unbelievable,” Jarrín says. “People from Mexico, from Central America, from South America, they didn’t care about baseball. They were just following soccer and boxing, that’s it. And then Fernando came along, and suddenly everybody cared.

“Especially women ... and especially ladies from 30 years and up. Mothers. Grandmothers. People used to pray for him. They used to go to Mass on the day he was pitching. Baseball had never seen anyone like this before.”

On the day he came back to Los Angeles, 53,906 piled in, the largest crowd at Dodger Stadium in almost a decade. The musical director at Dodger Stadium played ABBA’s “Fernando” while he warmed up. The Times called it a “carnival atmosphere that included hawkers lining the Elysian Park Avenue entrance selling records about him and T-shirts with his name on them. The stadium organist played Mexican music and the press room served Mexican food.”

Valenzuela threw his seventh complete game, allowing two runs (both on homers — the first he’d allowed all season). His record was 8-0. He had an 0.50 ERA. The league was hitting .172 against him. Valenzuela himself was hitting .360. This was the peak.

And ... it was never the same after that. Oh, Fernando would still have some great years. He would have a terrific career with 173 wins and more than 2,000 strikeouts and six All-Star appearances, one Cy Young Award and three other top-five finishes. He also went 5-1 with a 1.98 ERA in nine postseason appearances.

But it would never be quite like it was that May day in 1981 in front of a standing-room-only crowd at Dodger Stadium with the sense that Valenzuela just might become the greatest pitcher who ever lived.

Donny Ballgame

During his MVP season, Mattingly hit .324 with 35 homers and led the majors in doubles (48) and RBIs (145), which at the time was the most in a season by a left-handed hitter since Ted Williams (159 in 1949).

There was the magical 1987 season when Mattingly set a major-league single-season record with six grand slams — a feat only matched since by Travis Hafner in 2006.

Mattingly still shares the record for consecutive games with a home run, with eight in a row from July 8-18 in 1987 — something only Dale Long and Ken Griffey Jr. have done.

Mattingly hit 10 home runs during that stretch while hitting .459 with an absurd 1.812 OPS and driving in 21 runs.

He appeared in every All-Star Game from 1984-1989.

1995 playoffs. Mattingly finally had his chance. He hit .417 with six RBIs in that division series against Ken Griffey Jr. and the Mariners.

Rock

One of our regular readers loves Tim Lincecum. So here are a few highlights to remember: 1979-2002, 69.4 WAR, 170 HR, 808 SB, 980 RBIs, 2,605 hits. When you're the only player in history with at least 100 triples, 150 homers and 600 steals, when you're one of only four players in history with at least 700 extra-base hits and 800 steals (joining Ty Cobb, Lou Brock and Rickey Henderson) you belong in the HOF.

Bob Gibson

Gibson had a 1.12 ERA -- what more really needs to be said? That's by far the best single-season ERA in the Live Ball Era, as no other pitcher has even posted a sub-1.50 ERA over the last 100 years. The best ERA by any pitcher since Gibson's historic season is Dwight Gooden's 1.53 ERA in '85.

After putting up those ridiculous numbers during the regular season, Gibson somehow took his game to yet another level in Game 1 of the World Series. He racked up a World Series-record 17 strikeouts in a shutout against the Tigers. To this day, no other pitcher has registered more than 15 strikeouts in a World Series game.

Gibson went on to strike out another 10 batters while allowing just one run in a complete-game victory in Game 4, giving the Cardinals a 3-1 series lead. St. Louis, however, dropped three straight -- including Gibson's Game 7 start (four runs and eight strikeouts in another complete-game effort) -- to lose the series. Gibson's 35 strikeouts in the 1968 World Series remain the most by any pitcher in a single World Series in big league history.

Gibson allowed one run or fewer in 11 consecutive complete games from June 6-July 30, the longest such streak in Major League history. Making Gibson's historic run all the more remarkable is the fact that eight of those 11 outings were shutouts. Overall, Gibson allowed just three runs over 99 innings in that 11-start span, good for a 0.27 ERA for the two-month stretch.

That incredible streak helped Gibson go a perfect 12-0 with a 0.50 ERA in 12 starts covering June and July. All 12 outings were complete games -- and eight of the 12 were shutouts.

- Gibson's 1.12 overall ERA is impressive enough, but the right-hander was even better on the road. He went 12-3 with a 0.81 ERA in 16 road starts, while tossing complete games in all but one of those 16 outings. No other pitcher in big league history with at least 10 road starts has ever finished with a sub-1.00 ERA away from home.
- Very few players had success against Gibson in 1968, and that includes some of the game's best hitters. Hall of Famer Hank Aaron went 1-for-15 (.067) against Gibson. The legendary Johnny Bench went hitless in six at-bats against Gibson. Pete Rose, who led the Majors with 210 hits and a .335 average in '68, went 0-for-8 versus Gibson. Ernie Banks was just 3-for-13 against Gibson and Willie Mays went 2-for-8 -- and the list goes on and on.

Babe Ruth and some awesome numbers

Age 20, he won 18 games for Boston as a pitcher and hit four home runs in 92 at-bats.

Age 21, he led the league with a 1.75 ERA.

Age 22, he went 24-13 with a 2.01 ERA.

In 1918, at age 23, he pulled off his most famous pitching accomplishment, throwing the last of 29 2/3 consecutive scoreless innings in the World Series (a streak that began in 1916). That record would last for 43 years until it was broken by Whitey Ford.

Then he concentrated on hitting.

13: Times he led the league in slugging.

- 12: Times he led the league in home runs. Also the number of walk-off homers he hit.
- 11: Times he led the league in walks.
- 10: Times he led all players — including pitchers — in WAR.
- 9: Times he led the league in runs created.
- 8: Times he led the league in runs scored.
- 7: Times he led the league in extra-base hits.
- 6: Times he led the league in total bases.
- 5: Times he led the league in RBIs.

- 4: Times he hit at least 54 home runs in a season.
- 3: World Series wins. Also the number of times he drove in 160 or more RBIs.
- 2: Times he accumulated more than 400 total bases.
- 1: MVP Awards and ERA titles and his place on the all-time OPS ranking.

More Tidbits

1998, Shane Spencer became a modern-day Roy Hobbs. A 28th-round pick in 1990, Spencer debuted with the Yankees as a 26-year-old rookie in 1998, clubbing 10 homers (and three grand slams) across 18 games in August and September. During the same stretch, he hit .440 with a .481 on-base percentage and a 1.140 slugging percentage.

Only Major League team that has yet to retire a player's number (not counting Jackie Robinson)? The Marlins

Pedro Martinez holds the record for most MLB ERA titles, five: 1997, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003.

Eric Plunk was traded twice for Ricky Henderson, the only player traded twice for the same HOF player. Plunk was a 4th round pick of the Yankees in 1981. Rickey changed teams 12 times and was traded four times. Plunk was part of the deal in 1984 to bring Ricky from Oakland and again in 1988 to send him back to Oakland.

Al Kaline's best finish in AL MVP voting was second in both 1955 and '63. Yankees beat him both times--Yogi Berra in '55 and Elston Howard in '63

Derek Jeter age 22 - wins the World Series and the Rookie of the Year award as the Yankees' starting shortstop in 1996. He won four more World Series titles, a World Series MVP, five Gold Gloves, the designation as 11th Yankee captain. His .308 batting average in 158 postseason games — basically an entire season's worth of high-stakes contests against the game's best — was right on par with his career average of .310,

Pitcher who holds the record for most all-time appearances--Jesse Orosco (1,252 games).

Three longest games in MLB history

May 1, 1920: Brooklyn Robins 1, Boston Braves 1

Length: 26 innings. Called on account of darkness, took only 3 hours and 50 minutes.

May 8, 1984: Chicago White Sox 7, Milwaukee Brewers 6

Length: 25 innings. Took two days as AL rules at the time didn't allow an inning to start after 1 am. This is the longest game in MLB history in terms of time. It took eight hours and six minutes. The game was 3-3 in the 21st inning. Ben Oglivie hit a 3 run HR for the Brewers but the White Sox rallied to tie it 6-6. In the bottom of the 25th -- after a scoreless top half by Tom Seaver, on in relief -- the White Sox ended the game with a bang. Harold Baines drove a walk-off home run off Chuck Porter to win it for Chicago.

Sept. 11, 1974: St. Louis Cardinals 4, New York Mets 3

Length: 25 innings. Yogi Berra, the Mets' manager at the time, was ejected in the 20th inning, at about 1:30 a.m. Lou Brock came into the game with 105 stolen bases, but was caught trying for No. 106. Keith Hernandez appeared in only 14 games for the Cards as a rookie in 1974, and this was one. Claude Osteen pitched 9 1/3 scoreless innings in relief for St. Louis; Jerry Cram pitched eight scoreless innings in relief for New York. Fifty players appeared in the game, and about 180 baseballs were used.

Going for quality over quantity this week.

As a baseball fan, do yourself a favor and watch **Battered Bastards of Baseball** on Netflix. Recommendation from one of our readers--thank you Allen. I had never heard of this documentary about minor league baseball in Portland, Oregon. It is great.

More Donny Baseball

MVP in 1985. Nothing carried more weight than RBIs in MVP discussions during that era, and Mattingly's league-leading 145 RBIs were the most by a Yankees hitter since Joe DiMaggio in 1948. He also led the AL in total bases (370) and doubles (48) while hitting .324 with 35 homers and more walks (56) than strikeouts (41). Mattingly, who also won a Gold Glove and was considered the best defensive first baseman in the AL in the 1980s, received 23 of 28 first-place votes, with the other five going to second-place finisher George Brett.

Mattingly was arguably MLB's best hitter from 1984-89, averaging 27 homers and 114 RBIs with a .327 batting average and an MLB-best .530 slugging percentage over that span before back injuries affected his production. Mattingly also paced the Majors in extra-base hits (428) and RBIs (684) over those six seasons.

Perfect

Felix Hernandez is the only active big leaguer with a perfect game on his resume.

Only manager for two perfect games—Joe Torre was at the helm for David Wells' perfect game in 1998 and David Cone's perfect game in '99.

Randy Johnson was 40 years old when he tossed a perfect game in 2004. No other player has been older than 37 at the time of throwing a perfect game.

Three pitchers tossed perfect games in 2012 (Matt Cain, Philip Humber and Félix Hernández), but nobody has thrown one since.

How did that work out?

June 15, 1964 Cardinals acquired Lou Brock (with [Jack Spring](#) and [Paul Toth](#)) from Chicago Cubs for [Ernie Broglio](#), [Doug Clemens](#) and [Bobby Shantz](#).

December 9, 1965 Orioles acquired Frank Robinson from Cincinnati for Milt Pappas, Jack Baldschun and Dick Simpson.

December 10, 1971 Angels acquired Nolan Ryan from Mets for Jim Fregosi.

February 25, 1972 Phillies acquired Steve Carlton from St. Louis for Rick Wise.

August 12, 1987 Braves acquired John Smoltz from Detroit for Doyle Alexander.

May 25, 1989 Mariners acquire Randy Johnson from Montreal for [Mark Langston](#) and [Mike Campbell](#).

August 30, 1990 Astros acquired Jeff Bagwell from Boston for Larry Anderson.

February 18, 1999 Yankees acquired Roger Clemens from Toronto for David Wells, Homer Bush and Graeme Lloyd.

More tidbits

Most appearances at shortstop in the 20th century--Luis Aparicio (2,583 games).

Have there been more righties or lefties who won Cy Young as Yankees? Ford '61, Lyle '77 and Guidry '78 lefthanders beat out Bob Turley '58 and Clemens 2001.

13 Yankees have combined for 22 MVP awards. DiMaggio (3), Mantle (3), Berra (3), Gehrig (2), Maris (2), A-Rod (2), Mattingly, Munson, Elston Howard, Rizzuto, Spud Chandler, Joe Gordon, Ruth.

Eight players in MLB history have score 2,000 runs:

Ricky Henderson	2,295
Ty Cobb	2,245
Barry Bonds	2,227
Hank Aaron	2,174
Babe Ruth	2,174
Pete Rose	2,165
Willie Mays	2,062
A-Rod	2,021

Albert Pujols 1,828 (17th place) and Miguel Cabrera 1,429 (84th place) are the only active players in the top 150 of career runs scored.

John Smoltz s the only pitcher with 3,000 K's and 50+ saves.

Walter Johnson became the first player to join the 3,000-strikeout club on July 22, 1923 -- and he remained the only member for more than 50 years.

Randy Johnson is also the only pitcher to have 2K strikeouts with multiple teams. He tallied 2,162 strikeouts with the Mariners before registering another 2,077 with the D-backs.

Justin Verlander is the only active pitcher with 3,000 K's. He surpassed the 3,000-strikeout mark in his final start of 2019.

Next closest active pitchers are Max Scherzer's 2,692 strikeouts, just ahead of Greinke's 2,622.

18 pitchers to reach 3,000 career strikeouts. There have been 23 perfect games.

Bob Gibson racked up 3,117 strikeouts while spending his entire 17-year Hall of Fame career with the Cardinals, the only pitcher over 3,000 who pitched for just one team.

Franchise with the most Rookie of the Year winners since the award became a national honor in 1947--The Dodgers with 18, twice as many as the Yankees. Note four straight years '79-'83 and five straight '92-'96.

1947: Jackie Robinson

1949: Don Newcombe

1952: Joe Black

1953: Jim Gilliam

1960: Frank Howard

1965: Jim Lefebvre

1969: Ted Sizemore

1979: Rick Sutcliffe

1980: Steve Howe

1981: Fernando Valenzuela

1982: Steve Sax

1992: Eric Karros

1993: Mike Piazza

1994: Raul Mondesi

1995: Hideo Nomo

1996: Todd Hollandsworth

2016: Corey Seager

2017: Cody Bellinger

YANKEES ROY

1951: Gil McDougald

1954: Bob Grim

1957: Tony Kubeck

1962: Tom Tresh

1968: Stan Bahnsen

1970: Thurman Munson

1981: Dave Righetti

1996: Derek Jeter

2017: Aaron Judge